

ARTICLES

Karol Wojtyla's Philosophy of the Acting Person

1. *Introduction*

As the years of his pontificate unfolded, it became increasingly clear to many that the study of Karol Wojtyla's peculiar philosophy of the person is a valuable, if not an indispensable help in understanding better his thoughts and teachings as Pope John Paul II. This article is an attempt to present Wojtyla's prepapal philosophy.¹ The main foci of our discussions will be a) how does the human person, according to the then Cardinal of Cracow, reveal himself in his actions, b) how does the person fulfill himself in and through his acts, and c) Wojtyla's concept of "participation" which makes possible man's self-becoming through his actions, in the context of his being and acting "together with others."

¹ We base our study on the major philosophical writings of Karol Wojtyla prior to his election to the papacy, and in particular, on his book *The Acting Person*, (Dordrecht, Holland/Boston, USA/London, England: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979). This has been translated and revised from the Polish 1969 edition "Osoba i czyn." Translated from the Polish by Andrzej Potocki. This English definitive edition has been established in collaboration with the author by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, and it first appeared as volume 10 of the *Analecta Husserliana*. This will henceforth be referred to as AP.

2. *A Philosophy of the Acting Person*

Ours, Wojtyla once wrote, "is an age of violent controversy concerning man, the essential meaning of his existence, and consequently, the nature and value of his being."² One of the most distinctive traits of modern and contemporary philosophy has been its *profound* and pervasive preoccupation with the problem of man and human existence, or to be more precise, with the problem of what many have come to call the "alienation of man." This present-day anthropological crisis from the increasing "fragmentation of man — in both theory and practice — into mutually separate functions and dimensions some of which are then absolutized and others simply suppressed to the reduction and reification of man."³ Its most devastating end-result in the mind of Wojtyla is "the demoralization of man about the very meaning of his own being,"⁴ and the "systematic renunciation of the healthy ambition of being a man."⁵

The urgent task, therefore, as Wojtyla perceives it, is to rethink the anthropological question with the over-arching objective of recapturing man, the "complete man" — the real, concrete, historical man "in all his truth, in his full magnitude," "the whole man...in his unique unrepeatable human reality." There is need to reconstruct an anthropology which sees man as a concrete and integral totality;⁶ an anthropology anchored on that which, in the

² Karol Wojtyla, "The Controversy about Man," originally published as "Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota," in *Roczniki Filozoficzne-Etyka*, 24-2, pp. 5-39. This English translation is from *Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. Toward a Philosophy of Praxis*, ed. by Alfred Block & George T. Czuczka (New York: Crossroad, 1981) p. 12.

³ Anselm K. M in, "John Paul II's Anthropology of Concrete Totality," *Practical Reasoning*. Proceedings of The American Philosophical Association, vol. LVIII, ed. by Daniel O. Dalstrom (Washington, D.C.: ACPA, 1984) p. 120.

⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵ John Paul II, Address to UNESCO, Paris, 2 June 1980, in *The Person, the Nation and the State*, ed. by Msgr. William Murphy (Vatican City: Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax," 1980) p. 51.

⁶ Cf. Anselm K. Min, "John Paul II Anthropology of Concrete Totality," *Practical Reasoning*, p. 121.

rich reality of human person, is the most primordially and irreducibly human.⁷

For Wojtyla the category of the *persona* is a key element in the solution of the present-day controversy about the *humanum*.⁸ His basic response to the contemporary anthropological question is a penetrating study on the nature of the human person as revealed in and through his actions. In his major philosophical work, *The Acting Person*, he treats man directly as an "acting person," and this for him is an immediate datum given in the experience of man, especially in the experience of man's acting.⁹ He unravels and penetrates into the rich reality of the person by analyzing the action in and through which the person manifests, "unveils" and realizes himself. His is not a study of action in which the person is presupposed. On the contrary, says Wojtyla:

For us action *reveals* the person, and we look at the person through his action. For it lies in the nature of the correlation inherent in experience, in the very nature of man's acting, that action constitutes the specific moment whereby

⁷ See, Karol Wojtyla, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," *Analecta Husserliana*, 7 ((1978), ed. by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, Holland/Boston, USA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978) pp. 108-109. This publication will henceforth be referred to as AH.

⁸ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "Il problema del costituirsi della cultura attraverso la 'praxis' umana," *Rivista di Filosofia neo-scolastica*, 69 (1977) p. 515.

⁹ In the Draft Preface of *The Acting Person*, Wojtyla gives recognition to the varied philosophical strands from which he drew the elements of his own philosophy of the person, indicating therein that his thought remains firmly rooted in the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy although he has also drawn much from contemporary phenomenology. A. Wilder observes, and many would readily agree with him that "if Wojtyla is a realist phenomenologist, it is clear enough that the substance of his philosophy is Thomistic." Alfred Wilder, O.P., "Community of Persons in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla," *Angelicum*, vol. 56 (Roma: Pontificia Universitas a Sancto Thoma Aquinate in Urbe, 1979) p. 67.

Wojtyla's phenomenological analysis of the person and his actions enriches and at the same time is "framed" within the confines of the Thomistic philosophy of man. His phenomenology of the person completes the metaphysics of the person which it presupposes. As it is not within the limited purview of this chapter to treat of this matter in detail, it will suffice to refer the reader to the following articles which touch on this interesting aspect of the philosophy of K. Wojtyla: Abelardo Lobato, O.P., "La persona en el pensamiento de Karol Wojtyla," *Angelicum*, vol. 56 (Roma: Pontificia Universitas a Sancto Thoma Aquinate in Urbe, 1979) pp. 17-62; Philippe Jobert, O.S.B., "Jean-Paul II: Philosophe de la transition de l'anthropologie classique a l'anthropologie moderne," *Karol Wojtyla. Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, Atti del 10

the person is revealed. Action gives us the best insight into the inherent essence of the person and allows us to understand the person most fully.¹⁰

As we will later see, the main thesis of Wojtyla is that the analysis of man's concrete *operari* will reveal to us more fully the nature of the human being as a unique, unrepeatable personal subjectivity. In the process, he also shows how the man-subject, by means of his concrete *actus personae* constitutes himself in his personal subjective irreducibility. Man "creates" himself in his actions; in every *actus personae*, "something begins to exist in the man-subject that already is."¹¹

3. *The Basic Structure of Human Dynamism*

Karol Wojtyla grounds his philosophical analysis of the human person (as revealed through his actions) on human experience, on what he calls the "experience of man," which for him is the privileged and evident basis for our knowledge of the person. This experience of man involves an "inner" and "outer" aspect, for, Wojtyla says, "he who experiences is man, and he, whom the subject of the experience experiences, is also man; he is both the

colloquio internazionale del pensiero cristiano organizzato da ISTR, Roma, 23-25 settembre 1983 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984) pp. 47-52; Rocco Buttiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyla* (Milano: Editoriale Jaca Book, 1982) pp. 60-206; George Hunston Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II. Origins of his Thought and Action* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981) pp. 93-244; Jan Platek, *Persona e amore nel pensiero filosofico del Card. Karol Wojtyla* (Roma: Pontificia Studiorum a S. Thoma Aq. in Urbe, 1967); Andrew N. Woznicki, "The Christian Humanism and Adequate Personalism of Karol Wojtyla," *Pope John Paul II Lecture Series*, pp. 36-41.

At this juncture, we would like to point out that the English edition of *The Acting Person* has left out almost all of the Latin technical terms (such as *suppositum*, *individuum*, *operari sequitur esse*, etc.) that are otherwise found in the Polish original and in the Italian and Spanish translations of this book. Hence, in several cases we had to consult these latter translations as we will indicate later on in our succeeding discussions.

¹⁰ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 11. Wojtyla hastens to add that morality constitutes an intrinsic feature of an action proper to the human person. Thus, every action carries with itself an intrinsic moral, or what he calls "dynamic" or "existential" aspect. This moral modality inherent in every *actus humanus* allows us, according to Wojtyla, to acquire a better and fuller understanding of the human being as a person. Cf. AP, pp. 11-13.

¹¹ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 96.

subject and the object."¹² Thus, the experience of man consists, on the one hand, of the subjective experience that man has of himself and where he comes into cognitive relation with himself; and on the other hand, of his experience of other men whose position relative to him as subject of experience is that of objects of experience. These two aspects differ but are inseparable. They complement and compensate each other and together make up the integral totality of the whole "experience of man".¹³

Among the manifold data given us in the experience of man is the immediate experiential fact that "man-acts"; that is, that man, insofar as he is, acts.¹⁴ Moreover, that "man-acts" is itself first given in the direct experience of the "I act" — this unique subjective experience of our own acting which keeps us within the limits of the concrete subjectivity of our own ego and places us, as it were, right "inside" the objective fact of the experience of "man-acts". Thus, on account of the experience of the "I act", we possess a "lived" experience of man's acting.¹⁵ The whole process of understanding man *must* embrace both the objective experience of man's acting and the subjective experience of our own acting.¹⁶

¹² Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," *Review of Metaphysics*, 33 (December 1979) p. 273. This periodical will henceforth be referred to as RM. Cf. also, AP, pp. 3ff.

¹³ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 7-8. For more detailed studies on the experiential basis of Wojtyla's philosophy, the reader may see: Andrzej Pol-tawski, "The Epistemological Basis of Karol Wojtyla's Philosophy," *Karol Wojtyla. Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, pp. 79-91; Costantino Esposito, "L'esperienza dell'essere umano nel pensiero di Karol Wojtyla," *La Filosofia di Karol Wojtyla*, Atti del Seminario di Studi, Università di Bari, 25-26 gennaio 1983 (Bologna: Centro Studi Europa Orientale, 1983) pp. 17-43.

¹⁴ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 9-11; "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 273.

¹⁵ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 60-61. Elsewhere, Wojtyla says that "the experience of the human action concentrates on the experiencing of the fact 'I do'." Idem., "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario. Atti del Congresso Internazionale (Roma-Napoli 17-24 aprile 1974)*, vol. VII (Napoli: Edizione Domenicane, 1987) p. 38.

¹⁶ Says Wojtyla: "In experience man is given to us as he who exists and acts. All men and 'I' among them, participate in the experience of existing and acting; at the same time all the 'others,' along with myself, are the object of that experience. This occurs in different ways, since 'I' experience myself as existing and being in a different way from that in which I experience all others, and we say the same of each 'other' man as

This category of the "lived" experience (*Erlebnis*) of our own acting is necessary in our understanding of man as unique, personal subjectivity, which reveals itself precisely in its actions, and the employment of the phenomenological method is here crucial in the analysis, interpretation, and the objectivization of this immediate, unique, subjective, experience of our own actions.¹⁷

The experience of human action leads us to conclude that man is a being possessed of dynamism. Acting connotes dynamism, and phenomenological experience further reveals to us that the entire human dynamism discloses itself in a double aspect of man's acting and of something which is merely happening in him. Says Wojtyla: "the structure of 'man-acts' as well as the structure of 'something-happens-in-man' constitute the concrete manifestations of the dynamism proper to man."¹⁸

These two "objective structures" of man-acts and something merely happening in man constitute, according to Wojtyla, the two fundamental lines of human dynamism. In the active "man-acts" structure, the person is the active cause responsible for his actions, whereas in the passive structure of "something-happens-in-man," the person stands simply as the dynamic subject of what takes place in him without his active causal participation.¹⁹ The

a concrete self. It is clear, however, that the whole process of understanding man must embrace both the others and my own self and that I may start from either." Idem, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 273. Cf. also, AP, pp. 60-61.

¹⁷ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," AH, 7 (1978) pp. 107-114. On Wojtyla's use of the phenomenological method, please see: Hans Kochler, "The Phenomenology of Karol Wojtyla: On the Problem of the Phenomenological Foundation of Anthropology," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 42, n. 3 (March 1982) pp. 326-334.

¹⁸ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 65. Cf. also Idem, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 276.

