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**KAROL WOJTYŁA/ST. JOHN PAUL II'S PERSONALISM  
AS A RESPONSE TO THE CONTEMPORARY  
SECULARISM OF WESTERN CULTURE.  
A STUDY IN PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

A Doctoral Thesis written under the supervision of:  
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## **Dedication**

This work is dedication to my father, late Mr. James Chukwuemeka Ugwu **(Ikpemalueziokwu: aka azu di ya=Judgement against the integrity of truth is an evidence of corruption/deceit or a foul play)**, whose prayerful support guided me in this academic journey, although he did not live to witness and read this thesis as he desired.

Also, to late Rev. Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Maryniarczyk SDB, who guided my master's studies and laid the foundation of the topic of this research thesis.

May God bless the dead

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## INTRODUCTION

Since modern times, the concept of culture has undergone significant conceptual transformations, and the complexity surrounding its meaning and usage makes it impossible to arrive at a universally accepted scholarly definition of the concept. The collection of the various definitions of culture in the work of Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions, that results in further modifications, attests to the confusion about the meaning of culture. Attempts undertaken by Levi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz<sup>1</sup> to clarify this confusion on the basis of philosophical-anthropological analysis, given their emphasis on the social dimension of human life, did not yield much result, although the outcome of their studies still appeals to recent researchers. Informed by their linguistic attitude, they understand culture as a sociological phenomenon that is historically acquired, created by man as a member of society, communicated largely by language or symbolic form, and through participation in social institutions.<sup>2</sup> This meaning reduces culture to what people make out of their social environment, consisting only of socially learned behaviour which varies according to individual societies without reference to ontological status.

In this context, Parsons and Habermas formulated the now widely accepted consensual understanding of culture, which refers to the mechanism for the social integration of shared meanings, values, and norms, as well as theories of interpretation of the world.<sup>3</sup> As a sociological phenomenon, this mechanism encompasses the diverse acquired forms of behaviours, thoughts, and feelings of individuals within a society to which they belong for the attainment of common ends set by each society<sup>4</sup> and varies accordingly to concrete individual societies, peoples, and historical epochs. And such acquired and learned behaviour is inherently social in character, wherein the individual does not appear as the author of his personal action, but is influenced by sociological factors. Similarly, Alfred Weber states that culture is "the endowment of a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of events in the world with meaning and significance from the standpoint of human beings."<sup>5</sup> As it were, it is the collective or the

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Kuper, *Culture. The Anthropological Account*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> David Bidney, 'Human Nature and Cultural Process.' *American Anthropologist*, N.S. (1947). 49:3. (1947). 375-399

<sup>3</sup> Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*. New York: Free Press, 1964). 165. Also; Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. (London/Cambridge: Heinemann/Polity, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Clyde Kluckhohn, *The Concept of Culture. The Science of Man in the World Crisis*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944). 80

<sup>5</sup> Colin Loader, *Alfred Weber and the Crisis of Culture, 1890-1933*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). 84

society that defines and determines what constitutes cultural acts with varying attitudes, habits, and mostly in opposition to nature. This understanding aligns with what Clyde Kluckhohn refers to as the basic fact of cultural phenomenon, namely, “behavioural products-artefacts.”<sup>6</sup> The Enlightenment’s cultural attitude viewed culture as arising solely from human autonomous rationality—as inner impulses, logical constructions, and external outputs—understood largely in isolation from nature. This approach, in a sense, negates the fundamental sense of culture as man’s ability to derive meaning and significance from nature of the world in which he lives through rational activity informed by norms and values.

However, the reduction of the fundamentals and essence of culture to material phenomena as cultural artefacts, consisting of the theoretical cognition and arts, fragments the truth of culture and cultural experiences in their theoretical and practical structures. Initiated by the Enlightenment movement,<sup>7</sup> the concept of culture and cultural experiences has become polarised, wherein the notion of culture is isolated from the ontic nature of man, with a focus on the objects of culture in the natural social environment. This attitude supposes the material meaning of culture and cultural experiences, which basically appeals to the psychobiological social elements of culture, with a distrust on the immaterial elements, which results in the new cultural experience described as ‘secularism.’ This cultural experience undoubtedly echoes the reality of the lived experience in the contemporary Western world, where the essence of culture is demarcated into secular and sacred experiences, expressing a situation of overlapping and conflicting worldviews, especially in reference to the understanding of the human being.

Fundamentally, secularism refers to the ideological cultural experience that disintegrates the essence of culture into secular and sacred worldviews. Founded on individual rational autonomy and freedom, it opposes the sense of transcendent, ultimate, and immaterial sense of culture, and the traditional, religious constitution of ethical and moral experience. Opposing these cultural phenomena, it rejects their relevance in the public domain, relegating them to private practice due to their mythical, uncritical, authoritative, and heteronomous nature, which interferes, and hinders human development and scientific progress. Given its basic character of absolute nature of freedom, it advocates for autonomous individual choice, unhindered rational

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<sup>6</sup> Clyde Kluckhohn, Review of A. L. Kroeber’s ‘Configurations of Culture Growth. *American Journal of Sociology*. 51:4. (1946). 336-341. NB: Kluckhohn understands culture as the sociological and anthropological phenomenon that theoretically and practically shapes human life as individual in the society where the individual belongs; and improves or changes historically, as individuals also contributes to the changes that occur in culture. See: Kluckhohn. *The Concept of Culture. The Science of Man in the World Crisis*. 22

<sup>7</sup> The Enlightenment ideal proposes that economics, modern science and technology would bring true liberation to mankind which would have significant impact in the deconstruction of cultural experience based on religious and metaphysical analysis founded on belief in the ultimate or biblical concept of God. In line with this mentality, the world is seen as product of irrational evolution, as such, man must create his own rational world, wherein the normative moral idea of the contemporary human life consists in seeking of happiness, pleasure, erotic debauchery, drugs and other hedonistic tendencies. See; Talcott Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. (2024). 377-400

act, relativism of truth, morality, values, and good that emancipates the individual from religious and traditional influence. In this way, a secularization of consciousness takes place, in which religious experience is interpreted purely on psychobiological, sociological, or emotional grounds, according to a strictly natural-scientific approach and methodology.

The character of this new culture advocates for the emancipation of the individual from the guardianship of religious (Christian) influence (de-Christianization of the person),<sup>8</sup> expressing the attitude of atheism, practical materialism, utilitarianism, hedonism, religious indifference, nihilism, and elimination of metaphysical or ultimate analysis<sup>9</sup> of the world, especially the human being. It perceives the world and the human being as pure material and natural entities, immanent in character, without any supernatural/spiritual or transcendent features. This attitude reduces the human person to a mere bodily expression, leading to the objectification and commodification of the human body, which is then regarded as nothing more than matter or a material thing. The human being exists like other beings of nature as pure spatio-temporal being of matter and energy, in random occurrence<sup>10</sup> explainable through natural modern scientific methodology or verified empirically with no thought of the other-worldly, ultimate or transcendence status. Andrzej Szahaj describes this attitude of contemporary Western secularism as “transition from a theocentric to anthropocentric vision of the world in the Western culture,”<sup>11</sup> that is, an exclusive humanistic and materialistic understanding of the world.

However, some scholars do not share the idea that secularism entails the separation of sacred spheres (consisting of religion and traditional moral principles) from the secular sphere. This entails the sense of ‘godlessness’ or negation of the ideal of ultimate reality in the understanding of secularism, arguing that inasmuch as secularism theoretically advocates for this separation, it does not mean the end of religious experience. Thus, Charles Taylor states that although secularism has diminished the condition of religion in Western society, but that does not mean that religion has disappeared or been subtracted from modern life.<sup>12</sup> This situation rather advocates for the bracketing of the notion of ultimate or transcendent mentality, or God-centred attitude in all human endeavours. This supposition, therefore, results in what is described

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<sup>8</sup> Richard J. Neuhaus, *Prorok z Nowego Jorku: Wybór publicystyki i wywiadów*, ed. Grzegorz Górny & Robert Jankowski. (Warszawa: Fronda, 2010). 59

<sup>9</sup> Jan Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. (2024). 377-400

<sup>10</sup> Brendan Sweetman, B. *Secularism and Religion in Modern Democracies*. (E-International Relations, 2010). 1 <https://www.e-ir.info/2010/08/04/secularism-and-religion-in-modern-democracies>

<sup>11</sup> Andrzej Szahaj, ‘Wielość, względność, obojętność? O sekularyzacji i roli religii w debacie publicznej.’ Korzec, C. & Misiak, R., eds. *Nadzieje i zagrożenia sekularyzacji*. Szczecin. (2010). 15–28.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007). 558

as the move towards secularization of theology<sup>13</sup> and reduction of the supernatural idea in theological studies in the bid to reconcile theology with human knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

Although the ideal of secularism has helped to improve some aspects of cultural experiences, however the fragmentation of the truth of the essence of culture introduces some negative manifestations that are deficient in building an adequate anthropology. Such negative anthropological manifestations include: decline of religious experience, negation of transcendence, absolute ideal of freedom, relativism of truth and value, and culture of death. These manifestations, according to Peter Berger, are objective and subjective in nature,<sup>15</sup> wherefor one aspect of anthropological truth is emphasized while the other, such as religious or metaphysical analysis of realities, and religious or traditionally inspired morality, are bracketed, negated, and expunged from the public domain and from the scientific inquiries and whole human endeavours. But the truth about adequate anthropology and proper understanding of reality states that an aspect of the truth cannot be regarded as the whole truth, for man, who is the centre of all cultural realities, is a whole and not a part. On the grounds of this basic understanding of the nature of man and his personal or cultural action as a unit and whole, Karol Wojtyła refutes the anthropological defects that result from the negative manifestations of contemporary secularism.

In contrast to the sociological approach, Wojtyła believes that culture consists of cognitive and normative actions through which human beings interpret and understand the realities and mysteries of the world. It relates to activities by means of which man comes in contact with reality and goes beyond his subjectivity. He said,

culture is born at the end of man's ability to create notions and using them, which is inborn feature of man connected with his nature, enables him to have an extremely deep control of the variety of beings which surround him, give him the easiness of using them, constitutes one of the most fundamental foundations of creation and culture.<sup>16</sup>

Wojtyła considers culture holistically as the feature of man's demonstration of his authentic way of being, his cognitive capacity through his ability to coordinate his activities, theoretical and practical, that is, his theoretical cognition, moral acts, creative actions or skills, permeated by religion, with mutual complementarity of each other. This meaning expresses the various spheres of activities that constitute the classical understanding of culture, namely

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<sup>13</sup> Eric L. Mascall, *Sekularyzacja chrześcijaństwa*, trans. T. Mieszkowski. (Warszawa: 1970). 17

<sup>14</sup> Janusz Mariański, *Sekularyzacja i desekularyzacja w nowoczesnym świecie*. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2006). 185-200

<sup>15</sup> Peter L. Berger, 'Sekularyzacja a problem wiarygodności religii,' trans. W. Kurdziel., ed. Adamski, F. *Ateizm oraz irreligia i sekularyzacja*. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Petrus, 2011). 96–112.

<sup>16</sup> Karol Wojtyła, K. *Rozważania o istocie człowieka*. (Kraków: WAM, 2003). 45.

‘theoria,’ ‘praxis,’ ‘poiesis’ as the ways of expressing the truth, goodness, and beauty of being. The reference to the transcendental values shows the essence of religion as an integral character of culture, the basis of the bond between the human person and the person of Absolute Being or the Transcendent person as the terminus of culture, the ultimate reason of man’s being,<sup>17</sup> which also lifts culture beyond material things. In this spirit, Pope Benedict XVI defines culture “as the inward or immanent achievement of the person, and such achievement is necessarily transcendent, or oriented upward, so to speak, towards what is good, true and beautiful.”<sup>18</sup> These views are in line with a current of thought called Christian personalism, which proposes a vision of human culture based on a complementary understanding of the human person, combining philosophical and theological aspects.

Nevertheless, the existence of diverse forms of culture does not mean the complete pluralism of this phenomenon, because even in the light of pluralistic concepts, human activities that truly constitute culture are perceived as one and universal for the whole of human nature. Accordingly, culture flows from man’s rational nature, structured through axiological norms, his pattern of thought, behaviour, and feeling taken together as they are essentially governed by the same universal ethical principles and moral order. Indeed, man realizes his personal essence and existence through culture,<sup>19</sup> which is constituted through praxis (moral order). Thus, culture fundamentally becomes a means of cultivation of the whole man (*cultura animi*), of improving his nature, compensating for the lacks and defects in nature and makeup for other biological deficiencies through inventions, and guided by norms and values, by which the human person becomes ‘more human.’ Through its normative or ethical/moral character, culture permeates the whole fabric of human potentialities, tends its activities to the truth of good as the end of cultural actions. No wonder John Paul II remarks that “the future of man depends on culture, *and indeed on the proper understanding of the relation of truth of culture to the good of man.*”<sup>20</sup> Thus, he defines culture as “the means of man’s expression and confirmation of his humanity. Man creates culture and through culture creates himself. He creates himself with the inward effort of the spirit, of thought, will and heart.”<sup>21</sup> For culture, he maintains, does not subsist only on human creation, or material/external artefacts, it essentially relates to his internal capacities as the result of his rational nature. And so, culture is the medium through which the rational nature of man is realized. It helps answer questions about who man is, the meaning of life, his purpose and end, and it enables him to understand and navigate his existential challenges.

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<sup>17</sup> Mieczysław A. Mrapiec, *Człowiek i kultura*. (Lublin: PTTA, 2008). 23

<sup>18</sup> Pope Benedict XVI. *John Paul II: My Beloved Predecessor*, ed. Elio Guerriero. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2007). 50.

<sup>19</sup> John Paul II. *Address at the UNESCO*. (2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1980) [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

<sup>20</sup> John Paul II. *Address at the UNESCO*. NB: The italics is my emphasis.

<sup>21</sup> John Paul II. *Address at the UNESCO*. 1980

Personalism is the school of thought born to address and respond to the challenges of contemporary anthropological defects or what Augusto Del Noce describes as “anthropological nihilism”<sup>22</sup> that follows from the culture crisis of secularism. It advances, in the understanding of human person, the integration of the corporeal and spiritual elements of culture by which we arrive at the whole truth of who the person is as opposed to what the person is. This approach highlights the intrinsic value and dignity of the person, interpersonal, common good, and the truth of good as the true basis and ultimate end of cultural theory and practice, which tends cultural acts to the realization of the transcendental values: the truth, goodness, and beauty in the human person. These values are universal to human nature as they derive from man’s rational nature. Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, in line with this, develops his personalistic thought rooted in classical philosophy of culture, influenced by Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics. The basic personalistic analysis which he pursued follows from the Thomistic maxim *agere sequitur esse* expressed as *operari sequitur esse*. He believes that true culture, which results from human rational activities, adequately defines man as a subject and person. Through the hermeneutics of action, we grasp all dimensions of human action as an integral whole belonging to the person. Secularism, has fragmented this unity, creating antinomy in the anthropology of the human being by reducing the person either to consciousness or to the body, making this issue a major topic of discussion in philosophy and other areas of science.

Taking into account the deep discrepancy between secularist and personalist understandings of culture—and the fundamental sources of this discrepancy, which stem from differing conceptions of the human being and his or her personal status—as well as the need to confront these two positions, given their importance in shaping Western culture, this dissertation will focus on Karol Wojtyła/St. John Paul II’s personalism, which responds to the anthropological errors of contemporary Western secularism by applying his conception of personalistic culture to this problem.

## **Object and Aim of the Study**

What constitutes the object of this study relates to the crisis of culture that results from the contemporary understanding of the concept of culture in the fragmentation of the essence of culture, consequent in the new cultural experience ‘secularism.’ The ideal of secularism as the contemporary cultural experience rooted in absolute freedom, pure immanence and

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<sup>22</sup> Anthropological attitude based on radical equality and absolute freedom that abolishes all differences even in those determined by nature, thereby destroying true sense of culture, fragmenting culture with nature as the foundation of integral anthropology. See, Robert Skrzypczak, ‘Nie dać się zepsuciu. Wobec rewolucji seksualnej.’ *Non possumus: Niezgoda, której uczy Kościół*. ed. Paweł Milcarek, P. and Rowiński, T. (Warszawa: Demart, 2021).

materialization of culture and realities in the world, with its attendant relativism and individualization of truth according to one's own experience, presupposes some disorder in the human anthropology. The redress and solution to the anthropological defect that results from this cultural crisis will be sought philosophically through the ontological analysis of the root meaning of culture that reveals the unchanging truth about man as a person, who is at the centre, also the subject and object of culture. This will be in the light of the personalistic culture proposed by Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. He demonstrates a comprehensive account of the truth about the human person, wherein he argues that true culture constituted through praxis on the basis of the experience of morality, reveals the essence of man as a person. Since culture covers all human activities, Wojtyła considers the ethical-base analysis of human acts, and objective moral order as the starting point of human acts, for this approach, accounts for the proper experience of a real existing person without compromising the ontological nature of the person, with no form of antagonism or antinomy. He states that "the essence of moral value and its *feri* in the person reveals that which is essential in the person and constitutes the foundation of constructing anthropology that is essential and integral."<sup>23</sup>

This research examines the contemporary meaning of culture, the ambiguities about the concept of culture, and what results from this confusion, as the new cultural experience, namely, 'secularism.' Considering the anthropological defect that follows from this problem, the research responds to the problem from the philosophical point of view in the light of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II's personalism. Central in Wojtyła's personalistic analysis of culture is the understanding that the person is the subject and purpose of any activity that constitutes culture. Culture is the product of man's rational nature, where rationality is the highest expression of human nature, which integrates culture with human nature as a mechanism of improving nature. This approach offers a broad meaning of culture from its basic root meaning, highlighting the inseparable unity of the material and immaterial, realistic and idealistic elements of culture that constitute the whole of human activities. Wojtyła clearly states that culture radiates externally the innerness of man in the unity of objective and subjective, immanent and transcendent, individual and social activities.<sup>24</sup> For one can only understand the dynamism of the human person from the standpoint of a phenomenology of the act of culture shaped by transcendence.<sup>25</sup> The framework of this person-centred conception of culture provides a comprehensive response to the anthropological deficiencies within the idea of secularism.

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<sup>23</sup> Karol Wojtyła, K. *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. Ignatik, G., foreword C. Anderson. (Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 2021). 4

<sup>24</sup> Charles J. Haughey, 'A Critical Reading of Pope John Paul II on Culture,' Joseph W. Koterski, John J. Conley, *Creed and Culture: Jesuit Studies of Pope John Paul II*. (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2004). 76

<sup>25</sup> John P. Hittinger, 'John Paul II's Core Teaching on Culture (1979-1980).' *Communio: International Catholic Review*. 48. (2021). 248-271

Thus, this research, drawing on the specificities of the Christian personalistic culture advanced by Wojtyła, confronts the negative manifestation of the ideologies of contemporary Western secularism with its claims that the ‘truth’ that exists is the truth of one’s own experience, resulting in subjectivism, moral relativism, and pure immanent material constitution of realities, especially the human being. Personalistic critique of secularism appeals to the analysis of sensory observation and intellectual understanding of the actual experience<sup>26</sup> of man as being who exists and acts out of himself, on which basis his personal agency manifests.

## **The State of Research**

Interestingly, many scholars have studied and published about the personalistic thought of Wojtyła in the areas of philosophy and theology. But the significance of this study lies in the justification of the elements that characterize Wojtyła’s personalistic culture in its capacity to confront the dehumanizing ideologies of contemporary Western secularism that result from the ambiguities in the meaning of culture. The research finds some intriguing works that address the problem of secularism in the Western lived experience, like the monumental work of Charles Taylor, ‘A Secular Age,’ where he made a comprehensive presentation about secularism, the different stages, reasons, and background causes, and some ideological assumptions about the concept. Also the work of Jan Perszon ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ Perszon presents that the elimination of religion from public space and weakening of Christian cultural experience in Europe (the foundation of Western civilization) result from the philosophical rationalism and Enlightenment in the questioning of the credibility and authority of the veracity of religious-based or metaphysical or ultimate analysis of realities. The anti-religiosity moves adopted as a new philosophical approach the ideologies of secularism in the form of practical materialism, individual experience of truth, radical autonomy of the individual, pluralism of ideas and choices, and relativism. The work of Perszon confronts the reality of these presuppositions with the personalistic teachings of Karol Wojtyła as John Paul II and Benedict XVI, especially the intrinsic value and dignity of all human person, interpersonality, transcendence which prioritize the culture of ‘being’ as opposed to the new ideology of ‘having.’

The work of Chantal Delsol ‘*La fin de la Chrétienté*’ (*The End of Christianity*) demonstrates that Western society is undergoing cultural transformation, a fruit of postmodernism that results from culture crisis, and manifests as individual determination of absolute good, absolute autonomy, and personal sense of spirituality. However, she made some

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<sup>26</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 9-13

propositions while acknowledging the reality of a return to the pre-Christian idea of sacred,<sup>27</sup> but without the sense of transcendence. She also argues that the world, especially the Western society without God, has no future, likewise acts that violate an inalienable dignity of the human person and the essence of the family as the root of community, thus affirms the relevance and special character of religion in the nature of culture. Besides these, there are some philosophical writings about the elements of Wojtyła's personalistic culture that confront the materialistic ideals of secularism, like Acosta, M. & Reimers, A. 'Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act.' This work, published in 2016, expresses Wojtyła's understanding of cultural act as constituted by psychosomatic unity with emphasis on the interiority as what structures self-determination and realization of truth of good as the *telos* of culture and transcendence. Since cultural act does subsist only on the individual but transcends beyond the personal agency to the other personal subject, revealing the interpersonality as the element of personalism which opposes individualism with its alienation factors. The basis of this is the experience of morality or the objective moral order of action which Wojtyła considers as irreducible and indispensable in structuring human existence and activity (*suppositum*) as what differentiates human *suppositum* from other *supposita*. Again, the proper understanding of the human person as subject advanced by Grzegorz Hołub in 'The Human Subject and its Interiority. Karol Wojtyła and the Crisis of Philosophical Anthropology' showcases Wojtyła's clarification of the materialistic understanding of the human subject that characterises present-day cultural understanding and exposes the human person to various acts of culture of death.

But human person is always a subject and object at the same time, possessing as well his own interiority and exteriority in the same manner, not on the basis of mode of existence of worldly or extra-worldly, but as a *suppositum* structured by interiority which is the basis of his uniqueness, personal subject as being with natural rights, free, and has inherent dignity. Grzegorz Hołub's 'Understanding the Person: Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła,' published in 2021, highlights among other features of integral personhood the axiological category of human person in the thought of Wojtyła as indispensable and inherent in all human person and human life, given the sanctity of life and as the only being created in the image of God. This is the source of his discussion of the culture of life. Similarly, 'The Personalism of John Paul II' by John F. Crosby, published in 2019, also stresses this ontic value of the human person. A violation of this value, he argues, would by extension imply violation of other beings of nature, like animals, reflecting Wojtyła's concern not only for human beings but for all created beings. Indeed, this researcher draws on other philosophical writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II and the values they express, which guide the investigation toward interesting results. However, the

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<sup>27</sup> Chantal Delsol, *La fin de la Chrétienté. (The End of Christianity)*. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2021). 117-36

definite application of the specificities of Wojtyła's personalistic culture constitutes as adequate response and confrontation to the erroneous anthropology and anti-humanistic tendencies that result from the manifestations of secularism characterises this thesis. This approach is new with regards to other scholarly response to the challenges of contemporary secularism.

## Sources of Literature

The source literature of this research is categorised into three. Conscious of the variables and interdisciplinarity of this research, the author considers, as the primary sources, the essential literatures that discuss the object of this research. The primary sources consist of Charles Taylor's '*A Secular Age*,' given its comprehensive discussion of the phenomenon of secularism. Relevant works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II that are connected with the object of discussion such as '*Person and Act and Selected Essays*,' '*Love and Responsibility*,' '*The Lublin Lectures*,' '*Address to UNESCO*,' '*Evangelium Vitae*,' '*Veritatis Splendor*,' '*Ethics Primer*.' In addition to the primary sources are also other related works that analyse the subject matter of this research, like Kluckhohn, '*The Concept of Culture. The Science of Man in the World Crisis*.' Radziechowski, D. '*Culture of the Person and Culture of Works According to Karol Wojtyła*.' Rectenwald, M. '*Holyoake and Secularism: The Emergence of 'Positive' Freethought*,' Acosta, M. & Reimers, A. '*Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act*.' Crosby, J. '*The Personalism of John Pau II*,' Chantel Delsol '*La fin de la Chrétienté*' (*The End of Christianity*).

The secondary sources include works that gave insightful analysis on the topic like Hołub, G., Biesaga, T., Merecki, J. & Kostur, M. '*The Polish Christian Philosophy of the 20th Century*.' Jaroszynski, P. '*Science and Culture*,' Kroeber, A & Kluckhohn, C. '*Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*,' Perszon, J. '*The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism*.' Verbum Vitae, Duma, T. '*Personalism in the Lublin School of Philosophy: Card. Karol Wojtyła, Fr. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec*,' Kupczak, J. '*Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła*.' Besides these secondary sources, there are other materials consulted which guide the author in the course of the research and these works belong to the class of supporting sources or auxiliary literature.

## Research Structure

Given the varieties of elements involved in this study which stems from understanding the concept of culture to other features that proceed from it, this dissertation will be structured into five chapters.

This thesis proceeds in the first chapter with a discussion of the contemporary understanding of culture, examining the various scientific approaches, though not as a comparison with each other, but with emphasis on the sociological approach given its reductionism of materialization of the basic content of cultural experience. These varied meanings result in confusion and ambiguity in the concept of culture, which is described as a ‘culture crisis.’ The manifestations of this reductionism in contemporary culture lead to the birth of a new cultural experience, namely ‘secularism.’ The author presents the meaning of secularism in the light of a philosophical approach with cognisance that it is a sociological phenomenon. The discussion of this chapter analyses the philosophical meaning through the root source meaning, highlighting the classical Aristotelian spheres of culture that cover all human endeavours as evident in this root meaning. Wojtyła aligns with this approach, expressing and constituting his personalistic philosophical journey on culture (philosophy of culture) constituted through praxis, which he demonstrated as Pope by constituting some institutes of culture. His philosophy of culture though not popular like his anthropology and ethics, yet it is an important element of his personalism that views culture holistically as proceeding from human rational nature, and so helps to restore the unity of culture with human nature, an insight into the theoretical and practical understanding of human person who is the centre, the subject and object or rather the aim of all culture forming activities.

Chapter two discusses various negative manifestations of contemporary secularism in the lived experience of Western society. These manifestations will be described as elements of anthropological nihilism and defects, given the singularity of the notion of culture as material artefacts and the reduction of the human being as a mere bodily manifestation as a natural and physical being.

The discussion in chapter three addresses the foundations of personalism as a school of thought that emerged especially in Europe in response to the culture crisis, anti-humanistic ideologies and the anthropological disagreements arising from this situation—disagreements rooted in pure naturalistic, immanent, or materialistic analysis of realities, especially the human person. This anthropological school of thought prioritizes the ontic absolute value (dignity) of each person, shaped by the objective moral order in relation to the person as an individual, and in relation towards the others. This chapter will advance in line with this school of thought the

analysis of the synthesis of the spiritual essence of the person with the material elements by which he realizes the transcendental values and good of act. This approach denotes the personalistic idea of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, one of the prominent personalists, who analyses through the philosophy of culture the ontic unity between human nature and culture, on the basis of the analysis of the whole dimensions of experience of man's act as the gateway to the truth of the person. Following from this, this chapter will highlight various elements of the personal experience of man as a subject of action given that *operari sequitur esse*, which Wojtyła regard as the basis of self-knowledge and understanding of the person, structures self-determination through self-governance and self-possession, which leads to transcendence. The research will demonstrate that the realization of these elements in the person does not proceed from something material, but, through the recognition of the interior or spiritual elements as the source of action, which informs Wojtyła's idea that man is an embodied spirit. By this synthesis of culture with nature, and with reference to transcendence as the source factor,<sup>28</sup> this chapter shows how this approach confronts the abstract, idealistic and naturalistic mentality fuel individualism and moral relativism in the contemporary Western secularism, where each person is an autonomous creator of good, value and culture.

This holistic analysis of action (personal action and happening in the person as the dynamisms proper to the person) is structured by the moral capacity and moral nature of action that defines self-fulfilment and actualization of the person as good or bad, as it follows from what the person realizes in action. Thus, chapter four focuses on the analysis of the objective experience of action in the direction of Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics of action-actus potentia and actus humanus with particular reference to the intransitive character of action that defines human agency and moral value, enriched by phenomenological analysis, which constitutes the source of human determination and self-fulfilment. In this synthesis the praxiological, axiological, and deontological characters of ethics as a normative theory of morality is examined. However, as the practical principle of personal action, the thesis elucidates what truly defines the truth of the person, the truth or objective good as the telic end of action. Likewise, other constitutive elements of this realization will be discussed, such as the moral norm and obligation, the role of conscience in choice and decision by which the person manifests as responsible for the end he realizes. This demonstrates man's natural and fundamental capacity to seek and realize the truth of the good and the truth of the person.

Moreso, chapter five will demonstrates the relevance of Wojtyła's personalistic culture that has the characteristic approach of the blend of metaphysics with phenomenology in

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<sup>28</sup> Jan Paweł. 'Sekularyzacja i ewangelizacja w dzisiejszej Europie. Do uczestników VI Sympozjum Biskupów Europejskich.' *L'Osservatore Romano*, 6 (10–12). (11th October, 1985). 15/16, 32.

redeeming the erroneous anthropology that results from the elimination of the intrinsic value and good of cultural act, and the objective moral order. It relates to that which is indispensable and irreducible in the nature of man as a person, namely, the spiritual elements, or the interiority which organizes the corporeal elements beyond deterministic capacity and biological factor. As an embodied spirit, the human person is not constituted purely as a spirit, nor as a body, but the structure of the interiority, defines the person as a being whose existence and act transcends the physical realm. This truth of the human nature forms his analysis of freedom as one the spiritual features of the person, but tethered to the truth in order to realize the true experience of freedom. The analysis of the true nature of freedom as subordinated to the truth, realizes the rights, unconditional respect, dignity, and transcendental values of truth, goodness and beauty of all persons, accentuates culture of life and strongly opposes the absolute freedom in the ideal of contemporary secularism. As that which orders personal act surpassing individualistic and hedonistic mentality, he shows how interiority differentiates interpersonal relationship from the corporeality of animals. Man's interpersonal relationship manifests in the participation of 'I-you,' and 'we' on the basis of which we grasp the nature of the person as a 'communion of persons,' in an ontic permanent consideration of the nature of the person as male or female, and this truth is universal to all humanity.

## Methodology

The method<sup>29</sup> of this research basically relies on the analysis of the subject literature, not only to compare scholarly views, but above all to extract the relevant information necessary to form the core findings of this investigation. The pure a priori approach of rationalism, emotionalism, or epistemological methodology of understanding culture, to cultural experience and the human person, who is the subject and creator of cultural activities, would treat these experiential facts separately, fragmenting culture or cultural creation from nature. Therefore, a holistic analysis of these experiential facts is preferred, since the integral unity of human nature requires that such analysis be grounded in the truth of the human being. This, in turn, relates to the metaphysical method,<sup>30</sup> which objectively validates the theoretical and abstract claims derived from these experiential facts. The metaphysical approach firstly investigates these data

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<sup>29</sup> In the light of Stanisław Kamiński, scientific method refers to "the very course of operations in posing issues, solving them as well as justifying and systematizing answers, or a set of assumptions adopted as the framework or guidelines of the study [...] or finally all the activities and means used to efficiently achieve the research results." Stanisław Kamiński, *Nauka i metoda. Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*. (Lublin: TN KUL, 1998). 202.

<sup>30</sup> In his analysis, Kamiński explains that of all the disciplines connected with the theory of being, metaphysics provides us with ultimate explanation on which these other disciplines structurally depend on as their point of departure. See; Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics Z Metodologii Metafizyki*, trans. M. Stępien. (Lublin-Rome: PTTA SITD, 2018). 220-21

by delving into the root wherefrom these data emanate, namely, man as a person in an unbreakable bond of relation between the person and the experiential facts (actions), which reveal the truth of the person. No wonder Wojtyła in his book *‘Osoba i czyn-Person and Act’* insists that authentic anthropology consists in holistic analysis of experiential data in the light of experience of morality which deepens anthropological study as it presupposes from ethical analysis of action grounded on metaphysics on which we grasp the truth of the subjectivity of human person in the light of the analysis of the person’s actions.<sup>31</sup> Personal actions, as he explains, are the foundation of the discovery of the being of man, for action provides us with “an authentic moment of the vision, that is, the experience of the person.”<sup>32</sup> What guarantees and with greater precision the rationale behind moral value actions in man is metaphysical reduction, for it examines the internal experience and the general outcome of the cognitive activities.

Another important method employed in this thesis is the phenomenological method which considers the subjective sphere of the person’s experience from the perspective of their real experience as a subject and inter-subjective experiences beyond mere theoretical or sensual and abstract or pure intellectual experiences. For Wojtyła the analysis of concrete experience of the person through phenomenological method is the source of authentic anthropology which is universal, for it views the whole reality from the perspective of man as a person;<sup>33</sup> that is, man as an experiencing subject where man himself, his existence, and his action are observed as a whole, both from inside as his personal experience and from the outside by others. Wojtyła employs this method to objectively explain the experience of the person as the real experience manifesting in the person’s conscious actions, although with insight from the history of philosophy, which gives coherence that reflects the truth of phenomenological analysis. And so, historicism is considered as a methodological approach used in this research.

### **Clarification of Terminology**

Some concepts in this discussion require clarification to avoid biases and ambiguities in the reading of the text. The understanding of ‘man’ in this thesis, especially as a common conceptual usage in the thought of many classical philosophers to which Wojtyła belongs, connotes a generic sense of humanity and underscores the idea of ‘person’ which has its root meaning from the Greek culture and Christian thinkers and was made scientifically permanent through Eastern cultural experience. And so, Wojtyła refers to human being as a person with the

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<sup>31</sup> Alfred M. Wierzbicki, ‘The Person, Human Action and Morality as Seen in the Personalist Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła.’ *QUIEN*. 11. (2020). 51-66. See also, Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 12

<sup>32</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 102

<sup>33</sup> Arkadiusz Modrzejewski, & Slavomir Gálik, ‘Karol Wojtyła’s Personalistic and Universalistic Philosophy of Culture.’ *European Journal of Science and Technology*. 10:4. (2014). 99-110

concept 'man' '*człowiek*' alongside other masculine pronouns 'his, him,' evident in the Polish version of his manga corpus '*Osoba i czyn*-Person and Act' and other scholarly writings. Also, the meaning conveyed in the expressions 'religious decline' and 'religious insignificance' is the same as one of the negative manifestations of secularism.

# CHAPTER I

## THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PHENOMENON OF CULTURE

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the diverse conceptualization of culture, which results to the elements of ambiguities in the meaning of culture. It also presents the realistic philosophical meaning of culture in the light of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, in line with other realistic thinkers, with emphasis on the fundamental relation of religion to culture, given that people's activity is also an expression of their belief. What follows next will be the discussion of the demarcation of culture and its aftermath in form of the new cultural phenomenon, 'secularism' from the philosophical perspective in the contemporary Western experience with its anthropological implications.

### 1. The Conceptualization of Culture and its Ambiguities

The contemporary debate and theories about culture seems to align with the opinion that the term 'culture' possesses an ambiguous and complex understanding,<sup>34</sup> as a phenomenon that is "vague."<sup>35</sup> For different disciplines have proposed and emphasized different approaches to the concept of culture, yet expressing conflicting shades of meanings. These ambiguities relates especially to the distinction between the symbolic and cognitive meanings of culture, which refer to the conflicting ideas and arguments about the concept of culture. According to Leopold von Wiese, "...the word (culture) should be avoided entirely in descriptive sociology."<sup>36</sup> Given this confusion, culture has been reduced merely to people's way of living as individuals or a collective, literary works, artefacts, science, food, clothes, result of archaeological findings, beliefs; these elements refer to theories of culture with emphasis on the definite work of man.

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<sup>34</sup> The concept of culture has been advanced by various disciplines, namely; historical science, socio-cultural science, psychological science, archaeological science, anthropological science, philosophical science among others. Thus, Malinowski states that the concept of culture is "the most central problem of all social sciences." See: Bronisław Malinowski, 'Review of Six Essays on Culture by Albert Blumenthal.' *American Sociological Review*, 4:4. (1939). 588-94. See also; Alfred Kroeber, & Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press, 1952). 3

<sup>35</sup> Gabriel Lundberg, *Foundations of Sociology*. (New York: LYND, R. S., 1939). 179

<sup>36</sup> Leopold von Wiese, 'Review of Six Essays on Culture by Albert Blumenthal.' *American Sociological Review*, 4:4. (1939). 592-94

The pluralities of theories of culture informed by the sense of culture as the result of changes in situation, environment that leads to changes in person and actions constitutes the uncertainty and difficulty of arriving at the precise meaning of culture. Consequent to the idea that “culture is everywhere, and that, it can be everything and nothing,”<sup>37</sup> that results in cultural arbitrariness and various relativism in the contemporary experience of culture.

Nonetheless, the philosophical understanding of the nature of culture in the light of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II advances the meaning of culture from its essence and source.<sup>38</sup> This approach expresses realistically a holistic structure of culture in its inclusiveness, and reveals the ontic character of culture as the most direct route to understand the deepest plenitude, richness and authenticity of *humanum*.<sup>39</sup> This approach however is not in contradiction with the meanings of other individual sciences. It rather underlies the meaning of culture as a universal phenomenon that is intrinsically connected to human nature and action as specific way of existing and distinguishing himself from existence in the visible world, which is not distant from or hostile to cultural foundation (Christian) of Western civilization and universal human nature, as such, structures culture as shared way of life of the individual, as well as the community.<sup>40</sup> It is the fruits of man’s whole thoughtful reflection (reason, will, emotion), and the expression of this thought is culture.

Besides this Wojtyła’s root source meaning of culture, the concept of culture is generally understood as a phenomenon that is historically acquired and created by individuals, and it moulds the lives of individuals in the society. Despite this general understanding, various individual scholarly and scientific meanings contradict this basic meaning and suppose individual science perspectives. This constitutes the basis of the understanding of culture as concept that is misused, constantly changes, proliferates, undergoes modification and dispersions,<sup>41</sup> and makes consensual meaning difficult. Thus, Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde

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<sup>37</sup> Wojciech J. Burszta, & Michał Januszkiewicz, eds, *Słowo wstępne: kłopot zwany kulturoznawstwem*, in *Kulturoznawstwo. Dyscyplina bez dyscypliny?* (Warszawa: SWPS Academica Publishing House, 2010). 7

<sup>38</sup> This approach underlies also the broad description of culture by Mieczysław A. Krąpiec wherein he explains that culture originates from man’s signs of expression. Contents are absorbed in human cognition and expressed by means of different signs primarily located in human psyche and secondarily moved to an outer mental material, determine culture; and culture is in its deepest understanding intellectualization of nature. For even scientific theories are made from these observations of human life, be it in formative stage or difficult stage. This ontic structure of act that surpasses the subjective telos of the good of act on one’s intention, and qualifies the pursuit in act of dignity that is basic to all human being and life, even of life in crisis. See; Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Człowiek w kulturze*. (Warszawa: Gutenberg Print, 1996). 5

<sup>39</sup> Karol Wojtyła. ‘The problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis.’ *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993). 264. NB: From hence, only the particular article will be referenced.

<sup>40</sup> John Paul II. *Inaugural Speech at the IV General Conference of Latin American Bishops*. ‘New Evangelization, Human Development, and Christian Culture.’ (12<sup>th</sup> October, 1992). No. 10. See also; John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. ‘Man’s Entire Humanity is Expressed in Culture.’ (2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1980). No. 6. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

<sup>41</sup> Raymond Williams likewise T. S. Eliot express how the meaning of culture in the development of English language has been misused and reduced to organization of society to emotional phenomenon, art, industry,

Kluckhohn in the book: 'Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definition'<sup>42</sup> enumerated about one hundred and sixty-four definitions of culture that express psycho-sociological approach. Hence, recent discussions and a number of publications view the meaning of culture through the prism of psycho-sociological perspective, informed by social sciences whereby culture is understood as a way of social integration. This approach claims that in the analysis of the concept of culture that the analogical character of culture has to be considered, because each person is unique, has his own face, and there is no strict univocal law/rule that binds his actions, even though we find the same essential (but only general) structures in other similar beings.<sup>43</sup> Given this ideal, the nature of culture refers to individual experiences, with an implied understanding of culture as an epiphenomenon, a byproduct of sense experience, pieces of art, what happens in the mind and mechanism of social integration. It's idea is suggestive of antagonism or antinomy between culture and nature, since culture is not inscribed nor emanate from nature, but from human environment, social structure and artefacts.

### 1.1. Culture as the Product of Man

In his study of culture, Peter Berger declares that, "culture consists of the totality of man's product. Some of these are material, others are not."<sup>44</sup> It is man's product and means of bringing stability, which substitutes for what man biologically lacks; but different from man's nature. It relates to the varied tools produced by man, by means of which he modifies his physical world, and bends nature to his will. This physical world, refers to the society, which is the non-material element of culture, rooted or grounded in the biological constitution of man, and comparable to the technology of a particular cultural age, and individual's own consciousness.<sup>45</sup> This approach reflects the opinions of some sociologists about the concept of culture, wherein the meaning of culture has been reduced to artworks, artefacts or human productivities in various historical epochs, which are associated with people in their various lived environments, and refers to their food, dress etc. And so T. S. Eliot explains that culture is "the creation of society as organic structure that grows and changes, transmitted through generations and requires persistence of

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politics(democracy), aesthetics; with family as the most important structure of the civilized society; wherein what underlies as the meaning of culture is 'civilization. See: Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. (London: Fontana/Croom Helm, 1976/1985). See also; Thomas S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1948/2010). Also; Raymond Williams, *Culture & Society: 1780-1950*. (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc, 1960).

<sup>42</sup> Alfred Kroeber, & Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. (Cambridge, MA Peabody Museum Press, 1952).

<sup>43</sup> Kroeber. & Kluckhohn. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. 25

<sup>44</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1967). 11

<sup>45</sup> Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. 12-3

social classes or the whole group.”<sup>46</sup> It implies that culture could mean different things for different people, thus culture is said to be everything, anything and, or nothing.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the influence of Enlightenment movement has reduced the meaning of culture to external creations of human activities, viewing culture through the lens of human product. Thus, Derek Parfit maintains that “(cultural) activities or events are occurrences that can be described without linking them to experiences belonging to personal life.”<sup>48</sup> This understanding somehow separates the symbolic or works of culture from the spiritual character of cultural activities by materializing acts of culture and separates the person from his cultural creation as creator of acts of culture, and the unity of culture with nature. Given that material products are subject to change, the idea of culture as the product of man reduces culture to a phenomenon that constantly changes according to time, season or epoch, and according to the needs of each generation.

## 1.2. The Sociological Conception of Culture

Affirming the symbolic conceptualization of culture Clyde Kluckhohn states that culture “consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting distinctive achievements of human group, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.”<sup>49</sup> Logically, this definition presents culture as the product of human experience or consciousness, and as what each society or group acquired or produced. However, it refers to the pattern of behaviour in an abstract sense, that is, an abstraction from behaviour wherein culture per se does not proceed from activity, instead, human activity is seen as the raw data from which we deduce culture. And so, Kluckhohn maintains that “culture is a logical construct which manifests either in men’s acts or in the products of these acts.”<sup>50</sup> He further maintains that it is the problem solving ‘device,’ that allows people to communicate, learn, or fulfil material and emotional needs.<sup>51</sup> As such, culture is understood as constituted not by ordered and definite activities, but merely as the products of human activities, or rather everything created by man.

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<sup>46</sup> Eliot. *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. 15

<sup>47</sup> Dariusz Radziechowski, ‘Culture of the Person and Culture of Works According to Karol Wojtyła.’ *Logos i Ethos*, 56:1. (2021). 87-100

<sup>48</sup> Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). 217

<sup>49</sup> Clyde Kluckhohn, ‘Values and Value-Orientations in the Theory of Action: An Exploration in Definition and Classification.’ *Toward a General Theory of Action*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951). 86

<sup>50</sup> David Bidney, ‘Human Nature and The Cultural Process.’ *American Anthropologist*. 49:3. (1947). 375-399

<sup>51</sup> Kroeber. & Kluckhohn. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. 115

Thus, Edward Taylor construes culture “as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws and any other capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.<sup>52</sup>” What it means is that culture is the phenomenon of survival and mechanism of transition from the barbaric to civilized way of living, and this civilized living refers to the character of Western civilization. Thus, the meaning of culture has become associated with Western civilization, linked with the rise of *Romanticism* in the scientific and industrial revolution. Kroeber’s remark therefore portrays culture as the totality of human creations typical of Western civilisation such as technological/informatic civilisation; material products and thoughts constitute the main objects of cultural phenomena.<sup>53</sup> Culture is then understood as what one learnt, produced or skill acquired so as to develop the society. Accordingly, Kluckhohn conceptualizes culture as the design for living characterised by technological and scientific civilization in the sense of technical, economic and political production. A set of mechanism such as plans, recipes, rules, constructions or programme for social behaviour.<sup>54</sup> This approach emphasizes on the material content of culture devoid of ultimate notion, transcendental values, objective norms.

In line with this idea, Weber argues that culture only provides a sense of meaning for an era, and it must always have a centre from which the meaning emanates, thus, he states that religious has no place in the modern world or civilization.<sup>55</sup> This understanding resonates in Maria Bogucka that culture is “a group of (material and non-material) human products, socially accepted ways of being and systems of values that are typical of a given era and territory.”<sup>56</sup> In which case, the meaning of culture has no historical connection, for each age generates its culture or what constitutes as culture. In a sense, the notion of metaphysical and ultimate structure of culture and analysis of realities have become opposed and substituted with materialistic, scientific, sensualistic and mechanistic approach, likewise the understanding of human society. Culture in this ideal is purely a way of adapting to human society and environment, with emphasis on shared products, intellectual and aesthetic development of the group or society.

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<sup>52</sup> Edward B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1. (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1871/1920). 1.

<sup>53</sup> Alfred L. Kroeber, *An Anthropologist Looks at History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963). 68-69

<sup>54</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973). 4

<sup>55</sup> See: Alfred Weber, ‘The Sociological Concept of Culture.’ *British Sociological Association*, 9:2. (2014). Also; Kroeber. & Kluckhohn. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. 11-15; Kalberg, S. ed. *Max Weber: Readings and Commentary on Modernity*. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005). for the discussion about the distinction between culture and civilization; wherein Weber argues that civilization possesses the character of individuality of rationality, which aligns with Nietzsche’s notion of culture as medium in which man realizes himself as creator or meanings and interpreter of his own existence, as opposed the ontic unity or universality of culture constituted through praxis-objective moral order.

<sup>56</sup> Maria Bogucka, *Women in the History of Europe: From Antiquity Till the begin [sic] of XXIst Century*. (Warszawa: Bit Grafik, 2008). 8

Edward Said demonstrates that culture refers to “all those practices...that have relative autonomy from the economic, social and political realms.”<sup>57</sup> This idea particularly reduces the meaning of culture to Western civilization characterized by pragmatist and consumerist attitude whereby the material benefits have become the basis and end of cultural experience. And this underlies the mentality of individualism and collectivism wherefore each person and a few individuals act as “creators of meanings, values and interpreters of their own existence”<sup>58</sup> and the existence of others at their own whims and benefits. Here, culture is seen as products of man, likewise human beings who are seen solely through the prism of utile, wherein cultural values possess only logical and material worth with not sense of ultimate or inherent worth that essentially constitute true meaning of culture and cultural values. Thus, Emile Durkheim observes that culture refers to the mode of existing in the society, powered by products as sense of culture and beliefs; and these products and beliefs he said, bind people together in the society. He asserts that culture is constituted by the social facts (sentiments, moralities, behaviours), systematic integration of society and the need for objective data that tests laws and hypotheses, and collective consciousness of human society.<sup>59</sup> Hence, cultural objects or products manifest as that which hold the chaotic society together.

### 1.3. The Anthropological Conception of Culture

Nevertheless, Clifford Geertz’s ‘interpretative anthropological’<sup>60</sup> approach to the concept of culture is contrary to the sociological approach of his master Kluckhohn and other modernists and positivist theories. In his analysis, he states that “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, and culture is that webs, and the analysis of it cannot be carried out by experimental science in search of law, but by an interpretative one, in search of meaning.”<sup>61</sup> Culture, he maintains, serves this purpose of sorting out the structures of significance for man. He locates the meaning of culture within anthropology for its meaning-centeredness, and remarks that:

the unprecedented success of our species depends on human culture. We create culture, and culture in turn creates us. Our shared culture is what makes our social life possible. Without culture, we would have to solve the most elementary problems

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<sup>57</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. (New York: Random House, 1993). xii

<sup>58</sup> Renarde F. Nobre, ‘Culture and Perspectivism in Nietzsche’s and Weber’s View,’ trans. Reinhardt, B. M. N. *Teoria & Sociedade*, 2. (2006). 50-67

<sup>59</sup> Philip Smith, *Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2001). 9

<sup>60</sup> Geertz. *The Interpretation of Culture*. 4-5. See also; Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror of Man*. (New York: MacGraw Hill, 1949). For the full definitions of culture in different ways which Geertz specifically opposes.

<sup>61</sup> Geertz. *The Interpretation of Culture*. 5

of human existence over again. And without culture we probably would have to invent fire every morning.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, he defines culture as a “historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge and attitude towards life.”<sup>63</sup> As such, the meaning of culture does not only refer to conceptualization of products of man, it also structures various aspects of human society as an informal logic of actual life, and a general system of symbolic forms experienced in practice.

Further conceptualization of culture suggests that it is the mechanism of self-reflective, self-conditioning, and man’s means of attaining full development of his natural potentialities,<sup>64</sup> which views culture from a realistic perspective, as a phenomenon much more than man’s creativity, but also, a man’s way of rationalization of nature. Culture is therefore understood as the phenomenon that moulds the soul/mind, or rather the whole of human being via the diverse spheres of human activities on the basis of praxis, morality/ethics. And so, culture is the means of man’s re-creation of himself, and encompasses the assumption of merely conceptualizations of various individual cultural sciences.<sup>65</sup> This realistic approach positions man at the centre of culture, and crystalizes the understanding of man as a cultured being, through a well-defined virtuous/value formation, because he self-cultivates and self-reflects. Again, it portrays culture as the phenomenon by which man improves, complements and compensates for some of his natural incapacities and biological deficiencies.<sup>66</sup> This aligns with Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II understanding that culture articulates the entirety of the truth about human experience, thus resonates St. Thomas Aquinas’ that culture is the mechanism by which “*genus humanum arte et ratione vivit*-human race lives by art and reason.”<sup>67</sup> In the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, John Paul II states:

culture is necessary for human life, for it essentially consists in the fact that it is a characteristic of human life as such. *Man lives a really human life thanks to culture.* Human life is culture in this sense too that, through it, man is distinguished and differentiated from everything that exists elsewhere in the visible world: man cannot do without culture.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics*. (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). x

<sup>63</sup> Geertz. *The Interpretation of Culture*. 5

<sup>64</sup> Bidney, ‘Human Nature and Cultural Progress.’ In, *American Anthropologist*, 49:3. (1947). 375-399

<sup>65</sup> Krapiec. *Człowiek w kulturze*. 148.

<sup>66</sup> Bidney. ‘Human Nature and The Cultural Process.’ *American Anthropologist*, 49:3. (1947). 375-399

<sup>67</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No. 6

<sup>68</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No. 6

However, many scholars disagree to this ontic character of culture, they rather subscribe to psych-sociological perspectives, to the symbolic concepts visible in the cultural work, arts, emotional stimulants or anaesthetic,<sup>69</sup> limiting culture to pure natural order, emphasizing more the material valuation, external productivity, thereby expressing mere immanent nature of culture. This approach orchestrated by Enlightenment effect resulted in disintegration<sup>70</sup> of the totality of culture, separating the spiritual realm from the material, thus, reroutes the understanding of human person constituted through ontic character of culture. This attitude brackets the notion of ultimate and transcendent character of moral order with its axiological praxis from the essence of culture, subjecting it to private domain; thus, introduces tension that threatens the foundation of human history.

But, Wojtyła clarifies, stating that, culture is the specific way of man's existence because it conditions and structures human existence in his individual and collective being. This underlies Wojtyła's personalistic culture and gateway to the integral anthropology of man that entails the totality of man's activities. He maintains that culture is basically associated with man's rationality, with the intellectual sphere of the human person as the mechanism that organizes all other human activities. This resonates Krapiec's assertion that "there can be no human qua human activities or their artefacts without cognition guiding acting."<sup>71</sup> As such, the intellect is understood as the fundamental principle of activities by which man becomes more man<sup>72</sup> and becomes improved in his nature, realizing this truth in man through the phenomenon of culture. Thus, understanding culture as man's rational creation in both practical and theoretical aspects demonstrates the fundamental relation between culture and man which cannot be reduced to mere material phenomenon or epi-phenomenon.

To further buttress this correlation, Zygmunt Bauman states that culture helps man to order his world of existence, not only to make permanent the work of culture, but for proper understanding of work of culture as means of transforming and improving human existence and realities at large. Thus, culture is the dialectic process in which man orders his action so as to realise meaningful existence.<sup>73</sup> It is the mechanism of "paideia" of human nature through

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<sup>69</sup> Eliot. *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. 14

<sup>70</sup> Cultural disintegration results from tension in the struggle for dominance between what constitutes the essential activities of culture, religion, science, politics, art; thus, the sphere of science, politics and art become separated and distinct from religion, in effect different cultures emerge that leads to reductionism in grasping wholistically the essence of culture. See: Eliot. *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. 26/7

<sup>71</sup> Krapiec. *Człowiek w kulturze*. 17

<sup>72</sup> That the intellectual is that capacity by which man becomes conscious of the physical world, is thus affirmed by Aristotle stating that through the intellect, man (soul) becomes everything he recognizes (*anima quoddammodo omnia*). See; Aristotle, *Tractatus De anima. Graece et latine*, ed., versione latina auxit, (comm., illustrated by Paweł Siwek).

<sup>73</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). 107-108

cultivation of values, beliefs, and other positive attitudes so as to realize the “aletheia” of man as a person. This constitutes the basis of the realistic philosophical conception of culture that provides clarity to the confusions surrounding the diverse meanings of culture and so properly positions culture as the phenomenon that leads to authentic knowledge of human person. This approach basically views culture as the fruit of rational human activity which appeals to the etymological root meaning as the channel to understanding the truth of the person encompassed in the whole acts of culture. It also mediates the antinomy between culture and nature as phenomena harmonized into one in the nature of human person.

## 2. The Metaphysical-Based Conception of Culture

Understanding the concept of culture from its source meaning is significant for this analysis because culture is a universal phenomenon of rational order, and this order originates and refers to the life of man as a person.<sup>74</sup> And so, to grasp the essence of culture as a phenomenon for ordering human person, we have to go back to its root meaning, to the characteristic traits and acts of man that constitute culture. This approach reinterprets the objects of culture, retrieves and integrates the traditional ideals into the new tendencies of the contemporary meaning of culture since culture consists of the whole sphere of human experiences and activities. It also reveals the diverse faces<sup>75</sup> of one general truth of human experiences, which does not yield to the relativism in the concept of culture, instead, advocates for the revival of the well-defined values, especially the value of the human person; and the acceptance of this truth of culture in the whole human consciousness, morality, and community. On the basis this reality, we understand the true experience of freedom as the desire of the will to realize the good in the horizontal realm, that towards the vertical transcendence. Thus, the appeal to the metaphysical understanding of culture supposes the transcendent truth as the basis of cultural experience contrary to absolute freedom and rational autonomy that form the basis of secularism as new cultural experience.

Indeed, culture is born out of rational response to the existential challenges through man’s conscious actions which also structures his subjectivity and uniqueness, as well as positions man as an indetermined subject not biologically conditioned. Man, through his intellect as a creative being, expresses knowledge of his environment, transforms it by engaging in acts- transitive and

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<sup>74</sup> Florian Znaniecki, *F. Nauki o kulturze*, (trans. Jerzy Szacki). (Warszawa: PWN, 1971). 22

<sup>75</sup> This refers to the potential elements and values in the different cultures of the world which opposes the sense of universalism and the appeal to one culture and the values propagated by this culture (Western culture and values) as the standard basis and lens of analysis and viewing reality, especially human person.

intransitive<sup>76</sup> that improve and develop nature and these acts constitute culture. It demonstrates the relation of culture to nature, particularly human nature, and the unbreakable bond between culture and human history, which encompasses the whole dimensions of human experience. For a man endowed with rationality, will and emotional capacities engages in acts that improve nature to give meaning to his life. As such, acts that constitute culture do not only refer to the subjective acts of man because culture is not an individual property; rather, they refer to the objective or collective acts and enterprises of all people in the society.

Following from this insight, Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II defines culture as “the specific way of man’s existence and being, as well as that which determines man’s inter-human and social existence. It also conditions human existence, and human existence in turn conditions culture.”<sup>77</sup> For culture, he argues, constitutes the entirety of human experience or man’s humanity, shapes the foundations of human systems, and structures human existence. This understanding expresses culture as the phenomenon that organizes man’s life thus resounds St. Thomas Aquinas remark that culture helps man to “live a really full human life.”<sup>78</sup> In this sense, culture specifically reveals man as existing and acting, as well as expresses his subjectivity, it also objectivizes man in a unique, complete and indivisible manner.

In line with this thought, Bronisław Malinowski states that culture is an advanced and sophisticated apparatus which helps man cope and adjust nature to his needs, and not a biologically inherited action; a phenomenon that is created and recreated. These learned actions not only give meaning to the being of man, they guide him to his ultimate goal, tend him towards fulfilling the purpose of his being. This describes its metaphoric usage expressed as ‘cultured person’ vs. ‘uncultured person’ and defines the person as mannered or possessing good behaviour, or the opposite. These acts manifest in beliefs and customs, and are sometimes encoded in symbols and signs. Thus, we deduce the two orders of the world of humans: the world in which we find ourselves, the material or natural world, and the world we created by ourselves, that is, the cultural world. Governed by praxis as ethics/moral order, man forms cultural values, orders and gives meaning to his world, safeguards nature’s goods and gifts, and these values are transmitted from generation to generation. This basic meaning affirms the etymological meaning of culture and points to the fact that culture is truly human person-centred, consists of the whole human activities.

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<sup>76</sup> Action is transitive when it transcends the person as a subject and seeks an expression in the other and effect in the external world, and it is objectified in some product (technology). It is also intransitive insofar as it remains in the person as an ‘I/ego’, determines the subject’s immanent quality or value, defines the subject as a moral subject, and constitutes the subject’s essentially human *fieri*. See Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis.’ 265.

<sup>77</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No. 6

<sup>78</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No. 6

The term “culture” from its Latin root origin ‘*cultura*’ means to cultivate, also “*colere-cultūra*” which means to tend, nurture or cultivate soil. This understanding refers to things which can be cultivated, such as the farmers’ field- ‘*cultura agere*’ and by extension the human mind/soul- *cultura animi*. This root meaning refers to the cultivation of the human soul through training in character, or simply put, education and refinement of human nature, that is, everything that comes from man. It consists of the right cultivation of the human person in virtues and so eliminates vices.<sup>79</sup> This qualifies the essence of culture as a phenomenon that originates from man as a rational being for improving his intellectual and ethical life through praxis, and in a manner that befits human nature and his end. Thus, culture realizes the truth of good in man, for when one acts, the person becomes and recreates himself through his acts. Wojtyła further explains that culture serves as the mechanism of creative activity of the person through intellect, wherein man expresses the deepest layer of his being, expresses himself for himself and for others. As such, he realizes ‘virtuous good’ (*bonum honestum*) which belongs to his nature as a rational being,<sup>80</sup> and directs his acts to the Absolute Good as the ultimate end of human activities and culture.

## 2.1. The Plurality of Culture

The notion of plurality of culture in the realistic understanding of culture relates to the affirmation of universalism of culture and cultural values. This universalistic character helps us to discover and accept the inclusivity of culture which abhors the ideology of exclusivity. It manifests in the recognition and sharing of the goods and values of culture which do not subsist in one cultural experience, but in the identification of the ‘alteri-the other’ in one’s cultural experiences. It also highlights through the personalistic notion of culture the uniformity of cultural values rooted in morality by decentralizing the self (from the absolute autonomy) as the source of culture to recentralizing of the objective good of the person in recognition of the objective truth and universal good. Descartes affirms the plurality of universalism of culture in his remark stating that;

while traveling, having realized that all those who have attitudes very different from our own are not for that reason barbarians or savages but are as rational or more so than ourselves, and having considered how greatly the self-same person with the self-same mind who had grown up from infancy among the French or Germans would become different from what he would have been if he had always lived among

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<sup>79</sup> Piotr Jaroszyński, *Science and Culture*, trans. Hugh McDonald. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007). 219

<sup>80</sup> Wojtyła. ‘On the Directive or Subservient Role of Reason in Ethics.’ 59

the Chinese or the cannibals . . . I found myself forced to try myself to see things from their point of view.<sup>81</sup>

It shows therefore that the essence of culture as man's creative activities demonstrates its historical character embedded in the immaterial element as the learned goal-oriented praxis (action) that improves and fulfils universal human needs in dynamic ways, transmitted symbolically through language (mechanism of transferring thoughts and values cultivated through culture) from generation to generation. The sense of plurality of language expresses the dynamic character and plurality of culture wherein man expresses the result of his reflective creativity, shaping human activities in the individual and collective consciousness. It also surpasses the idea of culture as personal view or enterprise and cognitive capacities of individual human reason, instead, culture truly tends towards cultivation of the spiritual realm, the structure that orders the material realm and so gives meaning to the work of culture as man's way of "expressing himself creatively in the world."<sup>82</sup> The analysis clearly portrays the polarity of culture which does not suggest two separate effects of cultural acts, rather, but complement each other, the external creation of human activity (material), and internal or cognitive act and aspirations (spiritual),<sup>83</sup> and determines the immanent value of man as a subject. What it means is that there is an intrinsic connection between the person and what is created as the product of culture, that is, between the spiritual culture and material civilization. Wojtyła clearly states that:

what is transitive (material) in our (communality/pluralism) culturally creative activity and is expressed externally as an effect, objectification, product, or work can be said to be a result of the particular intensity of what is intransitive (spiritual). As such, man fills the outer, material world with his thought and his being.<sup>84</sup>

Thus we understand culture as the phenomenon of human actualization and what truly shapes the substance of man

Furthermore, Wojtyła sheds more light on the plurality of culture stating that it does not relate to plurality of values and truth, moral relativism, rather it demonstrates the reality and the need for the preservation of people's cultural identity which does not tolerate division. It is shaped by the communitarian consciousness that recognizes the human 'I' in the various dimensions of 'we' and the realization of the genuine good of the 'we' without devaluing the good of the individual. As stated by Wojtyła, it is the affirmation of the existence of the universal community that appeals to the sense of the individual existing and acting together in

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<sup>81</sup> Rene Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, trans. Donald A. Cress. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985). 58

<sup>82</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No. 6

<sup>83</sup> Jan Paweł II. *Wiara i kultura. Dokumenty, przemówienia i homilie*. (Lublin: KUL Rzym, 1988). 56.

<sup>84</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis.' 265

the community so as to realize both the individual and social subjectivity.<sup>85</sup> For man participates and benefits from the effects of the universal works, acts (moral norm) and axiological contents rooted in the nature of the person, and devoid of ideological prejudices and selfish interest. Again, it prioritizes the consciousness of our shared human value and true good, in the affirmation of the relational attitude of person by person. “Culture without universal value” John Paul II asserts “is not a real culture.”<sup>86</sup> Indeed, culture embraces the universality of cultural experiences even in their diversities such that what is implicit in each cultural experience will be fully explicit in the light of truth<sup>87</sup> without conflict. Therefore, universalism of culture seeks the truth of good and the truth of person, and constitute the dynamism of every culture. Hence, no particular cultural experience can be judged as superior, possessing the ultimate content, or superior in its search for truth. Basically, culture is open to objective truth that resides in each cultural experience, and as it interacts with other cultural experiences, it disagrees with acts that oppose human truth or the truth of the good of person (such as the ‘culture of death,’) that tends towards the absolute truth and Ultimate Good. The truth of culture expresses in all cultural experiences the essential defining elements of person common to every human culture such as: the universality of spirit, uniqueness, and universality of intelligibility that belongs to man as a rational being or to the human experience.<sup>88</sup>

As a learned pattern of thought and behaviour, culture is concerned with learned experiences, imitations and other forms of informal means of educating the mind (soul) or cultivation of human reason, besides what is learned in the formal way. It is not genetically determined nor biologically inherited, but a learned pattern of thought and behaviour by which meaning is abstracted or given to human nature and mysteries in the world. For human nature left alone would not develop and would remain barbaric, but culture models human activities, serves as a medium for development, growth and completion of nature. This capacity differentiates human nature from animals which respond instinctively to phenomena, whereas human persons through their spiritual faculties- intellect and will, mediate their instinct. Thus, man brings something new, improves nature, establishes himself in a distinct manner from the rest of creation, and by his unfailing openness to mystery and boundless desire for knowledge and meaning, deepens his nature and directs his acts towards fulfilment.<sup>89</sup> In these fulfilling acts, we grasp the essence of culture that reveals the culture of man and works of culture or cultural

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<sup>85</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn i oraz inne studia antropologiczne*. (Lublin: KUL Rzym, 1994). 408. See also; John Paul II. (2012). *Dialogue Between Cultures For a Civilization of Love and Peace*, <http://www.vatican.va>. no. 16

<sup>86</sup> Jan Paweł II. *Wiara i kultura. Dokumenty, przemówienia i homilie*, (Lublin: KUL, Rzym, 1998). 412.

<sup>87</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. (Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998). No. 71

<sup>88</sup> John Paul II. Address to the United Nations. (5<sup>th</sup> October, 1995). [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

<sup>89</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No. 71

artefacts through the whole human experiences-history, science, norms, technology, creativity and beliefs.

Indeed, this approach to the nature of culture expresses its ontic and axiological character as it permeates into the source of all human activities, his rational nature which crystalizes the works of man and the value of man as a person, ordered by praxis-moral principle through which we grasp the authentic understanding of the human person, the integral anthropology of man. This approach structures the two-fold dimensions of culture, namely “the culture of works-product of man” and “the culture of human person-innerness of man,”<sup>90</sup> and they complement each other. It shows how the two-fold elements of culture reveal the two structures of human person, the material expressing the psycho-sociological approach-science, food, cloth, technique; and the spiritual approach-belief, values, norms, emotional needs which refer to the innerness of the person. However, Wojtyła explains that the culture of human works proceeds from the culture of the person, for it is the person that determines the value of his work and gives meaning it; and this most profoundly structures the meaning of culture. He states that:

culture is one of those elements that are closest to man, which define his earthly existence and, in a way, indicate his very essence. Man is the one who creates culture, who needs culture, and who creates himself through it. Culture is a set of facts in which man expresses himself again and again more than in anything else. He expresses himself for himself and for others. Works of culture that last longer than man bear witness to him. It is a testimony of spiritual life, and the human spirit lives not only because it controls matter, but also because it lives in itself with content that is accessible and meaningful to it alone. He lives, therefore, with truth, goodness, and beauty – and he is able to express his inner life externally and objectively in his works. Therefore, man, as the creator of culture, gives a special testimony to humanity. (...) In a sense, the greatest work of culture is man himself – not any of his works or creations, but he himself. (...) After all, man’s actions and their fruit are in the closest relationship with who he is and what he lives with. Thus, the works of man’s culture are the fruit of this work of culture, which is man himself.<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, the human person is the centre of culture, and he becomes more human thanks to culture, and this analysis transcends the superficial and materialistic structure of culture that refer only to the social structure of human life.

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<sup>90</sup> Dariusz Radziechowski, ‘Culture of the Person and Culture of Works According to Karol Wojtyła.’ *Logos i Ethos*, 56:1. (2021). 87-100

<sup>91</sup> Karol Wojtyła, K. ‘Chrześcijanin a kultura.’ *Znak*, 16:10. (1964). 1153-1157. **NB: Quoted by D. Radziechowski.**

## 2.2. The Person-Centredness of Culture

The realistic analysis of the nature of culture as the phenomenon that creates order in the universe through man's rational creativity from his conscious voluntary activities truly affirms culture as the feature for rationalization/intellectualization of nature.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, in all cultural experiences, it is the man whose reflective activities result in culture and cultural artefacts<sup>93</sup> as the proper subject of culture. This intellectual activities, according to Aristotle relates to the various spheres of culture as: theoretical, moral and creative, which will be discussed later. Through these spheres Wojtyła explains man discovers himself, expresses himself, fulfils himself and finds his balance<sup>94</sup> in the world. This creative capacity qualifies man as the creator of culture, differentiates him from other beings of nature, wherefor man lives from culture and cannot live fully without culture.<sup>95</sup> Wojtyła as John Paul II asserts that man is:

the ontic subject of culture, its object and its term (end), the protagonist and architect of culture. Again, man is prioritized in the phenomenon of culture, because culture necessarily considers man from his very beginning to his last, and in his entirety. For man possesses a particular and autonomous value, because he is the subject bearing the transcendence of the person, and this must *be affirmed for himself*, and not for any other motive or reason: solely for himself.<sup>96</sup>

He further explains that culture is particular and natural to mankind even in the plurality of their cultural experiences, for it structures the progressive growth and development of human beings as individuals and a collective. This plurality reveals the dynamisms of the human person expressed through actions as well as the sense of unity of acts of culture that tend towards transcendence. Nevertheless, this plurality does not demonstrate the distinctiveness of culture, rather, it shows that there is in the dynamisms of culture the unity or singularity of praxis or ethical/moral order that constitute culture and reveals the essence of humanity. This essence relates to the inner dimension of the human person, and squares with Pope Benedict XVI's recognition that the essence of culture appeals to the innerness of man. Wherein culture is the phenomenon that forms the interiority of man-conscience, intellect and will, that is, it grows the person. According to him, "culture is an inward and immanent achievement of the person, and such an achievement is necessarily 'transcendent' or 'oriented upward,' so to speak, towards

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<sup>92</sup> Wojciech Daszkiewicz, 'Culture from the Perspective of Realistic Philosophy.' *Studia Gilsoniana*, 4:4. (2015). 393-403

<sup>93</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, 'O filozofie kultury.' Krąpiec, M. A. *Odzyskać świat realny*. (Lublin: KUL RW, 1999). 380

<sup>94</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No 7

<sup>95</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No 6

<sup>96</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No 10

what is true, good and beautiful.”<sup>97</sup> Thus, Wojtyła/JPII affirms that the fundamental purpose of culture consists in “educating or humanization of the person by which man realizes his quest for meaning.”<sup>98</sup> The consciousness of this realization of humanity and transformation of nature through culture is possible only in man. Thus, man is understood as that subject of existence and act (*suppositum*), and the only being whose future depends and is shaped by culture.

