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The importance of substantial ethical issues : is the diagnosis made by Tadeusz Styczeń correct?

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SUBSTANTIAL ETHICAL ISSUES. IS THE DIAGNOSIS MADE BY TADEUSZ STYCZEŃ CORRECT?

Keywords: assessing the value of an act, ethical content, meta-ethics

1. Introduction. 2. Approaches to assessing the moral value of a human act.
3. An attempt to combine methods.

1. INTRODUCTION

An inter-faculty discussion seminar on ethical issues, originated by the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (UKSW) and joined by the Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK), the Adam Mickiewicz University (UAM), the Pontifical University of John Paul II (UP JPII) and the Jesuit University Ignatianum is held annually in various cities of Poland under the name “Contemporary heritage of ethics”, which brings to mind the title “Tradycyjne i współczesne ujęcia etyki”¹, an article by Tadeusz Styczeń (1931-2010). Juxtaposing traditional and contemporary approaches to ethics may result in astonishment and objections. For a question is raised at once if there is a linear relation between ancient and contemporary approaches to ethical issues. What

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¹ T. Styczeń, *Tradycyjne i współczesne ujęcia etyki [Traditional and contemporary approaches to ethics]*, in: A. Szostek (ed.), *Metaetyka. Nowa rzecz czy nowe słowo? [Metaethics. A new thing or a new word?]*, Wyd. TN KUL, Lublin 2011, 411-431.

could contemporary ethics inherit from its long history? These questions deserve notice as many factors indicate that T. Styczeń addressed a very important issue, namely he observed that nowadays contemporary ethics is very often wrongly juxtaposed with traditional ethics (whatever the latter refers to), because authors writing on the subject either miss the substantial issues raised by ethicists and confine themselves to meta-ethical considerations, or make attempts to “scientific” ethics, *ipso facto* reducing it to psychology or sociology of morality. On the other hand, there are two other and contrary tendencies, i.e. defending metaphysically-oriented ethics and disregarding ethics done in the phenomenological and the linguistic currents, or defending one of the latter and disregarding achievements of the remaining ones. Meanwhile, as observed by T. Styczeń, what we need is not a combination of different ethics, but rather a multilateral approach to moral issues. He claims that many philosophers attempt to do ethics as if starting from nothing, disregarding the whole tradition. In other words, such philosophers, noticing some deficiencies in the ethical conceptions that they are familiar with, do not try to fill them by stating problems more precisely or improving proposed solutions, but start creating completely new conceptions. Moreover, T. Styczeń claims that replacing the philosophy of being with the philosophy of consciousness was the “original sin” in the crisis of ethics, which is mostly apparent in arguments of emotivists. However, is Styczeń right? To what extent is his diagnosis correct? Is his typology adequate and exhaustive? The considerations in this article are aimed at answering these questions.

2. APPROACHES TO ASSESSING THE MORAL VALUE OF A HUMAN ACT

If I were to refer to the above problems using only one word, I would use the word “approach”, and more precisely – “an approach to treating the criterion of the moral value of human action”. It turns out that Styczeń distinguishes three approaches to the criterion of assigning value (or obligation) to human deeds, i.e. metaphysical, epistemological and linguistic. It is worth noticing that he does not

mention such approaches as “religious” or “Christian”, which deserves a separate explanation. Also, he does not reject any of these approaches, but quite contrary, he believes they complement each other.

In order to fully understand his intentions, it is necessary to realize that Styczeń claims that the two most important questions of ethics are: “what?” and “why?”. These questions determine the approach to ethical (and, in general, philosophical) issues. Analyzing the ethical issues in the history of philosophy, Styczeń states that, in both ancient and medieval times, ethics was done metaphysically, regardless of how being was understood. The fundamental question posed by philosophers was: What kind of person should I be? And hence, the question about virtue was mostly a question of the essence of the human being. The philosophers of those times were not so much interested in a theory of man, as they were in a theory of being. Admittedly, they considered man a special and unique being, but one of many such beings. The concept of being was superior to the concept of man. By the same token, they treated human nature as normative and demanding that every man attempt to resemble the archetype of man. Human behaviour was determined through the perspective of being. Everybody should become a real man. In both ancient and medieval times, it was believed that human actions can be explained by means of the principle *agere sequitur esse*, i.e. that the way of acting is a derivative of the way of being. Karol Wojtyła reverses the interpretation of this principle. By observing human action he tries to investigate who man is².