¹⁹ A distinction made by Wojtyla which clarifies what he means when he talks about the dynamism involved in the "something-happens-in-man" structure is in order here. Wojtyla distinguishes two forms of "passivity," expressed in ordinary speech by the expressions: "something happens in man" and "something happens with man." The latter refers to what the person undergoes from the outside where, says Wojtyla, "rather than the dynamic subject, and the source of what occurs, man is... merely an object that undergoes what another subject or even another force is doing with him. Undergoing as such refers to the passiveness of man, the subject, but says nothing, at least not directly, of the subject's inner dynamism, in particular, nothing of the dynamism referred to in the proposition 'some-

former is a "distinct form of human action in and through which man reveals himself above all as a person."²⁰

4. *The Moment of Efficacy*

What distinguishes the man-acts structure from that of what merely happens in man (also termed by Wojtyla as "activations") is the moment of the efficient causality of the subject-man with regard to his actions.²¹ Through consciousness, our "being the agent" in relation to our acts is given to us as a direct and immediate experiential datum.²² This experience of efficacy (having the character of immediacy and a special self-evidence given in the experience of acting itself) is what distinguishes, in the totality of human dynamism, a human act (*actus humanus*) which involves the person's active causative participation in acting, from what merely happens in the subject-man, which takes place without such active participation. Only the former can be properly called "acting" or "action" — a conscious, deliberate act known in the Aristotelian Thomistic tradition as the *actus humanus*, as distinguished from an *actus hominis*. To quote Wojtyla at length:

When acting I have the experience of myself as the agent responsible for this particular form of dynamization of myself as the subject. When there is something happening in me, then the dynamism is imparted without the efficacious participation of my ego. This is precisely the reason why

thing happens in man'. Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 68. To emphasize this aspect of the subject's *inner dynamism* involved in what happens in man, Wojtyla alternately calls them "activations," that is, activations of the dynamic passivity where the subject, although not exercising any efficient causality as regards what happens, nonetheless remains its dynamic subject. Cf. Ibid., pp. 62-63

²⁰ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 276.

²¹ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 66.

²² "Man is thus in a wholly experiential way the cause of his acting. There is between the person and action a sensibly experiential causal relation, which brings the person, that is to say, every concrete human ego, to recognize his action to be the result of his efficacy...." Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 67. One author observes that this acceptance and insistence on the direct givenness of our "being the causal and responsible agents" of our actions constitute a fundamental cornerstone in Wojtyla's philosophical position. See Andrzej Poltawski, "The Epistemological Basis of Karol Wojtyla's Philosophy," *Karol Wojtyla. Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, pp. 79-91.

we speak of the facts of the latter kind as of something that happens in man, indicating thereby that then the dynamism is not accomplished by efficacy, by the efficacious participation of man. It is thus that in the dynamism of man there appears the essential difference arising from having the experience of efficacy. On the one hand, there is that form of human dynamism in which man himself is the agent, that is to say, he is the conscious cause of his causation; this form we grasp by the expression "man acts". On the other hand, there is that form of human dynamism in which man is not aware of his efficacy and does not experience it; this we express by "something happens in man".²³

Thus, in one instance we have the experience and the structure of efficacy where the ego is the cause which dynamizes the man-subject, while on the other, we have the structure of passive "subjectiveness" where the ego appears to be "subjacent in the act of its own dynamization."²⁴

5. *Potency and Act*

To understand better the data yielded thus far by the phenomenological experience of human dynamism, Wojtyla brings into the discussion the Aristotelian-Thomistic correlate of *potentia* and *actus*. In traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, the dynamism of all beings, including man, is expressed and explained through the *actus-potentia* correlate. For Wojtyla, so far there is no better tool for better comprehending the dynamism which occurs in every being, including that which is proper to man than the conceptual, analogical framework provided us by the philosophy of potency and act.²⁵

Potentia is that which in a certain way already is, but at the same time is not yet; "something that is in preparation is available, and even ready at hand but is not actually fulfilled." *Actus*, on the other hand, "is the actualization of potentiality, its fulfill-

²³ Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 66-67.

²⁴ Cf. Ibid., p. 71.

²⁵ Cf. Ibid., pp. 62-63.

ment."²⁶ Both refer one to the other, and one cannot be understood in isolation from the other.

Potency and act reveal two "differentiated, though coincident states of existence," as well as "the transition from one to the other."²⁷ Act is the realization of potency and the transition from potency to act is termed by Wojtyla "actualizations" or "dynamizations," involving some kind of becoming — understood not in the absolute sense (that is, not the coming of something into existence from non-existence or nothing) but in a relative existential sense. The actualizations, the becoming with which we are concerned in human dynamism is one which is

based on an already existing being and from within its inner structure. The dynamism of being is intrinsically connected with its very existence and is also the basis for, and source of, all the structures that may be distinguished in it... Actualization always implies the following pattern of existences: what exists as a possibility may, because it thus exists, come into existence in an act; and conversely, what came into existence in the act did so because of its previous existence as potentiality.²⁸

In the light of the potency-act category, both the dynamism involved in man's acting and in what merely happens in him can be analogically referred to as *actus*, that is, as actualizations or potentialities inherent in the man-subject. Both can be described as transitions from potency to act.²⁹ However, since the dyna-

²⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

²⁷ Loc. cit.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

²⁹ In the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy, we distinguish between the objective (logical) potency and the subjective (real) potency. This latter is further subdivided into *passive potency* and *active potency* (which may either be uncreated or created. Passive potency is the capacity of a thing to be changed by another, while active potency is the principle of activity in an agent. Now, potency always expresses relation to act. With regards to act, we distinguish between the entitative and the operative acts, and this latter may be either immanent or transient. Operative act is also known as *actus secundus* and it entails a further perfection of a thing. The dynamism involved in man's acting and in what merely happens in him belong to the category of this *actus secundus*, which presupposes an active potentiality in the man-subject. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, S. Th., Ia, q. 18, a. 3, ad. 1; Ia, q. 25, a. 1, C.; Ia, q. 48, a. 5, c.;

mism involved in man's acting differ from that involved in what is merely happening in him, these two structures seem to point to different potentialities inherent in the man-subject. Their analysis unravels two diverse roots of dynamism within the dynamic subject-man, and at this juncture Wojtyla notes, phenomenological experience seems to split the experience of human dynamism into two mutually irreconcilable factors, and furnishes us with a divided and contradictory picture of the person.³⁰

At this point there is a need to go beyond a purely phenomenological analysis and description of the basic structures of human dynamism and arrive at the metaphysical level of the ontological subject, the *suppositum*.

6. *The Ontological Supposit*

Notwithstanding the distinctness of the two structures of human dynamism that we saw. "it is impossible to deny that he who acts is simultaneously the one in whom something or other happens,"³¹ that the unity and identity of man lies at the roots of acting and happening, of subjectiveness and efficacy.³² In both, it is the human being who is their dynamic origin and subject. Says Wojtyla:

However we analyze the structure, conditions, and source of action we cannot bypass its ultimate ontological foundation. The subjectiveness present both in man's acting and in what happens in him, implies or refers to an ontologically subsequent factor as its necessary condition.³³

Cont. Gent., II, 1 & 9; III, 113, 1. Cf. also, H. D. Gardeil, O.P., *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. IV, *Metaphysics*, trans. by John A. Otto (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Co., 1967) pp. 183-200, 263-269.

³⁰ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 71. Cf. also, R. Buttiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyla*, p. 161.

³¹ Karol Wojtyla, *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³² As we have seen, efficacy refers to the structure of man's acting where the subject-man experiences himself as the "actor," whereas subjectiveness refers to the structure of what merely happens in man. Subjectiveness, rendered in the Italian translation of *The Acting Person* as *soggettualità*, refers, according to Buttiglione, to the scholastic subjectum which denotes susceptibility to being the object of activations, without involving the ego's efficacious participation. Cf. R. Buttiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyla*, p. 163.

³³ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 72.

This "ontological foundation" is no other than the ontological subject known in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition as the *suppositum*. Wojtyla, in the original Polish version of *Osoba y czyn*, explains in one passage what precisely he does mean by *suppositum*, and for reasons indicated in the footnote, we here cite the Italian translation of that passage.³⁴

Quando analizziamo la struttura e la fonte dell' azione, non possiamo tralasciare il suo fondamento ontico. La soggettività dell'uomo, comune all'agere e all'accedere nella filosofia sviluppata secondo i principi di Aristotele e di Tommaso d' Aquino ha trovato espressione nel concetto di *suppositum*. Etimologicamente questo termine indica qualcosa che è posto sotto (sub-ponere). Così appunto "ce'è" l'uomo "sotto" ogni azione e "sotto" tutto ciò che in lui accade. Il termine *suppositum* indica, l'essere soggetto oppure il soggetto come essere.³⁵

Thus, man is the subject, the *suppositum* which "underlies" all his actions as well as those which happen in him, of all the dynamisms which transpire in him. Moreover, man as subject-supposit is primarily an individual, concrete, existing being. The supposit is first of all "given as real, actually existing being, the man-being that actually exists and hence also 'really' acts."³⁶ Experience reveals the man-subject as the one who is, exists, and acts — as the subject of his own existence and action. As the philosophical axiom puts it: *operari sequitur esse*, where by *operari* is meant all dynamism derived not only from the fact of acting but also from all those which happen in man.

³⁴ The term *suppositum* in the English definitive text of *The Acting Person* has not been retained but has been variably rendered as "the structural ontological nucleus," the "structural/ontological basis," the "ontologically subsequent factor" and the like. Cf. Loc. cit. Obviously, all of the above equivalents can lead to a misreading of Wojtyla. In contrast, the Italian translation retains the technical term *suppositum* and renders to us more faithfully the thought of Wojtyla.

³⁵ Karol Wojtyla, *Persona e atto*, traduzione italiana di Stanislaw Morawski, Renzo Panzone e Rosa Liotta (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1982) p. 98.

³⁶ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 72; "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 274-275.

All dynamisms, all acting and "activations" are rooted in the supposit as a concrete being. *Esse* is not identified with the supposit but is the constitutive ontological principle which constitutes the supposit as subject of being and action. *Esse* is the *primus actus* of every being by which such being exists; it is the first and fundamental dynamization of every being. *Esse* or existence then lies at the origin of all dynamism proper to man.⁸⁷

Finally, we must note that for Wojtyla, the fact that man is a supposit is given in experience. Man as a supposit is not a mere philosophical notion: man himself has an immediate experience of himself as the concrete subject that he is. Experience reveals man to himself as the one who is, who exists and acts, as subject of his own existence and action; he has a "lived experience" of his being such. For Wojtyla, that exactly is what is contained in the concept of *suppositum*.⁸⁸

7. *Man as Personal Supposit*

Our analysis of human dynamism has so far led us to identify man as the ontologically existing subject of his acting and of all his dynamism. But man is not a mere supposit. He is a person, and *suppositum* does not yet give us a picture of what man as a person is. It is true that in the traditional Boethian definition, *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*, the *persona* is first of all identified as *suppositum*, as an individual, concrete subject of existence and action,⁸⁹ but it is precisely here that Wojtyla takes issue with Boethius. For Wojtyla, such a definition of the person, while it metaphysically provides for man's

⁸⁷ Alluding to St. Thomas Aquinas, Wojtyla says that *esse* or existence is "the first act (actus) of every being, that is, the first and fundamental factor of its dynamization." We have quoted here from the Italian translation *Persona e atto* because again in this case, the English version has not retained the term *esse* nor the technical *operari sequitur esse* phrase and Wojtyla's explicit reference to St. Thomas is also lacking. Please compare *Persona e atto*, p. 99 and *The Acting Person*, p. 73.

⁸⁸ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 274-275. Also see A. Wilder, O.P., "Community of Persons in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla," *Angelicum*, p. 73.

