

Roman Darowski

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

OUTLINE OF FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS



The Ignatianum Jesuit University in Cracow
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Translated from the Polish by
Łukasz Darowski SDS

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FOREWORD

Our times are characterized by the heightened awareness that every person has a right to be a creator of one's own destiny in the present as well as in the distant future. Although this truth is not universally realized yet, the resignation of implementing this truth would be tantamount to a betrayal of a human being, his values and dignity, which belong to him as a human person.

At the same time there exists a large uncertainty and divergence of views on *who is a human being*. Therefore there is an urgent need of reflection about man in order to accurately get to know him in all of his dimensions and aspects. There is a need of looking for the truth about man. In this respect almost all agree: a human being should be at the center of our interest.

The current book joins this reflection about man. It is written to serve people who look for the truth about a human being.

A presentation of views about the philosophy of man can be done in various ways. The most common one is the descriptive method: introducing in turn different fields about human existence and drawing conclusions, usually at the end, of the more general and philosophical nature. Our deliberations will have a more traditional structure. The central part of this book – after the introduction – is entitled *Main Problems in Philosophical Anthropology* and uses the method of thesis. It consists of formulating

basic issues of philosophy of man in the form of propositions, which are later developed in more or less detail. The detailed study of the thesis usually contains the following elements: the current state of the issue, the explanation of philosophical terms, views or opinions on the given subject as well as the argumentation (proofs) which prove individual parts (propositions) included in the previously formulated thesis. The *proofs* here are understood broadly; sometimes they can only be arguments for a given proposition.

Such an approach to the presentation of the problems in the book enables them – in my opinion – to be grasped with greater clarity and precision. It also makes the personal views and solutions of the author more obvious.

The current book is a somewhat changed and revised English translation of the 4th edition of the book *Filozofia człowieka* in the Polish language. The last section *Human being – an Absolute?* was expanded, while the chapter *History of Philosophical Anthropology* and the section *Anthology of texts* were omitted. The book enjoys a considerable success, which is evident in its use by readers, especially students in many institutes of higher education as a textbook and in the need for new editions.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Fr. Łukasz Darowski, a Salvatorian priest, who translated the book into English in his free time. I would also like to thank my niece Katarzyna Skórka and Ms. Małgorzata Hołda for their valuable insights and suggestions concerning the translation.

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INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. SPECIFIC CHARACTER OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Philosophy, as a general science about the whole of reality, exceeds and transcends our everyday experience in much greater degree than other sciences. For this reason anyone dealing with philosophical problems must be prepared to face more difficulties than in other sciences, and those difficulties are unique when compared to problems found anywhere else. Above all the difficulties are the result of an *abstract* and highly *theoretical* nature of the subject. Hence, a large number of diverse opinions and systems have spawned and developed throughout the ages; these developments are continuing to appear and flourish in our time.

For the simple reason of its exceptional character, philosophy is also exposed to more significant dangers of error and disconnection from truth and reality than other scientific disciplines. One must take this into account when pursuing a study of philosophy and employ various ways of managing it, and in particular use the appropriate method in doing so. All of what is said about philosophy in general is also applicable to philosophical anthropology.

That, which a person knows, or in other words the person's knowledge, in most cases is different from the person

itself – the subject with the knowledge. In the case of philosophical anthropology things are different. Philosophical anthropology deals directly with *me*, with ourselves. It is a knowledge or science about us. We want to get closer to the truth about ourselves. A human person then, is an object, and at the same time a subject of philosophical anthropology.

We want to discover who is a human being, and we want to know its essence and conditions using the philosophical way of acquiring knowledge. Therefore we want to know a human being from a reliable and definite point of view.

The specific character of philosophical anthropology has its roots also in the fact, that a human being occupies a unique position, a unique place in the world (cosmos), mainly for the following reasons:

- a human is a being somewhere between the spiritual and material world; a human being is both matter and spirit;
- in a human being there coexists (coincides) an extraordinary, special unity of matter and spirit, that preserves the separateness of both.

Hence, there exists a particular interest in human beings both in the past and present, as well as numerous efforts to understand the *mystery* of man.

* * *

In our reflections on the topic of human being we concentrate more than other contemporary authors on the fairly precise understanding of **philosophical anthropology**. We leave a **history of philosophical anthropology** at a somewhat further distance; not to contest in the least

its role and importance. We also intentionally avoid disputes and polemics, but rather concentrate on the positive presentation of various issues.

This approach can be justified by an opinion of certain thinkers reflecting on the state of today's philosophy. According to them early philosophers were more thinkers than writers and therefore they were closer to reality. This changed with the age of printing press and Internet. Now reading and writing is more prevalent than thinking. We do not have philosophers any more, but commentators. After the age of thinkers preoccupied with philosophy came the age of professors of philosophy preoccupied with philosophers.

2. DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Before approaching the problem of philosophical anthropology, we acknowledge that all normally developed and healthy persons already have some kind of an idea about man in general, including themselves, the world they inhabit, and have some kind of philosophy that dictates the direction of their lives. That philosophy was formed through many years on the basis of life experiences, literature, one's own reflections, discussions with others, family background and education.

For many people a significant role in developing "one's own philosophical anthropology" plays **the media of mass communication**: radio, television, press and the Internet. Contemporary *mass media* show various behavioral tendencies and world views, and often fight amongst themselves for influence on the listeners,

viewers, readers, and Internet users; they fight for *domination over their souls*. Many users of mass media do not take that fact into account or they give it little attention.

Our current knowledge about a human being is in constant need of development, deeper understanding, refining, and organizing. This is precisely the main task of our anthropological reflection. One of the important elements of this process is developing a definition for philosophical anthropology.

The term “definition” comes from Latin *de* = of; and *finis* = end, border; and denotes description. Definition may be **nominal** (lat. *nomen* = name) or in other words verbal, when it gives explanation (often etymological) of the defined term. In our case it will be a **philosophical** science about a human being: φίλος – *filos* = friend; φιλία – *filia* = friendship, love; σοφία – *sofia* = wisdom; φιλοσοφία – *philosophia* = love of wisdom, friendship with wisdom.

Real definition – is an unambiguous, short description (characterization) of a certain being. In our case it is a description of the philosophical anthropology. It depends on the concept and definition of philosophy in general. In our studies we understand philosophy as follows:

Philosophy is a rational science about the whole of existing reality in light of its ultimate causes (fundamental conditions).

Hence, the philosophy of man (philosophical anthropology) is a rational science **about a human being** in light of his ultimate causes, or fundamental conditions¹.

¹ In connection with “rational science” in the definition of philosophy, one may ask the question: can science be “not rational”?

2. Definition of philosophical anthropology

The term *ultimate cause*, mentioned in the above definitions, is relevant to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, according to which the existence of all material beings can be explained with the help of four elementary factors called causes. These causes are named: material (that from which a thing is constituted), formal (shape, form), efficient (initiator of change) and final (what something is for).

Philosophy may also be defined as

an unbiased, critical and systematic process of acquiring knowledge of the whole reality in its essential conditions with the help of natural cognitive human power.

It is a fact, that amongst many philosophers and people dealing with philosophy an opinion prevails, which sees philosophy's objective not in **changing the world**, but only in selflessly acquiring knowledge about the world. Yet the use of this knowledge, understanding and commitment to the good in order to make the world better and more humane, appears as a reasonable request to make. Not using philosophy for the **changing of the world** would be a waste of a good opportunity. The objective of studying philosophy then, is not only gaining an ability for critical thinking, but most of all for the formation of **creative thinking**, which will make the lives of people better².

It cannot be, if we understand it to mean irrational. However, science can be not rational in the following sense: using other than a rational argumentation. An example of such a science is theology, which draws its arguments from the authority of Revelation and Magisterium of the Church.

- 2 It is beneficial to mention here the words of the Pope John Paul II: "Men and women have at their disposal an array of

The philosophy of a human being is an essential part of the broader philosophy of being. It is the particular *metaphysics* pertaining to the very specific form of being, which comprises the whole category of being called man. It comes up with typical philosophical problems and tries to answer, among many others, the following philosophical questions:

What is the nature and essence of man and his mode of existence?

What place, and position does a man take among other existing beings?

What is the reason for a man to take such a position in the world – what creates it, what constitutes it and what is its final condition going to be?

Philosophical anthropology assumes the philosophy of being (ontology) and relies on it. Besides, it also assumes in some way the empirical knowledge about a specific category of being – a human. Naturally, the philosophy of being, and as a consequence the philosophy of a human being, also assumes the philosophy of cognition, or theory of cognition.

