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THREE KINDS OF PERSONALISM:
KANT, SCHELER AND JOHN PAUL II

- Slowa kluczowe:** personalizm, teologia ciała, norma personalistyczna, prawo daru, *Gaudium et spes*.
- Schlüsselworte:** Personalismus, Theologie des Leibes, personalistische Norm, das Gesetz der Gabe, *Gaudium et spes*.
- Key words:** personalism, theology of the body, personalistic norm, law of the gift, *Gaudium et spes*.

A key question for those who love John Paul II's Theology of the Body (TOB), who study or teach it, is the question in what context they should read it. What texts are particularly helpful for understanding TOB?

One can answer this question *a priori*, as it were. TOB is a catechesis by the Bishop of Rome for the universal Church. Like all magisterial texts, it should be read in the context of the Church's whole tradition through the ages and, conversely, the Church's tradition should be re-read in the light of TOB.

There are some who doubt that one *can actually* read TOB in this way. One author reads TOB in the context of „personalism”, which he takes to be a school of philosophy deriving from Kant and Scheler that undermines the traditional Thomistic bases of Catholic theology with disastrous pastoral results¹.

¹ „The entire argument of *Humanae vitae* rests upon the sentence, »That teaching, often set forth by the magisterium, is founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning«. [...] We must recognize that this new formulation stands in sharp contrast to the justification offered by traditional Catholic theology. The substitution of the new concept 'meaning' in place of the traditional language of »end« or »purpose« represents a radical restructuring. [...] How did the magisterium come to discard the natural law explanation of such a fundamental institution as marriage and replace it with a novel and untried philosophy? The answer in a word is »Personalism«.

Another author praises the presence of progressive personalism in TOB, but argues that it is a sheepskin that disguises the wolf of Thomism². Still another author claims that the traditional Catholic teaching about marriage „is sad, sick and suspect, a travesty of truth which has damaged the welfare of married people all through the ages”. It was only in the early decades of the 20th century, the same author continues, that a personalist revolution took place in which Dietrich von Hildebrand and Herbert Doms³ connected sexual interco-

Soon after its release, Cardinal Wojtyla (now Pope John Paul II) offered an extended testimony to the thoroughly personalistic nature of HV. [...] It is apparent that HV acted as a springboard by which personalism could launch its new philosophy of marriage, displacing the traditional teaching. Since that time, it has replaced all the customary supports of the Church such as history, tradition, authority and hierarchy with an impenetrable philosophy of inter-personal relationships that has proven disastrous in practice”. J. Galvin, *Humanae Vitae, Heroic, Deficient – or Both*, The Latin Mass 11 (2002), p. 14–15.

² „If the Pope’s theology of the body is sometimes ambiguous, it is because it can appear so revolutionary and original at first. He uses the language of personalism and the phenomenological method of description in his analyses of sexuality. He speaks rarely about nature and often about persons, personal dignity and responsibility, and so appears to have broken with his Neo-Thomistic training with its insistence upon immutable natural laws. Upon a closer examination, however, the pope is a skillful and energetic exponent of the neo-Thomistic natural law ethic. [...] Although he uses words like »person« and »love« liberally, his understanding of those words is hardly that of his readers. Like his arguments, his definitions refer constantly to nature”. R. Modras, *Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body*, in: Ch.E. Curran, R. A. McCormick (ed.), w: *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, New York 1998, p. 150–151.

³ In fact, Hildebrand was a strong supporter of *Humanae vitae*; see D. von Hildebrand, *The Encyclical Humanae Vitae: A Sign of Contradiction*, in: J. Smith (ed.), *Why Humanae Vitae was Right: A Reader* (Ignatius Press: San Francisco 1993) 47–83. Hildebrand’s ideas about marriage had an impact on Catholic theology mainly through Doms, who had a thorough Scholastic training and thus spoke the language of his colleagues in academic theology. While he acknowledges his dependence on Hildebrand (in particular on Hildebrand’s thesis that the primary „meaning” of marriage is the union of love; its primary end is procreation), he sees himself as taking a decisive step beyond the phenomenological method. „Although we gratefully recognize the stimulus that phenomenologically oriented authors [i.e., Hildebrand] have given to the discussion of marriage in the past few years, it was nevertheless, in conscious contrast (*Gegensatz*), our intention to achieve the decisive understanding on the basis of a metaphysical vision in the traditional scholastic sense”. H. Doms, *Vom Sinn und Zweck der Ehe: Eine systematische Studie*, Breslau 1935, p. 13.

Thinking and writing from within this scholastic metaphysical vision, Doms answers the question, „What is the essence of the conjugal act?” by denying that it is by its very essence an act of the procreative power of the human person. By its primary meaning or essence it is a unitive act, to which procreation can be attached as an effect and purpose that does not determine „what” the act is. On this basis, Doms also argues that the primary and true meaning of marriage, its essence, lies in the union of love between husband and wife, while procreation is first among the effects and purposes of marriage. These theses of Doms were condemned by the Magisterium in 1944 (see Denzinger-Schönmetzner, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 3838) and his book was withdrawn from circulation.

Doms continued to hold his views and became the preeminent German theologian on sexuality and marriage during Vatican II and the immediately following period. He provided the conceptual basis for theologians who used a personalist point of departure to argue in favor of contraception. Zob. H. Doms, *Gatteneinheit und Nachkommenschaft*, Mainz 1965 and *Zweigeschlechtlichkeit und Ehe*, in: J. Feiner, M. Löhrer (ed.), *Mysterium salutis: Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik*, Einsiedeln 1965.

urse with love, for the first time in the Catholic tradition, and thereby showed the moral legitimacy of contraception. John Paul II's support for *Humanae vitae* shows that he never saw the full light of personalism and never freed himself from the negative Augustinian and Thomistic teaching about marriage⁴.

The situation is rather confusing. Some condemn John Paul II for being a personalist rather than a Thomist; others condemn him for being a Thomist rather than a personalist.

The purpose of my paper is to focus with precision on the kind of personalism John Paul II actually embraces in order to show that TOB *can actually* be read in light of the Catholic tradition. To sharpen the focus I will compare

He states the heart of his position as follows. „I thus come to the conclusion that the *expressio amoris* (expression of love) or, as I would prefer to call it, the display of conjugal two-in-oneness (*Zweieinigkeit*) in the act specific to marriage, and not, by contrast, the *generatio prolis* (generation of offspring) is the *finis operis* (end of the act) of the natural conjugal act". H. Doms, *Gatteneinheit und Nachkommenschaft*, p. 25. „St. Thomas's ideas about generation among animals have been definitively refuted by numerous careful observations in the last half century. It is certain that the mature reproductive cells possess in themselves the powers needed either for a parthenogenetic development or fecundation; and copulation, when it is present at all, serves biologically only to bring about an external approach of the male and female gametes, often in the body of the female. In animals, there is no »act of generation«, no »*actus generativus vel generationis*« of sexually mature males and females, but only acts of mating and of copulation". Ibidem, p. 97–98.