⁸⁹ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 73.

being the ontological subject of his being and acting and guarantees his identity in existence and action, accentuates the individuality of the substantial being of man and emphasizes his concrete individuality (man as *individuum*) rather than the personal, "existential" subjectivity specific and essential to man as a person.⁴⁰ The concept of *persona* is broader than that of *individuum* (which is -what is primarily conveyed by *suppositum*). Says Wojtyla:

The concept of the "person" is broader and more comprehensive than the concept of the "individual," just as the person is more than individualized nature . . . In our perspective it seems clear that neither the concept of the "rational nature" nor that of its individualization seems to express fully the specific completeness of the person.⁴¹

While man can be ontologically identified as an individual, as a supposit, he is however a specific kind of supposit: he is a person: His being a supposit is different from that of all other things which surround him in the world. Again to quote Wojtyla at length:

The person, the human being as the person — seen in its ontological basic structure — is the subject of both existence and acting, though it is important to note that the existence proper to him is *personal* and not merely individual — unlike that of an ontologically founded merely individual type of being. Consequently, the action — whereby is meant all the dynamism of man including his acting as well as what happens in him — is also personal. The person is identifiable with an ontological basic structure (*suppositum*) in which a provision is to be made: the ontological structure of "somebody" manifests not only its similarities to but also its differences and detachment from the ontological structure of "something".⁴²

⁴⁰ Cf. Ibid., pp. 72-75: "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 275ff; "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," AH, 7 (1978) pp. 109-112; "Il personalismo tomista," *I fondamenti dell'ordine etico*, pp. 143-145.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 73-74.

⁴² Ibid., p. 74.

Thus, Wojtyla is concerned with man as supposit "not exclusively as subject in the metaphysical sense, but, on the basis of the supposit thus conceived, with everything that makes man an individual and personal subject."⁴³ He is concerned above all in grasping the *unique personal subjectivity of man*. Through the analysis of man's "experience lived through" (*Erlebnis*) in his acting, Wojtyla seeks to show the person not only as the ontological subject of his acting and dynamism, but above all "to show the person as a subject living through his own deeds and experiences, and thanks to all these, his own subjectivity."⁴⁴

This brings us to Wojtyla's analysis of the role of consciousness in the total dynamism of the human person.

8. *The Role of Consciousness*

The analysis of human action provides the proper venue for the knowledge of that specific subjectivity proper to the human person. According to Wojtyla, in order to "understand the subjectivity of a person precisely through this act we must at the same time realize the specific importance of consciousness for subjectivity",⁴⁵ for every *actus humanus* is a conscious and deliberate act.⁴⁶ Thus while not the core of Wojtyla's philosophy of the person, his treatment of the nature and function of consciousness within the total dynamics of the person-act relation constitutes, however, a crucial moment in the understanding of his thought.

⁴³ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 275-276.

⁴⁴ Karol Wojtyla, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," AH, 7 (1978) p. 110.

⁴⁵ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 277. Cf. also Idem, AP, pp. 25ff. For more detailed studies of Wojtyla's notion of consciousness, please Cf., Costantino Esposito, "L'esperienza dell'essere umano nel pensiero di Karol Wojtyla," *La Filosofia di Karol Wojtyla*, pp. 17-43; Massimo Serretti, "Autocoscienza e autoconoscenza," Ibid., pp. 45-59; Stanislaw Grygiel, "L'ermeneutica dell'azione ed il nuovo modello di coscienza," Ibid., pp. 107-120; Joseph Pappin III, "Karol Wojtyla and Jean-Paul Sartre on the Intentionality of Consciousness," *Practical Reasoning*, pp. 130-139.

⁴⁶ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 25-59.

Consciousness, for Wojtyla, is neither an independent subject nor an autonomous problem. His objective is not to elaborate an independent theory of consciousness treated as an isolated subject. "The singling out of consciousness as a separate object of investigation is," says Wojtyla, "only a methodical operation."⁴⁷ His avowed aim is to disclose the constitutive function performed by consciousness in the formation of that experience of the person not only of his conscious acting, but above all, of his being the conscious and causal subject of his being and acting. Consciousness makes possible the "lived" experience of one's personal subjectivity, and man is a subject in the fullest sense of the term only when "he experiences and lives his own self as a subject."⁴⁸ This subjective experience made possible by consciousness is crucial in Wojtyla's assertion that the person fulfills himself through his actions.

8.a. *Nature and Specific Function of Consciousness*

Wojtyla is not directly concerned with what conscious action is, but with consciousness which makes it possible for man to act consciously and his consciousness of his being the subject of his conscious acting, with consciousness which makes possible the formation of that characteristic experience of subjectivity proper to the personal ego as subject of his acts. Thus, he makes a distinction between *conscious action* and *consciousness of action*, for according to Wojtyla, "man not only acts consciously, but also has the consciousness that he is acting and even that he is acting consciously."⁴⁹

In conscious action, consciousness is used in the "attributive," adjectival sense where the emphasis is upon the act as conscious; whereas in consciousness of action, consciousness is used as a noun, that is, in the "substantival" sense. This sense discloses more clearly the subject as the source of acting. Here we have not just an "acting consciously" but a "consciousness of acting"

⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁸ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 279.

⁴⁹ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 28.

which permits us to recognize our actions as our own. It is with this latter that Wojtyla is directly concerned.⁵⁰

Understood in the substantival sense, consciousness is, first of all for Wojtyla, neither an independent, self-contained reality, nor an independent faculty, nor something which independently exists as "the 'substantive' subject" of its acts. The proper subject of consciousness is not itself but the human being — more specifically, the personal ego to which consciousness belongs as a proper and distinguishing accident.⁵¹

Moreover, Wojtyla follows St. Thomas in holding that consciousness is an accident derived from the rational nature of man, although he equates it neither with knowledge, nor with the intellect. The function of consciousness is neither cognitive, nor are its acts, by nature, intentional. He categorically asserts "that the intrinsic cognitive dynamism, the very operation of cognition, does not belong to consciousness."⁵² Cognitive acts always have an intentional character; acts of consciousness do not. It is to our understanding and intellect that intentionality belongs and not to consciousness.

An intentional act, according to Wojtyla, is one which is actively "oriented or directed outward toward an object," and overstepping, as it were, the limits of the subject. An act of cognition is intentional in that it is directed to a known project. So also is an act of volition because it is directed to an object willed

⁵⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29. According to Wojtyla, conscious action brings out the aspect of consciousness in acting but does not precisely identify the role of consciousness in its substantival sense in the dynamics of the person's acting: "conscious acting" says nothing directly of the consciousness of acting. This is the case, for instance, in the traditional Thomistic conception of *actus humanus* or *actus voluntarius* where consciousness was certainly seen as a constitutive only in its attributive sense. The crucial role of consciousness in its substantival sense was diminished or blurred, that is the role of consciousness in making the person aware not only of his conscious action but that he is the one who is acting consciously — and hence the dynamic inter-relation of his actions and the person that he is. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-31; "Il personalismo tomista," *I fondamenti dell'ordine etico*, pp. 141-152.

⁵¹ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 33-34; "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 278-279.

⁵² Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 32. Cf. also, "Il personalismo tomista," *I fondamenti dell'ordine etico*, p. 146.

and chosen. Acts of consciousness are not of this kind. Moreover, acts proper to consciousness are not intentional because they do not consist in "the penetrative apprehension of the constitutive elements of the object, in its objectivation, leading to the constitution of the object." Acts of consciousness do not consist in the active apprehension or understanding of objective reality. These latter belongs to cognition. By holding this position, Wojtyla departs from the classic phenomenological view (as in Husserl, for instance) which posits the acts of consciousness as intentional and thereby constitutive of their objects. This view ends up in a subjectivism which reduces *esse* to *percipi*, and which ultimately leads to idealism.⁵³

8.b. The "Mirroring and Reflexive"

Functions of Consciousness

For Wojtyla, consciousness understood in the substantial sense is conceived simply as a "mirroring" of what has already been cognized, a reflection of "what happens in man and of his acting, of what he does and how he does it."⁵⁴ The main function of mirroring consciousness is to reflect the person as the dynamic source and subject of his actions. Consciousness bends back over the person's acts and reflects the actions and relates them to the ego as to their source. Thus, while acting, man is aware that he is acting, "and that it is he who is acting."⁵⁵ What we have here is a kind of a rudimentary, non-intentional and prior-to-explicit-cognition awareness of one's actions and of oneself as the source of these actions and therefore the one who is acting.⁵⁶

⁵³ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 31-33, 58-59, 125-216. For Wojtyla's concept of intentionality, please see, Hans Kochler, "The Phenomenology of K. Wojtyla: On the Problem of the Phenomenological Foundation of Anthropology," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 42, n. 3 (March 1982) pp. 327-329; Joseph Pappin III, "Karol Cardinal Wojtyla and Jean-Paul Sartre on the Internationality of Consciousness," *Practical Reasoning*, pp. 130-139.

⁵⁴ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

⁵⁶ Cf. Josef Seifert, "Truth and Transcendence in the Philosophical Thought of Karol Wojtyla," *Karol Wojtyla. Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, pp. 93-106; Massimo Serretti, "Autocoscienza e autoconoscenza," *La Filosofia di Karol Wojtyla*, pp. 45-49.

Mirroring consciousness not only reflects but "illuminates" what goes on in our conscious life — "like keeping objects and their cognitive meaning *in the light* or *in the field* of consciousness."⁵⁷

Moreover, it is simultaneous with our conscious acting and, so to speak, accompanies it. Says Wojtyla:

Every action finds consciousness, if one may say so, already there; it develops and comes to pass in the presence of consciousness, leaving behind little trace of its passage. Consciousness accompanies and reflects and mirrors the action when it is born and while it is being performed; once the action is accomplished consciousness still continues to reflect it, though of course it no longer accompanies it.⁵⁸

Consciousness, while it is not cognitive or intentional, functions in close connection with cognition because it reflects and illuminates what has been cognized, "whatever becomes in any way man's cognitive possession."⁵⁹ The "contents" of mirroring consciousness are provided for by cognition. Without these cognitive contents, consciousness would have nothing to reflect because consciousness is not intentional, it does not constitute its objects. In fact, awareness of one's action and of oneself as the one who acts is possible only in conjunction with cognition, especially with self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge is an explicit cognitive understanding of the self, whose object is the ego itself, the self as such, the unique individual ego, his actions and everything related to it.⁶⁰ In acts of self-knowledge, the person becomes thematically the object of his own knowledge, and it is to them that the person owes his

⁵⁷ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 33. This illuminating function is not equivalent to an active understanding or constituting of objects of knowledge. J. Seifert, for instance, comments that what we have here is a sort of a pre-cognitive, non-intentional "acquaintance with" our conscious acts and ourselves as the source of those acts, prior to our making them objects of knowledge and reflection. Cf. Idem, "Truth and Transcendence in the Philosophical Thought of K. Wojtyla," *Karol Wojtyla, Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, pp. 93-95.

⁵⁸ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 31.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid., pp. 36-40.

"objectivizing contact with himself and with his actions."⁶¹ Self-knowledge provides consciousness with its objective, "most immanent" contents regarding the ego and its acts, to wit: the ego itself objectively cognized, its acts and their objective relation to the ego, and finally, consciousness of the action itself insofar as this is an object of knowledge.⁶²

Moreover, according to Wojtyla, self-knowledge never has a general abstract object. It is always and exclusively the unique, individual ego in his *haecceitas* which is the object of self-knowledge.⁶³ Consciousness not only reflects the cognitive data provided by self-knowledge, it also "interiorizes" them because "consciousness not only reflects but also *interiorizes* in its own specific manner what it mirrors, thus encapsulating or capturing them in the person's ego."⁶⁴ This interiorizing process leads to the *subjectivation* of the objective, cognitive contents supplied by self-knowledge, and the subjectivation of the ego itself objectively cognized in self-knowledge. Thus, say Wojtyla, "the 'subject' man is also the 'object'; he is the object for the subject, and he does not lose his objective significance when mirrored by consciousness."⁶⁵

This interplay between self-knowledge and consciousness makes possible the fact that while acting, the person is aware that he is acting and that it is he who is acting. Owing to self-knowledge (whose contents are mirrored in consciousness) the person is not only aware but *knows* that he is acting consciously, for "self-knowledge has as its object not only the person and the action, but also the person as being *aware* of himself and *aware* of his action."⁶⁶

The role of consciousness does not end in its mirroring function. Wojtyla assigns to it yet another, more important, constitutive and essential function which "endows consciousness with the ultimate reason for its presence in the specific structure of the

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 36.