Various conceptions of philosophy in general, and specifically, the philosophy of the human being emerged in the past and continue in the present.

resources for generating greater knowledge of truth so that their lives may be ever more human. Among these is philosophy, which is directly concerned with asking the question of life's meaning and sketching an answer to it. Philosophy emerges, then, as one of the noblest of human tasks", Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, 1998, no 3.

* * *

A philosopher's reflection should not be based only on his or her own impressions and feelings. It should be founded on solid reasons – objective and intersubjective, or in other words the possibility of verification by others. In accomplishing this task a philosopher is aided by philosophical tradition: thinkers and philosophers, both past and present. A recourse to their accomplishments will help to avoid many errors and mistakes already made known. In this broad sense philosophy is a *collective work* of many schools and trends, developed by various people of the past and present.

What helps to foster this process of acquiring knowledge? It is the clear, exact and unambiguously defined *terminology*. This is the reason why *definition* and *distinction*, or in other words analysis of terms, plays an important role in this process.

One should always keep in mind, however, that the major goal of philosophical studies and philosophizing in general is not learning what other philosophers past and present thought of a given subject. The main goal is **to acquire knowledge** about reality, and specifically **the whole of reality** in light of its basic conditions – causes, principles, essence, purposes, etc. Therefore, the major goal of studying philosophy is the search for and the finding of answers to questions like **“How things really are?”** and **“What is the truth?”**. Discovering the truth, however, is not easy and usually takes time. The philosopher then should honestly undertake continuous effort in order to approach the truth³.

3 Cf. “«All human beings desire to know» (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, 1) and truth is the proper object of this desire. Everyday

Despite the fact that in the process of philosophizing man's thinking plays a significant role, one should not tend to avoid experience as such. Common sense is also very important.

Experience, as mentioned above, may be either internal or external. **Internal experience** is a process of acquiring knowledge directly about one's own "self" and one's own activities – cognitive, volitive, and emotional. **External experience**, on the other hand, is a process of acquiring knowledge about objects existing "on the outside", beyond the subject, which is acquiring knowledge in and about the surrounding world.

3. EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS

At the root of philosophical anthropology are the so called life questions – *existential* questions, which demand an answer.

A human is a being inclined to spontaneously ask questions and search for answers. He asks others and also himself on a large variety of problems which confront

life shows how concerned each of us is to discover for ourselves, beyond mere opinions, how things really are. Within visible creation, man is the only creature who is not only capable of knowing, but who knows that he knows, and is therefore interested in the real truth of what he perceives. People cannot be genuinely indifferent to the question of whether what they know is true or not. If they discover that it is false, they reject it; but if they can establish its truth, they feel themselves rewarded. [...] It is rightly claimed that persons have reached adulthood when they can distinguish independently between truth and falsehood, making up their own minds about the objective reality of things.", John Paul II, Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, 1998, no 25.

him. He knows about things from his own reflection, from internal and external experience, and on the basis of contacts with others, who also ask various questions. The history of human thought, especially the history of philosophy, is by and large a history of questions and corresponding answers. A question is a beginning of a search and is the manifestation of superiority of man over other beings.

In the various stages of life of individuals and societies – especially in periods of war, catastrophe and disaster – questions intensify and become urgent. In such situations they often take the following form: Where does evil come from? Why does suffering exist? What is the meaning of suffering?

A raised question proves the existence of human consciousness, bears witness to the deficiency of knowledge (in other words, shows some *ignorance*), and it is a sign of some anxiety, which springs up within a person searching for answers; it proves that humans are capable of reflection.

A human, as a *questioning being*, shows his inquisitiveness most fully by asking the *existential questions*. They are questions regarding human existence and structure. Such questions are common to humankind; they arise in all thinking people. It is possible to simplify them into three main queries:

Who am I? – from the philosophical point of view it is a question asking for the essence of man and his structure of being.

Where am I from? – asks for the origins and for the efficient cause of man.

Where am I going? – asks for the meaning and final purpose of human life and also about what awaits him after this life.

Questions are sometimes general and sometimes specific, but one does not find answers to all of them.

Questions in philosophy have a different character than those in other disciplines, such as particular sciences. In philosophy, they concern fundamentals – general and ultimate; in other disciplines, they concern specifics – material, concrete, which are often measurable things existing in space-time.

Existential questions are common and occur often, which suggests that they have their roots in the nature of mankind – they flow out from human nature.

Such questions prove the existence of a spiritual element (the soul) in a human being, because they relate to things unconnected to matter, immaterial, and spiritual.

A **question** represents the natural aspiration of a man. It assumes that it is possible to find an answer, and that such an answer should have a meaning and a purpose. Thus it requires the existence of something final, which satisfies this specific “curiosity” and answers all questions: the Absolute Being or God.

While searching for answers to important questions, one cannot avoid a recourse to the tradition of thinkers and philosophers who have already dealt with similar problems, and have solved at least some of them. Knowledge of these topics is contained in the history of philosophy. Although many of the answers we find may not satisfy

us completely, or may only partially satisfy us, it is good to familiarize ourselves with them, because they can be helpful in our *personal reflection*.

Existential questions and the search for answers brings us closer to the understanding of a human being. Thus philosophical anthropology can be described as an effort to answer existential questions.

4. PHILOSOPHY OF MAN, PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND OTHER SCIENCES ABOUT MAN

The term “anthropology” has its root in the Greek language (ἄνθρωπος – *anthropos* = man, human; λόγος – *logos* = science). It corresponds to various fields of studies, which have a human being as its object. Not only does it correspond to philosophy, but also to psychology, sociology and theology (theological anthropology). Thus there is a need to specify even more closely which anthropology we mean. In our case it is **philosophical** anthropology.

Sometimes philosophical anthropology is distinguished from the philosophy of man, which has a larger scope. When understood in this broader sense, it also includes, for example, cognitive theory and ethics.

In our studies we use interchangeably the terms *philosophical anthropology* and *philosophy of man*. Thus philosophy of man (without cognitive theory and ethics) we understand in a narrower sense.

From Aristotle (4th century BC) to Christian Wolff (1679-1754) philosophical problems on the topic of man were usually discussed under treatises about the soul (*De anima*). In later times these treatises were called

psychology, and then rational psychology, metaphysical psychology or speculative psychology. In the middle of the 20th century the name changed to philosophical anthropology or philosophy of man⁴.

As already mentioned, philosophy is not the only science dealing with a human being. Many other sciences, for example, psychology, sociology and Christian anthropology also have a human being as the subject of study. Thus the following question arises: What is the relationship between philosophical anthropology and other sciences about man?

Philosophical anthropology draws upon other sciences and their results, and in certain ways it benefits from them. Philosophical anthropology is especially close to sciences under an umbrella term of 'Humanities', such as psychology, pedagogy, sociology, or cultural anthropology. These and other sciences provide philosophical anthropology with various data, which are grouped together under the branch sometimes called the *phenomenology of man* (see below: *Method of philosophical anthropology*). The philosophy of man, however, does not merely rely on generalizing results from other sciences. It has its own particular view of a human being in light of his ultimate condition.

4 It is useful to note, that in English and French the most common name is philosophical anthropology (*anthropologie philosophique*). The name philosophy of man (*philosophie de l'homme*) has two meanings, therefore it is not used as often. It could mean philosophy of a human being (in general) or philosophy of man (as opposed to a woman). In the Polish language there is no such ambiguity, since there are two different words signifying man as a human being (*człowiek*) and man (*mężczyzna*) as opposed to a woman (*kobieta*).

5. METHOD OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

A method (gr. μέθοδος – *methodos*; μετά – *meta* = according to, ὁδός – *hodos* = a way) is a way that leads to a certain goal.

A method is a consciously chosen and consequently employed manner of achieving a specified goal. In our case, the goal is philosophical knowledge and understanding of man.

On the subject of methods in philosophy, there are many, often divergent opinions, which may be narrowed down to two main concepts:

1. Philosophy has its own field of study, which is fundamentally different from particular sciences. It is based on a study of, and a reflection on, a subject – a man, a person, but does not overlook the achievements of particular sciences, of which it takes account at different stages of the study.
2. Philosophy *generalizes* (fragmentary) achievements of particular sciences; this is the view especially representative of Marxism.

If the philosophy of man aspires to be a philosophy, it should indispensably use the first method. This is exactly the method we use in our reflections.

In the method of philosophical anthropology it is necessary to distinguish between two stages:

1. **Descriptive** stage: the gathering, description and introductory interpretation of basic data about

a “human phenomenon” and a “human fact”. It is therefore gathering of as much knowledge as possible on the topic of essential characteristics of man as an individual category of being.

Philosophical reflection is generally based on broadly understood human experience:

- external experience: a human being “seen” from the outside – in such a way, as he appears;
- internal experience: a human being “experiences” himself, his own “self”, or his own cognitive, volitive and emotional elements.