⁴ „The idea that the human race was smitten particularly in its male sexual organs, (meaning the whole of male adult life, in marriage as well as out), that it is a battle against the unruly erection leading to lust, is the fundamental bedrock of Magisterial thinking. John Paul II can identify with Augustine, not through the experience of fornication, but because of the problems caused by the nuptial nature of the adult male body, when a healthy young man is leading a celibate life. This is made clear in Karol Wojtyła's *Love and Responsibility* in a chapter headed *The Metaphysics of Shame*. His conviction that acquiring conjugal chastity (marital continence) is the way to overcoming original sin's 'damage to human sexuality' is also stated in his many other writings on sexual matters. From his perspective, NFP may be commended since it requires such conjugal chastity, whereas contraception merely compounds original sin. [...] [D]evoid of sacramental experiences, far from being infallible, traditional teaching is sad, sick and suspect, a travesty of truth which has damaged the welfare of married people all through the ages. Rather than seeing sexual intercourse as a holy intrinsic part of married union, it was called the corrupt carrier of original sin, only to be used for the procreation of children. We now know its rich love overflows to provide the emotional welfare of these very children, and without which they will grow up with a deep emotional handicap. [...] When was sexual intercourse first connected with love by the Church? The astonishing answer is in the 1920s – by Dietrich Von Hildebrand who wrote *Marriage, the Mystery of Faithful Love*. He gave a lecture in Ulm, Germany, arguing a distinction between love as the meaning of marriage and procreation as its purpose. He characterised marriage as a 'community of love' which 'finds its end in procreation'. In 1935, Herbert Doms wrote *Vom Sinn und Zweck der Ehe*, which appeared in English under the title of *The Meaning of Marriage*. Doms suggests that the power of intercourse lies in its ability to bring about the total gift of self. Because sperm and ova do not meet in every act of intercourse, the first purpose of marriage is the union of the spouses with two ulterior motives - their fulfillment as persons and the conception of a child. Doms' approach was not simply a development of traditional doctrine and could be construed as a change in the Church's very understanding of marriage. Not surprisingly, Doms' work was withdrawn from circulation in the early 1940s by order of the Congregation of the Holy Office". E. Price, *Seeing Sin Where None Is* (Catholics for a Changing Church, 2000), <http://www.womenpriests.org/body/price.asp> (16 XII 2008).

his personalism with the personalisms of Kant and Scheler, which are, in turn, fundamentally opposed to each other⁵. John Paul II's personalism, I will argue, is a personalism best understood, not in light of Kant and Scheler, but in light of Vatican II and the tradition of the Church, including the "perennial philosophy" rooted in Plato and Aristotle.

1. Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes* 24:3

Gaudium et spes 24:3 plays an important role in John Paul II⁶. When he defines true personalism, he appeals to this text. The hymn to love in the First Letter to the Corinthians remains the Magna Carta of the civilization of love. In this concept what is important is [...] the radical acceptance of the understanding of man as a *person who "finds himself" by making a sincere gift of self* [*Gaudium et spes* 24:3]. A gift is, obviously, »for others«: This is the most important dimension of the civilization of love. We thus come to the very heart of the Gospel truth about freedom. [...] Freedom cannot be understood as a license to do absolutely anything; it means a *gift of self*. Even more, it means an interior discipline of the gift. The idea of gift contains not only the free initiative of the subject, but also the aspect of duty. All this is made real in the »communion of persons«. [...] Continuing this line of thought, we also come upon the antithesis between individualism and *personalism*. Love, the civilization of love, is bound up with *personalism*. Why with *personalism*? And why does individualism threaten the civilization of love? We find a key to answering this in the council's expression, a »sincere gift« [*Gaudium et spes* 24:3]⁷.

TOB quotes *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 many times and in key places. For example, *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 explains why the human body has a spousal meaning.

⁵ John Paul II usually speaks about personalism in positive terms, but there are texts in which he mentions false or misleading kinds of personalism. Two days after delivering the final catechesis of TOB, he gave a talk in which he warned about the danger of „pseudo-liturgical personalisms”. Discourse to the Center of Liturgical Action, November 30th, 1984, *Insegnamenti* 7/2 (1984), p. 1340–1343. In a talk to religious a few months later he spoke about „egotistical personalisms”. Discourse to religious, Quito (Ecuador), January 30th, 1985, *Insegnamenti* 8/1 (1985), p. 273–277, § 4.

It is significant that John Paul II uses the word „personalism” in the plural: personalisms. „Kantian personalism”, for example, is a particular kind of personalism, namely, a „formalistic personalism”. See K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, Boston and London 1979), p 22, note 8 printed on page 302 and *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco 1960 [1993]), p. 133.

⁶ P. Ide, Une théologie du don: Les occurrences de *Gaudium et spes*, n. 24, § 3 chez Jean-Paul II, *Anthropotes* 17 (2001), p. 149–178, 313–344.

⁷ John Paul II, Letter to Families *Gratissimam sane*, 14, emphasis added, cf. John Paul II, Discourse to the Roman Rota, January 27th, 1997, § 4.

One can understand this »spousal« meaning of the human body only in the context of the person. The body has a spousal meaning because the human person, as the Council says, is a creature that God willed for its own sake and that, at the same time, cannot fully find himself except through the gift of self [*Gaudium et spes* 24:3] (TOB 15:5)⁸.

Based on these texts and many others like them, one can define John Paul II's personalism as a personalism of the sincere gift of self in accord with *Gaudium et spes* 24:3, that is, a personalism rooted in the union of persons in the Trinity and in Christ's gift of his life for us. It is a personalism shaped by what TOB calls a „hermeneutics of the gift“ (TOB 13:2) that is, a comprehensive interpretation of reality in terms of gift. A hermeneutics of the gift is, of course, also a hermeneutics of receptivity and of communion. Gift and reception are correlative and communion is their fruit⁹.

Let us take a closer look at *Gaudium et spes* 24:3.

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when he prays to the Father, „that all may be one. [...] as we are one“ (Jn 17:21-22) and thus offers vistas closed to human reason, indicates a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the union of God's sons in truth and love. This likeness shows that man, who is the only creature on earth God willed for himself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self (cf. Lk 17:33).

John Paul II often focuses on two points in this text: (1) Man is the only creature on earth God willed for his (that is, man's) own sake. (2) Man cannot

⁸ For the many other examples of the use of *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 in TOB, see the Index at *Gaudium*.

⁹ „The Ecclesiology of Communion: This is the central idea about itself that the Church re-proposed in the Second Vatican Council, as the Extraordinary Synod of 1985 on the 20th anniversary of the Council has recalled for us. »The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea in the Council documents«. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 19. In interpreting this key of the Council, John Paul II emphasizes above all the root of all communion in the Trinity in accord with *Gaudium et spes* 24:3. „If we want to follow the main thread of the Council's thought, all that it says concerning the hierarchy, the laity and the religious orders in the Church should be re-read in the light of the reality of *communio* for the community of the People of God. »For the members of the People of God are called upon to share their goods, and the words of the apostle apply also to each of the Churches, according to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God« (1 Pet 5:10). Thus we have the *communio ecclesiarum* [communion of churches] and the *communio munerum* [the communion of gifts, tasks, or offices] and, through these, the *communio personarum* [communion of persons]. Such is the image of the Church presented by the Council. The type of union and unity that is proper to the community of the Church as People of God essentially determines the nature of that community. The Church as People of God, by reason of its most basic premises and its communal nature, is oriented towards the resemblance there ought to be between »the union of the sons of God in truth and love« [*Gaudium et spes*, 24:3] and the essentially divine unity of the divine persons, in *communione Sanctissimae Trinitatis*“. K. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council* (San Francisco 1980), p. 420. See John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Boston 2000, Introduction by M. Waldstein, p. 87–94.

fully find himself except in a sincere gift of self. According to John Paul II, these two statements contain „the whole truth”, „the integral truth about man” (see TOB, Index at „integral” and „truth”). They are the two fundamental laws of the life of persons as persons.

