
KAROL WOJTYŁA'S PERSONALISTIC AND UNIVERSALISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

Arkadiusz Modrzejewski^{1*} and Slavomír Gálik²

¹*University of Gdansk, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, 4 Bażyński Str., PL-80-952 Gdańsk, Poland*

²*University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Mass Media Communication, Nám. J. Herdu 2, 91701 Trnava, Slovak Republic*

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Abstract

Karol Wojtyła, later to become the Pope John Paul II, is known in the world of Philosophy as an anthropologist and ethicist. However, his interests go beyond Anthropology and Ethics. One of the most important fields of his philosophy is the philosophy of culture. He created a coherent and holistic notion of culture based on the premises of Christian personalism which in turn implied his universalism. The key to understand the notion of culture at Karol Wojtyła is personalistic hermeneutics which perceives the appropriate subject and ultimate aim of culture-forming activity in a human being. Culture is a derivative from human rationality and in this sense it is not the negation of nature but it is inscribed in human nature. It can be stated that it is the highest form of nature - rational nature. As every man is the subject of culture, it assumes the form of a truly universal culture.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła, philosophy of culture, personalism, universalism, Polish school of philosophy

1. Introduction

The philosophy of culture constitutes a vast field of philosophical thought of Karol Wojtyła (1920-2005), later to become the pope John Paul II (1978-2005). He was dealing with it from an anthropological point of view, from the point of view of the human and ethical-axiological philosophy. As a philosopher concerned with anthropological and ethical issues he put a special emphasis on culture understood as a result of rational human activity. He perceived culture in a much broader way. He associated it with the intellectual sphere of a person which implies the recognition of any activity expressing a rational nature of man as a cultural phenomenon. Therefore, culture is embedded in the rational nature of man. By nature man is predestined to create pieces of art and s/he is its creator. In this sense culture is a natural phenomenon.

*E-mail: modrzejewski@ug.edu.pl

This is a characteristic attitude of Christian philosophers of environment; the attitude which perceives the actual subject of culture in every man. It has a long tradition which goes back to the pre-Christian times. The term 'culture' (Latin: *cultura*) was used for the first time in ancient world and then it signified 'the cultivation of the land' (Latin: *agricultura*). A Roman thinker - Cicero (104-43 BC) in *Tusculan Disputations* started to use the term 'agrarian' to describe the state of mind – *animi cultura*, which can be achieved by practising philosophy to enrich human mind. Ancient Greeks used the word *παιδεία* (*paideia*) which also meant a broadly understood 'cultivation', from field works to the improvements of intellectual and ethical life.

Generally, in a reflection of the culture in the perspective of the Christian personalism we usually encounter two aspects. The first one is the concept of culture derived from the ideas of creation and creativity. The second aspect explains the idea of culture in the context of etymology of the word 'culture' [1]. The approach which Karol Wojtyła represented is far from stressing the antinomy between culture and nature. This intellectual approach which was pioneered by a German philosopher and lawyer Samuel Pufendorf (1632-1694) differentiates and somehow antagonizes two worlds: the world of culture and nature. This thought was developed and spread by an Enlightenment thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) who assigned a negative character to culture as being in opposition to the primary and perfect state of nature [2, 3]. For Karol Wojtyła and his intellectual circle, culture belongs to the world of nature due to the fact that its source is a natural ability of man's rational thinking and activity. If rationality belongs to human nature, then culture being its derivative is a natural phenomenon. Therefore, one cannot discuss antinomy or antagonism here. Justifying his approach, Wojtyła used anthropological arguments concerning the human nature.

Human actions are treated by the philosopher from Wadowice as an expression of a person's consciousness. A person is aware of his actions as well as his subjectivity [4]. Intellect is a factor constituting a person. Rationality distinguishes a human being from other 'visible' beings – as Karol Wojtyła was saying [5]. In the intellectual sphere of man some 'realized' pieces of art and civilization are born. Both culture and civilization are derivatives from human intellect. Only man – a person – due to his intellect has culture-forming abilities. As Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, one of the most prominent Polish Thomists, ascertains: "The whole culture originates from man as it is his – man's – sign of expression. Contents are absorbed in human cognition and expressed by means of different signs, primarily located in human *psyche* and secondarily moved to an outer mental material, determine culture; and the culture is in its deepest understanding the intellectualization of nature." [6] Karol Wojtyła represented a similar approach claiming that in the cognitive act there is a peculiar encounter of the cognitive subject with the object. The subject 'absorbs' the contents of the object, its essence. The contact of a person with the reality beyond subjectivity leads to the birth of the world of culture (also civilization). Especially, the rational cognition is an expression of culture-forming activity of man. It

distinguishes man from the animal world. Culture is born in him. At the end of 1940's Wojtyła noticed: "The ability to create notions and using them, which is an inborn feature of man connected with his nature, enables him to have an extremely deep control of the variety of beings which surround him, gives him the easiness of using them, constitutes one of the most fundamental foundations of creation and culture" [7].