Tadeusz Styczeń's views are very similar to Karol Wojtyła's considerations, but, in terms of methodology, constitute a reversal of Tadeusz Ślipko's opinions. What Styczeń recognized as the most characteristic feature of the ancient and medieval approach to the value of human action, was obvious to Ślipko. Ślipko claimed that the criterion for the moral value of human action is the ethics of human nature. Discussing

² K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn* [*Person and Act*], Wyd. WAM, Kraków 1969.

values, he states that the constitutive principle of value is human nature that is ordered with respect to propriety and perfection³.

However, as rightly pointed out by Styczeń, ancient conceptions of being were modified, and to be more specific – supplemented by Saint Thomas Aquinas's idea of existence as an act that constitutes the reality of being. By the same token, Aquinas made a revolution in understanding the value of human action, which is fully explained by the independent existence of God (Absolute). Harmony with nature is still an indication of the value of human action, however it is no longer the ultimate criterion of propriety of human action. What we encounter in Aquinas is not so much a call of nature (an appeal from nature) but a divine call, a vocation to perfection. As Aristotelian ethics was anthropocentric, Thomistic ethics became theocentric. Nevertheless, they both are still metaphysical. Ethics constitutes an extension of metaphysics⁴.

Another approach to assessing the moral value of human deeds, according to Styczeń, is an epistemological justification. It was originated by Descartes, Locke and Hume, who assumed human cognition, and not being⁵, as a starting point. In this way they gave up looking for a justification of value, because the justification is already known even before posing the problem of justification. For justification is a specific epistemological fact, and needs not to be looked for outside but in the subject's consciousness where it belongs. There is, after all, an empirical cognitive authority – a moral sense – that tells us how we should act. It informs us directly of what is valuable and what is not. The question arises: what is this moral sense? And the answer provided for it is: it is the feeling of pleasure and regret. When something brings

³ T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej* [*An outline of general ethics*], Wyd. WAM, Kraków 1974, 196-201.

⁴ Cf. T. Styczeń, *Tradycyjne i współczesne ujęcia etyki* [*Traditional and contemporary approaches to ethics*], op. cit., 417-420

⁵ Cf. Idem, *Możliwość etyki naukowej u Johna Locke'a* [*The possibility of scientific ethics in the work of John Locke*], in: A. Szostek (ed.), *Metaetyka. Nowa rzecz czy nowe słowo?* [*Metaethics. A new thing or a new word?*], op. cit., 244-247.

happiness, it could and even should be done. When something causes regret, it should not be done. Ethics ceased to be a science on the existential fundamentals of what is good or bad, and became felicitology, i.e. a science on happiness⁶.

Also Kant's philosophy follows this current, and his way of understanding the moral value is the same. The above claim may seem strange at first. For it is known that Kant regarded reason (and not feelings) as the cognitive authority. What is more, he wanted to cut off feelings from ethical considerations in which he allowed only one feeling, i.e. the respect for law. According to Kant, an appropriate action is the one that meets formal requirements set by reason and can be generalized. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Styczeń, the function of giving unconditioned imperatives is a specific cognitive fact, though stemming from the nature of reason. Hence Kant found the question characteristic of ancient and medieval authors: "why should I do this or that?" not so much redundant as inappropriate. It seemed obvious to him that reason tells us that we should and what we should. Why look for reasons, then, and ask why I should?

The philosopher from Königsberg was deeply convinced that reason does not define the quality of deeds on the basis of an idea which is shared by many subjects or trans-subjective, but does it on its own behalf. It becomes the ultimate normative authority itself. As rightly pointed out by Styczeń, though, it is necessary not to be deceived by appearances⁷. Ancient philosophers were also interested in the correspondence between action and reason. Although they ascribed sources of human morality to human nature, thus metaphysics, their point was totally different. In Kant's opinion, it is neither a creative intention expressed in reason (as argued by Aquinas), nor correspondence with an ultimate goal (as argued by Aristotle or stoics). Kant believed that the power of reason is the primary justifying authority, the ultimate legislator. Hence, despite huge differences between Kant and the em-

⁶ Cf. Idem, *Tradycyjne i współczesne ujęcia etyki [Traditional and contemporary approaches to ethics]*, op. cit., 422.