In order to see a whole in its integrity, one must see its beginning as well as its end without ignoring what lies in the middle. The two laws of the life of persons in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 are related to each other as beginning and end and they cover the middle as well.

a) The Beginning: The Personalistic Norm

„God willed man for his own sake”, stands *at the beginning* of the life of persons. It is connected with rational *nature*, in virtue of which persons are persons in the first place. Rational nature enables the beings that have it to know and love the good. Only for them, therefore, can and does God truly will the good for their own sake. Wojtyła calls this first law of the life of persons „the personalistic norm”¹⁰. Aristotle touches on this norm in his discussion of friendship.

Of the love of lifeless objects we do not use the word „friendship”; for it is not mutual love, nor is there a wishing of good to the other (for it would surely be ridiculous to wish wine well; if one wishes anything for it, it is that it may keep, so that one may have it oneself); but to a friend we say we ought to wish what is good for his sake¹¹.

It is with such a love of friendship, according to St. Thomas, that God provides for creatures whose nature gives them the power of intellectual knowledge and will. „Divine providence provides for intellectual creatures for their own sake, but for other creatures for the sake of these. [...] Only the intellectual nature is, therefore, sought for itself in the universe, but all other things for its sake”¹².

Of course, while the personalistic norm stands at the *beginning* of the life of persons, it accompanies the life of persons all the way through the middle to the very end. It remains forever true that persons must be loved for their own sake. Even they themselves rightly love themselves in this way, as Plato and Aristotle show.

In order to see the power of the personalistic norm in establishing an „integral vision” of man, one must see its relation to the commandment of love. This norm, in its negative aspect, states that the person is the kind of good which does not

¹⁰ K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, San Francisco 1960 [1993], p. 27–28, 40–44.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 8.2, 1155b.30–31.

¹² St. Thomas, *Contra gentiles*, 3.112.2–3.

admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such as a means to an end. In its positive form the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love¹³.

According to the teaching of Jesus, the commandment „You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18, Matt 19:19) sums up the whole law. „For this is the law and the prophets” (Matt 7:12). The moral life as a whole becomes intelligible through this one commandment. „Love and then do what you want! *Dilige et quod vis fac*”¹⁴. The personalistic norm is indeed a royal highway into an „integral vision of man”.

b) The End: The Law of the Gift

The second statement, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere „gift of self”, does not concern the *beginning*, but *the end* of the life of persons. „Fully finding oneself” refers to completion or perfection. Perfection needs to be acquired and is fully acquired only at the end.

The argument of *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 for this second law of the life of persons is a strictly theological argument. In his prayer to the Father, „that they may be one as we are one”, Jesus shows a similarity between the union of divine persons and the union of human persons. This similarity between the Trinitarian and the human communion of persons shows the truth of the law of the gift. The Council insists very clearly on the newness of the revelation brought by Jesus. Jesus opens up vistas *closed to human reason*. He opens the unheard-of heart of God’s inner life. It may well be that the law of „giving and finding” is reflected also in the natural order, but *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 does not draw attention to this fact. It places us immediately in the innermost sanctuary of Trinitarian theology. „Love, an uncreated gift, is part of the inner mystery of God and is the very nucleus of theology”¹⁵.

Gaudium et spes 24:3 briefly alludes to the character of this innermost sanctuary in the phrases, „as we are one” and „union of divine Persons”. An earlier version of the text was more explicit.

Indeed, Catholic doctrine, opening up vistas closed to human reason, teaches that God, though he is one, subsists in three persons, each of which lives in such a way toward the others that it is constituted by that very relation. One can infer that human persons, since they are created in the image of God one and three and are reformed in his image, show in themselves a certain imitation of him. While, then, man is the only creature on earth which God willed for its own sake, he himself is

¹³ K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 41.

¹⁴ St. Augustine, *In Iohannis epistulam tractatus*, 7.8.

¹⁵ K. Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction*, New York 1979, s. 55.

related out of himself toward others in such a way that he cannot find himself except by giving himself¹⁶.

The final text of *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 is more scriptural, less theologically unfolded, but the essential point remains the same¹⁷.

According to *Gaudium et spes* 24:3, the Trinity as exemplar is concretely mediated by Christ. The Council expresses this point by adding a reference to Luke 17:33, „The one who wants to save his life will lose it, but the one who loses his life for my sake will save it”. This is one of the very few sayings of Jesus reported by all four Gospels. The formulation of the saying in Matthew is closest to the formulation chosen by *Gaudium et spes* 24:3: „The one who *finds* his life will lose it and the one who loses his life for my sake will *find* it” (Mat 10:39).

Immediately before this saying in Matthew, Mark, and Luke 9, Jesus speaks about discipleship, denying oneself, taking up one’s cross and following after him. The law of losing and finding, which he formulates as a general law of the life of persons, is an explanation of this discipleship and particularly of the cross. This deep Trinitarian and Christological background must be kept in mind when one reads what John Paul II has to say about „the gift of self” in TOB.

Together with Jean Danielou, Wojtyła had the responsibility of producing an early draft of *Gaudium et spes* at a crucial point in the history of its composition¹⁸. He may well be responsible for the paragraph containing the two laws of the life of persons in the earlier form of that paragraph quoted above. At any rate, one finds the explicit joining of the two laws of *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 already some years before the Council in Wojtyła’s *Love and Responsibility*, first delivered as lectures in 1957–1959 and published in 1960. *Gaudium et spes* was promulgated five years later. One passage is particularly clear because it speaks about two specific laws that govern the existence and development of persons, the personalistic norm and the law of the gift of self.

[O]ne person can give himself or herself, can surrender entirely to another, whether to a human person or to God, and such a giving of the self creates a special form of love which we define as spousal love. This fact goes to prove that the person has

¹⁶ See F.G. Hellin, *Concilii Vaticani II synopsis, in ordinem redigens schemata cum relationibus necnon Patrum orationes atque animadversiones: Gaudium et spes*, Rome 2003, p. 171.

¹⁷ For the objections of some of the Council Fathers against the earlier text, and even against the final version, see F. Bechina, *Die Kirche als „Familie Gottes”: Die Stellung dieses theologischen Konzeptes in Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil und in den Bischofssynoden von 1974 bis 1994 im Hinblick auf eine „Familia-Dei-Ekklesiologie”*, Rome 1998, p. 221 footnote 129. A complementary account of the objections is found in P. d’Ornellas, *Liberté, que dis-tu de toi-même: Une lecture des travaux du Concile Vatican II, 25 janvier 1959 – 8 décembre 1965*, Paris 1999, p. 538–542.

¹⁸ See P. d’Ornellas, *Liberté*, especially pp. 22, 447–454, 481–483.

a dynamism of its own and [that] [...] *specific laws govern its existence and evolution*. Christ gave expression to this in a saying which is on the face of it profoundly paradoxical: „He who would save his soul shall lose it, and he who would lose his soul for my sake shall find it again” [Matt 10:39].