These reflections also take into account the results of various sciences about man, especially psychology, cultural anthropology, sociology, pedagogy, etc.

The first stage of gathering knowledge is sometimes called phenomenology, and the results of that stage – the concrete knowledge about man – is called **phenomenology of man**. The phenomenology of man, however, is understood differently from the specific philosophical discipline called phenomenology.

2. **Being** stage (ontic, speculative, metaphysical) – thorough interpretation of the data from the first stage, while taking into consideration general philosophical principles. It is the final clarification and as far as possible the **understanding** of a human being. This second stage is also called **metaphysics of man**.

One of the characteristic methods applied here is in the systematic part of this book: *Main problems in philosophical anthropology*. In the beginning of each chapter

there are statements, which contain short descriptions of the problems being undertaken in the corresponding chapter.

6. MAIN PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

At the beginning of our reflection there appears an issue of philosophical anthropology in light of the general view on philosophy as a whole. On this broad view of philosophy depends the concept of philosophical anthropology, which is after all part of philosophy in general. The concepts accepted at this stage will determine the basis of many further questions that will arise and inevitably affect the answers as well.

There are several main problems in philosophical anthropology:

1. The superiority of a human being in relation to other beings on earth
2. The structure of a human being
3. The problem of monism and pluralism in a human being
4. The material and spiritual elements (the body and soul) of a human being
5. Human freedom (the will) and its limitations
6. The human being as a person; his/her rights and responsibilities
7. Human activity and its aims; human being and the paradigm of values

* * *

There are attempts – in agreement with anthropocentric trends prevalent today – to expand the scope of philosophical anthropology to include almost all philosophy, which generally is more or less connected with the human being. One may agree that most intimately bound with the human being is a theory of cognition, because it is after all **human** cognitive theory. Similarly, ethics is really **human** ethics. Other disciplines are slightly less connected with the human being, for example, philosophy of being (ontology) or philosophy of nature. Even these latter named philosophies, however, are no stranger to man – for he is after all a being and he lives in nature.

7. “TO BE AND TO HAVE”

Philosophy in general, and philosophical anthropology in particular, is not only about achieving certain knowledge about various problems considered in the scope of this discipline. Everyday life should use the achieved knowledge, because philosophy demands from man the necessary attitude that is in agreement with one’s accepted and professed philosophy. Such attitudes should be supported by corresponding actions in everyday life. Among many philosophical disciplines the rules and principles of human conduct are defined mostly by ethics.

The main attitudes in human life, which follow from the accepted “philosophy of life”, may be simplified to the following three:

1. **To Be**
2. **To Have**
3. **To Be and To Have**

The first attitude is characterized by the primacy of spiritual and human values over materialistic, worldly and temporal ones. It is about **being somebody** in the good and positive meaning of the word.

The second attitude is characterized by the primacy of "possession". People, who have this attitude, are concerned with taking as much as possible, and often materialistically. They are in general excessively concerned with material things and collecting tangible goods.

In the third attitude there are the fundamental characteristics of both the first and the second attitudes, which usually lead to necessary moderation, a certain balance and to a more or less harmonious fulfillment of human needs. From the point of view of philosophical anthropology the "third way" is the proper way, worthy of recommendation.

The philosophical problem of *To be and to have* was worked out by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) in the book *Être et avoir* [To be and to have], published in 1918.

The psychologist Erich Fromm (1900-1980) published a book in 1976 under the title *To Have or to Be?* In his book the author presented two opposing views of life – that of "having" and that of "being". He promoted the second view because it is the only one capable of saving contemporary civilization from destruction.

Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II, emphasized on several occasions the primacy of 'being' over 'having'. In his speech given in Paris in 1980 at the United Nations

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), he said:

Man, who in the visible world is *the only ontic subject of culture*, is also the only *object* and *aim* proper to *that culture*. Culture is that, through which man as man becomes more human; more «is». On that also depends the main distinction between what man is, and what man has, between «to be» and «to have». Culture always stays in the essential and necessary relationship with that which man «is», whereas the relationship with that what man «has», is not only secondary, but also totally relative. Everything that man «has» (owns) is important to culture only inasmuch as it is culture-developing, and inasmuch as man through that which he owns, may at the same time «be» more as a human, and become a human being in all aspects proper to him.⁵

5 The speech of the Pope John Paul II during the visit to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris, 2 June 1980, Cracow 1980, publisher Znak, p. 6-7 (no 7), [translated from Polish].

MAIN PROBLEMS
IN PHILOSOPHICAL
ANTHROPOLOGY

1. HUMANITY AND THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Having gone through the introductory issues, we are currently moving to a more systematic and meritorious reflection. Let us begin with a problem of a relationship between man and the animal kingdom. Looking at this problem from one point of view, it is easy to see far reaching similarities between a human being and the most evolved animals. From another point of view, however, there appear some essential differences between man and animals. In addition, there is also a problem of the man's structure of being.

Despite significant external resemblance to animals the human being is a unique creature, freely driven by cognition and desire of every form of being.

I. Similarities between man and animals

Similarities between man and animals are obvious and do not require any special proofs. They are manifested, for example, by the process of embryonic development, birth, life processes: vegetative and sensitive (the senses), development, passing away and death. Because of these similarities some people were inclined to say that man, at least in the aspect of the body, descends from the animal species by way of evolution (see chapter 9).

According to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, man as well as animals, and also plants, has an **element of life**, called a soul. In the case of man, his soul is of the highest order, and it is called a rational soul. The animals have a soul, which in essence is of the lower order than a human soul. It is usually called a sensitive soul (from the senses). A soul of plants is of the lowest order, and is called a vegetative soul. Thus man, animals and plants differ from each other in their degree of life. The degree of life is most perfect in man, while in plants it is the least perfect. In short, the different “kinds” of a soul indicate different “degrees” of life. The degrees of life are related to the degrees of cognition and freedom.

Leaders of contemporary ecological movements often call upon these views about souls of animals and plants.

II. Differences between man and animals, and the essential superiority of man

In the philosophical tradition, man was usually denoted as *animal rationale* (lat.), which is translated – although not very precisely – into “rational animal.” The term: ζῷον λογικόν – *zoon logikon* – *animal rationale* (lat.), takes its origin, in the sense of the term’s content, from Aristotle, but it was formulated more clearly by the philosopher from Athens named Chrysippus (third century B.C.), who was a stoic. The content of the term “rational animal” is better described by a rational living being, or – from a Latin version – a being endowed with a soul (*anima-l*), which is rational (*rationale*).

A human being, as a peculiar “animal”, has peculiar characteristics proper to his biological species, for

example, teething, the position of movement (upright) and biological defenselessness.

From the purely biological point of view, man is poorly equipped in many ways when compared with animals: man has a weaker sense of sight and hearing, is not able to run fast, cannot fly, needs clothing, etc. It is easier for man to die from heat or cold than it is for many animals, and he can hardly swim. His superiority, however, lies in something else.

Man *as a whole, as a rational being*, is unique and without comparison in the world, for he has specific characteristics, which do not exist in the animal kingdom. Thus man is definitely the most superior being on earth.

The **uniqueness** of a human being is based most of all on his consciousness, which reveals itself in the double “openness” of man: cognitive and volitive (desire).

Thanks to the **cognitive openness**, man is able to get to know everything that exists, including spiritual beings in the strict sense of the word (not dependent on matter), such as: pure spirits and God.

This *openness* of man is expressed in an ability such as *speech*, which is based on sounds denoting *symbols*. The pillars of speech are built on general ideas, abstracted from matter. A being as such (being in general) becomes the subject of human thinking and speech.

A free will is another kind of “openness” (beside cognitive) proper to man, which is here called the *volitive openness* or *desiring openness*. Thanks to a free will, any kind of being can become an object and aim of human desires, aspirations and achievements.

Man, although physically weak, is very well equipped spiritually: has intelligence and freedom. Both of these kinds of openness are rooted in so-called “powers”, or faculties. More precisely, they are rooted in the human soul, expressed in the mind (intellect) and the free will. Ultimately it is man who acts cognitively and voluntarily, but he does it through the faculties, or natural properties of a soul, called *powers*.

1. **Cognitive openness.** It reveals itself in every stage of human cognition. In the beginning, man forms ideas, which are not only specific, but also general, such as: goodness, truth, charity, being, etc.

Moreover, a human being also forms judgments, or propositions. Predicate proposition combines (in the case of affirmation) or separates (in the case of negation) cognitive, immaterial content. Existential proposition, however, affirms the existence of a given being.

The most perfect cognitive form is reasoning (inference). Using this form, it is also possible to infer the existence of the Absolute.