⁷ Ibid., 422n.

piricists, there is one point in which their views converge, and which distinguishes them from ancient philosophers: this is the starting point of modern ethics which is cognition and not being. For Hume it is moral sense, for Kant – practical reason. The conditions for being in ancient philosophers are replaced with conditions for cognition. The ultimate justification of the moral value of an act is not on the level of metaphysics, but epistemology.

According to Styczeń, this results in that phenomenological ethics as well, even against its originators' intentions, is on the same level of justification as the Kantian ethics. For phenomenologists who attempted to replace the Kantian formalism with the ethics of value, the obligation to act is strictly related to value, and to be more specific – to valuable content that is grasped by an appropriate moral sense. Phenomenologists criticize Kant for overlooking the existence of a trans-empirical world of value, which resulted in reducing all obligation to a universal dimension, to what may be common in nature. By the same token, they accepted the existence of a specific cognitive power able to directly grasp both the valuable content and the existing (one and specific) hierarchy of values⁸. This is the reason why the approach to assigning value to a given action remains an epistemological fact, and to be more specific – a cognitive and normative power. For Hume it is moral sense, for Kant – practical reason, for Scheler – moral intuition. One way or another, it is a kind of cognition that informs us what we should do.

Styczeń rightly observes, then, that the sting of criticism of phenomenologists did not reach the fundamentals of the Kantian ethics, because it was unable to do so. In both cases, this fundament is consciousness⁹. Thus, neither Kant nor Scheler solved certain problems, which was used as an objection, e.g. by Schopenhauer¹⁰. They did not provide a sufficient answer to the question why many people act in a way we

⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 417-420.

⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 417-426.

¹⁰ A. Schopenhauer, *O podstawie moralności [On the basis of morality]*, Polish transl. by Z. Bassakówna, Wyd. Zielona Sowa, Kraków 2004, 48.

find inappropriate. It is known that Kant claimed that such people are either deviant or mentally retarded. Scheler called it 'blindness to values'. However, it is reasonable to ask: who then is normal? What are the criteria for normality? How is it to be assessed if a person is neither deviant nor mentally retarded? When is it possible to judge that one has a sharp enough perception (good intuition) and can see the hierarchy of values as it is? Also, it is possible to consider if Schopenhauer was right when he said that will that desires obligation is like wooden iron¹¹. Answers provided to these questions by other phenomenologists are not much different. Since values show me what I should want, has my will anything to say? Thus, am I a free man, i.e. the one who can choose? Let us abandon these issues, however, because they require separate treatment.

The third approach to assessing the moral value of a human act, according to Styczeń, is linguistic analysis. Discussing this approach, Styczeń first of all enumerates emotivists and analytic philosophers, for whom evaluating is a fact, but a social, psychological and linguistic fact. They claim that it is language, and to be more specific – the way it is used, that determines the moral value of a given action. This issue need not be further explained as it is well-known. Philosophers of this current reduce ethics to metaphysics¹². However, the question that is of interest here is: what does Tadeusz Styczeń understand by philosophical heritage?

3. AN ATTEMPT TO COMBINE METHODS

An analysis of Styczeń's works shows that according to this author the mentioned approaches to assessing the moral value of an act are complementary and there is no need to limit the ethical quest to only one method. It is necessary to use at least three. Those who are familiar with Styczeń's views know that he referred to each of them.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cf. T. Styczeń, *Tradycyjne i współczesne ujęcia etyki* [*Traditional and contemporary approaches to ethics*], op. cit., 427.