Immediately after this statement, Wojtyła explains the first principle of *Gaudium et spes* 24:3, the personalistic norm.

Indeed, the problem of spousal love does contain a profound paradox, a very real, and not mere a verbal paradox: the words of the Gospel point to a concrete reality, and the truth which they contain is made manifest in the life of the person. Thus, of its very nature, no person can be transferred or ceded to another. In the natural order it is oriented toward self-perfection, towards the attainment of an ever greater fullness of existence – which is, of course, always the existence of some concrete „I”. We have already stated that this self-perfection proceeds side by side with love.

The manner in which Wojtyła explains the personalistic norm in this passage is very close to the understanding of eros in Plato and of the desire for happiness in Aristotle. Wojtyła then turns to the second principle, the law of the gift.

The fullest, the most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self-giving, in making one’s inalienable and non-transferable „I” someone else’s property. This is doubly paradoxical: firstly in that it is possible to step outside one’s own „I” in this way, and secondly in that the „I” far from being destroyed or impaired as a result is enlarged and enriched – of course in a super-physical, a moral sense. The Gospel stresses this very clearly and unambiguously – „would lose – shall find again” „would save – shall lose”.

In the final sentence of this passage, Wojtyła relates the two laws to each other.

You will readily see that we have here *not merely the personalistic norm but also bold and explicit words of advice*, which make it possible for us *to amplify and elaborate on that norm*. The world of persons *possesses its own laws of existence and of development*¹⁹.

With full clarity, this text formulates the two laws of the existence of persons found in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3. It formulates them as a comprehensive pair of principles that throw light on human life as a whole. Wojtyła even appeals to the same saying of Jesus to which *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 also appeals.

Wojtyła shows that the personalistic norm and the law of the gift do not stand next to each other without any connection. The law of the gift „amplifies

¹⁹ K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 97, emphasis added.

and elaborates” on the personalistic norm. The two laws concern one single reality, namely, the life of the person, first in its beginnings and potential in human nature, then in its full realization in the relation of divinized love of the members of Christ who come to share in the life of Christ and the Trinity. In this perspective it becomes clear why John Paul II sees „the whole truth about man” expressed in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3. The beginning and the end, the natural order and its supernatural fulfillment, are embraced by the two laws.

2. Kant’s Personalism Built on the First Law

In his treatment of sexual union and marriage, Kant uses a similar pair of principles, though in a manner that is quite opposed to *Gaudium et spes* 24:3 and to John Paul II’s hermeneutics of the gift.

The natural use that one sex makes of the sexual organs of the other is an *enjoyment* (*Genuß*) for which one partner gives himself (*sich hingiebt*) to the other. In this act, a human being makes himself into a thing, which is contrary to the right of human nature to one’s own person. This is possible only under one single condition: when a person is acquired by another *in a manner equal to a thing*, correspondingly the former acquires the latter [by a marriage contract], for in this way the person gains itself back again and reconstitutes its personhood. Now, the acquisition of one bodily member of a human being is at the same time an acquisition of the whole person, because the person is an absolute unity²⁰.

²⁰ Here is the larger context of this remarkable statement. „*Sexual intercourse (commercium sexuelle)* is the mutual use which one human being makes of the sexual organs and faculty of another (*usus membrorum et facultatum sexualium alterius*). It is either a *natural* use, by which a being of the same nature can be conceived, or an *unnatural* use either with a person of the same sex or with an animal that does not belong to the human species. These transgressions of the law, called unnatural vices (*crimina carnis contra naturam*) and unmentionable vices, must be rejected entirely, without any qualifications or exceptions, because they do injury to human nature in our own person. Now, the natural union of the sexes occurs either only according to animal nature (*vaga libido, venus volgivaga, fornicatio*) or according to *law*. – The latter is *marriage (matrimonium)*, i.e., the union of two persons for the lifelong mutual possession of their sexual characteristics. – The purpose of begetting and educating children may be a reason for which nature implanted a mutual inclination toward each other in the sexes, but for the legality of this bond it is not required that the one who marries *must* intend this goal for himself, for otherwise marriage would dissolve of itself when the begetting of children ends. For, although it is based on pleasure [*Lust*] for the mutual use of their sexual characteristics, the marriage contract is not accidental, but it is necessary in accord with legal principles of pure reason. That is, when man and woman want to enjoy each other in their sexual characteristics, they *must* necessarily marry. This necessity follows from legal principles of pure reason. For, the natural use that one sex makes of the sexual organs of the other is an *enjoyment* for which one partner gives himself to the other. In this act, a human being makes himself into a thing, which is contrary to the right of human nature to one’s own person. This is possible only under one single condition: when a person is acquired by another *in a manner equal to a thing*, correspondingly the former acquires the latter, for in this way the person gains himself back again and reconstitutes his personality. Now, the acquisition of one bodily member of a human being is at the same time an acquisition of the whole person, because the person is an absolute unity. For this reason, the gift and the acceptance of one sex for enjoyment by the other is not merely permissible *only* on the single

For Kant, sexual intercourse is a gift of self contrary to the dignity of the person. In all sexual relations, whether in marriage or outside it, both persons turn themselves into mere things by giving their sexual organs, and thus their own persons, to each other for the sake of being possessed and „enjoyed”. Being used in such a way, Kant holds, is contrary to the autonomy of the person, contrary to the right every person has to himself or herself. Persons should be treated as ends, not means.

While man is unholy enough, the *humanity* in his person must be holy to him. In all of creation, everything one might want and over which one has power can be used *as a mere means*. Only man himself and with him every rational creature is *end in itself*. For, in virtue of the autonomy of his freedom, he is the subject of the moral law, which is holy²¹.

The only remedy for the loss of autonomy in sex is marriage. By marriage I permanently acquire my spouse as a thing. I thereby offset the loss of myself to her as a thing when she „enjoys” me in sexual intercourse. By a permanent contract I own the one who episodically owns me. In this way, I regain myself and my autonomy. It is like a man who wants to gamble, but is afraid of losing his money. And so he buys the casino.

The personalistic norm as Kant understands it is equivalent to the categorical imperative, „Act in such a way that at any time the maxim of your will can at the same time be valid as a principle of a universal legislation”²². By acting according to the categorical imperative, Kant holds, one grasps one’s own dignity as an autonomous person who is self-moving in the most radical manner possible, namely, as the universal lawgiver for all persons. In this autonomy, one must see the moral humanity in oneself as the only thing that has absolute value, the only final end of the entire cosmos. It immediately follows that one must affirm the dignity of others as well. One can only be consistent with oneself in affirming one’s own dignity as universal lawgiver, if one grants the same dignity to other persons²³.

condition of marriage, but it is *only* possible on this same condition. That this *personal right* is nevertheless at the same time also a *right in the manner of a right to a thing*, is clear, for when one of the spouses has run away or has given himself or herself into the possession of another, the other spouse has the right at any time and without any condition to take him or her back into his or her power like a thing. For the same reason, the relation of the married persons is a relation of *equality* of possession, equality both in their possession of each other (hence only in *monogamy*, for in polygamy the person who gives herself away gains back only part of the man whose possession she has become in her entirety and therefore reduces herself to a mere thing) and of external goods [...]. I. Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten [The Metaphysics of Morals]*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, Berlin 1793 [1902-], p. 277–278.

