

WOMAN AND THE PERSONALISM OF KAROL WOJTYŁA- JOHN PAUL II: DOCTRINE AND REVISION¹

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The article examines the question of femininity in the teachings of Karol Wojtyła-John Paul II. It illustrates the break between the philosophical personalist anthropology of Karol Wojtyła and the theological 'feminology' of John Paul II through reference to papal notes on femininity in relation to concepts: of will, choice, simple vs. complex acts of will, personal intransferability, its indetermination – self-determination and others. It discusses the problem of the council designation of an individual as 'a gift in themselves' within the context of the specific dynamics of femininity as being out of necessity allocentric as well as showing that also a conciliar explanation of the person is the reason for which the Pope John Paul II connects femininity especially with the figure of Mary. The strongly normative subtext ontologising the descriptions of femininity in John Paul II also allows one to examine the question of the ideologising of his reflections on women. The conclusion drawn shows the discontinuity of the teachings of Karol Wojtyła and John Paul II: involving a depersonalisation of women in his pontifical writings through a departure from the philosophical personalism of the works of Wojtyła and the supposition that similar teachings will not constitute a buffer for the Church in the face of the growing processes of emancipation in the West and opposition to liberal feminism.

Key words: person, personalism, woman, Karol Wojtyła, John Paul II.

I. KAROL WOJTYŁA'S PHILOSOPHICAL PERSONALISM VS. JOHN PAUL II'S CONCEPT OF FEMININITY

The aim of the current research has been to verify the hypothesis which claims that between Karol Wojtyła's personalist philosophical anthropology and the theological anthropology of the pope John Paul II there is a passage in the approach to women from the primacy of the conception of a person to that of a mother, along with an evident

¹ The article includes fragments from chapters 7 and 8 of the author's book *Osobna: kobieta a personalizm Karola Wojtyły-Jana Pawła II*, (Warszawa: Difin, 2016).

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renunciation of the categories coined in *The Acting Person*.² According to my hypothesis this change may be associated with the certain distance that John Paul II assumed towards his own personalist reflection in favor of his Mariology. It is the right moment to attempt a recapitulation of my earlier research by referring the pope's conception of femininity to selected categories and descriptions of personal dynamics offered by the philosophical personalism of Karol Wojtyła, in particular in *The Acting Person*. This is the work that constitutes the main source of references for the present summary. *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* [Love and Responsibility] complicates the personalist question since it evidently leans towards stereotypical descriptions of both sexes, ones justified by their biological nature. Nevertheless, its significance rests in that it emphasizes the fact that 'the gift of self' does not precede human – feminine subjectivity, but follows it. I employ a synoptic juxtaposition of the philosophical and theological statements of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II. I do not, however, explain here in detail the issues that have been explained earlier.

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In discussing the question of willing and directing oneself towards the object of willing, Karol Wojtyła wrote that wanting, as a basic form of the 'dynamization of will', is contained in the experience of I may – I need not. We read that '[...] »I may,« but I »need not« will that which I am willing'.³ A person is free both in the choice of the object of willing and in the willing itself. It is related to indetermination as freedom from an imposed object of willing. Indetermination is a condition of self-determination, Wojtyła claimed. He wrote about an undetermined readiness to will an object. He distinguished between simple and complex acts of will. A simple act of will refers to a situation when will is presented with only one object, one value. There is no place for ambiguity, hesitation, just simple willing. We are dealing with a determination here, but not with a choice.

A simple act of will corresponds to motivation of the kind in which the will is presented with only one object, only one motivating value. Then, because

² Translator's note: the literal translation of the original title of Wojtyła's book from the Polish *Osoba i czyn* into English is: *Person and Act*. Andrzej Potocki, whose translation of the book is the source of the quotations for this text, proposed a modified version of it, namely – *The Acting Person*. Most probably Potocki's intention was to convey the essential relation between being a person and human subjective agency, and, consequently, to emphasize the dynamic nature of Wojtyła's theory. Wojtyła himself, while reflecting on the term 'act', wrote that it is 'not as strictly exfoliated phenomenologically as is *acting* or even *action*'. See Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki, (Dordrecht: Riedel Publishing Company, 1979), 68.

³ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 100. In the same place: 'The freedom is best visualized by the human being in the experience aptly epitomized in the phrase "I may but I need not to".'

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of the value presented in the object, man simply desires it, he experiences no internal split or doubts, he does not have to make a choice, which always entails a momentary suspension of the process of willing. We may then speak of an unequivocal motive and an unequivocal decision; for while choice is unnecessary there is still a decision to be made. The simple 'I will something', or 'I will x' is an authentic decision.⁴

According to the author, this kind of situation (even though deciding rests within the power of the subject) does not actualize a person fully. The desired fullness is contained in the act of choice, which entails more than one possibility.

Far better than in a simple act of willing, the nature of decision is expressed and visualized when the choice is preceded by a more complex and developed process of motivation process. Such is the case when the will is presented with more objects as the end of possible striving, when it can choose from a number of values, which perhaps compete against each other or may even be mutually contradictory.⁵

The object of volition, Wojtyła emphasized, must be chosen autonomously. If there existed – he wrote – a determination by the object in the intentional order, self-determination would be abolished. This would amount to 'a suppression of a person...'

If, however, there was in man – within his whole accessible sphere of experience – anything that would allow for his being determined in advance by the object in the intentional order, then self-determination would be impossible. Such determination would unavoidably abolish within the domain of the person the experience of efficacy and self-determination, the experience of decision or simply of willing. It would also mean the suppression of the person [...] The person's existence is identical with the existence of a concrete central factor of freedom.⁶

Elsewhere we read:

In response to the value cognized, the will determines itself: to act or not to act (*libertas exercitii*), it chooses this or that object (*libertas specificationis*).⁷

⁴ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 129-130.

⁵ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 130.

⁶ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 132.

⁷ Karol Wojtyła, *Rozważania o istocie człowieka*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM), 67.

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John Paul II in turn wrote:

The conception of personality and of human communion, which emerges from the Gospels, does not allow to accept a voluntary rejection of maternity solely on the ground of the desire to achieve a material success or a satisfaction from certain activities. For it is a deviation from female personality which finds natural fulfillment in maternity.⁸

I do not venture to judge what 'conception of personality' emerges from the Gospels, even though the examples of the New Testament heroines evoked by John Paul II may seem, to some, to be a rather unconvincing support for his thesis. One should note, however, that *The Acting Person* rather than 'not allowing' for the rejection of motherhood, does not allow to impose it as the sole object of will or to make it the goal of persuasion. Such an imposition would be possible only at the cost of choice, and, finally, of the person herself. Drawing on Wojtyła's philosophical study, one should say that the 'natural fulfillment' of a woman's personality is first and foremost the flourishing of her will in reference to the good, her autodeterminism emerging out of indetermination, her self-possession and self-determination, her free and conscious acts.