2. Personalistic concept of culture

In the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła man is always understood as a person. Following the tradition of Boethius he defined a person as "an individual substance of a rational nature" (*rationalis naturae individua substantia*). In this definition the adjectives 'individual' and 'rational' seem to be the most essential. A person is an individual endowed with rationality. Uniqueness is equal with rationality, which is understood as an ability to think in an abstract way as well as indeterministic (not biologically conditioned) activity, therefore they constitute a factor determining man – a person [8]. Having a rational nature causes man to be able to act independently but he is also a creator whose aim is to create [4, p. 119-120]. He is the proper subject of culture. In his speech made for UNESCO the Pope John Paul II claimed that: "We cannot think of culture without human subjectivity and human agency" [9]. The source of culture is a creative activity of a person based on the intellectual effort expressed subjectively which in the opinion of Karol Wojtyła constitutes the deepest layer of personal existence – 'I' the man.

According to Wojtyła culture comes down to a group of factors "in which man expresses himself more than in anything else. He expresses himself for himself and for others. Works of culture which last longer than man give evidence of him. This is the evidence of spiritual life – and a human spirit lives not only because he controls the matter but he lives on the contents which are accessible only to him and only for him they have a meaning. He lives on the truth, good and beauty – and through his inner life he can express it outside and objectivise in his creations. Therefore, man as a creator of culture gives a testimony of humanity." [10]

In the thought of Karol Wojtyła culture consists of external creations of human activity (matter), internal experience and inspirations (spirit). Thus, culture is complementary understood as consisting of two powers: matter and spirit. John Paul II thinks that "works of material culture show some of matter's spirituality, subjected to the energies of human spirit: intelligence and will" [9]. Similarly, "works of spiritual culture show a specific '*materialization*' of the spirit and what is spiritual" [9]. Culture has the same ontic structure as man. It is possible to understand only after assigning it to 'an integral man'. John Paul II claims that both the absolute of matter in the structure of a human being as well as the 'idealistic' absolute of spirit do not reflect the whole reality of man and his culture [11]. Karol Wojtyła perceived both man and culture in holistic

categories as ontically composed of spirit and matter. The 'spirituality' of culture means spiritual provenience and symbolism at the same time.

3. Moral culture

During one of his lectures devoted to the issues of culture, Karol Wojtyła, following Thomas Aquinas, used categories of 'transitiveness' and 'intransitiveness' expressing the dual character of culture-forming activities. 'Transitive' character means expressing man 'outside', so the result or the creation of human activity. It is the objectivisation of what is 'intransitive' in a person, so - internal world, state of spirit, experience, etc., which, according to Wojtyła, eventually comes down to an unselfish relation and this "relation is its intensity, degree and depth and is something totally internal, immanent activity of human spirit which at the same time leaves its trace and bears fruit. From this man matures inside and grows." [11]. The inner world of human experiences, the contact with the transcendental values of truth, good and beauty, is a source of *praxis* which radiates humanity outwards. This radiation causes the man to be the creator of actions and creations by means of which he expresses himself. He is perceived through his action which manifests his state of spirit. These actions and creations also have unselfish character. Wojtyła treats unselfishness as a criterion of culture because "culture as a specific and at the same time essential social way of existence for man in the world, constitutes human praxis on the principle of unselfish admiration for actions and creations which were born in man on the same principle of inner contact with the truth, good and beauty" [11, p. 48]. Therefore, man can be captivated by the truth, good and beauty in an unselfish way. This admiration becomes the source of real culture in Karol Wojtyła's vision. In his opinion utilitarian approach excludes culture-forming character of human actions and creations. The most fundamental aim of human action (*praxis*) and also culture is making human life more human. The aim of the culture is ennobling man, his moral improvement [5, p. 17-18].