²¹ I. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft [Critique of Practical Reason]*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, Berlin 1785 [1902-], 5.87, cf. 5.131. See also I. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 6.434.

²² I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5.30.

²³ For, so runs Kant’s argument, suppose one did not grant this dignity to others, but only to oneself. One’s maxim, i.e., the practical universal principle valid for oneself, would in this case be,

In its actual application, Kant's personalistic norm works much like the golden rule in the teaching of Jesus. „Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6,31). „In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt 7,12).

Yet, this similarity goes hand in hand with a profound opposition between Kant and the Gospel. This opposition becomes apparent when one examines Wojtyła's argument for the personalistic norm.

[A] person must not be *merely* the means to an end for another person. This is precluded by the very nature of personhood, by what any person is. For a person is a thinking subject, and capable of taking decisions: these, most notably, are the attributes we find in the inner self of a person. This being so, every person is by nature capable of determining his or her aims. Anyone who treats a person as the means to an end does violence to the very essence of the other, to what constitutes its natural right²⁴.

Noteworthy in this argument for the personalistic norm is the focus on the person's ability, due to its *rational nature*, to understand the good, to understand aims or ends and pursue them. In Kant, the key point is not that the

I shall affirm only my own dignity, but not that of others. Now apply the categorical imperative by which this maxim is raised to the status of a universal law. The result is: *Everyone shall affirm only his or her own dignity, but not that of others.* This universal law is self-contradictory. When others follow it, they will not treat me as an end in myself while I *do* treat myself as an end in myself. I can only be and remain autonomous if I do not contradict my own will by legislating to other persons that they need not affirm the dignity that I myself ascribe to myself. This is why I must treat others as having the dignity of persons.

When Wojtyła, following Scheler, calls Kant's personalism „formalistic”, (K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 133.) what he has in mind is precisely this reduction of the moral standard to its universal logical form apart from any contents (such as the good of my neighbor). Kant writes, „The moral and thus categorical imperative [...] must abstract from any object [i.e., any »matter« of willing or good], the object having no influence at all on the will, in order not to reduce practical reason to merely serving an interest foreign to it. [The moral imperative] must prove its own imperious dignity as the highest law. For example, I must seek to make others happy not because their happiness is of interest to me – whether on the basis of inclination or some delight that influences me indirectly through my reason – but only because the maxim which excludes this happiness cannot be understood as a universal law within one and the same will”. I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten [Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals], Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin 1785 [1902-], 4.441.

Scheler offers a brilliant critique of this formalism. „It is for him [Kant] a matter of complete indifference, with respect to being-good and being-evil, whether we seek to realize the noble or the vulgar, the weal or the woe, the useful or the harmful. For the meaning of the words *good* and *evil* is wholly exhausted in *lawful form* or *unlawful form*. [...] Let us not further consider the monstrosity of this assertion, which ignores that the purposes of the devil are no less »systematic« than those of God. It is Kant's *first* error to deny that [moral] good and evil [*gut und böse*] are *material* values. But they are – avoiding all construction – clearly feelable *material* values of their own kind”. M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, 5th ed., Evanston 1916 [1973], 24–5, G 46–7. Emphasis on the word „material” added. Frings translates material in each case as „non-formal”. „Material” refers to the *content* of the will, some good or evil found in experience, rather than the universal *form* of its imperative.

²⁴ K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, s. 26–27.

person can *understand and pursue* the good and ends, but that the person *is* the ultimate end of the entire cosmos²⁵.

Immanuel Kant [...] formulated [...] the following imperative: act always in such a way that the other person is the end and not merely the instrument of your action. In the light of the preceding argument this principle should be restated in a form rather different from that which Kant gave it, as follows: whenever a person is the object of your activity, remember that you may not treat that person as only the means to an end, as an instrument, but must allow for the fact that he or she, too, *has, or at least should have*, distinct personal ends²⁶.

Wojtyła's understanding of the personalistic norm is indeed „rather different” from Kant's. *Being* an end differs from *having* an end, *being* the highest good differs from being *the beneficiary of* the highest good, *being* God differs from *having* God as one's end. Aristotle observes that if – and only if – man were the highest being, practical knowledge would be the supreme form of knowledge. He seems to be describing Kant²⁷.

To sum up: The key to Kant's personalism is the absolutizing of the autonomous dignity of the person as the highest end. The person must be treated as the final end, not a means. John Paul II's understanding of the personalistic norm is opposed to Kant on precisely this point. It is closer to Aristotle's and St. Thomas's account of the love of friendship according to which persons *have* ends and the right way to treat them is to love them and to will the good for them, for their sake.

3. Scheler's Personalism Built on the Second Law

While the key to Kant's personalism resembles the first of the two laws of the life of persons expressed in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3, the key to Scheler's personalism resembles the second of these two laws, the law of the gift. It is

²⁵ „Concerning man (and thus every rational being in the world) as a moral being one cannot ask further, For what end (*quem in finem*) does he exist? His existence has the highest purpose in itself. He can, as far as possible, subject the whole of nature to this purpose. At the least, he must not submit himself to any influence of nature contrary to this purpose. – Now if the beings of the world as beings that are contingent in their existence are in need of a highest cause that acts according to purpose, then man is the final purpose of creation. For, without man the chain of purposes subordinate to each other would not be explained in its entirety. It is only in man, and in man only as the subject of morality, that an unconditioned legislation concerning purposes can be found, which thus enables him alone to be a final purpose to which the whole of nature is teleologically subordinated”. I. Kant, *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie* [*On a Recently Assumed Noble Tone in Philosophy*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, Berlin 1796 [1902-], 5.435–436.

²⁶ K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 27–28.

²⁷ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 6.7. For Kant's explicit claim that practical knowledge is the supreme form of knowledge, see I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5.108.

difficult to imagine two thinkers further apart from each other than Kant and Scheler. Granted, both belong to the trajectory of the philosophy of consciousness from Descartes through Kant to Hegel, but it is no accident that Kant stems from the Protestant North, Scheler from the Catholic South of Germany, an origin not erased even by his spectacular apostasy from the Catholic faith toward the end of his life²⁸. Hans Urs von Balthasar shows in his account of Scheler's personalism that according to Scheler the highest and most perfect form of love is God's self-giving love as revealed by Jesus²⁹. According to Scheler, one can see a radical reversal in the basic movement of love when one compares Plato's and Aristotle's understanding of love with the Christian understanding of love³⁰. In Plato and Aristotle, love (*eros*) has an *ascending* movement of longing for fulfillment, fulfillment at the very end by the infinite good that constitutes the goal or object of human striving. In Christianity, according to Scheler, all attention is focused on the *descending* love of God (*agape*) in which fullness is first and self-gift is a necessary overflow. Balthasar summarizes:

It was only in this lavish self-gift in freedom that the self-glory and highest sovereignty of this love – neither bound by anything nor obliged to anything – was revealed. Once this »reversal in the movement of love« has been initiated by Christ, it becomes the true access to the supreme [value]: it is only »in performing this act of 'bending down', in letting himself glide down, in 'losing himself'«, that man can »gain the supreme [value] – becoming like God«. It is all the more surprising to Scheler that »the intellectual and philosophical expression of this singular revolution of the human spirit failed in an almost incomprehensible manner«. It was precisely »the Platonic definition of love as striving«, that »passed over into Scholastic philosophy, contrary to the innermost intentions of Christianity« so that »there never was, or at best there were only weak beginnings of, a philosophical understanding of the world and of life that sprang *originally* and *spontaneously* from the Christian experience«³¹.

