

SUMMARY

The purpose of the dissertation was to handle the subject of the essence of man as it is seen in the light of philosophical research by Karol Wojtyła – St. John Paul II; simultaneously, an attempt was made to show that his conception of the essence of man lies at the basis of all his considerations on the human person and it is crucial for understanding properly his personalistic philosophical anthropology as well as his ethics based on the anthropology.

Wojtyła builds his theory of the essence of man on the ground of the category of “substance” discovered by Aristotle and worked out anew by St. Thomas Aquinas and Thomists. It means an existential conception of essence as really and concretely existing; such a conception of essence is expressed by the notion “substance-essence”, where the first word (“substance”) refers to a concrete autonomous existence of a given substantial being (*existentia per se*) and the second word (essence) refers to the really existing content of this being which decides *what* this being is: whether it is a man, a cat, a dog etc. A “being-substance-essence” is an autonomous subject unlike its properties, called traditionally in Thomism “accidents” – they do not exist by themselves, but they are subjected in a substantial being i.e. their existence is totally dependent and subordinated to the subject-substance they belong to; a human consciousness, for example, is not an autonomous being-subject, but it is a property-accident subjected in a concretely existing substantial human being (John, Eve etc.). While noting that, Wojtyła opposes the absolutization of consciousness, which makes out of consciousness “the essence” of man; such a procedure (of the absolutization of consciousness) is characteristic of the modern philosophy called by him “the philosophy of consciousness”. In consequence, the philosophy of consciousness, concentrating on consciousness and its, arbitrarily chosen content (ideas, concepts etc.) does not reach the essence of beings; only the thomistic philosophy of being (metaphysics) does this, mainly through the category of “substance-essence”. The substance-essence of the investigated being is sought by the assistance of the metaphysical method which consists in looking for the commensurable cause-reason for the essential properties-accidents of the being manifested in the acts specific for this being and given in the integral (mental-sensual) experience. This cause-reason (substantial essence) is the only adequate explanation (irreplacable by any other one) of those properties-accidents of the analyzed being. The metaphysical method must be applied, since substance-essence itself is not cognitively available in the immediate experience; we merely generally grasp this essence through the name of a being (man, cat etc). Only properties-accidents are experientially given, so the metaphysical method should be supplemented – and it is supplemented by Wojtyła, especially in *Person and Act* – by the “phenomenological” method – that is by the method of integral experiential inspection of the essential properties (accidents) of the human being “phenomenologically” perceivable in his actions.

In the second part of our work, following Wojtyła, we discover – through the metaphysical method – the spiritual substance-essence of man. Essentially human properties-accidents of man – that is his mental faculties – exceed by far everything that is sensual and material. The very basic “units” of mental cognition – i.e. concepts – include all things named

by a concept (the concept “town”, for example, refers to all towns existing in the world); unlike mental cognition, the sensual cognition grasps only the things strictly limited to the concrete space and time. There are also more general concepts, such as “goodness”, “truth”, and concepts concerning purely immaterial beings (“spirit”, “God”). And there are much more advanced operations of mental cognition going beyond matter, such as reasoning and concluding on the basis of mental categories like causality, comparison etc. The second human mental faculty – the will - founds her conscious free choices on mental cognition and its result: the human consciousness. So the human mental faculties, highly encompassing the material and the sensual, can only be adequately explained by the immaterial – i.e. spiritual – substance as their cause and reason. Going further with Wojtyła, we see that this dynamic spiritual substance constitutes each man as a person-substance of reasonable nature for whom it is so characteristic to live inner spiritual life evolving around transcendentals such as being, truth, goodness and beauty. Also, this spiritual substance (i.e. the substantial spiritual soul) – the principle of person’s life, forming and enlivening his body – decides about the exceptional (in this world) shape of the life of spiritual-carnal person; this is a shape of the ontic vertical transcendence of person and his life over all his properties-accidents – even the most essential ones i.e. mental cognition, consciousness and will. Here it becomes clear that the thomistic substantialist personalism, adopted and developed by Wojtyła, is entirely different from modern non-substantialist personalisms, in which person is just a sum of conscious acts; those personalisms, treating the person without consciousness as purely material organism, are not able to grasp the ontic transcendence of person and her life over all her properties-accidents, even the essentially human mental cognition and will. Needless to say that the human substantial spiritual soul, being the principle of life, is as well the principle of all human dynamisms, also of the essentially personal – conscious and free – action. In such action all faculties-potentialities of the human soul are actualized: both spiritual cognitive-volitional faculties and, compatible with the human substantial spirituality, bodily-sensual-emotional faculties. All those faculties (potentialities) of the spiritual substance-essence (in itself incomplete, as St. Thomas said) are embraced by the category of “person-(complete)substance of the reasonable nature”, so “person” is an integral category referring both to the spiritual substance itself and to the spiritual substance as the form of the human body.

In the third chapter of our analysis we undertook a detailed characteristics of the properties of spiritual-carnal human person – that is of the “holistically” embraced essence of man. There were analyzed such cognitive-volitional dynamisms as: intentional objectivizing cognition and self-cognition, unintentional consciousness reflecting and subjectifying the results of cognition in the conscious lived experience, the ontic structures of self-owning and self-ruling which are the basis of the realization of human freedom in self-dependence and the acts of self-governance. We also looked into the dynamisms of the body (reactivity, vitality, movement) and the psyche – that is the sphere of human emotivity strongly connected with sensuality but liable to be raised to the level of spirit. All those dynamisms enter the structure of self-governance, and ultimately – the human act. The “mechanism”, which makes the structure of self-governance one ordered whole, is transcendence and integration of person in his act. Spiritual dynamisms (cognition, consciousness and will), being transcendent in

relation to the psychosomatic dynamisms, integrate the latter ones in the way proper to an action first consciously intended and then performed by a person. Through a detailed analysis of the spiritual dynamisms of the structure of self-governance and their role in the transcendence and integration of person in his action, the spiritual substance-essence of man becomes “empiricised” and “confirmed” as the ontic principle of person’s transcendence and integration. At the same time the spiritual substance-essence of man becomes demonstrated as the form of the human body and, on the other hand, it is shown how closely the body and the psyche belong to the spiritual substance-essence of man-person. In the end the structure of self-governance appears to be the essence of the “holistically” taken substantial essence of man – that is the essence of the human person-substance of the reasonable nature.

The two successive parts of the dissertation are devoted to the moral character of the substantial spiritual essence of man and to love which consists in performing morally good actions to others and to oneself. Wojtyła’s observation is quoted here that the values proper to man - because of his spiritual essence (soul) – are the spiritual-moral values called in the classical ethics “virtues” and read by an individual within his own spiritual substantial soul. Those spiritual values differ radically from the sensual-material values – the spiritual ones (virtues) are the more multiplied within oneself the more they are shared with others while the material ones are exhaustible: the more people there are to divide the material values among the less each person has, which leads to competition and struggle when, against our spiritual essence, we assign the first position to the material-sensual values in our life and acting. So only ascribing the primary position to spiritual-moral values in one’s life opens the door to true love. The human love is the highest spiritual-moral value embracing all the moral-spiritual values and as such it is the fullest realization both of the person’s substantial spiritual soul (essence) itself and his spiritual soul in its substantial unity with the body. The deepest meaning of the human love could be discovered when comparing the laws governing spirit to the laws governing matter: in the realm of matter giving equals losing while in the realm of spirit the more we lose (give) ourselves the more we gain. This allowed us to see that the human love ultimately means, as Wojtyła says, the communion of persons created by disinterested giving oneself in acting to another person and disinterested receiving as a gift the life and actions of another person.