The conception of femininity in the thought of John Paul II may be defended with the support of the concept of 'truth' and St. Augustine's privative conception of sin and guilt. Wojtyła wrote on the dynamics of will that it 'refers in a specific manner and is internally dependent on the recognition of truth'.⁹ He seems to be saying, then, that the truth about woman is such that she must choose motherhood (fulfilling herself as a person in a good act) and cannot not to choose it (this would involve the privation of the good and the lack of the fulfilment of the person). To choose means 'to make a decision, according to the principle of truth, upon selecting upon possible objects which have been presented to the will'.¹⁰ The author, however, does not present the question of femininity in such a straightforward manner and does not introduce any evidence of there being a necessary relation between truth, good and womanhood, or, in other words, an essential relation between womanhood and motherhood. This would be a rather desperate line of defense of the case made by Wojtyła, one ignoring everything that has been said here about personal will, freedom, indetermination, self-determination, etc. First of all, it would have to ignore the human experience of freedom as the antithesis of coercion and necessity. Wojtyła himself noted that all authentic directedness towards the object of will is lived by

⁸ John Paul II, 'Niezwykła wielkość macierzyństwa', 4, in *Katechezy Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II. Kościół*, (Kraków-Ząbki: Wydawnictwo M, Apostolicum, 1999).

⁹ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 137.

¹⁰ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 137.

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the person as free from compulsion and necessity.¹¹ This question reveals a difficulty in the polemics with Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II, namely – his tendency to objectify all structures and expressions of the life of a person. It originates, at least to some extent, from the visible didactic intention behind his works. Wojtyła, then, emphasizes an indubitable and '[...] painfully evident fact that not all of the particular choices or decisions of the human will are correct. Too often man seeks and chooses what is not good for him.'¹²

A person, then, should recognize the truth about herself/himself and about the true good. The question arises – how to reconcile the objective nature of the good with the subjective world of a person? In the works of John Paul II this dilemma, in reference to women, seems to find its solution in the unification and identification of the vocation to the good with the vocation to maternity. Meanwhile, when it comes to wrong choices, Wojtyła noted that 'choices and decisions which take as their object what is not a 'real good', especially when contrary to what has been recognized as a real good, lead to the [...] reality of guilt – of sin and moral evil.'¹³ Should we assume, then, that a woman who rejects maternity, which is her 'true good', is guilty and sinful? This is an essential question and reminds us that a woman 'shall be saved in child-bearing' (1 Tim 2:15).

Is not it perhaps the case that women as described by John Paul II may choose any good as long as it is motherhood? Is not an automatic determination towards motherhood, as known from the works of John Paul II, the condition of their being subject to self-determination? Personal self-determination and feminine automatic determination are under no circumstances the same thing. A positive answer to the question just posed might suggest that in the analyzed works we are presented with a recommendation of ethical conventionalism addressed at women.

Karol Wojtyła, however, emphasized that 'persona est ineffabilis' – a person is ineffable, remains partly beyond the scope of conceptualization.¹⁴ He also understood that a person determines herself/himself but at the same time remains hidden, as indicated in the following passage:

Thus, the essence of the person is revealed first and foremost in one's inner life. The inner life of a human being, of a person, is hardly known to us, no external observation allows for certain, unquestionable conclusions. We know, however, that man can communicate the content of his inner life to us. In this case we say that he gives us access to his mysteries.¹⁵

¹¹ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 133.

¹² Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 139.

¹³ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 139.

¹⁴ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 136.

¹⁵ Wojtyła, *Rozważania o istocie człowieka*, 116.

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Is also a person – a woman not veiled by her own mystery in the writings of John Paul II? It seems rather that womanhood here is not only expressed but exposed by way of so many determining references to her physical structure and by the indication of the necessary direction that should be followed by women. Rather than being a person hidden under the veil of her own vocation she seems to be a part of some collectivity characterized, in John Paul's II words, by 'feminine personality'. While, then, a person in the thought of Wojtyła was undetermined as well as summoned to and capable of having the order of nature occupy its proper place in the structures of his/her being, while this place was controlled by the order of will and reason, a woman is described predominantly in terms of natural dispositions. What is more, she is a being by all means determined.

Irrespectively of how many important roles may be performed by a woman, everything in her – her physiology, psychology, natural habits, moral, religious and even aesthetic sense – all these reveal and highlight her attitude, ability and mission to give birth to a new being. Parenthood engages her more than it engages a man.¹⁶

Is there room for indetermination and self-determination? Karol Wojtyła points clearly to the fact that

will is free, yet at the same time it 'must' seek the good which corresponds to its nature, it is free in searching and choosing, but it is not free from the need to seek and choose. Will repudiates any imposition of an object as the good. It wants to determine the object autonomously and assert its choice by itself, for the choice is always an assertion of the value of the object which is chosen.¹⁷

Meanwhile, John Paul II explains to women:

Even though perspectives of professional engagement in the society as well as the apostolate in the Church are open for a woman, nothing compares to the extraordinary dignity the source of which is maternity, when it is lived in all its dimensions. We see that Mary, the model of a woman, through maternity fulfilled her mission within the economy of Embodiment and Salvation.¹⁸

One can note not so much a contradiction but a clear tension between these passages. It is defined by a decidedly normative and didactic trait of papal anthropology,

¹⁶ John Paul II, *'Niezwykła wielkość macierzyństwa'*, 2.

¹⁷ Karol Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, (Lublin: TN KUL), 121.

¹⁸ John Paul II, *'Niezwykła wielkość macierzyństwa'*, 1.

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which may be interpreted as persuading, disciplining and instructing women. Women, whose will 'wants' both to 'choose' and 'affirm' by itself.

We may say, then, that the conception of womanhood created and advocated by John Paul II is unrelated to the following of Wojtyła's categories: indetermination – self-determination, dynamism 'I can – I don't have to', freedom, choice and self-possession. Woman is determined by her nature. The pope uses also the formula 'all in her' to describe her being predestined to motherhood. A woman can decide only about the form of motherhood by means of which she will actualize her nature, yet the very decision about the direction of her aspirations is 'imposed by biological facts'.¹⁹ It is worth emphasizing that by advocating biological motherhood, John Paul II at the same time relativizes its meaning; he thinks it can be replaced by spiritual parenthood and biological bonds (as belonging to the order of 'finite facts') – by spiritual ones. This, by the way, is expressive of the 'originality' of man.