This relation of culture with morality causes a new category to emerge – the category of 'moral culture'. Wojtyła understood moral culture as a human approach which is expressed in the acceptance of 'being' over possessing 'to have' into an *intra* and *extrapersonal* dimension. Moral culture is also expressed by the educational process which has the basic meaning for shaping interpersonal relations. These relations should be based on respecting the identity of a human being. Karol Wojtyła's *Love and responsibility* is opposed to treating another person only as a tool necessary to reaching our own aims. Such an approach to a person violates his basic rights, dignity and freedom. The aim of education lies in searching the ways which aim at the real goodness of man [12].

Moral culture was treated by the Pope as a postulative foundation and at the same time universal 'civilization of love' which is the vision of the world based on the universal principles of social ethics. The most essential task of the 'civilization of love' is to restore the primacy of a person over a thing [13].

During his speech in Quito - the capital of Ecuador – he encouraged to build a civilization of “human dignity, immaculate cult of morality, respect for a sincere conscience” and so “civilization of love” [9, p. 271]. The negation of the ‘civilization of love’ also called ‘civilization of life’ by the Pope, is ‘anti-civilization’ connected with the spread of utilitarianism in the field of morality. John Paul II claimed that “utilitarianism is a civilization of the result or use – civilization of *a thing* and not of *people*, civilization where people become the object of use similarly to the use of things” [13, p. 43-44]. These emotional expressions addressed to a broad audience are based on the philosophical views of Karol Wojtyła who was connected with personalism, which is one of the Christian philosophy trends. Utilitarianism is juxtaposed with the notion in which a human being and his dignity are the highest values. Wojtyła claimed that: “recognizing human dignity means placing him higher than anything else, whatever comes from him in the visible world. All the works and creations of man crystallized in civilizations and cultures constitute only the world of means which man uses to reach a proper aim. Man does not live for technology, civilization or culture, but he lives thanks to them all the time preserving his purposefulness.” [14]. Therefore, the Pope emphasized transcendence of a person with regards to all his creations, even those which originate from the rational nature, including culture. Culture, being a necessary space for human existence, is only a means for human personality development. Therefore, treating culture as a tool Karol Wojtyła stated: “In some sense man himself is the highest work of culture – not any of his creations or works but he himself” [10].

4. Culture in the service of the human being

The relation between man and culture in Wojtyła’s philosophy has a two-way character. “Man, who is in a visible world is the *only (ontic) subject of culture*, is also *the only proper object and aim*” [9, p. 54-55]. Culture is not only a human property originating from the reason but is also “existing *for man*” [9, p. 139]. In one of his speeches, Pope John Paul II stated: “The most important object of culture is the development of man as man, man as a person, that is - man as the only and unique individual in human family [...]. Therefore, the object of real culture is to form a person in man, a fully mature spirit able to turn all his possibilities into full development.” [9, p. 140] Culture was treated by Karol Wojtyła as this reality by which “man becomes more human: more *is*” [9, p. 53]. The process of maturing the human personality which has the basic cultural meaning is education. The Pope believed that: “the first and the most fundamental role of culture in general is *education*. Due to education man should become more and more human - it is all about *being* and not *having* – so that he is able to *be* not only with others but also *for others* by means of all he *has* and *possesses*. Education plays a crucial role in forming the interpersonal and social relations.” [9, p. 58] Certainly, this premise is the foundation for the conclusion made by Karol Wojtyła that man is the greatest and the most important work of culture by which his personality adapted to free and rational life is created [10].

The individual culture of a person is formed in the collective culture of a society which is a binder connecting individuals and generations. John Paul II thinks that “the society receives it, transforms it in a creative way and passes it down in the process of the succession of generations” [9, p. 405]. The culture of societies is a niche in which individuals exist and grow. The Pope claimed that “culture is the proper way of *existence* and *life* of man. Man always lives according to some culture which in turn creates an appropriate relation between people constituting the interpersonal and social character of human existence. Therefore, the *multiplicity of cultures* in which man exists originates from *culture unity* as a proper way of human existence. Man develops in this multiplicity not losing essential contact with culture unity as a fundamental and important dimension of living and existence” [9, p. 54]. John Paul II does not see the possibility of a culture existing outside of the society. Culture, being an attribute of a person, a creation of human rationality, is at the same time the necessity to exist in society. By participation at different levels of social life, such as family, local community, professional group, nation, etc., man adapts to create works of culture. Society allows to draw a potential rationality from a person which is a factor constituting culture. “Community – as Wojtyła claims – the human ‘we’ in different dimensions means such a shape of human multiplicity in which a person as a subject is maximally realised” [4, p. 407].