As the ontic subject of culture, man realizes the fullness of his person thanks to culture, and this distinguishing capacity refers to the innerness or spiritual faculties which actualize man’s becoming.’ Thus John Paul II states that “the most important object of culture is the development of man as man, man as a person, that is, man as the only and unique individual in human family. Therefore the object of real culture is to form a person in man, a fully mature spirit able to turn all his possibilities into full development.”<sup>99</sup> Culture really reveals the ‘who’ of man, contrary to ‘what,’ prioritizing man over his products, science, art, politics, superiority of spirit over matter<sup>100</sup> although these are cultural phenomena. By developing and maturing these faculties, culture manifests as the phenomenon by which “man becomes more human, more is”<sup>101</sup> in a holistic manner that do not tolerate any form of relativism, reductionism. Thus, culture structures human subjectivity and causality, and through praxis or ethics/morality order makes human life worth living. The Polish Pope affirms that “culture is of man, by man, and for man; and must serve humanity, must be ordered towards protecting and saving human life for it to flourish, and it must be ordered towards human dignity.”<sup>102</sup> It is inconceivable to think of culture without human subjectivity and human causality, because man is always the first point of reference to culture, the prime and fundamental fact of culture. And so, culture reveals the totality of truth about man, the truth about his spiritual and corporeal subjectivity,<sup>103</sup> expressing the two-fold character of culture, as spiritual and material. Thus, Wojtyła asserts that,

the works of material culture always show a ‘spiritualization (absolutization) of matter,’ a submission of the material element to man's spiritual forces, that is, his intelligence and will—and that, on the other hand the works of spiritual culture manifest, specifically, a “materialization (absolutization)” of the spirit, an

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<sup>97</sup> Pope Benedict XVI. *John Paul II: My Beloved Predecessor*, ed. Elio Guerriero. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2007). 49

<sup>98</sup> John P. Hittinger, ‘John Paul II’s Core Teaching on Culture.’ *Communio International Catholic Review*, 48:2. (2021). 253.

<sup>99</sup> Jan Paweł II. *Wiara i kultura. Dokumenty, przemówienia i homilie*. 140

<sup>100</sup> John P. Hittinger, ‘John Paul II on Humanae Vitae and Priority of Ethics over Technology.’ *Philosophy and Canon Law*, 5. (2020). 35-68

<sup>101</sup> Jan Paweł II. *Wiara i kultura. Dokumenty, przemówienia i homilie*. 53

<sup>102</sup> Jared R. Staudt, ‘Culture in the Magisterium of Pope John Paul II: Evangelization Theory Dialogue and the Renewal of Society.’ *Caritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture*, 3:1. (2014). 52-65

<sup>103</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No 10

incarnation of what is spiritual. This double characteristic seems to be equally of prime importance and equally permanent.<sup>104</sup>

This truth does not contradict each other nor suppose a distinction between the two dimensions of truth, instead they constitute one whole truth and unity in person. Man is at the centre of these cultural phenomena, because in all these, man reflects his thought as a rational being (animal rationale) and the activity originating from this reflection results in cultural artefacts.<sup>105</sup> Cultural artefacts per se do not or should not denigrate the person, rather man creates himself in these phenomena, and expresses his natural ability, his rational and thinking creativity, and consciousness on the basis of praxis, distinguishing man's activity from other non-human activity. Thus, in the cultural values, the value of human person is prior to any subordinate values.

Wojtyła further asserts that we cannot think of culture without human subjectivity and agency, for it is man's proper way of expressing consciousness evident in pieces of artefacts, in which culture meets with civilization<sup>106</sup> wherein man's rational nature defines his culture-forming abilities. Thus, Krąpiec states that "the whole dimensions of culture originates from man as the sign of man's expression of his humanity."<sup>107</sup> Man's expression of his creative activity underlies various spheres of cultural activities namely: "*theoria* (theoretical knowledge); *praxis* (morality); *poiesis* (art/technology),"<sup>108</sup> and religion. Although religion is considered as an aspect of *praxis*, a sphere of morality, it is central and uniquely specific in the lived experience of culture. Religion, argues Krąpiec, is the focus of culture and the factor which (while permeating all the spheres of culture, that is, theoretical-*theoria*, moral-*praxis* and productive-*poiesis* sides of human life) gathers them together around the vertical transcendence of man. Therefore,

removing religion from the domain of culture is consequent to depriving human being of their vertical transcendence, whereas replacing religion leads to an ideology whose kind depends on a substitute provided instead of religion. For example, in the case of progress being a substitute for religion we will have progressivism, in the case of nation-nationalism, in the case of state-statism, in the case of evolution-evolutionism, and so on.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No 10

<sup>105</sup> Krąpiec. 'O filozofie kultury.' 380

<sup>106</sup> Arkadiusz Modrzejewski, & Gálik, Slavomir. 'Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic and Universalistic Philosophy of Culture.' *Journal of European Science & Theology*, 10:4. (2014). 99-110

<sup>107</sup> Krąpiec. *Człowiek w kulturze*. 5

<sup>108</sup> Jaroszyński. *Science and Culture*. 223

<sup>109</sup> Pawel Tarasiewicz, 'Gilson, Krąpiec and Christian Philosophy Today.' *Studia Gilsoniana*, 4:4. (2015). 381-392. See also; Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Rozważania o narodzie* (Considerations about Nations). *Człowiek z Kulturze*. 1: (1993). 33

Indeed, these domains show the unity of culture with human nature, wherefore nature refers to “everything which exists of its own, what is innate, whereas culture signifies everything that man of his free will and competence has created”<sup>110</sup> to complete nature. Again, they affirm the essence and totality of the meaning of culture which do not oppose each other, but rather complement each other.

### 3. The Classical Domains of Culture

Domains of culture refer to the various categories of human rational activities, beliefs, norms, encounters, and meanings which characterise culture. These domains refer to the various ways of experiencing the world of humans in both natural and spiritual, while expressing good/value as the end of culture. There exists in these domains the interconnectedness of the different aspects of culture, that suggests how each domain relates to the other, and require the right use of reason *recta ratio* in their pursuit. The domain of *theoria* requires right reason in its inquiry about theoretical matters (*theoria est recta ratio speculabilium*); the domain of *praxis* uses right reason to direct things that humans can do (*praxis est recta ratio agibilium*); and *poiesis* requires the use of right reason in our production (*poiesis est recta ratio factibilium*).<sup>111</sup> Wherefore *religio* presupposes *praxis* and requires the right use of reason to process the content of faith as revealed truth, for faith is lived through the act of reason and will. Thus, culture appears to be largely a product of religion, for there is a close relation between religion and culture.

#### 3.1. The Domain of Theoretical Knowledge (*Theoria*)

The domain of theoretical knowledge (Gr. *theoria*) is concerned with the whole dimension of knowledge (Lat. *scientia*), literature and language (key to transmission of cultural values, educational knowledge), which is basically connected with intellectual and practical search for truth of reality, that is, truth for the sake of truth.<sup>112</sup> It is basic in man’s expression of his cognitive/intellectual and creative activities. When man knows, he knows the truth, likewise, when man acts, he acts regarding the truth. And so, truth belongs to the fundamental aims of culture and the ultimate quests and desires of man, because it is the desire for knowledge of truth

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<sup>110</sup> Franz-Josef Eilers, *Communicating Between Cultures*. (Rome: Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1990). 13

<sup>111</sup> Jaroszyński. *Science and Culture*. 223

<sup>112</sup> Truth as defined by Thomas Aquinas is ‘*veritas est adequatio intellectus et rei* - truth is agreement of thing and intellect.’ This agreement refers to the relation between object of cognition or thought and reality. Object has to do with really existing being, in other words, something that exists. See Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*. Ques. XVI. Art. 1, 3.

about reality, especially the truth about man. This quest for knowledge is reflected in the famous claim of Aristotle: “pantes anthropoi tou eidenai oregantai physei” all human beings by nature desire to know).<sup>113</sup> It attests to the metaphysical root meaning of culture as the mechanism for growing and developing man’s soul in the realm of knowledge, which structure his being and becoming. For knowing the truth, Wojtyła explains, relates to the interiority of man by which man becomes and perfects himself,<sup>114</sup> it also expresses that man’s relation with truth, and desire for knowledge (*theoria*) as an important purpose of cultural acts by which he realises his full cognitive potentialities. It shows the fundamental relation of *theoria* to man in the objective and subjective senses, evident in the meaning of *theoria* as, to look at, to gaze at, i.e., to contemplate the highest kind of life and truth available to man, which differs from speculation.<sup>115</sup> Speculation expresses an operation on ideas that are thought to be true, while contemplation refers to thoughtful reflection about the truth of reality.

As the basic source of growing man’s interiority and relating man to truth, the domain of *theoria* integrates man with other domains of culture so as to realize his integral development in the totality of culture with cognizance to all forms of disintegration. The person-act relation, Wojtyła explains, is first and foremost a lived experience, a subjective and experiential fact (thanks to induction), and it also becomes a theoretical inquiry and constitutes at the same time praxis, the practical understanding of act.<sup>116</sup> Nonetheless, the history of the Western culture is marked by the disintegration of cultural phenomena where theoretical knowledge is isolated from ethics, politics, technology, religion, metaphysics, whereby culture disintegrated in parts departs from truth as its proper end and so distorts the truth of reality.<sup>117</sup> It presupposes a univocal claim to the truth of science that characterises the present-day crisis of contemporary secularized Western culture, that subordinates good and truth to individual ideas, purposes and pursuits. This presupposition portrays the empirical scientific cognition as the only truth of culture, subordinating other spheres of human life and culture to this ideological approach as the ultimate truth and solution to human existential challenges. This attitude expresses *a priori* presuppositions of *theoria* and relativism of truth as the basis of human action.

However, Wojtyła believes otherwise. The truth of *theoria* in forming human intellectual capacity, he explains, influences the way man thinks and acts, and analogically connects it to

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<sup>113</sup> Aristotle. *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1933). No. 1.1

<sup>114</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No 17

<sup>115</sup> Piotr Jaroszyński, P. ‘Science and the Freedom of Man.’ In, Zdybicka, Z Herbut, J. et al., eds. *Freedom in Contemporary Culture: Acts of the V World Congress of Christian Philosophy, Catholic University of Lublin, 20-25 August 1996*. (Lublin: Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1999). 539

<sup>116</sup> Karol Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. G. Ignatik; foreword. C. Anderson. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press. 568

<sup>117</sup> Jaroszyński. *Science and Culture*. 224

other spheres of human life in recognisance of disinterested knowledge/truth that informs disinterested culture.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, the essence of *theoria* possesses analogical character and reveals as the fundamental aim of science the knowledge of the truth of reality. Thus, *theoria* as a domain of culture and the first object of human inquiry primarily seeks to know the truth. And by acquiring the truth, man contemplates the truth, grows spiritually, becomes more human, thereby experiences his personality in a more perfect manner.

This objective end of theoretical knowledge can only be found in the human being among all the beings of nature, for it is only the human being who is capable of knowing, knows that he wants to know, he is as well interested in the real truth.<sup>119</sup> However, the search for truth is not only confined to *theoria*, it also refers to the practical domain; “for it is impossible,” Wojtyła argues, “to formulate right or practically true norms of human conduct without a thorough answer to the question of what (who) is man,”<sup>120</sup> which appeals to *theoria* as means of man’s search for truth of his being. Polish Pope further stresses that “there exist a rational moral obligation, and a grave one at that, to seek the truth and to adhere to it once it is found.”<sup>121</sup> And this is affirmed by P. Jaroszyński that; “to know the truth for its own sake about being as being, about any being’s categories, or some aspect of being, we must apply different methods of knowing fitted to different material object (what we are studying) and a different formal object (the aspect we are studying).”<sup>122</sup> This demonstrates the analogical structure of the truth of science which cannot be grasp univocally, because univocal truth is contrary to the objective or common good which *theoria* achieves.

Certainly, *theoria* is not the product of an individual person as such, but the product of the community which affirms the sense of culture as a collective learned pattern of behaviour. As a product of the community, the findings of scientific knowledge are reported by an individual which passes through an institutional check and test mechanism, before they are accepted as knowledge<sup>123</sup> in line with the objective good of the community which improves human lives. Objective good of the community is thus understood as the end of theoretical knowledge as the domain of culture. For when such knowledge is a product of an individual, there is a manifestation of univocal conception of science as a framework of *theoria* that leads to scientific relativism or scientism, threatening the basic object and purpose of science which is the good of the human being, thereby portraying a distorted truth of reality. And so, science as a cultural

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<sup>118</sup> John Paul II. *Address to UNESCO*. No. 14

<sup>119</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. (Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998). No. 25

<sup>120</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 570

<sup>121</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. (Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1993). No. 34

<sup>122</sup> Jaroszyński. *Science and Culture*. 224

<sup>123</sup> Rosalind Driver, Edith Guesne, & Andrée Tiberghien, eds., *Children’s Ideas of Science*. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1996). 44

domain ultimately seeks the good of all humanity in its response to the natural human desire. And it realizes this end through the guiding principle of *praxis*. For *theoria* without *praxis* exposes man to manipulation, genetic experimentation, biological exploitation and instrumentalization. On the basis of this, we grasp the relation of *theoria* to *praxis*, which Wojtyła expresses thus: *praxis sequitur theoria*,<sup>124</sup> necessary for constituting true culture.

### 3.2. The Domain of Morality (*Praxis*)

The domain of morality concerns the action that fundamentally relates to man in the objective and subjective sense. It indeed affirms the ontic dependence of action on the being of man as the acting subject that indicates the universal category of cognitive or rational order through conscious action so as to understand the existence and nature of man who acts.<sup>125</sup> The basic aim of cultural action by which man becomes more human proceeds from *praxis* as from moral order, and relates culture to morality(*praxis*) as mechanism which ennobles man, his moral improvement.<sup>126</sup> And so, through learned behaviour, man cultivates virtuous habits, transforms and complements his nature and so gives meaning to his existence. This process is realised through the moral order and makes culture essentially analogous to *praxis*. As such, *praxis*:

includes the entire field of morality: (1) personal morality, which ethics studies; (2) family morality, which economics studies; and (3) social morality, which politics studies. Ethics considers personal good. Economics considers familial good. Politics considers social good. Each field requires the proper direction of reason.<sup>127</sup>

Man's various activities are basically informed by the cultivation of virtue through *praxis*, by which he creates order to the disordered nature, so that through these ordered human acts he realises objective good as the aim of his action. This affirms Wojtyła's statement that "the core of human *praxis* is the act [*czyn*], *actus humanus*, which denotes *actus* or act as means of perfection and fulfilment of human potency. This perfection resides precisely in *praxis*."<sup>128</sup> Thus, moral culture in the sense of *praxis* manifests as the basic and mechanism of shaping human being in both intra and extra-personal dimensions, and opposes any selfish and utilitarian conception of culture and person. And so, *praxis* is first and foremost in the sphere of human

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<sup>124</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 570

<sup>125</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 570

<sup>126</sup> Wojtyła, K. *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*. (Kraków: Znak, 1968). 17

<sup>127</sup> Jaroszyński. *Science and Culture*. 223

<sup>128</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 570

life and practice. For it is not a reality discovered in the same way as *theoria* or *poiesis*,<sup>129</sup> it constitutes the innermost domain of the actualization of man's personal life. As Wojtyła said, in a sense, it defines humanity, evaluates every human activity, not only on the basis that man acts, but with emphasis that he ought to act in a certain way that realizes the truth of good of our shared humanity<sup>130</sup> determined through *praxis*. And so, John Paul II emphasizes that *praxis* is essential for the interpersonal existence of man in the world, on the principle of unselfish admiration for actions and creations that proceed from man's interiority, which shapes the truth, goodness and beauty of the person. Thus, he shows how culture, despite its dynamic plurality overlaps in the universal values for the good of the person.<sup>131</sup>

Indeed, *praxis* engages the entirety of man's practical activities as well as theoretical and abstract thinking, guiding scientific verification towards finding objectivity in various aspects of human acts. It reveals the fact that culture encompasses the whole truth about all dimensions of human lived experiences on the basis of right reason so as to realise self-determination. It also expresses the sense of duty (how man should act) in man's response to cultural phenomena and dependence on truth<sup>132</sup> through which man realises himself. *Praxis* provides the basis for the justification of human acts because it is the basis of morality, at the same time, the proper centre of person's acts, even in the transitive acts, for man, by creating a work, objectifies and expresses who and what he is. It is the central and the governing point of all human acts without which the human being becomes a pure being of instincts, like lower animals. Hence, the domain of *praxis* qualifies through acts the nature of human being as virtuous or vicious as well as determines the transcendence of human being. Accordingly, the "appropriate measure of the greatness of every man is included in a morality, in which he writes his internal and most personal story."<sup>133</sup> This historical account refers specifically to the concrete action which defines the person, in which the person is the author, with the non-detachable value of the person and the action, expressing the essence of culture as ontically value-laden.

In a sense, *praxis* gives us the fullest insight into the whole dimensions of human act (transitive and intransitive) wherein man not only creates culture but also himself because he acts in accord with who he is and what he wants. Permeating and determining the internal structure of acts, *praxis* directs the whole dimensions of act to the truth of person, and by objectivizing the product of action, it expresses and defines the subjectivity of man. It justifies

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<sup>129</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Theory of Morality.' 144

<sup>130</sup> Karol Wojtyła, 'Teoria e Prassi: un tema umano e cristiano,' trans. D. Radziechowski. *Teoria e Prassi: atti del Congresso Internezionale Genova*. (Genova: 1976). 35

<sup>131</sup> John Paul II. *XXXIV World Day For Peace*. 'Dialogue Between Cultures for a Civilization of Love and Peace.' (1<sup>st</sup> January, 2001). No. 16

<sup>132</sup> Dariusz Radziechowski, 'Culture of the Person and Culture of Works According to Karol Wojtyła.' *Logos i Ethos*, 56:1. (2021). 87-100

<sup>133</sup> Wojtyła. 'Teoria e Prassi: un tema umano e cristiano.' 36

the specific immanent effect of transitive action as morally good or evil, as value or anti-value of the human person. One that defines the person in some respect as good or evil,<sup>134</sup> like a good doctor, teacher, engineer, writer, because his actions are decisive and in the right order ‘*recta ratio agibilium*.’ His acts remain within him as the subject of act, but his product does not fundamentally qualify the person as good or bad in principle (*simpliciter*), although it does qualify him in a certain respect (*secundum quid*), because he acted on the basis of the right content of facts before him-*recta ratio factibilium*.<sup>135</sup> That is to say that, when man acts, he does not only perform action but he expresses his innerness by which he becomes his action; as such, that action qualifies the person’s being (*fieri*) and becoming, thanks to *praxis* that defines the moral good or evil, value and anti-value of the person.

In this sense, *praxis* relates with the specific effect of the transitive dimension of act that forms the sphere of *poesis* or *techne*. As creators of products and skills, man also tells his story through his culture of work, because his products and skills shape his personality and justify him as good or bad with respect to realizing the common good. Wojtyła expresses this praxiological relation stating that: “the essence of *praxis* consists in realizing man, at the same time, in making the nonhuman reality outside man more human.”<sup>136</sup> The idea of nonhuman reality refers to culture of works expressed as *techne*, wherein man, in a certain sense, creates himself. Thus, *praxis* realizes the ontic good of the person and the truth of culture. It serves as the basis and guiding principle of various dimensions of human act, and manifests uniquely in the area of *poesis*, wherein man expresses his creative capacity through his skills and art (*techne*)

### 3.3. The Domain of Art and Technology (*Poiesis*).

The sphere of *poiesis* signifies the specific outcome of transitive (*transiens*) dimension of act, and refers to “that which man produces, is produced or leads a thing into being.”<sup>137</sup> This understanding originates from the Greek root ‘*poieo/poiein*’ which means ‘to make,’<sup>138</sup> and refers to a purposeful act of creating or bringing something concrete into presence. It is the act of aesthetic creative production which reflects outwardly the creative imagination of the producer. The creative act of *poiesis* is not desired for its own sake, rather, it unveils the truth, bringing to light nature’s gifts,<sup>139</sup> in its capacity to transform and improve what is given in nature the

<sup>134</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 572

<sup>135</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Teoria e Prassi: un tema umano e cristiano.’ 36

<sup>136</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis.’ 266

<sup>137</sup> Derek H. Whitehead, ‘Poiesis and Art-Making: A Way of Letting-Be.’ *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 1. (2003). <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7523862.0001.005>

<sup>138</sup> Whitehead. ‘Poiesis and Art-Making: A Way of Letting-Be.’ *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 1. (2003).

<sup>139</sup> Giorgio Agamben, ‘Poiesis and Praxis,’ in; *The Man Without Content*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). 72

wellbeing and flourishing of man. The truth of the teleological character of *poiesis* sets it in the opposite direction of understanding cultural act as means to an end, expressing the utilitarian sense of this sphere of culture. Instead, the basic meaning of *poiesis* expresses the person's creative will and intentionality which does not demonstrate a demarcation between the person and his creative skill. *Poiesis* or rather the creative art/*techne* of the person derives profoundly from the innerness of the person so as to preserve the material existence. Thus, John Paul II asserts that, "works of art speak of their authors; they enable us to know their inner life, and they reveal the original contribution which artists offer to the history of culture."<sup>140</sup> And so, the concept of *poiesis* objectivizes the person's interiority, expressing the vital significance and relation of the person's being and becoming with *poiesis*, as well as *praxis* as the basis of understanding cultural act and what orders *poiesis* to the immanent value of the person and the world at large.

Complementing one another shows how these spheres of culture build up the unity of cultural act as structured in the unity of the person who is the ontic subject of culture, and so opposes the sense of materialization of culture that leads to epiphenomenal perception of person that reduces the essence of person to productivity contrary to the fact that '*operari sequitur esse*,' and not the other way round. Indeed, the essence of *poiesis* realizes in person through socialization, industrialization, productivity and consumption a corresponding proportional personalization on the basis of *praxis*.<sup>141</sup> The truth of *poiesis* reflects and radiates in the objectified products the internal disposition and innerness of person who expresses his being in his products. For *poiesis* "transcends the confines of the merely usefulness and brings into the world, into the real arena of our lives, that which, apart from any *utile*, is purely and exclusively true, good and beautiful."<sup>142</sup> This expresses man's dominion over nature and the priority of human labour over his products, which surpasses any utilitarian attitude that reduces the person to means of production and a subject of manipulation and exploitation. A consumerist and capitalist attitude wherefore human labour is reduced to means, as such sets antagonism between means and telos in the nature of *poiesis*, by prioritizing economic value over the value of the person. Understanding *poiesis* as merely means for something else shows the loss of intrinsic value of culture of work and culture of man, wherefor the life of the individual according to Aristotle, is reduced to a status that is inimical to virtue,<sup>143</sup> and contrary the essence of culture.

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<sup>140</sup> Dariusz Radziechowski, 'Culture of the Person and Culture of Works According to Karol Wojtyła.' *Logos i Ethos*, 56:1. (2021). 87-100

<sup>141</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis.' 268

<sup>142</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis.' 271

<sup>143</sup> Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Ross, W. D. (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999). Bk. 8, Ch. 8-9

Opposing the utilitarian notion of poiesis, Kantian second categorical imperative<sup>144</sup> truly affirms that the proper understanding of poiesis relates to the recognition of the value of the person who is always an end in itself.

This teleological character in the root meaning reveals the close connection of *poiesis* with Aristotelian understanding of ‘*tekhne* -*techne*’ as art/technology, technical skill, human creative production, man’s ability to cause something to appear,<sup>145</sup> the ability to explore nature’s gift and natural resources. According to Martin Heidegger, “the concept of *tekhne* reinforces the meaning of *poiesis* as the principle of origination, of bringing forth which seeks to be known by being brought into light.”<sup>146</sup> It reveals *poiesis* as the cultural mechanism by which man expresses his “imaginative capacities or arts, later called fine arts, and industrial, manual arts, servile arts, or craftsmanship.”<sup>147</sup> These arts help us to discover the richness of human creativity which portray in an unselfish and nonutilitarian manner the truth, goodness and beauty of a person revealed through praxis. This realization requires the directives of the right reason (*recta ratio factibilium*) in guiding other faculties, senses, imagination and emotions. Through his conscious and willed act by which he brings forth, this phenomenon of culture transforms nature’s gifts in the manner that fulfils man’s needs, affirming culture as a feature for rationalization of nature and for objective order of nature. This bringing forth that transforms nature according to Heidegger involves the whole of the human person as a rational and moral being, therefore poiesis reveals the truth of being,<sup>148</sup> and sheds light on the reality in nature. It resonates Wojtyła’s complementary understanding of the two-fold powers of culture as matter and spirit;

which consists of external creations of human activity (matter), internal experience and aspirations (spirit). For works of material culture show some of matter’s spirituality, subjected to the energies of human spirit: intelligence and will, likewise, works of spiritual culture show a specific materialization of the spirit and what is spiritual.<sup>149</sup>

This does not reduce the meaning of culture through poiesis to mere material civilization. Indeed, *poiesis* materializes man’s inner thought, and as John Paul II rightly states that when we

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<sup>144</sup> “Act in such a way that the person is always an end and never a means to an end.” See; Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W. Ellington. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1785/1993). No. 429

<sup>145</sup> Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Bk. 1, Ch. 4

<sup>146</sup> Martin Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art,’ in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. (London: Harper and Row, 1935/1975). 17. Zimmerman also aligns with Heideggerian association of the meaning of *poiesis* with *tekhne* as the capacity for letting something to be seen, and not just known, but seen or known through seeing. See: Michael Zimmerman, ‘Authentic Producing as *Technē* and *Poiesis*,’ in *Heidegger’s Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, and Art*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990). 229-30

<sup>147</sup> Jaroszyński. *Science and Culture*. 223

<sup>148</sup> Alexandar F. Di Pippo, ‘The Concept of Poiesis in Heidegger’s An Introduction to Metaphysics.’ *Thinking Fundamentals, IWM Junior Visiting Fellows Conferences*, 9:3. (2000). 1-33

<sup>149</sup> Jan Paweł II. *Wiara i kultura. Dokumenty, przemówienia i homilie*. 56

create something externally, we invariably create what is within ourselves. In his particular product or art, “man somehow shows himself, does himself, updates who he is in *potentia*, shapes himself and even creates himself...he fulfils the outer, material world...with his thought and his being.”<sup>150</sup> Thus, what he becomes either good or bad as a result of his material creation depends on the integration of *praxis* into his *technē*.<sup>151</sup> Here, the interconnectedness of *praxis* in ordering the whole activities between production and consumption appears.

Accordingly, Wojtyła further explains that the sphere of *poiesis* as the creative work of man shows the disinterestedness in realizing also the transcendental telos of the truth, goodness and beauty of the person as the substantive purpose of work. Because *techne* permeates man’s consciousness, such that improving nature in his daily experiences brings forth his personhood and self-fulfilment. Thus, in the act of *techne*, he said,

fulfils himself in it. To fulfil oneself means to actualize, and in a way to bring to the proper fullness, that structure in man which is characteristic for him because of his personality and also because of his being somebody and not merely something.<sup>152</sup>

By revealing the innerness objectivized in the material technological production, the integration of *praxis* in *poiesis* prioritizes the value of the person over economic value, and the transcendent dignity of the person. It opposes the idea that culture of work or production is the fruit of personal creativity and a necessary reality, therefore is value free.<sup>153</sup> Indeed, the truth of *techne* relates to the objective good of the person (*communi boni*) in the universalism of culture which transcends the relative good of the producer, but the collective good, and leads to self-fulfilment and transcendence.

In all his productivity, Wojtyła stresses, man has the duty in his acts, the moral duty of dependence on the truth which the freedom of the person is subject to. This is also affirmed by Giorgio Agamben that: “the art work that structures *poiesis* does not proceed from doing, from acting which brings out work(production), but something substantially other (*heteron*) than the principle that has produced it into presence.”<sup>154</sup> This bringing into existence is only possible because art itself has left the sphere of production, of *poiesis*, and connecting with *praxis* results in the truth of culture and proper end of man. It also reveals through the transformation of

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<sup>150</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Thomistic Personalism.’ 171

<sup>151</sup> Wojtyła referencing St. Thomas Aquinas states that “man through his action profited in the transient dimension, in the direction of one or another objectivization, one or another product, man becomes good in some respect only (*secundum quid*)... Only an ethical qualification of an acting subject- i.e., moral value or counter value- constitutes the objective good or evil of an acting subject: it makes the man as a good or bad person.” See; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 5 & Ia, q. 1–49. See also; Karol Wojtyła, (1979). *Teoria e Prassi: un tema umano e cristiano*, in: *Teoria e Prassi: atti del Congresso internazionale Genova – Barcellona '76*. (Neapoli, 1979). 31-41.

<sup>152</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 151

<sup>153</sup> Ikechukwu S. Ugwu, ‘The Analysis of value-Free or Value-Ladenness of Work in the Light of Catholic Social Teaching of John Paul II.’ *Studia Elckie*. 25:2. (2023). 209/24

<sup>154</sup> Agamben. ‘Poiesis and Praxis.’ *The Man Without Content*. 73

poiesis the sacralization of art, wherein man gives testimony of his humanity, directed towards the vertical transcendence wherein man as creator of culture shares in God's creative work. Such transcending outside the person in self-fulfilment of the person Wojtyła asserts is the moment of the recognition of the "absolute that happens on the basis of the Absolute Good, wherein man is conscious of the existence of his contingency in which culture is truly a cipher pointing to the Transcendent and what is immortal."<sup>155</sup>

#### **4. Religion as a Unique Phenomenon of Culture**

The perennial understanding that man is a religious being is affirmed by historical data, for man faced with existential challenges, wonder about mysteries of life,<sup>156</sup> the end of life, the desire for a better life and life beyond this physical one had resorted to religion. Thus, religion plays a pivotal role in shaping the acts that constitute culture. It also lays the foundation of how human beings perceive the world, by imparting in them the consciousness of the Divine, and the sense of the norms as the framework that guides the right from wrong act, and so, protects the individuals against chaos, providing stability, essential for proper human existence.<sup>157</sup> This consciousness, underlies praxis- morality, creating cosmic order, sense of purpose and tends human acts towards their ultimate teleology, namely, ultimate good and end, that is, God, the object of religion. Hence, John Paul II explains that "the synthesis of culture with faith (religious faith), is a requirement not only of culture but also of faith...A faith that does not become culture is a faith not fully accepted, not fully thought out, not lived faithfully."<sup>158</sup> This idea reveals the organic bond between religion and culture that belongs to human nature, as what serves human needs, directs man in his search for meaning, and that which inclines the person to rightly order living and perfect psychological health,<sup>159</sup> and so orders human acts to the truth of his nature. It aligns with the innate desire of man to know the truth, live a purposeful and meaningful life that tends to his ultimate end. It also plays an outstanding role in prioritizing the value of the person over any other subordinate value, as well as the culture of life over the culture of death.

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<sup>155</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis.' 272/3; 275

<sup>156</sup> These questions show the deep reasonableness of human existence, since they summon human intelligence and will to search freely for a solution which can reveal the full meaning of life. These enquires, therefore, are the highest expression of human nature; which is why the answer to them is the gauge of the depth of his engagement with his own existence. In particular, when the why of things is explored in full harmony with the search for the ultimate answer, then human reason reaches its zenith and opens to the religious impulse. The religious impulse is the highest expression of the human person, because it is the highpoint of his rational nature. John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No: 33

<sup>157</sup> Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. 22-3

<sup>158</sup> John Paul II. (1982). 'Lettera di Giovanni Paolo II con cui Viene istituito il Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura.'

<sup>159</sup> Tomasz Duma, 'The Great Ideas: Causes of Human Transcendence or Enslavement.' 153

Religion is a unique cultural phenomenon of the relationship between man and the Absolute, which manifests through individual spiritual encounter/experience, rites, rituals, doctrines and cult, and forms the lives of individuals into the community.<sup>160</sup> As a cultural experience, it engages human faculties, both material and spiritual, in the expression of belief and practice, as it intellectualizes nature. Thus, religion basically directs human act towards transcendent perspectives or the notion of the ultimate which conditions man's relationship with the other and tends his acts to God.<sup>161</sup> Its cultural object is in a way different from other spheres of culture, for it refers to Being beyond this physical reality, in a sense relates to the ontic character of culture. As Alexis de Tocqueville states, religion and its articles of faith are a permanent quality and phenomenon of humanity<sup>162</sup> for:

only man among the living things experiences both a spontaneous disgust for existence and an immense desire to exist: he despises life and fears unbeing. These contradictory instincts drive his soul incessantly towards the contemplation of another world, and it is religion which will take him there. Religion, then, is only a particular kind of hope, and it is also as natural to the human heart as hope itself.<sup>163</sup>

John Paul II also emphasizes that religion reveals the transcendent understanding of man's existence, his understanding of life as a gift of God, as something sacred, entrusted responsibly to his care and veneration.<sup>164</sup> Despite the depressing chaotic human situations and existential challenges, religion offers the human person a deeper understanding about the meaning and value of life beyond this visible material existence. It positions religion as one of the constituting cultural phenomenon of knowledge of self. Within the cognitive activities, the concept of transcendence (vertical) portrays the phenomenon of religion as a recognized rational activity.

In line with this, religious consciousness shows the connection of the spiritual faculties-intellect and will, with God, for religion is the cultural practice wherein man express through his willed act his practice of faith and personal belief in God. This resonates in St. Thomas Aquinas that:“(C)redere est actus intellectus, secundum quod movetur a voluntate ad assentiendum-to believe is an intellectual act according to which the will moves the intellect to assent.”<sup>165</sup> Though an act of faith is a personal experience, however, its private expression does not in itself qualify as culture, rather, it becomes an aspect of culture when it is lived in relation to and with others,

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<sup>160</sup> Karol Jasiński, 'The Internal Secularisation of Religion.' *Collectanea Theologica*, 91:4. (2021). 95-111

<sup>161</sup> Other cultural functions of religion; see: Zofia J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religio. Zarys filozofii I religii*. (Lublin, TN KUL, 1993). 293-95. Also: Niklas Luhmann, *Funkcja religii*, trans. D. Motak. (Kraków: Zakład Wydawnictwo, 1998).

<sup>162</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. & eds. Harvey Mansfield & Delba Winthrop. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). 284

<sup>163</sup> Hugh Brogan, *Alexis de Tocqueville: A Life*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). 53

<sup>164</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa. No: 22

<sup>165</sup> Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. II-II, 4:2; 2:9

as an affirmation of his nature and a shared value. Because the authentic experience of culture does not manifest in the individual experience, rather through the relation of the individual experience within the community, likewise the experience of an act of faith. And so, religion is that cultural phenomenon that serves man's spiritual needs, influencing his relationship with others. This realization follows from the consciousness of praxis-moral order as the basis of cultural experiences or any culture-forming activity.

Accordingly, Mortimer Adler understands religion as "a personal human quality that essentially inclines human beings freely to attempt to transcend their natural, bodily dimension, and through elevated faculties of the soul (intellect and will) unite with some divine person."<sup>166</sup> It is truly man's proper expression of vertical transcendence as a manifestation self-determination. As it were, it touches the deepest of personal life, transcending the physical world, and even the world of material meanings, understandings and interpretations<sup>167</sup> to the spiritual realm. It reveals the nature of the person as one who is in relation with other human beings, with his natural environment and with the Divine-God. It truly shows the interrelatedness of religion to cultural phenomena, and how ontic cultural values and beliefs shape religious beliefs, ritual, transcendence, afterlife, and vice versa. Religious belief, practice and teachings provide the framework for cultural norms and values, or ethical norms and moral order. This portrays the etymological meaning of religion as a phenomenon of the relationship between human being and Absolute Being. Its root derivation '*relegere*,' refers to cultivating a relationship with Absolute Being, while *Religere* appeals to seeking to be reconnected to/with the Absolute Being, whereas *Religare*, refers to being tied to Absolute Being, or some combination of all these meanings.<sup>168</sup> The phenomenon of religion therefore elevates and relates man to the Supernatural, God, and provides him with the means and proper attitude of relationship and seeking God's help (grace) with the right disposition of receiving it. Hence, religion in a way influences the transcendent moral norm and traditional cultural values, and informs man's inner disposition to realize his ultimate end, happiness and perfection through morally good acts.

The effect of the divine grace functions within the spiritual faculties- intellect and will, serves as the proximate cause and the first principle of understanding religion with its articles of faith, and so qualifies religion as the divine science.<sup>169</sup> As divine science, religion answers agnostic question: 'what is God really like?' through the supernaturally acquired *habitus* of

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<sup>166</sup> Duma. 'The Great Ideas: Causes of Human Transcendence or Enslavement.' 144

<sup>167</sup> Czesław S. Bartnik, *Hermeneutyka personalizmu*. (Lublin: TN KUL, 1994). 122.

<sup>168</sup> Maria J. Gondek, 'Free and Religious Actions as Semiotic Effects of the Great Ideas.' *The Great Ideas of Religion and Freedom: A Semiotic Reinterpretation of the Great Ideas Movement for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. eds. Redpath, P. A, Chłódna-Błach, I. & Mamcarz-Plisiecki, A. Netherland: Leiden, 2021). 32-33

<sup>169</sup> Duma. 'The Great Ideas: Causes of Human Transcendence or Enslavement.' 145

understanding grace, in the light of right reason. Through it, John Paul II explains, the human person is purified of the mythological elements in the concept of God and acquires critical witness of what they believe in, providing a rational basis for belief in the Divine, separating religion from superstitious belief.<sup>170</sup> Hence, unlike the truth of science which flows from the reason's natural capacities, the truth of religion, given the peculiarity of its object, namely, revealed God, has its source from sense perception, revealed truth/faith, experience and light of reason. This latter truth cannot be fully grasped solely through the capacity of human natural reason, rather, it is innate in man. And Plato affirms this, stating that it is difficult to cognize with purely human rational cognition the knowledge of god (God), for god (God) he said, "must surely always be described such as he is."<sup>171</sup> Also, St. Augustine echoes this saying: "*noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi. In interiore homine habitat veritas*-do not wander far and wide but return into yourself. Deep within man there dwells the truth."<sup>172</sup> As such, the truth of religion reflects the natural truth of man's desire which accords with the truth of knowledge of good that characterises other domains of culture, and so, cannot be subordinated or substituted with the truth of science or technology, because they possess different objects of study. Nonetheless, the revealed truth about God is the ultimate end of knowledge.

It follows therefore that any form of reduction or substitution of truth of knowledge to univocal truth of science and technology, or the methodology of modern science (pure empirical method) diminishes the essence of religion as a phenomenon, and an aspect of accepted truth of culture. Such denial denigrates the nature of man as a person and the transcendent structure of moral order that results from religious sphere, and so exposes the nature of culture to culture war in the form of various relativisms/pluralism of cultural ideas, values and norms; atheism, agnosticism, materialism-utilitarianism, individualism, and hedonism. This culture battle ruptures the bond between culture and nature, the relationship between religion and praxis or transcendent moral norm and traditional values as informed by religion and its transcendent character. Articulating the nature of this hostile attitude, especially in the Western lived experience, Étienne Gilson said:

our times witness one of the most important historical events, and even the most important which has happened since the conversion of Europe to Christianity: the abandonment of Christianity proclaimed for the first time by Europe, the conscious decision made by the modern world not only to not adhere to the Christian faith, but to not even live by the moral wealth that Christianity bequeathed it and to organise itself on new foundations that owed nothing to it.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No: 36

<sup>171</sup> Duma. 'The Great Ideas: Causes of Human Transcendence or Enslavement.' 151

<sup>172</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No: 19

<sup>173</sup> Etienne Gilson, *Por un orden católico*, trans. by a Catholic Order, Maravell, J. A. (Madrid: Cruz y Raya, 1936).15-16

This understanding expresses as a new cultural experience in Western region the emancipation of human person from his long standing basis of cultural living and analysis of realities, from the organic and ontic relation of culture with nature to a new cultural experience, namely 'secularism,' or laicization of cultural meaning of its religious influence that is irrational, mythological, metaphysical and transcendent character. This attitude portrays a disintegration of cultural phenomena wherein pluralism and individualization of cultural values and norms are considered as good for the person; as such, religion with its practices, rites, transcendent morality and traditional values are regarded as irrational, obsolete and a threat to absolute freedom and autonomy of rationalization.

However, John Paul II argues that religion does not reduce to the culture, to something that is merely existing within the domain of culture and other human achievements like science, art, practical science, technology or philosophy. Instead, it is a supreme and revealed science that introduces into human history the concept of universal and ultimate truth discovered in God, who is the fullness of mysteries and the answer to all existential questions. He maintains that a secular approach to culture opposes the ontic character and essence of culture which relates to human nature as a milieu to improve and grow a human person. He further argues that this new cultural experience hampers and denigrates the human person. We observe in this new cultural experience that;

man is threatened in his biological being by the irreparable deterioration of the environment, by the risk of genetic manipulations, attacks against unborn life and by torture, which is currently still seriously widespread. Our love for man must give us the courage to denounce ideas which reduce the human being to a thing that one can manipulate, humiliate, or arbitrarily eliminate. Man is also insidiously threatened in his moral being, because he is subject to hedonistic currents which exacerbate his instincts and fascinate him with illusions of consumption without discrimination.<sup>174</sup>

Subordinating aspects of culture, namely, religion and *praxis* to *theoria* or *poiesis* alters the nature of culture, denies the human person of his interiority, transforms the way individuals perceive themselves and how they give meaning to realities around them, and, in a sense, brings contradiction to his nature.

## 5. Secularism as a Contemporary Cultural Experience

The outcome of the changes in the conceptualization of culture in the diverse, complex and ambiguous meanings in the demarcation of the essence of culture, results in the new cultural experience, 'secularism.' The lived experience of secularism, given the effect of globalization

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<sup>174</sup> Jean-Charles Poupard, *The Church and Culture: Challenges and Confrontation: Inculturation and Evangelization*; Miller, J. H. (ed). (St. Louis: Central Bureau CCVA, 1994). 8

initiated by European colonial project, is gradually expanding globally, so that it has become a dominant cultural ideology in the contemporary Western experience. As such, what has become the new cultural experience in most Western countries consists in emancipation from religiously influenced analysis and neutrality or laicization of its axiological dominance in the public space.<sup>175</sup> This new cultural experience associated with cultural crisis is rooted on the ‘pluralism’ of worldviews, individual ethical/moral preference, and absolute freedom, and so considers as threatening any contrary cultural experience.

The concept of secularism is historically drawn from the phenomenon of secular as a worldview, right from ancient times to the present day, with its improved and diverse ideological meaning. It broadly refers to worldviews and ideologies that advocate for the isolation of the notion and influence of religious, spiritual, ultimate and transcendent experiences from human experiences. However, its historical development since the modern time has marred the concept with confusion and controversies as a result of the obscure rhetoric of various approaches regarding its meaning, which makes it difficult to grasp its proper meaning. Nonetheless, while questioning the possibility of knowing objective truth and breaking away from transcendent ideals, it basically appeals to pure immanent perception of realities which characterizes the ideology of secularism. Understanding the ideology of secularism would proceed from its root meaning ‘secular’ together with its anthropological consequence.

### 5.1.1. The Conceptual Meaning of the Secular

The phenomenon of secular dates back to ancient times.<sup>176</sup> In the Middle Age, it refers to the rescinding of the intellectual influence and domination of Christian religious interpretations. It connotes a separation of supernatural ideals from the worldly and natural ideals, with the conviction of the possibility of human pursuits without recourse to the divine. Thus, expressing a demarcation of cultural phenomena, that is, ‘*profanum*’ from ‘*sacrum*’ that leads to a philosophical approach which resulted in ‘secular humanism,’ with the tenet of human-centred and worldly-centred analysis of realities, wherein man is understood as the measure of all things.<sup>177</sup> It supposes the idea of belonging to this life, here and now, in this world, an ideology that proposes a separation of the sphere of religion with its transcendent analysis from the worldly understanding. It also negates the idea of God and the influence of religious categories from human experience understood to be worldly. This rejection presupposes secular as the

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<sup>175</sup> Jan Person, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. (2024). 377-400

<sup>176</sup> Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008). 22

<sup>177</sup> Krzysztof Gózdź, ‘Historical and Theological Sources of Secularism and Secularisation.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 40:2. (2022). 359/73

dominant lived experience, expressing worldly values, pure natural pursuit freed from supernatural thought.

Hence, Saint Augustine applied the concept of secular in ‘The City of God’<sup>178</sup> to differentiate the spiritual realm from the secular realm in the understanding of the world, stating that the two realms overlap and relate with each other with no sharp distinction. Saint Thomas Aquinas explains that the secular world is part of God’s creation, however, he states that the goal of life transcends this secular world. He also refers to the concept of secular in relation to matters of the good of the community, i.e., in the political affairs (*bonum civile*), wherein he admonishes Christians to obey the directives of the secular authorities rather than ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>179</sup> The understanding of secular portrayed here does not connote a negative meaning nor demarcation between transcendent/metaphysical and immanent or physical structure of the world, rather, it refers to the clear distinction of competences in the general human affairs, for the harmony of the inner and outer dimensions of the human person.

The concept ‘secular’ from its Latin root ‘*saecularis/saeculum*’ means ‘worldly, the present age/time,’ and underlies the consciousness of the theories, practices, objects and facts that are synonymous with the present age and century.<sup>180</sup> It stands opposed to the religious concept *saeculua(m)* which expresses living for eternity, whereas secular refers to worldly living or the life of this ordinary time—a time of dispersal, tension, being cut off from our past and out of touch with our future.<sup>181</sup> Thus, the concept of secular tends to set a distinction between temporal and spiritual, one who is concerned with ordinary worldly affair and one who is concerned with affairs of eternity.<sup>182</sup> It also expresses the sense of being progressive-minded, expressing an invincible world-view devoid of superstition or orthodoxy, as well as acts, even within the ecclesiastical field, that refer purely to this visible world. It characterises a worldview expunged from religious significance and transcendent interpretation of realities, wherefore realities are viewed through the lens of a natural and worldly perspective. Secular strictly speaking appeals to the affairs of this physical world, a lived experience according to Edward Royle, that squares with the phenomenon of neutrality and crisis of the faith.<sup>183</sup> Thus, it refers to laicity or laicization of spiritual and ultimate analysis and liberation from traditional or

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<sup>178</sup> Augustine. *The City of God*, (trans. Dods Marcus). Roman Roads Media, 426/2015). The Hellenistic period also attests to this demarcation in a progressive manner as a way to reform and purge the cultural experience of its mythological influence. See; Charles N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1940). Also, Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>179</sup> John M. Finnis, ‘On the Practical Meaning of Secularism.’ *Notre Dame Law Review*. 73:3. (1998). 491-516

<sup>180</sup> Wilson, B. *Religion in Sociological Perspective*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). 148

<sup>181</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*. (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). 57

<sup>182</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 54/5

<sup>183</sup> Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists, and Republicans*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980). Preface.

institutional authority and religious interference in one's worldly living and analysis, while supposing absolute autonomous rationalization of realities. The concept of secular appeals to pure immanent conception of the universe rejecting the traditional metaphysical mentality or cosmological Deism as "childishly benign view of human life, where everything will come right in the end, something which the really mature person cannot believe, and is willing to do without, having the courage to face reality as it is."<sup>184</sup> And so, secular refers to the natural and physical understanding of the universe, on the basis of pure a rational and epistemological approach.

Politically, it refers to non-interference of religion, dogmatic theories and religious authorities in political decisions and public life. It also relates to the lived experience independent of and not favouring any particular religious beliefs and practices, and interference of processes possessed of moral purpose in the mainstream politics. It implies that man is living in a modern society, where modernity is understood as being secular. Accordingly, modernity<sup>185</sup> as secular opposes the religious dominance and homogenous intervenes in human affairs that have pluralistic structure. Therefore, the sense of secular as modern cultural experience refers to "multifaceted notions which encompass the industrialization of work, the emergence of cities, replacement of small community by the society; rise of individualism; the rise of egalitarianism; rationalization of thoughts and of social organization."<sup>186</sup> It supposes a cultural shift that breaks away from traditional, dogmatic, superstitious and metaphysical conception of the world to a modern scientific conception, with non-social obligation and collective conscience, but a supposition of individual conscience, choice and obligation. It suggests recourse to the precise and definite methodology of natural science, devoid of speculation and mystical understanding.

Basically, the concept of secular highlights the idea of separate spheres of cultural phenomena, demarcating the material from spiritual and transcendent moral or praxiological base of the nature of the person, and the organic bond between nature and culture. While relegating this latter experience to private practice, it presupposes as the basis of cultural experience autonomy of rationality and pure immanent nature of the world. As a new cultural phenomenon, it supposes epistemic relativism in moral order and individual value-free

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<sup>184</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 318

<sup>185</sup> Modernity though does not belong to any unified intellectual current; it is described as the very distinct philosophical essence that is opposed to classical philosophy and tends to overcome the classical realism, while opposing objective truth as the basis of inquiry, it supposes absolute freedom as the basis of inquiry. It presupposes absolute immanentism; atheism and agnosticism, wherefor man is conceived as the autonomous creator of values, with rationalization of values, and individualization of cultural values. See Alfred Wierzbicki, 'Freedom and Necessity.' ed. Zdybicka, Z. *Freedom in Contemporary Culture: Acts of the V World Congress of Christian Philosophy, Catholic University of Lublin, 20-25 August 1996*. (Lublin: Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1998). 82

<sup>186</sup> Sabbir Ilias, *Secularization in a Single Word But it has Plural Manifestations in Society*. 4 [https://www.academia.edu/839567/Secularization\\_is\\_a\\_single\\_word\\_but\\_it\\_has\\_plural\\_manifestations\\_in\\_society](https://www.academia.edu/839567/Secularization_is_a_single_word_but_it_has_plural_manifestations_in_society).

determination of act. Indeed, the concept of secular prompts the ideology of secularism as a worldview in the contemporary Western lived experience.

## 5.2. The Philosophical Interpretation of Secularism

The rhetoric surrounding the phenomenon of secularism shows the difficulty of having a precise and unambiguous<sup>187</sup> discussion about the concept, ranging from its root meaning secular, secularization and secularism.<sup>188</sup> These controversies have been discussed in Peter Berger,<sup>189</sup> José Casanova,<sup>190</sup> Charles Taylor,<sup>191</sup> Graeme Smith,<sup>192</sup> Lübbe Hermann,<sup>193</sup> Pollack Detlef,<sup>194</sup> Bruce Steve,<sup>195</sup> among others, whose works demonstrate the linear and unilinear understanding of the content of the concept.

On the basis of these complexities, some scholars associate the experience of secularism with modernity or modernization, given the basic idea of differentiation of secular from the sacred, temporal from the spiritual realms,<sup>196</sup> consequent in such mentality, namely: atheism, agnosticism, materialism, utilitarianism, individualism, hedonism, nihilism, pluralism in worldview, values, life choices, ethical and moral anomie, breakdown of consensus regarding the understanding of man as a person, crisis of the family;<sup>197</sup> expressing the radical mentality of the ‘death of God.’ Nonetheless, some oppose the understanding of secularism as an ideological practice of decoupling the cultural spheres, rather, they perceive it as the attitude of individual, separate cultural phenomenon between secular and sacred, with some element of synergy, or rather harmonization of the two spheres, and lessening the grip and influence of religious experience.

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<sup>187</sup> Jocelyn Maclure, & Charles Taylor, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience*, trans. J. M. Todd. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). 14

<sup>188</sup> Jose Casanova made a distinction between the three concepts as: ‘secular understood as a central modern epistemic category; secularization as an analytical conceptualization of modern world-historical processes; and secularism as a worldview. See: Jose Casanova, ‘The Secular and Secularism.’ *Social Research*. 76:4. (2009). 1049-1066. Besides this distinction by Casanova, secularization also refers to laicisation, desacralisation, dechristianisation and presupposes secularism and secular humanism. See also; Paweł Mazanka, ‘Refleksje o filozoficznych źródłach sekularyzacji i sekularyzmu.’ *Studia Nauk Teologicznych*. 9. (2014). 55–83. On the basis of these distinctions, the analysis of this discussion will focus on the concept of secularism as a new cultural ideology that describes and brings out the elements of cultural disintegration that underlies its meaning.

<sup>189</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

<sup>190</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>191</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*

<sup>192</sup> Smith. *A Short History of Secularism*.

<sup>193</sup> Hermann Lübbe, *Säkularisierung: Geschichte eines ideenpolitischen Begriffs*. 3d ed. Alber Studienausgabe. (Freiburg-Germany: Karl Alber, 2003).

<sup>194</sup> Pollack Detlef, *Säkularisierungstheorie*. (Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte, 2013)

<sup>195</sup> Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West. Religion in the Modern World*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

<sup>196</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). 212.

<sup>197</sup> Jan Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. (2024). 377-400

In this sense, they maintain that there is a distinction between secularism and modernity, stating that secularism does not necessarily lead to the conflict between religion and modernity, rather, secularism appeals to a minimal expression of religious experience with secular character. Peter Berger aligning with José Casanova<sup>198</sup> asserts that there is a wall of separation between the two, stating that it is wrong to connect secularism with modernity, while modernity opposes religious consciousness and metaphysical analysis, secularism appeals rather to private belief and practice. He maintains that “most religious people even very fervent ones, operate within secular discourse in important areas of lives. For most believers, there is no stark dichotomy between faith and secularity, rather, a fluid construction of both.”<sup>199</sup> For although one may be secular in some areas of life, yet, the person professes faith and believe in God, such expression of belief is specifically reduced to individual experience, likewise moral experiences. The liberalization of religious ideals does not per se lead to spiritual desert or practical materialism, rather there is observable signs according Delsol, of “the return to pre-Christian ideas of the sacred, a fascination with oriental beliefs, pantheistic concepts, and cosmotheism.”<sup>200</sup> This odd opposition yet advocates for cultural liberal tendencies and cultural arbitrariness, and, as such cultural relativism that characterises contemporary secularism.

### 5.3. A Survey on the Tenets of Secularism

If the conceptual ideology of secularism is linked with materialism, then, its roots would have to be traced to ancient times, especially the Hellenistic period with the abandonment of mythology in favour of reason for a renewed and better understanding of the realities in the world. This reform is characterised by unceasing quest for progress and desire to get out of oneself.<sup>201</sup> What basically conceptualizes secularism as an ideological practice ranges from transformation from the consciousness of the sacred-minded worldview, God’s ordered living, religiously influenced morality and its teleological-base living and source of flourishing and fulfilment, to a secular mindset that appeals to pure reason, or empirical analysis. The abandonment of this former cultural experience encompasses a whole spectrum of attitudes consequent in

different types of atheism (from its ideological versions, e.g. Marxism or philosophical atheism, to the committed so-called new atheism, actively eradicating religion); practical materialism (sometimes combined with utilitarianism and

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<sup>198</sup> Casanova, J. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>199</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity: Towards a Paradigm for Religion in Pluralist Age*. (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014). x

<sup>200</sup> Chantal Delsol, *La fin de la chrétienté (The End of Christianity)*. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2021). 117

<sup>201</sup> Ernest Fortin, ‘The Idea of Reformation in the Age of the Fathers.’ *Cross Currents*, 11:1. (1961). 97-99

hedonism); religious indifference – from “scientific” agnosticism, which assumes a conflict between faith and science, to nihilism and unwillingness to pose metaphysical questions.<sup>202</sup>

Without going into the historical origin of the forms and reforms of the concept however, the notion of secularism from the ancient time through to the middle ages, then reinforced by Reformation and to the contemporary time is structured by the dispute over reason and faith, liberation of science from ecclesiastical interference and authority, consequent in the idea of scientism, Enlightenment movement and rationalization of realities.<sup>203</sup> Secularism broadly refers to a paradigm shift from the old sacred consciousness and order to the secular order, the separation<sup>204</sup> of church authority and religious doctrinal influence from secular state or political authority in different cognitive and practical spheres- science, philosophy, theology, law etc.

Accordingly, Charles Taylor maintains that secularism expresses anthropocentric shift, from the idea of the world ordered by God through moral order, obedience to God by following his demand, moral order for the good of creatures, as well as to achieve human flourishing and fulfilment, to an eclipse of this sense of purpose tied to God and moral order and the idea that we owe God the realization of his plan.<sup>205</sup> Secularism as the new order appeals to human reason, to its nature which challenges the idea of grace, God’s order and moral order as the cultural model, and so has become the prism of understanding and analysing the realities in the visible world. Nonetheless, Taylor articulates as follows what could be the rationale behind the separation of religion from the public/secular sphere:

1. It offends against reason (harbouring a role for mystery, proposing paradoxical notions, such as the God-man).
2. It is authoritarian (that is, it offends both freedom and reason).
3. It poses impossible problems of theodicy, it tries to avoid them; being often pusillanimous in proposing to compensate for the most terrible events in history in a future life; or else bowdlerizing in covering up how terrible these events are
4. It threatens the order of mutual benefits:
  - (i) in mortifying the self: it inveighs against the body, sensual satisfaction, etc.,
  - (ii) in mortifying others: in the ordinary case, as well, by its condemnation of the body and sensual satisfaction, but rising to an extreme in actual persecution (Calas case);
  - (iii) in threatening legitimate authority in societies dedicated to furthering the order of mutual benefits.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Jan Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. (2024). 377-400

<sup>203</sup> Gózdź, ‘Historical and Theological Sources of Secularism and Secularisation.’ 361

<sup>204</sup> This separation portrays the ideological character of the meaning of secularism wherein religion is understood as abstract, irrational, intolerant, creating conflicts, producing a predictable effects and so should be banished from public sphere. See: Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993). See also; Andrew Greeley, *Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millenium*. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 2003). 78

<sup>205</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 221/2

<sup>206</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 305

Besides the political sense of secularism which does not per se subscribe to the negative attitude towards religion or sacred/ultimate notion, instead is compatible with religious moral order; it rather appeals for the separation of religious/church authority and influence from the state and political affairs. Wherefore religion will be contained within its own differentiated religious sphere, while secular would maintain its own public sphere free from religion.<sup>207</sup> However, the conceptualization of secularism as a worldview in the contemporary culture was shaped by the philosophical thoughts of the modern philosophers especially the Cartesians, Immanuel Kant, Georg W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud<sup>208</sup> among others. The effects of the Enlightenment<sup>209</sup> and the post-Enlightenment movement that follows from the tensions and dilemmas of medieval Christian world all together provide a hermeneutic key<sup>210</sup> that shapes the understanding of secularism in the contemporary time. This background is informed by a liberal mentality or unlimited freedom, autonomous rationalization and manifests in religious decline, the rise of modern science that necessitated unbelief and the idea that faith is incompatible with reason. It construes natural science and its methodology as the only source of all knowledge (truth) fundamentally defining the new character of secularism. Nietzsche had proposed unlimited freedom as the basis of future cultural phenomenon, stating that man is entrusted with the capacity as God to control and usurp his place in the world. He writes:

What alone can be our doctrine? That no one gives man his qualities-neither God, nor society, nor his parents and ancestors, nor he himself...One is necessary, one is a piece of fatefulness, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole; there is nothing which could judge, measure, compare, or sentence our being, for [it] would mean sentencing the whole...That nobody is held responsible any longer...that the world does not form a unity either as a sensorium or as 'spirit'-that alone is the great liberation. The concept of 'God' was until now the greatest objection to existence. We deny God, we deny the responsibility in God: only thereby do we redeem the world.<sup>211</sup>

Thus, the British writer George Holyoake (the father of contemporary secularism) in 1851 remarks that this new mentality is aimed at liberating (natural) science and cognitive experience

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<sup>207</sup> Jose Casanova, 'The Secular and Secularism.' *Social Research*. 76:4. (2009). 1049-1066

<sup>208</sup> Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*. 369/70

<sup>209</sup> The period of Enlightenment was the starting of the milestone in the conception of culture. The age was marked and influenced by the philosophical thoughts of R. Descartes, F. Bacon, J. Locke, G. Galileo, G. W. Leibniz, I. Newton, J. J. Rousseau, I. Kant among others. One denominator among these philosophers has been the understanding of religion as an inward, subjective and private phenomenon separate from science and politics. This thought could be described as 'laicization' of religion from secular arena. The age was not just characterized by autonomy of reason and limitless capacity to comprehend realities independent of external and illusory truth, it was marked by the supposition that the realities in the universe could be rationally demystified and catalogued through autonomous reason. Given its materialistic interpretations, metaphysics and transcendence were substituted with immanentism since the world tends to determine its course.

<sup>210</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 80. See also; Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, trans. O. Burge. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). 9-10

<sup>211</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Richard Polt. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 1889/1997). 36-37

from the web of metaphysical, theological/ecclesiastical dominance, and so realizes cognitive autonomy. That is to say, it is for the actualization of independent freedom of thought, proper distinction in the moral order, philosophy and other ideals in human society, especially in politics.

He also explains that secularism structures human autonomy or autonomy of reason in all endeavours, given the divergent sources of knowledge, ideas, truth; as such, these sources will be independent from orthodox Christian religious interference, filled with speculation and dogmatism that also appeals to different truth and object. Since religious culture and its attendant *praxis* or transcendent moral order appeal to supernatural and metaphysical truth, but the theory of secularism he said opposes any knowledge which cannot be tested by the experience of this visible world, for such should be of no concern to scientists, progressive thinkers, moralists and politicians.<sup>212</sup> Thus he expresses materialism as one of the features of secularism, stating that: “materialism will be advanced as the only sound basis of rational thought and practice,”<sup>213</sup> and that the human being will rely on material means for change and improvement of real conditions in this life.<sup>214</sup> This gives the impression that the human person possesses only utilitarian or material good, and that human life begins and ends in this physical world. He writes:

secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principles are three: (1) The improvement of this life by material means. (2) That science is the available Providence of man. (3) That it is good to do good. Whether there be other good or not, the good of the present life is good, and it is good to seek that good.<sup>215</sup>

Inasmuch as he advocates for the separation of sacred/religious truth from the secular/political truths, he however explains that the truth of secularism does not oppose or diminish the truth of religion, neither does it contradict it. Instead, secularism as an independent cultural sphere could exist equally with the religious sphere, without eliminating religious consciousness from the public domain. He supposes the dilution of influence of orthodox religion with its attendant *praxis*/morality, stating that “secularism supersedes religious culture from its standpoint as an innovative scientific, educative and moral system, with its liberal secular moral and epistemological system constructed independent of the old religious order.”<sup>216</sup> Thus, he maintains that the theory of secularism appeals to personal morality and epistemology

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<sup>212</sup> George Holyoake, *The Reasoner*. (1852). 12: 34

<sup>213</sup> George Holyoake, *The Movement*. (1843). 1: 117

<sup>214</sup> Michael Rectenwald. ‘Holyoake and Secularism: The Emergence of ‘Positive’ Freethought.’ *Nineteenth-Century British Secularism*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). 81

<sup>215</sup> George Holyoake, *English Secularism: A Confession of Belief*. (Chicago: Open Court Pub. Co, 1896). 22

<sup>216</sup> Colin Campbell, *Towards A Sociology of Irreligion*. (London: Macmillan, 1971). 54

freed from orthodox religious influence, and not the absence or negation of religion. It demonstrates a shift from the notion of ultimate and religious experience and analysis to secular interpretation of realities, or rather neutrality of religiosity, the influence of religiously informed or transcendent morality and traditional value, while prioritizing material perception, unlimited freedom of conscience and personal decisions and choices.

Moreso, the lived experience of secularism in the contemporary Western culture approaches the realities in the world, perceived not as ‘cosmos’ that is ‘fixed’ and ‘unvarying,’ instead the notion of ‘universe’ understood as ‘evolving’,<sup>217</sup> is substituted with the idea of static mentality of ‘cosmos.’ This portrays the understanding of reality as pure consciousness and a sensual perception of the world and human being as reality that is fluid and evolving. Thus, Taylor describes this cultural experience as a “great invention of the West...an immanent order in Nature, whose working could be systematically understood and explained on its own terms independent of supernatural, or one transcendent God, or of Gods or spirits, or magics forces, or whatever.”<sup>218</sup> It is a kind of trajectory similar to modernism that appeals to the transformation from Deism to humanism, Christian religious mentality to exclusive humanism, transcendence to immanence, belief to unbelief, enchanted to disenchanting, and transition from understanding the world as cosmos to universe,<sup>219</sup> from primitive thought about humanity to a superfluous secular individuals. Likewise the weakening of religiosity with its feature of privatization of truth of good and morality. As such, the truth of science has become purely cognitively constituted, rooted in unlimited individual freedom.

And so, the idea of autonomous scientific cognition, value-free determination of scientific pursuit is freed from any form of influence (theistic, traditional, or authority). This affirms Kantian debate that the source of knowledge is purely cognitive, expressed in the dictum: “dare to know! Have courage to use your own reason;”<sup>220</sup> and Auguste Comte’s positive phase in the stages of human historical phases, characterized by elimination of all excesses of fantasy and the increase dominance of the mind or reason.<sup>221</sup> It reflects Richard Dawkins’ antireligious idea in his expression that believing in God is the same as believing in fairy tales,<sup>222</sup> which conditions Graeme Smith’s understanding of secularism as:

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<sup>217</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 323

<sup>218</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 15/6

<sup>219</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 29

<sup>220</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Answer the Question: What is Enlightenment?* Trans. Daniel Fidel Ferrer. New York: Routledge, 1784/2013). 2

<sup>221</sup> Auguste Comte, *System of Polity*, vol 4, trans-J. H. Bridges; Frederick Harrison; E. S. Beesly; R. Congreve & H. D. Hutton. (Bristol-UK: Thoemmes, 2001). 178

<sup>222</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*. (London: Bantam Press, 2006). 52/3

a way of thinking about the world and life which makes no reference to supernatural beliefs. Obviously this entails a rejection of religious beliefs. The world, and our life upon it, are to be examined, reflected upon and studied without reference to anything beyond what can be known by human beings here and now. It is a way of life or interpretation of life which only refers to the natural order, never the supernatural.<sup>223</sup>

This understand expresses as the basic tenets of secularism the separation of cultural phenomena, worldview and human affairs from God-centredness/consciousness, notion of ultimate interpretation of reality, the idea of secularization of nature, values, morality and negation of the sphere of sacrum in public domain, relegating these lived experiences to private practices. It appeals to epistemic relativism informed by absolute freedom, whereby each person relies on the autonomy of his inner individual moral disposition independent of any heteronomy or transcendent influence. Freedom is therefore understood as acting from man's untamed nature, living according to an individual's natural desires, which squares with Nietzsche's believe that naturalistic morality is proper for man. For each person acting according to his natural desires, becomes determined, and on his own draws or ascribes meaning to his existence which reduces man's act to pure instinctual mechanism.

Taylor calls this new cultural phenomenon 'immanent frame' and asserts that it has become the basis of all human experience-cosmic, social and moral orders, understood as purely immanent secular order devoid of transcendent character, wherein man exists as if God would (did) not exist- *etsi Deus non daretur*,<sup>224</sup> which resonates Nietzsche's 'death of God,' receding the consciousness of God and notion of ultimate reality especially the soul from human experience. This mentality of Godlessness, negation of transcendence, traditional values and transcendent moral order aligns with Philip Gorski's understanding that the basic features of contemporary secularism consist in "disappearance of religion, religious decline, religious transformation and privatization of religion."<sup>225</sup> It also affirms Nietzsche's vision that the nature of culture in the future must rid itself of all mythologies, transcendence, metaphysical, religious and external sources of influence, for these sources are unmeasured and flows from indiscriminate drive<sup>226</sup> or heteronomy. And Max Weber describes this as a transition from 'enchanted/porous self' to 'disenchanted/buffered.'<sup>227</sup> Peter Berger describes this as "the progressive autonomization of societal sectors from the domination of religious meaning and

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<sup>223</sup> Smith. *A Short History of Secularism*. 23

<sup>224</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 245

<sup>225</sup> Philip Gorski, 'Looking Forward, Looking Back: Continuity and Change at the Turn of the Millenium.' *American Sociological Review*. 65:1. (2000). 138-167

<sup>226</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale. (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979). 7

<sup>227</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 29/30; 38/9. See also: Max Weber, 'Religious Rejection of the World and their Directions,' eds. Gerth, H. H. & Mills, C. W. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. (London: Routledge, 1915/2009). 323-359

institutions,<sup>228</sup> with the impression that the human mind is freed from the theological and metaphysical web. Although secularism tends to be the dominant contemporary Western cultural experience, however, there seems to be some confusing supposition, given the admixture of the ideals of secularism with the consciousness of the experience of the supernatural. Accordingly, Charles Taylor observes that the secularized person even though approaches reality from the pure rational, empirical and material perception, yet, experiences fears, anxieties, terrors, and magic that belong to the porous self or enchanted self, which is believed to belong to the enchanted world of spirits and forces,<sup>229</sup> and the old cultural order.

This consciousness expresses the diversity and confusion about secularism in the contemporary experience that reflects in the unlimited freedom and choice, and a new spiritual mentality that is laced with sociological tools, without religious sentiment and transcendent character considered as a non-attractive model of living. This new spirituality plays out in the search for one's own individual flourishing, pursuit of happiness and salvation.<sup>230</sup> Even with the decline of orthodox religious experiences and transcendent moral order from the public, yet Taylor explains, a vast majority still profess faith in God,<sup>231</sup> although as a private practice of each individual, giving the impression of personal religion and morality. Taylor calls this situation an 'Enlightenment myth,' with the impression that this attitude liberates human reason from religious illusion. This new cultural experience in a way does not tolerate interpersonal relationship given the emphasis on individual pursuit and maximization of pleasure, which express individualism as a character of contemporary secularism.

Thus, the human person in the present-day has become autonomous creator of cultures, values, and laws, especially moral laws; and subjective definer of truths, consequent to the present-day relativisms. Man's capacity as the creator of value also makes him the master of nature, as well as master over himself and creator of his own virtues.<sup>232</sup> Truth in the present-day experience Berger explains has become:

the private affairs of individuals, losing its character of self-evident subjective plausibility...And reality in so far as it is still maintained by the individual, is apprehended as being rooted within the consciousness of the individual rather than in the facticities of the external world.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. 107

<sup>229</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 300

<sup>230</sup> Jan Perszon, 'The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.' *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. 2024). 377-400

<sup>231</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 1-3

<sup>232</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All-Too-Human: A Book for Free Spirit*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1878/1996). 9

<sup>233</sup> Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. 151/2

This attitude of relativism is consequent to such present-day such experiences like: unbelief, positivism, nihilism, agnosticism, atheism, individualism and consumerism,<sup>234</sup> while expressing exclusive humanism and immanentism. In a way it portrays the ideal of consumerism, which has been described by Karl Marx as the new civilization that empowers man with “the capacity to invent new products to meet new markets and new demand. With the need for basic food, clothing and housing satisfied by the early twentieth century, wherefor capitalism becomes reincarnated as consumer capitalism by which individuals and families become concentrated into the consuming household.”<sup>235</sup> The desire for pleasure and material satisfaction has become the new sense of culture and the reason of being, which Taylor calls “anthropocentric turn,”<sup>236</sup> as such depicts the Copernican turn in the history of thought. What qualifies as new cultural phenomenon consists in “culture of authenticity, or expressive individualism, in which people are encouraged to find their own way, discover their own fulfilment, do their own thing.”<sup>237</sup> It expresses the impression that one is liberated from certain earlier<sup>238</sup> confining horizons, illusions, limitations of knowledge.<sup>239</sup>

These features of the present-day lived experience of Western secularism portray a fractured culture with the malaise effect in the anthropocentric turn about the essence of human nature and the truth, good and beauty of human being as a person and subject. Consequently, the insuperable objection to the objective truth and transcendent morality/value as the essence of culture and basis of all human activities. It also demonstrates the dichotomy between freedom and necessity, subjectiveness and objectiveness, truth and freedom; wherefore epistemic relativism and moral plurality as the dominant principles of act, alienate and objectify the human subject. Taylor captures these malaise effects thus: “a sense of internal malaise, emptiness, a need for meaning or loss of meaning; disengaged subjectivity; youths suffer lack of strong purpose in their lives; human society that is fickle, full of vice and disorder, lacking in greatness or high deeds, full of blasphemy and viciousness.”<sup>240</sup> Against this background, this anthropological defect supposes human person as a ‘what’ and as an ‘idea’ as against the truth of person as ‘who,’ and a ‘real’ ‘concrete’ being. Some challenging manifestations of contemporary Western secularism that portray this anthropological defect consist of: decline of religious

<sup>234</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. Nos: 86-90

<sup>235</sup> Jeff Lewis, *Cultural Studies: The Basic Studies*. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011). 6

<sup>236</sup> An understanding that is ‘self-centred,’ with the apprehension that man has the capacity to order himself and his world via pure reason and natural or mechanistic science, i.e. pure a priori rationalization of culture and cultural pluralism or multiplicity. Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 301/4

<sup>237</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 299

<sup>238</sup> God’s undeniable presence and control of the natural world, the Divine order and plan designed at creation, even the existential challenges of storms, floods, droughts, plagues, etc. were seen as acts of God; together with the idea that the world is enchanted, that is, filled with the presence of spirits, demons and moral forces which influence human acts. See; Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 25-6

<sup>239</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 22

<sup>240</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 305

significance, cultural imperialism, negation of transcendence, biological determinism, absolutization of freedom, fluid identity of human being, fascism, communism, moral relativism, culture of death among others. Some of these manifestations will be discussed along their anthropological effects on the essence of the human person.