Person in the philosophical conception presented in *The Acting Person* (where no difference is introduced on the account of sex), as well as in *Love and Responsibility* by Wojtyła, is a self-possessing, self-determining, active, and acting subject. The person is revealed via her/his act. The highest act is the gift of self in betrothed love. A self-possessing person (who is *sui iuris* and *alteri incommunicabilis*) may, in a way, make a gift of self to another person, a person whom she/he loves, or – to God.²⁰ Nobody else but a person may give herself. A person is a gift but is not 'given'. Except for an act, Wojtyła distinguishes also another kind of dynamism – activation. Activation takes place when something is 'happening' in man. It is not the person himself that is the cause, it is nature that is responsible for causation.

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 conscious cause of his own causation; this form we grasp by 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'.²¹

Wojtyła explained also that:

The personal causation is contained in having the experience of efficacy of the concrete ego – but only when man is acting. On the other hand, when there

¹⁹ Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, 231.

²⁰ I am not discussing a disjunction which, obviously, is about the actualization of the vocation of life in marriage or life in celibacy for the Kingdom's sake. Still, it poses the question whether the love of wife/husband might compete with the love of God, or whether the former is rather the fulfillment of the latter.

²¹ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 66-67.

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is something happening in man, efficacy is not experienced and consequently there is no causation that would be proper to the person.²²

This is how John Paul II describes the process in which woman distinguishes herself as a person:

The text of Gen 2:23-25 enables us to deduce that a woman, who in the mystery of creation 'is given' to man by the Creator, is 'received', thanks to original innocence. That is, she is accepted by man as a gift. [...] In the mystery of creation, the woman was 'given' to man. On his part, in receiving her as a gift in the full truth of her person and femininity, man thereby enriches her. At the same time he is also enriched in this mutual relationship. The man is enriched not only through her – who gives him her own person and femininity, but also through the gift of himself.²³

There is no indication here that the woman herself gives the gift of self to the man. She is presented in terms of the dynamism of activation (something is happening to her, she is 'given') rather than the dynamism of an act, or, in other words, of a subjective, personal agency. Nothing suggests that she is acting as a human being – a person (*sui iuris* and *alteri incommunicabilis*), someone self-possessing and accounting for herself. Meanwhile, the existence of a person is identical with the existence of a specific centre of freedom, Wojtyła claimed.

What is more, Wojtyła emphasized that only a constituted person can make the gift of self, so her existence precedes the occurrence of the gift. Yet the gift asserts the person, so it is prior to her (a woman exists as a gift insofar as she is received). What is more, sequential analysis of the text shows that it is not so much the constitution of woman's subjectivity that this 'gift' is responsible for but rather the assertion of the subjectivity of man as capable of its active reception. If there is a type of agency that does not rise doubts, it is the personalist dimension of man's becoming a person by distinguishing himself:

According to Genesis 4:1, the man 'knows' the woman, his wife, for the first time in the act of conjugal union. He is that same 'man', who by imposing names, that is also by 'knowing', differentiated himself from the whole world of living beings or animalia, affirming himself as a person and a subject.²⁴

²² Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 81.

²³ John Paul II, 'Man and Woman: A Gift for Each Other', in John Paul II, *The Redemption of the Body and Sacramentality of Marriage*, 45, www.catholicprimer.org (accessed 11 May 2017).

²⁴ John Paul II, 'Man and Woman', 53. Let us note at this point that John Paul II is considering here the status of consciousness and not of sex. Yet, it is on the ground of this conscious dimension that man, who has distinguished himself from *animalia*, ascertains his subjectivity in its fullness.

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John Paul II often described women in terms of their emotivity and emotionality, even those who endured standing at the cross – the pope saw in it the evidence of a particular sensitivity. We should stress, then, that *The Acting Person* clearly placed emotivity, affectivity, including sensitivity, on the side of *activations*. In *The Acting Person* carnality plays the role of the vehicle of ‘activating’ movements and sensations, which are given to a person in a varying scope of consciousness and which should be integrated. In John Paul’s catecheses the body plays a somewhat different role. The basic dimension of its essence is sex and the theology of the body is in fact a theology of sex, while it is mainly woman that is perceived as constantly and (acutely) dependent on the body. It also introduces the question of woman’s otherness, characterized by a ‘difference’ or ‘originality’ in relation to man. This perspective on the woman has two clear consequences. The first one is the sexualisation of the female body, the second – perceiving it through the lenses of maternal function. The former involves a watching, admiring man, the latter – the most radical expression of woman’s being different from man:

The whole exterior constitution of woman’s body, its particular aspect, the qualities which, with the power of perennial attractiveness, are at the beginning of the knowledge, which Genesis 4:1-2 speak of (‘Adam knew Eve his wife’), are in a close union with motherhood.²⁵

We also read that

The constitution of woman is different, as compared with man. We know today that it is different even in the deepest bio-physiological determinants. It is manifested externally only to a certain extent, in the construction and form of her body. Maternity manifests this constitution internally, as the particular potentiality of the female organism. With creative peculiarity it serves for the conception and begetting of the human being, with the help of man.²⁶

An important theme which requires further study is the conception of love in the thought of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II. The perception of woman not via the lenses of act, as it was proposed in *The Acting Person*, but via the lenses of receptivity and sensation, leads the author to a hybrid conception of love. On the one hand, he is constantly highlighting the fact that woman is created to experience, including the experience of love. And again we come across the recurring distinction: act – activation. Man rather actively loves first (act – person), while she rather experiences love (activation – nature). This is a recurrent trope in the writings of John Paul II, it appears under different guises and with varied

²⁵ John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, 54.

²⁶ John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, 53.

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frequency. At the same time the woman who experiences love is destined, by means of her maternal nature, to love every woman and every man, every human being as such. This sort of allocentric predisposition makes her desire a child and pregnancy. The desire in turn reveals her allocentric directedness towards all others. And so it happens circularly.

Also the way in which John Paul II understands maternity has not much in common with the personalism of *The Acting Person*. Maternity is for the author an attitude and a disposition which is given, rooted in nature and in the 'feminine genius'. It seems to him to be a natural, inborn disposition, not a skill. Who if not he, however, could have described the parental and pedagogical process as an effort of a person who possesses herself and accounts for herself to such an extent that she can consciously manage the development of another human being, a child? A full picture of this unusual experience would be visible only in reference to the categories of *The Acting Person* such as self-possession, self-constitution, intentionality, self-determination, directedness towards the object of will, choice, decision, etc. The analysis of giving birth and then of the whole maternal process as a sphere not so much of activating sensations and movements but rather of an active control over them, would have said more about woman than perceiving her in terms of 'nature' and 'inborn dispositions'.