²⁸ See D. von Hildebrand, *Max Scheler's Philosophie und Persönlichkeit*, in: idem, *Die Menschheit am Scheideweg: Gesammelte Abhandlungen und Vorträge, herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Karla Mertens*, Regensburg 1954, p. 587–639.

²⁹ The chapter entitled „Personalismus“ is the final chapter in Balthasar's treatment of Scheler. H. Urs von Balthasar, *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele: Studien zu einer Lehre von letzten Haltungen*, vol. 3, Einsiedeln-Freiburg 1937-39 [reprint 1998], p. 84–192. Chapter 4, „Personalismus“, p. 152–192.

³⁰ Scheler seems to be strongly influenced by P. Rousselot, *The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution*. Marquette 1908 [2001] which argues that two irreconcilable ways of understanding love clashed in the Middle Ages, namely, love as pure sacrificial self-gift and love as pure self-affirmation in the pursuit of the good for one's own sake. A similar thesis about love was proposed after Scheler by the influential Lutheran theologian A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, Philadelphia 1953.

³¹ H. Urs von Balthasar, *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele*, 3.153. Balthasar's quotes are taken from M. Scheler, *Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen*, in: *Vom Umsturz der Werte: Abhandlungen und Aufsätze*, Gesammelte Werke 3, Bern 1912 [1955], here p. 70ff. M. Scheler, *Liebe und Erkenntnis*, in: *Schriften zur Soziologie und Weltanschauungslehre: Gesammelte Werke* 6, Bern 1916 [1963]), here p. 87ff.

Scheler's ambition, at least in his Catholic period, was to offer precisely such an understanding, freed from the accretions of Greek philosophy and Scholastic theology. His ethics, he notes, „presupposes Kant's destruction of these [Greek and Scholastic] forms of ethics”³². The personalistic norm as Wojtyła explains it („one must treat the person *as having* an end”) implies precisely the Greek understanding of eros.

One of the guiding concerns of Scheler's personalism of self-giving love is to answer Nietzsche's objections against Christianity, according to which Christian love is born of the resentment (*Ressentiment*) of the weak against the strong. A lack of vitality, Nietzsche argues, makes Christians unable to enjoy life and so, out of resentment, they transmute weakness and wretchedness into virtues³³. Scheler counters that Christian love is free of such resentment because it is a movement of free giving out of fullness; it is a selfless descent from the heights to the depths.

What does the bourgeois man, who „wants to become something”, and who secretly measures himself by his lords and kings even when he rebels against them

³² The full text reads: „Aristotle does not recognize a sharp distinction between »goods« and »values«, nor does he, on a more fundamental level, have a concept of value that is independent of the subsistence and degrees of being (i.e., of the measure of perfection of entelechial striving for an end that stands at the foundation of each thing). Aristotle's ethics is in essence an ethics of »goods« and »objective purposes«, one that I reject in *Formalism in Ethics* with the most detailed arguments. Hence, the material ethics of values [i.e., Scheler's own ethics] already belongs *completely* to »modern« philosophy and can serve neither as a springboard for a return to the ancient static objectivism of goods (which is, in its own fashion, the wish of Catholic Scholasticism) nor as a basis for a »synthesis of ancient and contemporary ethics«. It is only *after* the collapse of all forms of ethics of goods and purposes, with their self-assured »absolute« worlds of goods, that »non-formal value-ethics« could arise. It *presupposes* Kant's *destruction* of these forms of ethics”. M. Scheler, *Formalism*, XXVIII, German 20.

The Scheler scholar Manfred Frings, editor of Scheler's collected works in German and translator of many of them into English, summarizes Scheler's relation to Aristotle and Scholasticism as follows. „[Scheler] [...] rejected the Aristotelian bases of Catholic theology. Aristotelianism does not do justice to the eminent role of love in Christian religion. Aristotle lived three centuries before Christ lived. Christ had no interest in Aristotle or Greek philosophy. The Greek influence on theological Christianity, especially that found in the Middle Ages, is deplorable because it tarnished both the essence of the love of the person and the pure exemplarity of the holy and of Christ with rationality. According to St. Thomas one must first know something in order to love it. According to Scheler, however, one can only know something by first having been drawn to the value of what is to be known. [...] The ancient Greek orientation of Christian theology also had deplorable sociological effects on the structure of the church. Popes, bishops, priests and public servants are portrayed like »Roman rulers«. [...] They even hold an »office« and observe »legal« stipulations in contrast to the essence of love. Redemption must be believed in according to »dogma«. The essence of the human person is supposed to be a »substance« (Aristotle) rather than *the* bearer of love. Charity and love tend to be observed as part of a Divine will, rather than in a free, selfless Samaritan way. In all of this there is a confusion, says Scheler, of Christian love and Aristotle's teleological system, culminating in a theological confusion of Aristotle's god as the »thought of thoughts« or »unmoving mover«, on the one and, and God as seat of love, on the other”. M. Frings, *The Mind of Max Scheler: The First Comprehensive Guide Based on the Complete Works*, 2nd ed., Marquette 2001, p. 116.

³³ See esp. F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, essay 1, chapter 14.

– what could he know of voluntary self-abasement, of the sweet urge of pouring oneself out felt by those who *are* something (the $\sigma\theta\lambda\omicron$, the noble), who do not see themselves as standing on the heights precisely because they do, as a matter of course, stand on the heights? Humility, this is precisely the movement of self-abasement, the movement of coming down from above, of coming from the height, of God letting himself glide down to humanity, of the holy one to the sinner – this free, daring, fearless movement of a spirit whose fullness, a fullness possessed as a matter of course, makes it impossible for him even to understand the concept of lavishly giving oneself away and squandering oneself (*Selbstverschwendung*)³⁴.

Scheler's work is incredibly rich and varied. His personalism could be unfolded in many directions, as Balthasar shows in his masterful study. For example, Scheler has a deep understanding of solidarity that inspired John Paul II's social thought and action (*Solidarność*). He has a deep understanding of the person's consciously lived experience, which inspired Wojtyła's personalism above all in *The Acting Person*. He has a deep understanding of the expression of the person in the body that inspired John Paul II's account of expression in *TOB*. He has a profound account of shame that is also reflected in *TOB*³⁵. He has a deep understanding of the imitation of Christ, evident particularly in his discussion of St. Francis of Assisi. Many other examples of Scheler's profound insights and his influence on John Paul II could be mentioned. „Certainly, Wojtyła learned much from Scheler that is positive and one can trace many influences”³⁶.