## CHAPTER II

### MANIFESTATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY WESTERN SECULARISM

#### Introduction

The dramatic story of contemporary Western lived experience of secularism will be incomplete without discussing some of the specific manifestations and the anthropological effects of this ideological cultural disintegration. However, conscious of the positive impact of the new cultural experience in improving human living, and cognizance that though secularism appeals to the separation of the religious sphere from the secular. Nevertheless, it has eradicated the presence and impact of religious sentiment even in the public domain. Thus, Graeme Smith, likewise some scholars like Chantal Delsol, remark that, there is still religious consciousness in the contemporary Western culture, although in a new form that set boundaries in the notion of the ultimate and ethical experience, between good and evil. Christianity, Delsol asserts, “is a profound structure, a far-reaching mesh, with a lasting influence on lived experiences.”<sup>1</sup> Smith further explains, emphasizing that Western lived experience is an ethical society, because, modern natural science has not been able to provide an ethical system for the people’s lived experiences and the only functional set of norm of morality has come from Christianity, from God’s moral order.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, the growing interest in nature as a material thing without reference to God or transcendence, and personal morality seems to counter this ethical consciousness. What has become the underlying principle of experience is dependence on nature-for-its-own-sake,<sup>3</sup> expressing materialism and exclusive immanentism determines human flourishing and self-fulfilment. Its denial of the fundamental principles constituted through Christian religious culture, while insisting of individual freedom and sovereignty of reason has necessitated anthropocentric shift, influencing also the meaning and the nature of culture as the gateway to understand man as a person. Some manifestations of this shift include: decline of religious experiences, negation

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<sup>1</sup> Chantal Delsol, *La fin de la Chrétienté (The End of Christendom)*. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2021). 38. See also; Peter Heather, *Christendom: The Triumph of a Religion, 300-1300*. (New York: Knopf, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008). 40

<sup>3</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*. (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). 90

of transcendence, absolute freedom, moral relativism, fluid human identity, culture of death among others.

## 1. The Decline of the Lived Religious Experiences<sup>4</sup>

The present-day Western cultural experience given the emergence of secularist ideology is witnessing abandonment of religious consciousness. The spectrum of this experience relates to various attitudes, but crystalizes as conflict between religion as a sphere of culture and science (*theoria/poiesis*), thereby cuts off an essential and foundational part of Western culture. And so, decline in religious experience refers to the significant emptying of pews in the church, abandoning of Christian spirituality in pursuit of individualized spirituality and salvation, non-attendance of religious or Christian rituals and feasts and “de-churchification of young people?”<sup>5</sup> The neutrality of religious influence and its insignificance manifests also in both institutional and practical dimensions of the Western lived experience as the modern person erroneously contrasts his position with God. It ideally expresses the “fall off of religious belief and practice, wherein people turn away from God or are emptied of God, church and notion of ultimate reality.”<sup>6</sup> This mentality portrays what Davie Grace describes as the state of overlapping lived experience of in form of “believing without belonging or belonging without believing;”<sup>7</sup> which some scholars refer to as ‘dead end,’<sup>8</sup> of secularism given the resurgence of religious experience in the public sphere. Nonetheless, the reality of abandonment or weakening of Christian religiosity seems to be the dominant and observable character of the present-day Western experience. It expresses the winding up of religious experiences and other religious practices, a decrease in the population that engages actively in religiosity and organised religious rituals and teachings, which have been with

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<sup>4</sup> In the analysis of this section, I will be interchanging the expression ‘declines of religious lived experiences’ with either ‘neutrality of religious living’ or ‘insignificance of religious living.’ In any of these expressions, I mean the same thing, namely the experience of loss of grip of power and influence of Orthodox Christian religion in Western cultural experience. Whereas religious (Christian) experience refers to public expression of practices of believe in God, ultimate meaning of life, transcendence, transcendent truth, values and morality, together with other doctrinal ritual and rites, and articulated spiritual sensibility.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. (2024). 377-400. See also; Tomáš Halík, *The Afternoon of Christianity: The Courage to Change*, trans. Gerald Turner. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021). Also; Tomasz P. Terlikowski, *Wygasanie: Zmierzch mojego kościoła (Towards Extinction: the Twilight of my Church)*. (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 2

<sup>7</sup> This concept suggests that religious experience has not really declined from human experience, rather, the manner of belief has changed, likewise the practice, from being more of a personal experience of the Divine or transcendence, to a less involved belief and practice. See: Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*. (Cambridge: Wiley Blackwell, 1994). 94

<sup>8</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). 1

substituted with secular experience of unbelieving sensibility and a recourse to modern natural scientific reasoning and methodology.

Moreso, belief in God has become one of the many options, or in fact, insignificant in determining human flourishing. As observed by Taylor, this cultural attitude which was virtually impossible in the past, has in the present-day experience become a new model of culture wherein “belief in God is no longer axiomatic, because there are alternatives.”<sup>9</sup> Expressing concern for this new experience, Leszek Kołakowski asked: will our culture survives if it forgets Jesus? Do we believe that if Jesus is banished from our world, this world will be lost?”<sup>10</sup> In relation to this concern, Attfield, Robin observes that: “the world could be succinctly and fruitfully explained without employing the notions normally favoured by the ecclesiastical and lay establishment, instead, through mechanistic theories, realities could be explained by matter and motion, or by matter, motion, and weight alone.”<sup>11</sup> For religion given this new attitude is understood to have lost its grip of influence and significance in the present-day lived experience, since each person has become the master of nature and culture. In this new ideal, man with his new craftsmanship and technological devices possesses the absolute capacity to enjoy the fruits and goods of the earth without pains.<sup>12</sup> It suggests that all the forces and other bodies that were supposed in the former cultural experience to be determined by God of Abraham are within man’s control. Thus, religious approach to some existential challenges and other human needs in the contemporary Western culture has been substituted with natural scientific methodological response. Secularism therefore eliminates religious influence and the consciousness of God from the public space and aptly stations the person into a new form of cultural experience, the experience of revolution such as scientific and technological revolution.

Indeed, this attitude of revolution through the modern natural science subjects the realities in the world under its method of rationalization and so considers religious realities as obsolete, erroneous, and full of superstition, thereby opposes its centrality and pivotal influence in the analysis of the realities in the world. This consideration makes religious (Christian) experience as insignificant, and seen as narrow in understanding the realities in the world, as such it’s taken to be of no or less relevance to the present-day human consciousness. Given this new ideal, religion is understood as a superfluous experience and a

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<sup>9</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 3

<sup>10</sup> Leszek Kołakowski, *Jezus ośmieszony: Esej apologetyczny i sceptyczny*, trans. Dorota Zańko. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2014). 11

<sup>11</sup> Robin Attfield, *God and the Secular*. (Wales: University of College Cardiff Press, 1978). p. 34

<sup>12</sup> Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Methos*, trans. Donald A. Cress. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985). part 6

worldview filled with doubt, an unreliable attitude, as such impedes the progress of natural modern science as the basis of analysis of realities and source of human advancement and flourishing. This new ideal that rescinds the consciousness of God, while suggesting a new intelligibility for proper human flourishing appeals to different forms of atheism, challenging the theories about the existence of God, creationism, doctrinal rites, rituals, practices and power of grace, while presupposing exclusive humanism, immanentism and materiality of the world. It resonates Friedrich Nietzsche thought that:

a day will come when the remembrance of a fearful event will be fixed to my name, the remembrance of a unique crisis in the history of the earth, of the most profound clash of conscience, of a decree enacted against all that had been believed, enacted and sanctified right down to our days...that from his very beginning, man had thought nothing, said nothing, done nothing that did not draw its inspiration from this certitude that there is God or gods...now, there is no longer one, or rather, we see that there never was one! We shall have to change completely our every thought, word and deed...a 'reversal of values.'<sup>13</sup>

Accordingly, Pierre van der Meer remarks that Western culture is experiencing a crisis of change of epoch and a total revolutionary approach in the entirety of the foundation of her lived experience previously occupied with Christian beliefs, dogmas and ethics to a new form of living that neutralizes these experiences. He said:

enormous events have taken place in these last twenty-five years (1914-1939). The face of the world has been totally changed. All the values in force before 1914 have been displaced. The tablets of the old law of Christian civilization have been broken, and our civilization has lost its unity, and is not even Christian any more, however much, old and tired, we turned the illusion of living eternally under its shadow. We believed that at least it would endure as long as us. We didn't suspect the possibility of a mutation.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the new cultural experience considers as default practice the naïve belief in God's divine providence, the reality of heaven or Hell, the afterlife, and other dogmatic constitutions. Instead, the materialization of life and the world and believe in this visible world is consequent in mass unbelief and religious indifference in the West.

This cultural approach of neutrality of religion of it powers gives the impression of emancipation of the Western culture on the basis that: "the end of human person is neither the immediate adoration of God nor the heavenly city of the blessed, rather the realization of those projects, appropriated to this world on the suggestion of both reason and

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<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, as quoted in: Gilson, E. *The Terrors of the Year Two Thousand*. (Toronto: University of St. Michael, 1984). 8

<sup>14</sup> Peter van Der Meer de Walcheren, *Hombres y Dios*, trans. W. de Ulupé. (Buenos Aires: Dedebece Ediciones Desclée de Brower, 1949). 9-10

imagination.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, José Casanova describes the human person in this situation as “faced with *fait accompli* of persistent minimization and decline,”<sup>16</sup> wherein the person feels emancipated from the influence of the orthodox Christian religion approach to realities, especially norms of activities or moral order. Freed from this influence, religion therefore becomes unpopular and a minority practice, with each person assuming autonomous control, possession and analysis of the world. This neutrality of religious dominance also extends to it powers in the axiological principles in public policy which has been replaced with the ideology of secularism and laicism, since religion is considered as threat to individual absolute freedom, personal life choices and ideas.<sup>17</sup> Given this claims, the person assumes the autonomous capacity to attain fullness and flourishing through his individual cognitive capacity, determining independently the truth and meaning of his existence, which weakens the essence of religion in the nature of culture.

As such, those moments of vestigial ritual, prayer and religious doctrines and rites barely constitute any significance in the present-day Western living that has been emptied of God factor or reference to ultimate reality.<sup>18</sup> Even when it is accepted as a worldview, it is treated as an idealistic phenomenon, for God according to the Cartesian exists only in the human mind as one of the thinking things. Thus, Ludwig Feuerbach remarks that “belief in God is a human construction and a projection of human ideal.”<sup>19</sup> These notions portray religion as an insignificant cultural experience in the present time, or exists as a phenomenon that is lived according to individual rational or emotional feeling as it aligns with each person’s nature, with no transcendent character. Likewise the notion of man as the only being created in the image of God (*imago Dei*), believe in the Bible as the revealed truth of God, subjected to critical and rigorous analysis on the basis of modern natural science and its methodology. This attitude reduces the Biblical contents to fictional and mythological stories that cannot be proved or substantiated scientifically. Consequently, the doubt about the authorship of the Bible and related questions like: “who wrote the various parts of the Bible? How did those authors reflect the assumptions and prejudices of their cultural times?”<sup>20</sup> And so, the Bible is now seen as one of the ancient historical text which has no attachment to any

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<sup>15</sup> Charles C. Nweke, C. ‘Secularism, Secular State and Religious Freedom.’ *African Journals Online*. (2015). 85-94

<sup>16</sup> Jose Casanova, ‘Rethinking Secularization : A Global Comparative Perspective.’ *The Hedgehog Review*, 8:1. (2006). 7-22. See also; Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Jan Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42:2. (2024). 377-400

<sup>18</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 2

<sup>19</sup> Smith. *A Short History of Secularism*. 178

<sup>20</sup> Grant Wacker, ‘Religious Liberalism and the Modern Crisis of Faith. *National Humanities Centre*. (2000).

supernatural or spiritual explanations and relevance. Moreso the elimination of the Biblical creation account from schools, as well as other doctrinal instructions that suggest spiritual and transcendental structure of human being.

Therefore, the intellectualization of religion, gave rise to agnosticism, atheism, hedonism, nihilism and unwillingness towards the ultimate apprehension of the universe and human being. Also, it results in the presupposition that ‘there is no God,’ and the permissiveness of any act as long as it tends towards individual flourishing and realization of one’s fullness, freed from any religious influence. And so, the idea of ‘the death of God’ Friedrich Nietzsche states, should be followed by the demise of religion and Christian-moral culture.<sup>21</sup> Thus, each person is invited to adopt the life-style of nominal seeking of well-being, optimum happiness and consumption, purged of transcendent truth, orthodoxy and tradition considered as heteronomous. Consequent in radical theological ideologies and liberation theology such as; “Black Theology, Feminist Theology, Gay, Lesbianism and Transgender Theology,”<sup>22</sup> as well as neuro-physiological explanations of mental functioning<sup>23</sup> that appeal to pure material nature of the human person.

As such, the scientific truth and object of theology as revealed God, has ceased to be the God of philosophers and scientists, the idea of God has been reduced to a topic for free exploration of human thought and human consciousness<sup>24</sup> and as object imagination, ecstasy of one’s feelings, which has no empirical import to human life. It also extends to the norms and principles of action being eclipsed of their reference to the consciousness of God or religious experience. Hence, the impression of rational liberation from theological hegemony, which resonates thus Ludwig Feuerbach that:

religion is a form of false consciousness that creates the idea of God as a being opposed to man...the creation of ‘God,’ entails degrading man, which ought to be opposed by overcoming traditional faith. Thus, philosophy, especially anthropology is meant to replace theology until man becomes conscious that ‘God’ is only a name for his own idealized essence. When false consciousness becomes extinct, the place of ‘God’ will be taken up by the state, and the role of philosophy by politics. In the State the powers of man divide and develop only to constitute an infinite being...The State is the essence of all realities, the State is the providence of man...The State is the unlimited, infinite, true, complete, divine man...the absolute man<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1887/2007). xiii

<sup>22</sup> Smith. *A Short History of Secularism*. 179

<sup>23</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 4

<sup>24</sup> John Paul II. *Memory and Identity: Personal Reflections*. (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005). 13

<sup>25</sup> Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy, vol. VII*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2003). 294-299

The idea of rational liberation wherein the state is conferred with absolute authority over the person in realization self-fulfilment and responding to the existential challenges seems to portray the attitude of totalitarianism. Thus, the idea of “*laïcité*-free from religion,”<sup>26</sup> finds its stronghold, where public expression of religious sentiment is forbidden. In which case, the state becomes deified and arrogated with infinite, absolute and complete power, and acting through the ideals of political correctness, plays the role of God in human affairs, and so strips religion of its significance in cultural experience. The eclipse of the efficacy of religious experience comes with a prize especially on the youths who in the present-day have inclined to egoism, consumerism, hedonism, utilitarianism and relativism as the pragmatic attitudes and patterns of behaviour;<sup>27</sup> and these attitudes very often result in depression, suicide, and addictions.

Moreso, the natural desire for spiritual or supernatural ecstasy has in the contemporary time been substituted with such experience that has no transcendence character in activities like: yoga exercise, fiction-based religion, psycho-therapeutics techniques, wellness/fitness/gym centres, neo-paganism, music festivals,<sup>28</sup> and fictional magical films. These acts according to Delsol create the idea of the “return to pre-Christian ideas of Sacred, a fascination with Orientals, pantheistic concepts and cosmotheism.”<sup>29</sup> And in their search for meaning, have abandoned the essential spiritual treasure of religious culture and resorted to what Danièle Hervieu-Léger describes as “exculturation of Christian experiences,”<sup>30</sup> wherein the fantasies of these pseudo objects of faith have become the new normal. This affirms the proposition of Alexis Tocqueville that, “there will be in future global weakening of religious beliefs and practices in an altogether simple fashion, where religious zeal will be extinguished.”<sup>31</sup> For “the sources of human power are not transcendent, they are found in nature, or in our inner depths, or in both,”<sup>32</sup> and this sense of inner depth has no character of ultimate reality. These acts fail to reflect the relationality that truly define human nature, but express individualism and pure naturalistic constitution of human being. It affirms

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<sup>26</sup> Juan Irarrazaval, *Changes in the World Cultural Studies since 1991*. (Washington, DC-Georgetown University: Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 2017). 2

<sup>27</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa. No: 106

<sup>28</sup> Staf Hellemans, & Peter Jonkers, ‘Reforming the Catholic Church Beyond Vatican II,’ eds. Staf Hellemans & Peter Jonkers. *Envisioning Future of the Catholic Church*. (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2018). 2

<sup>29</sup> Delsol. *La fin de la Chrétienté (The End of Christendom)*. 117

<sup>30</sup> Danièle Hervieu-Léger, ‘Mapping the Contemporary Forms of Catholic Religiosity,’ eds. Taylor, C., Casanova, J., McLean, G. *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age (Christian Philosophical Studies, I)*. (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012). 34

<sup>31</sup> Tomáš Halik, Religion and Individual Personal Fulfilment,’ eds. Staf Hellemans & Peter Jonkers. *Envisioning Future of the Catholic Church*. 33

<sup>32</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 9

Nietzsche's supposition that the decline of religious influence will also negate the idea of the spiritual essence of the person. He said:

the human spirit was not pure and separate from the senses, from the nervous system, or from the environmental realm. Rather, spirit and body were a unity, intimately related to climate and geographical location. The salvation of human kind, was not dependent upon any kind of quaint curiosity of the theologians, but the question of nutrition...for divinity had been erroneously sought in the concepts of God, soul, the Beyond, truth and eternal life, whereas the basic things: nutrient, place, and climate had been ignored.<sup>33</sup>

And so, the human person in the present-day Western experience lives as a mere material being of this physical world with shattered faith. Indeed, the true transcendent religious consciousness and its attendant basis of moral principles have vanished, therefore, there is no reason to hold on to the vestiges of old custom<sup>34</sup> and the notion of ultimate or transcendence.

## 2.2. The Negation of Transcendence

The concept of human transcendence continues to manifest as one of the central themes of discussion and a subject of division among contemporary philosophy.<sup>35</sup> As a perennial philosophical understanding, it refers to the spiritual constitution of the universe and human person although with some element of immanence. However, the emergence of secularism as a new cultural experience with its exclusive immanent understanding challenges this essential defining constitution of human person. This new cultural experience negates the ideal of transcendence in the reality of the human person and the world understood as pure material reality. This foundational demarcation of the realm of transcendence from material in the sole immanent supposition of cultural phenomena is considered by some scholars (e.g. Karl Marx,<sup>36</sup> Sigmund Freud<sup>37</sup> and Emilie Durkheim<sup>38</sup>) as

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<sup>33</sup> Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews: His Critique of Judeo-Christianity in Relation to the Nazi Myth*. New (York: State University of New York, 1994). 47

<sup>34</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington & B. Massumi. (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1984). 77

<sup>35</sup> Transcendence is usually contrasted with the notion of immanence, and often seen as a separation of division between divinely and human phenomena. Structured by the ancient thinkers Plato and Aristotle who thought the truth and essence of realities to exist outside the world, while Aristotle thought the opposite, that the essence of realities reside within the world. This dividing opinions have remained in the history of thought and in practical experiences, and in the present time has become the tacit assumption about the structure of the world and human being, wherefor the concept of transcendence is negated while expressing the ideal of immanence as the dominant factor in the world. The sole immanent ideal supposes that everything is matter, challenging the compositionality of man, by reducing man to aggregate of organs.

<sup>36</sup> Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy*, trans. Matthew Carmody. (Deutsch-Französische: Jahrbrücher, 1843/2009).

<sup>37</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. A. A. Brill. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1914).

a progress in human history. As such, rescinding the unrealistic transcendence from the material world, or the separation of sacred from profane according to Durkheim gives birth to structured social dimensions of human life. This is consequent to the idea of the sole corporeal nature of the world and human being, such that fragmentation of the realm of spiritual from the material has no significant effect in the determination of good or evil, which as Durkheim asserts are two separate genera, with nothing in common, as such the variables good or evil is also part of the sacred.<sup>39</sup> This neutrality and negation of the consciousness of transcendence and its effect in controlling human acts structures the idea of individual perspectives in life choice making, and absolute autonomous abstraction of meaning. On the basis of this, the contemporary man composes his own personal spirituality and religious creed according to his emotionally charged feelings, thereby weakens the dominant orthodox Christian religious influence and the notion of transcendence.

Negation of transcendence projects the idea of creating a new man and a perfect world free from traditional religious experience, acting on the basis of absolute freedom and material constitution of reality. This new attitude expresses a turn towards the self in one's willed and free action for human flourishing contrary to the attitude of turning to something beyond the self and beyond the ordinary natural consciousness of human flourishing. Those religious symbols and practices such as the monastic living, celibacy, sacraments and sacramentals that gear toward salvation and fulfilment or human flourishing are now in the state of apathy and have lost their importance in the secularised West. The transcendent character of these religious experiences in the situation of secularism are considered as illusions, as such, negate rational metaphysical thinking because, as Taylor presented it, "God hath given us Temporals to enjoy... We should therefore stuck the sweet of them, and so slack our thirst with them, as not to be Insatiably craving for more."<sup>40</sup> This demonstrates the sense of exclusive humanism and worldliness justification of the present-day experience. This material understanding has reshaped the cultural phenomenon, and gives the impression that the contemporary person in the Western experience is free from the idea of transcendence, but exists and acts under the immanent frame, and this constitutes the model of human flourishing. Indeed, it appeals purely to cultural experience of this visible world, without reference or relation to transcendence or spiritual entities.

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<sup>38</sup> Émile Durkheim, 'Individual and collective representations,' ed. Durkheim E. *Sociology and Philosophy*. (New York: The Free Press, 1974).

<sup>39</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. K. E. Fields. (New York: The Free Press, 1995). 36

<sup>40</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 230

Moreso, constituting realities to solely natural phenomena have substituted the mythological character of ultimate conception which no longer fits into the material human affairs. Thus, the contemporary thought claims the unknowability of truth about realities through metaphysical or transcendent approach, rather maintains the understanding of the world and realities in the world through the prism of the new cultural ideologies of secularism. And this new ideal detached from transcendent character, opens man to a new hermeneutic analysis based of symbolic interpretation and indirect reference of language, and affirmation of ordinary material living.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the contemporary Western person encapsulated by the ideals of the new material cultural experience disenchant from the consciousness of transcendence, as such, the notion that a God has purpose for us beyond fulfilling his plan in the world, equated with our good, begins to fade and becomes weaker. John Paul II clearly captures the reality of the postmodern Western person as an experience characterised by the mentality of pragmatism and belief in democratic mechanism has lost the consciousness of God as a personal being and respect for sacred place, as well as the non-existence of God or the reality of the world without God. Thus, he said:

man is no longer able to see himself as “mysteriously different” from other earthly creatures; he regards himself merely as one more living being, as an organism which, at most, has reached a very high stage of perfection. Enclosed in the narrow horizon of his physical nature, he is somehow reduced to being “a thing”, and no longer grasps the “transcendent” character of his “existence as man”. He no longer considers life as a splendid gift of God, something “sacred” entrusted to his responsibility and thus also to his loving care and “veneration”. Life itself becomes a mere “thing”, which man claims as his exclusive property, completely subject to his control and manipulation.<sup>42</sup>

For the power to order our lives and the world is seen as purely intra-human, in our economic centred order which neither grace nor the nature of God’s power in us seem dispensable.<sup>43</sup> This portrays diversity of human analysis which liberates the contemporary man from the sense of “God the creator, transcendence and universal moral law; however, condemns the person to constant choice, collisions of values, contradicts, conflicts and confusion”<sup>44</sup>

Again, Ludwig Feuerbach arguing contrary to the realm of transcendence as an element constituting human reality, states that “man is the fundamental essence of the State; the State is the actualized, developed and explicit totality of human nature. If we continue to

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<sup>41</sup> Celso-Sanchez Cadequi, & Javier Gil-Gimeno, ‘Echoes of Transcendence in a Secular Age.’ *European Journal of Science and Theology*. 18:5. (2022). 15-30

<sup>42</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 22

<sup>43</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 233/4

<sup>44</sup> Jan Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*. 42(2). (2024). 377-400

project human nature into a transcendent sphere in the form of the concept of God, justice cannot be done to this truth.”<sup>45</sup> Such perception of realities especially the human person indicates a total naturalistic and exclusive humanistic understanding with no recognition of the internal composition of beings which perfects the idea of transcendence in the constitution of culture and human nature. As John Paul II claims, the source of this crisis relates to the negation of true culture “in favour of the cult of power and wealth, the primacy of the ideology of “having” over “being”... thus, the abandonment of the reference to transcendence as the crisis-generating factor.”<sup>46</sup> This ideology assumes that there is no visible, observable and empirical relation between supernatural and natural being, and so, the human person of this present age finds the idea of transcendence and its attendant sense of afterlife as an inaccessible supposition that are essentially undefinable and cannot be substantiated rationally. This unreflective supposition of culture and human life impedes rational autonomy and scientific advancement given its appeal to orthodoxy and tradition. The idea of transcendence in human perception according to Nietzsche, is a “levelling device” that weakens human talent, for man should strive towards a more creative and naturalistic endeavours, and only such advancement counts as experience for man, as a being of this world. Hence, the postmodern man breaking with the previous existing vision of man and culture, to this new ideology of secularism supposes human life to start and end in this physical universe and does not transcend or go beyond this visible world.

Furthermore, the fragmentation of the ontological element from the nature of the human person, limiting the nature of a person material element, an aggregate of organs, expressed in Martin Heidegger’s “The Question Concerning Technology” as lethal machine and apparatus of technology.<sup>47</sup> This understanding denies the ultimate essence of human nature, while maintaining a naturalistic understanding, affirmed by the Heideggerian substitution of the ultimate ideal of the ontological structure of human existence with the state of “being-in-the-world; for man does not possess ultimate nature, does not exist as the synthesis of body and soul, but as existence.”<sup>48</sup> As such, being-in-the-world reduces man’s existence and act to the spatio-temporal world, that is, the temporality of realities, even

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<sup>45</sup> Frederick Copleston, *History of Philosophy*. Vol. vii. (New York: Image Books, 1977). 299

<sup>46</sup> Jan Paweł II. ‘Sekularyzacja i ewangelizacja w dzisiejszej Europie. Do uczestników VI Sympozjum Biskupów Europejskich.’ *L’Osservatore Romano*, 6 (10–12). (11th October, 1985). 15/16, 32.

<sup>47</sup> Martin Heidegger, ‘The Question Concerning Technology.’ *Readings in the Philosophy of Technology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. David M. Kaplan. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2009). 20

<sup>48</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Macquarrie, J. & Robinson, E. S. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962). 134-154. See also; Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s ‘Being and Time.’* (London, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991). 141-162

human being, wherefore natural flourishing is the *conditio sine quanon* for his authenticity, since he lives in accordance with this natural environment. This understanding neutralizes the sense of transcendence in human analysis and supposes pure material analysis, since man's purpose of existence and acting is solely for his needs and interest, in which case his act does not transcend beyond this physical realm, to any "Godness," but starts and ends in this visible world. Understanding the truth of human nature (selfhood) and culture on this ideal according to Taylor radiates the sense of "buffered self,"<sup>49</sup> wherein man severs contact with external spirits, with supernatural forces and order that are said to threaten and inspire man. But supposing the ideology of secularism dominated by rational and atomized ideal, man has become strongly attracted and constituted solely by natural order, while negating supernatural order. In this natural order Taylor states, "human good is in its very essence sensual, earthly; whoever identifies a transcendent goal departs from it, betrays it, for...we belong to our native land, we are one with this nature."<sup>50</sup>

More still, the negation of the spiritual soul that presupposes the abandonment of transcendence in cultural phenomena extends also to the neutrality of the efficacy of some spiritual elements like the relics of the saints believed to possess some supernatural power and healing effects. The new natural order of reality overrides and deactivates these supernatural elements with their hegemonic influence. A situation of "iconoclasm" according to Gilbert Gurand "wherein the polysemy of religious images is repressed by the referential and neutral language of the scientific concept."<sup>51</sup> Thus, the abstraction of meaning on the basis of transcendence has been repressed in the present cultural experience by natural order and the sense of worldliness of realities. This also fragments the sense of interiority (intransitive) and spiritual character of act in determining ontic value and common good, while supposing individual choice and good; consequent in what Thomas Lukemann describes as an egoistic and hedonistic attitude, individualism, and sacralization of individual.<sup>52</sup> This resonates Taylor's experience of being trapped in the immanent frame and manifests in the attitude of "egomania, godforsakenness, and disembodiment of religion."<sup>53</sup> These attitudes play out in the ethical, aesthetic and cognitive realms and lead to various forms of pluralism of values and relativisms.

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<sup>49</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 18

<sup>50</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 547

<sup>51</sup> Gilbert Durand, *Lo Imainario*. (Barcelona: Ediciones del Bronce, 2000). 23-45

<sup>52</sup> Thomas Lukemann, 'Shrinking Transcendence, Expanding Religion.' *Sociological Analysis*, 51:2. (1990). 127-138

<sup>53</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 552

Indeed, the contemporary person lives in the attitude of reduction of transcendence, disembarking from spiritual reality, existing on the plane of worldliness, with the impression that he is free from ultimate order, as such, exists in a total immanent indwelling capacity considered as a mechanism of proper understanding of selfhood that structures human flourishing.<sup>54</sup> This notion structures in the person the attitude that he lives for himself alone, a self-centred and egoistic mentality and the impression that his life per se does not relate to the other (thou/you) or (B)being outside this visible world. And even the sense of ‘another’ or the ‘other’ is approached with the attitude of ‘means to the end’ or as ‘*utile*’ desired by the person, as oppose the ‘other’ as an ‘end-in-itself’ that defines both the ontic axiological character of cultural act and person structured by the sense of transcendence. Negating transcendence therefore, supposes as authentic cultural experience seeking only the subjective good of the individual person, which does not recognize the objective truth and common good of act. The mentality also describes human person as a mere mechanism of biology who does not possess a transcendent character and a spiritual soul.

### 2.3. Moral Relativism

One of the significant purposes and outcomes of secularism in the contemporary experience consists of pluralism and diversity in the whole dimensions of human activities. Rooted in absolute liberal mentality, it supposes the ideal of diverse cultural experiences shaped by tolerance, that excludes objectivity and universality of truth. Rather, it proposes plurality of truth and thought, and the multiplicity of knowing and model of act as man’s way to self-realization.<sup>55</sup> It presupposes the mentality of individual perspectives of cultural phenomenon, wherein the analogical nature of culture demonstrates the fact that since each person is unique, with his own face, therefore, there are no rules or laws as moral law that strictly and univocally bind cultural act.<sup>56</sup> And so, there is no universal cultural order or rational order,<sup>57</sup> each person becomes creator of culture and creator of value, especially moral order, which defines the relativism of the present-day Western experience. It highlights the mentality of subjectivism in form of egomania which intrinsically relativises the ontic value,

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<sup>54</sup> Traill Dowie, & Julian Tempone-Wiltshire, ‘Immanence-Transcendence and the Godly in a Secular Age.’ *The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*. 18:2. (2022). 353-68

<sup>55</sup> Max Seckler, ‘Zeitgenössischer philosophisch-theologischer Kontext und ‚Dominus Iesus: Säkularisierung, Postmodernismus, religiöser Pluralismus.’ *PATH*, 1:2. (2002). 145–71.

<sup>56</sup> Mieczysław Krapiiec, M. A. ‘O filozofię kultury,’ Krapiiec, M. A. *Odzyskać świat realny*. (Lublin: R. W. KUL, 1999). 378

<sup>57</sup> Florian Znaniecki, *Nauki o kulturze*, trans. J. Szacki. (Warszawa: PWN, 1971). 22

goodness, truth and beauty that define the essence of human being, such that each individual manifests as autonomous, rational, creator of cultural act and product. This attitude subverts or ruptures the transcendent and religious or traditional-base conception of ethical and moral order, whereby each person determines his moral theory and practice. This comes with tension and clash of interest, incoherence between theory and practice, moral values, such that, moral norm good and bad of action is determined by each individual person. According to C. S. Lewis such an approach of relativistic mentality and of wishful thinking of each individual strips the world of meaning and objective content of act.<sup>58</sup>

The postmodern attitude of pluralism of values and thoughts also informs the individualisation and subjectivization of moral order and traditional values, and the bracketing of the sense of objective moral order from the public space, resulting in ethical uncertainty and polarisation of sensitive cultural phenomena like family, sexuality. Adopting relativism in values and morality, the human person therefore makes absolute individual preferences, choosing certain sets of acts and ideas as what determine meaning and on which to base his life. This approach opposes the objectiveness of moral order and any form of intermediary in moral decisions, and maintaining this position, man rather, subordinates ethical theory and moral norm purely on emotional feeling psycho-social construct which make morality unstable.<sup>59</sup> Again, this sense of plurality of culture empowers each or units of communities to make judgment about moral truth, which is often contrary to the idea of universality of culture, objective moral norms, truth of good, shared value and responsibility. As it were, the principle of moral relativism ascribes to each individual the power to act as creator of moral law, and this varies according to personal whims. Thus, one gets the impression that there is no singular, universal moral order or principle that applies for people of all times and cultures, since moral principles are fluid. As such, the rightness and wrongness of act varies according to cultural environment, age or time, and there is no moral absolute truth. This attitude supposes that there is no universally accepted solution to the moral questions and issues, rather, individuals follow their autonomous rational choices and their subjective moral values and beliefs. This ideal also opposes the theory of efficacy of act in the historical structure of relation of person to definite act as the efficient cause and author or owner of willed, rational and emotional acts that constitute the truth of culture.

While advocating for moral arbitrariness, the experience of subjective morality affirms the notion, that as culture evolves, likewise human being, ethical theory and moral

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<sup>58</sup> Clive S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*. (UK: HarperCollins eBooks, 2001). 53

<sup>59</sup> Karol Jasiński, 'The Internal Secularization of Religion.' *Collectanea Theologica*, 91:4. (2021). 95-111

norms. This understanding silences the power of conscience and undermines the determination of justice wherefore moral truth, values, beliefs and norms vary according to individuals and group cultural understandings, for what is considered morally right or wrong depends on the value and belief of the individual, the shared values of different peoples and groups in different historical periods. This moral approach empowers each individual, groups and communities to choose and determine their moral values and truth, and also relativizes absolute character of truth, since truth in this ideal is determined by an individual or groups autonomous rational logic. This mentality resounds Nietzsche's assertion; "you have your own way, I have my way. As for the right way, it does not exist."<sup>60</sup> For morality, he maintains, cannot be based on a set of facts, because no fact exists apart from individual autonomous interpretation. Besides the a priori subjectivization of morality and the influence of materialization of cultural phenomena in structuring moral relativism, the sense of sociology of morality that describes only cultural acts without proper efficacy whereby action is judged as good or bad, and reason for such a decision that defines moral norm is eroded from ethical theory.<sup>61</sup> As such, ethical theory is now viewed through the prism of empiricist and positivist<sup>62</sup> lenses. Their analysis of realities give credence to natural inclination and instinct which also extends to the determination of moral norms, as such, moral decisions are made on the basis of pure natural inclination and instinct.

More still, Kant in the 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Moral' in a way justifies the attitude of moral relativism in his proposition that each rational being is an autonomous legislator of moral act.<sup>63</sup> Acting in this capacity as legislator of moral law, the person is free from acting for salvific reward and other heteronomous elements that interfere with ethical apriorism,<sup>64</sup> but acts as an autonomous rational legislator. This relativistic sense of morality resonates thus in Steven Pinker that,

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<sup>60</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, ed. Caro, A. D. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). 56

<sup>61</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, Tadeusz Biesaga, Jarosław Merecki, Marek Kostur, *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. (Krakow: Ignatianum University Press, 2019). 85

<sup>62</sup> Especially the propositions of Hobbes, Hume and Rousseau's social contract as the source of morality, given that just as contract is subject to change according to the individuals subjective decisions, likewise morality. This ideal opposes the morality proposed by the earlier principle given its structure of demand and obligation, whereas morality as a personal phenomenon is a proposition of each individual according to the rational autonomy of each person acting as lawgiver and creator of morality. Rationalization of morality an ideal of social contract results in the principle of 'scientific morality,' which states that moral codes and principles should focus on social relationship, especially seeking the good and interest or convenience of the individual moral agent with another moral agent.

<sup>63</sup> Kant. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. No. IV 434

<sup>64</sup> For analysis of the meaning of ethical apriorism as the lived experience of moral relativism in the contemporary Western culture, see: Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act.' 9-11

human moral sense turns out to be an organ of considerable complexity, with quirks that reflects its evolutionary history and its neurobiological foundations. Evolution or nature has endowed us with ethical impulses, and so it is a betrayal of this naturalistic capacity to decide what is good or wrong for man, by limiting morality to transcendental and traditional influence.<sup>65</sup>

What this means is that there are no laid down principles of morality or specific moral theory; instead, each person has the capacity to determine and follow their own moral principle according to their subjective value. Thus, a breakdown of social consensus and moral certainties given the fragmentation of common moral norm and universal culture.<sup>66</sup> Relying on the claims of moral relativism, the postmodern man expresses doubt on the transcendent moral order which restrains individual freedom and choices, due to its authoritative character which is considered as a threat to freedom. This claim therefore results to nihilism in the objective moral structure that is said to be filled with moral facts,<sup>67</sup> contrary to the structure of epistemic value or truth that constitutes moral order. The source of moral facts does not proceed from interiority of act in the realization of truth of good and common good, because the idea of tradition, community and objective values and morality is not upheld in the contemporary Western culture. As such, there is an absence of a collective shared values, because each person informed by autonomous cognition, emotional feeling or social identification seeks and defines his morality as moral agent. This mentality suggests that there is no absolute or objective moral truth since each person determines his moral truth, his value or axiological praxis. This attitude manifests explicitly in the debates about human sexuality, family and nature or value of human life expressed in the various practices of anti-culture. Thus, the polarised nature of culture in the contemporary Western experience is becoming globalized.

Thus, Nietzsche argues that “morality is a system of errors that we have incorporated into our basic ways of thinking, feeling and living, for it is the great symbol of our profound ignorance of ourselves and the world.”<sup>68</sup> And so, each individual should free himself from tradition and fictitious attitude of transcendent morality in pursuit of good and avoidance of evil, rather, seek the realization of the highest potential, flourishing and splendour of his life. Nietzsche further maintains that the idea of objective morality is a menace and dangerous system that obstructs the present living, is at the expense of the future, and prevents scientific

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<sup>65</sup> Steven Pinker, ‘The Moral Insight.’ *The New York Times Magazine*. (13<sup>th</sup> January, 2008).

<sup>66</sup> Jan Perszon, ‘The Crisis of Western Culture and Secularism.’ *Verbum Vitae*, 42:2. (2024). 377-400

<sup>67</sup> Gilbert Harman, *The Nature of Morality: An Introduction to Ethics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). 132

<sup>68</sup> Keith Ansell-Pearson, ed. *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought: Friedrich Nietzsche on the Genealogy of Morality*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). xvi

progress.<sup>69</sup> And so, each individual acting as a liberal creator of morality is meant to produce sovereign individuals, whereas, conventional morality brings about series of deformations and perversions in human history.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, each sovereign individual should will and determine his personal morality independent of any factor acting as master, such as religious principles and authorities who influence the mind with the claims of objective moral good. While excusing moral evil on the grounds of tolerance, it regards any form of interference with one's sovereign and autonomous moral as obstruction of individual good or morality, which is considered as being judgmental. What emerges from this sense of stultifying mode of life is negative freedom, loss of truth, individual vision of good: individualism, utilitarianism, hedonism, consumerism. Hence, there is observed in this ideal of relativism, the loss of the sense of shared obligation and responsibility, upheaval of morals in which ethical issues are decided in the "light of multicoloured ethics."<sup>71</sup> Thus, the experience of being sloughed off from transcendent moral order, ethics of asceticism, sense of common good, to humanistic ethics in pursuit of exclusive personal good or material welfare.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, it is obvious that the transcendent morality is not an acceptable moral principle in the contemporary Western cultural experience, rather the sense of subjective or perspective morality has become the basis of moral truth. Moral law on this basis is not objective and not universal, but according to how each person feels or perceives himself and the social community or environment feels.<sup>73</sup> What underlies this attitude and understanding is the sense of unbounded freedom, which in the analysis of this discussion is an essential defining element of secularism and central in contemporary Western cultural experience.

#### **2.4. The Absolutization of Freedom**

Free will is one of the spiritual qualities of human being by which he determines his action, and as well the source of the fundamental right of every human being. Man's tethering from the transcendent moral standard and objective truth has greatly influenced his experience of freedom as he rethinks the presence of ultimate analysis and tradition in the cultural experiences. This mentality has redefined freedom with the idea of individual autonomy, possessing absolute character in adjudicating moral value. The tenets of absolute

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<sup>69</sup> Nietzsche. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. iii

<sup>70</sup> Ansell-Pearson, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought: Friedrich Nietzsche on the Genealogy of Morality*. xvi

<sup>71</sup> Delsol. *La fin de la Chrétienté* (The End of Christendom). 7

<sup>72</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 572

<sup>73</sup> Gareth Southwell, *A Beginner's Guide to Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil*. (London: Blackwell, 2009). 15

freedom consists in one's capacity for self-expression, to think and evaluate phenomena without limitations or restrictions, and to hold on one's determination of rightness and wrongness of action. Thus, absolute freedom has in the contemporary Western cultural experience become the source and basis of all human endeavours with each person seeking and pursuing their free will and own conception of good. This drive for uncontrolled freedom according to John Paul II darkens and weakens man's will and submits it to relativism, scepticism and distorted truth.<sup>74</sup> This attitude opposes the true sense of good in the realization of common good in its presupposition of neutrality of transcendent morality and objective values from the public spheres while expressing individual choices and absolute rational autonomy. In the light of this 'illusory freedom' detached from truth, rationality and responsibility, each individual will therefore determines the standard for moral judgment and right conduct. Indeed, what really sets freedom in motion is the appeal and quest for the realization of the objective good in the horizontal realm that leads through the vertical realm to the absolute Good.

Accordingly, the present-day cultural experience is witnessing absolute liberal mentality in form of pure rational or emotional acting unencumbered by attachments and background assumptions about the world.<sup>75</sup> This liberalism of cultural values and moral wisdom sunders cultural act to selfish constitution, as it appeals rather for individual freedom of conscience and moral good, unhindered determination of one's means of human flourishing and total self-sufficiency in one's identification without any form of restraint. This approach to freedom demonstrates a lack of harmony between the fruits of cultural acts with the immanent activity of the human spirit that radiates the truth, goodness and beauty of the human person, wherein the universal values and moral norms have been privatized. In keeping with this ideal, absolute freedom supposes pluralism of opinions and unrestrained attitude towards moral judgment in one's own sense of good and value. This liberal mentality claims the certainty of every opinion. However, this idea of justification of every opinion in the ideal of liberalism of thought according to some scholars is untannable and constitutes as woe to man in the contemporary culture. This supposition results in the diversity of socio-cultural beliefs and contexts, consequent in the present-day tensions and conflicts.<sup>76</sup> In the thought of Legutko, such supposition of freedom expresses "an indeterminate possibility, or

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<sup>74</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 1

<sup>75</sup> Jocelyn Maclure, & Charles Taylor, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011). 2

<sup>76</sup> Terry Pinkard, *Absolute Freedom and Terror*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023). 203

is an absence of obstacles predicated on a thin concept of the human self.”<sup>77</sup> For freedom in this ideal tends to be separated from the efficacy of the will (the faculty that directs actions towards the true good, i.e., general good-*bonum in universalis* which distinguishes human freedom<sup>78</sup> from other beings of nature whose acts of freedom are not powered by the will, but by natural inclinations). This distinction shows the difference between ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom for,’ which will be discussed later in the analysis of the relation of freedom to morality. Absolute constitution of freedom idealizes freedom without a concrete intellectual identification of reality, for it gives the impression that one can dream, live and think as one pleases, so long as it does not hurt other people, and this idea provides a viscous social glue<sup>79</sup> on which the contemporary Western culture acts and exists.

This ideal of freedom as ‘freedom from’ however, presupposes freedom in an unconditional sense wherein freedom not powered by the efficacy of the will tends towards the individual to perceive and interpret the truth as it appeals to each individual. This attitude according to Aristotle conceives freedom as *licentia*, expressing the idea of ‘what one wants,’ desires or does spontaneously (*ἐκούσιος*), with the attitude of exclusive realm of the mind as the essence of reality; while ‘freedom for’ is concerned with one’s free decisions (*προαίρεσις*) which relates to *libertas*, proceeds from the intellect and will, and tends to truth of good and informed by virtue.<sup>80</sup> And so, the unconditional freedom demonstrates one’s ability to act without coercion, where such coercion in the present-day cultural refers to religious authority and acting in line with traditional values. But the idea of freedom for the

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<sup>77</sup> Ryszard Legutko, R. *The Cunning of Freedom: Saving the Self in an Age of False Idols*. (New York: Encounter Books, 2021). 178

<sup>78</sup> Freedom consists of indeterminate capacity and or a state in which the will is open to the different members of an alternative (*ad utrumlibet se habere*). This is the power to act differently and to choose one’s action, and not determined or constrained to habit (*habitus*). The will in its freedom always desires/chooses good, chooses certain good means, and wills the means to realize this good. One can say that there is a connection between freedom with man’s spiritual being, following this understanding that the will is the subject of free choice and the basis of free choice. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, 1.82. *Summa theologiae*, q.1, 83, 3. See also; Elders, L. J. ‘Contemporary Theories of Freedom and Christian Ethics,’ ed. Zdybicka, Z. et al. *Freedom in Contemporary Culture: Acts of the V World Congress of Christian Philosophy, Catholic University of Lublin, 20-25 August 1996*. (Lublin: The University Press of the Catholic University of Lublin, 1999). 14,17 Thus, this Thomistic understanding of freedom set ground for the discussion of the idea of freedom in contemporary secular lived experience of the idea of total/absolute freedom.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Rorty, ‘Truth and freedom: A Reply to Thomas McCarthy.’ *Critical Inquiry-The University of Chicago Press Journals*, 16:3. (1990). 633-43

<sup>80</sup> Nichomachean Ethics 1167/1113b. For Aristotle in the third book of Nicomachean Ethics treats freedom as the foundation of moral virtues and the essence of morality. Morality he argues occurs in human life because of the specific human way of being which is a personal, rational and free being. It also guides all spheres of human activity, in order to protect the basic human right and prevent harm done to society and environment. See also; Leo J. Elders. ‘Contemporary Theories of Freedom and Christian Ethics.’ 10/11. Also; Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, ‘On Freedom and Limits of Scientific Inquiry,’ ed. Zdybicka, Z. et al. *Freedom in Contemporary Culture: Acts of the V World Congress of Christian Philosophy, Catholic University of Lublin, 20-25 August 1996*. (Lublin: The University Press of the Catholic University of Lublin, 1999). 547

contemporary Western person refers to acting without restriction, without external or internal pressure; and acting as an independent legislator of law, especially moral law and autonomous determiner of good. This ideal severs the intrinsic connection between freedom and mature conscience that structures proper self-fulfilment. As it were, the notion of unbounded freedom flows from Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of freedom, who is understood as the father of absolute freedom. For he said:

humans are radically free. To be free in this sense means that they are at liberty to make their choices and are not predetermined, because they have the ability to make their choices. This ability is a really free decision is a 'project,' [sic] an action which arises in total spontaneity without being determined by any preceding act, prior habit or consideration.<sup>81</sup>

Sartre's notion of freedom separates man's action from external influence and from its ultimate and ontological structure. He further maintains that man's action takes shape or is formed by his nature or natural instinct which does not refer to the past or preconceived structure, because such factors are no longer the self in action. Acting according to one's nature makes one's action free, as well as shapes the person's future, and this attitude is motivated by the person's autonomous choice, emotional spontaneity and unguided natural physical factors. And so, freedom is construed as man's self-creation of himself by independent individual praxis, wherein "man is freedom and freedom is man, because man is condemned to be free."<sup>82</sup> Thus, the contemporary Western person, given this notion of freedom, has assumed an absolute character, wherein liberal mentality has become the essence of man, the basis of act and what structures human flourishing. Thus the motto of contemporary Western culture has become: "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, ou la Mort*: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death."<sup>83</sup> In line with this understanding, each person while expressing unlimited freedom, breaks away with tradition and the whole existing culture or former culture, as he constructs his own culture.

More still, expressing total independence and absence of all forms of interference or authority in act seemingly negates transcendence given the suppression of efficacy of the will while extolling lower faculties. Freedom experienced absolutely severed the person from the proper structure of interiority, since freedom is understood to proceed from natural inclinations in the realization of consumerist and materialist desires. The sources of this

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<sup>81</sup> Elders, 'Contemporary Theories of Freedom and Christian Ethics.' 7

<sup>82</sup> Elders, 'Contemporary Theories of Freedom and Christian Ethics.' 8

<sup>83</sup> Katarzyna Stępien, 'Some Contemporary Problems Obscuring the Greatness of the Great Ideas,' eds. Redpath, P. A., Chłodna-Błach, I. & Mamcarz-Plisiecki, A. *The Great Ideas of Religion and Freedom: A Semiotic Reinterpretation of the Great Ideas Movement for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Boston: Brill, 2021). 113

approach can be found already in the medieval author, William Ockham, who claimed that freedom has no necessary connection with intellect and will, but rather flows from emotions and passions. For man's act, he argued, flows from his free choice, and in a total spontaneity, independent of intellect and will. This understanding of freedom as acting for an individual's autonomous choice, reflects the concept of absolute freedom and arbitrariness of acts, wherein the individual choices and decisions are free from tradition, metaphysics, and hierarchy.

This approach to cultural acts do not per se refer to ontic value or the axiological teleology of act. Instead, in cultural acts, the individual seeks only his autonomous choice and wellbeing in what Kant describes as "self-autonomy,"<sup>84</sup> which is the individual pursuit of self-discovery and individual fulfilment. Autonomy in this sense is equivalent to *licentia* and has become the basis and essence of human act. This attitude of solely seeking the individual well-being is described by Delsol as a cultural experience without an anthropological vision, that ruptures and reverses moral understanding and social attitude. For what used to be shameful acts, rejected and stigmatized by the community, have, in the ideal of autonomy of act and individual wellbeing, become acceptable and praised.<sup>85</sup> This attitude reflects exclusive immanentism and materialism. Again, unbounded understanding of freedom impoverishes the notion of freedom as an essential defining quality of human nature, demonstrating negative influence on the objective moral order and transcendent realm of human nature. Freedom in this sense is the ability to act without constraint, that is, acting according to self-interest and self-gratification in "doing whatever, whenever, and wherever. It entails disregard for the past and unconcern for the future."<sup>86</sup> Thus, one gets the impression that he is the absolute master of his act, as such, steers his acts towards his preferred end and good.

Moreso, the notion liberalism resounds in J. S. Mill as prioritization of the individual's right of conscience and good over the common good or objective good of the community or society.<sup>87</sup> In this sense, the individual good is understood as the highest good

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<sup>84</sup> Kantian idea of autonomy falls under the supreme principle of pure reason, rather than empirical reason. It is the supreme a priori principle (the categorical imperative) that serves the fundamental principle of the autonomy of reason in action. It is the power or authority of rational being to legislate through one's action, and such action becomes law for the person and others, thus, each person acts autonomously as member of kingdom of ends. See Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Moral*. IV 409, 421-429, 436. *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Gregor, M. (UK: Cambridge University Press). Also; Wierzbicki, A. 'Freedom and Necessity.' 81

<sup>85</sup> Delsol. *La fin de la Chrétienté* (The End of Christendom). 45, 67

<sup>86</sup> Legutko. *The Cunning of Freedom: Saving the Self in an Age of False Idols*. 34

<sup>87</sup> Bredan Sweetman, *The Crisis of Democratic Pluralism: The Loss of Confidence in Reason and the Clash of Worldviews*. (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). 52

which cannot be compromised with or by any good, even the objective good, as such, the individual determines what is good or bad. For the concept of objective good does not really account or demonstrate human goodness. Indeed, individual freedom is the proper path in human life, in that, the individual person should be free to decide and choose his or her path in life, even when the path may seem debasing to the majority. Thus, Mill argues that the opinion of the majority is not fit to make right judgement for the individual who is more enlightened and knows better than the majority.<sup>88</sup> As such, individual choice and decision informed by individual freedom which conditions egoism, individualism and epistemic relativism, have become the centre and focus of lived experience.

The sense of liberalism in the idealistic character of freedom splinters culture from nature and life, disregards the clause of conscience over rights while supposing individual opinion as the truth and essence of culture. On the basis of this autonomous liberal act, the supposition of culture on the ontic truth of praxis as moral order is seen as being judgmental, obstruction or constraint to individual choice and a ‘menace to subjectiveness.’ The notion of objective truth and common good are also seen as hinderance to subjective freedom which sinks the individual to objective illusion<sup>89</sup> and lose of personal autonomy and total freedom of choices and decisions. Indeed, the subjectivism of choice and act in the present-day cultural experience radiates the bodily and psycho-social identification as the essence of human being. Given its materialization of human nature, this attitude suggests that human being, just like cultural phenomenon, is in flux according to environment, situation and as one pleases. Sundered from ontological structure, the manifestation and experience of absolute freedom supposes the essence of person as bodily identification and as something that is fluid.

## **2.5 The Fluid Identity of the Person**

The postmodern Western understanding of personhood refers to such concepts like “personality,” “identity,” “individuality,” “mind,” “character” which seem more adequate for describing human nature. And these new conceptions advocate for conventional definitions of the person on the claim of diversities of culture, wherein human nature is understood as a phenomenon that is in constant flux, that is, as something that is fluid. However, this understanding necessitates this dilemma in the question, ‘what makes the person ‘A,’ a child

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<sup>88</sup> Sweetman. *The Crisis of Democratic Pluralism: The Loss of Confidence in Reason and the Clash of Worldviews*. 56

<sup>89</sup> Wierzbicki. ‘Freedom and Necessity.’ 83

of seven years ago the same after fifteen years? Has ‘A’ given the biopsychic-sociological effects changed to ‘C’ with a new identity?’ Is the human person wholly material or is there a spiritual aspect of human nature, thus, what constitutes the essence of human person? The reality of the present-day Western culture seems to propose a materialistic response to these questions which suggest that human nature manifests as personal identity, and this identity is fluid based on individual choice, biopsychic-societal or emotional influences. This understanding opposes any metaphysical or transcendent approach, or the ideal that prioritizes the soul over bodily inclinations. Thus Nietzsche states that “the soul and its lofty ideals were a sham, a sheer fantasy hostile to life.”

Human identity fundamentally refers to the integral dimensions of human nature; namely subjective and objective, transitive and intransitive, material and spiritual, immanent and transcendent, encompassing the whole aspects- reason, emotion, mind, body, soul. The integration of these dimensions significantly defines the organic and ontological unity of the plurality of the personal subject that determines the identity of person. Self-identity, Wojtyła observes, are those human qualities which one has little or no control over, such as the person’s inner capacities and the external qualities through which the person experiences the world, and leads the person to many interventions and discoveries.<sup>90</sup> It also encompasses various traits that the person is born with, as well as the thoughts and values the person acquires and develops from their surroundings.<sup>91</sup>

However, the notion of and emphasis on the singularity of any of these dimensions or aspects as what constitutes personal identity fragments the human nature, supposing the person as a being whose existence is conditioned by environment, situation or personal choice. Thus, the idea of fluid identity of person wherein a person is defined by the ‘social group, psychological disposition, community and any other external factor. This understanding is informed by the idea of individual choices and decisions conditioned by the ideal of absolute freedom. Basically, the idea of fluid identity states that human nature or identity is not fixed, rather, it changes and is shaped by these factors mentioned above and by other elements within the individual’s choice and decision or that of people around. As it were, some scholars agree with the idea that associates self-identity with one’s belief system, ethic group, social group, race, and gender expressing diversities in the concept that informs the present-

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<sup>90</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, & Piotr S. Mazur, ‘The Experience of Human Being in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła.’ *Filosofija Sociologia*. 28:1. (2017). 73-83

<sup>91</sup> Eser Yilmaz, Identity: Definition, Types & Examples. Berkley Well-being Institute. [www.berkeleywellbeing.com/identity.html](http://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/identity.html)

day idea that a person decides how and what he is to be identified. This resonates John Locke's idea that the person is:

a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places, which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it: it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving, that he does perceive. When we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate, or will anything, we know that we do so. Thus, it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions: and by this everyone is to himself, that which he calls self.<sup>92</sup>

This expresses a non-substantive perception of the person, since people forget their past acts, or modify the events they stored, so too, it is difficult to maintain or argue for the substantive and permanent nature of human person or personal identity.<sup>93</sup> What the person possesses is individual identity which is subject to fluidity just as one's consciousness changes, likewise, individual identity as preferred to the concept of person.<sup>94</sup> It goes to say that human being cannot be grasped in one single principle or term, for we can perceive personal identity in consciousness,<sup>95</sup> that is, in bodily manifestation or identification.

As such, personal identity, like the phenomenon of culture, constantly evolves and changes, and not is fixed nor permanent in each person, for human being is in a state of flux. Being in a flux varies according to personal choices, psycho-sociological identification and so affirms the understanding that "a person's identity can be either determined by self-perception, or the perception of an outsider observer."<sup>96</sup> Self-identity in this sense refers to external realities of the person which is subject to change as the person chooses or according to societal pressure or demand. It places human being on the same plane with amoeba that divides and changes. In a sense, the Cartesian idea of the person as *res cogitans*, that is, thinking thing or one that thinks, manifests here, wherefor what I think of myself becomes what I want to be identified as, because it is my subjective experience. The perception of

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<sup>92</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Roger WoolHouse. (London: Publishing Books Ltd, 1690/1959). 2.27.9

<sup>93</sup> Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). 248–252.

<sup>94</sup> Peter S. Strawson, P. S. *Individuals. An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*. (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd, 1959/1987). 45

<sup>95</sup> In Lockean analysis, consciousness is the basis of personal identity, and in a sense, a kind of separation between being a person and human being. According to Locke, what it means to be human being is to be a biological being, an animal of a certain kind, defined purely by bodily features. Personhood has no particular bodily feature, and so capacity for intelligence is the basis for personhood which belongs to all animals, which man is one of the species. Lockean analogy of a certain 'rational parrot' explains this ideal. See. *Locke. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2.27.8

<sup>96</sup> Richard Y. C. Wong, 'Fluid Identity.' *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, 118. (2016). 676-727

personal identity as something fluid is contrary to the ontological human nature in its masculinity and femininity.

This idea of fluid personal identity resonates with the allegory of the 'Ship of Theseus' where self-identity could be likened to the dilemma of the transformational changes on the ship, wherefore human developmental growth and relations with others determine or do not determine fluidity of self-identity. Given this mentality, the present-day understanding of the self, aligns with the view that such transformation in line with individual choice and decision and not some nature's given qualities, defines personal identity, which makes it fluid. As such, biological transformation, physical and social classification which evolves and changes, defines personal identification. This idea in the present-day experience also challenges the permanency of assigned sex at birth, instead, it subscribes to personal determination of one's sex which varies according to individual choice or incarnate social entities. This ideal feeds the biopsychic-social mentality and induces people into dualities or multiple identities. Thus, the confusion and cultural crisis of alienation, struggle for self-definition, intense gender consciousness that leads to a false idea of equality of all sexes and harsh feminist ideology.

Again, the present-day understanding of self-identity as causal dependent on, or the reducibility to physical process and self-awareness qualifies fluid personal identity as well as encourages pro-choice in ethical analysis and discussion on sexuality, family and determination of life. It is observed in this mentality an expressive individualism in the pursuit of individual good, happiness and satisfaction, shifting the nature(essence) of person towards the strength and genuineness of feelings and emotions.<sup>97</sup> There is also a shift in the genuine interpersonal relationship of responsible love between human being of opposite sex,<sup>98</sup> in the ontic masculinity and femininity, thus, the idea of gender identity.<sup>99</sup> This new lived experience rely on the autonomous individualistic and collectivistic association that perceives culture as the creation of individual social groups or communities which does not

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<sup>97</sup> Taylor. *A Secular Age*. 488

<sup>98</sup> Sex in this sense is understood as the phenomenon that accounts for not only the somatic individuality of man (human being), it also defines the personal identity and concreteness of each individual person in an unrepeatable and uniqueness of female or male. See: John Paul II. *Man and Woman, He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006). 52

<sup>99</sup> Gender identity is a set of thoughts and feelings about one's appraisals of compatibility with, and motivation to fit in with gender dualities, which may or may not correspond to the assigned sex at birth. It expresses individualistic sense of being a male, female, both or neither in the spectrum of association with both genders, and feelings of pressure from parents, peers, and self for conformity to gender stereotypes; and feeling of complexity in one's biological sex. See: Susan K. Egan, & David G. Perry, 'Gender identity: A Multidimensional Analysis with Implications for Psychosocial Adjustment.' *Developmental Psychology*. 37:4. (2001). 451-63

relate to common good nor align with the ontic good of natural familyhood, as the foundation of human community, society, state and nation. Evidently, the transgender ideology of gender identity with its gender dysphoria and utilitarian perception of human being expresses the multifaceted subjectivism in the manifestation of male (man) for female (woman), and vice versa or both, which lacks proper normative and valuation of human person, giving the impression that some individuals are trapped in wrong bodies. This model reduces personhood to a mere utilitarian end or means of gratification of pleasure (sensual) and satisfaction of analogical instinct/desire.<sup>100</sup>

Indeed the ideal of fluid personal identity with its confusion of disordered history and multiple identities induces the individual into a gender identity crisis with some observable implications such as alienation, stigmatization, gender dysphoria and consequently loneliness, depression, drug abuse, suicide, isolation and anxiety about future. The individual experiencing historical inconsistency finds it difficult to reconcile with his assigned sex or nature as a historical being. History Wojtyła explains plays a significant role in human nature, for:

the whole created universe is subject to time and therefore has a history. Living beings have a particular kind of history. Yet not one of them, no other animal species possesses a historical dimension of the kind that we attribute to man, or to nations, or to the entire human family. Man's historicity is expressed in his capacity to objectify history. He is not simply subject to the course of events, nor does he limit himself to acting and behaving in a certain way as an individual or as a member of a group: he also has the capacity to reflect on his history and to objectify it, giving an account of the way it unfolds stage by stage.<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, fluid personal identity reveals in the nature of individual a disconnection in the story and drama of life, for the fragmentation of the individual's identity somehow impacts on the individual's memory, history and culture. Because history or such memory (good and evil) which constitutes culture helps the person to reconcile with the past and improve the present and future, and so fulfils himself and contributes to nation building.

Furthermore, this fragmentation of identity extends also to ethnic identities and the attitude of singular culture as internationalism, where by, for any smaller nation and even migrants to survive, must be absorbed into a larger or superior political or cultural system and identity, or rather, embrace the host cultural identity.<sup>102</sup> Thus, the idea of 'fatherland,' 'native land' and 'motherland' together with the sense of spiritual patrimony in one's culture, loses

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<sup>100</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 43

<sup>101</sup> Savina Rayhard, 'Man as a Person Revealed through Action,' *L'Osservatore Romano*, 42:603. (8<sup>th</sup> October 1979).

<sup>102</sup> John Paul II. *Memory and Identity: Personal Reflections*. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005). 66

its permanent reality in this attitude of fluid identity. For patrimony as material and spiritual inherited traits from our fathers, mothers and native lands have been reduced to mere thoughtfulness, social entities, and consciousness. That which we inherited from our fathers and mothers and native lands require proper natural expression and living experience or cultivation. We always think of culture and cultural roots with some good reason, since culture has a historical character; understanding this roots, therefore, goes hand in hand with that of our history, including our political history.<sup>103</sup> And so, assuming a new identity comes with the tendency of losing the natural value of truth of good, the particular bond between culture and nature that manifests in the society.

And so, fluid self-identity contradicts the somatic structure and order of human nature in pursuit of mere bodily satisfaction that materializes the value of human being. Certainly, man's spiritual quality, especially the emotional dimension, has assumed a solely bodily manifestation and "unilaterally exaggerated"<sup>104</sup> opposing the relation of the body to the immaterial soul. Wherein the soul is only a mediation of the body and has no significant influence on the body<sup>105</sup> which is in flux. This not only objectifies the human being, but, it also exposes human being to various dangers, manipulations and practices in today's experiences of culture of death.

## 2.6. The "Culture of Death"

The fallback of absolute freedom in the ideal of one's ability to be what one wants and wishes is the culture conflict in the dramatic clash between "choice and conscience, "good and evil, death and life," and "culture of death and culture of life."<sup>106</sup> It bespeaks in the contemporary Western culture, the radicalization of the *res cogitans*, rational apriorism, emotional apriorism, and biopsychic-sociological perception of human being as mere material and pure immanent being. One perceives from this radicalization culture conflict that refers to the dichotomy of cultural values and moral dilemmas in the prioritization of the material value of the essence of culture over the ontic unity of the essence of culture in the material and spiritual dimensions. This battle unfolds especially in situations of human life in crisis-unexpected pregnancy/a life in developing stage, a severely disable, a person with

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<sup>103</sup> John Paul II. *Memory and Identity: Personal Reflections*. 64

<sup>104</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 42

<sup>105</sup> Marek Czachorowski, Tomasz Mamelka, Paul Mazanka., & Zbigniew Pańpuch. *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec*. (Krakow: Ignatianum University Press, 2020).174

<sup>106</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. (Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995). No. 21. See also; John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*. (Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1991). No. 39

chronic disease and a dying person. As a matter of fact, this conflict centres on issues about family, sexuality, essence of life, community, rooted on rational autonomy, absolute freedom,<sup>107</sup> and relativism of moral and values.

Basically, the culture of death refers to practices that violate the concept of sacredness and the spiritual structure of human life, in the materialization of human nature. Thus, Karol Wojtyła states that this culture is an ontological evil,<sup>108</sup> horrific and denigrates the essence of human being as a person and subject; as well as opposes the age-long practices that exhaust the value, dignity, and freedom that characterise human person and life. Furthermore, this culture, John Paul II explains, distorts or denies the fundamental natural rights of life to some individuals and accords such rights only to persons who enjoy full or at least incipient autonomy,<sup>109</sup> subjecting such helpless individual to objects of use and manipulation. This present-day culture crisis in the culture of death demonstrates the domination of freedom of the 'strong' against the weak who have no chance but submit to the strong; as it were, the weak are left with no choice and with no decision of theirs about their lives. It expresses the denial of the ontic-compositional character of the human nature as essence and existence, body and soul, while supposing only the phenomenal reality of the human nature. In the practices of culture of death, the dynamic mode of a person, the transformational stages of existence, and the unique permanent identity of a person as a male or female that affirms the contingency and non-necessarily existence of a person,<sup>110</sup> have become substituted with mere description of state of experience without recourse to the internal causes of existence, i.e., the objective reasons for the observable dynamisms in a person.

It also opposes the perennial understanding that the life of every person as an individual and as a community is founded on the recognition and respect of the inherent dignity, good and right of every human being; and the value of every human life from the very beginning to the final natural end. Because every person possesses ontic good, that defines the person always as an end, a being of right, free, rational and willed for his own sake. As such, this self-evident and fundamental truth affirms that human life or rather life in

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<sup>107</sup> When freedom is absolute, it loses its original content, its ontic character of structuring dignity is contradicted. Thus, it negates and destroys itself when it emancipates itself from tradition and authority, and becomes factor leading to destruction of others; when it longer recognizes and respects its essential link with the objective and universal truth which is the foundation of human life as individual and community. See; John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 19

<sup>108</sup> Evil as understood in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas as, the absence of good which ought to be present in a given being; it is a privation. It is never a total absence of good, but human choice of evil over good, and the power to decides and determine life. See: John Paul II. *Memory and Identity: Personal Reflections*. 4

<sup>109</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 19

<sup>110</sup> Andrzej Maryniarczyk, *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being, Notebooks on Metaphysics. Vol. 5*, trans. Hugh McDonald. (Lublin-Roma: PTTA, 2018). 19

general is a process, a process which has a natural beginning and natural end. But, culture of death in Michael Tooley's "Abortion and Infanticide" opposes and challenges this ontic understanding of human nature on the grounds that human beings in the early stages of development are not persons.<sup>111</sup> For there is a distinction between human being and person, wherefore some human beings are not persons and some persons are not human beings, since personhood is reduced to the capacity of moral rights, or in Kantian understanding being a legislator of moral laws. And so, such categories human beings in this understanding have become exposed to manipulation and subject to various acts of death, supported with modern scientific languages.

The drama of the culture of death prioritizes individual comfort and flourishing over any obstruction to the realization of this and so unfolds in living situations like the unexpected pregnancy, a dying person, a severely disabled person, person with chronic illness, in such practices: wilful abortion, euthanasia, contraception, gene manipulation and transhumanism. This culture is practiced on the false assumption about life in pursuit of unbounded pleasure, and on the pretext of being progressive, modern and enlightened in matters of rights, while prioritizing individual rights over moral duty and mutual shared responsibility. And so, acting under the pretext of emancipation from tradition and authority, each individual acts as an autonomous determiner of the beginning of life and its end. Man in this model usurps absolute right over life as opposed to the understanding of life as a gift entrusted man; and as Wojtyła asserts that life is a gift entrusted to man, not as absolute or ultimate reality, but as penultimate reality and duty, which beholds on him as an obligation of responsibility to preserve and protect it at all stages. Thus, he says that culture of death dehumanize the human person in form of;

lethal mentality possessing an unlimited capacity for engulfing a wide range of victims and employed an inclusive perspective for highlighting 'whatever is opposed to life itself,' such as genocide, abortion, euthanasia, suicide, experimental exploitation of human beings, slavery, torture, mutilation rituals, and a host of other infamies.<sup>112</sup>

The cruelty of these practices, he maintains, are avoidable, but given that they are politically motivated, have resulted in killing and taking of human life through war, genocide, unjust distribution of resources, arms trade, tampering with the world's ecological balance,

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<sup>111</sup> Michael Tooley, *Abortion and Infanticide*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). 43-50

<sup>112</sup> William Brennan, *John Paul II Confronting the Language Empowering the Culture of Death*. (Florida: Ave Maria University Press, 2008). 301

“unlimited genetic engineering, the techniques of cloning, mutilation and harvesting of organs”<sup>113</sup> and other related practices.