2. **Volitive (desiring) openness.** Desires, wants, aspirations and human achievements are not limited only to a certain category of beings, but relate to all kinds of beings, also immaterial ones, such as: truth, goodness, beauty, charity, happiness, God.

3. A human being does not only possess the above mentioned cognitive and volitive possibilities, but also **really actualizes them** in two areas: internal (immanent) and external (transcendent). Man does not only really understand and want (desire), but also chooses and acts externally in

various ways. The main areas of those actions are: consciousness, thinking, reflection, recognizing the truth, planning, speech, work, culture (art), realizing values, tradition, freedom, progress, technology, civilization, etc.

The cognitive and volitive openness is possible thanks to man's specific, particular only to himself ontic structure, which will be expounded on later in the text. It is beneficial, however, to gather the most important statements about this structure below:

- man is a unity of two elements: material and spiritual;
- spiritual element is immortal;
- man possesses intellect and free will;
- man is a person;
- man realizes himself through actualizing values;
- man's actions have an ethical dimension.

The **unlimited** cognitive and volitive openness of a human being and his uniqueness in the world must have its **proportional** reason (basis). This basis consists of the spiritual element co-forming a human being, which will be expounded on later in the course of our considerations.

The cognitive and volitive openness of a human being makes it possible and postulates dialogue in the widest sense (cognition, desire, change, etc.). Thanks to this openness to every being, which can be known and desired, man is also open to the absolute being, infinite being, or God. This openness highlights the value and dignity of a human being.

2. THE HUMAN CORPOREALITY

The human body and the related problem of corporeality is currently a subject of interest, and even fascination, of many authors. It is an example of anthropocentric tendency which characterizes our times.

Corporeality is the first important characteristic, which forces itself on our intellect, when we direct our attention towards man. The role of a body in the structure of a human being is tremendously important. A common phrase, the one pointing to the body as one of the “elements” of man, is imprecise and misleading. A human being in some respect is the body, or matter, but it is a spiritualized matter, or a spirit existing in matter, incorporated into matter. Spirit and matter are two fundamental **co-elements** of a human being. Together they form one entity: a man, who is characterized by deep inner unity.

Material element is a significant constituent of the human being. It reveals itself through physical properties. The spiritual element “organizes” its material element.

Man is a corporeal being. “He possesses the body” – as we commonly say – or “is the body”, although he is not matter alone. We consider the body as something external, made out of matter, something “material” in man, whereas the spirit-soul is something internal, immaterial and constant in the changing body-man. We attribute certain

actions to a body, which we sometimes consider material, e.g. eating, growing, etc., although strictly speaking they are not clearly and exclusively material (mineral), but biological, connected to *life*. To the soul, however, we usually attribute immaterial actions, most importantly cognition, desires, free decisions, moral attitudes, etc. We uncover in them a higher level of life than only the biological one.

Matter and spirit constitute *me* as a man, they are a man. It is not only that I have a body, but in a certain way I am a body, or a “form”, which the soul gave and continuously gives anew to the matter. The specific “parts” of the body and their actions, however, (including cognitive and volitive acts) belong to me; they are *mine*. The term *mine* and the corresponding notion should be understood *analogically*, not univocally, but on the basis of a certain likeness and at the same time a certain difference. In the case of the term *mine*, this analogy is quite clear. In that which is *mine* we need to distinguish several “degrees”; the term *mine* is understood differently in connotation to e.g. ego-consciousness, spirit-soul, my mind, body, senses, hair, my dress, a pen which I write with, a chair which I sit on, a hall in which a lecture is held, etc. We fittingly connect matter and spirit to the human *I*.

There are many responsibilities linked to the existence of a body, such as the care for its preservation and development, the care for the health of both body and spirit – in accordance to the proverb linked to the roman satirist Juvenalis (I/II century): *mens sana in corpore sano* – a healthy spirit in a healthy body.

It is a commonly accepted truth that man “possesses” a body and this truth does not need any special proof. Hence, our considerations have a reflective character extracting important elements of a human *corporeality*,

which are known to us from everyday experience – external and internal.

Some want to reduce a human being only to a body; to its biological and instinctive dynamisms. Therefore it is necessary to show the existence of the spiritual element, which will be our task in the next chapter.

It is sometimes said that man approaches or even is connected to the animal world through the body. This statement is true only to a limited extent. Despite the similarities in appearance between a human and an animal body, the first one is essentially different from the second one. From the very beginning a human body is enlivened and formed by the human soul and is “a body” in some sense “spiritualized”. It is therefore much more valuable in many respects than a body of the most advanced animals.

Through his body, or his material element, a man “ties himself” with the world, is present in it and acts in it. Materiality is also a basis for individualization of beings – distinguishing one from another, e.g. this here existing human being named John or Ann.

Through the instrumentality of body – especially through senses and speech – man is able to make various contacts with the world. He is able to do that cognitively and voluntarily, and also through his external actions. A special place among those contacts belongs to human communication, or interpersonal exchange of goods, alongside with their moral implications.

One can see both positive and negative sides in the fact of human corporeality. On the positive side one must include the human possibility of “exterior manifestation”, e.g. through setting up a family, through work, sport, entertainment, arts, physical beauty. Among many negative

sides one can commonly see the following: experience of tiredness, pain, passing away, old age and death. In light of these two sides, human corporeality is often described as ambivalent.

The role of a body and its place in the human structure is fundamental, since matter and spirit that form it, make up a human being. These two elements, however, differ from each other structurally (in nature) and dynamically (in acts/acting). They are irreducible to each other and they co-create this true **unity** – a human being. A man is a being, but he is not a *simple* being, or non-composite. He is not one-dimensional, but composite or “complexly” composite.

When it comes to pinpointing the beginning of man, or when “a human being has its beginning”, it is generally accepted that it is the moment of connecting the human soul with the body, which happens in the moment of conception.

Views. – Throughout centuries there have been many ways of approaching the problems of human body and corporeality. The various tendencies in this area can be reduced to two main ones: contempt for a body and its depreciation (e.g. Manichaeism; *funga mundi* – escape from the world), and a cult of body and its absolutization (e.g. epicureanism, hedonism; *amor mundi* – love of the world). The first tendency errs by lack, and the second by excess. Both of them do not show the necessary harmony between the elements creating a human being.

In contemporary world both of these tendencies can be seen, but the second one is more common. The proper approach, however, and the full “truth of a body” lies somewhere in between these extremes.

Let us focus on the following elements of the problem of corporeality:

1. The material element constitutes the essential component of a human being. Together with a spirit (a soul) it decides about the existence of a man from the very beginning; that is from the moment of conception, or from the creation of the first human cell, which already contains the full “memory” of all elements and processes proper for the given individual (genetic code, DNA). Without a body – as much as without a soul – a human being would not be able to develop.

2. Corporeality constitutes a constant element of being human; an element, which together with the invisible soul, co-creates man. Without a body it is not possible to talk about a human being in his beginning nor at any later stage in life.

3. The matter enlivened by the spirit, or the “spiritualized” body, is an exterior manifestation of being human. It constitutes a distinctive trait of a man, and the **first** trait. Everything, which we discover about a human being and what we say about him by formulating various theories, is subsequent and secondary. A visible body enables us also to distinguish one man from another.

4. A body (matter) constitutes a tool and an object of an “organizing” action of the spiritual element – a soul. The soul externalizes itself in the body and through the body. It actualizes, or “**organizes**” the body. From the moment of conception the soul penetrates, forms and adapts matter to the needs of a man; so that it will be a human body. The soul “communicates” with the outside world through the body. Through the body, man is connected with the material world, exists in it and belongs to it. Thanks to the soul, however, man is a being who is transcendent in relationship to the world. He surpasses it and steps beyond the visible

world of mineral, biological, instinctive and psychological dynamisms.

5. A human body from the very beginning is marked with a trait of sexuality. It is either male or female.

6. A body (matter) does not exist independently from the soul (it does not exist before the soul), but it participates in the existence of the soul. It “makes use” of the soul’s existence and exists thanks to the soul’s action. In the moment of death, the previously existing “body” changes in its essence. It is no longer enlivened by the soul and ceases to be a human body. The death of a body is not, however, the end of everything in a man, because the most important element of being human – the soul – still exists. The **death** begins a new stage of existence, a new way of existence for the soul, which before death enlivened the matter (body) and together with the body it co-created the human being, who in a particular moment left this world. From the philosophical point of view one cannot say much about this new form of life. It becomes necessary to take recourse in religion.

3. THE SPIRITUAL CONSTITUENT OF A HUMAN BEING

Going further afield with our reflections about man, we ask about the basis and cause of man's essential distinctiveness from all other beings on earth. We form a thesis that this basis consists of the spiritual element in a human being, or the spirit – the soul.