⁶² Ibid., p. 37.

⁶³ Cf. Ibid., p. 40.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 37.

⁶⁶ Loc. cit.

acting person."⁶⁷ He calls it the "*reflexive*" function of consciousness which is a "special turning back upon the subject" whereby consciousness "directs everything back upon the subject."⁶⁸

"Reflexive" consciousness denotes that consciousness, so to speak, turns back naturally upon the subject and *discloses* it to itself "in its specific distinctness and unique concreteness"⁶⁹ and allows the person to *experience* in a special way his own subjectivity and to *experience* his actions as his own.⁷⁰

We have seen that the person is already an ontologically constituted subject (*suppositum humanum*) of his being and acting. Consciousness, in its reflexive function and in close conjunction with self-knowledge, allows the person to *experience* his ontological subjectivity, his being a determined supposit. It allows him to experience himself as a distinct and concrete ego, the concrete "I". Man, says Wojtyla, "which in his ontic structure is basically a real individual object, would never without consciousness constitute himself as the ego."⁷¹ He continues:

To be a subject and to "live one's own self as a subject" (se vivre soi-meme) are quite different. Only in the latter do we touch upon the true reality of the human self. Consciousness possesses the key and constitutive meaning for the second of these dimensions of man's personal subjectivity. We may also say that the human subject becomes a human self and reveals itself to itself by consciousness.⁷²

Moreover, reflexive consciousness allows the person to experience himself as the dynamic, causal subject of his own actions which he experiences as his own.⁷³

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 42.

⁶⁸ Cf. Ibid., p. 44.

⁶⁹ Cf. Ibid., p. 46.

⁷⁰ Says Wojtyla: "In fact, the essential function of consciousness is to form man's experience and thus allow him to experience in a special way his own subjectiveness." Ibid., p. 42.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 46. On this the reader may also Cf., R. Battiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyla*, pp. 93, 107; J. Seifert, "Truth and Transcendence in the Philosophical Thought of K. Wojtyla," *Karol Wojtyla. Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, pp. 99-102.

⁷² Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 279.

⁷³ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 43-47.

Thus, for Wojtyla, "it is one thing to *be* the subject, another to *be cognized*... as the subject, and a still different thing to *experience* one's self as the subject of one's own acts and experiences."⁷⁴ Wojtyla concludes that:

Man is a subject only when he experiences or lives his own self as a subject; he is then, in some respect a subject fully in act (*in actu*). This is precisely what consciousness presupposes. This conception enriches and to some degree modifies the meaning of the subject and subjectivity. A specific interiority of action and existence in oneself ("inselfness" or *inseitas*) enters the concept of subjectivity. Man exists "in himself," and his activities also have this "in-self" or intransitive dimension. This interiority of man's existence and action and their being in themselves are a more precise philosophical explicitation of what is virtually contained in the concept of the human subject.⁷⁵

The person then is subject, not only in the ontological sense, but is subject who "lives" and experiences his own subjectivity as a personal ego or self. This unique experience that man has of his peculiar and irreducible subjectivity constitutes the "primordial originality of the human being" in the world.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

⁷⁵ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 279. Cf. also, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man, AH, 7 (1978) p. 111. In this connection, let us note that Wojtyla never reduces personal subjectivity solely to the "lived" experience of oneself as subject rendered possible by consciousness although this is crucial to the constitution of one's specific personal subjectivity. Neither does Wojtyla hold that the human self is entirely reducible to consciousness or self-consciousness. For instance, a newly born child is certainly a personal subject in the ontological sense. However, such child still lacks the degree of consciousness and many of the other traits which would make him or her a psychologically and ethically a distinct personality. In a word, he is not yet a subject fully in actu. Wojtyla maintains that the "human subject (*suppositum humanum*) must reveal itself to some extent as the human self; metaphysical subjectivity must appear as personal subjectivity." Idem, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 277. Cf. also, Idem *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by H. T. Willets (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., 1981) p. 26.

⁷⁶ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," AH 7 (1978) pp. 109, 111. Owing to consciousness, man possesses that specific self-experience whereby he lives his own subjectivity and this "experience of his own subjectiveness is, as it were," says Wojtyla, "superimposed on the 'metaphysical subjectiveness' of the human ontological foundation." Idem, AP, p. 113.

9. *The Moment and Structure of Self-determination*

Our preceding analyses of human dynamism has disclosed to us that only that type of action where man experiences himself as an efficient cause can properly be called an *actus humanus* or *actus personae*. The experience of the human act, asserts Wojtyla, leads us to concentrate on the fact of the "I do" or "I will" where we find the crucial moment of self-determination. As Wojtyla himself says, the analysis of the structure of self-determination lies at the very core of his philosophy of the person.⁷⁷

Man's experience of efficacy in his action is best expressed in the experience of "I will", which stands mid-way between the "I can" and the "I ought not".⁷⁸ While the latter denotes indecision and indetermination on the part of the acting subject, the "I will" expresses determination, decision, choice not only as regards the object of action but also as regards the subject's turning towards this, rather than that, object. It expresses as well the subject's decision to act or not to act at all. This "I will" is constitutive of every human action properly so called, and "every authentically human 'I will' is an act of self-determination."⁷⁹ Simply stated, self-determination means that in acting, the person not only determines his actions and their objects, but at the same time he also determines himself. In self-determination, the personal subject becomes itself the immanent object of his action. Says Wojtyla:

In every act of self-determination — in every "I will" — the self is the object, indeed the primary and nearest object.

⁷⁷ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario*..., pp. 37-39; AP, pp. 105-186. The expressions I will and I do are variant English renderings of what in Italian is expressed as *Io voglio*. Please Cf. *Persona e atto*, pp. 126ff.

⁷⁸ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 99-100. Jan Piatek, for instance, comments on this as follows: "The I can expresses that 'I am capable of doing it,' the I ought not expresses 'no one can oblige me to do it,' while the I will expresses the decision of doing or not doing it." Idem, *Persona e amore nel pensiero filosofico del Card. Karol Wojtyla*, pp. 20-21, note 13. The English translation is mine.

⁷⁹ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 106. Cf. also, "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario*..., p. 39.

This is contained in the concept itself, and the term expressing it — "self-determination" — (which) means that one is determined by oneself. The concept as well as the word expressing it contain simultaneously and correlatively both the subject and the object. The one as well as the other is the ego.⁸⁰

Even in human acts directed to objects external to the self, still "the turning to any external object that is seen as an end or value implies a simultaneous fundamental turn toward the ego as the object."⁸¹ Every action, argues Wojtyla, has simultaneously an immanent-intransitive and a transitive aspect because every act of willing is intentionally directed to objects outside and beyond the subject, but at the same time is also directed inner towards the subject, and reaches and penetrates deep into the ego as its primary object. Wojtyla says:

Human action or act has various aims, objects, and values toward which it is directed. Turning to these, one cannot fail in his conscious action to direct himself toward his own self as a goal, for he cannot refer to various objects of *action* and choose various values without determining himself and his value, through which he becomes an object for himself as subject. In this particular dimension the structure of the human act is auto-teleological.⁸²

This fundamental, simultaneous turn toward the personal ego in every instance of self-determination is termed by Wojtyla as "objectification" of the ego. This does not mean that the ego is always the intentional object of the acts of willing (although the person may intentionally turn to himself as an object of his willing). This means rather that in every act, the person "objectifies," actualizes or fulfills himself as a person. In every act, the person not only decides about his action, but he also decides about

⁸⁰ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 109.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 110.

⁸² Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 282. Cf. also, AP, pp. 150ff; "Il problema del costituirsi della cultura attraverso la 'praxis' umana," *Rivista di Filosofia neo-scolastica*, 69 (1977), pp. 515-519.

himself — determines himself.⁸³ This will become clearer as we go along in our discussion.

Self-determination brings to the fore a deeper and richer aspect of human causality in action. Human causality is a "consequence" of self-determination. Moreover, according to Wojtyla, consciousness influences and conditions the experience of self-determination. Owing to consciousness, especially in its reflexive function, the acting person "lives" his unique subjectivity in every self-determining act, and experiences that "*he is the one who is determined by himself and that his decisions make him somebody, who may be good or bad.*"⁸⁴

10. *Self-possession and Self-governance*

The experience of self-determination presupposes and reveals the structures of self-possession and self-governance in the reality of the human person. Self-determination by which man makes a decision about himself proves that the person has possession and control of himself. Wojtyla argues thus:

Self-determination is possible only on the ground of self-possession... For only the things that are man's actual possessions can be determined by him; that can be determined only by the one who actually possesses them. Being in the possession of himself man can determine himself. At the same time the will, every genuine "I will", reveals, confirms and realizes the self-possession that is appropriate solely to the person.⁸⁵

Self-possession denotes that the person is, so to speak, a self-contained entity. Owing to his knowledge, freedom and consciousness, the person belongs to himself — he is both the subject and the

⁸³ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 111-112; "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario*... pp. 40-42.

⁸⁴ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 113.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 106-107. Cf. also, John F. Crosby, "Persona est sui iuris: Reflections on the Foundations of Karol Wojtyla's Philosophy of the Person," *Karol Wojtyla. Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, pp. 25-37.

object of his being and acting. Wojtyla recalls here an old Thomistic axiom which best expresses what he means by self-possession: "*persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis.*" There is yet another essential element in the complex reality of the person which the experience of self-determination reveals: self-governance. The person is not only the one who possesses himself, but he also governs himself, and thus himself as the one who is possessed and governed. In deciding about himself, man demonstrates his power or mastery over himself. Self-governance presupposes self-possession and constitutes an aspect and concrete realization of this latter.⁸⁶

Self-determination, self-possession and self-governance mutually contain and explain each other. While self-possession and self-governance lay the ontological grounds which makes self-determination possible, this latter presupposes, concretizes and actualizes the former.⁸⁷

11. *The Will*

The experience of self-determination brings to the fore the *will* as a faculty and an agency of the acting person. Self-determination and human efficacy are accomplished in the acts of the will and they involve the actualization of this faculty.⁸⁸ The will endows man with freedom (best visualized according to Wojtyla in the experience of "I may but I need not"), and the power to be the author of his actions and of himself. It is a constitutive element in the structure of self-possession and self-governance that we saw above. The will is the faculty which makes self-determination possible because this latter is accomplished in the acts

⁸⁶ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 105-107: "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario*..., p. 42; "Il personalismo tomista," *I fondamenti dell'ordine etico*, p. 147; *Love and Responsibility*, p. 24.

⁸⁷ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 107.

⁸⁸ Wojtyla says: "The manifestation and actualization of the dynamism proper to man must have its correlate in the potentiality of the man-subject. We call the correlate the *will*. Between the 'I may' on the one hand and, on the other, the 'I need not,' the human 'I want' is formed, and it constitutes the dynamism proper to the will. The will is what in man allows him to act." *Ibid.*, p. 100.

of the will. "It is to the will," Wojtyla says, "that the person owns his specifically human form of dynamism, the dynamism of self-determination, and the dynamism of the human action."⁸⁹

The will is man's power of self-determination, of deliberate choice and decision.