5. Cultural universalism

Karol Wojtyła shaped the principle *communio personarum* (community of persons), which maintains the realisation of universal community including all mankind. “The human *I* in these different dimensions [family, society, nation – A.M., S.G.] carries the readiness not only to think about oneself in the category *we* but to realise what is important for *we* – so a social community, and also on the grounds of this community, according with its human nature readiness to realise the subjectivity of many, into an universal dimension – the subjectivity of all.” [4, p. 408] The creation of culture which occurs in a community and by a community and the recognition of communities’ gradation, ultimately leading to mankind as an ultimate community, allow to conclude that culture in Wojtyła’s philosophy has the traits of universal culture. Adam Rodziński, a philosopher and expert on Pope’s thinking considers that “Karol Wojtyła’s communionism carries [...] all features characteristic of universalism. This universalism is not cosmopolitan, it is not the universalism of cultural or political hegemony; it is also not a tolerance of all kinds of expressions – any individual or collective tastes, because it is not about common agreement on the variety of personality orientations and their equivalents in the culture of everyday life but about the characteristic affirmation of a person by a person, about the general attitude free from this deepest alienation which is hidden in the feeling of people strangeness towards people – turning automatically into hostility where serious divergence of interests seems to justify it.” [15]

The foundation of Wojtyła's cultural universalism is the affirmation of a limited relation between an individual and the whole mankind which is expressed in the creation of universal community and in consequence universal culture. Universal culture manifests itself in relations between individuals and nations based on the respect for the "subjectivity of many" [4, p. 408]. Universalism understood in such a way is far from cultural uniformity. The basic value of universal culture, growing from the affirmation of the existence of universal community, is respect for dissimilarity, which constitutes human and social subjectivity. The basic subject of universal culture is man participating in universal community and by this participation predestined to create universal works and acts.

Besides the ontological premises which Karol Wojtyła mentioned while forming the notion of universal culture, the axiological premises are also significant. The Pope was also convinced that "there are values which are common to all cultures because they are rooted in the nature of the person. These values express humanity's most authentic and distinctive features. Leaving aside ideological prejudices and selfish interests, it is necessary to foster people's awareness of these shared values, in order to nurture that intrinsically universal cultural 'soil' which makes a fruitful and constructive dialogue." [John Paul II, *Dialogue Between Cultures For a Civilization of Love and Peace*, online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20001208_xxiv-world-day-for-peace_en.html, 2012-02-08, no. 16] The Pope claimed that culture, despite its location in specific geographical space or even more in social spaces (they do not always overlap), should always co-exist with universal values. "Culture without universal values – the Pope believed – is not a real culture." [9, p. 412] Truth, good and beauty need to be recognized as fundamental universal values by which man becomes the creator of the real culture. With the attitude towards these universal values, with their contemplation and 'experiencing' them or even living them, a human being becomes a real subject for culture. They become an impulse, an inspiration for human *praxis* which all acts and works included in the culture they come from [11].

Finally it can be concluded that in the anthropological-ethical notion of Karol Wojtyła the whole human heritage which originates directly from individuals and particular societies contributes to universal culture. This heritage belongs to the legacy of all mankind as an universal community. Accepting the universalist notion of culture has been preceded by the affirmation of 'human spirit universalism', that is the universality of personal existence and the source of any culture-forming activity. In the encyclical *Fides et ratio* (no. 72) the Pope stated that the basic aspiration for "human body universalism" "can be found in the most complex cultures in unchanged form".

Here we can consider the relation between what is determined as global culture as a result of globalization processes and real universal culture. Global culture, despite the fact that it is created in a somewhat local sense, is popularized due to global mass media. Even Peter Barber, an American

sociologist, believes that the contemporary cultural globalization is nothing more than just the popularization of American particularism dubbed into various languages at a global scale [16]. Anyway, the announcements and contents propagated in electronic media do not know any limits and physical boundaries [17]. This fact leads to the establishment of a global civilization of information which is a *global village*. Within its framework there is also a global media society – recipients, and at the level of social media, producers of media messages. However, to what extent is this global culture a universal culture? Universal culture represents a kind of philosophical approach, it is embedded in universalist tradition, in which universal and basic values such as truth, goodness and beauty are declared. Global culture occurs in a spontaneous manner and may be completely separated from the universalist axiological system [18]. To some extent it is anti-reflexive. Hollywood film productions or various programs such as *reality shows* are its symbol. They are accompanied by the atrophy of traditional values such as truth, loyalty, responsibility. Instead of axiology, there is consumption which reduces the subjectivity of people, limiting them to the role of consumers of images and texts [19]. Nevertheless, even through this processes of realization, education - by media education and improvement of media skills - may obtain the formula of universality [20].