And so, prompted by the capitalist mentality and political backing<sup>114</sup> by exonerating the actors from the responsibility of being destroyers of life as oppose defenders and protectors of life, Wojtyła explains, this culture charges the individuals within the society to seek excessive concern for efficiency, by substituting the value of human person to one’s individual convenience, individual autonomy, economic/material value and individual choice. It is obvious in the present-day experience the enormous sums of money invested in the production of pharmaceutical products that facilitate the killing of foetus in the womb of their mothers without recourse to medical assistance.<sup>115</sup> Given the hedonism, individualism and utilitarian character therein, these acts that used to be abhorrently atrocious, horrific and terrible, that stir grief have become a welcomed part of the culture of present-day living, demonstrating a situation of “war of the powerful against the weak and defenceless.”<sup>116</sup> Likewise, people of some races, ethnic groups, religions, ages and social groups are stigmatized, devalued and abused. This culture Wojtyła explains exacerbates the human person, and fascinates him with illusions of consumption without discrimination and a sense of responsibility.

These practices so considered treat human life and person as purely an aggregate of biological materials and of economic value to be used as means to any convenient end, and in some cases as an enemy to be avoided; for what could have resulted from conjugal union has become an enemy to be avoided at all costs.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, these acts are intrinsically evil because they demean and destroy human life in different stages and oppose the virtue of justice. Hence, Gabriel Marcel explains that this culture substitutes the sense of ‘being’ of man for ‘having,’ wherefor man has “fallen into the trap of thinking of himself and of other persons as things to have and to be use instead of who we/they are: creatures who simply are, whose goodness lies not in our being useful but in our simply ‘being.’”<sup>118</sup> This culture debases and subverts the good and value of person to functionality and productivity, as such,

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<sup>113</sup> Maryniarczyk. *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being, Notebooks on Metaphysics*. 19/21

<sup>114</sup> Incidentally, the practices of culture of death have become socially accepted and receive justification from public opinion and State, in the penal codes and some countries Constitutions, in the name of the rights of individual freedom, and so, claim exemption from punishment so that the crimes can be practiced even with the total freedom and free assistance of health-care systems. All together legalizing these crimes against human life. See. John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 4

<sup>115</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 13

<sup>116</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 12

<sup>117</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 13

<sup>118</sup> Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. Katharine Farrer. Westminster, (London: Dacre Press, 1949). 54

foetus/embryo, the elderly, terminally sick, disable people are regarded as non-functional or “nonpersons”<sup>119</sup> with no or less economic value. Seen as a burden, therefore, they should be eliminated, discarded or disposed at the individual whim.

As a matter of fact, the culture of death demonstrates as one can observe in their various practices the ‘sense’ of loss of God as captured by John Paul II,<sup>120</sup> different from the idea of ‘belief’ as portrayed by Taylor’s ‘A Secular Age,’ but loss of sense of virtue-justice. This attitude of loss of sense of God translates into the loss of the consciousness of our shared humanity that requires from each person as an obligation of care and protection of lives at various stages and circumstances; as well as loss of consciousness of transcendence. When man loses the consciousness of God, he no longer sees himself as mysteriously different from other earthly creatures,<sup>121</sup> as such, treats other weak and vulnerable creatures especially human being to mere matter and material objects to be manipulated and used for his benefit. Analysis of the specificity of the culture of death reveals the truncated and reduced sense of personhood and its direct threat to human nature, obstruction of natural rights, and so defines it as immoral and inherently wrong.

### 6.1. Abortion

The concept abortion or wilful abortion is a linguistic expression for the practice that kills, destroys and alters the development, formation and growth of nascent life. It not only destroys the life of a human being; it also opposes directly the virtue of justice that fails to recognize and acknowledge that the act is ‘murder, while denying the responsibility of sexual act from the person. This practice also demonstrates the failure of contraceptives while fleeing from the responsibility of the sexual act. And so, John Paul II states this practice is “rooted in hedonistic mentality and unwillingness to accept responsibility in matters of sexuality, and implies a self-centred concept of freedom, which regards procreation as an

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<sup>119</sup> William Brennan exposes the various defamatory languages or expressions used in the contemporary secularized Western culture to describe the practices of culture of death, such as: deficient human, subhuman/nonhuman, lowe4 animal, nonperson etc. See: Brennan, *John Paul II Confronting the Language Empowering the Culture of Death*. 301

<sup>120</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 21

<sup>121</sup> Phil Davignon, ‘The Culture of Death and the Practice of Everyday Life.’ *Church Life Journal*. (2023). <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/the-culture-of-death-and-the-practice-of-everyday-life/>. See also; Simeon De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans H. M. Parshley. (London: Vintage Books, 1993). 268. Also; Anne Maloney, ‘The Feminine Genius and its Role in Building the Culture of Life.’ *eJournal of Personalist Feminism*. 2. (2015). 19-27

obstacle to personal fulfilment,”<sup>122</sup> while supposing enjoyment or pleasure. So, he defines procured abortion as “the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from conception to birth.”<sup>123</sup> This practice, as the deliberate choice<sup>124</sup> of the mother/woman, reveals the eclipse of the sense of God and our shared humanity, and appeals to an exclusive immanent understanding of life. The desire for pleasure and physical beauty in the practice of wilful abortion structures the act as moral evil and a crime against human life, because it involves the elimination of a human being at the very beginning of life and causes uneasiness of conscience for the perpetrator. It also expresses a perverse idea of freedom given the liberty to decide and deal with life in whatever manner one considers convenient.

## 6.2. Contraception

Contraceptive, just like wilful abortion, violate the truth of the human activities expressed in the conjugal act. Although the conjugal act fosters spousal union and oneness, nonetheless, it does not per se guarantee a procreative end. However, the introduction of contraception into the act defeats the integral vision of the person and the personalistic norm which the conjugal act is also meant to achieve, together with the greater chance of the prevention of possibility of transmission of life. For the conjugal act Wojtyła explains must possess in itself a true and honest act of love, which contains integration of both psychological and ethical value.<sup>125</sup> And so, the introduction of contraception hinders the chances of realization of this truth of human beginning through the family, since every human creature receives their life through the union of man (husband) and woman (wife) which is the basis of the metaphysical anthropology and interpersonality. Similarly, the cruelty of contraception shows that it excludes in the spouses’ conjugal acts the internal order or the ontic structure it possesses, while staying only on the sexual pleasure. For the conjugal act argues Wojtyła is a relation, a relation not only in the sexual sense, but also in the ontological sense.<sup>126</sup> And so, realizing only the sexual sense of the conjugal act by the introduction of contraception, manifests an attitude of death and elimination of the chance of

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<sup>122</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 13

<sup>123</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 58

<sup>124</sup> For analysis about deliberate or personal choice as the ground for abortion and similar practices that presuppose who and what it means to be a person in light of this discussion or topic. See; Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 2.27.9

<sup>125</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Teaching of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on Love.’ 309

<sup>126</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Teaching of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on Love.’ 307

fecundity and moral responsibility of the act. This practice, considering its close connection with abortion, makes the latter inevitable and permissible, presenting the practitioner as an enemy of life, who perceives procreation as a disease to be avoided.

### 6.3. Euthanasia and Suicide

Like abortion, euthanasia is a practice where mostly the kinship of flesh and blood, the relation of parents and child/children is violated. The practice presupposes flee from the existential reality of pain, suffering and sickness in the face of death, and so, death is hastened to ease the inconvenience and cost or burden of the patient on the family. In this planned and wilful murder,<sup>127</sup> we observe in those who execute the act a loss of the voice of the conscience and the sense of responsibility that calls one to the right moral act. Strictly speaking, euthanasia is an “action or omission which of itself and by intention causes death, with the purpose of eliminating all suffering. The term of reference of this practice lies in the intention of the will and methods used.”<sup>128</sup> Thus, St. Augustine observes that euthanasia is immoral because:

it is never licit to kill another: even if he should wish it, indeed if he requests it because, hanging between life and death, he begs for help in freeing the soul struggling against the bonds of the body and longing to be released; nor is it licit even when a sick person is no longer able to live.<sup>129</sup>

In like manner, suicide and murder could be viewed with the same lens as euthanasia, as grave evil and unspeakable crime against the good and value of human life. Irrespective of the ‘supposed tolerableness’ (fleeing from the burden of life in the case of suicide), they contradict the innate and inalienable inclination to life, by bracketing or withdrawing the sense of personal responsibility from the person, as an excuse to flee from the pains and worries of life. Suicide, when considered objectively, “is a grave immoral act that involves the rejection of love of self and the renunciation of the obligation of justice and charity towards one’s neighbour, towards the communities...and society.”<sup>130</sup> Besides the illicit and direct termination of life of people understood as murder, also harvesting of organs and deliberate dismembering of vulnerable and weak people, such as: embryo, severely handicapped/disabled, elderly or terminally ill, constitutes the culture of death. These practices regard human being merely as biological organism, and objectively degrades the

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<sup>127</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 9

<sup>128</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 65

<sup>129</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 66

<sup>130</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 66

dignity of human being, even the ones at the nascent developmental stage who possess equal rights like every human person. Nevertheless, this practice could be permitted when the respect for life and integrity of the embryo/foetus does not involve disproportionate risks, rather, gears towards healing and improvement of health condition.<sup>131</sup>

Indeed, the culture of death opposes the objective moral truth, goodness, beauty, true freedom and inherent dignity of the person. These denials reveal the grave moral decline of those who engage in them, distorting the truth of the objective value of human life and interpersonal relationships between people. This culture also demonstrates the twisting and degrading of the value of medical professions who have sworn an oath to defend and protect life, and so affects their conscience, moral obligation and their shared responsibility with that of the State legislator who exonerate these acts that threaten the value of familyhood and inviolability of every individual person. These practices in themselves are illicit, immoral, and lacking the pursuit of epistemic value that characterise true culture in their substitution of the ontic value and good of person with efficiency, physical well-being, beauty and economic value/good, and these latter approaches characterise these practices as reprehensible and unspeakable crime against humanity. Nevertheless, challenging the contemporary Western secularism and its anthropological deficient manifestation will require an adequate, proper and integral approach which Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II personalistic anthropology advance

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<sup>131</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No: 63

## CHAPTER III

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF PERSONALISM IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN PERSON: THE WOJTYŁAN APPROACH

#### Introduction

The narrative of this chapter begins the response to the anthropological defects that results from the fragmentation of culture, in the manifestation of the contemporary Western secularism. The discussion follows the anthropological principles of intellectual movement named ‘personalism,’ challenging the materialization of the essence of culture and the human person. The principles of personalism is basically rooted on the unity of person, on the integral personalistic hermeneutic of human being as a subject which crystalizes the holistic notion of culture, synthesizing into one the antagonism between nature and culture understood as fragmented by the ideal of secularism. In line with the person centred understanding of culture, this school of thought treats human person as a phenomenon directly given, as the highest and the most valuable ontic formation in the order of nature and culture; extolling the intrinsic value of each person, his rights and objective moral order as the basis of man’s personal and interpersonal relationship. And these values, appeal to man as a duty by which he realizes his solidarity with his fellow men.<sup>1</sup> Thus, personalism considers as irreducible elements of human nature constituted through culture the transcendent moral order and value, the common good, and interpersonality in recognition of human nature as male and female, who is open to transcendence. These themes oppose the immanent frame constitution of the person in the various reductionism of the human nature through material sense of culture to mere manifestation of rationality or emotion, and as psycho-sociological or mere biological being. It rather emphasizes the integration of the corporeal and spiritual elements as the unity of the plurality of human nature and the subordination of freedom to truth that tends to self-determination. In line with these personalistic tenets, this chapter, challenges the contemporary culture crisis through the specificity of personalistic culture of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jaroslav Seifert, ‘Excellence and Limits of Juan Manuel Burgos book: ‘An Introduction to Personalism’ *Appraisal: The Journal of the British Personalist Forum*. 14:1. (2024). 7

<sup>2</sup> He understands culture in a broad way as the phenomenon that integrates with nature. For him, cultural act improves, shapes, sharpens man and distinguishes him from other beings of nature given his rationality via ethical life; thus, permeates (*anima cultura*) the whole spheres of human nature and defines human nature as cultural phenomenon.

### 3. The Emergence of Personalism

Thinking in personalistic way is an intellectual project birthed as a paramount necessity given the present-day cultural crisis analysed above. One would ask, what does it mean to think in the personalistic way? How does personalism respond to the reductionism in the understanding of human nature expressed in the ideologies of secularism? Can one truly establish the nature of human person either solely on bodily manifestations, or spiritual manifestations? These questions highlight the subjectively perception of culture and values/goods in the ideal of secularism which does not really relate to the objective and intrinsic values/goods that proceed from ontic culture which personalism tends to address.

The crisis of culture that results to secularism given the single perception of culture subverts the apprehension of human nature, and so, 'personalism' arose in Europe in the twentieth century<sup>3</sup> in response to the anthropological dichotomy, ethical implications and hostile understanding of human being as a person;<sup>4</sup> in the controversy between the notion of being a 'human being, an instance of a kind of nature' and being a 'person,'<sup>5</sup> that gave rise to the immanent constitution of human being on the basis of mere biopsychic-sociological being. Hence, personalism proposes a correlation of the whole dynamisms of human operativity as what constitutes the nature of human person, which also determines the nature of culture, structures meaning and purpose of human life towards self-fulfilment. Confronting the idea that a person emerges through the gradual process of socialization, the school of thought personalism subscribes to the historical development of the concept of 'person' and etymological basis of culture in relation to human nature and explains that the reality of personhood proceeds from the dynamisms of human operativity and determines the root of human existence. This portrays person (humanity as the species of the genus animal) as the starting point and centre of analysis of all realities in the world.

Person, according to Jacques Maritain aligning with St. Thomas Aquinas signifies what is most perfect in all nature which cannot be fragmented or diminished into singular unites. Rather, person is always a whole, a unity of individuality and personality, and his

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<sup>3</sup> The emergence of 'personalism' in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has its background in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in demonstration of the relation of the human person to the Transcendent Person that underlies the spiritual nature of human person.

<sup>4</sup> The personalistic reconstruction followed the intellectual paths of Max Scheler, Thomistic personalism of Jacque Maritain, communitarian and interpersonal personalism of Emmanuel Mounier, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, Karol Wojtyła. See: Juan M. Burgos, *An Introduction to Personalism*, trans. Allen, R. T. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2018). 2

<sup>5</sup> John Zizioulas, 'On Being a Person: Towards an Ontology of Personhood.' *Persons Divine and Human*, ed. Christopher Schwobel & Colin E. Gunton. (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1991). 33-46

individuality proceeds from nature, something material by which he exists as a concrete being, while personality is rooted in spiritual elements and essentially structures self-fulfilment.<sup>6</sup> Again, human person is a single unified substance,<sup>7</sup> or a unity of the plurality of personal subject,<sup>8</sup> a dynamic whole and a synthesis of body and soul. This distinction however is not necessarily separable in reality. And so, in re-accessing the concept ‘man’ as a result of anthropological disagreement that arose on the basis of naturalism and scientism, personalism appeals to the transcendental elements and transcendent moral norm as the basis of cultural act (praxis) suppressed from the nature of man by Enlightenment movement, while placing freedom (freedom of conscience, rational autonomy) on the pedestal as the individual’s way of acting and being<sup>9</sup>. Personalism opposes this Enlightenment presupposition that brackets transcendent ideal in human analysis, and in expressing scientific materialism and rational autonomy deny the objective truth-value of any non-experimental affirmation<sup>10</sup> which does not appeal to methodology of natural modern science. As such, the personalists recourse to a robust and totality of the experience of human person-inner and outer experiences in understanding person both as individual and in relation to other person(s). It expresses a positive understanding of human person as a moral and responsible subject, who accounts for his actions and decisions for himself and in relation to another human subject.<sup>11</sup> This path of investigation in the analysis of human person has been neglected since the modern thought that results in materialization of human realities.

And so, personalism basically advances a metaphysical,<sup>12</sup> anthropological and ethical analysis of realities with human person as the central and primary focus of investigation. It

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<sup>6</sup> Jacques Maritain, *Man and State*. (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1966). 12

<sup>7</sup> Karol Wojtyła’s realistic personalism aligns with this tradition that advances substantive understanding of the person as a being that guarantees a continuous identity of the self throughout the person’s life and existence, in opposing response to the non-substantive idea that informs the contemporary secularism ideal of fluid identity of the person, lived as ‘trans-humanism’ on the axiom that personal identity is not permanent, but subject to change according to preferred individual identity. See: Mariusz Wojewoda, ‘Karol Wojtyła’s Conception of Personhood from the Perspective of Cognitive Sciences.’ *Philosophy and Canon Law*. 7:1. (2021). 1-17

<sup>8</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. I. Grzegorz, foreword C. Anderson. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021). 488

<sup>9</sup> Duncan Ivison, *Locke, Liberalism and Empire*, in: *The Philosophy of John Locke*, ed. P. R. Anstey. (London: Routledge Press, 2003). 94

<sup>10</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 1

<sup>11</sup> Michał Stachurski, M. ‘On the Lack of Explicit Internal Criticism of Contemporary Personalists. An Outline of the Problem.’ *Humaniora. Czasopismo Internetowe*, 1:41. (2023). 53-64

<sup>12</sup> The metaphysical import in the understanding of personalism refers to the fact that metaphysics offers in broad sense an ultimate, radical and fundamental knowledge (the desire for knowledge of truth is the primary desire in the heart of man), or as the search for ultimate and substantial certainties of knowledge which goes beyond what sensations and isolated experiences reveal, and tries to reach an essential comprehension of beings which arrives at their ultimate causes. The metaphysical, particularly the Aristotelian-Scholastic (Thomistic) basis in the search and analysis of the ontological density of the human person reaches the depth and ultimate

analyses all human endeavours and activities so as to grasp the nature and truth of human being as a subject and an 'I.'<sup>13</sup> This intellectual movement regards human person as the ultimate explanatory, epistemological, ontological, ethical and axiological principle of all reality.<sup>14</sup> It incorporates the concept of 'experiencing I' and 'subjectivity' into the understanding of human person who is a subsistent and autonomous being. These themes appeal to the dynamisms of human person in the exterior and interior spheres, thereby reveal the 'who' and 'what' of human person that radiates the two-fold character of culture in the nature of man which does not express any antinomy or antagonism nor reduce him to mere being of nature. For human person analogically deduced from other beings of nature is distinguished as perfect being because he transcends corporeality possessing spiritual capacities, as well as the awareness that awareness of his activities and his subjectivity.<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless, various dimensions of this school of thought demonstrate this integral analysis of man as person, namely: "Anglo-American personalism, Phenomenological personalism, Communitarian personalism, Dialogical personalism, Classical ontological personalism and Modern ontological personalism or neo-personalism."<sup>16</sup> However, for the purpose of this research, the personalistic analysis of this work will focus on classical ontological personalistic approach of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. His methodological approach has been described as:

an ontological analysis of reality based on an integral concept of experience which includes, simultaneously, objective and subjective elements. The objective ones comes from knowledge and perception of the world external to the subject (which includes some aspects of the perception of one's own body); and the subjective ones which are present in the experience of one's own, intimate world, entirely nontransferable to what is exterior in objective terms.<sup>17</sup>

Wojtyła himself asserts that "the experience of everything that exists outside man is always linked with some experience of man himself, and man never experiences something outside himself without in some way experiencing himself in this experience."<sup>18</sup> These complementary experiences reveal the truth about human person in action which cannot be

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truth of man as a person, the structure which can be grasp intellectually. See: Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 210

<sup>13</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 31

<sup>14</sup> Edited as quoted in: Thomas J. Gentry II, 'Human Dignity, Self-Determination, and the Gospel: An Enquiry into St. John Paul II's Personalism and its Implications for Evangelization.' *Studia Gilsoniana*, 9:2. (2020). 237-251

<sup>15</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Other Related Essays*. 26

<sup>16</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 200/1

<sup>17</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 208

<sup>18</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 44

limited only to the means of the faculties. This approach is not only specific to Wojtyła, it relates to other Polish personalists who strive to revive the battered image of human person in the World Wars.

### 1.1. The Character of Wojtyła's Personalism

Basically, personalism as a school of thought strongly opposes the impropriety in the abstract and idealistic sense of the person expressed by the rationalist-empiricist approach that reduce knowledge about human person to consciousness, they also counter intellectually the Marxist materialistic anthropology that dominates culture and inform contemporary Western secularism. These ideologies in today's cultural practices substitute the 'who' of human person to 'what,' thereby introduce paradigm shift that causes cultural crisis in the theoretical and practical understanding of human person, especially in the physical, moral, intellectual and social areas of life. But Wojtyła's personalistic approach considers these various experiences as one integral experience of man who experiences both good and bad dimensions of these experiences as a person and in relation to other person. This synthesis enriches human cognition and leads to broad understanding of man, the world, God or his ultimate end, man's vision and mission in the world.<sup>19</sup>

However, Wojtyła through the ally of Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics with phenomenological and existentialist analysis of consciousness from the first person point of view argues in response to the contemporary cultural crisis that personhood is what is inherent to human being, defines him as being of rights, free and rational, structures his uniqueness and condition his dignity. Affirming this background in the thought of Wojtyła, Paweł Tarasiewicz states that this method provides a "personalistic understanding of man in his transitive and intransitive experiences, and so arrive at that which is irreducible in man, saving human consciousness from the power of subjectivism and objectivism, and making it an object in realistic philosophy."<sup>20</sup> In his analysis, he remains firm, and deeply rooted to the objective content of experience, stating that this content qualifies man as a conscious being who is not constituted or determined, rather, he determines himself in and through his conscious act.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the holistic dynamisms of what he calls the "experience of man"<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Tomasz Duma, 'Personalism in the Lublin School of Philosophy: Card. Karol Wojtyła, Fr. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec.' *Studia Gilsoniana*. 5:2. (2016). 365-390

<sup>20</sup> Paweł Tarasiewicz, P. 'The Common Sense of Personalism of St. John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła).' *Studia Gilsoniana*, 3. (2014). 619-34

<sup>21</sup> Wojtyła. 'Person: Subject and Community.' 226

constitutes the basis of his personalism and justification for true sense of culture proceeds from these dynamisms.

### 1.2. The Manifestation of the Person in the Lived Experience of Act

Karol Wojtyła considers as the starting point of his analysis and response to ‘who is man’ what is the purpose of man? the whole experiential facts of experience of man. As he said, experience is a kind of knowledge or understanding, and as a kind of knowledge, it underpins all other operations of reason, but does not replace them, instead, it is the foundation and life-giving source.<sup>23</sup> These experiential data reveal the personal self of man as one who expresses himself and participates in nature and this defines the fundamental uniqueness of each human person,<sup>24</sup> as well as relates him to what is truly good. The essence of human person is more or less theoretical, but at the same time it is realistic and practical and so manifest holistically in and through various dimensions of experience. Thus, Wojtyła confronts the banality and antagonism of culture and nature through the whole dimensions of experience of man acts. The various layers of experience of man manifest differently but as one singular unit in person as a self-experiencing subject, and reveals personhood. These experiences belong to the person as the constitutive element of the person’s memory and history which is permanent and do not alter even as the person develops and maybe have forgotten some of the past experiences, yet, person’s experiences are irreplaceable because they constitute the self and cannot be replicated by another self. And so, the analysis of experience of self, reveals the person from nature, and as Marian Jaworski observes, starting from experience in the study of man as a person frees one from any form of pure rationalism.<sup>25</sup>

### 1.3. Lived Experience within the Objective Structure of the Person

The experience of self or the ‘experience of man’ as Wojtyła prefers consists of the whole activities of the person, willed, conscious and unconscious acts, which points to the

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<sup>22</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 44.

<sup>23</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 438.

<sup>24</sup> Henri de Lubac. *At the Service of the Church: Henry de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writing*, trans. Anne Englund. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993). 171/2

<sup>25</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, ‘Struggling with the Reality of the Human Person and its Interpretation: On the method of Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy.’ *Forum Philosophicum*, 28:2. (2023). 385-397

cognitive contact of 'self,' for it possesses experiential character.<sup>26</sup> This experiential character refers to the objective and ethical content which qualifies human experiences as possessing moral character, because it emanates from the acting subject as his conscious act, involving the unity of person in his body and soul, and in a sense thoroughly penetrates what man as a person is.<sup>27</sup> This demonstrates the relation of human act or culture with ethics as the science of human acts that tend to moral value—the good or evil contained in experience.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, he explains that the whole experience of man (*Erfahrung*) *ex se* (in a sense) is different from ethical experience (*Erlebnis*), although it is partly linked with it given its structure of action. Ethics he said is the basis of action, as such, action possesses moral value, for morality does not exist outside man, and man does not exist (at least in a certain sense) outside morality.<sup>29</sup> For at the base of the whole experience of man lies the experience of morality which is the source of act and human determination, for it reveals the truth of man and his position in the world. Since man is aware of his action, and being aware of it, he has control over his action and what he realizes as the end of his action, good or evil. However, it is not every experience of act that possesses this moral character or ontological structure, therefore, not every act constitutes self-realization and definition of the person, only morally good act does (this experience of morally good act will be discussed later). But every experience of the person in a way tends towards realization and definition of the person, because it possesses personalistic features. This awareness of realizing universal and objective truth of good in one's personal action to himself and in relation to others structures personal experience.

This experience is necessary because it accounts for the reality of what the person faces in his daily living. And the priority of this personal experience Aristotle explains is reliable in demonstrating and revealing the truth of who the person is, and in line with this, Wojtyła maintains that personal experience of oneself and other concrete self is the foundation and basic authority which provides us with depth of knowledge of human person. For in the daily experience of the person, we know that it is 'I' the person who is acting through himself, that is, acting with an act that is radically and organically his own. My acting as person is not an undergoing, or an enduring, or a transmitting of what originates

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<sup>26</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 45. NB; Wojtyła refers to phenomenological method so as to abstract and grasp the in-depth knowledge about the experience facts, thus he arrives at what he describes as 'transphenomenology.' See: Rocco Buttiglione, *The Thought of Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, trans. Paolo Guietti & Francesca Murphy. Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997). 120/1

<sup>27</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 589

<sup>28</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics.' 23

<sup>29</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 44

outside of myself, it is 'I,' (Stephen), myself who acts when 'I' act as person, and no one else.<sup>30</sup> This experience of act of the person resounds thus in Aquinas that, the person is not acted upon-*non aguntur, sed per se agunt*,<sup>31</sup> but acts on his own. Wojtyła asserts that the objective reality of the self as a personal subject is what is given as the immediate subject's own experience.

Again, he states that the subject in the course experiencing, man experiences himself as the subject, he also knows that the object experienced are real beings, like himself and not mere modifications or shadows of consciousness.<sup>32</sup> These objects of experience are not only known in our consciousness (ordered by the mind), they are also transcendent to the act of being known, because they possess ontological character (moral value or objective norm) and have the capacity to exist independent of being known. And so, the person demonstrates an experiential knowledge and understanding of himself and his environment with capacity of adapting to the changings in the environment. This capacity distinguishes human experience from other consciousness and makes the experience of the person a personal experience, an explicit conviction of the person's personality, and expression of the person's involvement. This structure is essential in understanding the person because man Wojtyła opines cannot "experience something outside himself without experiencing in a sense, himself;"<sup>33</sup> since the category of experience contains both the external and internal manifestation of human subject. Nonetheless, he observes also that experience is in a sense an understanding and a knowledge of the subjective self, and this knowledge is different from the knowledge of another, but somehow influences each other but does not deform them. Knowledge he said, "is a means of multiplying and supplementing experiences."<sup>34</sup>

He further explains that this experience becomes ever richer the longer and more intense as man lives and reflects.<sup>35</sup> And the expression, 'longer and more intensely a man lives and reflects,' attests to the fact that human life is a process, a process that begins at a definite moment, and gets richer in act of cognition (that is, the encounter of the cognitive subject with the object. The contact with the essence of the object as Wojtyła asserts is the birth of culture, wherein the rational cognition is an expression of culture-forming activity of

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<sup>30</sup> John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996). 26

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. The English Dominican Fathers. (New York: Catholic Way Publishing, 2015). 1, q. 29, art 1

<sup>32</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Personal Structure of Self-Determination.' 189-190

<sup>33</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 51

<sup>34</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 96/7

<sup>35</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Considerations on the Essence of Man*, trans. John Grondelski. (Lublin: PTTA, 2016). 21-23

man).<sup>36</sup> This affirms Wojtyła's understanding of the natural origin and end of human life, in the inseparable bond between the biological and psychical constitutions of human being which grows and improves intensely as man's experience of himself improves. Although this experience may be complex,<sup>37</sup> however, its complexity does not deny the fact that this experience is connected with man himself who possesses this experience and no other being. This lived experiences<sup>38</sup> indicate that we cannot discover the person only in the phenomenological moment of experience, that is, in the "intentionality of consciousness" which he said is not intentional, instead, he resorted to analysing the entirety of experiences of man.

Thus, he subscribes to a realistic phenomenology different from the dogmas of phenomenology, for he rejects the subjection of consciousness to intentional character. He rather explains that man has conscious experience of the objective reality of what he experiences, namely; real human person and other objects in the world, which constitute the entirety of that given in experience. This approach in a sense fits his response to his critique by the Thomistic philosophers on the usage of phenomenological method in his *magna opus*, 'Person and Act,' on the basis of which Prof. Kalinowski sees the work differently, as he said, "Person and Act does not possess a philosophical character, unless in the metonymical sense; or in the expression of Fr. Kłosak, it is phenomenology of person."<sup>39</sup> In response to the phenomenological element of experience as the starting point, "Fr. Jaworski referring to St. Thomas's philosophy argues that, to avoid falling into the problem of pure rationalism in the philosophy of man, the human person must...be given visually in experience...For whence could we know about this?"<sup>40</sup> However, Wojtyła maintains that basically "metaphysics finds its root in experience, and no other way can be seen to apply the general theory of being to the theory of the person, unless on the basis of a specific experience of man."<sup>41</sup> For one cannot fully grasp the truth of who the person is solely on the consciousness or solely

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<sup>36</sup> Arkadiusz Modrzejewski, & Slavomir Gálik, 'Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic and Universalistic Philosophy of Culture.' *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 10:4. (2014). 99-110

<sup>37</sup> The complexity of this experience refers to the moment of interruption like during sleep, which does not alter the character of this experience, because the person is always his own 'I,' an 'I' that is given as object of cognition as well as subject of cognition. Hence, man encounters himself and understands the continuity of his experience as something personal which he is accountable for, which defines him as unique and unrepeatable.

<sup>38</sup> "The fact that a general problem has gripped and assimilated the whole of a person is a guarantee that, that person has really experienced it and perhaps gained from the experience. Such person can really reflect the experience for others to learn from his/her personal life the truth about the experience." See: Carl E. Jung, *Research into the Phenomenology of Self*. (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc, 1959/1991). quoted by: Jordan B. Peterson, *Maps of Meaning: The Architect of Belief*. (New York: Routledge, 1999). xiii

<sup>39</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 437

<sup>40</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 437

<sup>41</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 438

through laborious analyses of metaphysics,<sup>42</sup> rather, through integration of the ontic structure of experience, namely, the object of experience, that is, the moral value with the fieri of man as a person. Thus, he unifies by this methodological approach the essence of culture disintegrated through the ideal of secularism wherefor consciousness is idolized as the essence of human person.

He maintains that this approach reveals especially intentional character of conscious experience where man as the experiencing self, grasps both the real experience of external world, and at the same time the experience of himself as a real human subject, and so permeates the interiority of the experiencing subject.<sup>43</sup> This experiencing self he asserts first experiences himself as a real being in the world, who is in direct contact or participates with other beings in the world. Thus, Karol Wojtyła cross-fertilizes by destroying the demarcation between the subjective and objective approaches to human anthropology and ethics, stating that the unity of the entirety of experience truly reveals human person.<sup>44</sup> He also explains that the best way to grasp the truth of human nature is when the cognitive structure always accompanies the experiential, stating that this phenomenological integration of ontological content is rich and deep in grasping the complexity of human person. Nonetheless, he recognizes the strangeness of phenomenological method to traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, however, he explains that the objective content of experience is the source and basis of the knowledge of human person, because “the proper categories of human being, have their own basis in experience, that is, in proper experience of man.”<sup>45</sup>

This element is fundamental and important because it relates especially to the ethical (moral) experience which is common to all humanity in various works of life-politics, economics, medicine, academia etc; and does not tolerate any sense of heterogeneity<sup>46</sup> in experience of morality. The essence of this experience is that it brings us to the world of man as a person, that is, as a being and as a consciousness in a parallel experience of act.<sup>47</sup> This is the realistic experience of the person, Wojtyła explains because the sense of the ‘self’ as the

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<sup>42</sup> ‘For if the cognition of man as a person has no basis in experience, no starting point in vision, then one could think that the philosophical concept of the person is derived from other sources and imposed on experience by way of ‘laborious analyses.’” Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 437

<sup>43</sup> Peter L. Simpson, *On Karol Wojtyła*. (New York: Lucario Occasio Press, 2014). 10

<sup>44</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Subjectivity and the Irreducibility in the Human Being.’ p. 210

<sup>45</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 438

<sup>46</sup> The sense of heterogeneity in ethical experience appeals to sociology of morality and psychology of morality which do not give proper, thorough and in-depth analysis of experiential data/facts; and interpretation as in reduction of these data with right reason, cause and foundation of these experiential data in relation to moral value. Such heterogeneity of morality results in moral subjectivism and relativism. See: Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 5/6

<sup>47</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 4

immediate cognitive contact takes place, and this contact lasts as long as the ‘self’ understands himself as the one who is the subject as well as the object. For the intentional act of experience of joy, or sadness, or love is always joy, or sadness or love about/of something or somebody.<sup>48</sup> The depth of this experience is that it is a personal experience that starts with the person (A) as the subject that experiences, and relates to who/what is experienced (B), as the object of experience. Because in the whole dimensions of experience, one must be in cognitive contact with oneself so as to have the real experience himself. The nature of the person manifests in the synthesis of different activities, that is, in the thought expressed in action (experience).<sup>49</sup> And this process he maintains, does not demonstrate a demarcation of conception and methodology between thought (metaphysics) and action/experience (consciousness/phenomenology), rather it shows the complementarity of interdependency of dynamisms;<sup>50</sup> which leads to self-understanding and self-knowledge. Likewise, it highlights the true manifestation of human nature in the integration of spirit with the body.

As it were, no singularity of these methodology or manifestations is capable of leading us the complexity of the mystery of person, his position and purpose in the world. As such he declares that “there is no universal method that enables us to acquire a thorough knowledge about every kind of reality.”<sup>51</sup> And in the case of man as a person, it is wrong to maintain the claim that singular method of analysis would give us true knowledge of who the person is as presupposed in the ideal of contemporary secularism. Therefore, we can grasp true knowledge of the personal being of man with less theoretical and laborious analysis through the synthesis of the analysis of the cognition or thought (metaphysics) with deliberate action of the person, the realm of experience of man. Thus, action reveals the unity of the essence of the person as a substance, subject, and agent,<sup>52</sup> who is not reducible solely to any of these elements.

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<sup>48</sup> Crosby. *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. 5

<sup>49</sup> James Taylor, ‘Beyond Nature: Karol Wojtyła’s Development of the Traditional Definition of Personhood.’ *The Review of Metaphysics*, 60:2. (2009). 415-454

<sup>50</sup> The concept of dynamism (Gr-*dynamis-δύναμις*) in the thought of Wojtyła follows from Aristotle’s philosophy which broadly means ‘strength, power, mightiness, ability, potentiality or potential state. And potentia in Latin which is equivalent of Greek *dynamis* narrowly means ‘power’ or ‘faculty.’ However, Wojtyła shows the difference in the interdependency of dynamism with potentiality, stating that dynamism in reference to man expresses actual dynamization of man-subject which issues from within and may have the form either of ‘acting’ or ‘happening,’ while potentiality indicates the source itself of this dynamization of the subject, which lies inherent in the subject. As analysed in: Tomasz Duma, ‘The Foundations of the Human Person’s Dynamism in Karol Wojtyła’s Anthropology: A Study in Light of ‘The Acting Person.’ *Verbum Vitae*, 38:2. (2020). 441-456

<sup>51</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, ‘On the Essence Of Karol Wojtyła’s Personalism.’ Febrery, R. F. & Llueca, E. O. *El testimonio de Karol Wojtyła*. (Navarra: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2022). 115-132

<sup>52</sup> James Taylor, ‘Beyond Nature: Karol Wojtyła’s Development of the Traditional Definition of Personhood.’ *The Review of Metaphysics*, 60:2. (2009). 415-454

## 2. The Truth of the Human Person Revealed Through Act

In the light of the analysis of the whole experiences of man, Wojtyła explains, we grasp who the person is through the act. For there are contained in the experience of man, innumerable facts about man as a person, such that one need not demonstrate or prove to anyone that man is a person, that man's action is an act"<sup>53</sup> because therein is revealed, the essence of man as a person. Hence, action is the route to the depth of his being. The fact of 'act' be it in the first 'I,' second 'I,' or third 'I' he said, can be "understood and interpreted on the basis of the experience contained in I act."<sup>54</sup> This fact of 'I act' Wojtyła further explains basically proceeds from experience of man as a fact that is given because, the human person is revealed through act in the two objective structures, namely: "I act or man-acts,"<sup>55</sup> and "something-happens-in-man."<sup>56</sup> It affirms what has been previously discussed, that experience, undoubtedly linked to the totality of acts, to the dynamisms proper to man in the inner and outer spheres of act, is the unique channel of the discovery of the person. It presents action as the means of knowing the person both from without on the basis of relating with people outside of him, and from within. Thus, Wojtyła clearly states that:

when I feel desires, cravings, urges springing up on their own, outside of my freedom, and thus happening in me, I do not just perceive these desires and urges as objects, as springing up in another being which however close to me is still other than me; I experience them subjectively and not just objectively as belonging to myself as subject; I experience myself as the one who lives in them and has them as his own. When I express the urges that spring up in me, saying for example 'I fear this,' 'I desire that,' I use 'I' in the same sense in which I say, expressing my acting through myself, 'I will,' 'I refuse,' etc.<sup>57</sup>

He further states that these dynamisms express the basic intuition of how the person manifests through actions, and highlight these facts as what belongs to his humanness. He observes that in man;

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<sup>53</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 107/8

<sup>54</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 161

<sup>55</sup> By act he means, acting that is a ceaselessly repeated event in the life of every man, so that when we consider the number of living people, we obtain innumerable facts and hence an enormous wealth of experience. It is a process-like sequence of acting; and it corresponds to different agents. In this sense of action, we grasp the datum: *agere sequitur esse*-action follows a being, simply put, as a being is, so does he/she act. By analysis, the action displays by embryo or sick person cannot and does not possess the same character, for as long as the being has life, the being acts according to his or her capacity. Thus, action reveals who the person is, as well as the moment of apprehending the person, for the person is aware of his action and his subjectivity. Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 161

<sup>56</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 163

<sup>57</sup> Crosby. *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. 39

there appears the essential difference arising from having the experience of efficacy. On the one hand, there is that form of the human dynamism in which man himself is the agent, that is to say, he is the cause of his own causation; in this form we grasp the expression, 'man-acts.' On the other hand, there is that form of human dynamism in which man is not aware of his efficacy and does not experience it; this we express by 'something happens in man.'<sup>58</sup>

These two-fold dynamism constitute a complete experience of act in the subject man, and do not tolerate any form of division in man. This bond demonstrates the organic relation between nature and person that radiates the bond between culture and nature. This integral understanding of the dynamisms of act (*czy/akt*), that is, the conscious act, is equivalent to what in the Western philosophical tradition is *actus humanus* or *actus personae*,<sup>59</sup> which relates to the act of the will, wherein the 'I' is the efficient cause of action.

However, in the dynamisms of act, conscious act-*actus humanus/actus personae* differs from *actus hominis*, wherefore the latter refers more to what happens in man, whereas the dynamism proper to human person that truly determines human person is the conscious act of the will.<sup>60</sup> He then adds that the concretization of this dynamism in human person is accomplished in the way proper to free will.<sup>61</sup> The will in actualizing the *actus voluntarius* reveals the structures of inner and outer experience of act that determines the essence of act and its distinctness with respect to the action of the other subjects that are not persons.<sup>62</sup> Inasmuch as these dynamisms contrasts each other in their manifestation yet, they complement and correspond with each other, for they do not express two individual persons, rather they refer to one and same being, as unity of acts. This analysis is affirmed in Jacques Maritain understanding, that *actus personae* that is, conscious act is the experience of act peculiar to man as a person, and the moment in man when there is something coming from above and something from the earth, something of spirit and something of matter.<sup>63</sup> Wojtyła explains that the foundation of these dynamisms is the will, and it derives its efficacy as

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<sup>58</sup> Karol Wojtyła. *The Acting Person*, trans. Potocki, A, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. (Dordrecht, Boston, London: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1969/1979). 66-67

<sup>59</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 59

<sup>60</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 61

<sup>61</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 60

<sup>62</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 60. NB: The concept of *actus humanus* or *actus voluntarius* developed by Wojtyła in the analysis of conscious act stems from Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy of *potentia-actus* by means of which they explain the changeable and dynamic character of being. For *potentia* is always characteristic of expressing *actus*, as such, *actus humanus* reveals the personal subject of man as a person who act, expressing the link between him and his action.

<sup>63</sup> Crosby. *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. 38

command from the reason always towards the good (*bonum in communi*);<sup>64</sup> and so defines the person as the efficient cause of action, even when he realizes opposite of good.

Thus, action properly speaking immanates from the will, and finds its locus in the authentic experience of the person, such that action becomes deliberate act of the person, act of his personal decision, that expresses the uniqueness of human person. This description of conscious act differentiates the person from human individuals understood as members of the species *Homo sapiens*, for person acts through his being, which makes this act personal and unique to him as a person. Because to be person he explains,

signifies that a man cannot be wholly 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.' To act as a personal subject is to interact with others (persons or things), to influence something, to stimulate or being stimulated by something, that is with the whole (external) world. To be present in a specific enterprise not only with his outer influence but with his interiority.<sup>65</sup>

This expression demonstrates two dynamic moments in man's life, the active and passive moments, and two structures of experience of man exteriority and interiority, but the moment in the experience of act that reveals the person as the agent of act is the active moment and interiority that belongs to *actus personae*. This moment nevertheless, does not define the person as pure spiritual being or consciousness, for the person acts through the body which structures his objective entity and reveals the power of the will by which he acts as autonomous being. Thus, personal action is construed as the essential expression of humanness, and it varies according to individual persons because '*agere/operare sequitur esse*-action follows being;' for as a being is, so does the being acts. We observe in this analysis two-fold character of conscious act namely: "a specific objective totality connected with the conscious action of man which contains the *feri* of the moral value, and a subjective content of consciousness connected with the subjective reality."<sup>66</sup> This two-fold structure of act refutes the pure consciousness constitution of acts that characterizes contemporary secularism with its effect of subjectivism and individualism, and materialization of act.

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<sup>64</sup> Wojtyła. 'Subjectivity and the Irreducibility in the Human Being. 5

<sup>65</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 22. See also: Hołub. 'On the Essence Of Karol Wojtyła's Personalism.' 115-132

<sup>66</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 6

## 2.1. The Dynamism of Conscious Action

In the structure of act, man experiences two dynamic elements that distinguish the personal act, namely, consciousness of act and conscious act. These two moments interiorizes and subjectivizes the whole dynamisms of act. Basically, consciousness plays two role in personal action, mirroring and reflexive function, but the aspect that is close to the relation of action to person is mirroring or reflective function. As an attribute of the person, consciousness fundamentally mirrors what takes place in man and in which man as man is not active, as well as what man does and how he does it.<sup>67</sup> It also interiorizes and subjectivizes lived experience, and as well mirrors what man as a subjects experiences externally in the course of his activities both cognitive and sensual, although man as a subject may not be aware of the cognitive act. Consciousness mirrors only what has been cognized because as Wojtyła explains, it is not the proper subject of the *fieri* of moral value.

The *fieri* of moral value is accomplished in and through personal acts,<sup>68</sup> that is, through conscious act. He clearly states that “only that which is conscious, the conscious act, possesses the moral value.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, he refutes the ideal of constituting cultural act that relates to person to consciousness that conditions secularism given its cognitive character in form of sensation and feeling that characterizes it as intentionality and as independent reality. But consciousness he said is not characterized by intentionality,<sup>70</sup> is not a self-knowledge,<sup>71</sup> as such, cannot come under intellect as rationality, or will as voluntarius, since it is not cognitive and intentional<sup>72</sup> for these qualities condition self-knowledge. Besides the mirroring function, Wojtyła further clarifies that consciousness is an aspect of man as a substantial subject of existence and action, the ontological structure of man, and the capacity in man that elevates man beyond mere consciousness. However, it shapes and reflects the subjectivity of human person given that it is as an aspect of interiority, thus it objectivizes interiority and constitutes part of the essence of moral value that relates fundamentally to conscious act, because it proceeds from the subject to the objective reality.

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<sup>67</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 162

<sup>68</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 7

<sup>69</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 8

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth Schmitz. *At the Centre of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła*. (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1993). 70

<sup>71</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 8

<sup>72</sup> Debora Savage, ‘The Centrality of Lived Experience in Wojtyła’s Account of the Person.’ *Roczniki Filozoficzne*. LXI(4). (2013). 19-51

By objectivizing the intentionality of conscious act, man experiences the external world as the real experience of human subject.<sup>73</sup> This demonstrates the sensual and cognitive character of consciousness that exist in man, and distinguishes man's consciousness from that of the beings of nature. Thanks to conscious act, we could observe the organic connection of consciousness to man that also reveals man as subject and object of consciousness. These structures Wojtyła explains are connected to the "subjective acting I, and linked with the totality of human cognitive capabilities through a common root (*in potentia*) but differs from them *in se* by the separate character of its acts."<sup>74</sup> What it means is that, consciousness does not have an ontological structure of its own, not possess a separate realm of subjectivity, instead, consciousness is part of the subjective content of being and acting that belongs to man as a subject.<sup>75</sup> It is in the nature of accident, given that it proceeds from the nature of man as a rational being and mirrors the complexity of man's conscious action.

Inasmuch as consciousness does not merely refer to self-cognition or self-knowledge, it rather radiates conscious action and determines the ethical character whereby the person is conscious that he is acting, for he not only acts consciously, at the same time, he has the consciousness that he acts and that he acts consciously.<sup>76</sup> The awareness of the consciousness of action which accompanies conscious action as aspects of consciousness relates the person who acts with action, and this is accomplished through the mechanism of the will. As he said, "conscious action leads us directly to the aspect of consciousness in the act and in relation to the person."<sup>77</sup> As it were, the ontological structure of consciousness that radiates consciousness in acting in a realistic and objectivistic manner portrays man as "a substantial subject of existence and action (*suppositum*)."<sup>78</sup> As such, the essence of act relates to interior capacity as the specific mark of the person, source of act and means of closest relation with the external world. Through this capacity of conscious action, the person permeates any given reality, even material reality and so obtains knowledge about object, such that with right rational assessment acts on the basis of truth or good. Thus, Wojtyła clearly states that the person acts on the category of two orders namely, truth or falsehood.<sup>79</sup> This implies that act does not belong merely to consciousness but to the person who engages himself and the world through his act, for man exists and acts consciously, but he does not exist and act also

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<sup>73</sup> Simpson. *On Karol Wojtyła*. 8

<sup>74</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 8

<sup>75</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 60

<sup>76</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 62

<sup>77</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 62

<sup>78</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 8

<sup>79</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 115

through consciousness. Thus, the man shows himself as a person through the dynamisms of action-actus humanus/personae. Certainly, the relation of consciousness to the internal property of act, and its incorporation into man's being and action, liberates consciousness from its supposed separate substantial reality or a separate suppositum.

## 2.2. The Realism of the Human *Suppositum* versus Idealism of Secularism

In his consideration of the nature of person through the lived experience of act, Karol Wojtyła discovered that the person is one who is a direct agent of specific action and one whom some sort of activity takes place in. And so, the person's engaging in these categories of act with his faculties especially the interiority results in something concrete, external or transitive which can be investigated by the other, which also conditions the culture of artefacts. This effect conditions another aspect of the aftermath of act which appeals more to what has been analysed, namely, conscious action by which the person determines himself, it is the intransitive effect of act. It radiates the potency and act theory wherein the person creates himself in his act, affirming the fact that *operari sequitur esse*, and reveals the person as the cause of definite action.<sup>80</sup>

However, besides creating the self through the act, and the fact that he is also agent of act even when something happens in him, there is something beyond self-knowledge that proceeds from consciousness that impacts on the person as a unity of being. It relates to ontological element that improves and mediates operativity and passivity, man and action as well as the subjectivity that belongs to the dynamic structures of act. It is the concept of "*suppositum*- understood as that which lies under (*sub-ponere*). For man lies under all action and under all that happens in him."<sup>81</sup> According to Wojtyła, the whole dynamism of lived experience- the intellect, will, emotion, sensation and axiology condition *suppositum*, because it summarizes the experience of person prior to proper action of the person. *Suppositum* justifies the person as a real being, the fact "that the being-man is really existing, and consequently really acting."<sup>82</sup> It portrays the organic bond that exists between man as a real

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<sup>80</sup> To be the cause of something means to evoke or bring something into being or make something to come to existence and the existence of an effect, its *fieri* and *esse*. See: Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 168-170

<sup>81</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 174/5

<sup>82</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 175

existing being who engages in deliberate act, which highlights the fundamental connection and understanding of man as the subject of existence and activity.<sup>83</sup>

It reveals the existence that is proper to each personal being, that is, it defines human being as an individual, personal subject and affirms consciousness not as independent existence divorced from cognition, but an integral aspect of human existence. By connecting consciousness to the cognitive process, the concept of *suppositum* substantiates the concreteness and individualization of person not on the basis of sensuous experience as supposed in the contemporary secularism, because human being is not a purely sensory being,<sup>84</sup> and not reducible to cosmological being of this present world.<sup>85</sup> Rather, *suppositum* structures the being of man, though not in the same sense as *esse*, because it is at the base of consciousness, rather, it constitutes itself through the conscious action of the person. As Wojtyła said:

if something did not exist, then it would not be the origin and subject of all dynamism proper to it, of action and happening. If man did not exist, neither would he act, nor would anything happen in him...*suppositum* is a being as a subject of existence and action...and man ought to be identified as a *suppositum* at the first and fundamental view.<sup>86</sup>

This ontological structure of man as a unique *suppositum* reveals the interrelation of ethics to anthropology of man and synthesizes the division of the concreteness of person in Boethian definition. The sense of person as *suppositum* qualifies him as a somebody who is not divided between his *esse* and *operari* as we deduce from the definition that “person is individual of rational nature.”<sup>87</sup> However, aligning while improving the objectivistic sense of *suppositum*<sup>88</sup> in St. Thomas, Wojtyła clearly states that human person cannot be severed from his objective nature, which is also an undeniable aspect of consciousness. And so, *suppositum* shapes and

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<sup>83</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Person: subject and Community.’ 223

<sup>84</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of Experience in Ethics.’ 116

<sup>85</sup> This cosmological reduction brings to mind Aristotelian definition-homo est animal rationale that qualifies human being as object in the world. But the relation of subjectivity (which according to Wojtyła is something objective to human person) to objectivity defines the proper essence of human being which cannot be reduced to or approximated to the genus of animal. See: Wojtyła. ‘Subjectivity and the Irreducibility in the Human Being.’ 211

<sup>86</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 175

<sup>87</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 176

<sup>88</sup> Wojtyła remarks that although the concept *suppositum* found in Thomistic metaphysics is objectivistic in character, however it requires the understanding of subjectivistic sense. This objectivistic sense he said almost gives the impression that it has no place for the analysis of consciousness and self-consciousness as truly specific symptoms of the person-subject. For St. Thomas the person is obviously a subject, a very particular subject of existence and action, since he has subsistence in rational nature and the capacity for consciousness and self-consciousness. However, it appears that his objectivist view of reality has no place for the analysis of consciousness and self-consciousness, about which modern philosophy and psychology are especially concerned. See: Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 107

highlights through the mirroring effect of consciousness the subjectivity proper to human person, namely, man's ability to experience himself in the course of his action, which is man's direct experience of his nature. He writes, stating that:

*suppositum* is the fundamental expression of the whole experience of the human being, I mean in an inviolable sense. For experience cannot be detached from it, and, at the same time, it is open to everything that man experiences, especially the experience of one's self, which leads to the understanding of the subjectivity of the person and the knowledge of human person.<sup>89</sup>

It follows therefore that, *suppositum* unites human nature with his cultural act, his personal act and through to the moral value. It refers to the unique substance (quiddity, the internal cause or substantial form) of the human person and his act, namely, the experience of morality

Moreso, *suppositum* synthesizes the various dynamisms proper to the person, that is, the synthesis of activity and passivity, of thought and action, and provides as well the basis of man's wholistic knowledge of himself. And so, by joining the perspective of consciousness to the metaphysical field, man-subject appears in his completeness and in the sense of real concrete subject and the unique 'I.'<sup>90</sup> This ontologically structure opposes the materialistic ontology that structures person as something,<sup>91</sup> and as any individualized nature that acts (*supposita*) in pure response to nutrition, growth, reproduction or biologically conditioned. We can only understand man's *suppositum* as he clarifies within the context of his existence and experience of himself as a subject. It is this manifestation in human nature Wojtyła explains, that man experiences his act. For nature, he said, "does not act; it is the *suppositum* that acts (*actiones sunt suppositorum*), and this *suppositum* is a person."<sup>92</sup> Indeed, *suppositum* reveals the person's capacity to think uniquely in abstract and in deterministic activities in line with each individual person's nature as being of right, rational and free will. But the character of *suppositum* expressed by the ideal of secularism in understanding human being as mere concrete being of this world does not recognize the objective structure of consciousness as the foundation of interiority. And so, man becomes in closed up in a subjective ego of individualism.

But human person is not like any other *suppositum* or individual substance- tree, cat, or apple reducible to mere being or object of nature. Thanks to the subjectivity of experience, Wojtyła amplifies the individuality of the *suppositum* in the objective analysis of the human

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<sup>89</sup> Wojtyła. 'Person: subject and Community.' 223

<sup>90</sup> Wojtyła. *The Acting Person*. 75

<sup>91</sup> Wojtyła. *The Acting Person*. 74

<sup>92</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics.' 285

person, and so man experiences his completeness in this integration, which also crystalizes the reflexive function of consciousness. This function Wojtyła states consists in “the subjectivization of the objectively given person-act relation and of its very elements and especially of the person himself as a *suppositum*.”<sup>93</sup> In this function, the person manifests as an ‘I,’ as a subject, for what he becomes from within, is what he becomes objectively. Man’s consciousness of this dynamism in himself also portrays man’s unique and unrepeatable qualities, and the awareness that he is the only subject who is aware of his subjectiveness. Thus, man becomes a real *suppositum* acting through himself in the in-selfness and inwardness of human existence and activity, which frees him from mechanistic subjugation and emotionalization of his act. This description of human nature really reveals the moment of efficacy and man’s expression of true freedom of the will. Indeed, Wojtyła’s approach accentuates the objectivity of *suppositum* integrating the concept with the phenomenological experience, which reveals man as subject and object of act in relation to himself and to others. Man in this ideal does not gain knowledge of himself, it also discloses self-determination and transcendence.

### 3. The Human Person Manifested in the Structure of Self-Determination

There exists in the ontic analysis of the lived experience of act the intrinsic union between man’s existence and activity that not only personifies the *actus personae*, it also radiates the person as a concrete and unrepeatable self, and structures *suppositum humanum*. The ability to link one’s existence with action that is unique to this person irrespective of the stage and condition, given that each being (man) acts in accordance with the nature (i.e., his existential causality), tends towards self-fulfilment. This realization through one’s deliberate action is better defined as the moment of self-determination. This dynamism of man’s existence and conscious action highlights the irreducible element of the nature of person as a self-creating individual namely, the mechanism of the will and freedom as elements of interiority of the person and essential for the moral character of action, as well as the agency of person. As the essence of freedom,<sup>94</sup> self-determination manifests in the moment of ‘I will’ not only as the internal property of act, but more as the property of the person who reveals himself in his conscious act as the agent of act. For self-determination structures the person as

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<sup>93</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 76

<sup>94</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne antropologiczne*. (Lublin. TN KUL, 1994). 426

the agent of action and efficient cause of action through the dynamism of the will as guided by the intellect.

Moreso, as Wojtyła explains, the basic manifestation and understanding of the concept of self-determination is in the moment of “efficacy on the part of the personal self, realized in this expression: ‘I act means I am the efficient cause of my action and my actualization of myself.’”<sup>95</sup> It is the specific moment of expression of freedom, no wonder Wojtyła calls self-determination another name of freedom, wherein the power of the will is at play in the mechanism of action, namely, decision and choice. And so, self-determination reveals the becoming of man. And through it, the dynamism of the will reveals the person as one who is able to realize the categories of action-truth or false, good or evil, which also connects self-determination to the being or fieri of the person. Thus, he maintains that self-determination is the “proper dynamic basis of the fieri of the person and presupposes him in a particular complexity.”<sup>96</sup> Given that it structures the person as the efficient cause of action, self-determination is also connected with responsibility. For the person is responsible for his choices, decisions and what he realizes in his action, and this sense of efficacy distinguishes personal action from what happens in man. He said: “...the more I experience self-determination, the more pronounced in my experience and awareness becomes my efficacy and responsibility.”<sup>97</sup> However, Wojtyła clarifies that the mechanism of efficacy in what the person realizes does not depend on external effects or factors on action, it rather points to the transitive character of action that structures true personal activities.<sup>98</sup> Nonetheless, efficacy as the first sense of self-determination does not only manifests in transitive actions, it also expresses itself essentially in intransitive action.

Furthermore, Wojtyła emphasizes that self-determination is revealed in that moment of ‘I can,’ but ‘I don’t have to,’ and in between this moment is the dynamism of choice and decision that results in ‘I want’ or ‘I will’ do this and not that. And so, informed by the intellect, the person as ‘the will’ chooses good as its natural inclination given his dependence on Supreme Good. Referencing St. Thomas Aquinas the Polish thinker said man participates in the ‘Supreme Good (God) and man not only participating in this, Good per se is the purpose of existence.’<sup>99</sup> Good is not just a recognition of the individual person, it has also objective character of being good enough as object of desire in the organic whole. Realization

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<sup>95</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Personal Structure of Self-Determination.’ 189

<sup>96</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 207

<sup>97</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Personal Structure of Self-Determination.’ 189

<sup>98</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Person: subject and Community.’ 229

<sup>99</sup> Wojtyła. ‘On the Metaphysical and Phenomenological Basis of the Moral Norm.’ 74

of good for the organic whole<sup>100</sup> constitutes self-determination. Indeed self-determination structured by the dynamism of the will and freedom as the property of action and property of the person points to other structures of personal action that portrays the person as someone, self-possession and self-governance. The dynamic of the person as the subject manifests firstly in the structure of self-possession, where person is the exclusive possessor of action. For in the authentic *actus personae*, says Wojtyła, “only the one who has possession of himself and is simultaneously his own sole and exclusive possession can be a person.”<sup>101</sup> And actual self-determination realizes the subjectivity of self-possession and self-governance and portrays the person as a gift unto oneself in a disinterested manner. For it is only when one possesses or governs oneself can one be a gift of oneself in a disinterested manner.<sup>102</sup>

### 3.1. Self-Possession

One of the ontological description of human person the proceeds from experience and consciousness is that human person is a willed being, as such, he decides and chooses his action. This ontological aspect also revealed by self-determination refers to the structure of self-possession. This structure of efficacy and man’s free operari is a distinctive property of the person that subordinates his acts to the truth of good. For in the structure of efficacy Wojtyła postulates, self-possession finds its manifestation and confirmation in action in the definite moment of the real “I will, not as the content of lived experience isolated from the dynamic ‘whole’ but as the content deeply rooted in this totality.”<sup>103</sup> It presupposes the specific moment of self-reliance that manifests through the totality of experience, for experience Krąpiec said guarantees cognitive self-reliance.<sup>104</sup> In this moment, the person as the proper author of action flows from himself, from his decision, different from the moment of something happens. Unlike other *supposita* namely non-human animals, tree whose activities rely solely on external mechanism sensation, vegetation; but the activities of *humanum suppositum* that defines self-possession proceeds from interiority and returns back to the person manifesting also in the exteriority, wherein the person experiences these acts

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<sup>100</sup> The idea of organic whole could be viewed from two angles, firstly, it refers to the common good of the whole persons in the human community, it also refers to the unity of the nature of person, of body and soul. This unity in the organic whole of the person that expresses self-determination challenges the reductionism of human nature to body, and such reduction does not condition self-determination.

<sup>101</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 205/208

<sup>102</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Personal Structure of Self-Determination.’ 194

<sup>103</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 208

<sup>104</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *I-Man: An Outline on Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. Maria Lescoe et al. (New Britain, CT: Mariel Publications, 1983). p. 29

immediately as his own. As it were, man possesses the acts he is conscious and aware of as a self-subsistent suppositum; for it is one's very self, one's very being that one possesses through self-awareness<sup>105</sup> in the unity of experience, and one cannot possess what he has no power to determine, for it is only one who possesses that can determine.<sup>106</sup>

Again, self-possession defined by true sense of freedom is not an abstraction of nature which is instinctual in character, rather, it is the real property of person that structures moral status of the person. It also expresses self-knowledge as integral aspect of self-consciousness, since knowledge of self is an expression of proper possession of self, and the fact that the person is *sui iuris*. More still, the complexity of the integral person and self-determination cannot be grasp without the role of the person as one who governs himself and the one whom he governs. This capacity Wojtyła stresses cannot be confused with man's exercise of control and authority, or with individualism, rather, it is one's "mastery over oneself in the colloquial sense"<sup>107</sup> and relates to self-governance as an aspect of self-possession that makes self-determination complete and possible. And so, the concrete manifestation of the person through self-possession connected with self-governance relates culture and acts of culture to proper human action who creates himself in and through the actions that flow from his being. The sense of culture concretely structures the person as the subject and object of culture revealed through the structure of self-determination, because I as the object possess and govern myself as subject, and manifests to the other as subject-object not in the manner of utile or means, but as an end and in the manner of intersubjectivization or interpersonal relations.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the truth of person that is revealed through self-possession shows the person as one who possesses himself and act in the inner decisions of conscience.

### 3.2. Self-Governance

The understanding of the person as a consciously acting moral subject who acts through himself for the truth of good and disclose the structure of self-determination manifests further in the moment of self-governance. This moment also unfolds man's expression of will and freedom, and follows from, or is as well an aspect self-possession. The structure of self-governance depicts the person as one who has control over himself and what he does, and not one who is governed by some heteronomous factors or by another.

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<sup>105</sup> Simpson. *On Karol Wojtyła*. p. 14

<sup>106</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 208

<sup>107</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 208

<sup>108</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 210

Because self-governance reveals the person as subject and object of his action, as one who governs, and at the same time as the one whom he governs, who is the master of his action to himself and in intrapersonal relations. This understanding of self as one who governs and determines himself Wojtyła indicates, is correlatively expressed as “one’s own ‘I’ is both the person and the other.”<sup>109</sup> This apperception portrays the Thomistic definition that: “*persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis*;<sup>110</sup> and self-knowledge of the person becomes visible in this definition, for the person understands that he exists all the time as an autonomous and nontransferable to anybody else.<sup>111</sup> As a self-governing being, man exercises this specific power over himself which nobody else can exercise or execute, and this capacity also reveals the moral subjectivity of the person. It also portrays autonomous character of action which does not suppose individualism, rather, it expresses person as the subjective ‘I’ who acts with the whole dynamisms of his nature-somatic, psychic and emotion in the concrete action of person<sup>112</sup> and in the unity of being man as a person. Thanks to the will, man expresses his rulership over himself, his instincts, drives, passions, and his capacity to direct them to true good. And this capacity however does not suggest licence, arbitrariness of action or absolute freedom of action, since the will by its nature is axiologically structured. Wherein the objective good or value is the natural longing and desire, and basis of decision of real existing person.

The incommunicability of person that presupposes the complexity of self-possession and self-governance revealed through the will expresses the concreteness of the person as ‘somebody.’ This capacity cannot be ascribed even to the highly trained animal, given the subordination of this capacity to the will by which man becomes encapsulated, such that he can make life decisions, decisions that proceed from responsible freedom that is alien to such animal. As Wojtyła explains, the will as the unique property of person definitely structures self-governance and this “does not exist in non-personal beings, whose dynamism proceeds from a given nature, dynamism that is purely on the level of nature alone.”<sup>113</sup> For in the order of person, the will constitutes reason *d’etre* of act, while instinct controls the order of nature, which makes the dynamism at the level of nature different from the dynamism at the level of

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<sup>109</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 211

<sup>110</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 209 and ‘The personal Structure of Self-Determination.’ p. 192 NB: Wojtyła clarifies this Thomistic definition, and states that it does not per se express metaphysical composition of matter/body and form/soul proper to human being, but this definition is more of an expression of phenomenological composition, wherein the person appears as one who possesses and governs himself by himself.

<sup>111</sup> Crosby. *The Selfhood of Human Person*. p. 24

<sup>112</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Person: Subject and Community.’ p. 224

<sup>113</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 209

person. Thus, Wojtyła clearly states that “there is no governing of oneself without subjecting and subordinating oneself to this governance,”<sup>114</sup> for as long as man acts, he determines himself through his willed action. The structure of self-governance presents the person as the being that is not subordinated to the order of nature, for in the functioning of the will, the person is revealed as “‘self-owning’ and ‘self-ruling.’”<sup>115</sup> As a matter of fact, the person experiences himself as the one who owns or governs oneself, at the same time, the one who is owned or governed exclusively by oneself; as well as the one who rules oneself and, at the same time, the one who is ruled by oneself.<sup>116</sup> This two-fold functions that structure self-determination appear in the moments of self-owing, where the will functions as the quality of person; and in self-ruling, where it serves as the faculty which man uses. They constitute the moment of decision, plays out in the interpersonality and are contained in the entire reality of moral order. Nonetheless, the will still plays its role as one who controls what one does and have control over oneself, and not be governed, for in all these he expresses self-mastery.<sup>117</sup>

Certainly, the realization of self-determination expressed in the interpersonal relation of self-possession and self-governance structured by free will in the lived experience of personal act also determine transcendence. The whole sense of self-possession and self-governance or turning to oneself in one’s action that tends towards self-fulfilment is inseparably related to transcendence. It shows that the person transcends his subjectivity beyond his subjective and objective, as well his personal actions as revealed through self-determination.

#### 4. The Transcendence of the Human Person

At the base of every ‘I will,’ there is an expression of self that goes beyond the self as the subject and relates to the object, to the value or good as the ‘telos’(τέλος) which the person desires and pursues. This understanding is captured thus in the maxim of the Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics: “*homo agit propter finem*”<sup>118</sup>-man acts for the purpose/sake of the end, and structures man’s contingency and autoteleology. As it were, man

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<sup>114</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 296

<sup>115</sup> Tomasz Duma, ‘The Foundations of the Human Person’s Dynamis in Karol Wojtyła’s Anthropology. A Study in the Light of ‘The Acting Person.’’ *Verbum Vitae*. (2020). 38(2). pp. 441-456

<sup>116</sup> Duma. ‘The Foundations of the Human Person’s Dynamis in Karol Wojtyła’s Anthropology. A Study in the Light of ‘The Acting Person.’’ 441-456

<sup>117</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 208

<sup>118</sup> Karol Wojtyła, ‘The Transcendence of the Person in Action and Man’s Self-Teleology.’ *Husserliana*, A. *The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research*, vol. IX, ed. Tymieniecka, A. T. (Dordrecht-Holland: D Reidel Publishing Company, 1979). 203

partly fulfils himself through the structure of self-determination, but this actualization is related to another structure of human person, the structure of transcendence by which man realizes his fullness and the personal subjectivity of his being. And so, the primary outcome of self-determination is transcendence through the efficacy of the free will.

As it were, man fully realizes his becoming through the dynamisms of will and freedom that structure morality and reveals the self-ownership and self-governance of the person with respect to 'I' that defines self-determination. And this demonstrates the relation of self-determination to transcendence,<sup>119</sup> affirms the fact that human person cannot be reduced to consciousness nor seen as a fully actual being or pure act, but as a being who is becoming, wherein he transcends his existential hurdles. For in the dynamisms of personal act, the person transcends or goes beyond his limits, or his desires and directs himself towards objects, that is, towards the category of what the person realizes in action-good or evil, especially truth of good that actualizes his nature. This understanding articulates the etymological meaning of transcendence as '*trans-scendere*' which means:

to go over and beyond a threshold or a boundary. This may refer to the subject's stepping out of his limits towards an object, as is in different ways the case in what is known as intentional acts of external (transcendent) perception. The manner in which the subject transgresses his limits in this type of cognitive acts differs from his outgoing in acts of willing.<sup>120</sup>

Indeed, this experiential structure refers to the whole aspect of the person; the psychic, somatic and emotion, and can only be expressed with the language of 'transcendence' which shapes the personal act through the dynamism of the will which is proper to human act as means of actualization and perfection of person in and through his act.

Just as in the phenomenology of Scheler, the person goes beyond the intentionality of self towards the exteriority of the object, especially towards the value in the object. However, recognizing the category of value in Scheler though lacking the efficacy of the will, Wojtyła states that the dynamism of the will and freedom radiates man's ability to choose especially in the concrete moment of 'I will.'<sup>121</sup> For in this moment, the person sees value and decides, thereby expresses his independence from intentional order. And while expressing this independence from intentional order he demonstrates his dependence on truth in freedom for objects of value, and this is the structure of transcendence. According to Wojtyła:

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<sup>119</sup> Wojtyła describes various philosophical meanings of transcendence in relations to personal act, but however states that metaphysical understanding provides basis for all the categories and constitutes true meaning of transcendence. See: Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 232

<sup>120</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 221

<sup>121</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 217

the transcendence of the person in action does not only consists solely on metaphysical categories, it also refers to the indispensable and essential moment of reference to truth, and it is this moment that ultimately determine freedom. Because human freedom is not accompanied nor exercised in bypassing truth, rather, by the person's realization and surrender to truth...It is the dependence on this truth that constitutes the person in his transcendence.<sup>122</sup>

And so, transcendence is man's capacity to go beyond himself, his intentionality, motivated by authentic decision and choice tends his act to the truth of good. This connection of transcendence to self-determination conditions transcendence as the source and basis of distinction of personal act from individual act. Wherefor thanks to the 'strength of will,'<sup>123</sup> the person goes beyond the self to the truth of value of good of the object of act, contrary to individual act that depends on the dynamism of nature. In this latter situation, the will subordinated to the person does not manifest its strength, and so the person becomes influenced by nature or instinct.