And so, when he analyses obligation, he begins with stating a certain fact, given to us directly as *datum morale*, thus using an epistemological method. For he begins with a certain fact, given in experience, and not with a particular conception of man, as, for example, Tadeusz Ślipko did. And this is a fundamental difference between the two authors. Styczeń, however, does not confine himself to stating the fact of obligation or one and specific way of behaviour. From the epistemological level he enters the field of ethics as he looks for *datum ethicum*. And at this point it is possible to draw similarity to Kant, which was used to criticize Styczeń. His opponents claim that he reduced ethics to a theory of justice¹³. Next, Styczeń enters the metaphysical level, and not in order to show who man is. For he does it at the very end, when he attempts to understand what in particular man should do to affirm another man as a person. When he raises metaphysical issues, he does it for a completely different reason. He combines epistemological and metaphysical issues. He tries to show why an inter-human relationship, given to us in direct experience as a relation of obligation, appears in all absoluteness, although its ends are contingent beings. I remember how Styczeń kept referring to Raskolnikov from *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky during his lectures. The protagonist of the novel compared his own life of a young and promising student with the ending life of an old woman who had committed usury. Yet he suffered enormous pangs of conscience for what he had done. For he experienced that his deed should never have happened. On many occasions, Styczeń repeated that a proposition asserting obligation must meet appropriate diagnostic criteria. There is no reason to fear that this will result in ethics losing the autonomy it had at the starting point, for this criterion is obviousness. There are no other criteria. The case of “should” turns out to be the case of “is”, a kind of “is”. Hence, it is not possible, by means of logical thinking, to start with “is” and end with “should”, but there are other paths. Thus, if “should” is a special case of “is”, then it is very important not to exclude being from what

¹³ M. A. Krąpiec, *U podstaw rozumienia kultury* [At the foundations of an understanding of culture], Wyd. KUL, Lublin, 130-134.

it is. Otherwise it will cease to be something that is morally obliged and given in direct experience. Styczeń believed that it cannot be an eidetic reduction, because then the existence of what is given in direct experience would be reduced only to what is grasped by human consciousness. And the interior of what is devoid of existence will be filled with anything, at random. If, however, the morally obliged owes its ontic status to the real existence of persons, then according to Styczeń, the existence of persons should not be separated from the existence of values. Values exist when persons exist.

Styczeń also uses logical and linguistic considerations, that is, uses the third approach to assessing the moral value of a given deed. It is not surprising as he was familiar with Anglo-Saxon philosophy to which he devoted his PhD dissertation. For example, he argued that a thesis that asserts something about a specific thing may at the same time assert something about all specific things together, but does not have to. For theses on data of primary moral experience are characterized by the fact that they transform a particular moral relation, and obligating moral contents is such a relation, into an appropriate pattern of a moral relation, modeled on semantic functions but in a specific way, namely: the ends of this relation are variables, whose domain may include names of specific and really existing persons. The relation occurs both between persons and inside a person, in which case I am an object to myself, the subject. Such understanding of this relation is completely absent in, for example, Tischner and Lévinas, who wanted to show that what counts are proper names and not universals. Hence, they were afraid of any universalization, and concerned that specific existing persons would be reduced to the role of terms.

The same type of universalization must also apply to the reference of two persons to each other, i.e. what we experience as imposed by absolute obligation, thus an inter- or interior-personal relation. It is a specific domain of variable which may include names of what is imposed by absolute obligation and whose content is defined each time by the context of persons contributing to a given moral relation, that is by the "reality" of the persons. For example, the love of John for Sophie or

the love of a mother for her child. Any other mother, in a given situation, should act in this one and specific way if she truly loves her child. What John should do to Sophie is not necessarily what Peter must do to Eve. However, he should do this to show her his true love and affirm her as a person. Hence the author in question wrote: “Bezwzględnie powinne osobie przez osobę jest po prostu pojęciem analogicznym”¹⁴, which translates as: “the absolute obligation of one person to another is simply an analogous term”.

If the ends of a relation are specific, then the whole relation must be specific. What follows as a consequence is the requirement, which might seem unfulfillable from the point of view of logic, that the domain should include not names but names of specific moral requirements. And this is perhaps what Lévinas thought about when he said that language changes a person to a term, reduces persons and deprives them of animateness, uniqueness and unrepeatability. This is, however, exaggerated and results from unfamiliarity with the difference between intellect and calculating reason, or from disregarding this difference¹⁵. It is a fact that language has only names, or general names, in this respect. And, although it is possible to specify these categories, they always remain general. There is a threat that universalization must end in eliminating the specific from general ethical theses¹⁶.