Wojtyla, however, refers to the will not only as a faculty, but an "agency," because in every "I will" there is involved not only the will as *potestas*, but the active, intentional turning to the objects about which man has decided.⁹⁰

For Wojtyla, a realistic interpretation of free will must be spelled out in terms of man's *autodeterminism*, instead of *indeterminism*. In such an interpretation, autodeterminism has a primary and fundamental significance.⁹¹ It is true that the will is naturally and intrinsically attracted to the good or a value as its object, although possessing an intrinsic independence from it, which might influence its acts. It is, however, the moment of choice and decision, which constitutes the active response of the will to a given good or value, which defines the intrinsic essence of volition, of the "I will."⁹² For Wojtyla, freedom "is not freedom from objects or values, but on the contrary, the freedom of, or rather for objects or values."⁹³

Although self-determination is accomplished in the acts of the will, Wojtyla is quick, however, to point out that it is not identified with them. Intentionality is directed towards an external good or value; self-determination is directed inwards, towards the subject. Wojtyla says:

For self-determination is the manifestation of the fact that not only the active directing of the subject towards a value takes place in the act of the will. There is more in it:

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

⁹⁰ Cf. Ibid., pp. 108-116, 120ff; "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII. centenario* . . . , pp. 38-42.

⁹¹ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 121.

⁹² Cf. Ibid., p. 126.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 132.

there is man, who in this act turns towards a definitive value and thus decides not only about this move, but by making it he also decides about himself.⁹⁴

Free will and its acts belong to the personal subject and can never be isolated from it. Thus, the acts of the will ultimately belong to the person: *actiones sunt suppositorum*, and although self-determination is realized in the acts of the will, it is ultimately the person, through his will, who determines himself. In fact, self-determination consists in man's use of his will and freedom.⁹⁵ By virtue of his free will, the person is truly the one who has possession and governance of himself, and who in his self-determining acts, concretizes his self-possession and actually governs himself, actually exercises that specific power over himself which no one who has possession and governance of himself, and who in his self-determining acts, concretizes his self-possession and actually governs himself, actually exercises that specific power over himself which no one else can execute. Self-determination is something absolutely innate, proper and "natural" for the person. Truly, *persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis*.

12. *Transcendence of the Person*

Freedom and self-determination manifest the transcendence of the person in his action. According to Wojtyla, transcendence etymologically "means to go over and beyond a threshold or boundary (*trans-scendere*)," namely, "the subject's stepping out of his limits toward an object" — as in the case of the acts of knowledge and volition that are intentionally directed to external objects. This type of transcendence he calls "horizontal transcendence". However, the transcendence which mainly interests

⁹⁴ Karol Wojtyla, "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario*..., p. 40.

⁹⁵ Wojtyla says: "Indeed it is impossible to understand or interpret the will except within the personal structure. It is only in this structure that it operates and can manifest its true nature. In nonpersonal beings, whose dynamism is achieved solely at the level of nature, there are no reasons for the existence of the will." *Idem*, AP, p. 107. Cf. also, p. 125.

Wojtyla here is that which he describes as "vertical". Vertical transcendence is the result of self-determination and freedom, of *being free* in the process of acting and not solely in the intentional directing of willing towards an external object.⁹⁶ What he means by vertical transcendence can best be explained by looking into his analysis of 1) man's self-dependence in acting, and 2) the will's intrinsic reference to knowledge and truth in every human act.

12.a. *Self-dependence*

Self-determination reveals that the person, owing to his freedom in every instance of a specifically human act, "depends chiefly on himself for the dynamization of his own subject."⁹⁷ Earlier we saw that while the will is intrinsically and spontaneously attracted to the object under the aspect of good, it is, however, the moment of choice and decision which is crucial in a person's action. In this latter is accomplished the moment of self-determination which essentially defines every instance of a genuinely human act. Self-determination reveals and actualizes self-dependence, and together they show man's transcendence in action, for in acting man not only determines, or decides about, the object of his acts (thereby transcending himself horizontally in the direction of the external object); but at the same time, he also decides about himself making himself the most immanent object of his own action. In this case, the person, as it were, steps out, stands over, himself — and decides about himself, vertically transcending his own subjectivity.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 120. The absence of this self-dependence places man beyond freedom and relegates human dynamism to the realm of instinct and necessity. Wojtyla distinguishes between the dynamism at the level of nature manifested in "activations" that has instinct as its moving and integrating factor, and the dynamism at the level of person which exhibits the ego's dependence on itself for his dynamization and where self-determination "serves as the basis from which acting itself as well as its direction and purpose are derived. The dynamism at the level of nature lacks that special dependence on the ego which is the characteristic mark of the specific dynamism of the person." *Ibid.*, p. 117.

12.b. *Relation to Truth*

The dynamic transcendence of the person in his acting is ultimately grounded on his relation to truth. Insofar as self-determination which manifests transcendence is accomplished in the acts of the will, our analysis is centered on the will's intrinsic reference to truth.

While the acts of the will (traditionally referred to as *appetitus rationalis*) are not in themselves cognitive, they however intrinsically depend on the cognition of truth: "nothing may be the object of the will unless it is known." Man's knowledge of objective reality, of himself and "in particular, his knowledge of values as possible ends and also as the basis of the norms that he refers to in his acting" are indispensable in every act of volition.⁹⁸

As we have seen, the will is naturally and intrinsically attracted to the good or value as its proper object or as an end. It is, however, the moment of decision or choice which constitutes, properly speaking, the act of volition. The will, in its acts, is not passively directed to the good which certainly attracts it, as if the will is determined from without in acts of volition. The crucial factor here is the moment of decision and choice by which the person actively moves towards the object posited before him as an end for himself. Thus, every instance of the "I will" constitutes an individual, active and unique response of the will to the object which the person has decided upon and chosen. The moment of decision and choice, says Wojtyla, "may be viewed as an instance of the threshold that the person as a person has to pass on his way toward the good."⁹⁹

Decision and choice, however, involve the will's intrinsic reference and dependence on cognition and truth which "forms an

⁹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114; 124-148. On this dependence of the will on truth in the philosophy of Wojtyla, please Cf. also, C. Esposito, "L'esperienza dell'essere umano nel pensiero di Karol Wojtyla," *La Filosofia di Karol Wojtyla*, pp. 34-37; R. Buttiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyla*, pp. 165-185.

⁹⁹ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 127.

intrinsic part of the very nature of a decision and is in a special manner manifest in choice.¹⁰⁰

In *simple* and *complex* acts of willing, there is always involved what Wojtyla calls the "moment of truth." An act is simple when the will is presented with only one possible object of volition. In this case, the person's active response is an "unequivocal decision": "I will X," or "I will something." While choice is not necessary, it still involves an authentic decision. In complex acts of willing, however, the will is confronted with more than one object as a possible end of action. It has to choose from a number of presented goods or values which perhaps compete against each other or may even be mutually contradictory. The person's choice of one particular good or value involves his decision for that good or value and entails his renouncing of the rest. Wojtyla writes:

In a simple decision there is no choice, because an unequivocal motive eliminates the need to choose. When motivation is complex each decision must become a choice... And choice always entails the renunciation of a spectrum of objects, of possible values, for the sake of one single object or value. It also necessitates putting off some potential wilings for the actual one.¹⁰¹

In both cases there is the crucial "moment of truth" or the "axiological truth" of the object, that is, the knowledge of the true goodness or value of the object. Knowledge of the objects of willing is a necessary condition of choice and decision, and while this is not the function of the will, the reference or the intrinsic dependence on this knowledge is, however, constitutive of the nature of the will. Moreover, the moment of truth becomes itself the principle of decision, choice and action.¹⁰²

Axiological or moral truth is different from the ontological, logical, or even practical truth. It refers to the knowledge of the value of the object, which involves not only the apprehension of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 137.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 130-131.

¹⁰² Cf. Ibid., pp. 137-139.

the goodness or badness of the object, but also the judgment that this attribution of value is indeed true and correct. Quoting Wojtyla at length, we may observe:

Choice as well as decision-making — each in its own way — is performed in reference to the truth of the object recognized as a positive good. Thus in both there is presupposed the cognitive *experience of truth*; for the cognitive experience to which the deliberation of the will takes recourse is not merely constitutive of objects of cognition, but is first and foremost evaluating them with respect to that “truth” about the object which shows it as a positive or negative good. That is, we speak here about the axiological (or moral) truth, which is differentiated from the ontological and logical “truth”. In grasping it we assert the value of an object rather than what the object itself or as cognized actually is. The “axiological truth” — or rather the truth in the axiological sense — which is disclosed by our investigation is not, however, the same as the so-called “practical truth” and does not belong directly to the so-called “practical knowledge”.¹⁰³

This judgment about the value of the object, moreover, carries with itself what Wojtyla calls its “apodictic” aspect; that is, the object is not only judged as good or bad, but such judgment is attributed to the subject himself who himself perceives the truth of his being good or bad, depending on the value (the goodness or badness) of the object he has opted for.

Our analysis of the will's reference to axiological truth has disclosed that truth is the basis of the person's transcendence in action, while at the same time, it has clarified what that transcendence consists of.

We said earlier that self-dependence and the will's intrinsic dependence on truth would clarify Wojtyla's understanding of vertical transcendence. Self-dependence reveals that the person depends chiefly upon himself for his own dynamization in a specifically human action. This is accounted for by man's freedom

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 143.

which renders him indeterminate in relation to the will's possible objects. Since none of these objects necessarily actualizes the will and moves it to act, the person's dynamization in action occurs in the moment of choice and decision, whereby man actively turns to the object and, as it were, places himself in act. Here, the person determines not only the object but his own capacity and freedom to act. He therefore transcends not only the object but his own action itself, his own dynamization itself. This latter is what Wojtyla means by vertical transcendence.

However, as we saw, freedom, the moment of decision and choice, self-determination itself, are all grounded on the will's intrinsic dependence on truth. The person, says Wojtyla, "becomes independent of the objects of his own acting through the moment of truth, which is contained in every authentic choice or decision making,"¹⁰⁴ and it is the will's intrinsic reference to truth that finally or ultimately accounts for the person's "ascendency over his own dynamism which we have here described as the transcendence in action (vertical transcendence)."¹⁰⁵ Owing to this freedom which intrinsically depends on truth, the person is acting, transcends not only his actions and its objects, but transcends himself in the very performance of the act, manifesting thereby his self-possession and self-governance.

13. *Self-fulfillment of the Person in Action*

We now consider the person's self-fulfillment in the performance of his action which runs parallel to self-determination and further clarifies the person's transcendence in action. This brings us to the heart of this chapter that we have devoted to Wojtyla's philosophy of the acting person.

Self-fulfillment denotes that in acting, man fulfills himself: "being the performer of an action man also fulfills himself in it."¹⁰⁶ The structure of self-fulfillment "tells man everytime anew

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 138.

¹⁰⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Ibid., pp. 149-186; "The Person; Subject and Community," RM, pp. 284-288.

that he is simultaneously given to himself as a gift and imposed upon himself as a task."¹⁰⁷

Fulfillment, according to Wojtyla, is similar to "act" — which denotes the fullness which corresponds to a definite possibility. Wojtyla says:

To fulfill oneself means to actualize, and in a way to bring to the proper fullness, that structure in man which is characteristic for him because of his personality and also because of his being somebody and not merely something.¹⁰⁸

Self-fulfillment reveals that the person is a potential and not a fully actual being, containing in himself that tendency or drive to move from his incompleteness to that fullness or plenitude that is proper to his being. Man is a being essentially in becoming, and his self-fulfillment in and through his actions evidences the fact that man is a contingent being.¹⁰⁹ Thus, self-fulfillment in and through actions indicates the person's ontological becoming and self-actualization, but this fulfillment of the person in his actions does not involve solely an ontological becoming. Owing to his specific nature as a person, this self-fulfillment also involves a moral or axiological dimension — proper only to the human person.¹¹⁰ In fact, as we will see later in this section, self-ful-

¹⁰⁷ Karol Wojtyla, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," *AH*, 7 (1978) p. 112.