Wojtyła however, subscribes to metaphysical understanding of transcendence which is identified with transcendentals such as truth, good, and beauty which are proper to person in relation to his personal act. For act Wojtyła affirms "contributes to the realization of truth, good and beauty."<sup>124</sup> Nonetheless, the experience of freedom as self-dependence does not rule out the possibility of realizing the opposite, but given the dependence on truth the person transcends the intentional order as well as that which in a way surpasses himself. In all, dependence on truth constitutes the basis of transcendence. And so, transcendence of person in act Wojtyła states "is not merely self-dependence, dependence on one's own 'I' for it also entails the moment of dependence on truth, and it is this moment that definitely shapes freedom, and freedom is realized through subordination to truth and constitutes the person in transcendence."<sup>125</sup> He further explains that every experiential fact of 'I act' discloses not only the relation of person to act, but at the same time the fact of irreducibility of person in action, who transcends himself in his acting and this transcendence is connected self-fulfilment.<sup>126</sup> For man in his acts goes beyond the intentionality of his volitions and tends towards external objects beyond the person, that is towards value as the telos.

Besides realizing this telos, transcendence also reveals the *personal esse* which makes it possible to discover the spiritual soul as the rationale behind the relation of the being

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<sup>122</sup> Wojtyła. *The Acting Person*. 154-155

<sup>123</sup> Miguel Acosta, & Adrian J. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016). 165

<sup>124</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 257

<sup>125</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 257

<sup>126</sup> Simpson. *On Karol Wojtyła*. 24

(existence) of human person with action, especially action that cannot be reduced to organic function, rather action that possesses character of self-realization through moral value. This capacity discloses the twofold structure of transcendence: horizontal and vertical, whereby man Wojtyła observes horizontally transcends himself in the direction of an external object, at the same time, he goes outside of his own previously constituted boundaries and vertically transcends his own subjectivity.<sup>127</sup> The subjectivity that cannot be reduced to immanent or psycho-sociological order.

#### 4.1. Horizontal Transcendence

Horizontal transcendence is the specific capacity of crossing beyond intentionality towards the truth of good as object of cognition. It shows that the whole sequence of ‘willing something’ is an expression of dependence of freedom on truth, whereby the will tends towards the object of value or some good. This capacity of the will reveals that true freedom is activated when it comes in contact with truth, as well as the dependence of self as the subject on other subject as object because self-experience is not an enclosed experience; it is also a demonstration of the experience of moral value in what is willed. For man’s nature as a moral being manifests in his encounter with other subjects, which portrays human experience as “a continuous flow of transcendence.”<sup>128</sup> Wojtyła emphasizes that this structure of transcendence manifests in the moment of ‘I may, but I need not,’ whereby the person while expressing his freedom shows its essential connection to truth in his decision. For freedom that is not subordinated to the truth sinks into arbitrariness, and reduces the person to the vilest of passions and to the point of self-destruction.<sup>129</sup> Thus, horizontal transcendence manifests as the quality of determination of person in action through the experience of morally good action. But by realizing moral good, person transcends his borders as the subject and tends towards object of good or value in the acts of cognizing and wanting. In this analysis, both the inner-outer relation of experience and the structure of the person as the subject and object of experience are visible, together with interpersonal relation.

Indeed horizontal transcendence expresses moral truth as the telos of personal act and conscience is significant in determining this natural dynamism of the will and integral

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<sup>127</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 284

<sup>128</sup> Thomas Lukemann, ‘Shrinking Transcendence, Expanding Religion?’ *Sociological Analysis*. 50:2. (1990). 127-138

<sup>129</sup> John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*. (Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1989). No. 4

essence of the person. In the drama of value, horizontal transcendence plays out through the mechanism of conscience in tending personal act to truth of good, for outside this drama Wojtyła said, man does not realize this threshold of crossing beyond the apriorism of value so as to fulfil himself as a person. This ability to grasp the real truth that manifests through the conscience appeals also to the person as a duty which discharges with responsibility. Just as the conscience makes the truth of act through the moral value to remain in man,<sup>130</sup> likewise the structure of responsibility tends this moral value beyond the person to external object-subject. We grasps from this two-fold dimensions of responsibility that determine transcendence. It consists in man's responsibility for himself and the other(s) in whom the structure of subject-object relationship refers to, and his responsibility for his choices and decisions, and the moral value of his own 'I' while actualizing himself according to the measure of his essence and existence.<sup>131</sup> And so, man experiences horizontal dimension of transcendence Wojtyła claims as he goes beyond his ego towards the truth of values beyond himself. This value refers to the personalistic value. As man turns towards object of values, he cannot help but turn towards himself as an end and a value, for he cannot relate to different object of determination and choose a value other than himself.<sup>132</sup> This does not suggest individualism or egoism, but the transcendence of the ontic value of the person. Thus, the will is released from determination by object of subjective choice which enables the person to determine himself in action with respect to precise possible object of value. As the fruit of self-determination, horizontal transcendence demonstrates that man experiences true self-realization in object of determining known value when compared with other objects of value.

Besides the capacity to transcends in the direction of external object, the other aspect of transcendence goes beyond the personal autonomy and demonstrates the superiority of 'I' over one's own dynamism and the transcendence of person over action, although it proceeds from the spiritual faculties. However, Wojtyła calls it 'vertical transcendence' different from transcendence as passing beyond the subject to the object of the reality known to man as the cognizing subject. This transcendence according to him, is the second name of the person, expressing properly the subjectivity of person<sup>133</sup> and uniquely structures the spiritual element of man that opposes the exclusive immanent and material or biological structure of action,

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<sup>130</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 265

<sup>131</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 214

<sup>132</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 230

<sup>133</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 230

and the subjectivism of the world to personal perspective that characterise contemporary secularism.

#### 4.2. Vertical Transcendence

The quality of vertical transcendence expresses the fact that the mode of existence of *personal esse* is spiritual, and this existence is beyond the individualized nature of Boethian definition of person which emphasizes rational objectivization as the defining nature of man, and somewhat connotes material element<sup>134</sup> given the reference to consciousness. However, Wojtyła accentuates through the integration of the intellect with the will, as oppose pure rational capacity, as the expression of true rational nature that structures vertical transcendence, and defines human nature. This structure of transcendence of person through personal action, Wojtyła explains, points to a dimension of autoteleology which is connected with the truth of good (*bonum honestum*) in an unconditional and uninterested manner. This affirms that man is free, as Wojtyła stated in his dynamism as the subject, because he depends on himself. This is what Wojtyła describes as the reflexive function of consciousness.<sup>135</sup> It also shows that in the lived experience of freedom, the will or rather the person is directed towards a superior value/good, that is, transcending oneself.<sup>136</sup> This tending, which follows from self-determination to something superior, does not refer to object within the external frame wherein the person confirms himself.

As it were, it is a tending, inwardly structured that affirms the spirituality of man, and relates to “vertical transcendence, which indicates that there is movement towards the deepest interior of the person, where the person is known as the object of his own subjectivity.”<sup>137</sup> It portrays the ontic character and personalization of personal action in realizing self-determination, expressing that the human person is always ‘somebody,’ concrete, unique and unrepeatable.<sup>138</sup> It also directs personal action in a verticality that separates real human *operari* from the biopsychic-sociological dynamism, wherefore the former highlights vertical transcendence, because it reveals the personal autonomy of man, and fundamentally separates him from other beings of nature. Freedom that structures efficacy constitutes this

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<sup>134</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 261

<sup>135</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 77-9

<sup>136</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Person: Subject and Community.’ 230

<sup>137</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 296

<sup>138</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 176

transcendence manifests as “being-from-himself and ‘being-to-himself’”.<sup>139</sup> It is an autonomy that is tethered to truth that has its source in the spiritual that manifests in efficacy and self-determination but transcends the material element, permeating into the essential content of experience of ‘man act.’

Freedom in expressing these dynamisms defines “man’s inner, psychological disposition and habitus;” the principle of “self-perfection, self-realization and self-determination; total goodness of a whole human being, and expression of immortality of soul.”<sup>140</sup> Indeed, the vertical sense of transcendence says Wojtyła defines the particular structural feature of man as a person: a specific superiority in relation to oneself and one’s own dynamism. It structures also the spirituality of man, because the indwelling expression of man does not refer to something material, since human nature cannot be reduced to an immaterial structure, but a spiritual element. This spiritual element refers as Wojtyła claims to vertical transcendence and determines the “concrete form of man’s existence and indeed, it is the form of his life. Man as a person lives and fulfils himself in this form of transcendence.”<sup>141</sup> Even the immanent structure of personal act, in a sense, corresponds and manifests man’s spirituality and radiates inner peace and happiness-felicity<sup>142</sup> which liberates man from buffered apprehension of act. Felicity-happiness, an aspect of man’s fulfilment is also a decisive factor of transcendence that corresponds to the unity of the person. For “man cannot manifest spirituality if he is not a spirit in some way.”<sup>143</sup> This is the form of transcendence that structures objective moral order and subordinates freedom to truth. We understand this nature of a person by way of abstraction, by which human being is a person whose nature cannot be severed from spirituality which is also a form of transcendence.

Again, as a substantial being, he is in a way reducible to nature which makes his essence a whole, for man is not only a spiritual being, he is also a cosmological being, and these dynamisms that determine his essence cannot in any way be reducible to necessity proper to nature. Nevertheless, Wojtyła subordinates the cosmological nature to the spiritual nature, arguing that, man “transcends his empirical data in order to attain something absolute

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<sup>139</sup> Tomasz Duma, ‘Personalism in the Lublin School of Philosophy: Card. Karol Wojtyła, Fr. Mieczysław A. Krapiec.’ *Studia Gilsoniana* 5:2. (2016). 365-390

<sup>140</sup> Tomasz Duma, ‘The Great Ideas: Causes of Human Transcendence or Enslavement?.’ *The Great Ideas of Religion and Freedom: A Semiotic Reinterpretation of the Great Ideas Movement for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds. Redpath, P., A., Chłodna-Błach, I., & Mamcarz-Plisiecki, A. (Netherland: Leiden, 2021). 157

<sup>141</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 284

<sup>142</sup> Happiness-felicity concept in the analysis of vertical transcendence confirms the perennial philosophical understanding that good act or rather the effect of good act in both transitive and intransitive dimensions is happiness, but the sense of felicity is connected with the interiority and intransitive which expresses fulfilment and transcendence. See: Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 276/7

<sup>143</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 285

as his ultimate, fundamental and foundational property, in his search for truth,”<sup>144</sup> beauty and goodness that define his nature. He further maintains that the *operari* proper to the human person proceed from the spiritual soul, which is not only the source and the reason for human existence and personal action, it also determines transcendence as the integral manifestation of personhood. The soul, Wojtyła asserts, “is the first cause of all human acts, experiences, and manifestations of life, we also by this accept that they all come from it, flowing from it, as from a source and leading to it as their proper and first cause.”<sup>145</sup> It is the actual act of man’s existence, and the principle of causality wherefore man is understood as true creator of culture. Thus, Wojtyła challenges the cosmological reduction of personhood that characterizes contemporary Western secularism, stating that, the truth of human nature manifests in the unity of these powers, wherein the person as a substance, subject, and agent is visibly seen. In the unique action of each person, there exists an essential relation between the rational ability/activity that reveals the spiritual activity, with the body, that shows the moment of efficacy, wherein the person is the efficient cause of action, as such, he is responsible for his choice and decision.

Affirming vertical transcendence as an integral defining quality of human nature, Gilson confronts the ideal of contemporary secularism that denies this notion in human person, while negating the sense of the ultimate, and living as if God does not exist. He states that in such presupposition, one loses the consciousness of God and indeed the sense of vertical transcendence, and the innerness that defines the truth of human nature. Man by this ideal also loses his reason that is tethered on the truth of good, and he will not find it again without having first found God (restore the sense of God or ultimate/transcendence) to his reality.<sup>146</sup> Thus, Wojtyła argues that, it would be wrong to claim and reduce human action and man’s cognition of object/being on matter. Truly, man can grasp, cognize or know beings in their complex whole richness and diversity, thanks to the human reason,<sup>147</sup> and through it, interacts not only with reality in this visible world,<sup>148</sup> likewise, the world beyond this physical. This complex process of cognition and experience of transcendence is possible through the integration and mutual cooperation of the senses or the external with the cognitive/internal powers.

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<sup>144</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. (Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998). No: 83

<sup>145</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 31

<sup>146</sup> Étienne Gilson, *The Terrors of the Year Two Thousand*. (Toronto: University of St. Michael, 1984). 17

<sup>147</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 17/19

<sup>148</sup> John Paul II. *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997). 37

## 5. Integration: The Unity of Nature and Person

The analysis undertaken in this section continues Karol Wojtyła's metaphysical and phenomenological analysis of person on the basis of the lived experience of man's act by which the person appears as a special *suppositum* and a particular self.<sup>149</sup> He based the understanding of the lived experience of act on the whole dynamisms proper to the person the intellect, efficacy of the will, freedom that is tethered to truth, conscience in responsibility that structure self-determination and transcendence. These dynamisms radiate the transcendentals, moral value and good of the person as structured in the interiority of act and reveals the synthesis of the spiritual nature of man as a person to his act. However, we cannot fully grasp the essence of person purely on the basis of spiritual capacity, because the dynamism proper to act also refers to the essence of man. And so, the need to look at the integration of the experience of man which, as Wojtyła said, reveals man as "somebody material, being a body, while at the same time the spirit, spirituality, the spiritual life, determines the unity of this material somebody."<sup>150</sup> This understanding defines the nature of a person that manifests in the ontic composite of soul and body, spirituality and materiality<sup>151</sup> in a unity of man as a person. However, considering the complexity of human being which informed Descartes' doubt and its aftermath, one is given to ask, how does the material element collaborate with the spiritual in the nature of man as a person? The Polish philosopher responds to this question through the analysis of the concept of integration that unites the nature of the person as a whole. For integration, he said, is "possible only in man because of the properties that human nature is equipped with which enables a concrete man to be a person."<sup>152</sup>

### 5.1. The Meaning of Integration

The specificity of personal act, revealed through the structure of self-determination via self-possession and self-governance, then transcendence that manifests the complexity of the person, demonstrates the reality of the dynamism of act in the person in an integrated manner. It shows the sense of duality of the person, "bi-aspectuality or bi-polarity."<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Wojtyła. *Osoba i czyn oraz inne antropologiczne*. 375

<sup>150</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 288

<sup>151</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 288

<sup>152</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 186

<sup>153</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 296

Nonetheless, the negation of transcendence in the pure immanent conception of the human person as a material being gets its definitive response in the analysis of this duality of plurality of human nature<sup>154</sup> as structured by integration. For in personal *operari* “there is this fact of integration”<sup>155</sup> which illuminates the dynamisms of personal act. And so, the concept of integration “from its Latin ‘integer’ means ‘entire, complete, unifying [*scalanie*], unification [*scalenie*].”<sup>156</sup> To integrate, therefore, implies to assemble the parts in a whole, denoting a process and a result. It also refers to attainment and manifestation of a whole and a unit that is constituted by certain complexity.”<sup>157</sup>

Nature, or rather essence of man, just like other beings, consists in the source of the being’s activity, and in man, his existence and activity are expressed in the interiorization and exteriorization of the essence of being.

This twofold dimensions of activity express the essence of man and constitutes integration as that which links these dimensions and so opposes the materiality of human activity similar to non-human activity which has no real ontic content.<sup>158</sup> But, integrating nature into the person, shows the value of the distinguishing rational quality and the efficacy of the free will that condition human nature as moral in an integral unity to self-determination and transcendence. It is experienced in the integration of the mechanism of body/soma, psyche and emotions that constitute human nature. Integration affirms that humanity or the human race manifests as man or woman, male or female and each person experiences his or her humanity in this natural manifestation. In the visible world, the Pope philosopher asserts, humanity manifests either as man or woman, male or female and this manifestation reveals the essence of human being, the greatest value of the person as free and responsible being.<sup>159</sup>

As it were, integration links and complements in the unity of the person the somato-vegetative and psycho-emotive dimensions of the person, although not in the sense of monism or dualism of Plato, Descartes, Spinoza in the history of thought in relation to anthropology. Wojtyła clarifies that the synthesis of person to act accomplished through self-determination and transcendence surpasses pure natural domain structured by freedom,

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<sup>154</sup> Maryniarczyk, *The Pluralistic Interpretation of Reality*. 57-69

<sup>155</sup> Simpson. *On Karol Wojtyła*. 30

<sup>156</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 297/8 NB: The Polish words do not really express the meaning of integration. For integration refers to joining into one whole of what was separated before, as well as the realization and manifestation of wholeness and unity on the substratum of a certain complexity.

<sup>157</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła’s Personalistic Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 188

<sup>158</sup> The real content of human act is strictly connected with moral value good or evil which defines the person, since person as subject is the efficient cause of action, whereas this fact, connection and content is lacking in animal.

<sup>159</sup> John Paul II. *Mulieris Dignitatem, Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women*. (15<sup>th</sup> August, 1998). Part. 3, No. 6. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

consciousness and self-determination, but the domain of transcendence, which is determined by the dynamism and functionality of the will, has to be integrated into the nature and so accomplish the whole person. Through integration of the whole dynamisms of nature into the person, the person transcends his nature, such that his personal action is not suspended in the structural emptiness<sup>160</sup> without realizing the subjectivity of the acting person. But integration, Wojtyła explains, realizes in the person the unity of these dynamisms of nature in various diversities, given the unrepeatability and uniqueness of the person, irrespective of the person's state. For in the dynamic unity of human action, there is a manifestation of both physical and emotional experiences; although these experiences may not be precisely visible especially in the situation where the person experiences physical disabilities, neurological and emotional disorders.

Nonetheless, in whatever state the person is, the phenomenon of integration manifests in the person, and thanks to the spiritual faculties, the stabilization of the senses is guaranteed. Wojtyła therefore stresses that the nature of man from where flows his activities is defined by the integration of soul and body, spiritual and biological characteristics, and other properties that are necessary for man to realize his purpose<sup>161</sup> and meaning in life. It also expresses the involvement of the wholeness of the personal 'I' in action. For I, as a person, am not only the interiority, I'm also the exteriority, that is in the structure of the subordination of subjective I to the transcendent I. Because it is my personal I that is given from the interior and from the exterior as a unity;<sup>162</sup> as well as my personal I in relation to others and other beings in the entire order of the world.

Along this line of thought, we experience participation as an aspect of integration and an essential property of the person who is a being in and for the community. This ideal opposes the naturalistic mentalities of egoism and utilitarianism that presuppose disintegration<sup>163</sup> that results in various forms of abnormalities, such as: alcoholism, depression and addictions experienced in the present-day secularised Western culture. When the natural elements of acts are not closely connected in personal *operari*, especially where one element is emphasized over the other, the person fundamentally experiences disintegration. In the situation of disintegration, the person becomes incapacitated in

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<sup>160</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 297

<sup>161</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. (Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1993). No: 50

<sup>162</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 304

<sup>163</sup> The understanding of disintegration presented here has ontic structure, not in the understanding of natural science along with the pathological abnormalities like mental illness and disorder of natural abilities that go with them. Thus, disintegration refers to the inability to realise the structure of self-determination and subordination of efficacy to the natural desires and orgies.

experiencing self-determination as one who governs and possesses oneself which suspends transcendence in structural emptiness and affects moral order. Disintegration, he explains, diverges human nature from normality or not completely normal, which is consequent in the crisis of transgenderism that demonstrates the inability to associate correctly someone's external appearance with the ontic nature, which is a defect of cognition and has consequences in action.<sup>164</sup> It limits the person's act and affects the manifestation of personality and moral norm as the basis of act.

## 5.2. Moral Norm as the Fruit of Integration of Nature into the Person

The concept of integration in the efficacy of act links specifically the existence proper to the nature of a person through the realization of moral value- good. Realizing this fact, Karol Wojtyła states, is essentially the starting point of the cognition of the nature of man and his act, because, the “human person is an objective reality in the world, because he possesses a unique interior life that revolves around truth and goodness, which are means of realization of self-determination.”<sup>165</sup> As stated above, the realization of this quality is not limited purely to mental consciousness, else, it will result to objectivism, it is realized through the mediation of sensual consciousness, such that man's nature manifests in the unity of his organic whole in what he realizes, especially the moral good that defines and determines his nature. The nature of man and his act is not exhausted in parts as internal faculties or sense faculties, but, in the formation of the organic unity of both the material and immaterial parts. Thus, we define and understand the end of human activities as possessing ethical character, which highlights ethical experience as an abstraction of anthropological and metaphysical data in the nature of the person. This realization belongs to the nature of man, and reveals his as the subject and object of action, expressing moral norm as essential content of human act. Because the person manifests as the subject of an act, and as one who is engaged in the activity of subjectivation. This understanding structures self-determination and transcendence, shapes interpersonal relation, and as Wojtyła stated, affirms the fact that the person manifests as ‘being’ as oppose the idea of the person ‘have.’<sup>166</sup> Realizing moral norm affirms that the true nature of the person manifests in an uninterested character of both the

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<sup>164</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 302

<sup>165</sup> Simpson. *On Karol Wojtyła*. 43

<sup>166</sup> Jarosław Merecki, ‘Moral Experience, Ethics and the Christian Faith in the Thought of Tadeusz Styczeń.’ *Open Insight*. 5:7. (2014). 239-50

intra and inter personal act, in recognition of “each person’s basic rights, dignity and freedom.”<sup>167</sup> Thus, moral norm underlies the nature of the person and act.

Wojtyła further elaborates that the integration of the intra and inter personal act into human nature, does not tolerate any form of conflict between nature and person, even if there is, it is only an apparent conflict. Because moral norm, especially moral good is intrinsic and inevitable to experiential data when connected to the moment of truth realized in freedom. However, the conflict between nature and person occurs only:

when we understand nature in the sense that phenomenologists, *empiricists, positivists, or extreme rationalists* understood it, i.e., as the subject of instinctual updating, *or in its egoistic and individualistic tendencies as foundations of morality (a form apriorism or pure consciousness)*, or as subject of only that which is happening...Nature as a source of this type of actualization excludes a person; the person, as a source of his own actualization, specifically the source of actions, that is, his acts, is above nature, in a sense opposed to it.<sup>168</sup>

This affirms the reality of the moral norm at the root of the relation of nature to the person, wherefore realizing moral good as the objective and subjective content of act attains normative force which one recognizes by intellect and will, thereby attains the truth of good and beauty of the person, This consciousness exposes man to recognize the good of others in oneself, not as material object of use, but always an end. This recognition opposes any utilitarian mentality, materialization of the body or reduction of act to pure externalization or internalization that characterise phenomenological ethics, pure rational ethics, or any form ethical apriorism, and Marxist ethics that result in the tension between the person and nature with their ethical relativism and emotivism. Transcendence of person in act also relates the person to act, and as Wojtyła emphasizes, it relates the person to even those acts that originate from rational nature.

He further expresses that “the experience of morality is an indispensable element of the integral experience of man, and this element has a fundamental significance for the understanding man as a person, both in a static and a dynamic aspects.”<sup>169</sup> This basic understanding of human nature that proceeds from moral character also structures ‘happiness-felicity’ as the telic purpose of act and existence of man as a person. As Wojtyła puts it: “reason agrees with the reality of human nature, with the reality of the order of being, it sees

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<sup>167</sup> Wojtyła, K. *Love and Responsibility*. 12

<sup>168</sup> Wojtyła, ‘Osoba ludzka a prawo naturalne,’ *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 18:2. (1970). 53-59. In, Hołub, Biesaga, Merecki, et Kostur, *The Polish Christian Philosophy of the 20th Century: Karol Wojtyła*. 89, 93

<sup>169</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 299

the goods and the hierarchy of goods in it, and this is the basis for normative judgements,”<sup>170</sup> and the basis of relating with persons and things in nature. This normative character inherently corresponds to the nature of a person, actualizes the substance of his being, that which his being is in potency and the finality or telicity.<sup>171</sup> The relevance of morality in determining integration of person to act indicates that man is in direct control of his natural instincts and passions. Wojtyła clearly states that the relationship between the person and action that defines the concrete suppositum that is a person can only be experienced through the objective moral character. In this order, the unity of person and nature continually intersect, somehow overlap, and mutually condition one another because morality is the property of both person and act. And nature alone cannot engage in activity that can be qualified with moral character, although it is significant in defining the moral character of a person. However, one needs to understand properly the meaning of nature in relate to the human person.

### 5.3. Nature at the Basis of Being of the Human Person

One of the dilemmas of the presuppositions of the contemporary secularism concerns the notion of nature understood merely as physical and material properties of being. This understanding extends also to act, the content of act and what is realized as the end of an act. But the analysis of the *operari* in the light of Karol Wojtyła, shows that there is more to the activities of the human person among the beings of nature that the differentiate the nature of man from other natures. On the basis of this difference that relates essentially to his rational nature which structures interiority, we gain access to the integral anthropology of man, and so, refute the anthropological deficiencies of contemporary secularism. It therefore affirms the reality of the various categories of nature, namely: human nature, animal nature, or vegetative nature.

Nature, refers basically to the properties inherent in beings in virtue of the nature or the category of each being. That by which each being exists, develops, and acts according to their components, which determines the identity of the being. In the metaphysical understanding of *suppositum* as an expression of existence, the concept of *supposita* refers to every beings that exist, but the *humanum suppositum* differs from other *supposita*, given his

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<sup>170</sup> Karol Wojtyła, ‘Elementarz etyczny,’ K. Wojtyła. *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*. (Krakow: Znak, 1979). 138

<sup>171</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Ethics Primer*, trans. Hugh McDonald. (Lublin: PTTA, 2017). 11

nature as the being who understands his experience of action through the internal mechanism. Thus, we observe as Wojtyła stated, the two-fold manifestations of human nature, namely, “the metaphysical subject of existence and of man’s dynamism, and phenomenological synthesis of efficacy and subjectivity.”<sup>172</sup> It relates to the integration of the metaphysical experience with the phenomenological experience that denotes the subjectivity of man, and the unity of the mechanisms of reason with nature. It also reveals the existence proper to man as a person, and as well informs the nature and manner of his action and being. Thus, Wojtyła affirms that “nature and reason”<sup>173</sup> are the sources of human cognition, personal act and happening in man. It affirms the nature of the human person as consisting of internal/immaterial and external/material structures.

The unity of these components in an organic whole, ordered by the complexity of the internal elements to a definite end,<sup>174</sup> namely, truth of good, defines the true nature of man. This integration into an organic unity in the nature of the person, clarifies the Boethian understanding of the nature of the person that seems to introduce some conflict in the understanding of human nature. The conflict that splits man from his nature in the course of emphasizing either mere sociological elements, or biological factors, thereby, expresses the instinctive actualization.<sup>175</sup> However, Wojtyła aligning with ‘the Philosopher’ clearly affirms that, nature is the innate abilities, not as aggregates of particles or accidental components of elements, but the sum of the whole parts or organs of the person.<sup>176</sup> It points to the distinctiveness of the nature of the human person, manifesting in polarity of male or female, with each distinct rational character that marks out his spiritual soul, the form of the body, the basis of his uniqueness<sup>177</sup> and element of personhood. As a matter of fact, nature is the integral endowed properties of man’s being and existence as a person, the basis of the cognition of his activity. It is the means of expression of existence and externalization of the essence of man.<sup>178</sup> Although it is the source of activation and actualization of the person, it also crystalizes happening in the person, and elevates the person above nature<sup>179</sup> understood as material element. Moreso, the internal element of human nature differentiates his nature from the other two natures, because it has real and concrete existence, and as well reveals

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<sup>172</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 178

<sup>173</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer*. 47

<sup>174</sup> Andrzej Maryniarczyk, *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*. (Lublin: PTTA, 2018). 12

<sup>175</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Human Person and Natural Law.’ 182

<sup>176</sup> Maryniarczyk. *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*. 11

<sup>177</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Thomistic Personalism.’ 168

<sup>178</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Human Nature as the Basis of Ethical Foundation.’ 97

<sup>179</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Human Person and Natural Law.’ 182

man as somebody. As it were, only the nature of man has the capacity for conscious freedom, transcendence and efficacy of the will in action which is the source of moral order, and structures self-fulfilment.

Again, the internal properties of the human person defines nature as what the person is born with or born into as principle of individualization. Thus, nature Wojtyła declares “denotes that which is to be born, that which is contained in the fact of birth as its possible consequence.”<sup>180</sup> This reflects the meaning of nature from its Latin root verb *nascor*-to be born,<sup>181</sup> and so, nature refers to all that a being or rather a person is born with. As the intrinsic properties of the person, human nature does not change, rather, it undergoes transformational development as the person grows and matures, which defines it as inherent, and so, constitutes the source of the person’s dignity and rights. It shows that nature is not a mere physical or material element, nor a phenomenon informed by external elements, emotions, passions or strict application of logic to praxis, or socially given, but, the *quidditas* of the person’s subjective and dynamic structure that reveals the concrete ‘I’ as the self-conscious cause of action. It follows therefore that nature is permanent. The physiological changes in human nature does not result in the intrinsic change, it is only an expression of transformation which does not alter or deform the being of the person.

Thus, human person unites with his nature, likewise, nature and culture in one integral bond. This highlights in the nature of man, his capacity to cognize among other things, the truth with respect to good and the truth with respect to goods (*bonum communi*);<sup>182</sup> and he realizes the fullness of his nature through this good. This realization relates his nature to truth of good in the light of norm or moral norm, thereby reveals the relation of truth of good with human nature as that which is contained in the fact of birth as its possible consequence.<sup>183</sup> This recognition in human nature is a continuous process of experience from birth to death, and properly situates man’s nature through the efficacy of will, in the face of good and evil, to realize the good that actualizes his nature. By participating in the order of good, man unites his nature, his horizontal transcendence with the Ultimate Good in the vertical transcendence. This participation radiates the dynamisms of human nature in an integrated unity.

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<sup>180</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 179

<sup>181</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 179

<sup>182</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Human Nature as the Basis of Ethical Foundation.’ 97

<sup>183</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 179

#### 5.4. The Human Person as an Embodied Somatic-Psychic-Emotional Being

The understanding of nature as the source of activities of the human person involves the integration of the whole dynamisms of human person-soma-psyche-emotion. It elevates human act beyond material end, and differentiates human act from animal act, because the nature that underlies human activity is different from that of animal, likewise the content of their activities. Accordingly, the difference as Wojtyła explains, lies basically in the fact that in a human person, essence is strictly connected with existence which makes human activity a continuation of his existence.<sup>184</sup> And given the unity of the dynamisms of person and nature in act, human act possesses moral character, and what determines this nature in human being as a person relates to his rational nature, consisting of the unity of soma-psyche-emotion elements in act. This unity, though complex, however, the synthesis of efficacy of the will, the appetitive will (emotion) with the intellect reveals the concrete 'I' as the self-conscious cause of action with the actuations of the subject, man. The connection of these elements of nature-psychic-emotive-somatic into a person, shows the integral character of these properties in one whole action of the person, and so unites the person and act in an unbreakable bond. This relation of person to act structures integration as complementary to transcendence,<sup>185</sup> because human act does not appear as an expression of one dynamism, either somaticity or the psyche-emotivity,<sup>186</sup> or a summation of these dynamisms as mere natural dynamisms. Instead, they appear as a plurality in the dynamic unity of the act of the person. For in every human act, there is a unification of somatic and psychical layers of his potentiality in a mutual complementarity of each other.

Wojtyła, in this claim about the plurality in the unity of act in the person, testifies to the identity of the subject 'man' and so opposes dualism, pure immanent and psycho-physiological expression of human being that characterise contemporary secularism. For personhood manifests in the integral dynamisms of lived experiences of 'man act' and 'something happens in him' and affirms the intrinsic unity of subjectivity/nature with efficacy of person, the unity of intellect, psyche, instinct/emotion. The concept of integration makes the dimensions of happening namely, emotions and feelings active, as an integral aspect of

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<sup>184</sup> Wojtyła. 'Human Nature as the Basis of Ethical Formation.' 96

<sup>185</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 304

<sup>186</sup> Wojtyła understands 'soma' not merely as body, neither does 'psyche' mean soul. Soma in his thought is much more than bodily functions as they enter into lived experience, similarly, psyche is much more than the feelings and emotions, it refers also to perception which are expressed in the lived experience, which belong to the element of happen-in-man in contrast to what man does. See: Simpson. *On Karol Wojtyła*. 31

human *operari* which plays an essential role in man's act. Thus, Wojtyła categorically states that integration makes "opposing of person and nature in man disappear and imposes the necessity of their integration."<sup>187</sup> Although they constitute part of man, however, they do not possess ontic reality, nor constitute in themselves a whole *operari* of man, else, human *operari* will be instinctual, rather, they are part of integral conscious act of man as agent of act and creator of culture. And so, the sense of integration of person to nature manifests in the proper experience of man act, wherein the somaticity and psychical elements mutually condition each other in a dynamic totality. However, their functionality varies according to individuals in various stages and circumstances, which expresses the individual specificity, uniqueness and unrepeatability of a person.

The mutual complementarity of the psycho-somaticity of a person with nature in the integral unity of experience of the person's own 'I' although in a different manner, manifests also the universality of culture and challenges the anthropological defects of contemporary secularism that considers separately the essence of man. As a matter of fact, the analysis of the unification of psycho-somaticity of man in the integral anthropology of Karol Wojtyła recognizes the unity of the plurality of the essentials of man as a person, namely the specificity of the personal whole.<sup>188</sup> Accordingly, Charles Arthur Campbell affirms that the selfhood of man as a person manifests in the unity of mind and body, not just in the bodily manner, for there is no intersection between the self and the body. He clearly states that "body and mind are a unity, because the 'I' shows itself in certain mental and bodily process which therefore are modes of the same unity."<sup>189</sup> Wojtyła further explains that in the functioning of the body, there is a unique unity of body and mind/intellect/soul, stating that, the body is the means for externalization of the interior act; and this serves as the channel for the fulfilment of the person in the act and through the act. Because the person's choice and decision, which are subordinated to the truth of good, manifest through the body, and the body too is subordinated to the person.<sup>190</sup> Thus, the real act of the person is initiated by the self and not the body or mere reactions that motivate the self. In his analysis, he observes and employs the positive outcome of the various particular sciences and integrates them into his philosophical anthropological study and arrives at the unity of person to nature. Indeed, neither these particular sciences alone nor philosophical anthropology alone can make us recognize the truth of the integration of the person into nature. Certainly, the truth of

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<sup>187</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 181

<sup>188</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 307

<sup>189</sup> Charles A. Campbell, *On Selfhood and Godhood*. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957/2003). 103

<sup>190</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 194

integration on the basis of metaphysical and phenomenological reduction that do not cancel each other recognizes that the ground of 'being' and experience of act give existence to man as a person, and unfold the reality of the human person generally and individually.<sup>191</sup>

However, the specificity of these dynamisms-soma/body and psyche/mind/soul reveals the distinction of man's nature from animals in the externalization of action as means of fulfilment of beings. Inasmuch as man externalizes some vitalities (vegetative, reproduction, digestion) like other animals which belong to the realm of happens, and are not captured in man's consciousness nor mirrored in self-awareness, yet, they indirectly constitute self-determination. These dynamisms are elements of man's subjectivity as aspects of acts of the body though not under his total or direct control. Nonetheless, even these bodily manifestations do not isolate man from moral responsibility, since bodily or even mental defect does not distort what makes him a person and subject. Similarly, the internalization, the domain of decision that belongs to the psychological-emotions, feelings, sensations and other related attitudes depends on the body, though it is not identical with the body. These dynamisms yield to good or evil as the case may be, and values in their hierarchical order. But the efficacy of the will as the property of the interiority of a person integrates into the dynamism of nature the desire to always seek and realize the true good and value, especially the value of person which is in tandem with the nature of man.

The integration of nature into the person is the moment of truthfulness, essential for self-determination and transcendence, not sundered to pure feelings, instincts and emotions,<sup>192</sup> excluding the physiological activities like blood circulation or cellular activities, although these former mechanisms are essential in structuring self-determination. However, the specificity of remorse and distress, joy, and peace as elements of the act also play a vital role in integration, especially in moral determination. Wojtyła clarifies that moral judgement becomes visible when man acts freely and spontaneously from what he apprehends as good or right, contrary to the conflict of the aforementioned desires and emotions. For man's moral nature is revealed in and through the integration of the whole dynamisms of nature to the person in act, excluding the physiological activities like blood circulation or cellular activities. This whole analysis of Wojtyła's lived experience of 'man acts' in the structure of the person has the imprint of St. Thomas Aquinas' metaphysical anthropology.

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<sup>191</sup> Jeff Mirus, 'The ERA's Manipulation of Thought and Culture.' *Catholic Culture*. (28<sup>th</sup> February, 2023). [www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)

<sup>192</sup> Simpson. *On Karol Wojtyła*. 32

## 6. The Thomistic Foundations of Wojtyła Personalism

The foundation of personalism of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II could be traced to Thomistic anthropology that has the character of the metaphysics of man. This claim affirms one of the essential questions posited while analysing the philosophical works of Karol Wojtyła, which is: is he a Thomist or a phenomenologist?<sup>193</sup> Elements of these philosophical system are evident in the thoughts and writings of Wojtyła; although, he showed some strong Thomistic influence (given the Thomistic response to Marxism which Wojtyła struggled with in the early course of his life and thought), yet, he goes beyond these threads in his task to address the controversies in the varied anthropocentric thoughts about the nature of man, his existence, and significance, that stem from culture crisis.

As stated in the analysis above, Wojtyła remains firm with the *philosophia perennis* in his study of man, integrating the concrete content of act, which is the domain of ethics with an anthropological background based on Scholastic metaphysics, especially St. Thomas Aquinas, and supplement this approach with phenomenological analysis. Thus, he demonstrates how phenomenology and metaphysics penetrate the same object,<sup>194</sup> without cancelling nor contradicting each other. He also considers this approach as adequate in solving the problem of the modern man as pointed out by St. Thomas, who stated that the problem of the modern man concerns the intellectualization of the reality. And solving this problem, becomes, the paramount concern of the philosopher Pope.

Hence, Wojtyła's Thomistic journey and interest was developed in the course of his seminary formation, following the instruction by Pope Leo XIII that Thomism be the quasi-official doctrine of Catholicism and should be taught in the principal Catholic institutions. Thus, it became necessary that Catholic philosopher should know Thomism with sufficient depth,<sup>195</sup> and Wojtyła was not left of this knowledge. Moving from philology (humane sciences) to Scholastic, especially Thomistic metaphysics, though with great struggle and difficulty, as he sought through philosophy an integral understanding of distinct dimensions of the human person.<sup>196</sup> But his interest matured and culminated with his encounter with the

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<sup>193</sup> Douglas Flippen, 'Was John Paul II a Thomist or a Phenomenologist?' *Faith & Reason*. 31:1. (2006). 65-106. See also, 'Dyskusja nad dziełem Kardynała Karola Wojtyły *Osoba i czyn*' (The Discussion about Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's Work *The Person and the Act*), 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. (Lublin: TN KUL, 1994).

<sup>194</sup>Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 187

<sup>195</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 24

<sup>196</sup> This investigation is evident in his earliest writings which focus on anthropology and ethics. See: Wojtyła. 'In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics.' 45-56

eminent Thomist, Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange OP, in Angelicum-Rome at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas<sup>197</sup> in the course of his doctoral studies.

Though Aquinas did not clearly present in his thought the problem of the person, however, his clear presentation and understanding of the person serves as the basis for personalism, a method of philosophizing that arose in the twentieth century to confront the reductionism of apprehension of the person. His philosophical reflection provides personalists with elements that aid in examining the problem, proving such understanding that personalism is “not primarily a theory of the person or a theoretical science of the person...but largely ethical and practical understanding that is concerned with the person as a subject and an object of activity, as a subject of rights and freedom.”<sup>198</sup> Thus, we can speak of Thomistic personalism, because his ideas are still relevant in today’s understanding of the person and other contemporary philosophical and theological issues, visible in his understanding that the human person, is the most perfect being of nature, who cannot be individualized as mere being of material nature. Hence, Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II aligns with this understanding, which are evident in his thoughts and writings, in the comprehensiveness of his integral anthropology (philosophical and theological), and a confirmation that knowledge is integral. For one cannot speak of separation in the ways of knowing,<sup>199</sup> and so, there is no confusion in the sequence of thought and discussion about man as a person and subject in his thought, in the search for the truth of man.

Wojtyła adopts in his analysis of human person the Thomistic hylomorphic fusion to describe the mystery and composite nature of the human subject as existence and essence, in a substantial unity of body and soul. He employs the concept of ‘person’ to clarify the understanding of the relation that exists in the nature of the ‘Second Person,’ as human nature and Divine nature. Thus, the concept of ‘person’ in the thoughts of theologians of the patristic period, but thoroughly analysed by Aquinas prepared grounds for the introduction of the concept in the analysis of human being as true perfection among created beings in the visible world, whose perfection follows from the highest perfection-God.<sup>200</sup> For “person signifies what is most perfect in all nature-that is, a subsistent individual of a rational nature...a distinct subsistence in rational nature...a distinct subsistence in human nature.”<sup>201</sup> Opposing the truncated understanding of the human person as an idealized individual in the

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<sup>197</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła’s Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act.* 19

<sup>198</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Thomistic Personalism.’ 165

<sup>199</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła’s Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act.* 17

<sup>200</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Thomistic Personalism.’ 166

<sup>201</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism.* 204

contemporary secularism, Wojtyła improves through his personalistic study of man as a person who, in the definition of Boethius, is an ‘*individua substantia*’ of ‘*rationalis naturae*.’ Wherein the quality of *rationalis naturae* differentiates him and defines him (human person) among the created beings as the being with highest perfection: the person is *perfectissimum ens*.<sup>202</sup> Aquinas explains that rational nature, as self-determiner and not self-legislator subsists only in a person, who is an agent that acts through its consent,<sup>203</sup> defines the person as a subsistent subject of existence and action (*suppositum*).

In line with this Boethian definition, St. Thomas states that person is a special name given to the singular individual being with rational nature that belongs to the category of substance. And so, human person is presented here as the real, existing human individual, whose unique existence reveals his essence as the person, and as the real agent and source of personal actions as medium of self-determination. Therefore, St. Thomas maintains that the real concrete person Stephen, must first of all exist so as to effect any personal action of self-realization, because real being is composed of existence (*esse*) and essence (*essentia*).<sup>204</sup> This ontological description as composed of essence and existence forms the framework of Wojtyła’s personalistic study, wherein man as a person manifests in the structure of personal action. Wojtyła in the above analysis and as evident in his anthropological magna opus: ‘Person and Act’ ‘*Osoba i czyn*’ in Polish title, and ‘Love and Responsibility’ among others, places emphasis like Aquinas’ on the *esse*-person (*esse*/existence, for *esse* is not only central in St. Thomas Aquinas philosophy of being, it is also the basic constitutive aspect of every being, that is, the component of every real being),<sup>205</sup> because as he quoted severally emphasizing on the integral bond between (*esse*) person and act (with special focus on Thomistic sense of act: *actus humanus* as human *praxis*) saying that; something or someone must exist and on the basis of this he/she/it can act- *operari sequitur esse*.

For Wojtyła not only demonstrates the relation of anthropology to metaphysics, but he also shows that the meaning of the *esse* of human being reveals the unique substantial character of his being, as an objectively existing subject (*suppositum*). And the sense of the substantial being of man in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas expresses the connection of human *esse* to the Absolute Being who is the *Ipsum Esse*, the Source and Giver of *esse*, and

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<sup>202</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Thomistic Personalism.’ 167

<sup>203</sup> John F. X. Knasas, ‘Kantianism and Thomistic Personalism on the Human Person: Self-Legislator or Self-Determiner?’ *Studia Gilsoniana*, 7:3. (2018). 437-451

<sup>204</sup> Malgorzata Jałoch-Palicka, ‘Thomas Aquinas’ Philosophy of being as the Basis for Wojtyła’s Concept and Cognition of Human Person.’ in; *Studia Gilsoniana*, 3. (2014). 127-153

<sup>205</sup> Jałoch-Palicka, ‘Thomas Aquinas’ Philosophy of being as the Basis for Wojtyła’s Concept and Cognition of Human Person.’ in; *Studia Gilsoniana*, 3. (2014). 127-153

the necessary being who exists by itself,<sup>206</sup> as well as actuates man as a contingent being. This analysis expresses the structure of vertical transcendence, the intransitiveness and spiritual quality of person and act that surpass the capacity of mere consciousness,<sup>207</sup> transitivity which Wojtyła integrates into the metaphysics of Aquinas. Since *actus humanus* or *actus personae* is directed towards certain object(s), expressing the intentional content of the experience of the act that precedes *actus humanus*, but Aquinas did not understand consciousness and self-consciousness as autonomous independent subsistence existing in itself, but as the capacity in a person that subsists in the rational nature, which is the accident of the contingent human being. This was a later understanding that was developed with Descartes and post-Cartesians, through to modern and contemporary times. Rather, consciousness and self-consciousness derive from man's spiritual nature, namely, his rationality, free will, and emotions as the essence of being and basis of personal acts. Abstracting from the positive effects of these developments, Wojtyła states that, the person's acts proceed from the rational nature, freely determined and chosen, and actualized through the dynamism of the will as autonomous faculty and self-legislator, thus, person appears as the master and definer of actions.

And so, Thomistic metaphysics (theory of Essence and Existence), along with improved Aristotelian metaphysics (Act and Potency theory), provide Karol Wojtyła with the material for his ethical and philosophical anthropology simultaneously. Although Wojtyła had explained that he is not a metaphysicist, but knowledge of metaphysics forms the basis of his investigation into the essence of the person and what constitutes the principles of a real existing human person revealed through actions. "To be human," according to Wojtyła, is "to act in a human way,"<sup>208</sup> which shows the priority of the human person over his action, while action, both transitive and intransitive, performed by the person defines the person as subject and agent of action, as well as actualizes the person. Again, morally good action that proceeds from the whole dynamism of efficacy of the will as powered by reason in freedom perfects the person, and vice versa. Wojtyła by this understanding aligns with Thomistic ethics in this analysis of the person, because ethics, or rather morality, belongs to human nature and human act and constitutes the means of realization of man as a person. Thus,

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<sup>206</sup> Jałoch-Palicka, 'Thomas Aquinas' Philosophy of being as the Basis for Wojtyła's Concept and Cognition of Human Person.' in; *Studia Gilsoniana*, 3. (2014). 127-153

<sup>207</sup> Karol Wojtyła, 'El personalismo tomista,' in, *Mi visión del hombre*, 6th ed., trans. Pilar Ferrer. (Madrid: Palabra, 2006). 311-12

<sup>208</sup> Jałoch-Palicka. 'Thomas Aquinas' Philosophy of being as the Basis for Wojtyła's Concept and Cognition of Human Person.' 131

morality, he said, is closely connected with man's contingency, or with man as a subject,<sup>209</sup> for man is a contingent being and subject of actuation,<sup>210</sup> whose existence proceeds from the necessary and Absolute Being; as such, he fulfils the essence of his being by realizing morally good acts. And so, moral good of acts, Wojtyła states, gives us access into the world of a person, into the core and nature of what it means to be a person.

In the analysis of man as a person, Wojtyła speaks about person and act not as separate realities, but one coherent reality that simultaneously manifest in the totality of cognitive process, which reveals self-determination and transcendence of person. This metaphysical relation of person and in the phenomenology of experience of act essentially demonstrates the unity of the psycho-somaticity, of the externalization of the activity of the substantial soul. A recognition of the synthesis of the spiritual with material elements-reason, free will, and emotion as the principle of human act. In this mutual relation of the whole dimensions of nature to the person in the lived experience of act, Wojtyła treats morality as inherent and an integral aspect of the metaphysics of man. For we cannot separate ethical experience from the nature and knowledge of a person.

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<sup>209</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 254

<sup>210</sup> This sense of actuation of human esse as an essence distinct from other natural esse can only be found in the human rational soul, as the substantial form of the matter (body). Because human soul's subsistence signifies its spirituality, and its capacity to act and exists of and by itself independent of matter or the body as the substantial form of the body, and the form that subsists on its own. (See: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. I. q. 79, a.3, a.5; q. 84, a.6; q. 85, a.1). Human soul Aquinas explains, does not come from the matter, that is, from the soul of the parents, rather, it is immediately created by God, and so, it is incorruptible and everlasting. (See: Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. I, q. 76, a. 1). Rational soul (*anima rationalis*) he calls it, is the principle and source of the spirituality of human being, and the basis of which human being is ascribed with the character of the person. It also constitutes the basis of uniqueness of the person, the real substance-essence of each human being at each stage of his life. (See: Jałocho-Palicka. 'Spiritual Substance. The Essence of Man-Person According to Karol Wojtyła.' 104). It is the principle of human life, activities, and actualization of activities. The spiritual soul synthesizes with the corporeal (bodily) elements in a complete unity, to form and shape human personality, as well as perfect human person.

## CHAPTER IV

### MORALITY AS THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION LEADING TO THE TRUTH OF THE PERSON

#### Introduction

The analysis of the integration of nature into person in Karol Wojtyła's analysis of the experience of man's act through metaphysical and phenomenological reduction<sup>1</sup> as the route to understanding man as a person takes another dimension as the outcome of the correlation of consciousness to the man who acts. For Wojtyła in the analysis of the whole dimensions of act evaded Scheler's functionalistic theory of person in the emotional approach to ethical value that fails to recognize efficacy of will, agency of person in action, while responding to Kantian ethics of duty, and what in the contemporary time refers to Weberian heterogeneity of values that reduces morality to value judgments with no objective determination.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Wojtyła generally faults the paradigm of apriorism, empiricism and positivism<sup>3</sup> in conducting ethics as science and morality as the principle of action, because these approach in the analysis of ethical experience were insufficient and lacking the metaphysical understanding of essence of things given in experience. These approach, lived in the contemporary Western culture deny the person the responsibility of his action. And so, correcting this essential omission, he proposes an ethics that takes cognizance of these essential elements which would lead to the truth of the person. He develops this ethics in line with Aristotelian-Thomistic analysis of ethics of good as the ontic experiential fact of act based on the theory of potency and act;<sup>4</sup> delving directly into the depth of the cognized object, so as to grasp the

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<sup>1</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik, foreword C. Anderson. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 2021). 108-10 NB: The method of reduction brings out the reality of object of study, in this instance, the realistic and practical understanding of person-act relation through praxis. The method of reduction leads us back to the proper reasons and foundations of praxis so as to explain, clarify and grasp the wealth of knowledge of this object that is given to us.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Critchley, *Aquinas, Morality and Modernity: The Search for the Natural Moral Law and Common Good*. (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2013). 1

<sup>3</sup> Karol Wojtyła, 'The Problem of Experience Ethics,' *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok OSM. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993). 108/9

<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that in Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics developed within the theory of potency and act, that there is a collaboration of the will, reason and emotion in the process of actualization of act, which is an expression of the broadly conceived relation of various dynamisms or contents of experience. This analysis conceives ethical act in its proper sense as, an expression of the kind of relation to experience that guides the philosophy of being as a whole. For only in such a relation to experience does the concept of the ethical act achieve its full value. In this relation, there is a transition from potency to act, where the essence of human action consists in the actualization of the will under the direction of the reason and emotional factors. Relying on this tradition, Wojtyła asserts that moral value as the experiential content and purpose, cannot be fully analyzed on the basis of sense-emotional/feeling alone, nor intellect alone, rather, through the permeation of intellect into

essence of things, that is, the metaphysical essence<sup>5</sup> as oppose phenomenological essence. Thus, he advances a broad realistic personalistic experience of morality<sup>6</sup> that strictly permeates the concrete individual act. By taking this approach, he maintains the classical philosophy of ethics founded on philosophy of being,<sup>7</sup> an ethics universal for all, as it flows through the efficacy of the will guided by right reason with respect to truth of good which informs man's decision and choice in freedom of conscience and recognition of obligation awakened by the knowledge of veracity and the sense of responsibility to act as such. This is based on the principle that good is to be done and evil avoided, on which norm of morality forms the basis of judging act as good or evil. This portrays therefore the organic connection between morality and human act, the basis of transcendence, the means of personal fulfillment, and the realization of the truth, goodness and beauty of the person.

#### 4. The Moral Nature of Human Experience

Wojtyła states that acting and morality are organically connected, however, he clarifies that they essentially differ from each other, because, what we experience in act is not strictly univocal, in a sense, it possesses ethical character, and these realities are intimately united, and do not blur each other, for morality does not really exist independent of concrete or proper human action.<sup>8</sup> This experience he further argues, does not exist in the vacuum, rather, it applies to the person and his act, as such, proper human action in a way possesses some elements of ethical or moral experience, therefore, true analysis of human action has to be positioned within the philosophy of morality and ethics,<sup>9</sup> enroute to the depth of humanness. And so one would ask, what does it mean to say that human action is good or

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the senses to form integral whole in the experience of morality. Analyzing this experience consists in organizing the understandings that accompany the human experience of morality; and this understanding presupposes the basic moral question and answer: 'what makes an action morally good or evil, and why?' Although this question(s) touches various spheres of moral experience, however, it concerns particularly the idea of norms and man's moral obligation to live this moral norms. See, Wojtyła. 'The Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics.' 39

<sup>5</sup> Jerzy, W. Gałkowski, 'Pozycja filozoficzna kard. Karola Wojtyły. Referat na Międzynarodowy Kongres Filozoficzny.' *Roczniki Filozoficzne*. 29:2. (1980). 75-87

<sup>6</sup> This broad analysis of experience unites experience of morality with other sciences on the basis of normativity as opposed descriptive facts of experience, and so provides an integral anthropology of man who becomes moral by his action. For man demonstrates in this structure of experience knowledge of real object of act.

<sup>7</sup> Wojtyła remarks that for ethics to deserve the name 'scientific,' it is has to be associated with the true philosophy of being, because without an honest reflection on the human being and his finality or telicity one cannot construct a rationally justifiable knowledge about what is morally good or evil, i.e., ethics. See: Karol Wojtyła, *Ethics Primer Elementarz Etyczny*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2017). 29/31

<sup>8</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 172

<sup>9</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 3

evil? Bearing in mind that action is the creation of the one who acts, how does action define one as good or bad? Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II approaches these questions to show ‘why’ certain action is good or bad, a justification of norms of morality founded on natural law in connection with the experiential facts of a really existing person as an individual and as a community. For objective morality is constituted on the fact that “man acts together with others”<sup>10</sup> which opposes the idea of acting as an independent legislator<sup>11</sup> of moral law that characterises contemporary Western secularism with its attitude of moral relativism.

Indeed, the starting point and basis of understanding the experiential facts or data of human experience is morality, because there is observed at this starting point something beyond the value of action, namely, the value of the person in his volitional and conscious action. In the complexity of human action, morality plays a significant role in understanding man-person, for within the whole structure of human experience, experience of morality occupies an essential and primary position.<sup>12</sup> Why? Because, firstly, ethics according to Wojtyła is the basis of all human activities-economics, politics, social life, education etc; but in human experience, the internal experience is not only the source of moral experience, it reveals it, and defines the person as agent and author of personal act, for in this experience, the person experiences moral value-good or evil.<sup>13</sup> And so, moral experience deepens and clarifies what is moral in the human experience; it is the basis for distinguishing what is morally good from evil. This is the prism and criterion of seeing ethics, in the interpretation of the real content of an act that justifies the person either as good or evil, without which ethics will be suspended in a vacuum. Because this prism provides us with the basis of judging and determining why a particular personal action is good or bad, while denoting the ethical character of experiential facts.

Again, it touches the axiological dimension of the person, constituting the fact of human fulfilment, the dynamic *fieri* and the source of the value of the person. This forms the foundation of the concept of dignity of the person, personal decisions and consequences, and uniqueness of the person. This analysis of human experience through the experience of

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<sup>10</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, trans. Kemp, K. W. & Kieroń, Z. M. (South Bend-Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 2011). 8

<sup>11</sup> Acting as independent legislator presupposes relativism of action wherein morality in particular is no longer one and universal property of mankind and natural quality of human person, but as confessional phenomenon, decided by each individual. At such, intransitive and transcendence of act are lost, since act is construed as possessing only immanent, material and external character; and so each person pursues and defines his individual good and morality. See: Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/Elementarz Etyczny*. 9. Also: Kenneth Schmitz, *At the Centre of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II*. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993). 153/6.

<sup>12</sup> Wojtyła. *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. 7

<sup>13</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 104/5

morality is the property of the internal dimension of acts that expresses the value of the act and appeals to the person as a moral obligation. For experience of morality engages personal acts, determines the quality and defines the content of acts as moral or immoral, and this determination structures man's becoming, given that in the course of experience of morality, man experiences who he is and what his nature is. And this discovery, Wojtyła asserts, expresses the inseparable connection of the essence of morality with humanity, at the same time affirms morality as the essential property of real human experience.<sup>14</sup> As it were, analysis of personal act through the experience of morality, he clearly states is the gateway into the world of the person;<sup>15</sup> it reveals the truth about the person.<sup>16</sup>

Moreso, the real content of the experience of man that follows from moral value as what results from the act and leads us to the person as the cause of the specific experience, defines the person as morally good or bad. For good or evil arises from the action, expressing the dependence of the agency of the person with action, and penetrates the personal 'I,' given the fact that conscious and voluntary action structures this personal I and does not tolerate any conflict. What could be the ground for this determination? The reason for this determination cannot be found in biopsychic-sociological factors, but in the objective and transcendent character of morality through ethics as the theory and basis of action. Experience of morality shows that experiential fact possesses some ethical property that qualifies as moral, and what definitely determines morality relates to norms and telos. We shall return to this later.

### 1.1. Ethics and Morality as the Foundations of Human Action

Ethics and morality are natural and universal properties of humanity that are fundamentally connected with the human life, and through the human acts to their "natural telos."<sup>17</sup> Ethics is par excellence the practical science<sup>18</sup> of morality that proceeds from

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<sup>14</sup> Wojtyła demonstrates by this connection the synthesis of anthropology with ethics in understanding the nature of man as a person, since ethics in his analysis of anthropology of man through his action is the starting point of understanding the nature of man who manifests through his act. For ethics is universally agreed as the science that studies human action through moral principle, gets to the depth of action and through to the person. And so, ethics through morality gives us the rich reality of man in his nature. See, Grzegorz Hołub, Tadeusz Biesaga, Jarosław Merecki, & Marek Kostur, *The Polish Christian Philosophy of the 20th Century*. (Krakow: Ignatianum University Press, 2019). 37

<sup>15</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie (Lublin Lectures)*. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL, 2020). 8

<sup>16</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, 'Philosophical Anthropology and Ethics in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła.' *Studia Gilsoniana*, 11:1. (2022). 145-161

<sup>17</sup> Patrick J. Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*. (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2018). 35

experiential facts that make up the structural whole of a completely unique reality, namely moral reality that is homogeneous,<sup>19</sup> and a guide to human conduct. This realization is based on the natural conviction that ‘good is to be done and evil avoided.’ These experiential facts, which result from personal act and lead to the person’s telos are what Karol Wojtyła referred to as “ethical lived experience.”<sup>20</sup> It is that personal awareness which the person experiences in action, as the author and agent of action; and such consciousness carries with it some sense of responsibility that proceeds from the witness of the conscience to the content of the act as powered by reason and free will. As the author of his action, man is also responsible for the choices and decisions and what he realizes, for morality Wojtyła explains proceeds from the whole dimensions of experience of man as his property, the measure of his greatness, in and through morality man writes his most internal and most personal story,<sup>21</sup> and this is rooted in personal action because such character of action has the property of being morally good or evil. This understanding portrays morality as integral with human life in the light of norms and relates to each person as an individual and as a community or group, and the same for all people in different historical epochs.

Wojtyła notes that realizing the proper experiential facts of the experience of action which defines the human person as the most perfect being in the order of nature, whose acts, describes the act and potency theory, relates to ethics that crystalizes the normativity of this realization. As the science that explains all human conscious activities, it reveals the good and evil of these acts, and the reason for such judgments, which determines that ‘A’ is good and ‘B’ is evil. This is the basic natural law that also presupposes divine law, because it is natural to man, to his reason in its capacity of knowing the truth. As Wojtyła said,

the activity of creating norms is based upon this natural ability, and underlying such activity there is the cognition of the truth about the good. The reason gets to know the truth about the moral good in reference to that which constitutes the object of human acts, and in reference to the acts themselves<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). 9-11. This idea forms the basis of Wojtyła’s normative understanding of personhood and human anthropology that delineates what one ought to do and ought not to do, of which the latter entails infringement on the essential good or objective/truth of good that belongs to the nature of man as a person. For just as body belong to the sensory nature, likewise, morality belong to the nature of the person, thanks to the interiority or the soul. However, he was cautious of the risk of reducing man to the being of this world or to natural order, whereas man is above all an object, one of the objects of the world. See; Mariusz Wojewoda, ‘Karol Wojtyła’s Conception of Personhood from the Perspective of Cognitive Sciences.’ *Philosophy and Canon Law*. 7:1. (2021). 1-17. Also: Karol Wojtyła, ‘Subjectivity and Irreducible in Man.’ *Human Being in Action: The Irreducible in Man*. Husserliana, A. *The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research*, 6th edition, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing, 1977). 108-9

<sup>19</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of Experience Ethics.’ 112

<sup>20</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 21

<sup>21</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Human Nature as the Basis of Ethical Formation.’ 98

<sup>22</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer Elementarz Etyczny*. 47

This natural and divine law-based constitution of morality reflects also the justification of positive laws as the guiding principles of human action. He further adds that ethics developed through the Christian principles and traditions fosters true perfection of the person, and this is applicable even to non-believers because it relates to man as a person, and determines the character of norms of actions. For goodness or badness are the basic experiential facts of action, which refer to people as individuals or society, and moral norms are the measuring standard of action and the basis of ethics as a science of morality. No wonder, Wojtyła defines ethics and morality as “the science of human actions from the point of view of moral value of actions-good or evil contained in them...it also intensifies the sense of bond that exists between the action and person.”<sup>23</sup> He further states that in the reality and drama of life, it is the proper starting point for grasping the essence of the person, and touches also the whole dynamism of human acts. Hence, morality he declares is that personal defining quality of every human person and the purpose of action.

As the starting point of human personal life that is connected to human action, it also makes permanent the realization of moral value good in the structure of man-person. This permanence he said,

is connected with the intransitiveness of acts, and at the same time determines it in a particular way. Human acts really becomes the act of the person, thanks to moral values, which are objective reality most closely coherent with the person, which defines the person as somebody who is good or evil by virtue of his moral act.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, it becomes impossible and difficult to isolate the nature of ethics from moral reality, because morality is the vital root of the *actus personae*.<sup>25</sup> As existential reality, it is connected with man as a person, and exists in the course of the performance of an act, and serves as the channel of fulfilment of the person through the act. Since morality manifests through man’s activity, man not only creates himself while creating morality, he also lets such becomes, as Kant said in one of the categorical imperatives, the basis of judging not only the action of others, but also his own. Indeed, human act possesses always a concrete experiential, individual character and is justified by objective morality as the guide for all people. Formulating moral judgment from such concrete act requires recognizing series of internal/intransitive and external/transitive circumstances, that arise from the situation in which man finds himself while acting, along with the individual’s disposition and

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<sup>23</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics.’ 23

<sup>24</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 254

<sup>25</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 254

temperament. This realization determines the transcendence of a person who did not succumb to the emotional desires and feelings with respect to good, but expresses his *sui generis* and self-governance in the integration of the person to action into relation to other persons. We can only understand the richness and fullness of the character of personal act in relation with others, and this acting to others surpasses the domain of utile through the moral value of that arises from the action in accordance with norm.

As it were, Wojtyła clearly states that in the whole analysis of the experience of morality as the ontic experiential fact, one must keep in mind the knowledge of the truth of being of man as a person, which relates to the good of the person. For moral good is not only the property of a person, it is also that of action and a source of self-fulfilment and transcendence. Realizing the truth of the good of the person Wojtyła said, can only be possible through an ordered moral action.<sup>26</sup> Good in this sense becomes the teleology and axiology of action. How?

## 1.2. The Good of the Person as the Motive of Action

Karol Wojtyła's ontogenetic understanding of the human person through his personal acts transcends the domain of individual realization of what the person intends in the act. To avoid falling into immanentism in describing the content of act, he subscribes to an ontological substrate that reveals the essence of what the person experiences, because every human experience he explains requires some understanding of what is experienced,<sup>27</sup> as well as the direct cognitive contact with the object. This contact with a person reveals that act is the property of the person with respect to moral value good or evil. Besides this, there is another aspect of the act that has its source in the person, namely, the 'good.' And so, good manifests as the intended motive behind a human act. Inasmuch as it has varied understandings, yet it is inscribed into human nature as the general purpose of action. It is significant in the understanding morality of an act and constitutes the source of moral judgment and ethical framework. As such, it is central in determining the contingency of a person, for man acts towards a certain object, an object that, in a sense is good and determines personal fulfilment. The varied conception of these objects expresses the various conceptions of good. But man's consciousness of morality as his property helps him to know and understand the truth of good, be willing to act according to this natural property, and so

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<sup>26</sup> Hołub. 'Philosophical Anthropology and Ethics in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła.' 145-161

<sup>27</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 254

realize his humanity and become himself. As it were, “morality does not only teach man how to be good, it is also good in itself because it teaches man to be even more human and more fulfilled. Again, it does not teach obligations, but rather implants into the identity of man what improves him and makes him perfect and brings out in him what lies within him as latent and potential.”<sup>28</sup>

Thus, Wojtyła asserts that good is significant in constructing ethics and a proper understanding of morality, for it is what remains at the end of action. Although the internal dimension may pass away and fade, he states that good remains as the purpose and what is realized in act, and this effect is explained by efficacy and self-determination,<sup>29</sup> thereby links good to human perfection. However, philosophers have approached the idea of good differently.<sup>30</sup> Socrates relates good to virtue as the greatest good for man, without which human life would become unworthy of man.<sup>31</sup> It conditions man’s happiness, given that the expression of virtue or living out virtue conditions good as what is fitting for man. Plato conception of the good, as well as that of St. Augustine, bears no direct relation to proper human action. The sense of good refers to man’s sharing in the idea of good and participating in the idea of the highest good (God), who is the efficient cause of every being and good.<sup>32</sup> Aristotle conceives good as that which is “properly fitting to man and constitutes the basis of the science of ethics, since good is the object of appetite; and so, every good is an end of the will, as that which really perfects the human being-man.”<sup>33</sup> The medieval thinkers, however, construe good as equivalent to man, and this resonates in St. Thomas Aquinas thus: ‘*ens et bonum convertuntur*’-being and good are convertible, which suggests that every being is good.

St. Thomas expresses the ontological relation of good with being, stating that being is the first and principal object of cognition, while other concepts, especially truth and good, though they express universal properties of this being, also exist as being. Good is naturally identified with real existing being; it also constitutes an end and perfection of this being. Thus, he said: *bonus et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed different secundum rationem tantum*- the good and being constitute one and the same thing, because one and the same

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<sup>28</sup> Anna Szura, ‘Dialogiczna etyka wychowawcza.’ Supplement to, Chudy, W. *Pedagogia godności. Elementy etyki Pedagogicznej*. (Lublin: TN KUL, 2009). 222

<sup>29</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 252

<sup>30</sup> The choice of these philosophers aligns systematically with Wojtyła’s study of the ontic conception good, given their fundamental influence of difference in the perception and lived experience of good in the contemporary culture.

<sup>31</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 144

<sup>32</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 238/9

<sup>33</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 212

thing is at the same time a being and a good.<sup>34</sup> As a matter of fact, good exists as what perfects the nature of man, and this perfection, as we grasp from the Boethian definition relates to his rational nature. Immanuel Kant was occupied by the question of good, and in his study, he construes good as completely independent of experience but subordinated to will as determined by the practical reason. Reacting to this, Max Scheler subscribes to intentionality of the good- or value as he prefers, and in restoring experience to human reality, proposes emotional feeling. He said: only that which is manifest in a feeling or phenomenological experience can be called value; a value is not some anonymous dark 'X' concealed beyond the phenomenon.”<sup>35</sup>

The various conceptions of goods attests to the fact that people have different objects of interest, and so what is good for one person may not be for another, and on the basis of reductionism of the concept of good as an object of act has become relativised. However, aligning with the Thomistic ontic structure of good as a means of human perfection, Wojtyła asserts that ontic or objective good is the proper foundation of ethics and morality. While remaining firm to the true nature of good in the thought of St. Thomas, Wojtyła further affirms these words of Aquinas that: “*homo est capax ut obiecti eius boni, quod est infinitum,*” at the same time, he is “*bonum simpliciter est finis ultimus et omnia quae ducunt ad eum.*”<sup>36</sup> Beneath human decision and action, there is this innate desire and appeal to realise good because good evokes appetite, especially moral good, which stirs action and leads to happiness of the person, as well as tends towards the fulfilment of man’s destiny. Endowed with natural reason, Wojtyła argues, the person comes to know that the truth of good constitutes the object or purpose of human acts, and on the basis of this truth, he understands himself and his nature. He states that “good is that which corresponds to his nature with respect to the aim of his being and action.”<sup>37</sup> He emphasizes that good perfects the person, but bearing in mind the possibility of other goods that the person is capable of and that do not perfects hers, he states that the good that perfects the person relates to the true good which is the proper object of the will. True good, he said, is “the object of the will. The

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. 1, q. 5, a. 1 as quoted in: Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 260

<sup>35</sup> Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and non-Formal Ethics of Values: A new Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. & ed. Manfred S. Frings & Roger L. Funk. (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1966/1973). 35

<sup>36</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 286/8

<sup>37</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer Elementarz Etyczny*. 47

will is actualized by this good primarily as by the proper object of the its activity.”<sup>38</sup> In his words he said,

some goods, for example, perfect his organism by augmenting his powers, while others perfect his intellect by broadening his knowledge. Among all these goods, only moral good perfects the very humanity of man; through the moral good a man becomes simply a better man, he becomes better as a man-he actualizes the potency slumber within him to become a better man. In this way, moral perfection is the chief and central act of the human nature, while all the other perfections of man are somehow reduced to moral perfection.<sup>39</sup>

Wojtyła demonstrates in this that of all the various categories of good that motivates human act, moral good appears as the true good that suits the entirety of humanity. In line with St. Thomas ontic sense of good, he calls this moral good *bonum rationis*<sup>40</sup> or honest good, because it is superior to other goods and concerns always the objective and ultimate good of the person as an individual and as a community or society. This universalistic sense of true good or moral good (honest good) opposes the useful good of the present-day secularised experience in their relativistic approach to good that results in individualism and utilitarianism. Wojtyła emphasizes that honest good that funds true and objective morality results in right attitude to love, which actualizes man’s highest possibilities.<sup>41</sup> This attitude of truthfulness and goodness of all persons is structured by right reason as it seeks the realization of good of, and good for all people. In what way does good in general and true good or moral good in particular reveal or relate to the nature of man as a person?