Fortunately, as shown by Styczeń, neither the name of what is morally obliged, nor the names that are in the domain of variable need to be treated as universal names. What is more, they must not be, as it is in opposition to the situation under consideration whose characteristics

¹⁴ T. Styczeń, *Problem możliwości etyki jako empirycznie uprawomocnionej i ogólnie ważnej teorii moralności* [The problem of the possibility of ethics as an empirically legitimate and generally valid theory of morality], TN KUL, Lublin 1972, 165; cf. S. Kamiński, M. A. Krąpiec, *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki* [On theory and methodology of metaphysics], Wyd. KUL, Lublin 1962, 72nn.

¹⁵ Cf. R. Moń, *Odpowiedzialność fundamentem ludzkiej podmiotowości?* [Responsibility as a basis of human subjectivity?], Wyd. ATK, Warszawa 1999, 252.

¹⁶ T. Styczeń, *Problem możliwości etyki jako empirycznie uprawomocnionej i ogólnie ważnej teorii moralności* [The problem of the possibility of ethics as an empirically legitimate and generally valid theory of morality], op. cit., 163n.

is intended. For what appears to be absolutely morally obliged captures an inter-personal relation which is most appropriately expressed by a proposition (or a sentence on the linguistic level), and not by a term (or name). The morally obliged is expressed in the propositions of the type: "I owe you this" or "I am experiencing that I am responsible for you, even your faults", as Lévinas would express it. Styczeń consistently repeats that such a proposition is not a term (thus not a name). The expression "morally obliged" which may suggest that what is intended is a name, is only a linguistic abbreviation. And propositions are created not by calculating reason but by intellect that grasps existence directly, and a really existing relation of obligation we experience is such an existence.

Instead of showing such a necessity inside the system or referring to a unique experience, an absolutely obligating authority, as, for example, Lévinas did, Styczeń attempts to show an existential necessity of the whole structure of a person. For he was deeply convinced that morality does not exist outside the world of persons, and persons do not exist outside the moral world. Being a person is a necessary and, at the same time, a sufficient condition for being a moral entity. Hence he believed that it is necessary to abandon the approach of looking for similarities between persons, and to ask for reasons why a person should be affirmed by another person. In other words, it is necessary to ask: "Why?" Intuition tells us only that the fact of being a person is necessarily linked to the fact of morality. By the same token, it turns out to be insufficient. What is necessary is the ultimate justification of the claim that being a person necessarily implies appropriate action towards the person, and not any action.

The final metaphysical interpretation of ethics, according to Styczeń, is about indicating moral equivalents of man's being of a person as man, or about indicating ethical theses as equivalents of anthropologic-metaphysical theses. The method of reduction, transforming data of moral experience into expressions of metaphysics, requires metaphysics to be translated into a more detailed language twice, that is to refer to the experience of man and to the experience of morality.

What results are extralogical (in a formal sense) necessity relationships between relevant theses of metaphysics, anthropology and ethics.

Moreover, Styczeń was fully aware that it is not possible, on the basis of metaphysical theses, to deduce what their actual realizations of content are. Metaphysics will not tell us what we should do here and now. Such content may only be experienced. Having experienced them, however, it is not possible to overlook the categorial case of what is transcendent in them, i.e. to overlook that they are a sign of being. This also applies to ethics. Ethical statements do not follow from metaphysics. Ethical theses that are results of a certain universalization, unification of data of experience, cannot follow from metaphysics. Overlooking this methodological possibility is, according to Styczeń, the cause of trouble ethicists have with ethics itself¹⁷. It is very important, then, not to change the order. For some who intuitively see the relationship between ethics and metaphysics use deduction, i.e. they formulate ethical theses on the basis of metaphysical ones, which is obviously incorrect. It is necessary to employ a reverse process, that is, to show that data of moral experience appear to be absolutely valid because they are embedded in Absolute as the ultimate reason of being and person's dignity. Rejecting this possibility causes only scepticism.

This relation of ethics and metaphysics has yet another advantage – it removes the objections of Ernst Tugendhat, who criticizes Christian (or traditionalistic, as it is sometimes called) ethics. He claims that such ethics define what is good by reference to the will of God, whose existence first needs to be proved. And hence it is not capable of having a dialogue with other conceptions that do not accept religious content¹⁸. Styczeń does not need a justification of obligation or of good in the starting point but on the level of *datum metaphisicum*, or even on the level of *datum antropologicum*, when he analyses what act affirms man as a person. And then, in many cases, an answer to the question whether man is mortal or not plays a role. Also, the answer affects what

¹⁷ Ibid., 196.