The basic aim of intellectual inquiries of Wojtyła was to investigate human nature. Man has become a main research issue; he concentrated his intellectual effort on man. He is recognized as one of the most prominent Polish representatives of personalistic philosophy, the philosophy which is an anthropological interpretation of the phenomenon of man as a person. The person is the basic category of personalistic hermeneutics. It is even claimed that the primary and elementary source of Wojtyła's philosophy is simply the human experience [21]. This experience is an universal experience. That is why his philosophical notion is sometimes described as personalistic universalism. Its essence is to perceive the whole reality, including also interpersonal relations, from the perspective of a man – of a person. Subjectivity is a quality of every human being and as such, it constitutes the criterion for universality [22].

Wojtyła believed that an universal relation is built between people and this relation can be called a communion or community. It occurs due to the transcendence of a person in relation with the objective world, also his own creations and acts, including own thoughts and cognitive states [23]. When a person starts a relation with another person, he touches upon the deepest dimensions of personal life, crossing the whole world of material creations, and even the world of meanings, understandings, interpretations, etc. He goes beyond his own physicality in order to experience the personality's richness of another person as "pure spirituality" [24]. A person as transcendent in relation to reality and also to his own acts and creations in communion with other person crosses any cultural contexts. In the spiritual relation he 'rises' beyond particular conditionings and limits, potentially becoming the subject of the universal community of people. The basic characteristic of a person is the ability of understanding. It also occurs in interpersonal relations. Ultimately it is to go

towards personal understanding, which is also the understanding of another person. "Understanding – according to personalists – is an act of particular realization of a person facing the mystery of existence in its being, form, content and toward-personal relation." [24, p. 177]

It contains this 'personal life', the internal dimension of an individual, and a social one which concerns the civilization; it contains both private and public spheres [25]. A French personalist - Jacques Maritain - thought that culture belongs to human nature in the same way as human reason because it is its 'fruit and fulfilment'. Therefore, he defined it as "rational development of man in the full sense of the word" [26]. Culture understood in such a way is first of all 'humanising man' which is connected with the realisation of moral and ethical principles and duties. It leads to "ennobling intellectual and moral personality in oneself and in others" [15, p. 208]. Personalists believe that personal experience of every man, which results from the common sense vision, from intuitional communion with reality, leads to the recognition that self-realization of a person is necessarily connected with the commonly accepted values - truth, good and beauty - and in a theological sense also with sacredness. These values constitute the most essential foundation of culture [3, p. 251].

The universality of culture is also connected with its scope. As it covers all creations of human intellect, from abstract ideas and values to materialised forms of human thoughts - works of art, literature, architecture, tools, etc. - but also religion, customs, traditions, habits laws, etc., it has universal character. Human rationality determines all thoughts, acts and works composing the whole of culture. In this context it serves as a factor making culture more universal. Put briefly, culture is universal because it originates from the human intellect, and therefore everything which is its creation is included in the scope of the notion of 'culture' [3, p. 15].

Despite the acceptance of cultural and civilisational pluralism, which is the affirmation of a natural status quo, that is the existence of numerous and varied human communities, personalism emerging from the rational life of man makes the whole culture space more universal. Although man exists situated within a particular culture, he participates in universal culture through his personal existence due to the fact that the unity of culture is expressed as "a fundamental dimension of human existence" [27], i.e. it concerns absolutely every human being. In this sense culture is a common attribute of man. Everybody with no exception is its participant and creator, experiencing his personal existence.

Personalistic universalism comes from an individual in which man's universe of is gathered, i.e. his rationality, spiritual world, culture-forming abilities (civilization-forming too) or *tout court* 'being a person'. Firstly being a creator of individual or personal culture (*cultura individualis*) which is the expression of the inside, soul, he participates in building collective cultures (*cultura collectiva*). However, he is *animal sociale* and as such he cooperates with other people. Collective culture, the culture of particular communities may assume different forms, from domestic to regional, national or continental. By