### 1.3. The Moral Good as the Essence of Human Action

In the analysis of the integration of interior with exterior aspects of human act, as well as the psycho-somaticity of nature to person, Wojtyła recognizes the role of the dynamism of the will guided by reason in discovering and discerning the proper human act that suits human nature. This quality of act is not only the fundamental motive of act, it is integral to human nature, the distinguishing element of human nature and source of human perfection, described by Aristotle as “*kalokagathia*-integral goodness,”<sup>42</sup> that is, the actualization of the entire fullness accessible to man. This quality of act relates to moral good as the ontic basis of

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<sup>38</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 304

<sup>39</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/Elementarz Etyczny*. 67

<sup>40</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 304

<sup>41</sup> Wojtyła defines love as that man’s phenomenal and rational capacity which refers to the good, as well as depends on his willingness consciously to seek the good together with others, and to subordinate himself to that good for the sake of others, or to others for the sake of that good. See, Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 29

<sup>42</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 376

acts of self-determination, transcendence, and ultimate fulfilment. Wojtyła severally reiterates that man is the only being of nature endowed with rational capacity, which elevates his nature as something that cannot be contained within the concept of an individual member of the species, and so he states that what qualifies his richness and perfection as ‘person’ relates to his rational nature, by which he realizes moral good. Man’s rational capacity, as it were entails making the right moral judgment, and through it man recognizes the truth of good as the proper value of an act, and acts on it.

According to Wojtyła, man, while living out his nature (rational), “tends towards the true good as to an end, because by tending towards, he seeks the perfection himself, as well as the self of the other. Thus, moral good manifests as that good which perfects”<sup>43</sup> and reveals the true *fieri* or becoming of man. And this connection of moral good to the person shapes the substance of humanity<sup>44</sup> such that man becomes true to his nature through moral good. Although evil is also an aspect of moral value and one of the facts of realities in the universe alongside good, as what man realizes in his action, however, the emphasis on good as the intended purpose of the act and moral good as an integral property of human act because it plays a significant role in revealing the nature of man as a person. The essence of man, metaphysical speaking, appeals to good as a feature of his nature and defines man as good, and the domain of this definition is morality that belongs specially to the internal dynamism of man, for it is the domain of decision and free choice with respect to good and evil. Where evil is an expression of lack and non-being in the right reasoning,<sup>45</sup> as such cannot constitute the purpose of an act and essential determination of the person, because no one, in his right reason can choose evil.

And so, the moment of decision is a complex moment in what the person realizes. As it were, the agent of act, faced with varied options of good, is confronted with what is called ‘existential moment,’ where existence is at stake and the question of ‘to be or not to be’ of either the existence of the subject of act or that of someone else.<sup>46</sup> At this moment, the dynamism of the will, in collaboration with the right reason chooses the true good of the person which radiates the attitude of ‘being’ as opposed ‘having’ within the rightly ordered conscience that conditions responsibility. Herein is observed in one’s personal act, the

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<sup>43</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 373

<sup>44</sup> Hołub. ‘Philosophical Anthropology and Ethics in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła.’ 145-161

<sup>45</sup> Piotr Jaroszynski, & Mathew Anderson, *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*, trans. Hugh McDonald. (Socrates Press, 2013). 4

<sup>46</sup> Jaroszynski. & Anderson. *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*. 30

moment of decision as an integral aspect of moral nature, and proceeds from the internal structure.

However, in the hierarchy of good, Wojtyła declares,<sup>47</sup> moral good as the true good of the person actualizes and perfects man. Choosing moral good over other subordinate goods, or evil portrays the connection of this highest good to the human nature, because nature, especially the rational nature of man, is the foundation of human activities that tends his acts toward that specific true good that belongs and perfects his nature. This specific true good is the object of morality and it is strictly connected to the subject called, a person.<sup>48</sup> True good or moral good is the property of human nature, although there is a possibility of lack of this manifestation of human nature when the choice of lower good is made contrary to the higher. This possibility as it were affirms the complexity of human act, for it is only in such nature as human can this occurrence happen. Yet, there is a difference between lack of higher a good that destroys the ontic good, and lack as a result of choosing a lower good. This is illustrated with: in a situation where I am relaxing from work and playing some music while my neighbour is studying for a final exam and needs silence, then he calls out for help and I ignore the call for help. Though listening to music after a stressful day is a good, but the good of the other ranks higher than mine and appeals to me as a moral responsibility to seek this higher good. For indeed, good action affects both the person as subject-agent of the act, and also the other as the subject-object of the act, and what coordinates this structure is moral good. This fact of human nature, Wojtyła categorically states, is personalistic and axiological.<sup>49</sup>

This affirms the normative character of morality expressed by Wojtyła in justifying ‘why’ a specific act is good or evil, and so, when the chosen good does not relate to the truth of good of a person, such good does not, in a sense, qualify as property of human nature. Accordingly, an action that recognizes the truth of the good of the value of a person qualifies per se as moral good, and this resonates John Finnis understanding. He states that true or real good that underlies human nature should be in conformity with right reason and appears as moral good. Accordingly, morally good actions are directed by practical reasonableness

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<sup>47</sup> The principle of realistic ethics states that, at the starting point, all human activity must remain in harmony with reality, i.e., must be faithful to reality that is acting. Not only is the reason capable of knowing and suggesting to the will the subjective and objective reality, and the will chooses always the real good; in reality, it perceives goods and the hierarchy of goods, and this perception becomes the basis of choice and for normative judgments. The reason also, guided by the light of faith grasp the revealed truth of supernatural goods, thus, the whole order of goods are made known to the reason, and reason assumes new proportions-knowing natural and supernatural goods. See: Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/Elementarz Etyczny*. 55

<sup>48</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Human Nature as the Basis of Ethical Formation.’ 97

<sup>49</sup> Wojtyła. *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. 17

towards our internal human fulfilment, in agreement with the principles and rules of right reason.<sup>50</sup> And so, morally good actions structure morally good objects and ends since it is something natural and necessary to man and as well conditions human capabilities as they really are in relation to human nature. On the basis of this, we understand true moral good as the second name of human nature, and the material value of human action.

#### 1.4. The Axiological Character of Moral Good

Karol Wojtyła demonstrates conviction in the possibility of constructing a theory of the objective experience of morality that is whole and universal in nature by synthesizing those theories that treat ethics and morality as part but not an integral element of human nature. Grasping the practical and normative character of morality as a whole requires adequate understanding of the experiential fact of act, namely the axiological layer (good, value). His understanding of the axiological layer as the truth of ethics and morality takes into account the whole ethics as the practical science in the tradition of Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, with the normative science of Kant and ethics of value formulated by Scheler.<sup>51</sup> Wojtyła explains that the axiological layer is the source and end of experience of morality that relates the praxiological layer. This layer is strictly and exclusively connected to the interiority of person as the centre and basis of personal fulfilment.

Given this characteristic element, Wojtyła maintains that, moral good determines the axiological teleology of an act, structures self-determination and transcendence. Realizing through moral good the axiological teleology of an act is not only connected with the nature of the person, it also conditions who the person is always, a value, good, and gift as Wojtyła said, unto himself and for others since the value of act manifests in the other. For instance, the true good/value of research is in its usefulness to other users of the outcome, likewise any aspect of human endeavour. This reveals the objective and subjective character of moral good and opposes the autonomous and relativistic character of morality and individualistic mentality of good in the lived experience of contemporary secularism. But the truth of the rational nature that is subordinated to the truth of good requires from man as an obligation to relate to this truth despite the objects contrary to this truth that one may encounter on the way.

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<sup>50</sup> John Finnis, *Aquinas*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). 104-10. See also: Cristóbal Orrego, 'On Moral Philosophy and Kinds of Human Actions.' *Reason, Morality, and Law: The Philosophy of John Finnis*, eds. John Keown & Robert, P. George. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). 113-150

<sup>51</sup> Wojtyła. *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. xviii

The truth of his nature demands that he realizes the axiological end (true/moral good) that befits his nature.

For axiological good is intrinsic to man, and reaching it at the end of his act perfects his nature. In this way, axiological character of good finds its way to the truth as the proper object of reason, which it obliges to the will, and the will realizes it as the true good of human perfection. Wojtyła contends that it is impossible to realize the intrinsic axiological structure of good on the basis of intellectualist, emotionalist, biologist, utilitarian, vitalist, and voluntarist suppositions that characterise contemporary Western secularism on the grounds that these approaches suppress and bracket the objective good which is significant and integral to objective and ultimate moral good. As such, the inability of the efficacy of the will collaborating with reason as the causal effect of objective moral good, like in the situations mentioned above, results in relativism of egoism, wherein each person becomes the measure of good and axiological teleology. Acting in the capacity of autonomous creator of good and value, each person creates himself and his world, which manifests as a clash of goods and values without the proper objectivity and subjectivity of man, and transcendence.

Wojtyła clearly maintains that true good as the axiological content of act must involve the coefficients of acts, namely: cognition and appetite, reason and will, truth and good;<sup>52</sup> and all these must join with each other, so as to actualize this purpose in accuracy. Because what every concrete person basically experiences as the axiology of action, especially morally good action, is the truth about the good, a good that is indeed the person. Other goods/values may appear in the course of acting, but, the true axiological content of an act relates to the objective good of man-person, and it is indispensable in the moral structure of the person. This realization forms the being of man and vice versa. However, responding positively to moral good appeals to the person as an obligation, and this obligation has its source in norm, and norm Wojtyła asserts is nothing other than, “the truth about the good.”<sup>53</sup>

## **2. The Relation of Norm to Obligation in Moral Experience**

Understanding true good and value as the content and end of act, and what structure morality shows some connection between these experiential content of act with the concept of norm. However, the disconnection of norm from the ethical experience in the realization of the ultimate end of act, namely, happiness or personal flourishing, greatly affects the

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<sup>52</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 379

<sup>53</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 378

approach to ethical and moral good in the contemporary Western culture. Therefore, the analysis and proper positioning of norm in ethical experience becomes paramount and necessary in the course of this study, so as to reinstate in a profound manner the concept of norm in moral experience, thereby responds properly to the present-day relativism of good or value through acts that seek the subjectively satisfying end, in compromise to the objective good.

### 2.1. Normativity of the Moral Experience

The analysis of action as an integral property of the human person and what defines the person determined by experience of morality at this juncture requires understanding the source of this judgment about action. What in the structure of experience of morality is grounds for the justification of action as morally good or evil, and morally permissible and obligatory? The perennial understanding of the purpose of ethics and morality is that it is connected with good or happiness as the end,<sup>54</sup> and this conception, in a sense, is connected with norm. It presents norm as the basis of justification of moral character of action as good or evil, our understanding of ethics as a practical science different from other sciences.<sup>55</sup> As such, the norm is the basis of cultural acts, both the culture of a person and the culture of work (artefact), and as well proposes the need for an ordered living and mutual co-existence and development.

Norm is an ethical structure and a moral principle that classifies the various goods of human appetite in connection with human perfection. The source of norm's capacity as the judge and classifier of action is supernatural and natural,<sup>56</sup> that is, from divine law and from human natural right reason permeated in its approach to what is good and evil which is applicable to all humanity. As Karol Wojtyła presents it, "the source of cognition of moral norm (norm of morality) is always in some way nature and reason. The reason is capable of knowing the truth. So, the activity of creating norm is based upon this natural ability, and underlying such activity there is the cognition of the truth about good."<sup>57</sup> Norm proceeds also

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<sup>54</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 386 NB: see also pages 394/5 for a clarification of the proper sense of good and happiness that really suits the person as the foundation of ethics and morality.

<sup>55</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 41

<sup>56</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 89/97 wherein Wojtyła distances himself from the modern and contemporary understanding of nature as the source of evil inclination, but relying of Thomistic approach, he construes nature as the source of action. The intellect is the source of norm, its power and energy is closely related to it for it defines the rules of conduct in accordance with the way of human perfection in the whole order of beings. And duty follows from this insight. See also; 142

<sup>57</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 41

from the natural law and every person is some way is aware of it and obeys it, and is guided by it, because it aims at the common good. Natural law also informs other subsidiary authorities that promulgate norms, such as: religious traditions, or objective standards/rules set by the society to avoid arbitrariness and normative relativism. And so, transgression of it, is considered a moral offence, because it distorts the natural order of humanity.

In the experiential facts, norm appears as the mechanism for justification and for qualifying the specifics of act, and so liberates experience of morality as a description of acts or as descriptive science of morality/ethics, and from the presupposition of ethics as negativism which has to do only with evil and its avoidance. The norm of morality<sup>58</sup> essentially provides justification for what morality is, the grounds for the moral value of an act on the basis of which some acts are considered as morally evil. This classification follows from the knowledge of experiential fact through the efficacy of the will, such that establishing the moral value of an act is followed by the sense of duty or moral obligation so as to realize the true good that is permanently and essentially inscribed into human life or nature.<sup>59</sup> As a matter of fact, the obligation to norm appeals to the person as imperative, for on this structure the agency of the person manifests in the classification of action as morally good or morally evil, justifying the reason for such positive or negative moral value-good or evil. Wojtyła affirms this, arguing that the lived experience of norm relates to the person as an obligation for justification of true good, and this realization cannot be achieved under any form of apriorism of value and good. For apriorism in the form of pragmatic, materialistic and atheistic assumptions of human experience sunder experience of morality from the ontic character of experiential facts and their natural determination of man's telicity, perfection, happiness, and ultimate end-God.

However, in the complexity of the experiential facts, the rightly formed conscience guides man's evaluation of moral value as informed by the norm of morality to act in accordance with what is morally good that befits his nature, whereas contrary to this defeats his nature. Wojtyła categorically states that "a detachment from norms as the distinctive source of the phenomenon of morality- a source that beats within the heart of the unique and

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<sup>58</sup> Wojtyła subscribed to the concept 'norm of morality' over 'ethical norm' or 'moral norm,' because norm of morality according to him refers to that principle of action of a person which immediately and from within gives that act its moral character, causing the person performing that act to become through it morally good or bad person. It also concerns the specific element, which is the threshold within the dynamic connection of person and act, that characterizes the morality of act, such that human act does not remain in its ontic dimension, even though this ontic dimension also possesses ethical character. But norm of morality is the principle of actualization of the very potentiality of the person. See: Wojtyła. *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. 35

<sup>59</sup> Jaroszynski. & Anderson. *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*. xxiii

dynamic reality of morality- would rob morality of the dynamism proper to it.”<sup>60</sup> In the objectification of experience of morality, norm clearly determines and defines good or evil, and at the centre of this objectification is also moral obligation. As such, “norm is the essential content of duty (obligation); it also determines duty’s structure and originality.”<sup>61</sup> As a mechanism of experience of morality, norm functions as imperative or command, prohibiting the person from the negative good or value that opposes his nature. This command or obligation manifests also as advice, recommendation and dissuasion from that which deforms the nature of man, and encourages that which forms and improves his nature. And so the obligatory accent to true good as the teleology of experience of morality will be difficult to understand without the normative moment. Despite the ends which man desires as ultimate happiness, the mechanism of norm governs man in his choices to choose the end that is proper to his nature, his rational nature. Human reason in this situation manifests as the subject and object of a norm capable of measuring both the activities and their end at the same time. As it were, the norm appears as the mechanism that regulates the will of the person as an agent of act in relation to others.<sup>62</sup>

However, Wojtyła’s improved analysis of Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics and the role of the will through the findings of Narziss Ach, Michotte Albert and other psychologists of the school of contemporary psychology of the will<sup>63</sup> maintains that, the will’s capacity to grasp good as the axiological content of action constitutes the foundation of norms, because the will naturally follows norm of morality in distinguishing various classes of good, as well as good from evil. In grasping the true good that characterises authentic ethical experience, norms functions as that element of the interior faculty that distinguishes good from evil, and determines what makes ‘A’ good and ‘C’ evil, and why. Norm Wojtyła asserts, “pronounce(s) judgments about what is good and what is evil, and it gives the grounds for these judgments, i.e., it shows why it is so.”<sup>64</sup> It objectivizes moral value-good or bad, evaluates the worth of action, judges action as good or evil, and provides reasons for such evaluative judgment. It helps the person to understand the essence of morality, in determining the rightness or wrongness of an action. For instance, telling the truth or being honest is good, while telling a

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<sup>60</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Theory of Morality.’ 136

<sup>61</sup> Jaroszynski. & Anderson. *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*. 29

<sup>62</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 462

<sup>63</sup> According to this school of thought, we encounter the will immediately (phenomenologically) precisely in that experience in which we experience ourselves as the efficient cause of our acts. Analysis of this nature of the will provides us with thorough analysis of ethical experience, in which we grasp the efficacy of the person, an experience where the will manifests itself phenomenologically as a basic structural element of the whole empirical fact. See. Wojtyła. ‘The Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics.’ 39

<sup>64</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 19/21

lie is bad. The former affirms the truth of the good of action, while the latter deforms the natural good of act, and such knowledge of classification of the axiology of action appeals to the person as an obligation, as per why he ought to tell the truth and avoid lies. This connection of norm to obligation determines the person's fulfilment and sense of transcendence, not only to the person as an individual, but in relation to others in the right order of conscience and in correspondence with the true good of human nature.

Norm indeed identifies action as morally good or evil, and this justification expresses the fact that man acts towards an end, and so reveals norm's functionality in determining the teleology of the act. For man does not only act with respect to something as an end, or act towards just any end, but rather his final end emerges from his act. This final end *eo ipso* must be true good, the moral good of the act and the personalistic value/good of the person.

## 2.2. The Teleological Capacity of the Norms

In the praxiological analysis of the personal action of a person which reveals in the experiential facts the moral value-good or evil as the source of human becoming and being, we grasp the axiology of act, that is good in general and true good in particular, that belong to the nature of a person. For what the person becomes through his or her personal action, says Karol Wojtyła, depends on whether these actions are morally good or bad, because the human being and human activity are the same subject of moral value.<sup>65</sup> This demonstrates the link between a human being as a being and subject of morality with experience of morality and moral value<sup>66</sup> which is what this subject realizes that shapes his fieri and becoming. And so, the experiential facts or moral facts which the person realizes in relation to the moral value of action refers to the teleology or norm of morality. In the interpretation of moral facts, Wojtyła explains, there arises the moment of moral value as the end or the teleology which the person reaches. He, however clarifies that his analysis of the concept of teleology does not reflect the thoughts of either Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas, wherein realizing moral value takes the person towards or away from the teleology proper to his or her life.

As it were, his understanding of teleology relates to the final becoming of man as a person which is determined by morality or experience of morality. For teleology is integral

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<sup>65</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Theory of Morality.' 143

<sup>66</sup> He gave a generic understanding of moral value as that fragment of experience of morality through which the human being as a person becomes and is good or evil. Moral value he said is original and self-evident in personal action and irreducible to any general category, because it structures what the person is and what the person becomes either good or bad through the person's action. See: Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Theory of Morality.' 143-45

and compatible with the whole dynamisms of human experience on this basis, we qualify the experience of man's acts that structures morality as an integral property of man. Morality, he maintains, directs human act to a purposeful end, to his ultimate end, and this purposefulness does not per se reflect Aristotle's teleological character that: *omnes agens agit propter finem*—all human agents act for an end. End or teleology in this sense refers to good or happiness in general as the finality of an act, but the theory of finality in this expression does not intrinsically possess moral character, because according to Wojtyła, “between praxiology (the theory of action) and the theory of morality, we cannot place an equal sign.”<sup>67</sup> And so, since norm justifies the moral value of action, teleology, as that element of morality, determines the being of the person, especially realizing true good which is connected to the nature of the person as a rational being. Wojtyła further observes that norm is intrinsic in realizing this end in the light of proper experience of freedom by which the person overcomes self-centred good or subjectively satisfying good that do not conform with the true nature of the person.<sup>68</sup> The end realized under this experience has the character of selfish suitability and does not really appeal to moral value, especially true good justified by a norm. Again, moral value loses its proper foundation in man who has been reduced to a kind of pleasure or pain. And so, ethics becomes unnecessary and the fundamental ethical questions, together with the justification for the rightness or wrongness of actions, make no sense or meaning and are excluded from morality.

The teleological theory advanced by Karol Wojtyła refers to the permissiveness of certain action on the basis of true good as determined by a normative principle as good that befits the nature of man which man has the obligation in conscience to realize. It differs from the deontological realization of good or the permissiveness of certain action on the basis of law, as well as the utilitarian realization of certain action once happiness is feasible. This latter approach to experiential facts at the *prima facie* may seem to pursue the good of the person, however, its interestedness in the realization of good is contrary to the character of morality. Human act possesses a teleological character that is normative, in the sense that, human being acts for an end, or rather, human act tends to that reason of which the act is aimed at. And that thing is not only good as such, it is the good of the person who acts as well as the good of the other. For people in their act, Wojtyła expresses, not only want good as

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<sup>67</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Theory of Morality.’ 147

<sup>68</sup> Richard A. Spinello. *The Encyclicals of John Paul II: An Introduction and Commentary*. (Maryland: Rowman & LittleField, 2017). 158

their telic end, but also they want to be good.<sup>69</sup> This teleological wanting and realization of good of the person in the experience of morality perfects human nature not on the basis of purely sensual and idealistic experience, but on the interiority of the objectification of experience. Given that what the person experiences in the absence of non-realization of the teleology of norm of morality is an internal conflict which is the case when the teleology of norm is based on an external phenomenon or has no disinterestedness.

The sense of duty or moral obligation in the teleological interpretation of moral value Wojtyła observes differs from the deontological imperative in Kantian ethics. The former expresses the disinterestedness of moral value that is linked to goodness as such-*bonum in se*,<sup>70</sup> in particular, goodness proper to the person and the basis of person's dignity. This reality he maintains is somehow isolated from the interestedness that characterizes the imperative of deontology or ethics of law and utilitarian ethics, because dignity in its essence excludes interestedness. Although Kantian categorical imperative indicates that human being should always be treated as an end and not as means, nonetheless, Wojtyła did not consent to the uninterested nature of the norm that follows from it. For man, Wojtyła said "is an end for himself inasmuch as, and in such a way, that his acts-the volitions, choices, and decisions contained in them-find in man himself their terminus. They find this terminus on the basis of the transcendent relation to truth, good and beauty."<sup>71</sup> As it were, the good of the person or wanting the good of the person is not to be understood in the subjective or emotional sense; it takes the form of objective wanting of the good of the person, and the person of the other.

This teleological sense affirms also the obligatory character of ethical norm by which the experience of morality or moral value manifests as the true value that man must strive to achieve as an end which confers value on the person<sup>72</sup> and others. And so, the teleology of the norm of morality expresses disinterestedness in relation to the dignity of the person,<sup>73</sup> perfects the person through moral good, and actualizes the latent potentiality of being better<sup>74</sup> or perfect. It also reveals the moral responsible agency of the person. For moral value as the object of the will, Wojtyła maintains, appears 'alongside' the objective value that happens to be the end of an aim and want. Although the tending towards values in these two senses vary, however, the teleology of norm of morality manifests in wanting to be good, because the person confers good or value on himself, different from just seeking the value or good of the

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<sup>69</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Theory of Morality.' 147

<sup>70</sup> Wojtyła. *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. 43

<sup>71</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 562

<sup>72</sup> Jim Jove S. Aguas, 'Ethics and Moral Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła.' *Kritike*, 7:1. (2013). 115-137

<sup>73</sup> Wojtyła. *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. 38

<sup>74</sup> Wojtyła. 'Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny.' 141

object.<sup>75</sup> It follows that the end for human being and human action achieved in and through moral value has another character, namely, autoteleology or self-realization of the person and his activity. The fulfilment of the person in ‘actus,’ or self-realization, is also the attainment of the end or teleology proper to human being as a person, and on this lies the essence of moral good, and vice versa.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, the teleology of norm of morality is an essential constituting element of the being of man as a person and his becoming. It objectifies the experiential facts, constituting the basis for the normative justification of ‘wanting to be good,’ the synderesis of action that ‘good is to be done-*bonum est faciendum* that relates to every human being as a duty and command to act for the good of the person, or its opposite in ‘not wanting to be good.’ Transcendence of the person also manifests in this structure. Because the teleology of norm relates to the transcendent value of the act that reveals the value of the person.

The consciousness of the value of a person in the teleology of norm ought to continuously drives the person to always make the right choices and decisions, bearing in mind that true good radiates the good of the act and the good of the person. Therefore, true good as the objective end of action reveals both the moral nature of the act and structures self-determination and transcendence of the person, in a way that underlies the sense of obligation in conscience.

### 2.3. The Structure of Moral Obligation

In our consideration so far, we agree with Karol Wojtyła that human act, or *actus* (willed and free), leaves an imprint in the person which has both moral value and objective value, and is at the same time subjective. However, moral value profoundly and exclusively defines a human being as good or evil, while other values determine what a human being becomes with respect to expertise/skill, such as a bad teacher (yet a good person), a good footballer, etc. Only moral value can reckon being good or bad of a human being, and this recognition relates to ethics as a science and morality as the first and foremost sphere of human life and practice,<sup>77</sup> a reality that is unique only to the person. We grasp from this the teleological interpretation of the norm of morality that sets the standard of evaluation of action, along with what manifests from this by which the person must strive in his action to

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<sup>75</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Theory of Morality.’ p. 148

<sup>76</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Theory of Morality.’ 149

<sup>77</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Theory of Morality.’ 144

realize his being and becoming, especially the axiology of praxis that is the second name of his nature, namely the structure of duty or obligation.

Moreso, Wojtyła further explains, stating that, there arises in human nature this tension between ‘what I am and what I should be,’<sup>78</sup> nonetheless, the internal structure of reason and free will direct human *actus* to that which he should be, which is his natural end, his self-fulfillment/realization obtained only through moral good<sup>79</sup> or true good, since the opposite leads to non-realization. As he said, “moral obligation involves the will, it refers to it, it is simply the obligation of the will...the representative of the fundamental interest of the human nature, of its moral to be or not to be.”<sup>80</sup> As such, the will Wojtyła explains has the natural drive towards the good, and this drive towards the good portrays the will as the subject of obligation. Because, realizing moral good requires moral obligation, and the will, despite the challenges of realizing subordinate good, has an unconditional objective task attached to it, such that moral obligation becomes a decisive element of the will, with morality as the natural purpose of act of all humanity. And so, he clearly states that obligation is an expression of the normative power of will to the truth, which manifests as a response to true value, activating the sense of responsibility<sup>81</sup> in the person. As it were man has the obligation to yield to this natural self-fulfillment which is the perfectible element of human being in his fullness.<sup>82</sup> The sense of obligation connected to right conscience arises here by which achieving perfection through morally good becomes possible. For conscience, Wojtyła explains, distinguishes the character of good of act and implores the person as a form of obligation to act towards this good of his nature. And so, man experiences this drive as an obligation to be who he should be, which is a manifestation of his dependence on truth on which freedom of the person also depends. The dependence on truth to realize the teleological praxis of true good of act and person does not connote duty, it is also a task which man must undertake.

As a matter of fact, there exists in this understanding the connection of obligation to morality, because man’s wanting of the moral and objective value-good, is a necessary decisive factor and the essence of experience of morality. Duty, Wojtyła asserts denotes the

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<sup>78</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 81

<sup>79</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 81

<sup>80</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 75

<sup>81</sup> Duma. ‘The Foundation of the Human Person’s Dynamism in Karol Wojtyła’s Anthropology. A Study in the Light of ‘The Acting Person.’ 441-456

<sup>82</sup> Maria J. Franquet, *Persona, acción y Libertad*. Las claves de la antropología de Karol Wojtyła. (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1996). 223

definite moment of the lived experience to which we ascribe with the character of morality.<sup>83</sup> It is that moment of 'I must,' wherein the obligatory character of norm manifests its functionality of realizing not only the moral value of the act, but as well the personalistic value. It surpasses the moment of 'I want to be good' which is a specific aspect of morality, to the concrete moment given in the structure of lived experience of 'I ought to-I respond,'<sup>84</sup> or vice versa. On the basis of this, we grasp the connection of obligation with autoteleology wherein the person does not only want to be good, he must, ought, and should choose that specific morally good act so as to realize this self-determination, self-fulfillment and transcendence as the core of moral reality. The structure of obligation in the experience of morality really defines who the person ought and should be through the moral value-good, which arises from the spiritual potentiality of the will, the freedom that is tethered to truth which belongs to rational being, man as a person. And the source of this truth of experience of morality is in the conscience.

### **3. Conscience as the Guardian of the Moral Goodness of Action**

The application of the general principle of human act or ethical experience requires right judgment which sets human acts in the proper direction towards their perfection. Application of this principle, according to Karol Wojtyła, in moral cases requires consideration of a series of special circumstances, both internal and external situations which man finds himself in the course of acting, together with some essential features of man's individual temperament. And in all these circumstances and dispositions, each person must align and ground his actions in the direction of moral value-good or evil,<sup>85</sup> in the direction of that true good which he ought to achieve. That element of the moral nature of a person that judges and determines the truth of an act expressed in untethered freedom is concerned with conscience. It passes judgement on already performed personal act and distinguishes through its genuine judgment, the good because it is good and evil because it is evil or not good. It appeals to the sense of duty and subordinates the will to that good or truth about the good of human nature. The discussion of the role of conscience in the analysis the morality in the nature of the personal act is pivotal in refuting the errors of secularism wherein the voice of the conscience is weakened, silenced and bracketed from the contemporary Western cultural

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<sup>83</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Theory of Morality.' 150

<sup>84</sup> Duma. 'The Foundation of the Human Person's Dynamism in Karol Wojtyła's Anthropology. A Study in the Light of 'The Acting Person.' 441-456

<sup>85</sup> Wojtyła. *Ethics Primer/ Elementarz Etyczny*. 23

experience in relation to moral order. The act of deafening to the voice of conscience that plays out in the ideals of secularism demonstrates a negation of and opposition to moral evil in the structure of moral value and the norm, as well as the experience of guilt.

And so, Wojtyła defines conscience as the force of principle in relation to action that announces and determines the moral value- good or evil in the lived experience.<sup>86</sup> It is the conscience that makes the person to see and understand the real value in the action. This value, becomes rooted in the person as the defining quality of the person. He clearly asserts that, conscience is “the natural ability to know concrete good and evil in a moral sense.”<sup>87</sup> In the thought of John Henry Newman, conscience appears in the concrete human experience as the lawgiver, and as the voice that guides the individual to distinguish right from wrong, surpassing the subjective opinion of the individual.<sup>88</sup> It stands as Wojtyła states as the tribunal and judge of what is right/good and wrong/bad in human act,<sup>89</sup> in line with the universal experience of morality, and so liberates morality and moral judgment from subjectivism. With the structure of conscience as the judge of good from bad, one can speak of the experience of morality in the proper sense or in an objective meaning.

Indeed, the voice of conscience is a fundamental element of the experience of morality that reveals in the normativity the essential and constitutive aspect of ethics as what guides right actions, as well as keeps alive in the person, the sense of responsibility based on one’s true knowledge of the object of act. By this description, Wojtyła envisages the present-day subjectivism and moral relativism that ruptures the true normativity that is connected to the genuine judgment of conscience in relating good/value to truth. Accordingly, it also opposes the relativistic mentality wherein people think that they can do what they want, or be what they want. As the prosecutor of human act, the conscience in this tribunal role establishes the truth, and passes judgment, while recognizing and evaluating the action in the light of moral value-good or truth of a good person. To realize the one has to develop the conscience so as to adhere to the true good as given in knowledge and recognized by the spiritual faculties- reason and will. And here prudence appears in connection with conscience to realize the truth of the good of the act and person among other lesser goods.

Wojtyła aligns with St. Thomas’ ethics in this relation of prudence with conscience and maintains that conscience concretizes norm from within and directs the person to the

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<sup>86</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Problem of the Theory of Morality.’ 137

<sup>87</sup> Jaroszynski. & Anderson. *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*. 62

<sup>88</sup> Drew Morgan, ‘John Henry Newman- Doctor of the Conscience: Doctor of the Church?’ *Newman Studies Journal*, 4. (2007). 5-23. See also; Hermann Geissler, *Conscience and Truth in the Writings of Blessed John Henry Newman*. (Rome: International Centre of Newman Friends, 2011).

<sup>89</sup> Spinello. *The Encyclicals of John Paul II: An Introduction and Commentary*. 159

truth. For conscience he said has relation with the truth, it also conditions the experience of truth, as well as constitutes the foundation of self-determination and transcendence. He states that:

moral conscience introduces into (self-fulfillment) the normative power of truth, which not only conditions the fulfillment of the act on the part of the person, but also the fulfillment of self through the action... Truthfulness, the normative force of truth contained in moral conscience, constitutes the keystone of this structure. Without truth...it is impossible correctly to perceive or interpret the conscience or, more generally, the entire system to its function and moral order.<sup>90</sup>

As it were, conscience first of all aims at the truth of values, recognizes it, and passes judgment on the objectivity of the truth in the order of morality, and this is followed by the moral obligation to realize this good of self-fulfillment. He clearly states that conscience designates the person to the truth, and this capacity has the character of obligation, whereby conscience subjects the act to the truth in recognition of proper experience of freedom tethered to truth. This implies that “conscience subjects the freedom of the will to the true good, that is, to the good in truth.”<sup>91</sup> It situates acts to the person through the moral value and conditions the person’s agency and fulfillment. Although conscience is not always certain of its judgment in conformity to the good, nonetheless, that is to say that conscience can err in its judgment because it does not reflect the voice of the spirit or god;<sup>92</sup> however, its subordination through the internal faculties to the truth in the spheres of values reveals its capacity to realize self-determination and transcendence. In this good in truth as teleology of praxis, he declares, “I fulfil myself in it if the action is good, which means in accord with my conscience, that is, true/good conscience. And so, I myself become good, and am good as a human being.”<sup>93</sup>

In all, what the person realizes or becomes following the voice of conscience in the character of veracity realized from within and not somehow from outside awakens the sense of responsibility that one has in connection with the obligation towards this veracity. Conscience in connection with normativity of morality expresses the subjective and objective responsibility of the person as an individual and social subject. Conscience uniquely determines the responsibility of action.

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<sup>90</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. p. 261, as quoted in Acosta. & Reimers. Karol Wojtyła’s Personalistic Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act. 174

<sup>91</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 258

<sup>92</sup> Jaroszynski. & Anderson. *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*. 34. See also; 30-9 for analysis on factors that affect the judgment of conscience.

<sup>93</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Person: Subject and Community.’ 235

## 4. The Human Person as a Responsible Subject

The experience of morality cannot be fully analyzed and understood within the structure of action and the person as the subject of the act, without understanding another experiential fact that is connected to the norm of morality. This experiential fact reveals the causal relation between the person and his act, expressing the person as the owner of his specific action, moral action in particular. Thus, describing moral action as that “existential reality that is always closely connected with the person.”<sup>94</sup> This experiential fact is the sense of responsibility or moral responsibility that arises in close connection with the norm of morality, obligation and conscience. It portrays the unique quality of the person as the owner of his action, and an element of the structure of internal faculties especially the conscience by which one is personally responsible for his choices and decisions.

### 4.1. Responsibility in the Drama of Human Reality

Moral responsibility, according to Karol Wojtyła, is connected with man’s natural obligation to truth in the light of internal faculties—reason and will, to freely align with the voice of conscience in realizing good in truth in the sphere of values. Accordingly, the fruit of man’s decision in line with his knowledge of true good and good in general which he realizes in conscience whether in error or not, constitutes his responsibility. For man has the moral obligation in conscience to realize good in truth as what determines and defines his agency, distinguishes him from other beings of nature and defends the autonomy of man as a person; since he is morally responsible for his decisions even when his action has been hindered by external causes.<sup>95</sup> Thus, Wojtyła affirms that moral obligation connected with conscience is the source of responsibility, stating that “responsibility occurs not so much through the person’s efficacy alone, but through duty.”<sup>96</sup> He explains that the reality of responsibility has the character of obligation by which the person feels the command or imperative to realize the true good as the moral value of the act and the truth of the person. Thus he said:

the lived experience of responsibility is a confirmation of the relation that exists between an action’s moral value and the person’s efficacy, both when the experience occurs after the deed is done and when it occurs before it. The lived

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<sup>94</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 254

<sup>95</sup> Jaroszynski. & Anderson. *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*. 39

<sup>96</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 271

experience of responsibility points to the will as the psychological factor that constitutes the very core of ethical experience.<sup>97</sup>

This sense of responsibility affirms the will's capacity in the efficacy of the personal self as that which realizes the true good of the act and of the person. For in the efficacy of the person, and in the whole act of the will, the person manifests as the efficient source and cause of moral value-good or evil, and this determines the person's moral responsibility. He states that, "the efficacy of the person as the acting subject in relation to his activity is intimately connected with a sense of responsibility for the activity."<sup>98</sup> This is particular to conscious action, contrary to something that happens in man in which man is not actively involved in the act. Although the outcome of such an act is still the experience of the person, however, Wojtyła clarifies that sense of responsibility refers to the person as the author of *actus*, and not to the act itself, for the person fulfils himself through his act. And so, moral responsibility strictly appeals to the person, and it is intimately woven into man's acting.<sup>99</sup>

This experience of responsibility of a person that presupposes moral obligation towards moral value is also affirmed by Roman Ingarden's phenomenological analysis of the quality of an act that determines moral responsibility. According to Ingarden, the sense of responsibility is experienced in the free act which results from the initiative of the person, independent of the exterior environment which could influence the realization of the truth of good.<sup>100</sup> On the basis of this, one is said to be a responsible person when the person in his act is obliged to the truth, but that does not imply that he is not responsible for realizing the opposite of this truth. For moral value determines the person's being and becoming, although objective value uniquely defines the person's becoming. Being responsible as a person refers to a different character of responsibility that relates to the person, however, the sense of responsibility ascribes in the nature of act the reality of ownership of act, since action bears the character of the one who acts, and demonstrates man's recognition of the fact that there is consequence for every human act, and the person as the agent of act is answerable for his act. As such, responsibility constitutes the foundation of moral and legal order.<sup>101</sup>

He further states that, the sense of responsibility obliges the person to realize true value in his action, the person is as well responsible for the other values that are not in line with the truth of the action and the truth of the good of the person. He asserts that, "man is

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<sup>97</sup> Wojtyła. 'The problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act.' 9

<sup>98</sup> Wojtyła, 'The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,' 189.

<sup>99</sup> Duma. 'The foundations of the Human Person's Dynamism in Karol Wojtyła's Anthropology. A Study in the Light of 'The Acting Person.' 441-456

<sup>100</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act.* 175

<sup>101</sup> Wojtyła, K. *Person and Act and other Related Essays.* 271

responsible for 'x' only when he should have performed 'x,' or when he should not have performed 'x.' The one can be contained in the other due to the fact that the transition from value to duty takes place not only in the positive way, but also in the negative way."<sup>102</sup> For responsibility, he stresses, is a "consequence of the obligation and operativity of the person."<sup>103</sup> This quality of the person relates to the person's happiness and transcendence, because man's obligation to the truth awakens the consciousness of the fact that he is a responsible agent of action, as well as his understanding of the obligation in conscience to realize the truth. As it were, in the experience of morality, there is a connection between the obligation to realize the moral good of the act and the truth of the good of the person and responsibility. The sense of responsibility does not manifest in wanting or intentionality of act, for the person in the drama of life does not manifest his obligation in this dynamism, and so moral responsibility does not appear here.

As regards Ingarden's claims, moral responsibility of the person adequately manifests in a concrete order of the real world, in which man lives in his full dynamisms and works.<sup>104</sup> According to Karol Wojtyła, in the broad analysis of moral experience, the emotional content and utilitarian good have been raised to true good of moral value in our judgment through right choices, and so, the efficacy of the will in collaboration with the reason orient the person's choices to recognize values, especially the value of the person, and obliges him to these values through moral responsibility. Hence, the genuine recognition of the value of the person and true good compels the person to act responsibly. The consciousness of moral responsibility and being a responsible person demands from the person genuine cognition of the true good in freedom tethered to truth<sup>105</sup> which surpasses and opposes the utilitarian good, all sorts of relativism with respect to good in truth that deny proper accountability of action that relates to responsibility. This loss of consciousness of moral responsibility, according to Wojtyła, manifests in the present-day secularized experience as the eclipse of fundamental moral principles of act and ontic ethical values.<sup>106</sup> This eclipse of the ethical values in the lack of moral responsibility also affects the fundamental values connected with the dignity of the person and disconnects the inner communion with truth, good, and beauty as the source of praxis and true radiation of our humanity.

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<sup>102</sup> Wojtyła, K. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 271

<sup>103</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 176

<sup>104</sup> Roman Ingarden, *Über die Verantwortung. Ihre ontischen Fundamente*. (Leipzig: Phillip Reclam, 1970). 66

<sup>105</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 95

<sup>106</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 106

And so, moral responsibility as an element of the norm of morality demands accountability from the person, in the course of recognition and realization of the true good of the act and the good of the person, as well as other goods, although realizing true good is the proper and adequate way of self-determination. It is that experiential expression of the subjectivity that reveals the integration of the interior qualities of the person-reason, freedom and free will, with the capacity to choose and decide about a definite act, as agent and author of the act. This experiential expression affirms that morality is a personal experience, given the fact that the person is answerable (responsible) for realizing moral value- good or evil as the agent of the act. As such, he is responsible for realizing 'A' and not 'B' or for realizing 'B' and not 'A.' It is the realization of the truth of a person in recognition of the dignity of the person, the person of my 'I/ego' and the person of the other. For in the truth of act, Wojtyła said, I recognize myself as "somebody to whom I am and feel responsible to."<sup>107</sup> Similarly, the person also recognizes his responsibility for the other person in the world of persons. And this latter sense of responsibility reflects the interpersonality of the person and the need for a responsible relationality structures the basis of judicial power. And so, the "recognition of responsibility to others begins with the recognition of each person's responsibility to his own 'I.'"<sup>108</sup> Both self-responsibility and responsibility for somebody correspond to the self-dependence and self-determination that belong to the structure the of freedom of the person.

This recognition is relevant in the present-day cultural experience with its characteristic feature of relativism of truth about what is right and what is wrong, and moral or ethical nihilism. Annihilating the objective experience of morality and transcendent moral order would results in negating moral responsibility since every action is somehow permissible, and a normative sense of moral value will lose its power of justification of act together with the judgmental structure of conscience, since nothing is really right or wrong. However, Wojtyła strongly affirms that the moral value of an act that orders morality is the fruit of man's knowledge of good in truth, for without truth there is no knowledge, and falsity as well is a knowledge of its kind, it is a contradistinction to truth and knowledge,<sup>109</sup> and so, does not qualify as true knowledge or truth. But acting for the truth of good and moral truth/good is a natural property of man and the basis of self-determination and transcendence. This structure of act is the authentic nature of *actus personae*, that reveals the person. Given

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<sup>107</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and other Related Essays*. 274

<sup>108</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 177

<sup>109</sup> Acosta. & Reimer. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 168

the fact of the realization of the opposite of the true good, one may ask: is the truth of good possible or accessible to man as a person?

### ***5. Homo Capax Veritas et Boni***

The contemplation of truth has been at the forefront of human quest and has unfolded in different horizons of human consciousness. It forms the basis of humanity's approach to the world of person (the self and others), and other realities in recognition of good in general and objective good/value that corresponds to the intellect and will. This quest to know the truth and the good forms the basis of all human activities, and appeals to the person as a demand to attain to this truth of good in his conscious act in correspondence between the mind and the object of thought. But, is it possible or has human being the capacity to know this truth of good and act towards it? In keeping with this fact and dilemma about the human nature, John Paul II (K. Wojtyła) states that "human being driven by the desire to discover the ultimate truth of existence, seeks to acquire those universal elements of knowledge which enable them to understand themselves better and relate better with each other, and to advance in their own self-realization."<sup>110</sup>

Accordingly, human being has this natural quest to know which is a testimony to the truth understood as the norm and basis of human act. For a human being acts in recognition of this quest to know the truth of reality as that which aligns with the interiority, and this affirms St. Thomas Aquinas definition of truth as "*adequation intellectus et rei*-correspondence of intellect and thing/reality."<sup>111</sup> It is in a special way the knowledge of the good as that truth that resides in the known object to which the intellect tends, in collaboration with the freely willed conscious action. This demonstrates that the human mind can abstract truth from things (realities), on the basis of correspondence<sup>112</sup> between what exists in reality and what the intellect/mind reflects/experiences. What the intellect abstracts is the knowledge of truth that inheres in the existing thing/reality that helps man to make judgement of an act as good or bad. For when we cannot make this right judgement on the

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<sup>110</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No. 4

<sup>111</sup> Aquinas. *De Veritate*. 1, 1. Also; *The Summa Theologiae*. 1a q. 16 a. 2 co

<sup>112</sup> Correspondence theory states that: "for a proposition to be true is for it to correspond with the facts." See: Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae*. Q.16. By correspondence he means that, the reality (thing) itself corresponds to the form of thing which the mind (the human person) apprehends. For instance, the fruit apple in my hand is true, because it corresponds with the concept of apple, not just in the mind of the thinker as St. Augustine thought, but in the genus of fruits, and this species apple is apple and cannot be seen as orange.

basis of truth that resides in the knower, everything becomes true and not true, good and bad, thus, arbitrariness or relativism of truth.

Acting effectively on the basis of knowledge and understanding of the experiential facts (moral facts) of reality, as well as comprehending the structures of reality not in parts but as a whole, belongs to the nature of man. According to Wittgenstein, man grasps the world as a whole, for the world, he said, “is all that is the case; the world is the totality of facts, not of things,”<sup>113</sup> and man acts in this respect which marks his act out from non-humans, thanks to his interiority-intellect and will. This capacity of the interiority echoes Aristotle’s view that the internal factor—the soul—is the principle of life (act). Through this, man perceives the world as a unified whole, acts upon it, and seeks to perfect it, thereby manifesting the very foundation of culture’s essence. In agreement with this, Aquinas argues that human beings are defined primarily by their rationality, and that human fulfillment as well as their ultimate end lies in the correct use of that capacity.<sup>114</sup> As it were, to know the truth is equivalent to knowing the good which is second nature or name of man and coefficient of morality, since man as Aquinas said acts towards good in general—*bonum in communi*, or rather created good or temporary good which alone or taken together can only satisfy some aspect of human personality, but the objective or honest/perfect good (*bonum honestum*) is that good that brings human desires, his restlessness and anxious existence to rest.<sup>115</sup> This knowledge and realization of good is linked to the truth. He said, “the truth and good are joined with one another, for truth is a certain good, else, it will not be object of appetitions and efforts, and the good as a truth also cannot be cognized.”<sup>116</sup> This mutual relation between good and truth is not only the foundation of morality, but it also conditions self-determination and transcendence.

Affirming this fact of human reality, Wojtyła argues that what is of great importance in this knowledge<sup>117</sup> and realization is the person who is a good in itself, because, good he said is what perfects his nature and so cannot be reduced to mere means for the other to attain

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<sup>113</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. David Peras & Brian McGuinness. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961). 6-7

<sup>114</sup> Aquinas. *The Summa Theologiae*. 1-II, prologue. See also; Peter S. Eardley, & Carl N. Still, *Aquinas: A Guide for the Perplexed*. (London: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2010). 67

<sup>115</sup> Aquinas. *The Summa Theologiae*. 1-II, q. 2, a. 4 corp.

<sup>116</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 268

<sup>117</sup> According to Wojtyła, all knowledge is contained within the ambient of experience, especially true knowledge. And to speak of knowledge is to admit of being in the presence of truth, without truth, there is no knowledge. The relation of the person to truth also reveals his spiritual nature and his transcendence. And so, truth constitutes the basis of transcendence of the person in act who goes beyond his likes, desires, instinct to objectivity of act, because the moment of truth about the moral good, makes the act really what it is, the authentic *actus personae*. See: Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 220

his own ends. It reflects Aristotle's understanding that man's knowledge of the truth is independent of good and evil, but, through the spiritual faculties, he aspires for the true good that belongs to and perfects his nature. He describes this good that ultimately perfects rational nature as "*kalokagathia*-integral goodness."<sup>118</sup> It is the first foundation of morality and requires from man the right judgment of reason. For reason he explains naturally knows the truth which is related to good in truth as the real end, the final end-*finis ultimus* of man, and what structures his *beatitudo*<sup>119</sup> and union with Ultimate Good. He then states that true good is the end purpose of man, the object of desire and choice of the will that corresponds and constitutes the real perfection of rational nature.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, truth also corresponds to this nature, for the reason has as its proper object, truth, through which it aspires to that good that truly perfects man as a rational being. As such, St. Thomas affirms that "good is something ordinary and natural to human being, because it conforms to the nature of human being and the world."<sup>121</sup> And so, truth and good are recognizable to man, through his rational nature, and the realization via personal conscious act constitutes the nature of man as moral. This good, he declares, surpasses personal good, but is subordinated to the common good (*bonum commune*). For "without a proper attitude towards the common good," he said, "one cannot speak of the true good of the individual,"<sup>122</sup> the good of truth that perfects human nature.

As it were, Wojtyła explains that this knowledge of the cofactors of the theory of morality leads us to the truth of man as a person (anthropology of man), constituting an integral and adequate anthropology of man as a person through the analysis of the experience of morality. He constitutes integral anthropology of man on this basis arguing that man's knowledge of the world does not exclusively arise in consciousness,<sup>123</sup> it manifests also in and through the efficient causality of personal action moderated by his natural faculties-reason, will, freedom lived in truth, by which the person demonstrates his capability to attain

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<sup>118</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 376

<sup>119</sup> *Beatitudo* according to Aquinas refers to the perfect and sufficient good that excludes every evil (privation of good not lack of good because good is inherent to the nature of the person) and fulfils every desire. It also actualizes the distinctive human potentialities of intellect and will to their fullest possible extent as the ultimate end and perfection which everyone desires. See: Eardley. & Still. *Aquinas: A Guide for the Perplexed*. 71

<sup>120</sup> *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*. Bk. 1, Ch. 1 See also, Wojtyła. 'In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics.' 46.

<sup>121</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Problem of the Theory of Morality.' 137

<sup>122</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 302

<sup>123</sup> Consciousness is an accident in the being of man who is a substantial being endowed with rational and unique responsible free nature (possessing free judgment-*liberum arbitrium*). Consciousness does not absorb the being but only actualizes its nature, and such a conscious actualization of rational nature always has a determining role in the perfection of human being. The moral good is not merely a content of consciousness, but it is the perfection of rational being joined with its conscious activity, thanks to the efficacy of the will joined with intellect that define man as master of personal act and one who sets true personal goal. See, Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 372. See also: Eardley. & Still. *Aquinas: A Guide for the Perplexed*. 71

to the truth about realities in the world in recognition of the axiological teleology of his praxis. This constitutes as solution to the present-day cultural disintegration of truth of good from its ultimate and objective character in the attitude of unbounded freedom and relativism of truth and good of the realities in the world, and human good. In the attitude of relativism, the connection of truth to honest good is severed in the normative character of ethics, because norm, as the essence of morality in the lived experience of autonomous morality does not radiate the truth in the good of human perfection. Wojtyła again argues that if there is no truth to which freedom is oriented, freedom becomes immersed in instinct and loses its true character of structuring *sui juris*. Because, without the truth that seeks the true good of the person as the end of action, the structure of human life will end up in some sort of negative anthropology<sup>124</sup> or anthropological error. According to him, the *finis ultimus*,

of the person in act...entails the moment of dependence on truth, and it is this moment that definitely shapes freedom. For freedom is not realized through subordination of truth to oneself, but through the subordination of oneself to truth. The dependence on truth defines the boundaries of the human autonomy proper to the person.<sup>125</sup>

Accordingly, reason, or rather man, has the natural capacity to know the truth of good of his being, of the things in the world, and the truth of his place in the world given his rational nature which is inexorably connected to the ultimate or supernatural order,<sup>126</sup> to the attainment of his transcendentals- beauty, goodness and truth.

Wojtyła therefore agrees to the Thomistic classification of good as: *bonum delectabile*, *bonum utile* and *bonum honestum*,<sup>127</sup> stating that the last two varieties of the good are joined with reason in relation with the efficacy of the will in tending towards self-fulfillment. He further explains that *bonum honestum* is superior to the other two varieties of good, because that which is pleasurable is not always useful and honest. But honest good is by itself a greater and lasting good than useful good and at the same time pleasant; and the perfection of man comes from the will's desire and realization of this good, through this good, man attains the highest good, the beatitudo, and *finis ultimus*, God, to which every other subsidiary goods as ends are ordered. And by subordinating these goods to the Ultimate Goodness that is God, man fulfils himself and his end, and this truth of man's being, he said, is open to him because, "*homo est capax ut obiecti eius boni, quod est infinitum.*"<sup>128</sup> This

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<sup>124</sup> Spinello. *The Encyclicals of John Paul II: An Introduction and Commentary*. 136

<sup>125</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 257

<sup>126</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No. 43

<sup>127</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 278

<sup>128</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. p. 286

capacity, according to John Paul II, informs the uniqueness of man as he strives in his personal action to know and realize this truth<sup>129</sup> of his being, and as well reveals the distinctive nature of man. It also opens up in him the consciousness of knowing and loving (God)<sup>130</sup> and other human persons, and so, comes to the fullness of truth about their being.<sup>131</sup> Because a human person has the natural obligation to “always direct their acts towards truth that transcends them”<sup>132</sup> and constitutes his esteem worth or dignity. The outcome of this natural human capacity, Wojtyła said, is the ‘personalist principle’ that surpasses any utilitarian and individualistic apprehension; it rather appeals to the recognition of the truth in the good of person, informed by love towards the person.

### 5.1. The Cognition of Truth Through the Efficacy of the Will

Karol Wojtyła devoted great attention especially in ‘Person and Act,’ analyzing and reconciling the two aspects of human experience, the interior and exterior in ethical consideration, because man is a manifestation of both his interiority and exteriority in a single unity. However, the most important structure of human experience that constitutes the truth of good of acts that reveals the truth of the good of person and his world manifests uniquely in the interiority of the person. Wojtyła states that knowing the truth of the good of a person follows from love, and this is possible for man thanks to the dynamism of the will in collaboration with other elements of interiority, and as Wojtyła asserts:

reference to truth belongs to the very essence of decision and manifests in a special manner in choice. This essential condition of choice and the ability to make a choice as such, seems to lie in the specific relation of will to truth, the relation that permeates the intentionality of willing and constitutes what is somehow the inner principle of volition...to choose means to decide about the objects presented to the will in the intentional order on the basis of a certain truth.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Wojtyła understands Aquinas’ definition of truth in its ontological connection with axiology of praxis, expressing the link between truth, value/good and being. According to Aquinas: *bonus et ens idem secundum rem, sed different secundum rationem tantum*—the good and being constitute one and the same thing is at the same time a being and a good. For when we cognize, we know being and good simultaneously, and truth expresses a relational fittingness of one being with another. Thus, truth and good are identified with each other in suppositum, and being is implied in the concept of truth and good. see: Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 260, 266/7

<sup>130</sup> According to Edit Stein, ‘God is truth, anyone who seeks the truth seeks God, whether or not he is aware of it.’ As quoted in: Spinello. *The Encyclicals of John Paul II: An Introduction and Commentary*. 136

<sup>131</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. Intro.

<sup>132</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No. 5

<sup>133</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 239/40

Really, the truth of good intrinsically issues from the interiority of a person, from the integration of reason with free will, which will truly salvage recent-day various form of apriorism and relativism in ethics or morality. For morality to remain true to its nature, Wojtyła states, the integration of reason and will either order human actus to the truth of the good, or they do not; at the same time, they either order man to the ultimate end, or they do not. This is possible because the reason naturally cognizes the truth and the will distinguishes good from evil, and so chooses the good that is the ultimate end of man.

As a matter of fact, one cannot grasp the truth about ethics that constitutes the basis of human culture, and true answer to the question about good of action, if in the conception of the good there is no place for truth about good, for ethics as the norm of praxis is nothing but truth about good,<sup>134</sup> good of the person and good of the world in which the person lives. In the various spheres of human activity, the good of the person (*bonum commune*) is structured by the will as Wojtyła argues, which does not choose arbitrarily, but rather, makes its deliberate choice, through the right judgment of conscience, decision, and choice towards the truth in good. This capacity, he said, also expresses the contingency of man<sup>135</sup> who actualizes his potency by realizing truth of good as well as moral good. As it were, any action that would distort the good of the person would be regarded as moral evil, and vice versa.<sup>136</sup> And so, by choosing the truth of good (moral), he maintains, the will is freed from determination by the object of act, instead through its natural power, the will chooses the true good that portrays the person as one who determines himself in his acts, because he knows the truth about the objects of act. For truth, he said, is one, universal and eternal, and does not depend purely on the intellect of the knower, but on natural law in connection with divine law. Moreso, natural law, Aquinas says, consists of the existence of a moral law whose principles are timeless and universal, directing the intellect and will to self-perfection and ultimate end,<sup>137</sup> and so, affirms that the fundamental principles of moral law are the same for all people at all times and places. Indeed, the universality of the person-centeredness of truth of good reveals that man is obliged to good and before good he stands, since the cognition of truth and good is always implicit in the whole of human lived experience.

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<sup>134</sup> Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures/Wyklady Lubelskie*. 378

<sup>135</sup> Contingency belongs to the being of human person whose morally performed act serves as means of fulfilling himself. And so, the possibility of being good or evil, that is, fulfilling oneself in moral good or evil, testifies to this particular traditional metaphysics, namely, contingency of the person. That man can choose good or evil also affirms the concept of freedom, and its subordinated to truth. See, Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 256

<sup>136</sup> Jaroszynski. & Anderson. *Ethics: The Drama of the Moral Life*. 17

<sup>137</sup> Eardley. & Still. *Aquinas: A Guide for the Perplexed*. 74

The question about man's capacity to know the truth and true good is the moment of fundamental decision that engages the whole mechanisms of the human person. It is the moment of living the truth of moral value, when the spiritual dimension of the person-intellect, emotion and free will overpower the lower level of these powers in form of instinct, irrational desire, egoism; that man as a person empowered by the efficacy of the will cultivates culture that tends towards actualization of the person in freedom that is linked to truth of good. For freedom expresses its true character when it chooses to live in truth, enabling the person to fully realize himself.<sup>138</sup> So, the analysis of experience of morality through the analysis of the whole experience of man leads us to adequate anthropology of man, constituting the basis of authentic personalistic culture in the thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II as the justification and guide to the truth of culture and solution to the crisis of the contemporary Western cultural experience that is gradually affecting other human sectors.

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<sup>138</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No 13

## CHAPTER V

### TOWARDS THE PERSONALISTIC CULTURE AS AN ADEQUATE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

#### Introduction

The focus of this chapter is, applying the key elements and features of the person that characterise, and define Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II's personalistic culture as coherent, realistic, holistic, and universal.<sup>1</sup> Through the analysis of the ontic root notion of culture, he advances a philosophical, anthropological personalistic hermeneutics of culture-creating activities of man as a subject and person, that adequately tackles and responds to the culture crisis, and its negative manifestations. This new cultural experience- secularism, negates the metaphysical and religious-base thought, analysis and lived cultural experience, especially in the present-day Western culture. That culture is the fruit of man's rationality construes the basis of Wojtyła's personalistic approach,<sup>2</sup> which considers the mystery and complexity of human existence, and so places the person as the start, the key, method, and prism of seeing realities in the world. Thus, he mediates the antinomy between nature and culture, treats as one unitary integral whole the internal and external experience of man as a person, on the basis of their moral character, as an adequate, justifiable response to this crisis,<sup>3</sup> for ethics or moral experience is an integral property of the person and a second name of human nature. So thought, any cultural experience that has no ontological basic principle of practice and direction, is a movement towards destruction. As such, secularism, while opposing this ontic structure in the analysis of the human nature, created an anthropological problem which this project tries to resolve.

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<sup>1</sup> Gacka Bogumił, *European Personalism*. (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Ekosystem-Natury, 2014). 23

<sup>2</sup> The return to personalistic principle and culture seems to rescue humanity from the dangers and risks of dehumanization theories and practices by determining the truth about human person, not only as a collection of information about his origin and existence, above all, as a process of reading man as a person which will prevent the collapse of the entire social-cultural reality in which humanity lives and develops. See; Teresa Zubrzycka-Maciąg, & Poitr Goliszek, 'The Personal Aspect of the Moral and Axiological Upbringing of Children and Adolescent.' *Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, 39:2. (2020). 32-37

<sup>3</sup> Merecki Jarosław, 'On the Sources of Karol Wojtyła's The Acting Person.' *Philosophy and Canon Law*, 7:1. (2021). 1-15

The personalistic attitude<sup>4</sup> of Wojtyła, constructed on the basis of metaphysics of the human person, but starting from the concrete, personal, and original experience of man,<sup>5</sup> an experience that is permanent and universal as observed in every man as a subject of culture, although varies due to the individuality, uniqueness and unrepeatability of the person justifies his approach. This experience according to John Paul II, encompasses all human experiences, in which we can discover the extraordinary nature of what is original, and ordinary to all human beings and their nature,<sup>6</sup> as such, leads us to the truth of the human person. The source of this experience the Pope explains is interiority, which the ideals of secularism denied in the person while supposing pure immanent and materialized<sup>7</sup> human nature, is inscribed into the material nature of man, and constitutes his essence/nature, constitutes the basis of true acts of culture by which the person-centred culture adequately reveals the authentic human anthropology.

## 1. The Immanent Interiority of the Human Subject

The concept of interiority as a distinguishing quality of human person has been a perennial philosophical understanding,<sup>8</sup> although from the modern time in *res cogitans* and

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<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II advances a realistic personalistic culture integrating the immanent and transcendent structures and so provides a holistic vision of man as a person, his place, and vision in the world. This vision although is mystical in character, however, it offers a broad logical and real meaning of human life and purpose of life which affirms acts of culture constituted through praxis-morality as the channel of self-fulfilment and human perfection and realization of ultimate end.

<sup>5</sup> John Paul II. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein. (Boston: Mass. Pauline Books and Media, 2006). 11:1, 169

<sup>6</sup> John Paul II. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. 11:1, 170

<sup>7</sup> The concept of materialism as the general articulation of secularism in the contemporary Western experience does not understand matter in the ontological structure of the changing material beings; that is, as the permanent element constituting the passive foundation for various changes, that is as the principle of individuality. Rather, matter is conceived in the sense of natural science as always some ready form of material being, such as; a rock, a leaf, or an ant or a man-human body; and each of such body mass figure constitutes an already combination of matter and form, subject to change, which is the basis of the conception of fluid identity of human being in the lived experience of contemporary Western secularism. But matter properly thought, consists in prime matter, such as the matter of the body of the being of human person, which is the first substrate for all changes as growth of development, and this changes goes through the mediation of the form into a given figure of material being. And so, human person is a formed matter and not a matter as in material body, rather, his matter is powered by spirit as form, the element which makes and forms a defined quantity of matter into the body. See; Karol Wojtyła, *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. (Lublin: PTTA, 2016). 145-9

<sup>8</sup> The manifestation of spirituality or interiority of man has been supported from the ancient time by the principles of noncontradiction and sufficient reason, and Wojtyła/JPII aligns with these principles to build his debate about interiority in both phenomenological and ontological sense. He tailored interiority within ethical and moral theory, and so shows through abstraction that the nature of person and his act refers to the inseparable complementarity of the exterior into interiority. However, the psycho-sociological and even the sense of *res cogitans*-thinking being seem to oppose this spiritual or interiority given the emphasis on rational nature without substantiality of the spirituality, therefore, does not justify the interiority, rather they presuppose solipsism,

*res extensa* of the Cartesians and empiricists to the contemporary time, the concept of interiority has been given a reductionistic interpretation, as pure rationalism, empiricism or sensory experience and their outcomes.<sup>9</sup> These ideas have implications in the present-day lived experience in the form of elimination from consciousness and thought the sense of supernatural, ultimate, and transcendentals seen as baseless and irrational, leads to the negation of the spiritual form of the human person and culture forming activity that translates to the mentality of ‘living as if God does not exist-*etsi Deus non daretur*.’ But how does interiority relate to the nature of man as a person? Although these ideas have been variously critiqued, however, their effects still persist; but Karol Wojtyła, conscious of the criticisms and the effects of these ideas in philosophical anthropology and ethics while avoiding these reductionism, remarks that these ideas are insufficient as they omit that which is irreducible in man.<sup>10</sup> And so, he clarifies these ideas and, improving upon the Boethian definition of person as an individual/concrete being with a rational nature, states that the idea of individuality is akin to Aristotelian concept of (*animal rationale*),<sup>11</sup> which reduces man to being of nature, or, respectively, to pure consciousness.

Karol Wojtyła however argues that for rationality which determines interiority and primordial uniqueness of man to pass beyond reducing man as mere object in the world, then interiority must find its proper place in the experience of man, especially in the experience of morality as the property of act that qualifies the nature of man as a person and qualifies the subjectivity of man as a person who is irreducible to mere material nature. And so, the interiority of man is the foundation of cognizing and understanding human person, it defines him not merely as being of this world, but also as a spiritual being. He clarifies that the spiritual nature of man is not a matter of ontological claim, because there exists also in man the material aspect; as such, the spiritual claim is experiential. Thus, he points out that the interiority of the human subject is not immune from materiality, else the human person will be an extra-worldly existence characterized purely by internal capacities-thinking,

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mechanistic and materialistic structure of human nature. Wherefor the sense of interiority is understood as an extra-worldly constitution that is isolated from natural reality, with no empirical relation.

<sup>9</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Bk. 1, Part IV, Section vi. See also: Price, H. *Hume's Theory of the External World*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940).

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth L. Schmits, *At the Centre of Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1993). 40.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). No: 1098a/28a. NB: This definition constitutes the foundation of our understanding the nature of man as a person and a subject, and the interiority of his nature. He said that the activity of the soul implies rational principle, for the function of man is an activity of the soul which implies reason. No: 1098a/8.

understanding, willing, feeling and imagining.<sup>12</sup> But interiority, he said, is an aspect and essential one at that in understanding the person, and this claim is free from any form of absoluteness or pure character.

Moreso, interiority is the foundation of human action and existence, determining the whole dynamisms or components of personal act, namely moral norm and duty, man's contingency, transcendence over his action and society, freedom as self-dependence and cooperation, responsibility in subordination to the truth of thought (science) and activities.<sup>13</sup> Thanks to human experience, interiority determines the subjectivity and objectivity of the person, revealing the person as the subject and object of action, as one determines his action and his action in turn determines him, he is the author of action, and his becoming proceeds from this. This is the character of human subjectivity, wherefore the "subjectivity of the human person is also something objective."<sup>14</sup> Wojtyła further points out that the human esse that radiates interiority is the beginning of the dynamism proper to man and the basic constituting aspect of every concrete definite human being (i.e., Stephen, Zosia, James).<sup>15</sup> It follows from this analysis the ontic relation of true culture to the essence of person, wherein culture truly encompasses the whole spheres of human person by cultivating the interiority (*cultura anima*). Thus, he mediates the antagonism between human nature and culture, stating that, interiority belongs to human nature, and culture proceeds from this nature- interiority.

Wojtyła further states that interiority which shapes rationality by which a man is conscious of his action and subjectivity, defines his spiritual nature, underlies man's superiority among beings in the visible world, and his transcendence over pure immanent and material dimension of nature. For interiority, he said, refers to "what is spiritual, immaterial and what is intrinsically irreducible to matter;"<sup>16</sup> and given man's intellectual/rational capacity, man is therefore said to be part of spiritual beings, for man's inner life defines his spiritual life and it revolves around truth and goodness.<sup>17</sup> This is opposed to the individuality which presupposes corporeality of the person that is subject to transformation as the person matures, but man's spirituality faculty or interiority, which is the beginning of the dynamism

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<sup>12</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, 'The Human Subject and its Interiority: Karol Wojtyła and the Crisis in Philosophical Anthropology.' *Quien*. 4. (2016). 47-66. See also; Andrzej Maryniarczyk, (2018). *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*, trans. Hugh McDonald. (Lublin-Roma: PTTA, 2018). 76

<sup>13</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 284

<sup>14</sup> Karol Wojtyła, 'Subjectivity and Irreducibility in the Human Being.' *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993). 211

<sup>15</sup> Malgorzata Jałocho-Palicka, 'Thomas Aquinas' Philosophy of Being as the Basis for Wojtyła's Concept and cognition of Human Person.' *Studia Gilsoniana*, 3. (2014). 127-153

<sup>16</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 284

<sup>17</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013). 23

proper to man, is permanent, although it improves as the person develops and grows. For the intellect and will do not change their nature, rather as man grows and develops, his reasoning and his apperception of truth in good improves, and shapes the person's potentiality even when certain factors impede self-fulfilment in act.<sup>18</sup> As a matter of fact, interiority is innate to the person from conception to natural death; it defines the person as somebody and determines the person as one who owns and governs himself.

As it were, Ferdinando Adornato aligns with this Wojtyła personalistic analysis, and states that, man's innerness qualifies his grandness and man's transcendence<sup>19</sup> beyond self-denial and self-defeating. Thus, Wojtyła maintains that, interiority determines the greatest fullness (*szczęśliwość*)<sup>20</sup> and transcendence to which we are called as human beings<sup>21</sup> to reach through the experience of morality by realizing moral good by which the person is made good. It also expresses the individual diversity, metaphysical incommunicability and uniqueness of each individual, as well as constitutes each person's own identity, his personal 'I.'<sup>22</sup> He also observes that, the value of a person results from interiority, forms an indivisible whole in the person without downplaying the material or external element. It is the basis of *compositum humanum* of the person, awakes in man the teleological consciousness that guides the meaning and purpose of his life, and his position in the world.

### 1.1. Interiority as the Source of the Person's Transcendence

As that intrinsic feature of personal fulfilment, interiority expresses not only self-determination, it is also results to transcendence, and leads to the objective understanding of the person. For the spiritual soul through the will causes the person to transcend beyond the actualization of the material element. Thus, Wojtyła remarks that, there is an ontological connection of the innerness of a person with transcendence which is not only significant for ethics and constituting the basis of morality, it is also the foundation and essence of the nature of man. He asserts that personal transcendence is an expression of innerness or spirituality of person that manifests in personal acts, although a personal act has two phases, but the phase

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<sup>18</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 283

<sup>19</sup> Ferdinando Adornato, 'Karol Wojtyła: Jedyny (ostatni?) filozof moralista,' trans. A. Wierzbicki. *Ethos*, 3:4. (2002). 40-53

<sup>20</sup> John Paul II. *Mężczyzną i niewiastą stworzył ich: Odkupienie ciała a sakramentalność małżeństwa*. (Lublin: KUL, 2008). 47

<sup>21</sup> Miguel Acosta, & Adrian J. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act*. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 2016). 178

<sup>22</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act*. 117

which is identified with the realization of the person's 'I' refers to the internal phase and has the character of truth and freedom. On the basis of this identification, the person is seen as possessing both immanent and transcendent qualities. However, without an authentic experience of these internal features of truth and freedom, the interior realization of the person is attacked<sup>23</sup> or suspended in the vacuum. More still, the person arrogates himself with absolute authority given the denial of the transcendent truth, while expressing materiality of freedom. For in the personal act (*actus humanus*) or even in *actus homini*, Wojtyła explains, the ethical consciousness and moral obligation that pertains to truth of good that leads to the personal fulfilment does not only pertain to the immanence of the act, but as well in a certain descriptive-analytic whole, it essentially pertains to the innerness of person.

Even though interiority points to spirituality, however, it does not negate the immanent character of acts of culture, nor the exteriority/material element of human nature, it does not suggest 'cosmotheistic'<sup>24</sup> perception of the person and the world; rather, it demonstrates that immanent structure alone does not articulate the fullness of the universe with man as the centre of culture. A human person is a unity, an objective whole, acting in the complementarity of the body (matter) and form (spirit); he is as much a spiritual being as he is also a material being. Again, interiority does not contradict the exteriority of the human person, rather, it enriches and reveals the superiority of human nature and acts that proceed from human subject, distinguishing human subject from other subjects in the visible world. This demonstrates the stabilization of acts within the person which does not express individualism, wherefore the person as subject identifies himself with a particular act in relation to other subject as object in the sense of an end and not as a means. Thus, interiority reveals man's capacity for shared life with the other (OTHER).