A tension within the Mariology of John Paul II is of importance too. In some texts addressed at women Mary is presented as the one who fulfills her role in the 'economy of salvation' by means of maternity. In Mariological texts in turn, it is Her faith that is emphasized. It is easy to refute this argument by claiming that Mary's maternity is not comprehensible beyond the context of Her faith, and faith is always in the background of all references to Mary's maternity. And yet the difference spotted requires an in-depth study and is of importance for understanding the question of femininity in the thought of the author in question. The argument from Mary's maternity seems to be particularly handy in the didactics of a certain type of womanhood. Yet, to speak of Her in this context and for this purpose would be to instrumentalize Mary as a person. A person, as emphasized by the personalist norm, must always be an end for herself and not a means. And so is the case with Mary – Her fate and experience, as well as the exegesis of them, may and should be the only aim of any study. They should not serve the purpose of persuading other women to behave in a certain way, make certain choices or assume certain social roles. This difficulty is insoluble insofar as it concerns the pope's motivation and aims and depends – to use the language of Karol Wojtyła – on 'the subjective culture of a person'.²⁷

²⁷ Anna Szwed seems to present a similar notion when remarking that '[...] the figure of Mary has been utilized here as a means of legitimizing the perspective on woman's role advocated by the Church – Mary as an ideal woman is defined by her maternity, and not by work or any other activity'; Anna Szwed, *Ta druga. Obraz kobiety w nauczaniu Kościoła rzymskokatolickiego i w świadomości księży*, (Kraków: Nomos, 2015), 123.

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John Paul II does not explain why Mary is supposed to be the primary role-model for female Christians (in his language for 'a Christian woman'). An important hint is to be found in the conciliar exposition of the person as the one who can only find herself through 'a gift of self'. The stress on maternity emerges out of the fusion of the two most important concepts for the pope: femininity and the gift. I admit that while formulating the hypothesis of this study I overrated the significance of Mariology in his doctrine of woman. In the light of some earlier analyses offered in the current work one may rather defend the conclusion that he abandoned (or, less radically, distanced himself from) his own personalist thought, or, in any case, that the conclusions from *The Acting Person* did not shape his later anthropological writings, especially those devoted to woman. This change, however, occurred not in the direction of Mariology but rather that of the conciliar conception of the person. In this sense one may also claim that the continuity of a personalist reference had been retained but its form had been significantly modified.

The council speaks of the personal 'gift of self', while a woman's gift of self is, according to the pope, first and foremost maternity. That is why he had to make his anthropology of femininity Mariocentric: it is Mary and not Jesus Christ who meets both criteria: she is a 'gift of self' and a woman.

The pope's hierarchism and discipline, his desire for an order and a system, make him see in this concise description provided by the Council 'a definition' of the person and this is the way he treats it – as a definition rather than as an indication or an incentive. 'Definition' offers a greater didactic and parenetic potential – it states what the being defined must contain. As an ontological predication, then, and by way of the relation between ontology and axiology, the term 'gift of self' may be used in a normative way. It is possible to claim, then, that a person should make a 'gift of self' or it may even seem justified to specify the ways of this self-donation. It is for the sake of this post-conciliar conclusion that the pope puts aside his own – in my view precious – philosophical findings.

The terms 'gift' and 'given' shed some light on yet another important characteristic of Karol Wojtyła's – John Paul's II analyses. I mean their being ahistorical. This dimension of his anthropology of woman is hard to relate to. On the one hand, any attempt at reaching the essence of a phenomenon indeed assumes that this essence is to some extent independent of history and culture. On the other hand, though, insofar as persons live in history and in a culture, both personal experience as such and any hermeneutics of it are rooted therein too. This is where the most visible problem with the pope's writings emerges. John Paul II treats his description of femininity as ontological, universal, always valid. He describes his method, at Wednesday catecheses, as not totally independent of a historical context – he speaks of 'historical *aposteriori*'.²⁸ But what is meant by that? Undoubtedly, John Paul II utilizes a certain model of womanhood, a popular idea the components of which he derives from the surrounding reality, 'distills' them into a certain

²⁸ John Paul II, 'The Mystery of Man's Original Innocence,' in *The Redemption of the Body*, 43.

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'type' of a woman, which he then universalizes and describes. One of the results of this method is the conclusion that woman is 'given' to man and he is supposed to 'secure the gift'. A label of this sort may indeed be useful in the description of the relations between the sexes, it may even be considered almost infallible (and nuanced differently). Yet, this is why the history of women has often been so dark. John Paul II takes note of the fact and expresses his 'regret'. What is more, in some of his writings he has presented unquestionable evidence of his understanding of this problem. The problem of the abuse of women reappears in his statements. The solution, though, is not to be sought in men better 'securing the gift' but rather in women not being 'given' to men. It is not about turning a bad dependence into a good one but about turning it into an independence. Meanwhile, the pope fails to notice how his own anthropological view is inscribed into the context of symbolic action, including symbolic violence, which cannot be separated from social practice.

I also believe, as I have explained earlier, that Catholics should not wait until a 'bomb' (George Weigel's phrase) of papal theology of the body explodes in history. In fact both this theology and history speak about the same thing: about woman existing for the sake of man. One may note that in the context of the centuries-long, radical submission of women, the terms 'gift' and 'given to man' seem ambiguous. Moreover, it is probably possible to relate the description of a woman becoming a person by way of being 'given' to a man and asserted in her existence by him, to the degenerated sex relations which have been created by humanity and which still flourish today. The anthropology of sex remains in an astounding relation to what is historical: it challenges history and at the same time – asserts it.

A similar problem emerges from the prohibition of the masculinization of women (in the quotation selected 'must not' and 'under no condition' appear twice). This cannot be defended either in a historical or in a personalist context:

[...] the rightful opposition of women to what is expressed in the biblical words 'He shall rule over you' (Gen 3:16) must not under any condition lead to the 'masculinization of women'. In the name of the liberation from male 'domination', women must not appropriate to themselves male characteristics contrary to their own feminine 'originality'. (MD 10).