In his habilitation thesis in moral theology on Scheler, Wojtyła chose as his point of departure Scheler's teaching on the imitation of Christ. The main question he raises is, „Can we, or to what degree can we, attempt to interpret Christian ethics with the help of Scheler's system?”³⁷. In raising this question, Wojtyła meets Scheler at a point that is not incidental, but deeply embedded in

³⁴ M. Scheler, *Zur Rehabilitierung der Tugend*, in: *Vom Umsturz der Werte: Abhandlungen und Aufsätze. Gesammelte Werke 3*, Bern 1915 [1955], p. 25. Scheler goes on after this text to argue that the weak man's true desire is to rule. He only serves his master because he is too weak to dominate him. Servility is second nature to him precisely because of his weakness. Humility, by contrast, is the virtue of the natural lords. The natural lord is humble even when he rules. He is humble at the core of his being before God. For such a man, the willingness to serve is the center of his being, while for the base and servile man it is an attitude on the periphery forced upon him by the circumstance of his weakness. The desire to rule is the center of the servile man's being, while for the genuinely humble man it is a possibility on the periphery which he does not actively pursue, because he already stands on the heights.

³⁵ In comparing Scheler's and Wojtyła's treatment of shame, one difference is striking, namely, the great importance of „concupiscence” in Wojtyła's account of shame, in agreement with St. Augustine, and the absence of this category in Scheler's more naturalistic analysis.

³⁶ M. Waldstein, *Introduction to TOB*, p.78, emphasis added.

³⁷ K. Wojtyła, [*Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the Assumptions of Max Scheler's System of Philosophy*] *Über die Möglichkeit eine christliche Ethik in Anlehnung an Max Scheler zu schaffen*, ed. J. Stroynowski, *Primat des Geistes: Philosophische Schriften*, Stuttgart 1953 [1980]), p. 65.

Scheler's own intentions. Scheler's attempt to de-Hellenize and de-Scholastify philosophy in order to reach (for the first time in the history of philosophy!) the personalist philosophical understanding of the world that springs originally and spontaneously from the Christian experience of self-giving love can and should be appropriately tested by raising precisely this question.

In structuring his argument, Wojtyła follows Aristotle's four causes (minus matter). Chapter One of the thesis gives a preliminary overview, Chapter Two examines Scheler's account of the formal cause of moral goodness, Chapter Three his account of the efficient cause, and Chapter Four of the final cause. This Aristotelian structure of the overall argument seems quite pointed in a book about a philosopher whose project it was to free Christian philosophy from Greek and Medieval philosophy, particularly from Aristotle. Wojtyła's conclusion is, on the whole, negative. (See the summary of the thesis that has been distributed together with this paper).

Let us look at the very end of Wojtyła's argument which deals with God as the end of the moral life. This point of the argument is most relevant to the main thrust of Scheler's personalism: agape as opposed to eros, self-giving love out of fullness as opposed to the striving love of Greek philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle.

Scheler agrees with Kant that happiness cannot be the goal of moral goodness. Yet, while Kant locates happiness far from the core of the person as the irrational object of sensual inclinations, Scheler gives it the most central possible place in the human spirit as the *source* of all morally good acts.

Deepest happiness and complete bliss are dependent in their being on a consciousness of one's own moral goodness. „Only the good person is blissful”. This does *not* preclude the possibility that this very blissfulness is the *root* and *source* of all willing and acting. But happiness can *never* be a goal or even a „purpose” of willing and acting. „Only the happy person acts in a morally good way”. Happiness is therefore in no way a „reward for virtue”³⁸, nor is virtue the *means* to reach bliss. Rather, happiness is the root and source of virtue, a fountainhead, although it is only a *consequence* of the inner *goodness* of the person³⁹.

The innermost source of bliss, according to Scheler, is a participation in the divine nature when one acts „in God”. Such participation in the divine nature is an unsurpassable fountain of unsurpassable bliss. No reward could equal such bliss.

In his existence and his acts the „good” person directly takes part in the nature of God, in the sense of *velle in deo* [to will in God] or *amare in deo* [to love in God],

³⁸ „[Happiness is] [...] the reward and end of virtue”. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1.9; 1099b.16–17.

³⁹ M. Scheler, *Formalism*, 359, G 359–60.

and he is blissful in this participation. A „reward” from God could only put a smaller and lower good in place of a higher one, and a superficial feeling in the place of a deeper pleasure⁴⁰.

Wojtyła points out that it is difficult to reconcile this understanding of unsurpassable bliss with the teaching of the Gospels on reward and punishment, in which bliss, understood as the beatific vision of God, is promised as a reward.

We see that in the teaching of revelation, all emphasis in the doctrine of eternal blessedness falls on the object of blessedness, namely, the divine nature, which is this object. In Scheler’s phenomenological system, of course, this doctrine cannot be grasped and expressed. [...] No good that comes from outside the person can be a greater good than the good which the person finds in himself when he experiences himself as the source of a morally good act. [...] The greatest happiness and the greatest suffering – man draws these from within himself, he himself is its source for himself. This point of view seems to separate us completely from the Christian teaching. Given such a point of view, can we establish any point of contact with the revealed truth according to which the object of man’s final blessedness is the divine nature?⁴¹

Wojtyła’s answer is in the end, no. A personalism in which human love is a free descent from inner fullness and joy is irreconcilable with Christian faith.

To summarize, Scheler, like Kant, attributes a quasi divine value to the human person. This excess seems to be due in part to his concern to answer Nietzsche’s attack on Christianity. To protect Christianity from the charge that it transmutes weakness and suffering into virtue, he paints a quasi divine picture of the human person. The key to Scheler’s personalism is the bliss of the morally good person, who experiences his own individual value essence as an absolute fullness. It is bliss without need, with no desire for a divine reward. The person already has the final end within himself and descends to other human beings from this fullness in purely self-giving love. Like Kant’s personalism, Scheler’s personalism is thus anti-Trinitarian. The dependence and receptivity implied in sonship does not play a constitutive role in it.

Conclusion

John Paul II’s personalism is built on the two laws of the life of persons expressed by Vatican II in *Gaudium et spes* 24:3. Kant’s personalism is built on a principle apparently similar to, but in fact profoundly opposed to, the first

⁴⁰ M. Scheler, *Formalism*, 368, G 368, translation modified.

⁴¹ K. Wojtyła, *Scheler*, p. 183–184.

principle of *Gaudium et spes* 24:3, the personalistic norm. The absolute moral dignity of the human person as an autonomous agent is, according to Kant, the unsurpassable final end of the whole cosmos. Scheler's personalism is built on a principle apparently similar to, but in fact profoundly opposed to, the second principle of *Gaudium et spes* 24:3, the law of the gift. In the attempt to purify Christian philosophy from the Greek and Medieval conception of eros in favor of pure self-giving agape, Scheler claims that the highest end lies already within the person prior to any divine reward.

It is difficult to conceive a disagreement that is more radical and fundamental than this disagreement between John Paul II on the one side and Kant as well as Scheler on the other. The final end determines everything. A personalism for which God is the final end differs most radically and fundamentally from personalisms in which the final end is found already within the human person.

John Paul II's personalism is much closer to the personalism of Greek and Medieval philosophy and theology, particularly that of Plato, Aristotle and St. Thomas⁴². In one of his essays Wojtyła refers to himself as, „We in the Thomistic school, the school of ‘perennial philosophy’...”⁴³. He first encountered the thought of St. Thomas in the writings of St. John of the Cross rather than in Neo-Thomist manuals. St. John of the Cross offers a profoundly experiential and in this sense personalist rereading of St. Thomas, focused on the spousal gift of self and its ultimate roots in the Trinity⁴⁴.

One might appeal against these theses to the Preface to *The Acting Person*, in which Wojtyła writes.