¹⁰⁸ Karol Wojtyla, *AP*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁹ "Every being," says Wojtyla, "that must strive to attain its own fullness, and that is subjected to actualization, appears indeed to be contingent. This seems to be evidence also, in a different way, by the modality of action as seen in its axiological status; the possibility of being good or being bad, that is to say, of fulfilling oneself through goodness or of non-fulfilling oneself, shows a special feature of the contingency of the person." *Ibid.*, p. 154. Cf. also, "The Person: Subject and Community," *RM*, p. 284.

¹¹⁰ "At any rate," says Wojtyla, "it is only in the person that the fulfillment, which ontologically corresponds to the structure itself of the person, can be achieved. The person finds fulfillment in performing the action and thus in attaining appropriate plenitude and completeness, which in its structure conforms essentially to the structural condition of self-governance and self-possession. In the action, the person achieves his own accomplishment by becoming 'somebody' and the being 'somebody' is his manifestation of himself. Together with this individual fulfillment — stress is to be laid on 'together' — or indeed in direct union with it, comes the fulfillment of the self in the axiological and ethical sense, the fulfillment through crystallization of moral value." *Idem*, *AP*, p. 157.

fillment is not solely identified with the mere performance of an action, but depends on the moral value of the act.

Every action, as we have seen, has a double teleology: the transitive/outer and the intransitive/inner consequences. Self-fulfillment refers primarily, not exclusively, to inner dimension of action by which "an action reaches and penetrates into the subject, into the ego, which is its primary and principal object.¹¹¹ The person's choice of, or decision for, a certain particular good of value at the same time brings about an immanent effect or modification in the acting subject himself. It is in this "inward-reflecting leaning" to the subject that the decisive moment of self-determination lies. It is this inner aspect of the act which leaves its lasting effect in the person, primarily in its moral dimension. In performing an action, man fulfills himself in it, depending on the moral virtualities of the act. Writes Wojtyla:

Human actions once performed do not vanish without trace: they leave their moral value, which constitutes an objective reality intrinsically cohesive with the person, and thus a reality also profoundly subjective. Being a person man is "somebody" and being somebody he may either be *good* or *bad*.¹¹²

Self-fulfillment, therefore, brings us to the moral dimension of action and the person's fulfillment in action.

13.a. *The Moral Dimension of Self-fulfillment*

Every action, in the performance of which the person achieves self-fulfillment, possesses an intrinsic moral dimension. There exists a fundamental link between the *humanum* and the *morale*.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 150.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 151. The reader may also see, Hans Kochler, "The Dialectical Conception of Self-determination," AH, 6 (1977) ed. by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, Holland/Boston, USA; D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1977) pp. 75-80.

The *morale*, Wojtyla holds, is rooted in the *humanum*, and a *fortiori* is what might be defined as the *personale*.¹¹³

The experience of what is morally good or bad, as disclosed particularly in conscience, constitutes an essential moment in the experience and the performance of a human act, and the person's self-fulfillment in and through his action. Self-fulfillment brings the person into direct contact with the moral reality, insofar as, according to Wojtyla, man fulfills himself as a person, as somebody, by becoming either good or bad — "which means that he may or may not achieve self-fulfillment."¹¹⁴ True self-fulfillment is accomplished, moreover, solely in the performance of a morally good act. Says Wojtyla:

Existentially every action is some kind of fulfillment of the person. Axiologically, however, this fulfillment is reached only through the good, while moral evil leads or amounts to, so to speak, non-fulfillment.¹¹⁵

This axiological dimension of the structure of self-fulfillment bring us the key role played by conscience as a necessary condition of man's fulfillment of himself in action.

13.b. *The Role of Conscience and Truth*

The role of conscience in self-fulfillment comes to the fore because "it is owing to conscience that the human act is formed as the willing and the choosing of true good." Its function is to

¹¹³ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," AH, 7 (1978) p. 112.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, pp. 149-186; "The Structure of Self-determination as the Core of the Theory of the Person," *Tommasso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario*..., p. 38; "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 284-288; "The Intentional Act and the Human Act, that is, Act and Experience," AH, 5 (1976) ed. by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, Holland/Boston, USA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976) pp. 269-280. According to Wojtyla, on the one hand, self-fulfillment can only be properly understood in the context of the intrinsically moral modality of human action. On the other hand, "as an existential reality, morality is always strictly connected with man as a person. Its vital roots grow out of the person. Indeed, it has no existence apart from man's performance of actions and his fulfillment through actions." Idem, AP, p. 152.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 120.

judge the moral value of the action, of the good or the evil contained in the act, and thereafter to elicit in the person a sense of duty to perform that which is good and to avoid that which is evil, lies at the core of self-fulfillment. "Do good and avoid evil," the first principle of conscience known as *synderesis*, is the most basic formula of all human praxis. "To do this," says Wojtyla, "man must constantly transcend himself in conscience in the direction of true good. That is the fundamental direction of the transcendence which is the property or characteristic of the human person."¹¹⁶ The person, owing to his conscience, must continually "outgrow" himself in the direction of the good, willed and chosen in the light of truth — and simultaneous with this transcendence, the person achieves self-fulfillment.

In fulfilling an act, I fulfill myself in it provided the act is good or in agreement with my conscience, that is, done with a good or righteous conscience. The moral value reaches to the entire depths of the metaphysical structure of the human subject. The opposite of this is a deed contrary to conscience; in a morally evil deed I become an evil man and evil as man. Committing such a deed does not bring self-fulfillment, but is rather a "nonfulfillment" of self. This experience of nonfulfillment of self corresponds to negative moral value; we might call it "antivalue," especially from the point of view of the judgment of the conscience.¹¹⁷

The function of conscience as the subjective norm of morality comes to the foreground in the analysis of self-determination, and places this latter in a clearer light. Conscience not only judges the good contained in the action, but also elicits in the person a sense of duty with regards to this good. This transition from the judgment about the moral value of the action to the sense of duty or obligation is based on, and occurs in the context of, two factors: first, the surrender to truth intrinsically constitutive of freedom and self-determination in every human act, and secondly, the concomitant, self-objectivizing turn of the will towards the ego

¹¹⁶ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 286.

¹¹⁷ Loc. cit.

in every act. In other words, conscience's judgment about the moral truthfulness of the act (X is truly good) can be made only because of its reference to truth. Simultaneous with this judgment of the moral truthfulness of the action, conscience relates and extends this judgment to the person as the primary value in acting.¹¹⁸

In this judgment by conscience about the objective value of the action, the former never judges the latter as if in a detached manner, but always extending this judgment to the subject himself. Hence, not only is "X is truly good", but "X should be done" — because by doing so I become good and thus fulfill myself.

The fact that the assertion of "X is truly good" activates the conscience and thus sets off what is like an inner obligation or command to perform the action that leads to the realization of X is most strictly related with the specific dynamism of the fulfillment of the personal ego in and through action. It is from this point of view that duty is discussed here.¹¹⁹

Our discussion above has disclosed that, and how, conscience functions of the subjective norm of morality in the structure of self-fulfillment. Closely interwoven and connected with this subjective normative role is the function that conscience plays in relation to the objective norms of moral conduct, which also bear upon the fulfillment of the person in his actions.

¹¹⁸ Says Wojtyla: "When it is an effort of the intellect striving for truth in the sphere of values, then its aim is to grasp not only any detached values as such of the objects of willing but also — together with the intrasitiveness of the action — the *basic value of the person as the subject of the will and thus also of the agent of action.*" Idem, AP, p. 161.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 163. Modern philosophy of language has put into question and has denied the possibility of this transition from an "is statement" to an "ought statement" especially in ethics. However, in Wojtyla's philosophy of the acting person, such transition is possible owing to the fundamental openness of the will and freedom to objective truth and the objective good, as well as the inherently axiological-moral character of self-fulfillment. For instance, R. Buttiglione commenting on this aspect of Wojtyla's thought, holds that the transition from "this is truly good" to the affirmation that "this must be realized" is possible in Wojtyla because there exists an obligation on the part of man to realize the good which is constitutive of his self-realization as a person. Buttiglione goes on to say that this connection between the will and freedom on the one hand and, on the other, the objective truth and the good allows us to establish a normative order. Cf. R. Buttiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyla*, p. 179.

Moral duty also arises as a consequence of a pre-existent moral (or legal) principle or norm which appears to be derived from outside the person. This is the objective order or morality which "in its significance and application extends far beyond an individual person and his concrete innerness."¹²⁰ Conscience does not create these norms; it discovers them. Their fundamental value lies in the good that they objectify, and it is because of this good that these objective norms become related to conscience and decidedly bear upon self-fulfillment, for they can become sources of moral obligation that binds the person, in conscience, to act in compliance with their precepts. In doing so the person attains his self-fulfillment as a person.

This moral obligation, however, arises only when conscience, not only judges their abstract objective truthfulness, but when conscience perceives their objective truthfulness, in an experience "that expresses itself in the conviction or subjective certitude that such-and-such a norm corresponds to a good."¹²¹ On the strength of this subjective conviction, the objective norm can bind conscience and bring it to act in compliance with its precepts: "A right norm is thus one that it is proper for the conscience to obey: a wrong norm, on the contrary, one that is not to be followed."¹²²

The norm and the obligation which arise because of it take on a concrete personal dimension. According to Wojtyla, conscience shapes this norm and the moral obligation that issues forth from it on account of the subjective conviction about its truthfulness, into "*that unique and unparalleled form they acquire within the experience and fulfillment of the person.*"¹²³ Here the tension between the objective order of norms and the inner freedom of the person is relieved in the subjective conviction (and "active" acceptance) of the truthfulness of the good contained in the norms. Indeed, by complying to the right norm, the person becomes good and experiences self-fulfillment. Far from abolishing or stifling man's inner freedom, the truthfulness of the good contained in the objective order of morality liberates it.

¹²⁰ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 164.

¹²¹ Loc. cit.

¹²² Loc. cit.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 165.

13.c. The Call and Responsibility to Self-fulfillment

In every obligation, says Wojtyla, there always lurks behind the fundamental imperative: "Be good as a man — do not be bad as man."¹²⁴ Such an imperative manifests the person's fundamental call to self-fulfillment that forms part of the inner reality of the person as the one who has possession and governance of himself because of freedom. Man is constantly given to himself as a gift and simultaneously imposed upon himself as a task.

The person *responds* to this call whenever he determines himself in the direction of the good, willed and chosen in the light of truth. This surrender to truth, which always bears the mark of man's transcendence and is proper to him because of his rational nature, brings together the ontological and axiological dimensions of self-fulfillment in action.

Moreover, this call to fulfillment brings to the fore man's responsibility to and for himself in action. The person is responsible for performing "X", not only because he is the cause of it, but because of the call to self-determination and self-fulfillment that the performance of such an action involves. In performing "X", the person is not only responsible for its value, he is at the same time morally responsible to himself for it. Wojtyla writes:

Together with the responsibility for the value of intentional objects, the first and fundamental responsibility that arises in acting on the basis of self-determination and self-dependence is the responsibility for the ego who is the agent performing the action.¹²⁵

13.d. *Self-fulfillment and Felicity*

Self-fulfillment, which unrolls parallel to self-determination, brings about happiness or felicity in the acting person. According to Wojtyla, in the very notion of happiness or felicity — an exclusive privilege that is proper solely to the unique structure of

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 168.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 171.

the person — there is something very akin to fulfillment, to the fulfillment of the self through action: "To fulfill oneself is almost synonymous with felicity, with being happy."¹²⁶

Human action does not *eo ipso* bring about happiness, for "the sphere of felicity is to be sought in what is internal and intransitive in the action, in what is identifiable with the fulfillment of the ego as the person."¹²⁷ Now, we saw that the person fulfills himself in action only when he chooses the good, in the light of the moral truth. Since felicity is synonymous with self-fulfillment, it is brought about by the person's surrender to moral truth whereby he attains fulfillment as a person. Thus, felicity, according to Wojtyla, has to be identified "*with the fulfillment of freedom through truth.*"¹²⁸ It is in the surrender of freedom to truth that man attains fulfillment, which engenders the state of felicity of the person.