What is this masculinization supposed to be, then? What are 'male attributes'? I am deeply convinced that the burden of delivering an explanation and arguments rests also in this case on the author and not on the reader. In case the author does not provide them, he exposes himself to an accusation of avoiding any deviation from his own vision of femininity. Yet, this statement of his reveals something of great importance both for him and for women. If the pope had lived in the 19th or early 20th century, would he have been an enemy of the suffragette movement? There is no need for probabilistic

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thinking, it is enough to note that popes did not support the activities of suffragettes. This fight was fought by women alone. Their involvement in political life – just like many other initiatives, postulates and demands – were interpreted precisely as the expression of their ‘masculinization’ and their reaching out for ‘male attributes’. Where, then, are the limits of this ‘just opposition’ supposed to be and how are they to be established? What is a sufficient feminization of women supposed to be and who is to define it? Karol Wojtyła claimed that in the context of community life the justness of resistance is established in dialogue. His categorical statement, though, does not seem to be an expression of a dialogical attitude, nor do his decisively normative writings, which are devoid of the significant voice of women, a contestatory voice in particular.

This ban on masculinization by the pope is tenable if we return to an old order of sexes and the division between ‘private’ and ‘public’. Then, as presented by Friedrich Schiller in his classical poem *The Song of the Bell*, everything seems simple and easy, while social roles and tasks are presented as complementary and forming a unitary whole:

The man must go out
To stern hostile life,
For power and strife,
To plant and to toil,
To wager and dare,
His luck to ensnare.
And now without end the blessings are streaming,
With goodly possessions the storerooms are teeming,
The rooms are expanding, the house has to grow.
And in it there moves
The good modest housewife
The mother of children
Who wise and dear
Here rules in her sphere²⁹

I consider the reference to Schiller justified in this context, the pope himself made references to the romantic concept of ‘eternal femininity’. If we reject this vision of order (at least as something necessary and imposed), the objection against the masculinization of women becomes highly problematic. It is surprising that it is not accompanied with a ban on the ‘feminization of men’ if the ‘genuineness’ of each sex is to be protected.

Finally, we should also take note of the fact that by means of their ‘masculinization’ women won the chance for a more independent affirmation of the complementarity of the sexes: also today leaving one’s job and devoting oneself to one’s family may be

²⁹ Margarete Münsterberg, ed., *A Harvest of German Verse*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1916).

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an autonomous and free decision, not one forced by peremptory social norms and the pressure of religion.

Woman in the thinking of the pope is primarily a second 'I' of humanity, she is simply different than man. An important component of this otherness is that a woman should be defined and instructed about her tasks, vocation, and place.³⁰ Yet, the problem with the form of papal didactics (its tone, for example) concerns all women, including those who have chosen maternity and consider it to be the highest form of the realization of femininity, the existence of which they assume. A reference to Wojtyła's analysis of duty in Max Scheler's thought helps one to understand the problem:

[...] if we give an order to a person who out of inner conviction about the goodness of what has been the object of the order is ready to execute this order, then this order is not only unnecessary but it is also morally evil. For it causes a moral opposition [...] if the order should assume the person concerned to strive against the value which forms its content while the person is striving for this value, this harmful assumption must perturb the person and cause a moral opposition in her/him.³¹

Obviously enough, the message of the passage is not that giving up motherhood is an act against good, but rather that it is a good, the realization of which does not abide orders. Even those women, then, who share the papal vision of femininity and of human affairs in general, may consider some components of his didactics to be non-personalist and of causing moral opposition.

Other problematic aspects of papal anthropology include selected issues of sexual ethics, the hierarchy of the aims of marriage, the superiority of celibacy for the Kingdom over marriage. A question which should be asked, then, is whether a different kind of reflection on woman is possible within Catholic Christianity. Yes, it is. Let us evoke the words coming from a decree of the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus – *Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society*.

In the first place, we invite all Jesuits to listen carefully and courageously to the experience of women. Many women feel that men simply do not listen to them. There is no substitute for such listening. More than anything else it will bring about change. Without listening, action in this area, no matter how well-intentioned, is likely to by-pass the real concerns of women and to confirm male condescension and reinforce male dominance. Listening, in a spirit of

³⁰ Exhortation *Redemptoris Custos*, devoted to St. Joseph, lacks in an extended didactics of manhood even though there seems to be an opportunity for one. And yet manhood, manliness – as neutral and original – does not require a definition or an instruction. See also Szwed, *Ta druga*, 118.

³¹ Karol Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, (Lublin: TN KUL, 2001), 83.

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partnership and equality, is the most practical response we can make, and is the foundation for our mutual partnership to reform unjust structures.³²

In the context of this listening, the analyses of participation (*The Acting Person*) and the types of authentic attitudes acquire a particular significance. Wojtyła claimed that opposition is truly an effort of participation in a community and therein taking responsibility for it. If so, the total absence of the work of feminist theology and philosophy (approached either affirmatively or critically) is incomprehensible. Let us recall Wojtyła's words that

the structure of human community is correct only if it admits not just the presence of a justified opposition but also that practical effectiveness of opposition required by the common good and the right of participation.³³

It is also worth taking a look at all these problems by way of a certain meta-methodological *retractatio*. In *The Acting Person* Wojtyła claimed that it is one thing to 'experience' and another to 'understand' or 'explain'. Experience does not necessarily entail understanding but understanding entails experience. I claim that it was the aspect of the manifold experience of women and their polyphony that had been neglected in papal parenesis and, consequently, could not render a deeper understanding. I agree with Wojtyła that '[...] the bias of subjectivism may also develop in connection with a narrow and one-sided bias of objectivism.'³⁴ This is what happened to his anthropology: a narrow and one-sided objectivism makes papal endeavor extremely subjectivist – it expresses his own, one-sided and impoverished vision of so-called womanhood.

This remains in connection with yet another problem. To avoid what he called an 'unwarranted idealism',³⁵ Karol Wojtyła assumed as the point of departure in his analysis of freedom a human being instead of freedom itself. For 'we are thus considering freedom as real, the freedom that constitutes the real and privileged position of man in the world and also the main condition of his will'.³⁶ In *The Acting Person* this approach brought about the results that were in accordance with the author's intentions. But it

³² 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, *Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society*, www.sjweb.info, (accessed 16 May 2017).

³³ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 287.

³⁴ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 58. He would add then that to prevent it from happening one should 'reach and bring to light the whole, objectively multifarious composition of [...] factual data'.

³⁵ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 116. Wojtyła made a similar remark in his *Considerations on the Essence of Man*, where he assumed a realistic standpoint as against the agnostics and idealists, who, '[...] derive their vision of the world not from objective reality but consider it to be a figment of a thinking subject'; Wojtyła, *Rozważania o istocie człowieka*, 16.

³⁶ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 115.