This is possible thanks to interior experience, which is not transferable, because the experience of 'I' differs from the experience of any other man outside myself. As such, Wojtyła clearly said: "although being for me only an object of experience from without, every other man outside myself does not stand in relation to the totality of my cognition as a mere 'outwardness' but has an interiority proper to him."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the concept of interiority does not agree with the notion of person as a being acting purely on the basis of mind, psyche, or thinking, that is, as an extra-worldly being unidentified with body, supposing mechanistic understanding of the body that supports some practices of culture of death (wilful abortion,

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<sup>23</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act*. 179

<sup>24</sup> Chantal Delsol, *La fin de la Chrétienté (The End of Christianity)*. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2021). 43. See also; Piotr Małysz, 'The End of Christianity.' *Lutheran forum*, 56:4. (2022).

<sup>25</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 48

euthanasia) where the ‘capacity’ (the ability to express this quality) for interior quality is considered as the basis of subjectivity. But capacity in the ideal of psycho-socio-empirical expression alone does not qualify the subjectivity or true interiority of a person. And so, expressing a realistic understanding of interiority, Wojtyła transgresses the boundaries of pure empirical and sensory presupposition of interiority, which fragments humanity of full dynamism that belong to his nature, where interiority refers to bodily manifestation or identification. This apprehension immerses human being deep into societal and environmental influence and determination, wherein human being changes and modifies according to personal whims and external influences. But a human being reduced to sensory experience appears as potentially unruly, unpredictable, restless, and fluid.

As a matter of fact, Wojtyła’s realistic personalistic insight on interiority stands opposed to the sensory, this worldly character of interiority that reduces human person to material being, for man’s interiority transcends corporeality and cosmological composition. It ontologically reveals the permanent personal identity as well as affirms that human life is a process of connectedness of innerness with external, determining the various constituents of human experience in a continuous development of the person. It attests to the truth of personal identity of a human person as a man or a woman in the constant, continuous experience, on the basis of man as a moral and responsible agent of act and a substantial ‘self/I’ appears.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, this quality of human nature has a complex character, given its uniqueness and incommunicability; as such, one would ask, what is the source of the interiority of the human subject?

## 1.2. The Rational Soul as the Principle of Interiority

The clarification given by Wojtyła to the outcome of empirical and rationalistic character of interiority states that interiority is the foundational quality of the person, which expresses the uniqueness and inalienable element of the dynamic nature of man as a being of exists and acts- *suppositum humanum*. This fundamental understanding of human nature resonates from St. Thomas Aquinas, and refers to the quality of reason and freedom (properly lived) as the property of man by which man as a person organizes and carries out his activities towards real truth and genuine goodness. How is does this quality manifest, and what is responsible for this capacity in man? Since interiority is primordial dynamism of

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<sup>26</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 22-23

human act, it follows that the source and principle of human acts cannot be something material, empirical or possessing absolute character animating the capacity in the matter of the human organism. Rather, the source of the integration of innerness with exteriority in a complete human experience refers to the spiritual soul, the substantial form that organizes the matter, and the first act of human existence. It is the foundation of action and the source of human life. As the incomplete substance, the soul unites with the body in a unitary whole, and constitutes the complete substance<sup>27</sup> of man as a subject.

Wojtyła also points out that the nature of the human soul cannot be grasped empirically; instead, there are other possibilities for judging and understanding its essence. Thus, he said:

there is nobody of us who touches that spiritual element, who sees it, who senses it through the senses; we accept it as a conclusion on the path of philosophical reflection about that to which an analysis of human experience leads us. On the basis of that foundation, we also create a wholly positive definition of the spiritual being, the spiritual soul. It is the structure internally free of matter, capable of cognition and purposeful aspiration.<sup>28</sup>

The knowledge of the innate spirituality of the soul is accessible to man through experience as a truth that is basic in every human person; it shapes and directs human experience in their mental cognition and purposeful free aspiration of the will.

Aligning with Aristotelian analysis of the powers of the soul, Wojtyła explains that the soul as the principle and sign of human life integrates the material structure in the unity of human experiences and acts, integrates in one dynamic manifestation the multifaceted life and power soul as: rational, vegetative, and sensory.<sup>29</sup> This qualifies the substance of the human person in the unity of subjective and objective elements, different from other substance of mere material quality, but the substantial form- the soul through reason and free will, qualify man's spirituality. According to Wojtyła

the human soul is a substantial being, which means it possesses self-existence (it exists with its own act of existence), it itself is the subject of its existence and action (human *suppositum* distinct from other *supposita*), and yes, it is such a subject of existence and action because of certain strength or powers which flow from it as accidents and which are used by it in its activity. These are the spiritual powers of reason and will, besides which there are the powers of sensory and vegetative life.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Maryniarczyk, A. *The Realistic Interpretation of Reality*. 116-7

<sup>28</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 121

<sup>29</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 125

<sup>30</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 137. See also; Arkadiusz Gudaniec, Karol Wojtyła's Concept of Personal Transcendence.' *Verbum Vitae*, 40:3. (2022). 733-50. Also; Grzegorz Hołub, 'Karol Wojtyła on the Metaphysics of the Person.' *Logos i ethos*, 2:39. (2015). 97-115

Inasmuch as these other two powers do not per se depend on the spiritual substantial power of the rational soul, because they have their internal dependence in action, yet, the ontological nature of the soul as the source and principle of human life articulates these other substantial powers under the directive of the rational soul. For one cannot imagine the soul to depend on something else, on any other principle or power in man for its activity and existence. The rational soul, therefore, harmonises all human activities, and constitutes the proper manifestation of man's existence and act by means of the body. He also improves on St. Thomas' objective<sup>31</sup> approach to the subjective definition of person in Boethian definition of man as- '*rationalis naturae individua substantia*, stating that the soul is the substantial (not as something stiff, immobile or inanimate as thought by Kant) source and force of the dynamisms proper to man. For man, as Maryniarczyk notes,

animated by a soul that constantly organizes matter for itself to be a human body, so that through this body organized for itself it may come into contact (cognitive, loving and creative contact) with the really existing world as a participation in God's existence-in its concretely ontological way.<sup>32</sup>

And so, Wojtyła declares that, "the soul is that first cause of all human acts, experiences, and manifestations of life."<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, he clarifies that the soul's existence as the source of acts and experiences does not have a necessary capacity, for it has contingent existence existing through the '*Ipsum Esse*-Absolute Being. This constitutes the foundation of the understanding of the spiritual quality of man (who is the only creature that has the image of God, thanks to the soul) and the basis of the truth of knowledge of man. The soul's expressiveness of the human *suppositum* also qualifies definitely the individual concreteness of human being, this man, Peter, or that woman, Mary, who possesses his or her own existence and action. However, this does not qualify to define man as a pure spiritual being, as it were, there is always an essential connection between the spiritual soul and the corporeal sphere. Thus, we understand the person as an embodied spirit, although, the soul has the capacity to exist independent of the body as a self-existing being.<sup>34</sup> Because the spiritual

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<sup>31</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas introduced through his metaphysics the objective constitution of man as being that exists, that is, through the theory which states that esse is essence and existence; that esse does not have any existence of its own which would allow it to enter into a composition without essence, or to stand distinctly from it. That man is a being due to existence and essence, not due to matter and form. Existence is therefore the act of essence and together with essence makes the concrete thing exist. See; Maryniarczyk. *The Realistic Interpretation of Reality*. 17/8

<sup>32</sup> Maryniarczyk. *The Realistic Interpretation of Reality*. 11

<sup>33</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 31

<sup>34</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 137. See also; Jałocho-Palicka. 'Thomas Aquinas' Philosophy of Being as the Basis for Wojtyła's Concept and Cognition of Human Person.' 127-153

sphere somehow constantly needs and connects with the material sphere for its activity.<sup>35</sup> The soul integrates in one unity the dynamisms of activation and passivity in man, consequent in self-determination and transcendence- vertical and horizontal. In a way, the soul organizes the activities that structure horizontal transcendence- language, biological mechanisms of human survival;<sup>36</sup> in like manner, the soul organizes the interior life and integrates man's life into real truth, genuine goodness and beauty.

He clearly states that the soul determines self-determination and leads to man's *autoteleology* (the ability not only to determine his own ends but to become an end for himself, as well as for the other as a gift).<sup>37</sup> Each person, Wojtyła further explains, can discover by experience that he has soul which structures the inner life and activities and by which the person cognizes what is really true and good. For man we understand from Plato that everyone wants things that are really good.<sup>38</sup> This innate power of the soul to know the truth of good requires from each person to see and seek the true good of the person that conditions dignity, a good that cannot be reduced to utilitarian or material meaning. He stresses that the soul does not possess a semi-autonomous subject nor exist as a mere derivative of matter; instead, "the human soul shows itself as a spiritual being, as a dynamic structure and as well the source of specific concentration of cognitive (reason) and appetitive (will) spiritual energy."<sup>39</sup> The (rational) soul manifests its power of grasping the truth of good and reveals that man is not limited or reduced to his biological mechanism. Because man, as S. Bartnik argues, "expresses himself through the body and soul, and through the metaphysical self which is present in consciousness."<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, the essence of the body in objectifying the activities of the soul, the basis of the person as an embodied spirit, does not suggest that the body possesses a separate existence just as the soul is a self-existing substantial being, instead, the body exists and acts on the basis of its esse rooted in the soul. The body as the sacrament of the person, Wojtyła argues, reveals the acts that belongs to the person. Again, he further asserts that the body reveals man in relation to the woman in the manner that the scripture tells us, 'this is flesh of my flesh.' It confirms that the body's organic structure and physiology serve the personal

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<sup>35</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 53

<sup>36</sup> Ian Tattersall, 'How We Came to be Human.' *Scientific American*, 16:2. (2006). 66-73

<sup>37</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Family as a Community of Persons.' 317

<sup>38</sup> Plato. *The Republic*, trans. with notes and an interpretative essay, Allan Bloom. (USA: BasicBooks, 1991). 505

<sup>39</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 125

<sup>40</sup> Stanisław C. Bartnik, 'Personalizm uniwersalistyczny.' *Roczniki Teologiczne*, 49:2. (2002). 77-87

spiritual life of the person.<sup>41</sup> Thus, he affirms Thomas Aquinas thought that the body exists for the good of the soul,<sup>42</sup> and the soul qualifies the person's sexual identity as 'he' or 'she' which cannot be altered. This means as Bartnik notes, that the soul together with the body, constitutes the human nature, and thanks to this nature, there is a metaphysical personal self which can be described as a spiritual soul.<sup>43</sup> For the metaphysical structure of the soul relates with the essence of the body, and qualifies the person either as male or female, for the self is inseparable from the soul, and this identification is inherent and permanent. In essence, the spiritual soul is the uniting principle of the being and concrete life of the person, for the person is the soul with bodily experience, or has the body as the vessel of experience.

Again, the immateriality of the soul as something not empirically experienced does not amount to the denial of its capacity and negation of its existence in the person evident in the materialistic apprehension of the world. For just as one cannot empirically point out the principle of the mind, beauty, love, sadness, happiness, but believes in the reality of their existence, likewise, the soul is the principle of causality of the spiritual faculties- intellect, free will and emotion. Wojtyła also explains that the soul reveals and qualifies the composite nature of the body, whereby the immortal destiny of the soul extends also to the body, such that the body participates in a certain way in the immortality of the soul; and this is known partially by the light of reason, but more fully by the light of supernatural revelation.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, it is difficult to definitely or concretely determine the moment it is infused or departs from a human person, which confers on each individual person the right to life and fundamentally constitutes the basis of dignity that belongs to every human person irrespective of age and situation. It therefore beholds on each person, given the reality of the soul as the source of life and its departure from the body as the end of life, to treat human life with respect, since no man can make the soul.

The permanent character of the soul linked to the body that metaphysically identifies the self as male or female opposes the erroneous anthropological idea of fluid identity of human essence in the trans-sexual mentality of the contemporary Western secularism. For the substantial, unchangeable and uniqueness of the human person does not manifest only through bodily identification; instead, an adequate anthropology of person has its source in the soul, and as well manifests through interiority in its relation with the exteriority. This

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<sup>41</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 75

<sup>42</sup> Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*. I-II, q. 2, a. 5

<sup>43</sup> Jacek Miczyński, 'Human Soul in the Light of Czesław Stanisław Bartnik's Universalistic Personalism Bartnik.' *Verbum Vitae*, 40:3. (2022). 751-774. See also: Stanislaw C. Bartnik, *Osoba i personalizm*. (Lublin: Standruk, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Mary Shivanandan, *Crossing the Threshold of Love*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999). 73/4

truth is known to the common sense, and accessible to the right cognition (reason) that human person naturally manifests either as man or as woman; and this identification is structured from the soul. And the human person while experiencing the natural differences of their sexuality, transcends the world of matter, opens up for the possibility to unite as one flesh with another of the opposite sex, a union that may result in a new person, and constitutes a *communio personarum* as the basic truth of a person. This analysis of the nature of the soul adequately describes man as a person.

### 1.3. The Truth of the Person Revealed in the Interiority

At different times, human persons have expressed a desire for truth that goes beyond ideas or opinions. Among all, it is a desire and search for the truth about the self, and knowledge of this truth is paramount in this present time of anthropological crisis. This discussion in the light of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II indicates that human perfection and self-fulfilment proceed from acting ethically powered by right reason and free will. And this knowledge is possible only to man as a person, because it is only man among the beings of nature who knows that he knows, and who is able to distinguish good from evil, and this knowledge that reveals morality as what qualifies and defines human nature. According to John Paul II, “there is no morality without freedom...Although each individual has a right to be respected in his own journey in search of the truth, there exists a prior moral obligation, and a grave one at that, to seek the truth and to adhere to it once it is known.”<sup>45</sup> Man could realize this, thanks to the element of the interiority- reason and will that express externally this truth of the nature of the person. And so, man, in freedom properly lived, seeks the realization of this truth.

It is a recognition that does not end with the individual person, it extends also to the truth of the other person and other beings, and demands from each individual as an obligation to pursue and realize this value as truth of value. According to John Paul II, “only true value can lead to the realization of the truth of human nature. This truth is realized not by turning in on oneself, but by opening oneself to apprehend the truth of the other that transcends the level of each person.”<sup>46</sup> The ability to separate material elements from transcendental values that reveals the truth and good of the person flows through the innerness. Besides, response to these true values awakens the consciousness of the inevitability of death as the finality of

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<sup>45</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 34

<sup>46</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No. 25

man, a finality that opens to a new form of living which reveals the immortality of the soul. Man as a spiritual being whose experience is organized from the interior transcends the demands of law of nature, that is, the physical principles, immanent frame or what Taylor refers to as subjectivistic spirituality<sup>47</sup> that lacks vertical transcendence, which has no reference to the idea of ultimate reality, the final end, and afterlife, likewise the sense of dignity that inherently belongs to innerness of person. As it were, interiority helps us to grasp the truth of a person beyond the ‘facticity’ constituting interior life to the mystery that the person is, the mystery that tends the person towards truth about perfect good found only in God.<sup>48</sup> This truth is fundamental in understanding the culture of life that opposes the culture of death, for this latter culture in the contemporary experience of secularism prioritizes the material or the human biological mechanism as the essence of person, consequent in acts that endanger life and fragments natural human continuity and the reality of integration of soul to the body.

#### 1.4. Interiority as the Foundation of a Culture of Life

The analysis of interiority of the person in the thought of Karol Wojtyła as the quality that distinguishes and structures superiority, as well as reveals the truth about the person, is the source of all human activities irrespective of the state and stage, as opposed blind causation<sup>49</sup> of non-human nature. Interiority, he maintains, is that ‘great gulf’ that separates the world of persons from the world of things,<sup>50</sup> and constitutes the basic foundation of the person’s knowledge, self-knowledge, consciousness, deliberation, and the experience of moral values. As that aspect of the mystery of the human person, it is beyond empirical grasp and surpasses cognitive and natural sciences. And so, Wojtyła subscribes to a metaphysical approach, supplementing Thomistic metaphysical approach with the reality of the inner experience, stating that, interior life is innate in each person as what defines each person’s *sui juris*, individuality, and subjectivity; as such varies according to persons, given that this quality in a sick elderly person, an infant, an embryo, and a human life in crisis are not the same with other human persons. Nevertheless, the presence and consciousness of this inner experience, is an indication of personhood.

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<sup>47</sup> Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*. (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). 508

<sup>48</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła’s Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 77

<sup>49</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, ‘Persons as the Cause of Their Own Actions: Karol Wojtyła on Efficacy.’ *Ethical Perspectives*, 23:2. 2016. 259-275

<sup>50</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 21

Contesting against the supposition of this quality of person as an object-like element that results in various materializations of person in the practices of culture of death, Wojtyła clearly states that interiority structures the uniqueness, distinctiveness, and precise nature of activities found in each person. This would be a deep and genuine way of looking at the human person Wojtyła argues because it:

takes on a distinctive inwardness of human activity and existence, as well as an 'in-selfness.' Human beings exist in themselves, and so their activities likewise have an 'in-self,' or nontransitive dimension. This in-selfness and inwardness of human activity and existence is simply a more precise definition of what is contained in the *suppositum humanum*.<sup>51</sup>

In essence, interiority qualifies the person beyond mere empirical cognition, because it reveals what is the basic source of distinct activities of a person, affirming also the consciousness of life in each human person. On the basis of manifestation in the human person, we grasp the foundation of the culture of life as it flows through the interiority and the spiritual element of the person. It underlies the fundamental principle of life which has both ontic and experiential character, that cannot be grounded merely on one aspect of experience, namely pure consciousness, transitive, material or physical factor.

Affirming this approach Martin Luther King, Jr. argues that the metaphysical character of the human person that proceeds from personal relation to God, forms the basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality as finite and infinite nature.<sup>52</sup> It is an affirmation of true understanding of the source of human life beyond mechanistic happening. Thus, Wojtyła further argues that the source of human life is beyond phenomenal or extraphenomenal; it is rather transphenomenal<sup>53</sup> but integrally exteriorized in a mutual dependence. Understanding the human person from this root source of life is not only to challenge the cultural reduction of the human person to matter, but to dialogue with modern culture towards a renewed culture that meets the truth about human life.

It expresses the richness of human personality found in each human life and in various conditions which transcends empirical cognition and physical functionality, but relates to something ontological and ultimately true and objectively good. Although cognitive and natural sciences are far less successful in empirically explaining the content of consciousness, yet, the spark of consciousness<sup>54</sup> that presupposes distinct activity and presence of life is an

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<sup>51</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 227

<sup>52</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. *Stride Towards Freedom*. (New York: Harper, 1958). 100

<sup>53</sup> Wojtyła. *The Person and Act and Related Essays*. 478

<sup>54</sup> Inasmuch as Wojtyła did not subscribe to the idea of limiting human personhood to consciousness or to the post-Lockean idea of the presence of such higher human qualities-consciousness, self-knowledge, memory, etc,

affirmation of life and the sign of human personhood. As such, an embryo is considered as a growing human life, for no human being is born fully grown, each person grows and develops. Given this foundational understanding of life, John Paul II challenges acts that terminate and threaten life based on a lack of empirical experience, stating that such reduced perception of life violates the spiritual kinship uniting mankind in one great family, wherein all share the same fundamental good.<sup>55</sup> The good that cannot be lost or reduced to physical or empirical perception, because it is the good that relates to the innerness of self that links human being to the Ultimate Good-God. Wojtyła therefore declares that the innerness qualifies human life and connects human life to the essence of culture, wherein the person matures and grows beyond the psycho-sociological structure. As such, interiority reveals the person as a subject that is present to itself, as a self-experiencing being, which is somehow hidden from the person's view as the starting of the beingness of the person.

This awakens in the person the awareness of the value of life which man is called to fullness of life beyond earthly existence, that reveals the greatness and value or dignity of human life from beginning to its natural end, and even in the temporal phase or difficult condition.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, it is obvious in our discussion that the essence of culture does not relate to something temporal or material, but spiritual which improves the material, and so, we can say that culture is life or is innate to human life (*anima cultura*). As affirmed in the thought of Wojtyła, the essence of culture is rooted in the person, that is in the inner spiritual dimension of the person as the source of human praxis, especially moral order beyond cosmological perception<sup>57</sup> or consumerist/materialist outlook of culture as mere human production that contravenes and obscures the universal norms of morality. This idea is the cause of the breakdown in values and rupture of culture that results in a threat to human life and the moral being of a person in the practices that instrumentalize human life, opposing the essence of culture as a phenomenon of life, which preserves and promotes human life. For in all human needs and means to meet them, John Paul II argues, one must be guided by a comprehensive picture of people with respect to the whole dimensions of their being, subordinating the material and instinctive dimensions to the interior and spiritual ones.<sup>58</sup> As it were, true culture

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or the lack of either total or partial these, however, he explains that these qualities affirm in the secondary sense the sense of beingness but just other non-person beings. Human person is a being primarily through the inner life that qualifies interiority, even when it is somehow impaired or not fully developed. He considers such denial of truth that is known even to the common sense as unfounded manipulation of the concept of person, because there is something more in the being and acting of human person.

<sup>55</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. (Nairo-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995). No. 8

<sup>56</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 2

<sup>57</sup> John Crosby, *The Personalism of John Pau II*. (Steubenville, OH: Hildebrand Press, 2019). 16

<sup>58</sup> John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*. (Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1991). No. 36

as culture of life<sup>59</sup> prioritizes the essence of the reality of the human person as intelligent and free, as what integrates the dynamisms in man, expressing the universality of the inherent and permanent dignity of every human person as the recognizable specific identity<sup>60</sup> of the person.

## 2. The Dignity of the Human Person as a Foundation of Personalistic Culture

The anthropological error in the materialization of the human person that proceeds from the cosmological apprehension of the human being as a mere being of nature results in a wrong attitude directed towards the human person as ‘having’ contrary to ‘being.’ This attitude fails to recognize the belief of the metaphysical value of each person as an ontic truth of goodness possessed by each individual person, accessible to every person with right reason. This value of a person is named ‘dignity,’ and as John Paul II-Karol Wojtyła claims, it qualifies the intrinsic worth by which a human person is always a good and a gift, and this fundamentally good gift possesses indestructible dignity<sup>61</sup> from its beginning to its natural end. His understanding and indefatigable defense of human dignity is a kind of challenge to the cultural acts that degrade and pulverize the innate value of the human being as a person, especially where life is weak and defenceless by which he reveals his concern for “human life-bios-and for the necessary ethical respect for the dignity of every human person.”<sup>62</sup> Wherein he refutes the anthropological errors in the practices that oppose the truth of life (human nature), that violate familyhood and the integrity of the human person in such acts like: abortion, euthanasia, cloning, trans-humanism, prostitution, murder, mutilation, among others. However, some scholars have queried and criticized<sup>63</sup> this concept and its source,

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<sup>59</sup> The cultural experience that is rooted on the fundamental dependence of freedom on truth as the basis of acts, that grasps and expresses the ideal of unity of the plurality of person, the understanding of sanctity of life, that life is an entrusted gift, a penultimate and not an absolute or ultimate reality, which should be preserved and cared for with responsibility that structures transcendence and dignity through human experience.

<sup>60</sup> Jałocho-Palicka. ‘Thomas Aquinas’ Philosophy of Being as the Basis for Wojtyła’s Concept and Cognition of Human Person.’ 127-153

<sup>61</sup> John Paul II. *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997). 515

<sup>62</sup> Christopher Tollefsen, *John Paul II’s Contribution to Catholic Bioethics*. Dordrecht-Netherlands: Springer, 2004). 2

<sup>63</sup> Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). 88/9. Along Peter Singer’s objection to the source of human dignity, Michael Rosen challenges this concept stating that dignity per se is not limited only to human being since it is intrinsic value, because even plant have intrinsic worth, and so should be ascribed with such respect like humans. See: Michael Rosen, *Dignity. Its History and Meaning*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). 19. See also: Dietrich Birnbacher, ‘Human Cloning and Human Dignity.’ *Reproductive Biomedicine. Online 10 Supplement 1*. (2005). 50-55

given the ambiguities<sup>64</sup> surrounding its meaning, asking whether it is common to human being (with human life in crisis or difficult moment, and developing life in mind) as such, a quality that is empirically based, or a capacity that could be gained or lost? Yet, some defend it as an intrinsic and ontological<sup>65</sup> concept of the person.

## 2.1. The Concept of Human Dignity in Personalistic Thought

There has been controversies about the concept of human dignity on the basis of what constitutes its source. However, human dignity is generally construed as the source of rights that belong to every human being as a person. This understanding and recognition of the inalienable dignity of the human person constitutes the basis of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the constitutions of European states after the Second World War, and the Second Vatican Council. The basis of this quality of human person follows from the universality of human nature, the centrality of human person in cultural phenomenon which reveals the depth of the richness and the truth of the good of the person. Thus, one of the famous Polish personalist Andrzej Szostek state that dignity is a feature that is typical of human life as our everyday experience which requires equilibrium in our ability to experience and recognize the hierarchy of values. As such, it is a two-way experience that demands moral imperative on the part of the one who experiences it, and on the part of the one who brings with it the justification of this imperative.<sup>66</sup> The awareness of this basic quality of the human person informs the ethical 'synderesis' that good is to be done and evil avoided which is the foundation of the principle and law of personal act-ethical principle and moral law. Human dignity is basically understood as the:

moral property innate to all humans. Because all humans are equally human, there is no single person whose dignity is superior or inferior to any other. Because humans never metamorphose to something else, there humanness is permanent. Because human dignity is derived only from this humanness, human dignity is

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<sup>64</sup> There are various propositions by scholars about the basis of the concept of human dignity. Some propose consequentialist-base conception of dignity, stating that human dignity is the state of being worthy of honour, respect, status; and possession of certain qualities to a high degree. See; Albin Dearing, *A Justice for Victims of Crime*. (Switzerland: Springer International Publication, 2017). 139; Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999). 86. Some suppose deontologist-base conception that dignity is ascribed to moral human being, that is, being with capacity for categorical imperative or rational apriorism. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (Indianapolis : Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 1993). IV: 420-421, 428-429.

<sup>65</sup> Dietrich Von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*. (New York: McKay, 1952). 137; See also: Fukuyama, F. *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*. (London: Profile Books, 2003).

<sup>66</sup> Andrzej Szostek, *Wokół godności, prawy i miłość. Rozważania etyczne*. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1988). 49

irrevocable. All humans are equally expected to respect the human dignity of each other; all people should be treated equally in matters of human dignity.’<sup>67</sup>

It is the natural phenomenon that describes the aggregate of value and property of person as a ‘self’ or ‘subject,’ and the quality of the selfhood of person that characterizes the superiority of person in relation to other terrestrial beings. And this understanding demands from all human acts the recognition of the truth of good that is the person, that tends acts to their ultimate end, verifiable by each person regardless of the stage and condition of the life, or how inferior or vulnerable one might feel due to physical, spiritual, psychological, and sociological deficiency. No wonder it constitutes the foundation of the thoughts of many personalists in their strong defense for this inherent property of all persons, at every stage and circumstance of life, by which the lives of embryos, the worst criminals, elderly and the weak are protected and advocated for.<sup>68</sup>

Hence, the recognition of the inherent dignity of the person is universally accepted as the basis of ethical principles for all human endeavours and the legal system. And so, dignity appeals for recognition in all human acts the harmony of the truth of the good of the person with actions. It is the recognition that relates to the essence of the human person and the axiological content that structures personalistic norm. As such, Adrian Reimers observes that this good has no independent ontological status; rather, it is rooted in the human subject.<sup>69</sup> Thus, Josef Seifert affirms that this good defines dignity as an inherent quality of person, a holistic axiological state of the person that stems from intentional acts and involvement.<sup>70</sup> As such, dignity is not the product of human projection, or subject of some external factors or empirical capacity or functionality; rather, it is an objective good common to all persons irrespective of the person’s awareness of it. It is innate to the nature of every human person as his ontological property which defines the character of integral anthropology of man.

As that intrinsic feature that has its source on the interiority of the person, dignity is therefore one of the distinguishing element, the quality of greatness and superiority of man among the creatures in the visible world. Thus, Florian Znaniecki notes that dignity is “man’s fundamental and primary point of departure of culture, economy, civilization and technology.

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<sup>67</sup> Yechiel M. Barilan, *Human Dignity, Human Rights and Responsibility*. (London: The MIT Press, 2012). 93

<sup>68</sup> Mieczysław A. Krapiec, *Człowiek w kulturze*. (Warszawa: Gutenberg Print, 1996). 5

<sup>69</sup> Adrian Reimers, *Truth About the Good. Moral Norms in the Thought of John Paul II*. (Ave Maria FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2011). 18

<sup>70</sup> Jaroslav Seifert, *What is Life? The Originality, Irreducible and the value of Life*. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997). 14; Robert Spaemann, *Essays in Anthropology: Variations on a Theme*, trans. De Graaff, G., Mumford, J. (Eugene-Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010). & Rodziński, A. ‘U podstaw kultury moralnej,’ *Roczniki filozoficzne*. XVI :2. (1968). 43-49

Because all these elements are products of human hand which possess only a second value or worth.”<sup>71</sup> But a human being possesses an absolute worth or dignity which cannot be quantified nor be substituted, nor equated with the secondary values. For it is only human beings who are conscious of, and recognize this innate worth and special value of their being, at such, it beholds on them as an obligation and right to acknowledge, care and promote and witness to this intrinsic property in all human life. Dignity is the substantial realistic element of human person; it also qualifies the praxiology and axiology of the nature of a person, wherein a person cannot be treated as an ordinary means to something else, but in itself as an end and a good. On the basis of this concreteness of the human person we grasp Wojtyła’s approach to the concept of human dignity as it follows from his analysis of the experience of man, and revelation.

## 2.2. Wojtyła’s Basis of the Concept of Human Dignity

In the light of the discussion of the root source of the personalistic principles of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, wherein he stresses that the act that defines the human personhood refers to the integration of exteriority with interiority, but the closest and intimate contact the person has with his external world relates to his innerness, his interior life.<sup>72</sup> For the spiritual life determines the unique and objective reality of the person, such that the person basically is not a passive being, nor the fruit of someone’s intentions and projection, nor a part (rather always is a whole), nor an appendage of any other reality.<sup>73</sup> And so, interiority informs the unique multifaceted nature of the act of each person, irrespective of stage and condition, and this is the basis of the recognition of the value and worth of each person. Thus, Wojtyła states that this truth about human nature and the value of life is a truth that is open to natural reason, a fact of experience which aligns with right reason and proceeds from natural law via eternal/divine law. For dignity, he asserts, defines the being and existence of man as a person, and as a somebody who possesses natural right and worth. Wojtyła clearly states that “dignity is a right and value that is accorded to every individual human person, equal to and in all human beings, not determined for and by any person, but constitutes the means of self-

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<sup>71</sup> Leon Dyczewski, L. ‘Value- The Core of Culture,’ in; *Politeja*. 44 :10. (2016). 143-170

<sup>72</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 23

<sup>73</sup> Grzegorz Hołub, ‘On the Essence of Karol Wojtyła’s Personalism.’ Febrery, R. F. & Llucca, E. O. *El testimonio de Karol Wojtyła*. (Navarra: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2022). 115-132

transcendence and self-definition.”<sup>74</sup> It is an affirmation of the integrity of human nature which expresses man for who and not what he is, and this affirmation underscores the culture of life.

Accordingly, he clarifies the reductionistic supposition, and challenges those who deny that the person has no innate dignity nor inalienable right,<sup>75</sup> given their materialists claim, that the only difference between human being and other terrestrial beings is based on degree and not of kind. But man Wojtyła strongly indicates is not an instance of human nature nor a kind of nature, nor an instance of a rational nature, that is, the power of rational capacity, rather, he is a person, a somebody with an intrinsic value, who in the expression of John Henry Newman, “exceeds the finite qualities and properties that he or she displays.”<sup>76</sup> Again, man’s interiority he maintains qualifies his subjectivity, radiates his intrinsic capacity above the level of other natural and material being. These faculties of interiority, namely, the intellect, free will, and emotion, are irrevocable, essential, and distinguishing qualities in each human person,<sup>77</sup> and these are basically universal to human nature and as well as constitute the distinct character of the act of the individual person. Likewise, the capacity of cultural creativity and the ability to transform the world presupposes interiority, raise the status and level of man among the natural being, and so qualify his dignity, as well as his selfhood.

Moreso, Wojtyła understands the dignity of a person as the ontic greatness and inalienable worth of a human person, which confers the right to life to every human being as a person, from the moment of conception to his natural end. It is a greatness that is connected to the truth of the good of the person and his selfhood that makes the person worthy of life. Thus, Wojtyła argues that the awareness of the fact that life is a process, is in a way, the acknowledgment of innate dignity and right of this life which demands from each person, in fact from every human community and from the political community, proper guidance and protection of this life from beginning to its natural end. For human person, he maintains, possesses an intrinsic value which should be affirmed for his own sake, and this value surpasses any other value or end which one may consider as the purpose of an act. And so, dignity is understood as the esteemed and intrinsic value of each person that requires as an axiological obligation and shared moral responsibility from each person, the care, preservation, and protection of this personalistic value, so that the seed of greatness in each

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<sup>74</sup> Stephen Ugwu, ‘Essentialist Vs. Consequentialist-Based Concept of Human Dignity,’ in; *Człowiek w kulturze*, 32:1. (2022). 273-294

<sup>75</sup> John M. Rist, *What is Person? Realities, Constructs, Illusions*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020). 253

<sup>76</sup> Crosby. *The Personalism of John Paul II*. 54

<sup>77</sup> Wojtyła. ‘On the Dignity of the Human Person.’ 178

person can be allowed to bloom and flourish, as well as realize his purpose and meaning. This acknowledgment expresses the character of the culture of life that challenges the contemporary cultural crisis and the danger of human extinction in the practices of the culture of death.

This attribute of a human person that reveals the intrinsic truth of the good of a person, as different from the value of other natural being, is connected to the Ultimate Good, God. As such, Josef Seifert affirms this intrinsic character of human dignity, stating that it is an ultimate and irreducible phenomenon, an in-dwelling positive importance which can only be unfolded and brought to evidence.<sup>78</sup> Willian Stern claims that dignity is something ontic and intrinsic in a person which qualifies and “describes his primal uniqueness...through which every person is a world of its own with regards to other persons...for person’s acts proceed from inner self, as a subjective I.”<sup>79</sup> This distinctiveness and greatness that qualifies dignity is known to everyone, and appeals to all as a moral obligation to recognize and respect this quality. This recognition and respect is also a prescription and requirement of divine and natural law. Indeed, this quality expresses the richness and perfection of man as a person, for it is only man among all the creatures in the world who is qualified to be described as ‘person,’ thanks to this innerness as the defining quality of dignity.

### 2.3. Human Dignity as an Expression of *Imago Dei*

Besides this basic human essential (interiority) foundation of dignity, Wojtyła further advances the source of human dignity as a phenomenon that proceeds from God, given that the human being is the only being created in the image of God. For man asserts John Paul II, is that being that is endowed with light from God and created in the image of God, and this endowment defines his dignity, and affirms him always as somebody and as ‘who’ that cannot be treated as ‘something’ or ‘what.’ As a realization and expression of the perfect good of a human person which is associated with the Ultimate Good, dignity is a quality that is permanent and cannot be lost, because of this ontological structure. For in every man’s work or act, John Paul II explains, it is not enough to do good works; they need to be done well, which means that they must be done not only for the purpose of pleasing God, or reaching the

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<sup>78</sup> Jaroslav Seifert, *What is Life? The Originality, Irreducibility and Value of Life*. 96-98

<sup>79</sup> Stern, W. *Person and Thing: System of a Philosophical Worldview*. vol. 2: *The Human Personality*. (Leipzig: Barth, 1918). Quoted in: Thomas J. Gentry, II. ‘Human Dignity, Self-Determination, and the Gospel: An Inquiry into St. John Paul II: Personalism and its Implications for Evangelization.’ *Studia Gilsoniana*, 9:2. (2020). 237-251

Ultimate Good,<sup>80</sup> but also for perfecting the person who reflects himself in his work. This perfection in a way reveals dignity, because it is only a human person who has such consciousness of perfection, the idea of dignity, and the awareness as the only being God intends for Himself, who reflects God's splendour, the only being in dialogue and contact with God, the only being whom God communicated His plan and thought. John Paul II clearly states that God becomes a human being, enters into the drama of human existence through redemption and permeates the human being with divine grace.<sup>81</sup> These attributes demonstrate his participation in God's dignity and reveals also human dignity.

Further suppositions of dignity can be found in the thought of American personalist John F. Crosby, who asserts that human dignity relates to moral order, since man is the unique being due to the original act of creation; and his natural ability of interpersonal relations, wherein man acts according to moral good to oneself and also in the context of another human being. For moral evil brings defect on both the personal and social level.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Robert Spaemann argues that the concept of dignity is based on the sanctity and sublimity of human life, stating that, "the preciousness of the human being as such...renders her life something holy, giving the concept of dignity an ontological dimension which is in fact its *sine qua non*. Dignity signals something sacred."<sup>83</sup> Emmanuel Mounier also affirms this claim, stating that, the human person is created out of love and for love, and the source of this love is God the creator. Love (in its metaphysical and psychological sense) is then conceived as the visible unity of the human being with God, and with each person, for person as participant of this love is called and has the obligation to develop this love, and use (in the positive sense of use) the individual mutual love for the social cause,<sup>84</sup> so as to preserve the human social fabric, because love is the foundation of society. And so, John Paul II strongly maintains that the quality of dignity is an attribute of God, inherently conferred on the human person, as such, opposes the acts of culture of death which materializes, dehumanizes and violates the sanctity of human life.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 78

<sup>81</sup> Wojtyła. 'On the Dignity of the Human Person.' 178/9

<sup>82</sup> John Crosby, *Zarys filozofii osoby*, trans. Majczna, B. (Kraków: WAM, 2007). 264

<sup>83</sup> Spaemann. *Essays in Anthropology: Variations on a Theme*. 57

<sup>84</sup> Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism*. (University of Notre Dame Press, 1989). 12

<sup>85</sup> John Paul II. 'Speech before Men of Culture.' (Rio de Janeiro, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1997). The original in Portuguese reads: '*A verdadeira cultura é humanização, enquanto que a não-cultura e as falsas culturas são deshumanizantes.*' See also, John Paul II. 'Inaugural Speech at the IV General Conference of Latin American Bishops.' (12<sup>th</sup> October, 1992).

#### 2.4. Wojtyła's Existentialist-Based Concept of Human Dignity

The analysis of dignity in the personalistic thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II appeals also to the axiological character of human nature which is a fundamental attribute of his nature. This attribute follows from the quality of interiority, nevertheless, his subscribing to this quality seems to qualify him as being anthropocentric, who has no sense of value for other non-human creatures. However, we grasp from his analysis that non-human creatures possess value but not in proportion to human worth whose experience of innerness (intellect and free will) lived in right conscience and responsibility defers from other creatures, and reveals the inherent worth of the human being. He further explains that the dignity of the human person refers to the fact that it is only the human person that is essentially referred to as 'who' and not 'what,' 'somebody' and not 'something.' This recognition, therefore, appeals to all human beings as a duty and right, which must be respected, and an invitation to treat all human beings in all stages and circumstances of life as being with dignity and right, and not as object. The sense of pure consciousness of the human person that highlights the 'whatness,' or 'something' approach to human nature in which man is seen as a pure mechanistic and materialistic being, as mere: '*homo faber* or *homo sapiens*,' subjects man to exploitation and use. Opposing this approach, the philosopher Pope strongly affirms that a human being is essentially who and this derives primarily from within<sup>86</sup> and not from external manifestations of the inner qualities. This, he said, is the foundation of personalistic norm and moral norm, to do good and avoid evil which is universal and forbids all forms of use, coercion and violation of the human person.

As that fundamental quality of the person, it is not per se based on moral capacity (legislator of moral law), and cannot be achieved nor lost; rather, it is permanent in every human person.<sup>87</sup> What characterizes this worth is fundamentally spiritual which relates to the spiritual soul and reveals the transcendence of the person. Nonetheless, this does not define man as a pure spiritual being; rather, it clarifies that human person is an embodied spirit, and not merely a body, but a substantial permanent nature that surpasses mere bodily identification, and this recognition qualifies the value (dignity) of the body as an integral whole of the person; and as well extends to the non-human animals.<sup>88</sup> For cruelty melted on

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<sup>86</sup> Wojtyła. 'On the Dignity of the Human Person.' 178

<sup>87</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 182

<sup>88</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 104

these other creatures, shows likelihood of such cruelty on human person. The recognition of this intrinsic worth pertains to the essence of the person, and cuts across all boundaries of human endeavours, beliefs, convictions, worldviews, ideologies and cultures. This recognition demands from the person to act in the truth, since all beings are given to man in terms of truth.

As it were, truth, he said, is the lens through which we grasp the character and nature of all realities, the human person in particular. He categorically states that “the disposition to listen to the Truth (that is, obedience to the Truth), and the readiness to act according to Truth constitutes the true dignity of the human person.”<sup>89</sup> The recognition of this axiological order in human nature as a feature of dignity, Wojtyła declares, demands from everyone

even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties to be sincerely open to the truth and goodness of dignity which in the light of reason and hidden action of grace, come to recognize in the natural law written in the heart of every human life from its very beginning until its end, and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree. Upon the recognition of this right, every human community and political community itself are founded.<sup>90</sup>

It follows from this understanding that dignity is a right that belongs to a human person, a right that is owed to human life from the very first moment. As for when or how to determine the beginning of life, Wojtyła, or rather The Pope, clearly and strongly explains that, it is that:

stage when the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor the mother, it is rather the life of a new human being with his/her own growth...modern genetic science offers clear confirmation that, from the first instant there is established the programme of what this living being will be. Right from fertilization the adventure of a human life begins, and each of its capacities requires time, a rather lengthy time to find its place and to be in a position to act (in the definite dimensions of act). Even if the presence of a spiritual soul cannot be ascertained by empirical data, the results themselves of scientific research on the human embryo provide a valuable indication for discerning by use of reason a personal presence at the moment of the first appearance of a human life.<sup>91</sup>

On the basis of this determination, we understand from the ancient author Tertullian as expressed by The Pope that, “it is anticipated murder and (violation of innate dignity) to prevent someone from being born; it makes little difference whether one kills a soul already born or puts it to death, for he/she who will one day be a man/woman is a man/woman

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<sup>89</sup> Karol Wojtyła. *Teaching for an Unbelieving World*. (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2020). 36

<sup>90</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 2

<sup>91</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 60

already.”<sup>92</sup> It goes to say that life in general and human life in particular is a process, right from the moment of conception, because from that stage, the essential qualities start to develop and mature till they wear out and die at natural death. For being a person is in *pari passu* with dignity, an expression of ontic personalistic value, a second name of human nature that essentially structures adequate anthropology.

### 3. Justification of the Personalistic Values: Truth and Freedom

At the base of the contemporary cultural crisis lies the question about truth and freedom as the subject matter in understanding man as a person, which is also the source of anthropological disparity. Karol Wojtyła’s understanding of truth is in line with Aristotelian-Thomistic apprehension of truth as the correspondence of intellect with what exists in reality, in a sense, portrays freedom as, the ability to choose based on the person’s true knowledge and understanding of the reality. For nothing is desired if there is no knowledge of the thing known (*nihil volitum nisi praecognitum*).<sup>93</sup> This knowledge and understanding point to the truth which, according to John Paul II, enlightens man’s intelligence and shapes his freedom.<sup>94</sup> As such, Wojtyła did not construe truth exclusively as the subject of consciousness without understanding or coming in contact with reality in the world, rather, truth is the relation between the intellect with the object, which the will perceives and reveals as an end, an end that is objectively good. On this account, some scholars consider freedom or free will as an illusion and as contradictory to the facts of reality,<sup>95</sup> arguing that freedom as the capacity to choose, is dependent on one’s knowledge of reality and the natural response of the will.

Inasmuch as this debate is not the subject of this analysis, however, freedom constitutes one of the essential defining qualities of a person and an aspect of the spirituality of man, the essence of spirit according to Hegel,<sup>96</sup> and one of the sources of human rights, however, contrasts the ancient pure social character of freedom wherein some people were born free while others were slaves. But Wojtyła states that, “the existence of the person is

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<sup>92</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 61

<sup>93</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła’s Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 161

<sup>94</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. Intro.

<sup>95</sup> Peter van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil: The Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of St. Andrew in 2003*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006). 70. See also; John Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992). 10/1

<sup>96</sup> Georg W. F. Hegel, *Hegel: Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol. I-III*, trans. Robert F. Brown. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958/2009). 1:26

identified with the existence of a concrete centre of freedom.”<sup>97</sup> This definition affirms that freedom is an ontological element of human nature, wherefore Descartes already asserts that freedom is the basis of human dignity, stating that there is nothing bigger than freedom: “that I can think, is thanks to it, that I recognize that I am, to some extent, created in the image and likeness of God.”<sup>98</sup> The fact about freedom is that it is a personal experience which manifests in the very moment of the human ‘I will’ in which the person freely selects/chooses from the known options. For Wojtyła, man’s freedom is distinct from the ‘freedom’ of non-human beings, because his freedom proceeds from the will acting through the intellect as faculties of the spiritual soul, and this is peculiar to the human person and to personal act as the property of the person.

Freedom, as I will, he argues, is an expression of the person who wills, which manifests in the definite moment of ‘I can but I do not have to,’<sup>99</sup> and structures self-determination and transcendence. And this expression does not possess an absolute character, it is an experience of the dynamisms of act, grounded on the truth of good that defines the person who acts. This analysis portrays freedom not as acting out of individual impulse, feeling, whims, social pressure or naturally determined, but as an experience of self-determination that belongs to the substantial dimension of the person,<sup>100</sup> because the will does not act indifferently; rather, the person experiences freedom through the will. However, careful observation of this structure seems to suggest that man is not free as such, but determined by cause and effect without proper experience of freedom and intent to act effectively. For if the will is naturally inclined to a specific known object as an end (assigned always to choose good because evil enslaves and deprives man of his freedom), does it suggest that the will or rather that freedom is as illusion, as thought by some scholars? The lived experience of contemporary Western secularism partly aligns with this understanding whereby freedom is isolated from the will’s natural connection with ontic axiology of praxis. Then comes the revolution about freedom which has redefined *humanum* in the separation of freedom from the will’s natural subordination towards transcendent truth, not regulated by ontic values or normativity, by customs and authority. Thus, man, enticed by freedom, has become constrained to freedom, to pursue one’s autonomous desires/interests, acting as one who cannot rise above the determining effects of freedom. For a man ‘condemned’ to

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<sup>97</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 235

<sup>98</sup> René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993). 76

<sup>99</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 217

<sup>100</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Personal Structure of Self-Determination.’ 190

freedom, is now free to think, act, and live as he wants, as ethically neutral in an axiological nihilism, such that freedom, possessing an absolute character, becomes an end in itself.

However, John Paul II remarks that in search of an illusory freedom, the contemporary person's "capacity to know the truth has been darkened and his will weakened, thus, giving himself over to relativism and scepticism."<sup>101</sup> He further states that yearning for absolute truth, tireless search for knowledge, remains always man's natural desire by which he knows and understands himself, the world in which he lives, and so gives meaning to the realities in the world and improves his world. On this is found the essence of culture as the phenomenon of the person. By inputting meaning to the world through the development of science and technology, The Pope explains that, man has remained obligated to norms in his search for knowledge and has never stopped asking the fundamental questions, namely, what must I do? How do I distinguish good from evil? The response to these can only be possible in the face of truth which lies in the depth of man's spirit/heart.<sup>102</sup> The search for truth in freedom of act that issues from the norm of morality is universal to all people as dictated by the conscience, because our subjective desire possesses an objective basis, the basis of truth of good as what actualizes and perfects man. And so, when man acts unguided by this objective basis, JP II observes, he "detaches freedom from its essential and constitutive relationship to truth,"<sup>103</sup> as well as the "perspective of the real acting person."<sup>104</sup> Because the connection to the transcendent truth or objective basis is the same as the connection to the essence of person and his personalistic norm. George Weigel buttresses it thus:

freedom, untethered from truth, is freedom's worst enemy. For if there is only your truth and my truth, and neither one of us recognizes a transcendent moral standard (call it 'the truth') by which to adjudicate our differences, then the only way to settle the argument is for you to impose your power on me, or for me to impose my power on you. Freedom untethered from truth leads to chaos; chaos leads to anarchy; and since human beings cannot tolerate anarchy, tyranny as the answer to the human imperative of order is just around the corner. The false humanism of the freedom of indifference leads first to freedom's decay, and then to freedom's demise.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 1

<sup>102</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 2

<sup>103</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 4

<sup>104</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 78

<sup>105</sup> George Weigel, 'John Paul II as Defensor Hominis-Christian Humanism and The Gods that Failed.' *Servo Veritatis: Materiały Międzynarodowej Konferencji dla uczczenia 25-lecia pontyfikatu Jego Świątobliwości Jana Pawła II, Uniwersytet Jagielloński 9-11 październik 2003 r.*, eds. ks. Stefan Koperek CR, & Stanisław Szczur). (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PAT, 2003). 411

To be a person, Wojtyła argues, is to act out of oneself and not to be acted upon, and so, personhood and freedom are inseparable.<sup>106</sup> Again, when freedom fails to surpass external causality and transcend via self to the highest and final end, one observes a disorder in organizing human life, collapse of faithfulness, inconsistency in cultural act, and subordination of human act to instinct. It is an expression of oneself beyond the threshold of mere ‘wanting’ or ‘wishing’ which is an appendage to externality, but refers to acts of willing which appeal to the ontological identity of a person whose acts transcend through the self to an objective or common good/value.

Inasmuch as the experience of something happens to man and something happens in man are also integral aspect of human experience, Wojtyła however explains that true freedom that defines personalistic culture manifests in and through the dynamism of personal act wherein the person manifests as agent of act, acting through his intellect, free will, emotion in the concrete choice and decision towards truth that define his nature. But when something acts through the person or when an aspect of these faculties dominates and determines the acts of the person, the person experiences illusory freedom and wanders away from truth. For a personal act must involve knowledge of the experiential facts of the act in the integration of these faculties in order to realize the truth about the good of the person that qualifies the moral nature of the person, defining the person as morally good or bad.<sup>107</sup> It shows from this understanding, that real freedom finds its essence in connection to truth. This connection, as Wojtyła maintains, is the connection of freedom ‘for/to’ the truth, contrary to ‘freedom from’<sup>108</sup> which is equivalent to license based on subjective comprehension of the truth. He clearly states that true freedom refers to the ability to choose in relation to that particular truth, by which the intentionality of the will and its interiority properties disregard subordinate values and goods to choose the true good for the person as an individual and for others with whom man acts with.

### 3.1. Two-fold Structure of Freedom: Self-Dependence and Dependence on Other(s)

The justification of the personalistic values of truth and freedom in the structure of the personalistic culture of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II in the wake of the ambivalence of freedom in the contemporary experience, where freedom, is detached from its essential and

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<sup>106</sup> Crosby. *The Personalism of John Paul II*. 20

<sup>107</sup> Jarosław Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła*. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000). 113

<sup>108</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 235

constitutive relationship to truth, and supposing absolute autonomy, now questions the traditional moral order. But freedom can truly maintain its role in structuring self-determination and transcendence through two-fold dimensions which underscores an adequate anthropology.

### 3.2. Freedom as Self-Dependence

The experience of freedom that is revealed in ‘I can, but I do not have to’ that results in ‘I want’ refers not only to the power of the will in the intentionality of truth of good/value of object, but there also manifests the structure of self-possession and self-governance by which the person acts out of himself. It is an expression of the person’s control and power over his will, the central power of the soul that underlies self-determination. For in his capacity to choose, Wojtyła explains, freedom does not manifest as a mere property of the person to choose arbitrarily; rather, it is experienced in relation to the normative and transcendent value that lies in the will, and radiates the truth of the good as what the person is oriented to. This dependence of self on the truth of value structures man’s becoming beyond the autonomous self, distinct from instinctual character and egoistic tendencies. Freedom as dependence on the self is not only about the action itself, it is also about the act that the personal ‘I’ is the perpetrator of, also, about the moral good or evil, that is, about becoming a good or a bad man.<sup>109</sup> This is the sense, Wojtyła observes, whereby freedom in the fundamental sense is self-dependence which does not connote absolute independence, but dependence on self and on truth.<sup>110</sup> For man, by acting upon oneself, decides and chooses one’s action recognized by right conscience as true good for the person, thus man shows his superiority (transcendence) over his own dynamism. This radiates St. Thomas’ understanding, which Wojtyła concurs with that freedom is, “*ad utrumlibet se habere*-to act out of oneself.<sup>111</sup> Wojtyła affirms this stating that

the fundamental meaning of man’s freedom, the freedom of the will, impels us to see in it above all this particular self-dependence that goes hand in hand with self-determination. What we mean by ‘man is free,’ is that he depends on himself for dynamization of his subject. This is the true character of personal freedom<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Krzysztof Stachewicz, ‘Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy of Freedom.’ *Teologia i Moralność*, 15:1. (2020). 151-62

<sup>110</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 241

<sup>111</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Lib.1, Cap. 82, n. 5.

<sup>112</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 222

Freedom as acting out of oneself expresses the person's mastery of himself, while remaining still subject to the law, objective moral law and state law. Not acting out of one's 'I' he explains, the person falls into necessity, because there is no indication of ownership and dominion, nor a relationship between the person and his act. As such, the act remains within the sphere of nature directed by the instinct and sundered from real truth. But self-dependence is a structure and expression of ownership and mastery as well as dominion, for the person decides his action as one who possesses himself and being possessed by himself (the *sui juris* of the person) and the one in control of his will. As it were, every real act of the will is an expression of specific dependence on the person, that is, a dependence on truth beyond somatic cravings and sensual wants.<sup>113</sup> I determine the course of my action dispensed from subordinate motives, self-interest and value-free presuppositions which defects the sense of self dependence of freedom, such that freedom becomes illusory and superficially unilateral.

But acting via oneself reveals the self as responsible for the outcome of my act since 'my' bears my imprint as what proceeds from me and makes me who/what I am. To be free is to transcend oneself towards the truth and not be impelled by passion, but towards personal good that reveals common good. He also clarifies that there is a proportionality between the knowledge of action and the knowledge of good/value that determines his agency and responsibility. Contrary to this Wojtyła explains is absolutization of self in the form of egoism and alienation from the other. Proper experience of freedom as dependence on self and on the truth is accomplished with respect to the freedom of the other person, and the good of all creatures in the universe. This is the root of the interpersonality of the person. Freedom as self-dependence in reference to truth accounts for the moral nature of personal act, determines the person, and structures authentic anthropology.

### 3.3. Freedom as Dependence on Other(s)

Freedom as dependence on self and on truth that passes through the conscience does not negate the true character of freedom as an innate quality of the person. It does not indicate that freedom is irremovable or can be impeded, lost because it is an element of the spirituality of the person. Even when some external factor obstruct this inalienable quality of the person for instance, the case of someone in prison, it does not suggest a loss even though it is

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<sup>113</sup> Crosby. *The Personalism of John Paul II*. 31

restricted, because freedom is the faculty or property that is related to the will, or rather the will is the person's faculty of freedom<sup>114</sup> and the person does not cease to be someone in the situation of restriction of freedom. For man transcends his subjectivity in intentionality towards the objectivity (horizontal transcendence) to the truth of good beyond his personal 'I' which in a way refers back to him. This ontological character reveals the dignity of a person in virtue of the fact that he is a free being, and this quality is sacred, untouchable and an intrinsic value of the person. This, in a sense, points to another dimension of freedom as dependence on others to realize the truth of the person and good. It is not a surrendering of one's will, but transcending beyond the individual self and collective self-interest or selfishness, reaching that objective truth and common good of the persons, and yet, without losing the ontological character of freedom; instead, it becomes expended. By supposing this position, Wojtyła counters the ideal of individualism as well as totalitarianism which are opposed to participation and cooperation.

For freedom in the real sense of it, John Paul II declares, is not tied to an individual's activity alone, it expresses and constitutes the selfhood of the other, the realization of self-determination and axiology<sup>115</sup> of personhood of oneself and another. As it were, true freedom entails personalistic participation in obedience to the universal norms of morality, for the categorical defence of man's personal dignity is an essential condition of freedom.<sup>116</sup> Freedom, as Michael Polanyi describes it, is not the power or right to act as one likes or pleases, but the right of being able to act as one 'ought' (this demonstrates the moral obligation of freedom of action). Because as a responsible person, one must not act for the sake of his self-interest, but for and towards the good of others. As it were, to be isolated from others in a sense is opposed to human nature, for it limits the person's freedom in action and ends in self-imprisonment.<sup>117</sup> Freedom as property of the person reaches its fullness when it goes out beyond itself or gives itself for the sake of the other without any form of self-isolation or heteronomy. And so, John Paul II clearly states that true freedom in action

structures true self-determination and this is possible only when humans (persons) go beyond individual and collective selfishness and reaches out to that which reason perceives as objectively good and true...freedom is not diminished but expanded and fulfilled when...employ(ed) to bring about a true good.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 165

<sup>115</sup> Avery Dulles, 'John Paul II and the Mystery of the Human Person.' *America: The Jesuit Review*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb., 2004). 469. <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/469/article/john-paul-ii-and-mystery-human-person>

<sup>116</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 96

<sup>117</sup> Avery Dulles, 'John Paul II and the Truth about Freedom.' *First Things*. (August, 1995). 4 <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1995/08/004-john-paul-ii-and-the-truth-about-freedom>

<sup>118</sup> Dulles, 'John Paul II and the Truth about Freedom.' *First Things*. (August, 1995). 4

The sense of community in this analysis of freedom, however, does not in any sense suggest anonymity of the collective, for the personal dynamics of freedom as the will surpasses beyond the level of nature and relates to the transcendent truth of the person. This sense of community is contrary to the presupposition of the ‘TRANSGENDER community,’ given its lack of dependence on one’s true self as a unity of being that is permanent. This sense of ‘community’ does not possess metaphysical character as it tends to pursue self-interest in illusory unilateral superficiality, with no true reflection of interiority that defines the goodness, truth, and beauty of a person. Wojtyła insists that true freedom consists not in freedom from truth of good and value, but freedom ‘for’ the truth of human nature, to right decision of conscience in its responsible use. This character of freedom leads to self-fulfilment, inner joy, realization of the Ultimate End/Good.

When freedom is detached from its essence and fulfilment of person, it deteriorates into various ideologies that negate the essence of human nature (transgender ideology, various acts of culture of death), and in the political arena into ‘Totalitarianism’ where freedom is at the dictate of the most powerful and arrogance of power. But when freedom is true to its character in dependence on truth, it matures from auto-dependence to dependence on others in realizing self-determination, truth of self, and selfhood of the other. Thus, the truth of the good of person(s), says John Paul II, is “the guarantor of freedom.”<sup>119</sup> Thus, we read from Kupczak that dependence on the other subject is a necessary determinant for freedom<sup>120</sup> by which the person also surrenders to truth. Freedom is an inalienable right rooted in humanity, and it is ultimately directed towards communion. One has the obligation to realize the common good as he pursues his personal good, for he ‘ought to’ or ‘should’ choose this good that also qualifies his good and truly demonstrates self-determination. Realizing this good objectively frees the person from any obstacle to true freedom, even if it requires undergoing some pains so as to realize this inner quality of the person.

#### **4. Human Person and Community of Persons**

The analysis of freedom as the faculty of the will that structures self-determination, transcendence and proper human flourishing, as well as an element of the spiritual quality and one of the sources of human rights has in the contemporary experience assumed a

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<sup>119</sup> John Paul II. *General Assembly of the United Nations*. (5<sup>th</sup> October, 1995).

<sup>120</sup> Kupczak. *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła*. 125

different character that isolates the person to himself (self-imprisonment-individualism) and alienate the person from others (totalitarianism). These experiences not only demonstrate illusory freedom, they are contrary to the nature of a person as a being that exists and acts through the self with other(s). Acting with other(s) is a special feature of man as a person, but also a duty as discovered by Karol Wojtyła of seeing something higher in one's fellow man in man's experience.<sup>121</sup> This natural quality of the person denotes intersubjectivity through participation with other subjects, especially human subjects, illuminating still the dependence on the other in relation to the truth of the good of action. The foundation of norm of morality and truth of good of action resides in the recognition of the ontological reality of the other as a human person who has intrinsic and unique value, and that the other person constitutes another 'I.' He construes the basis of discussing the nature of the person as a community through participation in the humanity of another being. This entails "to be virtually related to others as a particular human being, and not just related to what makes the other (in abstracto) a human being."<sup>122</sup> It expresses the character of social life but in a social conviviality where the innate dignity of <sup>123</sup>person is respected, and each person experiences every act of the collectivity as his own.

This understanding structures interpersonal relationship, man's sociality and participation in the world organized by others because man's personal existence presupposes the existence of the other, that is, the fact that there are other selves who experience the world with man, because he is not alone in the world. Wojtyła considers interpersonality as an unavoidable aspect of real anthropology, for inasmuch as the personal act of man is personal, yet he acts together with other human beings. This is the basis of proper assessment of human act that structures the person's being and becoming, namely, the close co-relation of act with other person.<sup>124</sup> It goes to affirm the perennial understanding that man is not an isolated being and that no man is an island, for his action is affected by, and at the same time, has an effect on other people's actions.<sup>125</sup> This is the character of subjectivity of a person, for the experience of a human being Wojtyła explains is a two-way experience, "for the one who is having the experience is a human being and the one being experienced by the subject of this experience is also a human being. Thus, the person is simultaneously its subject and

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<sup>121</sup> Wojtyła, K. *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. ix

<sup>122</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 237

<sup>123</sup> Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, trans. P. Guietti & F. Murphy. (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997). 169

<sup>124</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 377

<sup>125</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 224

object.”<sup>126</sup> The truth of the essence of man is that he lives in the world not as a private suppositum, rather, he shares it with his fellow men in interpersonal or social relations. It also relates not only to sharing between or among other human person(s), but with ‘The Person (God),’ and this is also an essential feature of personal action and a condition in human nature. Wojtyła clearly explains that interpersonality of person is properly

designated by pronoun *I*, who exists and acts in common with other human persons and the *other* who lives alongside the *I* who is both *another* and *one of the others*. The notion of *others* includes all human beings so that everyone is not just an *I* but also an ‘*other*.’ The *other* who could either be a *he* or *she* is always someone who is experientially and actually in relation with the *I*.<sup>127</sup>

This analysis is beyond the sociological basis of society or community that presupposes the social nature of human being in the anthropology of Aristotle, which emphasizes the moral values that arise from action performed in accordance with a norm.

Rather, Wojtyła advances in his analysis of existing and acting together with others via the outcome of this dynamism of this acting together with others which relates to the fundamental value of act superior and different from the moral value, namely ‘personalistic value,’<sup>128</sup> and reveals self-determination through self-possession and self-governance and transcendence. For the person and his value is prior and fundamental with respect to the value of the act, and personalistic value is the basis of knowledge of the person’s value and other values.<sup>129</sup> The recourse to personalistic value in interpersonality adequately responds to the outcome of the superficial understanding of the sociology of man, wherein man is understood as a unit of a species or mere a individual, that is, as a mere natural being, in which the ‘social nature’ relates to something accidental to the human person.

But personalistic value reveals beyond the natural qualities of existing and acting with others, the constituents of the unrepeatability and uniqueness of the person which flow from the interiority of the person, and helps us to understand other values of action as they are strictly connected with the person and the totality of the ‘world of persons.’<sup>130</sup> Affirming this position, Czesław Bartnik explains that the subjectivity of ‘I’ as a subject is not an idealized ‘I,’ as in, a separate individual in the community, rather, it is an ‘I’ constituted in the ‘thou’ as

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<sup>126</sup> Wojtyła. ‘The Person: Subject and Community.’ 221

<sup>127</sup> Wojtyła. ‘Participation or Alienation?’ 198

<sup>128</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 380

<sup>129</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 381

<sup>130</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 383

a unity, who is always an end in the recognition of the ontic value of a person. The structure of human person appears in a dialectic ontic unity, because the person manifests as:

the self (ego), existence/subsistence (substantia) and the common being (esse commune)...hence, a person is someone separate, identified and separated from the other beings and the common being; again, the 'I' subsists with, in and thanks to the whole being. Thus, the relationship between 'I' and its existence in reality constitutes a communitarian unity.<sup>131</sup>

This nature of the human person that manifests in personalistic participation resonates thus in Martin Buber that "the overcoming of the 'I-it' relationship (person-object)...by the 'I-Thou' relationship (person-person), for this relationship he explains, though not easy to specify, gives the 'I' its constitution."<sup>132</sup> As it were, the nature of a person in his experience of the world is truly revealed in his ability for objective perception of the fact that he/she is a community *communio*<sup>133</sup> (*communio personarum*), a being that is a union of body, spirit and soul.

This sense of community is more philosophical than theological understanding, and a perennial historical truth of humanity which is also affirmed by Gabriel Marcel that intersubjectivity is an integral nature of human being. He maintains that, "human existence is from the start being-with, being with others, a perspective that affects all aspects of the person including understanding."<sup>134</sup> This affirms Max Scheler's personalistic idea that knowledge of self is insufficient without the other, stating "the individual begins by living in the community to a much greater extent that he does for himself."<sup>135</sup> Community is the basis of understanding the person and self-awareness or knowledge. Taking this further, Wojtyła explains that man reaches his fullness through opening of himself to another personal being

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<sup>131</sup> Stanisław C. Bartnik, 'Personalistic Ontology.' *Misterium człowieka*. (Lublin: Standruk, 2004). 77. See also; Stanisław C. Bartnik, 'Personalizm uniwersalistyczny.' *Roczniki Teologiczne*, 49:2. (2002). 77-87

<sup>132</sup> Juan M. Burgos, *An Introduction to Personalism*, trans. R. T. Allen. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018). 131

<sup>133</sup> Wojtyła refers to the Latin expression '*communio*' because it denotes the specific relationship that exists between persons, which is proper to them alone, which also indicates the good that they do to one another, by sharing and receiving the good of the person within that mutual relationship; as well as essential understating element of family. He describes this sense of gift as a 'disinterested,' that is, without *utile* motive. This capacity is possible only to the nature of human person because *operari sequitur esse*; and because human person is capable of existing in community with others in the sense of rational community as *communio*. As such, by nature, human person is a social being who develops their full potential when they relates with others, and by doing so, they mutually confirm and affirm one another as communion of community of persons. See: Wojtyła. 'The Family as a Community of Persons.' 318-320; also, Shivanandan. *Crossing the Threshold of Love*. 79

<sup>134</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 60

<sup>135</sup> Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1954). 248. See also: Kelly, E. *Structure and Diversity: Studies in the Phenomenological Philosophy of Max Scheler*. (New York: New York Institute of technology, 1999). 144

in an interpersonal manner, which reflects ‘the *ubuntu* personalism, an African conceptualization of the human person. This principle defines the person as: “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*-I am because of others.”<sup>136</sup> It expresses the disinterested interconnectedness of the personal subject with another personal subject, with other beings in the visible world in which man lives and with the spiritual beings (God, gods- ancestors as the saints who are intercessors), which radiates the idea of our shared humanity. Ubuntu personalism truly states that being a ‘person’ and being a ‘human being’ are not the same, because one becomes a person through the personhood of the other real person.<sup>137</sup> Thus, J. S. Mbiti expresses this understanding idea: “I am because you are, and you are because I am.”<sup>138</sup> It shows that a person realizes his personhood through realization of the personalistic value of the person. As such, what lies beneath the fullness and becoming a person is the relationality of communality of the persons in the context of personalistic value, that surpasses the relations between non-human beings which has impersonal character and the naturalist idea of human relations as group identity connected together through events or common constituencies, according to Deret Parfit.<sup>139</sup>

This position, however, has been criticized by Paul Ricoeur, who affirms that personhood could be adequately described using three deictic pronouns-‘my, we and our.’<sup>140</sup> For Ricoeur, personhood or the relation between persons, that is, the real subjectivity of the person (the integration of the interior of a person with the exterior), encompasses first person, second person and third person interpersonality-living the good life with and for others in just institutions. He asserts that it is inconceivable for one to encounter himself without encountering the other as (we), and the other as (them) in interpersonality.<sup>141</sup> This as Bartnik claims affirming John Paul II is the ontological truth of human nature who does not live in solitude or as individual, rather, have common being-*ens commune*, common existence-*esse commune*, which is the fundamental reality and basis of interpersonality of human person as a relational being; which is also a necessity to exist as *ens relativum*,<sup>142</sup> as a being in relational communion with others.

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<sup>136</sup> Michael Battle, ‘The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu.’ Hulley, L., Kretzchmar, L. & Pato, L. L. eds., *Archbishop Tutu: Prophetic Witness in South Africa*. (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1996). 93-105

<sup>137</sup> Celucien L. Joseph, ‘Towards a Black African Theological Anthropology and Ubuntu Ethics.’ *Journal of Religion and Theology*, 2:1. (2018). 16-30

<sup>138</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*. (Doubleday Anchor Book, 1969/2012). 141

<sup>139</sup> Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). 217

<sup>140</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). 130

<sup>141</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. D. Savage. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970). 379

<sup>142</sup> Bartnik, ‘Personalistic Ontology.’ 77

This relation, he said, is not in the manner of anonymous ‘we’ or ‘thou,’ or a relation in vacuum, but, a personal relation with another real person and above all, to God. He is conscious of the fact that not every community has the character of personalistic value, that serves the development of the person in the uniqueness of the person and his innerness in the world. It affirms still the basis of human dignity as the only being with this capacity, and the only being created in the image of God, whom God wills for its own sake; and so, he participates in His nature in a relational manner, because man’s spiritual essence resembles and relates to God as a spiritual being, and in His social nature. The nature of person as *esse commune* relates indeed to that other I, that other existence, which are as near and dear as one’s own,<sup>143</sup> together with awareness of moral obligation and shared responsibility that does not tolerate use, that develops into relation of union of love<sup>144</sup> of moral agents (the love that possesses both metaphysical and axiological character), different from axiological character of love. Interpersonality possesses a normative significance and duty wherein one carries in himself the person of the other and vice versa which points to the irrevocable primacy of the personal subject in relation to community. Accordingly John F. Crosby declares that human,

person is a unique being due to the original act of creation, but also due to the natural ability of interpersonal relations, of acting according to good, moral good, both for oneself and also in the context of another human being. And just as moral good has specific effects within itself, moral evil brings such effects both on a personal and social level.<sup>145</sup>

Thus, Wojtyła argues that it is illogical to treat one another simply as objects, for if we do, we damage both others and ourselves.<sup>146</sup> This, he said, is an empirically observable truth which is universal to all human persons, founded on the understanding that to be a person is to be an agent of love, to be aware of that one’s own value engages the other. The love that recognizes the personalistic value of the personal subjectivity of each member of the community, while paying attention to the complexity of the human person, forbids treating people as individuals of a species. This idea affects what connotes the meaning of life and participation, and

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<sup>143</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 130

<sup>144</sup> The union of love according to JP II is the basis of the marital union and idea of person as gift a disinterested gift to the other person of the opposite as *communio personarum*, not in one-dimensional or objectivity manner, lacking proper personal subjectivity that could result in family as the authentic way of human continuity. According to him, “man... can attain his full identity only in sincere self-giving, that is, the ability to become a gift for others.” This act of self-giving and sharing is essentially connected to human nature and to the fact that he is a person. For in the birth of child(ren), new life begins and new human person(s) is/are introduced into the human community and society. This is the true nature of person as *communio personarum*, ‘the sacrament of nature,’ and a respect to the order of nature and natural morality of human person. See: Shivanandan. *Crossing the Threshold of Love*. 78

<sup>145</sup> Crosby. *Zarys filozofii osoby*. 264

<sup>146</sup> Rist. *What is a Person? Realities, Construct, Illusions*. p. 228

community character of the person, and Wojtyła challenges this idea for it violate the integrity of the personal subjectivity, especially of growing baby, the young, severely brain-damaged, senile, prisoners, foreigners and persons in struggling or difficult condition. He proceeds to outline the various manifestations of the sense of community in the nature of the person as follows: 'I-you' relation, and 'we' relation.