¹⁸ E. Tugendhat, *Wykłady o etyce [Lectures on ethics]*, Polish transl. by J. Sidorek, Oficyna Wydawnicza, Warszawa 2004, 64.

action we will take. However, justifying an emerging obligation is not essential at the very beginning. For we know what we should do in a particular situation regardless of religious beliefs¹⁹.

This is why Styczeń claims that the ultimate reason of moral facts is metaphysical in nature, and ethics is a metaphysics of morality, which – let us digress – was sensed by Kant but incorrectly justified²⁰. Ethics so understood may aspire to be a theory explaining real and empirically stated facts. What is more, these justifications are of unconditional character and can be extended to all cases through reference to the only non-contradictory ontic reason of real empirically given moral content. The reduction used is, as he claims, a reduction to being, and not to content (as could be found in Scheler or, in a slightly different way, in Moore)²¹. A reduction to being is not an extension of domain in order to make contents disappear, but it is embedding of contents in the con-

¹⁹ „Kant zapominając o swym formalizmie wygłasza kategoryczny imperatyw traktowania osoby zawsze jako cel. Marks głosi, że człowiek dla człowieka jest summum bonum. Musimy ich z tego powodu umieścić obok siebie na tej samej liście, na której zresztą trzeba także widzieć inne, znamienne pary autorów, jak np. M. Buber i N. Hartmann, E. Mounier i R. Guardy, czy K. Wojtyła i T. Kotarbiński. Wymowa tego jest jednoznaczna (...) Istotne jest, że wyraża się tu identyczną treść oraz że źródło poznania tejże jest ewidentnie (i filozoficznie, i światopoglądowo) neutralne. ‘Ujrzyć człowieka’. ‘Ecce homo!’ – jest tu wszystkim”. T. Styczeń, *W sprawie etyki niezależnej*, w: Tenże, *Wprowadzenie do etyki*, Wyd. TN KUL, Lublin 1995, 70.

„Forgetting of his formalism, Kant yields a categorical imperative of treating a person always as a goal. Marx proclaims that man is summum bonum to another man. For this reason we must place them close to each other on the same list, which needs to include other significant pairs of authors, i.e. M. Buber and N. Hartmann, E. Mounier and R. Guardy, or K. Wojtyła and T. Kotarbiński. The meaning of this is unambiguous (...) It is essential that the content expressed here is identical and the source of cognition of this content is evidently (and philosophically as well as in term of a view-point) neutral. ‘Behold the man’. ‘Ecce homo!’ – is everything here”. T. Styczeń, *W sprawie etyki niezależnej* [*On the matter of independent ethics*], in: Idem, *Wprowadzenie do etyki* [*Introduction to ethics*], Wyd. TN KUL, Lublin 1995, 70.

²⁰ The title of the first ethical work by Kant is, after all: “*Groundwork of the metaphysic of morals*”.

²¹ T. Styczeń, *Problem możliwości etyki jako empirycznie uprawomocnionej i ogólnej ważnej teorii moralności* [*The problem of the possibility of ethics as an empirically legitimate and generally valid theory of morality*], op. cit., 196n.

text of existence, that is in the fundamental of the contents' existence²². The reduction connects primary existence of the relation with another man as a person (through existence) with the Necessary Reason. This reason, as a reason of being, is a reason of connected contents given in experience. Moreover, it allows a more detailed analysis of the content itself that is given in a particular experience, i.e. it allows stating that it is an existence of somebody created through love. If we assume that the Necessary Reason is God, it is easier to see that Styczeń's ethics was inspired by Christianity.