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was not the case with the papal anthropology of sex. John Paul II not only failed to reach the essence of women's freedom as their 'real privilege' and 'real condition of will', but he reached the opposite result indeed: the effect of misrepresenting and obscuring the movements and the acts of will. A fundamental difference between a relative success in the exposition of freedom in *The Acting Person* and its negation in some papal catecheses rests in the absence/presence of sex as a factor which modifies or adjusts the structures of the person. Starting in the analyses of freedom with a human being and assuming that he/she becomes a person (is determined as one) via sex, we inevitably end up with a twofold understanding of freedom: as a male and female one. Furthermore, within the androcentric paradigm what we arrive at is a human freedom and a female freedom. The former may aspire to the real, experiential, universal meaning and expose the essence of freedom as such. The latter is a woman-specific freedom. In the papal anthropology this means freedom to maternity but not freedom from it. Meanwhile, in reality we are acquainted with the nature of freedom by freedom itself and not by femininity or masculinity. There is only one, single nature of freedom and the author of *The Acting Person* seems to be aware of this fact when he ignores the problem of sex. Freedom is what it is or it is not there at all.³⁷ One should, then, start with experience, experience truly recognized, or, in other words, with real, existing freedom (without adjusting it to assumptions concerning sex).

The tension among the positions of realism, experience, subjectivism and idealism is visible also in some other areas of Karol Wojtyła's thought. He speaks about 'the absolutization of a single aspect'. 'The reduction which operates such absolutization of the experiential aspect is characteristic of the specific mental attitude inherent in subjectivism

³⁷ John Paul's II anthropology invites also liberal critique, in particular one finding support in Isaiah Berlin's distinction between positive and negative freedom. The latter was understood by Berlin – in a nutshell – as freedom of the individual from being imposed with certain goals. What is interesting in our context is positive freedom (freedom to realize a certain model of life and engagement), discussed synthetically by Szahaj and Jakubowski: 'Positive freedom [...] is [...] a sign of a dangerous temptation to persuade people to follow this or that political or ideological path, which, allegedly, is to make them really free or help them become real human beings [...] The result of assuming the standpoint recognized as positive freedom is, according to Berlin, paternalism – an approach which treats people as incapable of autonomous judgment, the autonomous choice of their life goals, and hence needing guidance'. Finally, Berlin '[...] consistently advocates [...] pluralism of aims, proving that it is the condition of one's conscious choice, which in turn guarantees his/her being a subject (a person), and not an object (an instrumental treatment of human beings is connected with paternalism)' Marek N. Jakubowski, Andrzej Szahaj, *Filozofia polityki*, (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2015), 126-127. I claim only that Berlin's conception may be used in a just critique of Catholic anthropology of femininity. I am not claiming that Berlin himself is always right.

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and, within a more distant perspective, in idealism³⁸ – he wrote. The papal anthropology of femininity is an example of such a process: the absolutization of a certain experiential aspect (a certain observed and experienced modus of femininity and maternity), which leads him to subjectivism, and – finally – to an idealism of sorts, visible, for an instance, in an extreme allegorization of femininity (the idea of womanhood, the ideal of femininity, eternal femininity, etc.). This idealism finds its fruition in the idealization of women (visible, for example, in expressing thanks to a woman for being a woman).

* * *

In the first chapter I have signaled the possibility and the need to refer the personalism of Wojtyła as well as the theological personalism of John Paul II to the ideas of other personalists in order to approach a certain personalist culture. Particularly promising seems to be comparative attempts with French and Russian personalism, which may become the subject matter of a separate study. In the context of papal feminology and the pope's personalist conception the thought of Emmanuel Mounier merits mention. Mounier's basic assumption was that a person cannot be defined since we can define only what is external to man and is objective. He also opposed the objectivization of human acts, since, as he claimed, it 'deprived' the person of their act, removing from the act the very special mark imprinted by the person. Meanwhile, John Paul II was striving for a radical and possibly full objectivization of the phenomena of the life of a person, and if this person happened to be a woman – the objectivization of the possibilities of her engagement and the fulfillment of her vocation. Mounier in turn was writing that 'the revelation of a person to herself, or – equally – the revelation of her vocation, are not the results of a more or less necessary phenomenon, like when we expose a photographic film, but rather constitute an act of freedom'.³⁹ He stressed that life and vocation '[...] are not like a ready Idea, which we merely need to decipher and realize'.⁴⁰ Wojtyła in his feminology followed precisely the path which Mounier had questioned. The life and vocation of a woman are a ready-made Idea, a film. There is even no need to decipher it (that is done by the pope), it is enough to realize it.

Obviously enough, it is not my intention to probe the personalism of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II against the criterion of Mounier's theses. It is important to note, however, that

³⁸ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 58. '[...] an aspect may never stand for the whole and may never put it out of view. If it is substituted for a whole, it ceases to be but an aspect, and unavoidably leads to errors in the conception we form of any composite reality. But it is precisely such a complex reality that we have in the acting person.' Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 28.

³⁹ Emmanuel Mounier, '*Non estis sub lege*', in Emmanuel Mounier, *Wprowadzenie do egzystencjalizmów oraz wybór innych prac*, (Kraków: Znak), 155.

⁴⁰ Emmanuel Mounier, '*Intimius intimomeo*', in Emmanuel Mounier, *Wprowadzenie do egzystencjalizmów oraz wybór innych prac*, (Kraków: Znak), 153.

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they approached the problem of the person in clearly different ways and held a different 'sense' of personalism as such. Those who wish to study a person and persons should at least be aware of the tension between these two approaches (as well as some other personalist doctrines).

II: CONTEMPORARY EMANCIPATORY PROCESSES AND THE CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGY OF SEX

'FEMININITY' AS AN ACADEMIC PROBLEM

It was not John Paul II who initiated or organized seminars at Castel Gandolfo and I want to emphasize that the following remark is a mere indicator and not an accusation leveled at the pope! It is meant to evoke the already mentioned experience of participation in academic meetings which presented a huge forming potential, meetings the participants of which were John Paul's II guests. We should pay attention to the quality of the expertise that the pope, who is himself a teacher, relies on. We can hardly imagine a thinker and a leader that is more privileged in this respect.