#### 4.1. The 'I-You (Other) Dimension

The analysis at this point properly demonstrates the character of participation as what structures community in Karol Wojtyła's personalistic culture affirming the inter-personal and social relational nature of the person. It basically refers to the concrete encounter in which persons act together, that is, the 'subjective' participation that involves an 'I,' not in the manner of existing and acting alone, but in common with another subjective 'I' as 'you.' It is the 'I' that acts together with another 'I,' which Wojtyła describes as the "encounter of 'I'-'you,' in which one person sees the other as another I and where the principle of reciprocity applies (for I see myself as the reflection of the truth of the other): each you is also another I."<sup>147</sup> What denotes the foundation of existing and acting together with another 'I' as the subjective 'you' is the personalistic value of act, as property of the person, that is, an interior homogenous property that determine transcendence, and the fact that by existing and acting together with others, the person exists and acts as a person.

As it were, the reciprocity of the personalistic value constitutes the character of the act, the common purpose by which each person is open to learn and share from each other's experience without losing or surrendering one's will in an objective manner as an object. In the I to you relation, there is a multiplicity of personal subjects that defines the basic recognition that you is just like the I who is always a someone, although somehow different from the I, but fully possessing a separate and personal subjectivity as *sui juris* who is also *alteri incommunicabilis*. Wojtyła, by this analysis, wrestles the person out from the web of egoism or individualism and its attendant effects, arguing that inasmuch as the relation of I to you somehow returns to the I, however, this relation is not potentially directed to me, but away from me, to the other, who may be virtual. The relation of I to you always contains a formal clear separation of one from the other and from many others. This separation expresses the basic affirmation of self and the inherent priority of the truth of the good of the

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<sup>147</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 237

person, in this relation to a community. This relationship, he said, is an interpersonal relation, connecting I to another concrete human being, a connection with some one person, not in the generic sense of human being, else it will no longer be 'you,' but a relation to a 'we.' This connection is contrary to 'I-it' reduction of person; rather, it connotes personal subject to another personal subject, one person to another person, of an 'I' to a 'you' or You<sup>148</sup> in a personal interlocutor.<sup>149</sup>

Indeed, the I to you relation does not imprison the self in himself, nor deny the person of his personal subjectivity. No, the subject I experiences the relationship to the you, likewise, the you has the same experience, and this strongly affirms and defines the person's subjectivity in its dual character. For it amounts to "treating and experiencing the other as oneself."<sup>150</sup> As a matter of fact, the I to you relation is a confirmation of the person's subjectivity and the priority of self, either as subject I relating to you, or you as subject relating also to I in interpersonal relation. Wojtyła however clarifies that the structures of transcendence and self-determination shape the character of I to you relation, because each person aims at the truth of good as the end, knowing the goodness and value of each person. As it were, each person is committed to developing the other, not on the basis of some knowledge<sup>151</sup> of the other, but, from the lived experience of self, in the recognition of the other as the being of existence and action, that is, as a unique *suppositum*. And this proceeds from one's experience of one's subjectivity and extends to the recognition that the 'other' possesses the same property of self-determination like the 'I,' and that he exists as neighbour to me is because he is another I with whom I live and act<sup>152</sup> in an interpersonal manner. This is the basis of friendship and the ground of sharing in the humanity of the other which possesses both normative and axiological significance, and there exists in this relationship some element of plurality of persons in their distinct subjectivity, in a complementary exchange of participation and interpersonality. This dialogical character of I to you

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<sup>148</sup> The sense of 'You' with capital refers to the Being of God as the unconditional 'You' for the human 'I', which is the basis of the human personal mode of existence. This relation to 'You' constitutes the major distinguishing element of human being from other beings. See: Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 261

<sup>149</sup> Burgos. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 132

<sup>150</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 244

<sup>151</sup> However, Wojtyła does not diminish the relevance of self-knowledge as a factor of participation, he rather clarifies that understanding the essence of the person opens the way to participation, but it does not per se determine it, nor give rise to an I-you relationship. He maintains that what is important in I-you relationship is the fact both I and you are human beings. See: Wojtyła. 'Participation or Alienation?' 201/2

<sup>152</sup> Jove Jim S. Aguas. *Person, Action and Love: The Philosophical Thoughts of Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II)*. Manila, Philippines: UST Publishing House, 2014). 161

constitutes the foundation of personalistic community and radiates the family, social/trade union, community, neighbour, state, nation etc.

However, the interpersonality of 'I' to 'you' relationship, Wojtyła emphasizes, has analogous way, involving especially two people joined together, regardless of the particular type of relationship. It encompasses the I-you relationship of "married or engaged couples, mother and child, two strangers who unexpectedly find themselves in such a relationship."<sup>153</sup> This sense of community, he continues, is sustained by the discovery and affirmation of the special value of the person, that is, the dignity of the person. According to Wojtyła, "in the relation of 'I-you,' an authentic inter-personal community is formed, if 'I' and 'you' persist in the mutual affirmation of the transcendent value of the person, confirming their actions. Such discovery and confirmation deserve the name *communio personarum*."<sup>154</sup> The recognition of this value proceeds from the source subject 'I' and returns to the 'I,' on this basis, we understand that harm done to another indirectly returns to the person (reflecting Kantian categorical imperative). The relationship further opens up for a broad understanding of the person and extends to the relation of the third person, to the reality of 'we' as a community.

#### 4.2. The 'We' Dimension

That participation is the property of the person refers to co-relating and acting together with another concrete person in the realization of the personalistic value of the person as well as the truth of the good of the act. The foundation of this relationship is the active interpersonality of I to you that binds the I to you, the you as in the group, which comprises of series of 'yous' also in active relationship and structures the community, possessing social character. As Wojtyła says, the relationship of I-you proceeds from me and is directed to all people, and always binds me to one, that is, to you as a representative of a group.<sup>155</sup> The 'we,' as a community, refers to the multitude of persons, that is, to multiple personal subjectivities, consisting of people that 'we' designate as a society, group. This relation of subjective I to you as a group does not possess the character of anonymity of the collective or community (like people walking on the street, or group of students on a journey while each person is occupied with his or her mobile phone), rather, it consists of multiplicity of unique personal subjects, that is, the multiple 'Is' acting for a common value.

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<sup>153</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 244

<sup>154</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 246

<sup>155</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 246

It shows that the 'we' as an expression of community appeals to the personal subjectivity of human being on the basis of interpersonal relation of I to you, and not merely as Wojtyła says on the third person-'he/she/they,' but on the plurality of 'you,' because there is no 'we' without the 'I' to 'you' relation, and I as an independent and autonomous self does not fully complete the person, as such does not structure self-determination and transcendence. And so, 'we' consists of different 'Is' who act and exist together with one another. Wojtyła defines this community, this we as '*communitas*,'<sup>156</sup> encompassing a large number of persons which has accidental existence, either as a result of relation that exists between persons that makes them members of a group(s), or with respect to belonging to each one of them.<sup>157</sup> Such a group of Is that exists and acts together for the common interest that is subordinated to the personalistic value and truth of good of act like: 'Teachers,' 'Catholics,' 'Military.' Nevertheless, Wojtyła explains that the personal subjectivity of the 'I' is not distorted, lost nor diminished in the 'we,' for there is a compatibility between personal subjectivity and community,<sup>158</sup> wherein each person fulfils himself in relation to what he calls "common good"<sup>159</sup> without losing or diminishing the personal good of the personal subject.

And so, he affirms that I is constituted in and by the we, not in a metaphysical sense, but as an experiential fact which takes place through acting and existing together with others in social communities, based on the common good, and value of the 'we' or groups.' Wojtyła further explains that there exists in the 'we' community a certain kind of subjectivity, namely, social subjectivity, because community is not a substantial being<sup>160</sup> similar to the subjectivity of the various Is. He further clarifies that social subjectivity of the we-community varies according to the purpose and structure of each group, that is, on the basis of the natural subjectivity proper to the person which tends not only to the self-realization of the person, but also the group. As the member of the we-community, the person becomes him/herself by acting together and striving to realize the good of the community and society, likewise personal good. Thus, common good/good of the community he said manifests as the reference point and what determines the quality of interpersonality of 'I' to 'you' of 'we.'

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<sup>156</sup> Wojtyła. 'Participation and Alienation.' 204

<sup>157</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 246

<sup>158</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 248

<sup>159</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 396 NB: Common good as the basis of existing and acting together with others in the we-community annihilates the recent lived experiences of individualism, egoism, 'objective totalism/anti-individualism.' Contrary to the idea of seeking purely personal wellbeing, or subordinating personal good to the 'community-consisting of a few,' common good is based on the personalistic value, in recognition of and without bypassing the wealth of objective good of each person within the community. In realizing the good of the community, the ideal of common good also reaches the personal good of the acting persons. See: Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 388-99

<sup>160</sup> Wojtyła. 'The Person: Subject and Community.' 248

As it were, the good of the collectives in a way structures the subjective good of each particular person. And Wojtyła affirms this, stating that what determines the character of common good “is the greater fullness of values than the individual good of each individual I in a given community...not the qualitative totality but the thoroughness (*gruntowność*).”<sup>161</sup> The sense of fullness here is grounded in a relation to truth and true good, which has subjective a character, but in the dimension of all the members. Thus, Jacques Maritain affirms this, stating that:

[...] the public welfare and the general order of law are essential parts of the common good of the body politics, but this common good has far larger and richer, more concretely human implications, for it is by nature the good human life of the multitude and is common to both the whole and the parts, the persons into whom it flows back and who must benefit from it. The common good is not only the collection of public commodities and services which the organization of common life presupposes: a sound fiscal condition, a strong military force; the body of just laws, good customs, and wise institutions which provides the political society with its structure; the heritage of its great historical remembrances, its symbols and its glories, its living traditions and cultural treasures.<sup>162</sup>

Accordingly, as Jan Galarowicz observes, the subjective structure of common good should be taken into account, because, “the common good must also include, and even above all, the subjective moment,”<sup>163</sup> and Wojtyła notes that it must have axiological character, because it belongs to the domain of ‘personal acting’ together with others on which the persons of the community develop and reach transcendence.

Indeed, there is a connection between ‘we’ and the common good which structures transcendence, since the common good is essential in understanding ‘we’ as the participation of the plurality of personal subjectivity that constitute community. Thus, he affirms that the common good is the essence of ‘we’ and the very core of social community.<sup>164</sup> It is the unifying factor of interpersonal in which the values of each person in the we do not diminish or becomes distorted, evidently expressed in marriage, where the interpersonal intimate relationship of the couple finds the common good in the procreation of child.<sup>165</sup> By this position, Wojtyła challenges the splitting of the personal subjectivity developed through

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<sup>161</sup> Wojtyła. *Person and Act and Related Essays*. 398/9

<sup>162</sup> Jacque Maritain, *Man and the State*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966). pp. 11-12

<sup>163</sup> Jan Galarowicz, *Karol Wojtyła. Myśl o człowieku*. (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Petrus, 2014). 189

<sup>164</sup> Shivanandan. *Crossing the Threshold of Love*. 98

<sup>165</sup> Wojtyła employs the idea of plurality of personal subjectivity in community to the relation of spouse and child. Fr. Meissner in his remark about this understanding in *Love and Responsibility* said: “the point is, the gift of one person for another, the gift which in this case is indispensable for the union of persons, so that they, a man and a woman, constitute a particular community and unity.” Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 286

the I-you and we relationships that result in utilitarianism, consumerism and egoism which alienate the person and weaken one's ability to experience the wealth of goodness and truth of another human person as another I, that distorts the possibility of proper friendship on the basis of norms of morality, and the truth of human nature as *communio personarum*.

Affirming Wojtyła's challenge of this distortion of human nature as a *communio personarum*, Walter Kasper observes that the human person by nature searches for another human person, and by relating with the other person(s) can this nature be fully lived. He clearly states that: "*Person sucht Person, und nur die absolute Person, die absolute vollendete Freiheit kann eine Antwort sein auf Frage des menschen-* person seeks person, and only the absolute person, the absolute perfect freedom can be an answer to man's question"<sup>166</sup> This relational searching of the other person is fundamentally stirred by love, yet on the basis of common good is the foundation of participation and plurality of 'I' and 'you' in the various dimensions of man as being that acts and exists in community. The whole dimensions of human acting and existing Wojtyła strongly declares is in love, in its metaphysical, ethical and psychological aspects. It is not only the basis of acting and existing in community, it also perfects the person,<sup>167</sup> and this character of human love distinguishes man's love from other beings of nature. Indeed, love portrays fully the whole notion of participation in community, demonstrates in entirety the affirmation of the human person and the value of the person. It is also an affirmation of obligatory invitation for the recognition and actualization of the dignity of oneself in relation to the other.

## 5. The Justified Proposal for Personalistic Culture

What is important as the justification as well as a definite response in the light of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II's anthropological personalistic culture to the impasse of the contemporary Western cultural experience essentially relates to the attitude towards freedom. At the base of today's anthropological and cultural crisis is the presupposition of liberalism/license, pure absolute autonomous analysis, and hermeneutics of realities in the world, especially human being, that result in various forms of relativism and the ideal of living as if there is no God and without a consciousness of the ultimate. John Paul II,

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<sup>166</sup> Walter Kasper, *Gott der Schöpfer und Vollender*. (Freiburg: Herder, 2017). 106

<sup>167</sup> Wojtyła. *Love and Responsibility*. 103-4. For a full analysis of the various aspects of love in the thought of Wojtyła, see: 101-6

conscious of this situation,<sup>168</sup> insistently appealed for a true or genuine culture of freedom as the responsible autonomy of man that opposes the illusory freedom banalized and trivialized in the recent time and marked by some ambivalence. Given this situation, there seems to be a paradox about the meaning of freedom in relation to the inherent value of a person in the present-day cultural experience which Jan Galarowicz describes as ‘cult of freedom,’ an anthropological attitude that reduces man’s freedom to an animalistic experience of freedom, as well as the attitude of denial or disbelief in freedom.<sup>169</sup> But Wojtyła’s personalistic, genuine conception of freedom as the foundation of human existence, as analysed, is a direct confrontation to the false freedom of the contemporary cultural experience.

He construes genuine freedom essentially attached to truth as the natural ethos<sup>170</sup> and basis of the proper functioning of the human person as an individual and in relation to others in the true nature of man as a social being. Also, the perennial and classical understanding of human being which Wojtyła assumes as the basic defining character of human being, is that, man is a free being, and his freedom because of his intellect and will elevates him above other creatures of nature. Freedom Wojtyła argues is the fundamental right and foundation of the dignity of the human person. This right uniquely manifests in the experience of man act-transitive and intransitive<sup>171</sup> in which we grasp the personal agency of the person in his conscious act, and this structure Wojtyła says offers us insight into the essence of who the person is, revealing the truth about the person.

The right to freedom is innate and natural to every human person, lived on the basis of duty, right conscience, without external pressure or coercion, which structures what the person becomes given his knowledge of the act and his responsible choice and decision. What manifests from this structure is the morality as it tends conscious personal act towards truth about good, which binds freedom to truth, that is, not on the perspective of personal choices in absolute character, but in relation to universal truth about good, knowable to the reason and relates to morality. And so, what man becomes, given his conscious personal action as morally good or bad, which defines his uniqueness, follows from this structure, affirming also

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<sup>168</sup> The drama of the contemporary situation seems to suggest that human person is faced with the cultural threat that results from the presupposition of culture as product of man, or rather, the result of the work of his hand, and even more, the work of his intellect and tendencies of his will, that alienate the person from himself and from others which turns especially the genius aspect of culture against man who is the centre and sense of culture. See; John Paul II. *Redemptor Hominis*. (Nairobi-Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1979). No. 15

<sup>169</sup> Jan Galarowicz, *Paradoks egzystencji etycznej. Inspiracje: Ingarden-Wojtyła-Tischner*. (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Petrus, 2009). 139

<sup>170</sup> Gerald J. Beyer, ‘John XXIII & John Paul II: The Human Rights Popes. *Ethos*, 27:2. (2014). 50-91

<sup>171</sup> Andrzej Szostek (2013). ‘Karola Wojtyły koncepcja wolności.’ *Filozofia i Chrześcijańska*. 10. (2013). 47-59. See also; Andrzej Szostek, ‘Karol Wojtyła’s View of Human Person in the Light of Experience of Morality.’ *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*. 60. (1986). 50-64

that *operari sequitur esse*, by which man realizes self-determination and transcendence. Man's becoming does not manifest in his acting alone, but in existing and acting together with other concrete human subject in a dialogical manner, that is, through the phenomenon of participating with other concrete human subjects, and the denial of it alienates man from subjective personalistic value which has enormous consequences, such as egoism, totalism-totalitarianism, depression, addictions, and suicide.

And as John Paul II says, the dialogical cultural character reveals the inner culture of the person, for the greater a man's cultural value is, the more it must be used consciously, actively, responsibly, and in a way that radiates the value of others.<sup>172</sup> Wojtyła clearly declares that knowledge about the complexity of human nature, of his immanence and transcendence revealed through axiological culture of the person, is the proper gateway to human existence and reality, and what makes man more of a man.<sup>173</sup> This recognition of true integration leads to proper intersubjectivity of a person through participation, or acting together with people, that results in true friendships, families, groups, society, states, and nations which cannot be realized if we hold on to these practices that materialize and commodify the person. Indeed, the truth of the nature of the person manifests as a community of persons, in the connectedness of interpersonalities of the personal subjects that underlies *ubuntu*, which is poetically portrayed by Chinua Achebe in 'Things Fall Apart.' He writes "when a man invites his kinsmen to a feast, he does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground, it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so."<sup>174</sup> However, the attitudes of the contemporary Western lived experience of secularism, in pursuit of individual pleasure, desire, gratification are sundered from the truth of the human nature in authentic communality, in accordance with the proper experience of common good in line with right reason, normative conscience, criteria of justice in subordination to personalistic value. For true sense of participation manifests in the mutual subordination of common good to personalistic value and the subordination of personalistic value to common good.

Again, freedom in the absolute character says John Paul II, "negates and destroys itself, becomes a factor leading to the destruction of others, since it no longer recognizes and

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<sup>172</sup> Jan Paweł II. *Wiara i Kultura*. Dokumenty, przemówienia, homilie. (Rzym: Polski Instytut Kultury Chrześcijańskiej Fundacja, 1986). 148

<sup>173</sup> Jan Paweł II. *W imię przyszłości kultury: Poznać człowieka w Chrystusie*. Jan Paweł II o godności ludzkiej, eds. J. Kowalski, D. Sikorski, & G. Ślęzak. (Częstochowa: Częstochowskie Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne, 1983). 197–198.

<sup>174</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*. (London: Heinemann, 1958). Pt.5, ch. 15.

respects its essential link to truth, emancipating itself from all forms of tradition and authority, thus shuts off from objective and universal truth.”<sup>175</sup> He further emphasizes that freedom cannot prescind from morality, for there can be no morality without freedom, for only in genuine freedom can man turn to what is good.<sup>176</sup> As such, realizing the universal cultural good of the person depends on the affirmation of the dependence of freedom on truth, which is the basis of personal and social life, and liberates the person from selfish interest and whim, various forms of relativisms which points out man as an autonomous creator of cultural values and truth. Such an attitude alienates man from the truth of culture and from the truth of good about a person, while assuming the position of a supreme tribunal of moral judgment and subjectivization of truth and morality. But the personalistic approach of Wojtyła in the universal affirmation of the good of the person states that cultural acts are constituted and founded in and through praxis as morality, and this, he said, is the route to the depth and essence of the truth, goodness, and beauty of the person.<sup>177</sup> Evidently, achieving these fundamental values is in man’s recognition of the axiologically fundamental truth about the good of the person in cultural phenomena as the basic aim of culture by which man improves and develops, and as a means of man’s actualization of his potential nature. A recognition that will confront the various specific cultural experiences of anti-humanism, anti-anthropology, desacralization, and depersonalization<sup>178</sup> that relativize cultural values in the contemporary Western secularism in the materialization of the essence of culture and human person.

Wojtyła sees the anthropological cultural crisis of our time as a result of the separation of the spheres of culture, and states that the remedy to the present cultural confusion is the recognition of the common grounds of understanding and relationship between the various spheres of cultural experiences, namely the personalistic value or good of the person who is the sense, the centre and subject-object of culture. This common ground does not only refer to the truth of the good of the person, but it also directly and indirectly relates to God, who is the source and ultimate end of cultural values. As he said, the cultural value/good does not only relate to the good of the person, but to God as well, because the Christian culture, which happens to be the foundation of Western culture, is also the base of human improvement, a

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<sup>175</sup> John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. No. 19

<sup>176</sup> John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. No. 34

<sup>177</sup> At the climax of every cultural experiences and achievements says JP II, there is awaken in man the need for the truth, the longing for beauty, readiness to do good and sensitivity to transcendence, not only beyond the boarder between subjectivity and objectivity, it reaches the realization of self-determination. See; Jan Paweł II. *Wstanie, chodźmy*. (Krakow: Wydawnictwo św. Stanisławe BM Archidiecezji Krakowskiego, 2004). 74/5

<sup>178</sup> Piotr Goliszek, ‘Personalistic Concept of Moral Formation.’ *Roczniki Teologiczne*. LXVII:II. (2020). 79-93

person and a community. True culture, as person-centred culture, draws its strength from the Divine Law, through the revealed truth in the Gospel, and determines the truth about man, the meaning and purpose of his life in union with God as the ultimate end of cultural experiences. He maintains that it is by integrating as one the various spheres of culture- cognitive, artistic, moral, transcendent values- man could realize his goal, determine his becoming and his ultimate end; and this structure certainly defines man as true and authentic creator of culture, a culture that is human life conscious. This demonstrates in the cultural activities the relation between man and God, that expresses the relation between culture and religion.

Thus, true culture is a reflection of the culture of life in which culture achieves its fundamental purpose as man's creative activity, as a medium for preserving and expressing his intellectual and aesthetic achievement, and as what rationally and purposefully improves man and his world via creating values, rooted in transcendent truth and moral order. It is a culture, as John Paul II says, that always sees the "greatness, dignity and value that belongs to all humanity."<sup>179</sup> True creators of culture, John Paul II argues, are not only creators of material works of culture, they also build lives, their lives as individuals and those of others; shape and orient lives to the ultimate reality through axiological praxis. It shows that the truth of a person is the starting point and the centre of culture, in which we grasp the essence of culture as the phenomenon that cultivates the soul, or rather the whole mechanisms of man as a person, as well as the whole human endeavours, on the basis of ethical or moral law. And so, the unique role of the cultural spheres of *theoria* and *techne* in discovering and reaching truth about man and his world will be incomplete and anti-human when they are isolated from religion and transcendent morality. For the truth about man, John Paul II points out, is not limited to science and technology; instead, true personalistic culture recognizes, appreciates, and gives justice to the autonomy, specificity, and the close relationship of the other ways of reaching and knowing the truth, as well as probing or monitoring all the channels and sources of this knowledge about the person. What is important is the awareness and recognition that the path to the truth about the person is given to different spheres of cultural experiences, and it demands an openness of mutual aspirations that may result from the dialogue of these domains in responsible actions on the basis of an ethical dimension.<sup>180</sup> The integration and obedience to faith/religion of the domain of *theoria* and *techne* portrays the broad character of personalistic culture in a holistic way beyond pragmatic and material

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<sup>179</sup> John Paul II. *Redemptor Hominis*. No. 10

<sup>180</sup> John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio*. No. 13

context about the truth about the person in response to “cultural impoverishment and the decline of mankind.”<sup>181</sup>

Indeed, the truth of Wojtyła’s personalistic culture manifests the holistic apprehension of the unity of the human person in his subjective and objective elements, which does not tolerate any fragmentary or disintegration of the core of the human person, nor reduce the human being to a mere individual species, cosmological or pure immanent being. This approach permeates and synthesizes as one the theoretical and practical aspects of cultural experience in the knowledge and understanding of the person. As a matter of fact, Wojtyła is not alone in the integration of immanent and transcendence elements in one holistic understanding of the person. According to Stanisław C. Bartnik, the integral personalistic culture is the starting point of all human inquiries and analysis of the realities in the world. This approach is the key to interpreting and understanding both created and uncreated realities. For the person from the substantive aspect is the fundamental reality, and from the methodological aspect, the person defines the direction of thinking and understanding;<sup>182</sup> as such, the person is the summary of all cultural realities. Wojtyła strongly argues that culture has a normative character, and through this prism we grasp the mutual complementary relation between the rational nature and cultural praxis by which the human person is elevated beyond mere being of nature. Thanks to the relation of spiritual or transcendent realm to the corporeal realm, the human person could reach his fullness beyond the immanent frame by relating the experiential facts to the right judgment of action.<sup>183</sup> In line with this, Cardinal Stephen Wyszyński argues that this personalistic value, likewise other men’s values, essentially relate to the transcendental values of truth, goodness and beauty that lead to human perfection, and constitute the soul of culture, the spirit of culture, indeed, the Western civilization.<sup>184</sup>

Moreso, Wojtyła argues that by their very nature, the human person is a subject of rights which cannot be exploited or violated, and this quality is affirmed always with respect to freedom lived in truth. When freedom is isolated from the truth of good or in acceptance of the truth, it loses its foundation and exposes the human person to manipulation, violence of

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<sup>181</sup> Mariya G. Kokhanovaska, ‘Adequate Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła.’ *Anthropological Measurements of Philosophical Research*. 14. (2018). 172-79. See also; Marek Słomka, *Who is Man? The Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła*. (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2017). Ch.1.

<sup>182</sup> Stanisław C. Bartnik, *Osoba i personalizm*. (Lublin: Standruk, 2012). 11-47; Possenti, V. *Il nuovo principio persona*. (Rome: Armando, 2013).

<sup>183</sup> Jan Z. Celej, *Kultura chrześcijańska dusza narodu*. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sióstr Loretanek, 1995). 109

<sup>184</sup> Stefan kardynał Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne*. (Warszawa: ODISS, 1990). 378-382

passion,<sup>185</sup> emotionalization of human nature (apriorism), and practices of the culture of death that negate the fact of the right to life and the understanding that human life is a process. The affirmation of this right, and the idea that life is a process attests to the truth of family in the union of man-husband and woman-wife in a moral environment that could result in a new life, the child. Unfortunately, the identification of the self as a fluid reality on the basis of bodily manifestation does not align with this truth of the essence of a person in the familyhood. According to Borden P. Bowen, the materialistic understanding of human being that results in fluid personal identity and pure bodily identification simply because the person possesses mouth, nose, ears, or other physical bodily features, without considering the personal innerness that determines the uniqueness and incommunicability of each individual person is incomplete. Personhood, he asserts, is essentially characterized by spiritual personal qualities and these peculiarities are beyond the physical and bodily perception, for the reality of human personhood goes beyond the physical, bodily, and superficial qualities, but descends into the realm of causality or causation, and so accounts for the uniqueness, specificities, as well as differences in each person.<sup>186</sup> The reality of the person manifests in the recognition of the truth of integration of body to spirit, not in the manner of relation to each other, but in complementarity or mutuality of each other that actualizes the unity of the person.

He clearly states that, “personalistic culture is not a theory of the person or a theoretical science of the person, but the practical and ethical culture that is concerned with the person as a subject and an object of activity, as a subject of rights, freedom, etc.”<sup>187</sup> It supposes that the phenomenon of culture, is for the proper development and perfection of human potentialities, and that culture through knowledge and work, brings the world under man’s control, not in absolute control, but through moral order/imperative as that which probes the experience so that man can realize his real existence,<sup>188</sup> and culture serves man’s need. The source of this experiential fact is the innerness of man, structured by the soul, and through the material elements, the spiritual activities are expressed externally in a concrete and permanent whole experience of man as a person. In this sense, the anthropocentrism of the present-day ideological believe of fluidity of human nature characterized by immanentism

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<sup>185</sup> John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*. No. 46

<sup>186</sup> Borden P. Bowne, ‘The Failure of Impersonalism.’ B. P. Bowne. *Personalism*. (Boston, Houghton: Mifflin and Company, 1908/1960). 217-267

<sup>187</sup> John Paul II. *Gift and Mystery*. (New York: Doubleday, 1996). 166

<sup>188</sup> John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996). 214

does not apply, because, the human matter interiorizes the spiritual dynamisms in the objective reality of the personal identity of person as always male or female, who exists and acts through his nature, his personal suppositum; and who in his various experiences and manifestations is always one and the same person, always manifesting as male or female.

Furthermore, there is observed in the sense of integration of immanence with transcendence in the nature of the person, this portrays the dual character of the essence of culture as impersonal relating to material element, and personal relating to and rooted directing to the innerness of the person. On the basis of relation, Wojtyła argues that human nature is never separate, not singular; rather, the transcendent interpenetrates and compliments the immanent to constitute a permanent unite, and a complete whole, a structure that is universal to all humanity. As a matter of fact, the person is neither a material body, nor a spiritual soul, but a synthesis of the soma-psycho-spiritual elements.<sup>189</sup> He observes that constituting the nature of the person on pure corporeality and immanent factor pulverizes the essence of the human being and the qualitative development of man's personhood.<sup>190</sup> Wojtyła also argues that, "it would be wrong to claim that the totality and proper object of our cognition is matter, and that object is simply being, or rather, beings in their whole richness and diversity."<sup>191</sup> As it were, that the transcendence of person in both horizontal and vertical dimensions is a vital element of cultural experience, and this claim does not reduce the person to a pure spiritual being; it portrays the holistic nature of the human subject that cannot be negated. In line with this, Francis Fukuyama argues that religion and transcendence are important aspects of culture, for they serve as the habits of the mind and heart, essential for channelling and disciplining the enormous energies set loose by the sense of absolute freedom, corporeality of person, unreal apperception of human spiritual experience that serve as the purpose of 'genuine' human flourishing.<sup>192</sup> Implicitly, the nature of the human person does not purely subsists or cannot be fully grasped, nor subordinated merely to sole immanent, empirical manifestation, or rational functionality, for these approach have been found to reduce the person to conventional capacity.

The truth of the nature of the human person justified by Wojtyła's personalistic culture, highlights Peter Berger's understanding of the reality of today's cultural experience in what he describes as 'desecularization.' He suggests by this concept, that the recent

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<sup>189</sup> Acosta. & Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act*. 188

<sup>190</sup> Peter Simpson, *On Karol Wojtyła*. (Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001). 8

<sup>191</sup> Wojtyła. *Considerations on the Essence of Man*. 17/19

<sup>192</sup> Peter L. Berger, ed. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999). 22

cultural experience is witnessing a renewed religious and transcendent ideal, although not yet fully grasped or blossomed in the Western European culture. However, given the uncertainties surrounding modernity and secularism, he argues and believes that since religion has always been around, what is needed now is the appearance of the absence of religious mentality<sup>193</sup> which will repeal the effects of the anthropological turn of the Cartesian revolution. He maintains along the line of thought of Wojtyła that the truth of the person, his purpose and mysteries in the world will become meaningful through the resurgence of religious principles and morality, traditional transcendent cultural values, defiance of ‘Zeitgeist,’<sup>194</sup> and reference to transcendence and the truth of the person. For human life bereft of transcendence subjects the human being to an impoverished and untenable condition, with difficulty of reaching his final or ultimate end. Indeed, the notions of ultimate and transcendence are integral elements of culture, that structure the sphere of religion. In the complexity of human nature, these elements of cultural experience are significant, because they enrich the immanent structure and balance the superficial apprehension of culture and the person.

Indeed, secularism opens the contemporary person to the reality of the metaphysical conception of culture and the truth of the spiritual value of act, with its innovation, creativity, and transformation, which the person desires.<sup>195</sup> And so, the justification of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II’s personalistic approach is relevant and of paramount importance in this moment of cultural and ideological upheaval, given its integration of the good elements which secularism offers with the ultimate or metaphysically-based analysis on the grounds of objective moral order, which will rescue humanity from the gradual loss of his essence and value. His comprehensive insight into the truth of the nature of the person dialogues with the present-day reductionistic attitudes, opposing the absolute liberal-based analysis with other dogmatic and dangerous ideologies that reduce the person to singularity of nature in the materialistic immanent conception, resulting in various manipulations, and utilitarian character that violate the integrity and the dignity of the human person. The primacy and priority of the human person and the recognition of his extraordinary dignity and integrity in the whole dynamisms of human experience of act that constitute culture shapes the meaning of culture as a phenomenon for the person. For man’s recognition of the axiological character

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<sup>193</sup> Berger. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. p. 12. Also; Dylan Reaves, ‘Peter Berger and the Rise and Fall of the Theory of Secularization.’ *Denison Journal of Religion*, 11:3. (2012). 11-19

<sup>194</sup> Berger. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. 7

<sup>195</sup> Stephen Bullivant, Hannah Vaughan-Spruce, & Bernedette Durcan, *After Secularization: The Present and Future of British Catholicism*. (London: CTS Press, 2025). 47

of acts of culture and indeed the person as the sense of culture structured essentially by his spiritual elements, elevates man beyond his creative activities or culture forming activities, and beyond externalities of his nature assumed by the recent cultural experiences towards the truth of his nature, the meaning and purpose of his life and to his Ultimate End and Good-God.

## CONCLUSION

The present-day crisis of culture cannot be reduced merely to disputes among the diverse theoretical approaches to the human being in both individual and social dimensions. However, the approach of different philosophical schools to resolve the crisis did not yield much result, given their antinomies of thought. The problem was heightened by the supposition that the natural sciences, as the proper field of scientific research, possess the exclusive ability to grasp the truth about the human being. This, in turn, relegated philosophy, especially metaphysics, to the status of being incapable of conceiving the truth about the human being as such, irrelevant to the contemporary situation of the human person. Although one cannot clearly explain or state how and why we arrive at this present controversy concerning the understanding of culture, however, the discovery of this study, in agreement with many scholars, identifies the root of the problem as the disintegration of the meaning of culture that presupposes the Enlightenment movement, which results in ‘anthropocentric shift.’ This shift follows from understanding the nature and meaning of culture, and results in a crisis of culture that relates to the controversy about the nature, meaning, and purpose of the human being, which gave rise to anthropological defect and thrust towards secular ideology. Various manifestations of this shift and defect have been discussed in the course of this research, and it was observed that the root of the problem could be traced to the ambiguities in the foundational meaning of culture by which we interpret the realities in the world, especially the complexity of human nature. Thus were placed the demarcation of culture or worldview into scientific and non-scientific, sacred and profane, in the form of division of the various spheres of culture.

This demarcation of culture has, in the contemporary approach, reduced the understanding of culture to psycho-biological and sociological meaning, dominating the whole spheres of human endeavours (cultural experiences), while bracketing *praxis* and *religio* from the meaning of culture. This new approach to the phenomenon of culture gave rise to the cultural experience described as ‘secularism’ and has become the spectrum of viewing realities in the world, especially the human being, mostly in the Western and North Atlantic worldview and lived experience, extending also to other regions of the world. The idea of secularism basically refers to and presupposes a secular mentality, expressing material and immanent interpretation of the universe, and with particular respect to the human being,

negating the notion of transcendence and ultimate reality. Thus, the exclusive naturalistic and materialistic perception of reality that results in specific humanism and depersonalization excludes from the nature of the human person that which is essential and which accounts for the originality, uniqueness, unrepeatability, and dignity of each human person constituted by the spiritual element that complements the material element of human being. Thus, culture came to be understood as a materialistic representation of signs and symbols in the universe, oriented purely toward transitive experience or external human products or achievements.

Some scholars, however believe, that secular ideas do not entirely suppose hostility towards the sacred and religious mentality; instead, and so oppose such notion that secular ideals are hostile to sacred or ultimate/transcendent perception of reality. They rather suppose the neutrality of the effects and influence of traditional and religious approach to realities, while some argue that the present time is experiencing a rebirth and resurgence of religious sentiment, principles, and traditional values in the public domain. However, Peter Berger's 'The Desecularization Theory' and Chantel Delsol's 'La fin de la Chrétienté' describe the experience of rebirth as possessing yet a secular ideology with less hostility and dominance, but has the character of privatization of religious experience and secularization of ultimate perception in the manner of expressing spirituality without transcendence and rationalization of spiritual and religious elements. But such supposition defects itself given the character of ideological theories and practices which secular mentality propagates which sets a boundary between secular and sacred, wherein secular is a break away from tradition and reference to God, authority, as such, man on the individual basis has become the measure of all things, the determiner of good or bad, true or false, as well as the ruler of the world. Although the realm of sacred and secular are two different spheres of culture maintaining their borders, yet they are objectified in the human person, and in the human person also they find their meaning and relevance, which does not and would not tolerate any division since the human person is the subject and object of the spheres of culture which secularism tends to separate.

The manifestations of secularism in the contemporary Western cultural experience rather supposes, as we observe in this cause of this discussion, a pure mechanistic and materialistic approach to the meaning of culture, confining the nature of the human person to such understanding. It sets a clear boundary between the material/immanent and ultimate/spiritual transcendent approach and understanding of realities in the world, with particular respect to the human person. Thus, there emerged an absolute 'cosmologization' of realities and a breakaway from the ideal of an enchanted world or universe, resulting in a shift toward a more penetrable ideal as the new cultural experience. Thereby, the human

person and the manifestation of humanity were reduced to mere consciousness, treated as just any other subject or substance among the beings of nature, and thus made vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation, an issue extensively addressed in discussions on the various manifestations of the culture of death. What informs this reductionistic attitude and meaning?

The investigation carried out in this study singles out the separation of objective truth from freedom as the basis of all human endeavours or cultural experiences by separating transitive from intransitive spheres of human action, while singling out the transitive aspect as the core of culture, and this obstructs the realization of the objective truth, goodness, and beauty of the human person. The idea of the changeable character of culture informs the idea of fluid human identity as a phenomenon that is sociologically and psychologically influenced, based on epiphenomenon and an empirical base-conception of human nature. And so, consequent in such recent deceptive language expression and concept like ‘gender identity,’ ‘transsexualism,’ ‘trans-identity,’ and other related ideas or movements play a significant role in reducing human nature to bodily identification, or that personhood is constituted by bodily appearance. As it were, these ideologies founded on individual rational autonomy or absolute freedom and personal choice sever from cultural experiences the notion of ultimate reality or transcendence, objective moral order, which gives room for the various forms of relativism, collapse of traditional or ultimate values or virtues, pursuit of individual value, truth, and good as oppose objective good or moral good (*bonum honestum*) and common good (*bonum commune*).

Again, the materialization of culture in the reductionism of human being to bodily substance, facts, or pure consciousness expresses and appeals to phenomenalism and external manifestation as the whole truth of the human being, where pure rational or emotional capacities constitute humanness. But cultural acts, encompassing different spheres of human activity, as the gateway to understanding human nature, surpass such antinomy of singularity of human nature, because cultural experience is richer than mere phenomenal appearances or purely psychic feelings. And such a reduction of the nature of human being distorts the understanding of human being as a self-determining subject, given his ontological quality that constitutes the basis of understanding culture as a phenomenon that tends towards creation and improving the self, and then towards human products. But prioritizing the secondary object of culture in the ideal of secularism fragments the nature of man, giving emphasis either on the biological, psychical, or social, expressing the mechanistic nature of the human being, lacking an authentic, realistic subjectivity of the person as subject who exists and acts in a unified whole. Again, just an objectivistic understanding of human being as pure

consciousness or subjectivity, and so manifesting as something, always expresses human being as an object and mere means, which exposes him to exploitation, manipulation, and violation, lived in the various acts of culture of death. Indeed, the plight of the human person in the face of the degradation from the manifestations of the negative ideologies of contemporary secularism demonstrates the substitution of the sense of the ontological character of human being, who is always a subject and person, with notions such as personality, identity, or gender, which align with materiality of human nature as something that is fluid, likewise, negating the immaterial nature, the spiritual soul. The popular vision of spirituality in contemporary Western culture is rather a turn to nature in search for spiritual and religious experience, with an individual perception of moral values and the truth of the good.

The anthropological harm that follows from cultural crisis continually occupies many philosophical anthropologists, leading to the emergence of personalistic thought as an intervention aimed at addressing the problem within the complexity of the nature of man as a person. The personalistic approach, which Wojtyła adopts, possesses a metaphysical character with a phenomenological blend that construes man as a person, that is, as a substantial being that highlights the person's experience of himself as the efficient cause of culture-creating action and values. This structure relates not to the idealistic virtue of experience, but to the concrete experience of the person, which consists of one's personal experiences, including the external experiences which are associated with the person, whereby the person is aware of himself as the one who is and has the experience. Even the diversity and complexity of this experience, yet the person experiences it as an integral whole, that is, as a unity of experience in its internal and external dimensions. And the nature of this experience though complex, yet, it is rich and continuously improves as the person develops and matures, as such, structures the person's uniqueness and unrepeatable quality, as well as reveals the essence of human person in his immanent/material and transcendent/spiritual nature, revealing also the subjectivity that belongs only to human person as self-determining being.

Wojtyła undertakes a phenomenological analysis of experience strengthened by the metaphysical tradition of realism. And so, he reconciled these two dimensions of experiences as consisting of one's cognitive contact with oneself, stating that the experience of himself lasts as long as one is directly in cognitive contact with himself as the subject and object. For there is in this complex experience the element of dependence of one on the other, and they complement each other, and so become a kind of understanding of self. He also claims that this experience is common to every human person, although each person has a unique

manifestation which does not appeal to pluralism or relativism, consequent therefore in the consciousness of the value of the person (personalistic value), dignity of the human person, man's interpersonal relationship with real human subject and other beings. It rather relates to the subjective experience of the person in which the person is conscious of the fact that he is the one having the experience, which informs the first-person character of the analysis of the experiential data, wherefore each person manifests as 'a world-a microcosm,' 'an autoteleology,' and has 'a unique finality.' And so, action in the sense of the totality of human activities and experiences constitutes the nature of culture, and the basis of the personalistic thought of Wojtyła as a gateway to the truth of the human person that opposes the one-sided understanding of cultural action and experience. Thus, he states that culture and acts of creating are universal and definite expressions of human existence.

His personalism considers as the foundation of culture-forming activities the ethical experience, or rather moral order as the principle of veracity of action which derives from the cooperation of the human interiority- intellect, free will, emotion, and structures the spiritual nature of the human person. He argues that action reveals the person and the justification for such action that leads to the ontic essence of the person, by which we fully understand the person, is through praxis as objective moral. The ontic analysis of action gives us the deepest insight into the reality and nature of the human person. For Wojtyła, as he argues along the scholastic dictum *operari sequitur esse*, that the personal existence of each person at any stage and condition in life, as an embryo, child, adult, elderly, or sick, greatly flows from the particular character of action of the person and discloses the personal subjectivity and the whole dynamism of the person. It follows that every human being as a person manifests a unique causative feature that is proper to the person as a subject, which differs one from the other.

Subordinating cultural activities through the phenomenon of lived experience to objective moral order shows that the realization of moral value, especially moral good or truth of good, corresponds to self-fulfilment and distinguishes human person and his activities from the world of things in their operativities and mere bodily manifestation. For there is a connection between moral good and the realization of one's ultimate goal in life. He credits this quality to the innerness of the person, whereupon actions flow, which also sheds light on the character of human action beyond empirical or phenomenological description of the person on the basis of external effects which is typical of material beings. But the basis of the essence of the being of the human person stems from what is spiritual, namely, the soul, and given that it has no definite moment of determination in a human person, it therefore

guarantees the inherent right of life of an embryo and other human persons in need. Thus, he condemns various views of human nature based on the grounds of pure empirical, or cognitive and immanent elements that reduce the human person to an organic being or material substance, a pure self-conscious existence without reference to the ontological source of the beingness of the person, revealed through ontic culture-forming activities and cultural experiences.

And so, the soul or rational soul is the source of all human capacities and faculties, and the origin of the exteriority of action, revealing the spirit and body as what compose the unity of the person. Nonetheless, the spiritual or rational soul and its sundries- vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual- do not act independently of the body. However, this invisible feature in every human person determines the person's uniqueness and defines the *sui generis* of the person. Hence, the spiritual faculties- intellect, will, and emotion- structure the moral nature of man by which man chooses and decides his action, and takes responsibility for the outcome, and so fulfils himself by realizing true good and *vice versa*. The integration of these faculties of personal act, as it was shown in our discussion, frees man from the psychological and sociological factors that deny man's agency, wherein the will is bracketed, or rather the rational will is subordinated to emotional feeling, societal influence or environmental factors reducing personal action to pure instinctual action on the same level with animal, with no sense of obligation, duty or responsibility.

This person-centred cultural experience prioritizes a culture of life that recognizes the inner dynamism source of human life with the sense of human person as an embodied spirit, a spirited body, for the essence of the human person cannot be reduced to mere phenomenological description, nor spiritual being. Instead, the essence of human nature is revealed in the psychosomatic whole beyond functionality or even higher human capacities. These higher human capacities, just like cultural artefacts, are only aspects of who the person is. They manifest only the accidents, the properties, or the secondary sense of the personal characteristic of the human person, whereas the primordial source and the quidditas of existence of man is revealed in the genuine innerness. The genuine ontological innerness is not disrupted in the course of one's growth and development, and so, not subject to being fluid as supposed in the ideology of contemporary secularism that construes innerness from the prism of personal identity and mode of being separate from real act and ontic nature while extolling happening. But Wojtyła's realistic analysis of the whole dynamism of personal action-acting and happening through the act-potency theory and in the light of

phenomenological hermeneutics of experience, which reveals the true anthropology of man founded on ethical analysis of the experiential facts.

This synergy of phenomenology with metaphysics in the personalistic philosophy of Wojtyła truly justifies the truth of human nature in its subjective and objective status, for it portrays man's existence and acting, *suppositum* beyond 'ordinary' *suppositum* or like any other *supposita*. The point of departure of man's existence as an individual rational substance relates to this relationship where man's cultural acts, especially the truth of good as the outcome of his personal acts, define self-determination and transcendence. It also radiates the transcendental values not only in man, but his environment. This metaphysical character of the human person as *subjectum* and *suppositum* that underlies the personalistic intervention of Wojtyła in the analysis of this research, wherein he argues that the essence and root of human action relate to ethical experience or objective moral order, refutes the contemporary practices of relativism of morality, truth, and cultural value. For the truth of good of action that structures the truth of good of the person, or what Wojtyła refers to as 'personalistic value' and defines human dignity, proceeds from the objective moral order which prioritizes the common/objective good of all human persons.

At the centre of all the activities in the universe is the realization of the truth of the good of the person as the first object of act, and this consideration is possible only through the objective moral order that serves the good of the person as an individual, as well as the good of all, the common good. Indeed, personal action driven by true culture, by what the true rational will knows and understands to be true and good not only for the individual person, but for the whole community (*bonum commune*), not for the present moment, but for the present and generations after. This echoes Kantian categorical imperative, which Wojtyła recognises as a great ethical principle, namely: 'would that the maxim of your action should become a universal law.' However, Wojtyła, relying on Thomistic ethics and the theory of the will, which Kantian imperative omitted, clarifies that the will as the *quod exercitum*, and guided by the intellect, tends action towards the true/concrete good (*quod specificationem*) for the good of the person. It is on the basis that personal action radiates self-determination through self-possession and self-governance, and transcendence, especially vertical transcendence, indeed, man's ultimate end. As it were, prioritizing the truth of good of the person which in the thought of Wojtyła portrays the essence of culture of life comes first before any subordinate value, like political correctness and economic value that inform the various attitudes of culture of death in the contemporary secularism with their consequent

effects of alienation that results in depression, addictions, alcoholism, dysphoria, suicides and related risks or dangers.

Truly, the spiritual elements or faculties or the intransitive experience is not only the basis of true culture, but also the source of human development, human perfection, and indeed the subjectivity of man as a person. It also differentiates man from other objective beings, even the most advanced animal. The consciousness and recognition of the spirituality, the transcendent status of the rational soul as the source and the principle of human life, which regulates the vegetative and sensitive elements, elevates man's action beyond his desires and feelings, and above the level of irrational animality, or like any other substance. Indeed, Wojtyła highlights the essence of this spiritual nature of man as affirmed in the ontological subjectivity of man as *suppositum humanum* as the source of the intersubjectivity of persons in the structure of I-you, I-other, we, and community. For he sees in the nature of the human person a correlation with his action, not solely as individual action, but action that comes to its complete realization in the subjectivity of the person. This dimension of human nature affirms the subject-object structure of culture and cultural acts in which actions emanating from the spiritual nature are objectivized in another subjective human person, although not in the materialistic or objectivistic manner of *utile*, but in the manner that truly reveals the *fieri* of man. This is an anthropological and self-evident knowledge that the person must exist so as to act or be acted upon, and his existence is not per se determined by mere consciousness, but by the fact of his interiority by which he exists and acts together with other human subjects. Wojtyła strongly states that this is a source of the person's transcendence and self-determination and the source of true freedom, as freedom to willingly choose, decide, and act for the true good, whereby the person manifests as one who possesses and governs himself in his action. It shows that man's contact with the external realities, even other human subjectivity, proceeds from interiority, but this contact does not define man as a pure natural or physical being. The core of the being of a human person- male or female, the source of life, and the seat of his thoughtfulness and emotions, refers to the interiority or spirituality (spiritual soul).

The bodily externalization of the interiority defines the objective somebodyness of man not as mere being of this physical world, but as one who transcends the self towards the other and 'The Other' in the dimensions of both horizontal and vertical transcendence. The person manifests as an individual subject and concrete I, unique and unrepeatable, who governs himself and is in control of himself, thinks for himself, wills, chooses and decides for himself, transcends himself beyond the physical, spatio-temporal elements towards the

ultimate. This is the moment of true freedom, the moment of ‘I want to or I can, but I should/I will or shouldn’t/I will not,’ the moment of objective truth of an act that is not reducible to psychic, biological, or sociological factors, or the dynamism of something-happens. In the proper moment of ‘I will,’ the moment of personal action (*actus persona*), the nature of the person as a moral agent manifests and the person becomes responsible for his action, good or bad, and becomes a morally good or bad person, as well becomes fulfilled.

Acting in accord and on the background of truth and goodness, the person perceives these transcendental values not purely on his subjective order, but in relation to other subjects in recognition of the natural experiential solidarity with other persons (the source of traditional family and true sense of living community) on the grounds of normativity of action that tends to self-fulfilment. This is the foundation of true knowledge of the human person and realistic social ontology by which we grasp the relational sense of human nature, for we cannot build a reliable knowledge of human person on the basis of individual experience without proper objectification of the experiential fact that truly expresses itself in the other. Certainly, internal subjective experience justified in the intersubjective experience greatly eliminates the effects of alienation in the Western cultural experience, for it opens the person to the world, especially to other human subjects, as neighbours, friends, family, community, society, and nation. Wojtyła aligns with Martin Buber’s I-Thou dialogical relationship in the description of human nature and states that the nature of human person manifests as community of persons ‘*communio personarum*’ (which has two-fold character of participation, namely the theological character which sometimes results in marriage and family as the foundation of human society and means of human continuity; and the relation of participation with other human subject as the source of living community, society, state and nation) and constitutes as the source of human fulfilment. This understanding resonates with the ‘Ubuntu personalism’ (*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*- I am because you are, and you are because I am), specific to the African understanding of personhood, as the interconnectedness of each person both in the physical and spiritual worlds. This affirms Wojtyła’s understanding of human nature as subsisting not only as an individual subject (‘for no man is an island’) but oriented towards the other in a relational manner. He exists and acts, or rather participates together with other existing subjects in intersubjectivity of person(s), and this is the essence of his nature and an important element of true culture.

The big concern of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, and indeed should be for every person, is how to salvage true culture, the gateway to the truth of human nature, from the ruptured cultural experience and anthropological nihilism. This is the paradigm culture shift

that instrumentalizes and degrades human nature, person, and life tends to invalidate the classical realm of culture that esteems the true nature of the human person with its axiological status that delineates ontic human dignity. Interestingly, Wojtyła's personalistic anthropology perceives the human being beyond and deeper than a material or bodily endowed being acting on the basis of brain functionality, mere rational capacity, or as an individual shaped by socio-cultural experiences. These manifestations are evident in the lived experience of secularism, viewing the human being as an individual substance like any other individual substance, purely as natural being, that yields to natural instinct and order, and being of this physical world, which undermines personal and objective moral agency that proceeds from interiority or spiritual nature and conditions what is exterior.

As it were, the present-day materialization of cultural experiences true of the Western culture alienate the person to himself and other human subject in form of individualism, acts of culture of death, wrong idea of freedom as 'freedom from,' absolute autonomous experience of truth and moral values with no sense of personal responsibility, with a bracketed transcendence in the name of pseudo spirituality (living as if God does not exist, but relates to exclusive humanism) and with no reference to the spiritual nature of human person. Thus, the idea of fluid human nature, wherein personhood is viewed through the prism of personal identity and psycho-sociological mode of being lacking genuine ontological description. For true freedom does not consists in freedom 'from,' but freedom 'for' truth, for goodness, for beauty of man; freedom for personal responsibility of action; freedom for the true good of the other; freedom for the inviolable dignity of all human person irrespective of stage, condition or state of the life; freedom for the respect and recognition that life has a definite ontological start and a definite; freedom for the recognition of the continuity of the ontological nature of human being as male or female.

This research shows that adopting this person-centred character of culture in the thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II would help to address the present-day culture crisis that materialises and instrumentalises the human person in theoretical and practical dimensions. Therefore, one should treat, as the priority of culture, cultural acts and creation, the ontic value of human person, that radiates the root meaning of culture-cultura as the phenomenon that improves human nature, in the internal and external realms, and corresponds to the psychosomatic nature of the human person in recognition of the transcendental values. This is the basis and the rationale of constituting true culture via praxis as an objective moral order, which also structures self-determination and self-fulfilment. For this order of culture-forming acts, esteem the essence of human nature beyond the superficial

reduction of human nature to pure corporeal, cosmological, and immanent nature that results in the instrumentalization of the human person as an object-like being and means to an end. Indeed, what truly defines the nature of the human person is the theoretical and practical cooperation of the natural, immanent, and corporeal ideals with the ultimate, transcendent ideals, forming an integral anthropology of man. It also extends to interconnectedness of the whole cultural spheres- *praxis*, *theoria*, *poiesis*, and *religio*, which find their concreteness in man as a person, and the value of these activities refers to the good of the person, whereby the truth of the good of the human person is the object of culture.

The integration of the value of other scientific disciplines with the personalistic thought of Wojtyła, without any form of antagonism or antinomy, demonstrates and marks out his unique realistic anthropological approach in handling the crisis of culture and the consequent anthropological defects in understanding the nature of the human person. It is an approach that cannot *per se* be pinned down to a methodological matter; a metaphysical foundation laced with analysis of the ethical experience of the experiential facts of personal action, which makes his philosophical anthropology rich, given the diverse aspects of his personalism. However, the results of this research do not claim to have exhausted this approach of integrating the personalistic elements of the philosopher Pope with other fields of science. An example problem for further research is the emergence of the idea of ‘visual person’ in present-day culture, as well as the ethical or moral agency and the anthropological basis of this sense of personhood. Another area of study open for investigation and in need of such a rich personalistic approach is the set of presuppositions in cognitive sciences, particularly in cultural neuroscience, which claims that human nature is properly manifested in the social functions of the brain within the human natural environment.

Nevertheless, some challenges were encountered in the course of this research which stems from understanding the methodological style and thought pattern of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. Likewise, the problem of understanding the original language of his major philosophical works *Osoba i czyn* and *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, although, thanks to the later translation (2021 edition) by Grzegorz Ignatik, the metaphysical character and background of the original text- *Osoba i czyn*, are better portrayed. Hence, the recommendation resulting from this research with respect to understanding the works, style, and thought pattern of Wojtyła is, firstly, studying the publications of various Polish authors, students, and associates of Karol Wojtyła (especially from the Lublim Philosophical School), also the recently published English critical edition, and then other related publications and writings.

The intellectual journey with Karol Wojtyła, later Saint Pope John Paul II, has a great influence on one's understanding of the world and one's approach toward the human person and other beings within it. The relevance of his personalistic philosophical approach, grounded in the recognition of the value of every human person and of human life, is especially needed in the present-day cultural context, as it offers an adequate response to cultural collapse and various forms of dehumanization. One may feel unconcerned today about the dangers posed by the present-day attitude of uncontrolled freedom and the acts that follow from it, particularly in respect to the threat of real human extinction, however, the effects of this state of affairs may soon be irreversible for humanity.

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## Abstract

This dissertation analyzed the problem of secularism in Western culture in light of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II's personalist anthropology. The research aimed to uncover the essential features of Western secularism, particularly those that seem to contradict the natural dispositions of the human person and thus prevent the optimal fulfillment of the personal nature of man. One of the essential features of this nature is religiosity. As a result, the elimination of religion from human life, or its relegation to the private sphere – contrary to the communal character of the phenomenon of religion – is not without significance, both for the understanding of the human person, and for their optimal fulfillment in the cultural environment.

A second important goal of the research was to demonstrate the close correlation between the concept of culture and the understanding of the human person. Ambiguity, fragmentation, and, above all, the related separation of culture from human nature have led to the relativization of culture's essence and, ultimately, to its negation. As a result of this reinterpretation of culture, its fundamental dimensions were marginalized, including those related to the transcendence of human being, the community-based realization of the human person, the objective moral order, and the religious nature of man, expressed in openness to the supernatural world. In this way, secularist ideas, initially socio-political in nature, gained a rational theoretical justification, described by Max Weber, among others, as the "disenchantment of the world." Culture began to be explained exclusively from a sociological and anthropological perspective, rejecting any metaphysical foundations. This led to a dichotomy between culture and the human person (nature), and consequently, to a reductionist vision of the person.

Meanwhile, the personalist approach draws on metaphysics, through which it overcomes this dichotomy, pointing to the close interdependence between the understanding of culture and the person. Demonstrating this personalist approach was therefore another important goal of the research. In this light, as Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II noted, the human person is the center, subject, object, and purpose of culture. Personalism thus appears as a rational and realistic approach to the foundations of human culture, defined by a non-reductionist understanding of the human person, which Karol Wojtyła positively calls an adequate approach, taking into account both the metaphysics of the human person and the

theology that explains its supernatural dimension, while also appropriately considering the findings of research in the particular sciences.

The achievement of the intended research goals determined the structure of the research, which comprises five chapters of inquiry. The first chapter offers an analysis of the ambiguities surrounding the concept of culture, presented in the form of a review of the principal interpretations of the fact of culture within the major disciplines, including the philosophy of culture, cultural anthropology, and the sociology of culture. Furthermore, a metaphysical concept of culture is presented, which emphasizes the search for essential properties within the pluralism of cultural phenomena and the subjectivation of cultural expression in the human person. This chapter also analyzes the classic domains of culture—*theoria*, *praxis*, and *poiesis*—while also taking into account religion as a unique and integral cultural phenomenon. The discussion concludes with a philosophical analysis of secularism as a contemporary cultural experience, clarifying its conceptual meaning and outlining its principal assumptions.

The next chapter focuses on the manifestations of contemporary Western secularism as the dominant cultural paradigm. These manifestations include: the decline of lived religious experience, the denial of transcendence, moral relativism, the absolutization of freedom, the fluidity of human personal identity, and the emergence of the so-called “culture of death,” exemplified by practices such as abortion, contraception, euthanasia, and suicide. The anthropological implications of these phenomena and their consequences for understanding human dignity and moral responsibility are critically analyzed.

The next chapter is devoted to the foundations of Karol Wojtyła's/John Paul II's personalism, which involves a phenomenological and metaphysical analysis of the human person, who reveals their specificity in action, given in its original sense within inner experience. The original nature of Wojtyła's personalism is presented with particular emphasis on conscious action, self-determination, self-possession, and self-governance. The subsequent discussion addresses the horizontal and vertical dimensions of human person's transcendence and the integration of nature into the person as the foundation of moral normativity. By referring to Thomistic metaphysics, this chapter highlights the realism of Wojtyła's anthropology in contrast to the idealistic tendencies characteristic of secularist thought.

Chapter four analyzes the moral dimension of human action as a fundamental path to the truth about the human person. The focus is on the moral structure of the human experience of action, the axiological nature of moral goodness, and the normative and

teleological dimensions of moral obligation. The role of conscience as a guardian of moral conduct and the understanding of the human person as a responsible moral subject are also considered. The culmination of this investigation was the portrayal of the person as *capax veritatis et boni*, that is, as capable of apprehending truth and goodness through the agency of will guided by reason. It is emphasized that, unlike the Wojtyła/John Paul II approach, ethical positions invoking secularism are typically relativistic or *a priori*.

The final chapter presents a constructive approach to personalist culture, based on an adequate anthropology of the human person. This approach is derived from the immanent property of the human subject, identified as the source of personal transcendence and moral action. Personalistic, existential, and theological analyses of the personal subject, and in particular the concept of *imago Dei*, allowed Wojtyła to justify human dignity, which underlies personalist culture. An important aspect of human agency is the relationship between truth and freedom, a necessary condition for authentic personal and communal life. The discussion concludes by presenting the human person in the context of a community of persons realized in the “I-Thou” and “Us” relationships.

In light of the analyses conducted, personalist culture appears to be a proposal that better reflects the personal nature of man than the one formulated by the anthropological reductionism of contemporary Western secularism. The results of the undertaken research confirm that Wojtyła's/John Paul II's personalist vision of culture, based on a realistic understanding of the human person, appears to adequately address the anthropological shortcomings of contemporary Western secularism, given its individualistic assumption of a culture devoid of a true sense of community, the relativism of cultural values and truth, and the marginalization of the importance of religion in culture and an objective sense of morality. These shortcomings do not create an appropriate environment for cultural experience that corresponds to the truth about the personal nature of man. Meanwhile, the personalist approach realistically considers the correlation of all fundamental dimensions of culture with human nature, thanks to which culture, thus understood, encompasses the indispensable conditions for the fulfillment of the human person, who is the subject, object, and purpose of culture.

# **Personalizm Karola Wojtyły/św. Jana Pawła II jako odpowiedź na współczesny sekularyzm kultury zachodniej. Studium z antropologii filozoficznej**

## **Streszczenie**

W dysertacji poddano analizie problem sekularyzmu kultury zachodniej w świetle personalistycznej antropologii Karola Wojtyły/Jana Pawła II. Badania miały na celu wydobycie istotnych cech zachodniego sekularyzmu, zwłaszcza tych, które wydają się być sprzeczne z naturalnymi dyspozycjami ludzkiej osoby i które uniemożliwiają tym samym optymalne realizowanie się osobowej natury człowieka. Jedną bowiem z istotnych cech wspomnianej natury jest religijność, skutkiem czego eliminacja zjawiska religii z życia ludzkiego, względnie sprowadzenie go do sfery prywatnej – wbrew wspólnotowemu charakterowi fenomenowi religii – nie pozostaje bez znaczenia zarówno dla rozumienia ludzkiej osoby, jak i dla jej optymalnego spełniania się w środowisku kulturowym.

Drugim istotnym celem badań było ukazanie ścisłej korelacji, jaka zachodzi między koncepcją kultury i rozumieniem osoby ludzkiej. Niejednoznaczność, fragmentaryzacja, a przede wszystkim związane z tym oderwanie kultury od natury ludzkiej doprowadziło bowiem do relatywizacji istoty kultury, a ostatecznie do jej zanegowania. W wyniku tego rodzaju reinterpretacji faktu kultury zmarginalizowaniu uległy jej fundamentalne wymiary, które wiązały się z transcendencją bytu ludzkiego, wspólnotowym sposobem realizowania się osoby ludzkiej, obiektywnym porządkiem moralnym oraz religijną naturą człowieka, wyrażającą się w otwarciu na świat nadprzyrodzony. W ten sposób idee sekularystyczne, które początkowo miały charakter społeczno-polityczny, uzyskały racjonalne teoretyczne uzasadnienie, opisywane m.in. przez Maksa Webera jako „odczarowanie świata”. Kulturę zaczęto wyjaśniać wyłącznie z perspektywy socjologicznej i antropologicznej, odrzucając jakiegokolwiek jej metafizyczne podstawy, co prowadziło do swoistej dychotomii między kulturą a osobą ludzką (naturą), a w konsekwencji do redukcjonistycznej wizji osoby.

Tymczasem personalistyczne ujęcie odwołuje się do metafizyki, dzięki której przewyższa wspomnianą dychotomię, wskazując na ścisłą współzależność między rozumieniem kultury i osoby. Ukazanie ujęcia personalistycznego było tym samym kolejnym istotnym celem przeprowadzonych badań. W jego świetle bowiem, jak zauważy Karol

Wojtyła/Jan Paweł II, osoba ludzka stanowi centrum, podmiot, przedmiot i cel kultury. Personalizm jawi się w ten sposób jako racjonalne i realistyczne ujęcie podstaw ludzkiej kultury, które określane są na podstawie nieredukcjonistycznego rozumienia ludzkiej osoby, które Karol Wojtyła pozytywnie nazywa ujęciem adekwatnym, uwzględniającym zarówno metafizykę ludzkiej osoby, jak i wyjaśniającą jej wymiar nadprzyrodzony teologię, przy jednoczesnym odpowiednim uwzględnieniu wyników badań nauk szczegółowych.

Zrealizowanie zamierzonych celów badań wpłynęło na określenie ich struktury, która obejmuje pięć rozdziałów dociekań. Rozdział pierwszy zawiera analizę niejasności związanych z pojęciem kultury w formie przeglądu głównych interpretacji faktu kultury na gruncie podstawowych dyscyplin, do których należy filozofia kultury, antropologia kulturowa oraz socjologia kultury. Ponadto przedstawiona została także metafizyczna koncepcja kultury, która kładzie nacisk na poszukiwanie istotnych właściwości w pluralizmie zjawiska kultury, jak i na zapodmiotowanie ekspresji kulturowej w człowieku. W rozdziale tym poddano również analizie klasyczne dziedziny kultury – *theoria*, *praxis* i *poiesis*, z uwzględnieniem religii, która stanowi unikalne i integralne zjawisko kulturowe. Dyskusję kończy filozoficzna analiza sekularyzmu jako współczesnego doświadczenia kulturowego, wyjaśniająca jego znaczenie pojęciowe i nakreślająca jego główne założenia.

W kolejnym rozdziale uwaga skupia się na przejawach współczesnego zachodniego sekularyzmu jako dominującego paradygmatu kulturowego. Do przejawów tych należą: zanik przeżywanego doświadczenia religijnego, negacja transcendencji, relatywizm moralny, absolutyzacja wolności, płynność tożsamości osobowej człowieka oraz pojawienie się tzw. „kultury śmierci”, której ilustracją są praktyki, takie jak aborcja, antykoncepcja, eutanazja czy samobójstwo. Krytycznej analizie poddano antropologiczne implikacje tych zjawisk i ich konsekwencje dla rozumienia godności człowieka i odpowiedzialności moralnej.

Następny rozdział poświęcony został podstawom personalizmu Karola Wojtyły/Jana Pawła II, co wiązało się z analizą fenomenologiczną i metafizyczną osoby ludzkiej, która ujawnia swoją specyfikę w czynie, danym w pierwotnym sensie w ramach doświadczenia wewnętrznego. Oryginalny charakter personalizmu Wojtyły został przedstawiony ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem świadomego działania, samostanowienia, samoposiadania i samopanowania. W dalszej części rozważań poruszono poziomy i pionowy wymiar transcendencji osobowej człowieka oraz integrację natury i osoby jako podstawę normatywności moralnej. Dzięki odwołaniu się do metafizyki tomistycznej, w niniejszym rozdziale uwytłumiony został realizm antropologii Wojtyły, w kontraście do idealistycznych tendencji charakterystycznych dla myśli sekularystycznej.

W rozdziale czwartym przeprowadzono analizę moralnego wymiaru ludzkiego działania jako fundamentalnej drogi do prawdy o osobie ludzkiej. Główna uwaga skupiła się na moralnej strukturze ludzkiego doświadczenia czynu, aksjologicznym charakterze dobra moralnego oraz normatywnym i teleologicznym wymiarze powinności moralnej. Rozważona została także rola sumienia jako strażnika postępowania moralnego oraz rozumienie osoby ludzkiej jako odpowiedzialnego podmiotu moralnego. Punktem kulminacyjnym dociekań było ukazanie osoby jako *capax veritatis et boni*, czyli jako zdolnej do pojmowania prawdy i dobra poprzez sprawczość woli kierowanej rozumem. Podkreślono, że w odróżnieniu od ujęcia Wojtyły/Jana Pawła II, stanowiska etyczne odwołujące się do sekularyzmu, zazwyczaj mają charakter relatywistyczny albo aprioryczny.

Ostatni rozdział przedstawia konstruktywne ujęcie kultury personalistycznej, opartej na adekwatnej antropologii osoby ludzkiej. Ujęcie to wyprowadzone jest z immanentnej właściwości podmiotu ludzkiego, utożsamianej ze źródłem osobowej transcendencji i działania moralnego. Personalistyczne, egzystencjalne i teologiczne analizy podmiotu osobowego, a w szczególności z koncepcją *imago Dei*, pozwoliły Wojtyłemu uzasadnić godność człowieka, która leży u podstaw kultury personalistycznej. Ważnym aspektem sprawczości człowieka jest relacja między prawdą a wolnością, będąca koniecznym warunkiem autentycznego życia osobowego i wspólnotowego. Dyskusję kończy ukazanie osoby ludzkiej w kontekście wspólnoty osób urzeczywistniającej się w relacjach Ja–Ty i My. W świetle przeprowadzonych analiz kultura personalistyczna jawi się jako propozycja lepiej odpowiadająca osobowej naturze człowieka, niż ta, którą formułuje antropologiczny redukcjonizm współczesnego zachodniego sekularyzmu.

Wyniki podjętych badań potwierdzają, że personalistyczna wizja kultury Wojtyły/Jana Pawła II, oparta na realistycznym pojmowaniu osoby ludzkiej, wydaje się adekwatnie odpowiadać na antropologiczne mankamenty współczesnego zachodniego sekularyzmu, zważywszy na jego indywidualistyczne założenie o kulturze pozbawionej prawdziwego poczucia wspólnoty, relatywizm wartości kulturowych i prawdy, marginalizowanie znaczenia religii w kulturze i obiektywnego poczucia moralności. Wymienione mankamenty nie tworzą właściwego środowiska dla doświadczenia kulturowego, które odpowiada prawdzie o osobowej naturze człowieka. Tymczasem podejście personalistyczne realistycznie uwzględnia korelację wszystkich podstawowych wymiarów kultury z naturą ludzką, dzięki czemu tak pojęta kultura obejmuje nieodzowne uwarunkowania spełnienia się osoby ludzkiej, będącej podmiotem, przedmiotem i celem kultury.