14. *The Personalistic Value of Action*

Having analyzed the complex reality of the performance of an action, Wojtyla concludes that the fundamental value of every action lies precisely in the *performance itself of such action by the person*. He calls this the "personalistic" value of the action, "which inheres in the performance itself of the action by the person, in the very fact that man acts in a manner appropriate to him," in the fact that performing the action, the person reveals, determines and fulfills himself in it.¹²⁹ This personalistic value of action has both an ontological and axiological significance: ontological because the person and his value are simply and ontologically prior to and more fundamental than the value of the action (*operari sequitur esse*); axiological because in every action the fundamental value is the person who, in performing the action, fulfills himself in it.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 174.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 175.

¹²⁸ Loc. cit.

¹²⁹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 264-267.

This personalistic value, according to Wojtyla, is prior to and differs from the moral value that "belongs to the nature of the performed action and issues from their reference to a norm."¹³⁰ Moral or ethical values are rooted in, emerge and develop "on the *substratum* of the personalistic value," which they permeate but with which they cannot be identified.¹³¹

15. *Self-fulfillment and Participation*

Wojtyla devotes the closing chapter of his book *The Acting Person* to an analysis, albeit by his own admission "sketchy," of that immanent and constitutive dimension of the dynamic person-act correlate which issues from the fact that actions can be, and in a rather universal way, are actually performed "together with others", in various interhuman and communal relations. This is a direct and natural consequence of the fact that the person lives and exists "together with others". Given this fact, Wojtyla asks: what significance does this acting together with others have for the personalistic value of action? How does the person fulfill himself in action, precisely in his performance of such action together with others? Wojtyla's answer is encapsulated in one word: *participation*.¹³²

In common usage, says Wojtyla, participation is taken to mean "having a share or part in something." Philosophically, however, participation refers to that ontic property of the person in virtue of which he,

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 264.

¹³¹ Cf. Ibid., p. 266.

¹³² Cf. Ibid., pp. 261-300. Wojtyla elaborated further on this theme in his two other writings, namely: "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 288-308, and "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977), ed. by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, Holland/Boston, USA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1977) pp. 61-73. For related studies on Wojtyla's notion of participation, please see: A. Wilder, O.P., "Community of Persons in the thought of Karol Wojtyla," *Angelicum*, pp. 63-96; R. Buttiglione, *Il pensiero di Karol Wojtyla*, pp. 197-206; Marco Cangioti, "Sul concetto di partecipazione in Karol Wojtyla," *Karol Wojtyla e il pensiero europeo contemporaneo* (Bologna: Centro Studi Europa Orientale, 1984) pp. 83-97; Nicholas Lobkowicz, "Participation et aliénation," *Karol Wojtyla. Filosofo, teologo, poeta*, pp. 247-251.

when he acts together with other men, retains in this acting the personalistic value of his own acting and at the same time shares in the realization and the results of communal acting. Owing to this share, man, when he acts together with others, retains everything that results from communal acting and simultaneously brings about — *in this very manner* — the personalistic value of his action.¹³³

Participation, according to Wojtyla, has a double sense. It is conceived, first of all, as that ontic capacity or ability of the person, rooted in and stemming from the specific structure of the person himself, which makes possible his acting together with others in a manner that in so doing, he fulfills himself in it. As any human action follows upon the ontological nature of the person, so being and acting together with others, in such a manner that in it the person simultaneously retains the personalistic value of action, is first of all grounded in the ontological structure of the person himself.¹³⁴ Secondly, participation refers, so to speak, to that "actual moment" of the person's performing an action together with others, such that he is not absorbed by such communal interplay, but rather, in this very manner of acting with others, he fulfills himself and manifests his transcendence, and reveals a new dimension of his self as a person.¹³⁵

Participation thus conceived carries with itself a normative significance for both the individual and the community of which he is a part. On the one hand, every person must

strive for that kind of participation which would allow him in acting together with others to realize the personalistic value of his action. On the other hand, any community of

¹³³ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 269. Cf. also, "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977) p. 70.

¹³⁴ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 269.

¹³⁵ Cf. Loc. cit. Wojtyla says that participation "signifies, on the one hand, that ability of acting 'together with others' which allows the realization of all that results from communal acting and simultaneously enables the one who is acting to realize thereby the personalistic value of his action. However, this ability is followed by its actualization. Thus, the notion of 'participation' includes both that ability and its realization." Ibid., p. 271. Cf. also, "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977) p. 71.

acting, or any human cooperation, should be conducted so as to allow the person remaining within its orbit to realize himself through participation.¹³⁶

Such normative significance is ultimately founded on the fact that, owing to his uniquely personal nature, the person had a basic and "natural" right not only to act, but to fulfill himself in action, and he has the obligation to do so.

Denial or lack of participation may, therefore, occur either on the part of the person as the subject-agent of action, and we have *individualism*, or on the part of the community, and here we have *objective totalism*.¹³⁷ Wojtyla describes them in these words:

Individualism sees in the individual the supreme and the fundamental good, to which all interests of the community or the society have to be subordinated, while objective totalism relies on the opposite principle and unconditionally subordinates the individual to the community or the society.¹³⁸

In essence, individualism isolates the individual from others and treats his good as opposed to, or in contradiction, to theirs. From individualism's viewpoint, being and acting "together with others"

is a necessity that the individual has to submit to, a necessity that corresponds to none of his very own features or positive properties; neither does the acting and existing together with others serve or develop any of the individual's positive and essential constituents... From the individualistic point of view an essentially constituent human property that allow the person to fulfill himself in acting "together with other" simply does not exist.¹³⁹

Totalism is the reverse of, and is derived from, individualism. It protects the community or society *from* the individual, on the assumption that the individual seeks solely his own good and that

¹³⁶ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 271.

¹³⁷ Cf. Ibid., p. 272.

¹³⁸ Loc. cit.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 274.

any tendency to participation is "totally alien to him". Thus, to attain the common good, totalism limits the individual and his freedom — at times even surpresses them completely.

Both systems imply a denial or rejection of participation as a constitutive element in the structure of the human person. Both are, therefore, based on an anthropology described by Wojtyla as "impersonalistic" or "anti-personalistic."¹⁴⁰

15.a. *Community and the Common Good*

Participation, according to Wojtyla, constitutes and at the same time is realized in that type of interpersonal or intersubjective relationship called community. Every human being, from birth, finds himself inserted within different interhuman situations of existing and acting "together with others," and his belonging or membership in each of them may vary depending precisely on the various interpersonal, associational relationships and bonds that exist in each of them.¹⁴¹

All communities, however, can either be a *community of being* or a *community of acting*. In a community of being, the members are brought together by the objective *bonds* which exist among them and which "define," so to speak, their membership in that communal group. This happens, for instance, in a family, where the members are bound together by their natural ties and by their common good. In a community of acting, the members are brought together by the objective aim or goal, or sets of aims or goals, that brought them to act together. Wojtyla here presents the example of a group of men digging a trench in an excavation, or a group of students listening to the professor's lecture. In both cases, their acting together occurs on the basis of their common goals. Moreover, according to Wojtyla, the community of being always conditions the community of acting, as is obvious in the case of a family for example.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 274-275.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 276-280.

What is crucial to note here, however, is that these objective bonds and associational relations existing between members of either type of community do not as yet realize, or cannot as yet be identified with, participation. Mere membership in these communities cannot as yet be identified as participation. Participation is realized only when each member of the community has "subjectively" chosen *as his own* the good of the community. Writes Wojtyla:

Participation inheres among others in choice; man chooses what others choose and indeed often because others choose it, but even then he chooses it as his own good and as the end of his own striving. What he thus chooses is his own good in the sense that he as the person can fulfill himself in it. It is participation that enables him to make these choices and to undertake this way of acting "together with others."¹⁴²

It is in this subjective appropriation of the common good or goal that participation is identified, constituting thereby the community as a "quasi-subject" of action. In a communal acting where there is participation, the individual person remains as the proper subject-agent of action; participation does not constitute the community as a new and separate subject of acting. Participation, however, introduces new relations amongst the persons acting together and a new "subjectiveness" in their acting. Owing to participation, the community acquires a "quasi-subjectiveness" because the individuals have subjectively chosen the common good as *their own*.¹⁴³

Thus, the common good can be seen as the basis of participation when persons act together with one another. The common good, according to Wojtyla, can be easily identified with the objective goal of the community and can be conceived simply in this purely objective or "material" manner. Wojtyla says, however, that:

It is impossible to define the common good without simultaneously taking into account the subjective moment, that is,

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 280.

¹⁴³ Cf. Ibid., p. 277.

the moment of acting in relation to the acting persons. When we consider this moment we see that the common good does not consist solely in the goal of the common acting performed by a community or group; indeed, it also, or even primarily, consists in that which conditions and somehow initiates in the persons acting together their participation, and thereby develops and shapes in them a subjective community of acting.

We can conceive the common good as being the goal of acting only in that double — subjective and objective sense.¹⁴⁴

It is participation which inheres in the individual's choice of the common good as *his own* that constitutes this subjective or, perhaps better, "personalistic" aspect of the common good. Owing to participation, the individual person's choice of or for the common good brings him fulfillment. At the same time, Wojtyla says, "owing to the same ability of participation, man expects that in communities founded on the common good his own actions will serve the community and help to maintain and enrich it."¹⁴⁵

It is finally on account of this personalistic dimension of the common good that it acquires an axiological priority or superiority over partial or individual goods. Because of the personalistic aspect of the value of the common good, a person may readily relinquish his individual good for the welfare of the community. Such sacrifice of his individual good corresponds to the ability of participation inherent in him — and instead of depriving him of self-fulfillment, brings him rather a high degree of it.¹⁴⁶

15.b. *Participative Attitudes*

After having considered the relation between the common good and participation, Wojtyla goes on to discuss the different attitudes which characterize man's being and acting together with others which affect such relation. He classifies these attitudes

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 281.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 283.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Loc. cit.

as: 1) *authentic attitudes* (namely, solidarity, opposition, dialogue) and 2) *non-authentic attitudes* (namely, non-involvement and servile conformism). He hastens to add that here he is mainly concerned with the pre-ethical, personalistic significance of these attitudes.

Solidarity is that participative attitude which renders the person constantly ready to accept and realize his share in the community. In taking this attitude, the person

does what he is supposed to do not only because of his membership in the group, but because he has the "benefit of the whole" in view: he does it for the "common good." The awareness of the common good makes him look beyond his own shares; and this intentional reference allows him to realize essentially his own share.¹⁴⁷

Solidarity also entails that one respects the duties and obligations which properly belong to the domain and responsibility of others — except in cases of necessity when one, guided by an acute sense of the needs of the community, may have to "take over more than one's usual share in acting and responsibility." Solidarity implies a mutual complementariness (amongst the members of the community), which forms an intrinsic part of participation and fulfillment. It "allows man to find the fulfillment of himself in complementing others."¹⁴⁸ *Opposition* is the attitude which aims at a more adequate understanding of the common good, and more especially, of the means employed or need to be employed for its achievement — especially from the point of view of the possibility of participation.

Opposition, therefore, does not contradict solidarity. It is rather an essentially solidaristic attitude that, far from rejecting the need for participation and the common good, seeks rather to clarify the constructive roles one may play in confirming them. The one who opposes does not therefore withdraw his solidarity with others. Rather, he seeks "for *that* participation and *that* at-

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 285.