Rozmowy w Castel Gandolfo [Conversations at Castel Gandolfo] is a long and fascinating book and an intellectual feast (John Paul II would call it 'a feast for the spirit'). Yet, the ministrations here are conducted solely by men. Among those invited to Castel Gandolfo are fifty outstanding thinkers and intellectuals, four women among them.⁴¹ I touch upon this issue – once again – not without doubts. First of all, sex is neither the warrant of maternity, passivity, receptivity, etc., nor does it automatically introduce into a conversation common sense or the kind of thinking which is associated with intellectual empathy and the ability to internalize more than one (one's own) vantage point. Women do sometimes speak nonsense. They happen to support patriarchal enunciations and they wish to subdue themselves to them. They are sometimes intellectually and emotionally dependent on their collocutors. They may simply not know how to make an objection even if they wish to. Particularly given that for millennia the right to formulate independent, important, audible opinions as well as exercises in dialectics were treated by culture as the prerogative of manhood and as the 'genius' of manhood. Secondly, however, I do not think the mere fact of being a man prevents one from having to say something important about the situation of women and understand this situation in its specificity, or even to be able to see one's own position in the current social structure, or, in other words, in the process of the production of the norms which control sexuality. And yet, the voice of women presents a value in itself: it is the value of participation. Participation, as often emphasized by Arendt, is by definition irreplaceable.

⁴¹ See also: Notes about authors, in Krzysztof Michalski, ed., *Rozmowy w Castel Gandolfo*, vol. 2, (Warszawa-Kraków: Znak, 2010), 555-560.

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In this light, Krzysztof Michalski's report on the preparation and the course of seminars at Castel Gandolfo is oftentimes anecdotic. We learn, for example, that a leading American neoconservative, Gertrude Himmelfarb, 'brought with her' her husband, Irving Kristol and that an enthusiastic speech supporting consumerism was delivered by ... him. Lévinas arrived with his wife. She did not take the floor but she sang a Polish lullaby with her husband. There appeared yet another woman figure. Michalski writes:

Once, during a break between the seminars, Le Roy went to swim in the nearby lake; I can still see in my mind's eye a nun carrying in front of her his wet swimming trunks that he had abandoned somewhere in the palace, her face expressing a long and complex history of the Church's relation to the human body, its pleasures, as well as to the relation between woman and man.⁴²

The participants were selected according to their substantive competences, independently of the political and ideological aspects of their views. 'Perhaps also with regard to their manners, – he explains – after all, we did not invite people to our own home so we felt responsible also for the conduct of our guests.'⁴³ It is difficult to relate to this last criterion which allows one to infer that women's conduct is not proper since they were not invited. More important, though, is what Michalski says about the emphasis on substantive competence and about giving voice to representatives of different worldviews. The significance of these meetings is elucidated by him in the following words:

Scholars at this level, representing different fields, different political and ideological positions, different denominations, and coming from different countries, hardly ever reach a meeting point, hardly ever find a common ground for discussion. What attracted them – including those who were critical of our Host – was undoubtedly he in person; for him a few days of discussion with the best minds of the Western world were a unique chance to get in touch with a world that was beyond the scope of his daily life. In saying farewell, he described these meetings as 'a feast for the spirit.'⁴⁴

Not a single one of the published seminars concerns the situation of women, the topic appears merely in the background of the discussions about other social issues. Meanwhile, it is difficult not to agree with Elżbieta Adamiak, who says [...] contemporary changes in the life and thinking of women, along with an altogether new vision of social life which they involve, constitute one of the major transformations occurring in our

⁴² Krzysztof Michalski, *Castel Gandolfo*, in Krzysztof Michalski, ed., *Rozmowy w Castel Gandolfo*, vol. 1, (Warszawa-Kraków: Znak, 2010), 6.

⁴³ Michalski, *Castel Gandolfo*, 1.

⁴⁴ Michalski, *Castel Gandolfo*, 14.

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times.⁴⁵ It may be considered regrettable that the pope missed a unique opportunity to look at the women's world which 'was beyond the scope of his daily life'.

Because, as I have mentioned, John Paul II was not the organizer of the seminars in question, one may easily regard the scarce presence of women and the lack of the issue of the subjectivization of women as an unreliable measure of his interest in the problem of the sexes. Yet, it is not so easy to disregard the lack of any references to women's writing in his thought or to ignore the fact that there are no references (not necessarily affirmative!) to such a theology and philosophy of sex that would prompt the author to relativize his own perspective or enrich it with a discussion with other, competing arguments. This is the problem of the reliability of his writings and the responsibility of the author for the choice of experts, references and sources. John Paul II tried to popularize his own, personal vision of femininity, and if he cooperated with women they happened to represent views which were not in conflict with his vision. Women could support him with their consent but not with their objection.

WOMEN STUDIES VERSUS IDEOLOGY OF FEMININITY

Is woman, however, an important academic topic at all? The answer to this question is more complex than it might seem from my accusing the pope of not posing women as an academic problem. Looking back at the significance of his intellectual effort as a whole, of what and how he taught us about human being as such, I believe that woman should not be a specific field in the study of humanity.⁴⁶ What is important and universal is the question of human subjectivity, freedom, autonomy, action, responsibility, creativity and love. In other words, the important question to ask is: who is a human being?

Still, in agreeing with Wojtyła that the basis for understanding is experience, I admit that the historical, cultural and social conditioning of subjectivity, freedom and autonomy of women is of importance. It is here and only here – at the level of society and not of an alleged essence – that the problem in question arises. But it is not the problem of 'femininity' in itself. A woman when acting manifests the structure of the act and the essence of freedom, just like a man does. It stems from the essence of the act and not from her essence. It is the act, then, that should be studied. One should, however, be also aware of the fact that the possibilities for women's action are subject to effective control on the part of society and the Church. The situation when action is being modified by societies

⁴⁵ Elżbieta Adamiak, *Milcząca obecność. O roli kobiety w Kościele*, (Warszawa: Więź, 1999), 15.

⁴⁶ This is, by the way, in line with the view presented in the introduction, namely that woman should not be the object of interest of the Church. 'Woman', as I see it, is contained within universal phenomena such as Christianity (a Christian), personhood (a person), humanity (a woman). Studying women as a specific area is tantamount with treating and constructing them as 'others'.

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and the Church on the account of sex is, and should be, subject to research. In this context one should say: 'yes, women are an important academic problem'.