The analysis of the activity of reason and free will points to a substantial immateriality of the human soul. This immateriality, however, is not perfect, since various manifestations of the soul's dynamism are externally conditioned by matter.

A common sense of almost all human tribes living in various times harmoniously proposes the statement that “a spirit” lives in a human being, which is immaterial and immortal. This raises a question: what confirms this common conviction about the existence of the spiritual element in a human being? The convincing arguments in this matter are the facts observed in the areas of cognition and will (desire).

In the process of cognition we observe various cognitive activities and their results – or cognitive acts. The cognitive activities include perception, imagination, association of ideas, conceptualizing, creating propositions and reasoning; while the results of those activities include impressions, observations, images, associations, concepts,

propositions and conclusions. Various philosophical movements in the course of history tried to explain the process of human cognition and state the differences between the cognitive acts. Among them it is useful to mention sensualism and intellectualism.

Sensualism proposes that there is no essential difference between sensual cognition (e.g. sensual impressions) and intellectual cognition (e.g. concepts, ideas) and that the first is the source of the second one. *Intellectualism*, however, accepts an essential difference between a concept, proposition and reasoning on one side, and the sensual cognitive acts on the other side.

The aforementioned cognitive acts (concepts, propositions and reasoning) are essentially different, more perfect than the acts of sensual cognition. Intellectualism does not cast away the sensual cognition and its influence on the intellectual cognition. Yet it states that the “understanding” is not simply a collection or a sum of a certain number of sensual observations.

A psychological-philosophical reflection shows an essential difference between the sensual and intellectual cognition, basing its arguments predominantly on the analysis of the general concepts and propositions, which cannot be reduced only to the sensual cognition, although they are connected with it. The general concepts and propositions are characterized by their *generality*, which does not belong to sensual cognition.

There exists in my mind, for example, a concept of a particular tree, which is not related solely to the one that I saw in the past, but it does have the essential features of a tree. Similar situation arises in the case of concepts such as: a plant, an animal or a human being. It is even clearer

with the concepts of: good, beauty, justice, cause, God, etc. They are not direct objects of sensual observations and they cannot be material stimuli for cognition, and still a human being not only recognizes them, but also shows interest in them, has discussions about them, etc. Moreover, the agreement in the results of this cognition for various people is statistically very high.

A concept or idea detached from singular features of particular beings of a given kind, general concept enclosing in itself essential features of a being to which it points, and stating univocally or analogically about many designates of the same kind – such concepts are *immaterial*. This is due to the fact that everything which is material is always singular; it has features constrained by space and time. Many concepts in a human mind are not singular concepts, they do not relate to particular objects, they are not constrained by space and time, they are not measurable and they do not have materiality. Therefore they are immaterial, or spiritual.

If general concepts are spiritual, then also the cognitive power, which creates them – the human mind – must also be spiritual. It is the result of the principle of sufficient reason. This law states that every being has a reason, which explains its essence (contents) and existence (actuality). A less perfect element cannot constitute a reason for a more perfect element, it cannot give more than it possesses. Furthermore, if a certain power (here an intellect) is spiritual, then also the source, from which that power springs forth, must be spiritual. This source, the basis of both mind and indirectly a concept, we call a human soul.

A proposition is another manifestation of the existence of an immaterial element in a human being. In every

predicate proposition there exists a comparison between at least two concepts and an observation of a necessary relationship between them (agreement or disagreement). There is a comparison of “a part” and “a whole” (e.g. “John is a man”). It is not, however, some material action, in which comparison is made by the physical contact of the parts.

The fact that a man transcends the material world is especially pointed to by existential propositions, which express an existence of a certain being (e.g. “I exist”). This is true, because *the existence* in itself is immaterial and is not constrained by time and space – cannot be measured, weighed, etc.

A free will and its specific manifestations, or various actions resulting from it such as: want, desire, resolution, decision, choice, realization (of a given aim) – are also a proof for the existence of spiritual element in a human being. And here also – in the same way as in the area of cognition – there exist two philosophical movements explaining the nature and activity of a human will. The sensualistic movement does not admit an essential difference between a will and sensual desires. Yet a deeper analysis of the processes of desire reveal that in this area there exists a radical difference. Human wants are always preceded by cognition. A human being never wants something which is not known to him, and a way of wanting it is related to the way of knowing it. From our internal experience, from the reflection about actions of a will, we know that there exist in us both sensual desires leading to achieving concrete and distinct material goods, and also wants and desires of our will relating to immaterial beings, which can be known only through intellect, e.g. good, beauty, charity, justice, sacrifice, perfection.

* * *

From the methodological point of view our reflection on this topic has characteristics of reductive reasoning. It is based on working out new propositions (results) from premises, or from propositions and sentences, which we take into account. It proceeds from results to their reasons. In other words: for a known result we are looking for an unknown (at the moment) reason. In our case: from the fact of human knowledge of immaterial beings and their desire, we reason out the existence of a spiritual element of a human being (a soul).

I. Immateriality – spirituality

In the case of a human being, a **spirit** is the element responsible for making that being human.

Spirit is described by contrasting it with matter: spirit is not matter, is not essentially (internally) related to materiality, and is in opposition to matter.

Matter is a being, which has the following characteristics:

1. Extension, or spatiality; matter contains parts, which can be measured, weighed, moved, etc.;
2. Subjected to *time*, that is existence in time and changing in time;
3. Dependence on external influence, especially submitting to the movement coming from the outside.

Spirit has characteristics contrary to the ones above:

1. Non-spatiality;
2. Not being subjected to time (timelessness);
3. Basic independence of external influence (freedom) as well as immanent movement manifesting itself through: consciousness, cognition, etc.

Spirit is also described as a being, which does not **internally** depend on matter in its existence or in its action.

Spirituality is an essential separateness from matter, or immateriality. It is a notion of **spirituality in the narrow sense**. Besides this notion, there also exists a broader, more common notion of spirit and spirituality.

Spirituality – depending on what it refers to, or in what it manifests itself – can be either substantial (the spiritual element in a human being) or accidental (e.g. general idea).

Some circles distinguish and place in opposition these two terms: *immaterial* and *spiritual*. We do not hold this opinion.

When talking here about immateriality, we have in mind both its Aristotelian meaning and the contemporary one. According to the first one, immateriality refers to that which in a being is the sufficient reason for its identity, immutability and generality. It is called the form. According to the contemporary understanding, which is related to the empirical understanding of matter, immateriality refers to that which cannot be an object of solely sensual cognition (like in animals), what is not measurable, what is not contained by time and space.

Opposition:

- 1) materialism of all kinds, especially Marxist materialism;
- 2) extreme spiritualism (Plato).

Arguments:

- 1) From the analysis of the intellectual cognition:

Certain human cognitive actions and objects, which we get to know, are spiritual. They must have a corresponding **basis**, which should also be spiritual – in agreement with the principle of sufficient reason and causation.

All action comes from existence, from a being, and flows out of it. If an action is immaterial, then also its basis (a being) must be immaterial, since the result cannot surpass the cause. All spiritual action cannot have its root in material basis.

An object of intellectual cognition is general, abstract, without individual features. Its understanding is spontaneous, dynamic, and free of determinism, which is so characteristic for sensual cognition. These features are found in “higher” cognitive forms (a notion, proposition, and reasoning). The aim of cognition is to attain truth.

It is noteworthy to see that a human being is not the same as its actions, since man is a subject of these actions.

- 2) From the analysis of natural human desires (a will):

The aims of human wants and desires are among others: goodness, other purely spiritual aims, eternal and

3. The spiritual constituent of a human being

permanent aims, highest values, God. These aspirations are directed to immaterial beings, which man can achieve more or less frequently. If there are these kinds of desires in a man and they are being realized, then they must have their necessary immaterial basis. This basis, independent of temporariness and passing away, is called a spiritual element (a soul). This observation is based on the principle that if the results are immaterial then their causes must also be immaterial, or spiritual.

Human wants and desires are free, and sometimes can even be against the sensual nature, e.g. aspiring for perfection, the choice of certain health care procedures.

3) From the so called perfect reflection:

A human mind is capable of full reflection, or perfect reflection. It means that a human being through an act of cognition directs his act not only on the object of understanding, but also on his own act of cognition, on the fact that he *understands*. This “return to himself” does not have a material character, because a material object cannot act on itself in this way. Therefore a being capable of this “return” is not material, but spiritual. A mind is responsible for this and is the quality of a soul.

4) From cultural activities:

A human being can form matter by giving it various shapes, which express the ideas of truth, good, beauty, friendship, love, etc. They have an immaterial character. This human activity must have its basis, its cause in some immaterial being. This being is called a spirit or a soul.