¹⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

titude to the common good which would allow them a better, a fuller, and a more effective share in the communal life."¹⁴⁹

This constructive opposition is not only beneficial to, but is required by, the common good and participation.

Dialogue is the attitude which establishes and keeps the balance between solidarity and opposition, in the midst of differences and conflicts, strains and strifes that may arise within the community. In such situations, dialogue "allows us to select and bring to light what in controversial situations is right and true, and helps to eliminate any partial, preconceived or subjective views and trends."¹⁵⁰ It also prevents opposition from disrupting solidarity, and solidarity from stifling opposition.

These attitudes are authentic because they allow participation and the personalistic value of the action to be realized in man's acting and being with others. Where the person deviates from them, we have servile conformism or non-involvement.

Servile conformism denotes a passive compliance which, on the surface, appears as solidaristic but, in reality, involves an intrinsic lack of solidarity and an evasion of opposition. The conformist, in this sense, shows but a mere semblance of participation because, in reality, his "specifically human ability of shaping creatively his community is dwarfed, annihilated, or perverted."¹⁵¹ Says Wojtyla:

Conformism consists primarily in an attitude of compliance or resignation, in a specific form of passivity that makes the man-person to be but the subject of *what happens* instead of being the *actor* or *agent* responsible for building his own attitudes and his own commitment in the community. Man then fails to accept his share in constructing the community and allows himself to be carried with and by the anonymous majority... The problem of conformism obviously does not lie solely in the submission to the other members

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 286.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 287.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 290.

of the community. It lies deeper and consists in a definite renunciation of seeking fulfillment of oneself in and through acting "together with others."¹⁵²

Non-involvement is the complete withdrawal from the community; it is man's absence from his community. It is a constitutive element of conformism. However, while this latter leaves a semblance of participation, non-involvement openly proclaims one's estrangement from his community. In both cases, man abandons his striving for self-fulfillment in acting and being "together with others."

16. "I-You" and "We" Relations

We now close this excursus on Wojtyla's philosophy by taking up his analysis of those interpersonal relations where participation and self-fulfillment in a community are most profoundly rooted, and where he traces back the roots of the problem of alienation. These are the interpersonal relations expressed in the "I-You" and "We" formulas, to which all other possible intersubjective relations are reducible.¹⁵³ They are basic interpersonal patterns of being and acting in a community that are, according to our author, given as facts that are "lived through," and, therefore, given in man's experience prior to any attempt at methodic reflections.

The "I-You" pattern is always a one-to-one relation (hence "You" here is taken in the singular) and the fundamental fact contained in it is that the "you" is always like "me", someone or some other "I".¹⁵⁴ This relation presupposes both the "I" and the "you"

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 289-290.

¹⁵³ Cf. Ibid., pp. 292-299; "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 291ff; "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977) pp. 61-73. Cf. also, A. Wilder, O.P., "Community of Persons in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla," *Angelicum*, 76ff. Let us note here that the "other" is ultimately reducible to a "you".

¹⁵⁴ The "I-You" relation, Wojtyla maintains, "is potentially directed from one to all people; actually, however, it always connects me with one. If it connects me in fact with many it is a relation, not to 'you' in the singular, but to 'you' in the plural, although it may be easily resolved into a set of relations to 'you' in the singular." Idem, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 293. Cf. also, "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977) pp. 64ff.

as distinct personal subjects, inclusive of everything which constitutes the personal subjectivity of each of them.

In this relation, according to Wojtyla, there are involved a peculiar *reflexivity* and *reciprocity* between the "I" and the "you". When the "I" relates to a "you", it does so with the "you" as another "I", different from his "I". Moreover, this movement which passes from my "I", for instance, to the "you" of the other not only extends my subjectivity beyond me but at the same time reverts back to me. When "I" relate to a "you" (who is another "I" and for whom "I" am a "you"). I experience and am confirmed in, my personal subjectivity as an "I". This peculiar reflexivity of this "I-you" relation contains, says Wojtyla, "the moment of the specific constitution of the human 'I' through the relation to the 'you' — 'in the light of another 'I'.'" ¹⁵⁵ We must note, however, that for Wojtyla, as A. Wilder has aptly pointed out, this "openness to the 'other' with which the 'I' appears is not such that the 'I' simply is unintelligible except in terms of its relation to the 'you'." ¹⁵⁶ What Wojtyla is saying is simply that the "I" is never given in isolation or in opposition to the "other"

that in the normal state of affairs 'you' help me to more amply ascertain and affirm my own 'I'. In its basic shape the relation 'I-you' does not lead me out of my subjectivity; on the contrary, it establishes me in it more firmly. ¹⁵⁷

This "I-you" relation, however, attains its full-blown completeness only when it acquires a reciprocal character, that is, when two people become for each other reciprocally "I" and "you", and this happens when, in this relation, the "I" and the "you" are mutually revealed to each other in the truth of their unique personal subjectivity and everything which determines that subjectivity, and are mutually accepted and confirmed in it as well. In this reciprocal relation the "I" is at the same time the "you" for

¹⁵⁵ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 293.

¹⁵⁶ A. Wilder, O.P., "Community of Persons in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla," Angelicum, p. 80.

¹⁵⁷ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 294.

the other "I", which is my "you". Thus, according to Wojtyla, the "I-you" relation

should reveal man to man in his personal subjectivity and in everything that determines it. Through the relation "I-you" man should reveal himself to man in his deepest structure of self-possession and self-domination. Especially, it should reveal his tendency to self-fulfillment which, culminating in the acts of conscience, witnesses to the transcendence proper to man as a person. In this truth of his personal reality, not only should man be revealed in the interpersonal relation "I-you", but he should be accepted and confirmed. Such an acceptance and confirmation is the moral and ethical expression of the sense of the interpersonal community.¹⁵⁸

The reciprocity involved in the "I-you" relation has profound significance for participation and reveals a new dimension in man's acting and being together with others. The "I-you" relation opens a direct channel from one person to another and allows one to participate in the *very humanness of others*. Says Wojtyla:

The man-person is capable not only of partaking in the life of a community, to be and to act together with others; he is also capable of participation in the *very humanness of others*. It is in this ability to participate in the humanness of every human being that all types of participation in a community are rooted, and it is here that it receives its personal meaning. This is what is ultimately contained in the notion of "neighbour."¹⁵⁹

This peculiar reciprocal interaction between the "I" and the "you" allows a personal "I" to turn to a personal "you" as the

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 296.

¹⁵⁹ Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 294. Participation in the very humanity of the "other" or the "you" means experiencing another human being as another unique and irrepeatable "I". Participation, according to Wojtyla, "means the basic *personalization* of the relation of a human being to a human being. I cannot experience another human being as self, because my own 'I', as such, is not transferable. When I experience him as a person, I am coming the closest to that which constitutes his 'self' as the only and unique reality of a human being." Idem, "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977) p. 66. Cf. also, p. 64.

object of his action, and at the same time this objectivity of the "you" relates back to him in the manner that "the 'I' becomes in a special way an object for itself in the action directed objectively to the 'you'." In this action, both retain the personalistic value of their acts, both are confirmed in their unique personal subjectivity, and both achieve self-fulfillment. This is, for instance, the case with love in which two persons relate to each other in a way that they so intimately and profoundly share in each other's subjective humanity as to form two unique and irreducible "selves," and to constitute thereby a true *communio personarum*.¹⁶⁰ In fact, according to Wojtyla, the Gospel commandment to love, if we were to define it in its basic, anthropological and even pre-ethical sense, means simply the need and the "the call to experience another human being as the 'other I', that is, a call to participate in his humanity, concretized in his person, similarly as my humanity is in my person."¹⁶¹

This ability to share in the very humanness of the other that we have discovered in the "I-you" relation is the "*very core of participation*," and brings to full relief its "*personal depth and universal dimension*." It is "*the condition of the personalistic value of all acting and existing 'together with others'*."¹⁶²

The "I-you" points to the interhuman relation between persons in a community of acting and being. The other pronoun "we" signifies the social dimension of this acting and being with others. According to Wojtyla, "we" indicates directly the plurality of persons who compose a community of acting and being and only indirectly points to the persons themselves, while "I-you" indicates these latter directly.¹⁶³ "We" signifies a plurality of subjects, of many "I's" who, in some fashion, act and exist together in view of a common value to which they all subscribe, namely, the common good.

¹⁶⁰ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 295. This dimension in this reciprocal interaction between the "I" and the "you" reveals that the "I" in this action treats and actually experiences the other as one's own self.

¹⁶¹ Karol Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977) p. 66. Cf. also, AP, pp. 295-299; *Love and Responsibility*, pp. 73-140.

¹⁶² Karol Wojtyla, AP, p. 295.

¹⁶³ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, pp. 296ff.

We have already spoken of the common good as the basis of participation in a community of being and acting, and we have seen how, in seeking the common good, the individual likewise attains his self-fulfillment in this very manner. In acting in view of, or for the realization of the common good, each person in a community experiences his own personal subjectivity and is confirmed in it. In this way, the many "I's" acting together in view of the common good, experience their subjectivities in a new way, in the dimension of the "we". Owing to their relation to the common good, the plurality of "I's" not only experience their personal subjectivity but they realize that they constitute a definite "we" and experience themselves in a new dimension. This dimension of the "we" does not minimize or annihilate the "I-you" direct personal contact. On the contrary, Wojtyla maintains, the "I" and the "you" find their reciprocal reference in a new dimension. In the "we", the "I-you" relation does not cease; on the contrary, this latter draws from and is further enriched by the former.¹⁶⁴

In both the "I-you" and "we" interhuman relations, the person is confirmed in the depths of his humanity and finds his fulfillment.¹⁶⁵ According to Wojtyla, it is precisely on the basis of participation as a property of the person, on the strength of which he retains his personal subjectivity and the personalistic value of his actions when he lives and acts "together with others," that this self-fulfillment of the person in the "I-you" and "we" relations becomes possible. On the basis of participation every personal "I" is able to share with and to relate directly to a "you", or to stand together with others as a "we" — in the full truth and depth of their humanity.

17. *The Problem of Human Alienation*

The disregard for, the neglect and absence of, participation brings about human alienation. Alienation is the anti-thesis or participation. It is, says Wojtyla, "*the weakening or simply the annihilation of the possibility to experience another human being*

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 298.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 304.

as the 'other I'." Alienation is the privation of participation which makes it possible for the personal "I" to develop and fulfill himself in acting and being with others. It is a usurpation or deprivation of the very humanity of man, and this may happen both from the part of the subject himself, or from the part of others and the community.¹⁶⁶

The person may himself abandon his inclination to participate and turn away from his responsibility to fulfill himself. This could, for instance, be the case with "servile conformism" or non-involvement that we have seen above. Thus, the person alienates himself from himself. The person may as well be alienated, deprived of his ability to experience his unique subjectivity, by others or by the community, both in the "I-you" and "we" relations. "I" may, for instance, turn to the "you" purely as an object to be used, and thereby limit and even annihilate all that makes the "you" another "I". Then, the very humanity, the personal subjectivities of the "I" and the "you" are undermined. Both remain cut off from each other; both remain unconfirmed by and in each other. The "neighbour" vanishes and there remains solely, says Wojtyla, "the 'other one,' a 'stranger,' or perhaps even an outright 'enemy'."¹⁶⁷ Or the "we" could vanish into an amorphous crowd because the social community does not allow, refuses to allow the personal "I" to affirm his subjectivity and humanity. The life of the community is conducted beyond him, against him, or even "at his expense," and swallows him into that faceless crowd where he may no longer be able to retrieve himself as subject.¹⁶⁸ In all these, the person is deprived of his ability to participate that allows him to fulfill himself and that reveals his transcendence — in his being and acting "together with others."

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¹⁶⁶ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation," AH, 6 (1977) pp. 68-73.

¹⁶⁷ Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 307. Cf. also, AP, pp. 296-299.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," RM, p. 306.