transcendence man is also predestined to build universal culture, common to all mankind (*cultura humana, cultura universalis*). It is the humanisation of the world. As Czesław Bartnik notices “in the heart of the world there is one huge slowly developing Cultural Tree which is analogous to the Tree of Life. Although boughs and branches wither away, mankind gives birth to one Universal Culture. Then we can talk about a particular ‘genealogy of cultures’. And although opposite phenomena occur, such as ‘acculturation’ or ‘deculturation’, i.e. departure from a particular culture, or ‘inculturation’, i.e. transformation of one culture into another, then from universal perspective there are certain ‘interactive trends’ occurring, which do not disappear; they continue, accumulate and create the emanation of mankind, the rainbow of life of all mankind.” [28]. From this perspective, culture has a communal dimension. In personalistic philosophy a person is presented in a relational way, in relation with other people. He is not ‘a lonely island’ or an atomised individual but a participant in the communal existence. Therefore, culture is a way of existence not only of an individual but also it is the principle of communal life and even for some personalists “substantial unity of all mankind in the whole dimension of time and space” [...] *the wealth of culture understood as an objective spirit, enters particular human individuals as a refreshing and nourishing spirit, in order to incorporate them into the general historic trend as personalities brought up by historic tradition*. There is one human life, there is a process of human development, there is also a culture which is not the wholeness of the human spirit creations (objective spirit), but it is *alive, the continuous process and trend of life*, as it is a way of life for man as *an individual person and collective person*” [29]. It is worth mentioning that Karol Wojtyła was far from using the category of ‘a collective person’. He treated a community as a substantial being, that is self-contained but whose existence depends on the existence of substantial individuals. He claimed that neither a human community nor a social group or a society or a commonwealth of nations or a nation “has a substantial existence but it has disposition [...], it is based on a system of relations between people” [4, p. 457]. To put in brief, he treated a person as *individua substantia*. Nevertheless, the statement concerning people participating in the creation of culture generally corresponds with the approach of Karol Wojtyła. He believed that the community of people is created in the interpersonal relations. This community can be formed on different levels - family, social groups, nations and universal community level. The interpersonal relation is expressed by the pronoun ‘we’. Wojtyła was convinced that “all people who feel they belong to mankind as if to a great human family” can use it [4, p. 458-459]. And it is not about quantitative proportions but about authentic ‘unity’ expressed by means of a community of actions. The authenticity of this community lies in the fact that there is an emphasis put on particular man, ‘who exists and acts together with others’ at the same time becoming a participant of community of persons. He maintains his substantial autonomy; he does not blend into a ‘collective person’, but he still constitutes a

self-contained and self-determining being. The participation assumes the affirmation of personal autonomy.

6. Conclusions

Regardless of the differences occurring in the system of personalistic philosophy, a person is treated as key in order to understand the notion of culture. Personalists, including Karol Wojtyła, consider reality from the perspective of a person. Personality, or to be more precise 'being a person', is a common phenomenon in people's world. Every man is a person and by his intellectual predispositions, which constitute the essence of 'being a person' – *rationalis naturae*, is predestined to create and participate at the creation of culture. Since Wojtyła, similarly to other personalists, starts from a person being a universal phenomenon, we can discuss not only universal personalism but also personalistic universalism. And universalism presented in such a manner implies both the existence of common community of people as well as the affirmation of autonomy which compose the world from every person. A person is not only 'a rational nature' but also 'an individual substance', and therefore a separate being from the ontological point of view. It seems that personalistic hermeneutics enables to understand Wojtyła's universalism which is different from other notions of universalism in many respects. To put it briefly, he assumes the transformation in man of the personal life commonness into the unity of all mankind.

In personalism, 'being a person' determines the existence of universal community of history, culture and civilization. It seems that it constitutes an idealistic notion which puts aside diagnosing current interpersonal relations, including international relations, which are the foundation of civilisational order. This is only an illusion because personalists, including Karol Wojtyła, interpret the social reality from ontological or anthropological premises. They do not carry out the analyses on the ground of empirical sciences, though they often refer to them, but they move it to the level of speculative philosophical reflection which leads to being apart from a particular reality and as a result moving to a higher, if not the highest, level of generalization. Then it is noticeable that an universal community of people occurs due to self-realization of the individuals participating in the creation of culture and civilization. Similarly to man, who continually improves his personality, 'being a person', culture and civilization develop continually because they are the emanation of man's personal life. Since life permanently develops in order to reach a more perfect form of personal existence, whose ultimate standard is the Absolute, culture and civilization cross to a greater extent the particular imperfections in order to reach the level of the highest form of universality. Therefore, it is a processual approach which assumes a constant and linear progress. Due to the fact that it also assumes moral and ethical postulates it notices the imperfection of human nature. It sets a goal which a universal community and its members should strive for. Personalism can be regarded as an idealistic trend in the Philosophy of history and the

Philosophy of culture and civilization only when this goal is recognized *a priori* as idealistic. Otherwise, personalistic universalism must be regarded as a realistic approach.

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