5) From the experience of responsibility:

The experience of responsibility manifesting itself in the voice of conscience shows the existence of a spiritual element, which in some way directs human actions in their moral character. Its authority inclines one to obedience to law, especially the moral law. The sufficient reason for the experience of responsibility is hardly found in peer pressure, for example, or in a personal prudence of individuals, because the fact of morality is common to all and in its essence is irremovable.

II. Substantiality

A spiritual element in a human being (a soul) is a *substance*. We sometimes connect the term “substance” with chemistry, where it is used. Here, however, we use it in the philosophical sense. The idea of a substance (lat. *sub-stantia*) comes from Aristotle and means a being, which exists autonomously in itself as one and undivided. Substance is a being, which exists in itself and does not exist in some other being – a being that is a subject which “belongs to itself”. The opposites of a substance are accidentals. Substance endures unchangeably “under the cover” or “under the coat” of impermanent and changing accidentals.

The spiritual element, or the rational soul, ties itself with matter, and in this way a human being is formed as one **substance**, autonomous, a being in full.

In the notion of a substance there exist the following characteristics: autonomy, subject in itself, unity, individuality, totality, a basis for impermanent characteristics

(accidentals), a basis and condition of identity, and *relative* unchangeability of being. A substance is an essence of a given being; it makes a being that which it is. Accidentals, however, are nonessential and changing characteristics of a being, such as: shape, size, color, etc.

Many philosophers, especially the modern ones, do not accept the existence of a substance for many reasons. The theory of a substance and accidentals, however, makes it possible to explain or at least approach certain facts in the surrounding reality, including the human reality.

Arguments

1) From the analysis of acts of consciousness:

Impressions, observations, feelings, cognitive and volitive acts assume the existence of an autonomous substantial subject (a soul) as their reason for being, their subject.

A human being acknowledges in himself the existence of two different areas: “I” and “mine”. I “have” a body, but I am not (only) a body. I have thoughts, desires, feelings, etc., but they do not exhaust my whole existence. They are **mine**, but they are not **me**.

2) Unity and permanence of consciousness:

Beside many various activities, which a man performs and which always change, there exists in a human being something permanent, unchanging, which endures from the beginning to the end of his life and which is the basis of his consciousness and his identity.

3) A specific character (quality, type) of cognitive and volitive human activity:

A reason and a will do not act accidentally, but they are directed in a certain way by some higher instance existing in a human being, through something, which is not identical to them, but is somehow beyond them and above them. After all, a man can control his reason and will, and in various ways he actually directs them, takes care of their development and governs them. This higher instance (soul, spirit) has a characteristic of a substance with the usual features already discussed above such as permanence, unity, autonomy.

4) Responsibility for human actions:

A human being feels responsible for his actions and he really is accountable for them before himself and before others, also before the society, e.g. in courts. This assumes, however, the existence of a higher element in man, different from his specific acts. These acts flow out of that element and ultimately that element is accountable for them. Therefore, it cannot be something changing and accidental, but has to have a durable and substantial character. Thus it should be a substance.

III. The external dependence of a soul on a body

A human being is not only a soul but a unity of two elements: spiritual and material. Thus some of the activities of a soul are in some way dependent on a body and “filled with” corporeality. This dependence of a soul on

3. The spiritual constituent of a human being

a body is not internal or essential, but external. It reveals itself in the following:

- the underdeveloped organism of a child shows a limited activity of a soul (cognitive and volitive);
- pain and suffering hamper the activities of mind and will;
- diseases and injuries, especially the ones affecting the nervous system, often paralyze human activity;
- strong passions and psychological disorders disrupt cognitive acts and decision-making process (this is also acknowledged by the courts in the sentencing procedure);
- human actions and behavior are affected by certain agents, such as alcohol and drugs;
- sleeping, in a certain way, excludes a human being from conscious activities.

It is necessary to point out that *interdependence* between psyche and matter does not mean that they are *identical*; the fact that the soul depends on matter does not implicate corporeality of the soul.

* * *

A human being is characterized by a certain **unfulfillment** (sometimes called *metaphysical*). It means that we desire to know more and possess more than we currently know and have. This is true not only in the material realm, but also in the spiritual realm. The desire for truth, good, love and happiness points to a unique human mindset and orientation towards the full knowledge and full happiness, which cannot be achieved in the material sphere. Such

unfulfillment affirms the existence of an enduring element in a human being, which transcends matter.

Hence, a man is endowed with cognitive and volitive powers, which transcend matter. These powers are not limited only to concrete matter, so one can say that they have a certain kind of *limitlessness*. They go beyond the realm of space and time, which is not true for material powers, such as gaining knowledge by using the five senses.

The power of cognition and desire (a will) belongs to *someone*, flows out of something, and has some kind of a base or foundation. This foundation is usually called a spirit or a soul. A power, however, cannot be more perfect than a being who is its owner. The power to know or the power to want and pursue (a will) has an immaterial character and such is its foundation. Thus a soul has to be immaterial or spiritual.

Both the analysis of human cognition and of human will prompts us to accept powers acting in a spiritual way. It also prompts us to accept a subject, to which these powers belong – immaterial human soul.

Hence, a man is a material-spiritual being who possesses vegetative, psycho-sensual life as well as higher psycho-mental life, which manifests itself through intellectual cognition and desire (will).

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL CONSTITUENT AND THE MATERIAL CONSTITUENT

The spiritual constituent is responsible for making a human being distinct from animals and other beings on earth. In this context a question comes to mind about the relationship between the spiritual and material constituent.

In the common language we often hear the phrase: relationship between the soul and the body. This phrase – as we have already seen – is often imprecise and misleading, because a man is from the very beginning of his existence a single, whole and strict unity, and not a merging of two previously existing separate elements.

The question about the mutual relationship between the two constituent elements is particularly pressing, when we realize that certain human acts are undoubtedly spiritual in their character and structure (e.g. an intellectual cognition, a desire of a free will towards immaterial aims). It is also widely known, however, that in order to perform certain acts the soul “needs” the senses and their functions. It is therefore in some sense dependent on the body. This “cooperation” can be explained by the theory of *matter* and *form*: the soul and the body (matter) constitute one substance, and the soul is the *form* of the body.

The relationship between the spiritual and material constituents of the human being can be adequately explained by the theory of substantial unity, according to which the soul is a substantial form of the human body.

The term “body” is often used in various meanings:

1. as some undefined “matter”, without any dynamisms, for example, the Thomistic “prime matter” or Cartesian extension;
2. as a physical body, or in other words physical-chemical matter, e.g. rock, water, gas;
3. as a biological body, or a unity created from physical-chemical matter (2) through the soul, which can be (a) vegetative, (b) animal, or sensitive and (c) human, or rational, intellectual-volitive.

A substantial unity of man as described above is said to be a strict, internal connection of physical-chemical matter (2) with the rational soul (3, c).

In the process of transmitting life, parents give their child a “dowry” in the form of an ovum and a sperm, which contain detailed information included in the genetic code. They constitute a kind of “a pediment” for the rational soul created directly by God. Such soul is spiritual and immortal, free and unique.

4. The relationship between the spiritual constituent

Positions

1. Psycho-physical monism

Monism is a philosophical line of thought which tries to explain reality with the help of only one rule, one element (gr. *μόνος* – *monos* = one, unique).

The psycho-physical monism states that a human being consists of only one element; that means that man is a totally homogeneous being. Depending on how this element is understood, there are several kinds of monisms:

Spiritual:

There only exists a spirit, not as a basis of life, but as a basis of consciousness – this is a view held by supporters of idealism.

Materialistic:

There exists only matter – dialectic materialism (Marxism).

Pantheistic:

Both the soul and the body are manifestations of a divine substance – this view was held, for example, by Spinoza.

Theory of identity:

There exists a basic identity between the physical and psychological phenomena in a human being – this

view is held by various currents of thought, especially in psychology.

Monism does not correspond well to reality; its variety of objects and phenomena. It leaves out the problem of development of specific human beings, as well as the whole of humanity. It also overlooks the relationship between a soul and a body, negating in man – in spite of common experience – either the soul or the body.

2. Psycho-physical dualism

This philosophical line of thought underlines a division (a split) in the human nature and explains the human structure using two elements. Below are the main proponents and the main forms of dualism:

Plato:

A human being is most of all a soul, while a body is only her ballast and prison. A soul and a body are related to each other like a driver and a horse.

Descartes:

A body and a soul are two substances: material and spiritual. The essence of the first one is its extension (in space and time), and the essence of the second one – thinking. A soul, as a substance, directs a body, which is also a substance.

4. The relationship between the spiritual constituent

Psycho-physical parallelism:

The physical and psychic phenomena occur in parallel.