It is still worth considering if the concept of "combined" approaches to morality is correct and exhaustive. It seems that it is. On the other hand, it may be puzzling why Styczeń omitted the contractualism approach, advocated by such thinkers as J. Rawls or J. Habermas (in different versions) who treated morality as something that exists and is obeyed (better or worse) only because people agreed to do this. A justification of action considered here is thus reduced to finding general agreement. The answer to the question why I should act this way and not another would be: "Because you consented". It seems, however, that despite the fact that this way of justification is very popular today, it does not meet ethical justification requirements. And, perhaps, because of this Styczeń omitted it. For, as rightly pointed out by Tugendhat: "if morality was understood contractually, it would be irrational to obey moral rules, not only towards those whom one wants to co-operate with. There is no (even limited) claim to universality that we find in traditionalistic [religious - RM] morality. Structural limits of contractualism as a certain potential conception of morality will become clearer when we take into consideration the counterargument Plato used in Book II of *the Republic*: most rational would be the one who would only seemingly obey moral rules, although he would always breach them. If he profited from this and the situation was not disclosed"²³. In other words, what appears to be obligation, would be

²² Cf. R. Moń, *Odpowiedzialność fundamentem ludzkiej podmiotowości? [Responsibility as a basis of human subjectivity?]*, op. cit., 261.

²³ E. Tugendhat, *Wykłady o etyce [Lectures on ethics]*, op. cit., 73.

only of hypothetical character. Moreover, morality cannot be reduced to something that is of community character. It also has an individual dimension. And, although many question this individual dimension of morality, it is difficult to prove it does not exist. For, as rightly observed by C. S. Lewis, even those who pay spies (who are very useful for them), in fact, despise them²⁴. It is not to be forgotten that all morality is aimed at a certain goal, which is happiness, no matter how it is understood. The problem issue is whether we start with considerations about what happiness is, or think what action we should take in order not to miss the clearly emerging obligation of a certain behaviour (even if, at the moment, it is unfavourable to us), in order not to lose happiness. Styczeń suggests the latter approach to justifying acts as morally valuable, that is the one that combines metaphysical, epistemological and linguistic approaches. Many factors indicate that he is right.

WAŻNOŚĆ RZECZOWEJ PROBLEMATYKI ETYCZNEJ. SŁUSZNOŚĆ DIAGNOZY DOKONANEJ PRZEZ TADEUSZA STYCZNIA?

Streszczenie

Treść artykułu stanowi analiza propozycji Tadeusza Stycznia, by problematykę etyczną rozważać na trzech poziomach: metafizycznym, teoriopoznawczym i semantycznym. Lektura jego tekstów pozwala stwierdzić, że wszystkie te wątki są obecne w jego publikacjach. Cennym wykładem Stycznia w rozważania na tematy etyczne jest pokazanie, że rozwiązania, z jakimi spotykamy się w dziejach myśli etycznej, były jednostronne. Co więcej, gdy nie uwzględnimy trojakiego podejścia do rozważanych zagadnień moralnych, to wówczas możemy do jednej grupy zaliczyć filozofów, którzy zdają się stać na zupełnie przeciwnych stanowiskach. Tak jest na przykład w przypadku Hume'a, Kanta, Schelera, a to dlatego, że sposób ustalenia wartości danego

²⁴ "Sometimes the behaviour which I call bad is not inconvenient to me at all, but the very opposite. In war, each side may find a traitor on the other side very useful. But though they use him and pay him they regard him as human vermin. So you cannot say that what we call decent behaviour in others is simply the behaviour that happens to be useful to us". C. S. Lewis, *The Reality of the Law*, in: *Idem Mere Christianity*, Harper One, New York, 2001, 21.

działania pozostaje u nich faktem teoriopoznawczym, a dokładniej mówiąc – władzą poznawczo-normującą. Dla Hume’a jest nią zmysł moralny, dla Kanta – rozum praktyczny, dla Schelera – intuicja moralna. Tak czy inaczej, jest to rodzaj poznania informującego nas o tym, co powinniśmy uczynić. I zamiast tylko pokazywać taką konieczność wewnątrz systemu lub odwoływać się do jedyne go w swoim rodzaju doświadczenia bezwzględnie zobowiązującego nas oblicza, jak to czyni na przykład Lévinas, Styczeń stara się pokazać egzystencjalną konieczność całej struktury osoby. Przeprowadzone analizy stanowią próbę odpowiedzi na pytanie, na ile udało się Styczeniowi w pełni spojrzeć na problematykę moralną przeżywaną przez człowieka, a także dlaczego Styczeń nie uwzględnił metody kontraktualistycznej zaproponowanej przez J. Habermasa, O. Apla czy J. Rawlsa.

Słowa kluczowe: ustalanie wartości czynu, treść etyczna, metaetyka