Granted the author's acquaintance with traditional Aristotelian thought, it is however the work of Max Scheler that has been a major influence upon his reflection. In my overall conception of the person envisaged through the mechanisms of his operative systems and their variations, as presented here, may indeed be seen the Schelerian foundation studied in my previous work⁴⁵.

According to this statement, Wojtyła aligns himself more with Scheler than with Aristotle. Yet, there is some doubt whether this statement is really

⁴² See K. Wojtyła, *Thomistic Personalism*, in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, New York 1961 [1993].

⁴³ K. Wojtyła, *The Human Person and Natural Law*, in: *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, New York 1970 [1993], here p. 181.

⁴⁴ See M. Waldstein, *Introduction to TOB*, p. 23–34. For an account of „gift of self” in the theology of St. Thomas, see my essays: *John Paul II and St. Thomas on Love and the Trinity*, *Anthropotes* 18 (2002), p. 113–138, 269–286 and *The Analogy of Mission and Obedience: A Central Point in the Relation between Theologia and Oikonomia in St. Thomas Aquinas's „Commentary on John”*, in: M. Dauphinais, M. Levering (ed.), *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas*, Washington, DC 2005, p. 92–112.

⁴⁵ K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, VIII.

Wojtyła's own⁴⁶. There is no doubt that Wojtyła learned much from Scheler and felt a deep debt of gratitude to Scheler. Nowhere, not even in the thesis on Scheler, does one find even a trace of *animus* against Scheler; nowhere does one find a wholesale rejection of Scheler. *The Acting Person*, however, is a case in point for measuring the overall closeness and distance between Wojtyła and Scheler. When one compares *The Acting Person* to Wojtyła's thesis on Scheler, one quickly realizes that it concentrates as a whole on establishing precisely what Wojtyła found missing in his second major criticism of Scheler, namely, the responsible causal efficacy of the person. It does so, in part, by a better use of the phenomenological method, so that the debt of gratitude exists even at a major point in which Wojtyła corrects Scheler.

The overall situation is clear. In the face of personalisms inimical to Christian faith, such as those of Kant and Scheler, Wojtyła / John Paul II sustains the personalism of the Catholic tradition and of perennial philosophy as reaffirmed in a new way by the Second Vatican Council (esp. *Gaudium et spes* 24:3)⁴⁷. This personalism is present in Scripture and the liturgy. John Paul II insists, for example, that the Letter to the Ephesians is personalistic in the full sense of that term.

[Ephesians 5] [...] is personalistic in the full meaning of the word, which was already shown in the earlier analyses of this text. The language of the liturgy is equally personalistic – both when we consider Tobit and when we consider the present [marriage] liturgy of the Church (TOB 117:3).

This conclusion brings us back to the question asked at the very beginning of my paper. Those who love John Paul II's Theology of the Body, who study it or teach it, in what context should they read it? A fundamental rule of interpretation of all magisterial documents was mentioned at the beginning as well: they should be read in light of the tradition and the tradition should be re-read in their light. We are now in a position to conclude that TOB *can actually* be read in this way.

⁴⁶ In an editorial note signed by her initials (p. x), the editor, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, distinguishes „the original draft of the preface” (printed on pp. XI–XIV) from „the definitive version of the author's preface” (printed on pp. VII–IX). The original draft contains no such statement about Scheler and Aristotle. Tymieniecka notes that Wojtyła did not proofread the „definitive version” and that he might have added „personal touches” during proofreading. She does not clarify whether he read the „definitive version” at all and approved it in a provisional manner before proofreading. If personal touches were to be added only at the proofreading stage, the implication seems to be that they were not yet present in the „definitive version” before proofreading. The authoritative third edition of the Polish and the similarly authoritative Italian version do not contain this preface.

⁴⁷ Again, it cannot and should not be denied that Wojtyła learned much from Kant and Scheler. Yet the fundamental form of his philosophy agrees with St. Thomas rather than Kant and Scheler.

TRZY RODZAJE PERSONALIZMU: KANT, SCHELER I JAN PAWEŁ II (STRESZCZENIE)

W dyskursie akademickim wszyscy wykładający teologię ciała muszą zadać sobie pytanie, w jakim kontekście powinna być ona rozwijana i wykładana? Najprostsza odpowiedź na to pytanie – powinna być nauczana w kontekście nauki Kościoła, gdyż jej trzonem są *Katechezy środowe* Jana Pawła II; bywa jednak przez wielu przyjmowana sceptycznie. Nie brakuje także propozycji usiłujących wkomponować treści teologii ciała w nowy kontekst filozoficzny. Szczególnie odpowiednio wydają się tu być różne rodzaje personalizmu. Autor artykułu analizuje i porównuje trzy rodzaje personalizmu. Personalizm Maksa Schelera i Emanuela Kanta jest zestawiony z myślą personalistyczną Karola Wojtyły. Personalizm Wojtyły, który obficie czerpie z dorobku starożytnej greckiej, ale też średniowiecznej myśli, odróżnia się od personalistycznych koncepcji Schelera i Kanta przede wszystkim sformulowaniem celu ostatecznego. Personalizm, który akceptuje Boga jako cel ostateczny, będzie różnił się w wielu zasadniczych kwestiach od koncepcji personalistycznych, dla których jedynym celem jest osoba ludzka. Z tej racji, że myśl personalistyczna Wojtyły jest mocna zakorzeniona w chrześcijańskiej tradycji filozoficzno-teologicznej, właśnie ten punkt odniesienia wydaje się być najlepszą glebą dla uprawiania naukowej refleksji w ramach teologii ciała.

DREI ARTEN VON PERSONALISMUS: KANT, SCHELER UND JOHANNES PAUL II. (ZUSAMMENFASSUNG)

Für alle, die die Theologie des Leibes im akademischen Diskurs lehren, stellt sich die Frage nach dem Kontext, in dem sie entfaltet und gelehrt werden soll. Die einfachste Antwort auf diese Frage, dass es im Kontext der Lehre der Kirche geschehen soll, da ja ihr Grundstock die Mittwochskatechesen von Johannes Paul II sind, wird jedoch von vielen bezweifelt. Es fehlt aber auch nicht an Vorschlägen, die versuchen, die Inhalte der Theologie des Leibes in einen philosophischen Kontext zu stellen. Besonders geeignet scheinen hier verschiedene Arten von Personalismus zu sein. Der Autor des folgenden Beitrags analysiert und vergleicht drei Arten von Personalismus miteinander. Dem Personalismus von Max Scheller und Immanuel Kant wird der personalistische Ansatz Karol Wojtyłas gegenüber gestellt. Wojtyłas Personalismus, der reichlich von altgriechischem und mittelalterlichem Gedankengut schöpft, unterscheidet sich von den personalistischen Konzepten Kants und Schelers vor allem in der Formulierung des letzten Zieles. Ein Personalismus, der Gott als letztes Ziel akzeptiert, wird in vielen fundamentalen Fragen von jenen personalistischen Konzepten abweichen, die lediglich auf der menschlichen Person als Endziel fundiert sind. Da das personalistische Gedankengut Wojtyłas stark in der christlichen philosophisch-theologischen Tradition verwurzelt ist, erscheint gerade dieser Ansatz als der am meisten geeignete Nährboden für die wissenschaftliche Reflexion im Rahmen der Theologie des Leibes.