John Paul II committed himself to the promotion and justification of a certain vision of femininity. Yet, justification is not only a component of communication but also of governing others. That is why it happens to be an object of communication studies. Linguists point to the fact that precisely 'justification' is a specific feature of ideological discourse. What attracts attention in the thought of John Paul II is its pan-normativity leading to the exclusion not so much of a neutral sphere but rather of any sphere devoid of an a-priori resolution. In other words, we are presented with an extreme bipolarity of visions, judgments, beliefs, etc. Norms imposed by him cannot be inferred by reasoning and yet their defense is lengthy and detailed, it turns into an act of convincing or even persuasion. What is more, the resources he draws on while persuading are scarce and limited. Mirosław Karwat points also to the emotional dimension of the processes of the description and judgment of phenomena, which is typical of ideologies. He says that

striving for objectivity and distance is replaced here by a certain sense of the obviousness of views (visions and judgments) which have arisen out of prejudice. In the consciousness of the subject and in his way of communicating with others the boundaries between the language of description, the language of values (judgment, models, ideals) and the language of norms (prohibitions and prescriptions) are blurred. [...] An ideological thinker tends to express himself using evaluative terms which convey and impose on the readers powerful emotions instead of axiologically neutral ones. He also assumes an unambiguous dichotomy of values (either good or evil, either just or unjust), while ignoring situations axiologically neutral and the ambivalence of certain phenomena.⁴⁷

Karwat stresses the idealism of ideological thinking and the lack of cognitive motivation, of curiosity. In his opinion an ideologist already 'knows' and works upon the justification of what is clear from the beginning. This is accompanied by an almost fetishized striving for coherence. All these traits are visible in the writings of John Paul II about women. Moreover,

ideological thinking is 'idealistic' by nature: the subject believes (wants to believe) that his views and intentions are rooted in absolute values, the voice of conscience, the rules of decency, wisdom, etc., rather than stem from his being biased, influenced by his own interests, by the others, by certain upbringing, etc.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Mirosław Karwat, 'Cechy myślenia ideologicznego', in Marcin Poprawa, Irena Kamińska-Szmaj, Tomasz Piekot, eds., *Ideologie w słowach i obrazach*, (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2008), 42.

⁴⁸ Karwat, 'Cechy myślenia ideologicznego', 42-43.

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I am not passing a definite judgment on whether John Paul's II writing about women is an ideology and whether it can be treated as one. It certainly reveals some semblance to an ideology. This problem, then, requires further study. Of crucial importance here is the relation between ideology and personalism. As I have mentioned in the chapter devoted to personalism, it emerged in response to an ideology and adopted a stance against it. Something is either an ideology or a personalism – it cannot be both at once. Hence, by all means, religious discourse should be kept far away from an ideological one. An essential feature of an ideology, I think, is that it offers a complete set of answers and knows no doubts. It is a sort of an all-encompassing instruction for human life. Each ideology claims to have deciphered an individual completely. The stakes for a religious discourse are: to remain aware both of the certainty and the uncertainty concerning the existence of the person, to accept boldly the contrasts and paradoxes of the world, and – by way of respect towards the mystery of each and every person – to be able to refrain from any attempt to objectify the life of a person.

CONCLUSIONS

Actus humanus – the human act is an expression of a person. The homogeneity of humanness as the basis for any personalism is a response which is capable of neutralizing the chaos and the unceremoniousness of the emancipatory processes and endowing them with a deeply human dimension. This, however, requires such an interpretation of the commandment of love, which – as highlighted by Wojtyła – will treat any reference to another human being as first and foremost a reference to 'thy neighbor'.

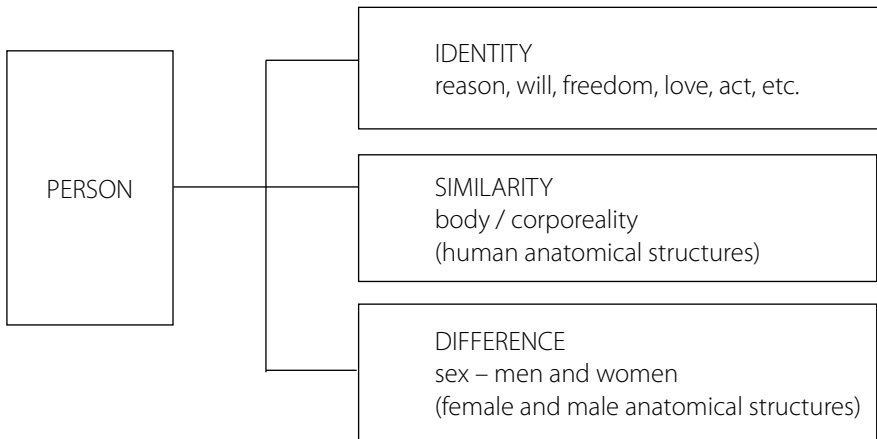
The reference system centered on 'thy neighbor' has a crucial significance in any acting and existing 'together with others'. [...] It appears fundamental because this system underlies any other reference system existing in a human community by its scope, simplicity, and depth.⁴⁹

The scope, simplicity and depth of the relations thus constituted may and should save proper human relations and human community, including the community of the Church. When it comes to the reflection on relations, I am convinced that the theology of sex does not provide us with a new perspective. It is rather another attempt to discipline the world by imposing on it a description of the symbolic universe of sexuality, one which is ideological enough, hermetic, and purportedly novel. By the same token it undermines seriously the 'simplicity and depth', the craving for which I share with Karol Wojtyła.

⁴⁹ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 295-296.

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The final conclusion of this study is the need to recognize the priority of the unity and homogeneity of humanness. A person is a rational freedom which performs acts and directs themselves towards love. A person acts as a bodily being and the basic structure of the body is shared by both sexes (both women and men have a spleen or liver). A visible difference appears only at the third level of the 'descent'. Why, then, shift it to the first plane? It leads, as I have attempted to explain, to the hybridization of higher planes, as a result of which freedom ceases to be simply freedom, reason ceases to be reason, and love – love. The schema that in my view is fully personalist may be represented as follows:



The above schema is an attempt to describe the real homogeneity of humanness. It is meant to illustrate the possibility to see oneself in another or another in oneself, to understand the other as different from oneself, yet remaining within a human, personal identity, in other words – as siblings sharing one spiritual genotype. It is meant to be a realistic support for Karol Wojtyła's – John Paul II's call for the spirit of the commandment of love (to love another as oneself) to be the basic reference point in human relations.

* * *

Well known are the words of the Address to women ('girls, wives, mothers and widows, to you also consecrated virgins and women living alone', as assured by Paul VI, 'glorified and liberated' by the Church), addressed to them at the end of the 2nd Vatican Council.⁵⁰ The best-known passage says: 'But the hour is coming, in fact has come, when

⁵⁰ See also: Paul VI, *Address to Women*, 8 December 1965, <https://w2.vatican.va> (accessed 17 May 2017).

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the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved.⁵¹

Indeed, today woman's calling echoes all around. It is a voice of a bold, free woman, whose time has come to fulfill her vocation in all its infinite fullness of the paths and possibilities accessible for a person. To influence society and gain power hitherto unknown...

It is a power over herself.

TRANSLATED BY Katarzyna Krempleska

⁵¹ Paul VI, *Address to Woman*.