Occasionalism (Malebranche):

A body and a soul are two independent substances. Changes in the bodily sphere are events that create a possibility for change in the spiritual sphere, but do not cause them and vice versa.

Leibniz:

A body and a soul are two substances, while the obvious physical and psychic parallelism (convergence) is explained by the so called harmony previously established by God (*harmonia praestabilita*).

Dualism does not explain satisfactorily the unity in the human being nor the mutual dependence between physical and psychic phenomena.

3. The theory of substantial unity of a soul and a body

It is the view of the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy which explains the nature of the material beings in general, but especially of a human being, through the theory called **hylomorphism** (gr. ὕλη – *hyle* = matter, μορφή – *morfé* = form understood dynamically). According to that view a human being (its essence) is made of two co-elements: a matter (a body) and a spirit (a soul), which together compose **one** substance, although it is a soul which forms a matter (a body). A body and a soul are two incomplete substances, which

in joining with each other form **one complete substance**, one complete substantial being, one human nature and one person. The relationship between them is not a relationship between two beings, but between **components, co-elements** of a being; hence, their union is especially strong.

A man is a unity as the most perfect being in the visible world, among beings composed of matter and its forming base, or form. We remember that form and matter are only elements which constitute a man, so a man is an unbreakable whole. One may not say about matter, nor about form that it is a human being. [...] Hence, not a body by itself, nor a soul by itself is a human being. [...] This relatively perfect unity – since the truly perfect unity exists only in God – is made possible in man by the substantial form, the only forming and constituting base, which is the human soul. A man is not a duality made up of a soul and a body. [...] Hence, the fact that I exist, that I am a bodily being, alive, receiving sensual impressions, that I gain knowledge not only sensually, but intellectually (which means that I have ideas), that I can make judgments, that I can reason, that I can make free decisions – all of this is possible thanks to this one substantial form, or one forming base, which we call a soul. Hence, a soul does not reach an already constituted body as a second element, but rather forms a body together with all of its functions. At the same time a soul has its own functions connected with the concrete body, but in their essence these functions are purely spiritual.⁶

⁶ Stefan Swieżawski, *Święty Tomasz na nowo odczytany* [*St. Thomas being read anew*], Poznań 1995, s. 135-136.

4. The relationship between the spiritual constituent

The problem mentioned above reaches a personalistic direction in the following consideration:

The interior human experience reveals our internal unity, which proceeds by various acts— both sensual and intellectual acts. At the base of these acts we discover one subject, which reveals itself in experience as identical with himself “I”. [...] A man experiences his own subjectivity not in the essential, but in the existential aspect. It is I, as an existing subject, who perform various acts, although I do not know, who I am *as I*. But the existence recognized in this way leads us to a track which plays a fundamental role in explaining the unity of a human being. Only existence, and not a form, can constitute such a superior act, which allows joining of the two “elements” – a body and a soul – into one being. [...] If the existence belongs to the soul as a subject, and the soul organizes for itself the body making it a human body, then the existence, retaining the subjective character of the soul, comprises in one act also the body. Only then we can speak about the integral concept of a human being as a person, for such a being is both a man, because it contains a body and a soul, and a person, due to the immaterial soul capable of bringing forth spiritual acts on the level of cognition and love. Such a being is a complex being, but also one being, a man-person. Without accepting the theory of form and matter, act and potentiality, bound by the existence as a superior act, it is impossible to create a personalistic and integral conception of a human being.⁷

7 Piotr Jaroszyński, *Personalizm filozoficzny – integralna wizja człowieka* [*Philosophical personalism – integral vision of man*],

Speaking more precisely, the soul does not necessarily “need” a body-matter for its existence (because it exists without it after the death of a human being), but the *biological* body cannot exist without a soul, since it is thanks to the soul that the body receives its existence.

In the face of the aforementioned insufficiency of monism and dualism for satisfactory explanation of the relationship between body and soul – the theory of substantial unity is seen as the most accurate one.

The manner in which a soul exists in a body

A soul is a being which exists as a **whole** and is not complex, or in other words it is simple. How then can it make a body alive, how can it somehow “be” in the human body, which is material and extendable?

The question formulated in this way is based on inadmissible separation of soul and body through pure abstraction. It suggests that a human body is only a matter. This view, however, is not true. Our human body is already a “humanized” matter through the dynamic of a soul acting in such body.

The question also does not take into account the activity of the soul as a *form*, which actualizes and organizes matter, making it a human body. A body then, is not “a container” for a soul. Here we see a special manner of existence and action, different than in the case of existence of material objects which we encounter every day. Hence, there comes the difficulty in understanding the manner in

w: *Dusza Umysł Ciało. Spór o jedność bytową człowieka.*
[*Soul Mind Body. A dispute about man's unity of being*]. Red.
A. Maryniarczyk, K. Stępień, Lublin 2007, s. 483-484.

4. The relationship between the spiritual constituent

which a soul exists in a body. Such existence is not spatial. It is sometimes called virtual (lat. *per virtutem* – through power, influence). A soul is everywhere a human being is. It is present as a **whole**, where it exists, where it acts. In its action it is present through its powers, through its dynamism.

A soul is present only in those parts of a body, which are actually connected with a man, which constitute him. When a man loses his hand or his leg, there is no “less soul” in him than before. When a child grows, the soul does not grow with him or her, but it only enlivens, actualizes and organizes more matter, although in the same manner as before.

The activities of a soul in a human being are performed with the help of various organs previously developed by it, such as a brain, a nervous system, and senses. A brain defect does not eliminate the soul in a man, but only suspends its external activities connected with the functioning of the defective organ and dependent on it.

5. DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

Death is a fact and an experience, which does not pass by anyone. It does not mean, however, that death ends everything for man who prolongs his being into eternity thanks to his spiritual element. A closer look at the problem of death, at everything that is connected to it and what will happen after it, shapes to a large extent the meaning of human life.

As a whole, the human being is submitted to death. However, its essential element, the soul, continues its existence because it is immortal.

No man has a direct experience of death, since no one, who is alive, could live through it personally. Indirectly, however, we do experience in some way the phenomenon of death and a fact of death:

- we affirm that death is unavoidable and universal (everyone is subjected to it);
- we recognize its causes, signs, results;
- we realize that there are dangers, which can cause death;
- we discover the *personal* character of death, which awaits everyone and ultimately has to be dealt with by everyone **individually**;
- many people, especially the old, feel „the approaching death”, weakness, waning of life, illness, etc.;

- we observe that death is usually accompanied by suffering, and often is preceded by it.

These experiences and reflections may sometimes trigger in people strong emotional reactions, even fear and terror.

From the philosophical point of view death means – qualified by various reasons – the separating of the existential elements in a man. The change of the existential structure of a human being often has dramatic character. A note of hope and optimism to this existential human problem brings the truth about immortality of a human spiritual element, and for Christians – the revealed truth about the resurrection of the body.

Immortality is a freedom from death. Through immortality one can endure without end. It is a feature of a being, which does not cease to exist, does not perish, so it is indestructible.

Immortal being, however, does have a beginning. A being without the beginning and without end we call eternal. This definition we can ascribe only to the Absolute Being, or God.

We contend that the spiritual element in a human being (the soul) is immortal. This immortality results from his nature, from his immateriality, from his spirituality, which we talked about before.

In other words: the human soul is immortal, because it is spiritual. Immortality directly stems from spirituality.

Opposition: The opposition to the statements above is represented by the materialistic movements, such as Marxism.

Arguments

1) From the fact of spirituality:

A human soul is spiritual, therefore it is simple and unextendable, and it is not composed from parts. Hence, it is not subjected to internal decomposition, meaning that it cannot decompose into constituent parts, because it does not have them. Therefore, it exists and will endure without end – it is immortal.

A human soul in its essential actions, meaning the cognitive and volitive acts, is internally autonomous from a body. We can conclude that it is also autonomous in its existence. Therefore, it does not end its existence when the body dies. It is, therefore, immortal.

Any action is a result of existence and is based on it. The mode of existence is proportional to the mode of action (*agere sequitur esse*).

2) From the unlimited possibilities of a human mind and will:

A human being is destined to live forever:

a) A man has unlimited abilities to recognize truth. Since an object of a human mind is that which exists (a being as such), man is able to know all beings; everything, which is knowable. A virtually unsatisfied human “curiosity” is a very good manifestation of that ability. All of us want to know more than we already know. This cognitive ability cannot be satisfied even by the most extensive and deepest knowledge. We are convinced about it by the most distinguished scholars and by the history of progress of human knowledge.

b) A human will has similar capabilities in the area of good. This good as such, meaning all good, is an object of human will. Thanks to those abilities a man desires good, pursues it and – more or less – attains it. He is not content with *any good*, limited good, does not stop on a given good, but always wants more.

This desire of truth and good is something primary in humans – not secondary or even less important – and universal – it existed in the past and currently exists generally speaking in all people. Hence comes the conclusion that this desire has its basis in human nature; such is the human condition and such is the human destiny.

It is true, however, that these unlimited possibilities of intellect and will are realized only in a small portion here on earth. Obviously, they cannot be realized here in full. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge that they will be realized after an earthly life, in God, through the participation in the unlimited knowledge and unlimited good. Otherwise one would be forced to question the rationality of human nature.

The above arguments affirm the immortality of a human spirit. It is aptly put in words by St. Augustine in the following sentence: “A human heart is restless, until it finds peace in God”.

Some people might not achieve this goal, but it is a matter of their free decision, it is a consequence of free will and a price, which a man pays for the great, but difficult gift of freedom.

Sometimes it is heard that someone does not want to achieve truth or good. If that is really true than one should suspect an insufficient knowledge of these values.

3) Teleological proof (from the fact of purpose):

The current proof is similar to the previous one. It takes into account, however, only the *desire for happiness* proper to a human being.

By nature a man wants and desires happiness without limits, full or perfect happiness. Happiness, which would end some day, would not be perfect. Therefore, in order to be fully perfect, it cannot have an end. Hence a man needs to be immortal, at least in his essential part, which is his spiritual element. A human soul is therefore immortal.

A desire of happiness stems from the exceptional psychological human structure. A human being with his abstract thinking is able to create transcendent and analogical ideas, thanks to which he is open to every being. This general ability to gain knowledge is followed by the human will. It has the ability to choose freely and is open to every good thanks to the abstraction of ideas and the possibility of their realization in various concrete ways.

By contrast a man in his temporal life can satisfy only some of his needs. The rationality of the world demands, however, that natural human desires should not be illusory or deceptive. Hence, it is necessary that there should exist such a Being, which will be able to satisfy these desires. It has to be a personal Being, because only such a Being is able to satisfy man, who after all is a person, with true and perfect happiness.

The fact that man **desires** happiness is obvious from his internal experience, from reflection and the ordinary way of human behavior. This desire stems from human **nature**. It is universal (all people experience it, although

they understand it differently), constant (not passing), no one can rationally deny it. Hence, its cause must be universal, and such is the human nature.

4) From the moral order:

The natural law necessitates the perfect sanction. There would be no such sanction, if a human soul was mortal. Hence, a human soul is immortal.

Every lawmaker, who really wants his laws to be kept, should establish proportional sanctions against those who disobey that law. If this is not done, such lawmaker runs the risk of being ridiculed through his ineffective law, which can be broken without any penalties.

God, the highest lawmaker, infinitely wise and just, wants the natural law, which comes from Him, to be kept. Therefore, He undoubtedly established the necessary sanctions.

Human sanctions applied here on earth do not suffice, since very often the prevailing force belongs to evil, violence, injustice and even trampling of truth and good as such.

5) From the sense of justice:

Both particular individuals and humanity as a whole are convinced that justice should be served. It is an inner need of every man. Justice in the world, however, is not often preserved. Hence, there must be a time and a place in the afterlife, where full justice will be served and all debts will be paid. This assumes further existence of the spiritual element after bodily death and as such it is an argument for its immortality.

Connected with this issue is the fact of inequality between people, especially these inequalities, which are independent from people themselves. It applies especially to the differences in health, talents, intelligence, and also beauty. These matters after all have a tremendous impact on a human life. This kind of “injustice” also demands some kind of “ordering” in the afterlife and consequently – the existence of a spiritual element.

6) From the conviction of all mankind:

Scientific studies assert that there exists a conviction in all people of all times about life after death. From that conviction stems the cult of the dead, which has taken on many forms throughout the ages. The existence of this conviction and its various manifestations, both today and in the past, are especially affirmed by ethnology and paleontology. The universality of this phenomenon shows that it stems from human nature.

In light of this it is beneficial to remind the words of Cicero, who in defending immortality used the argument stating that “Consensus among all people should be recognized as the law of nature” (*Discussions at Tusculum*, book I, chapter 13; see also chapters 14-16).

6. THE STRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN MIND AND THE PROCESS OF INTELLECTUAL COGNITION

Cognition is a kind of *entrance* – unusual, special entrance – of a given object into the consciousness of a subject, or a human being. It depends on the specific “recreation” in a human mind of *the image* of a given object (being) and indirectly the object itself. This object then begins to exist *intentionally* (cognitively) in a man (lat. *intendo* – to extend, to direct one’s attention to something). The meaning of *intentionality* in our discourse is defined as special cognitive approach to something as an object; a given being becomes an object of a cognitive act, which leads to gaining some information about the object.

The cognitive process can be characterized as “making contact” with beings, which are usually outside of us. How is it done? How is this entrance achieved? These questions about the cognitive process and the structure of a human mind have generated interest especially in philosophers and psychologists for a long time. Here is one of many attempts of solving this problem.

Human cognition relies on an intentional admission of an object by the mind in a process, which involves active and passive phases.

A human mind – a fundamental “power” or ability of a human soul (next to free will) – receives its first data,

or idea, from material things (objects) under the influence of human senses. The essence (content) of material things is the *proper* object of human intellect.

Things are subjected to the senses and so they are **material**. They cannot create in the **immaterial** human mind an *intentional* (cognitive) similarity in a direct way. They can do it only indirectly through the power of imagination, or the ability to reconstruct past observations (sensual cognitive images), when, for example, the observed object is no longer present (we are not looking at it at the moment). The imagination, however, is material. We infer it from the fact that it can be disturbed by chemical agents.

Therefore, we are currently faced with the following facts: sensual images, through which notions (ideas) are created, are material; notions of things, especially the general notions, are not material. The sensual cognitive data – as material – is not *proportional* to the human mind and cannot constitute a sufficient cause for the influence it has on the action of the immaterial mind (intellect).

Nonetheless, this strange transformation takes place in a human being on a regular basis: a man really creates immaterial notions (also general ones) on the basis of particular beings, also material ones. How is it done? An effort to explain this mystery is enclosed in a *theory of an active and passive mind*.

In order to explain the transition in the process of cognition from the material element (sensual image of an object) to the spiritual element (a notion, idea), Aristotle and some medieval and later philosophers distinguished two dimensions or two functions in the human mind (intellect). One of them was called **an active mind** (*intellectus agens*), and the second – **a passive mind** (*intellectus patiens* or *possibilis*).

The goal of an active mind is *to raise* the sensual (material) image existing in the imagination to the level of immateriality. In other words an active mind should give the image its proper *cognitive* or *immaterial form*, so that it will be able to influence the passive mind and stimulate it to an act of intellectual cognition.

This “raising” of the sensual data to the level of a mind is carried out in an active mind through the process of abstraction. This process levels (perfects) the sensual data to the level proper to the mind through its *dematerialization*, or freeing the sensual data from its particular features, getting out of the data everything which is stable, unchanging and repeatable. In other words it is extracting from the sensual data their essential content and creating in this way an intellectual cognitive form called **an impressed intellectual image** (*species intelligibilis impressa*) or a “working” image. A passive mind gets this image from an active mind and reacts to it immanently by creating **an expressed intellectual image** of a thing (*species intelligibilis expressa*), or a full, final image.

Hence, a structure of a human mind and the process of intellectual cognition are comprised from the following:

- an active mind and its creation called the *impressed* intellectual image of an object (working image);
- a passive mind and its creation called the *expressed* intellectual image of an object (full, final image).

An active mind (intellect) is not a cognitive power in a strict sense, but a power which leads to cognition, and, therefore, it is called an intellect (lat. *intus legere* – to read inward) in a wider sense. The proper cognition is achieved in the **passive mind**. It means that the passive

mind takes the cognitive data from the active intellect, “conforms itself to” the content of an object, and converts it into a notion or multiple notions. A passive mind is sometimes called “a possible mind”, which underscores that it does not yet possess an actual cognition, but it can possess it in the future – potentially (*in potentia*).

A human mind recognizes the nature of things (objects), or their essence (content), and this essence can be manifested in a notion which has immaterial character. An immaterial mind can recognize a material thing only to the extent that it can “dematerialize” it, or extract from it its essence (content) and leave out everything, which is inessential, specific and particular. This process of breaking things apart is called **abstraction**. The next fruit in this process is called a particular notion, and the last – general notion.

The theory presented above, or an intellectual reconstruction of the dynamics of cognition, is an effort not so much to give a final solution to the problem, but to at least draw closer to this complicated matter. One can of course be satisfied with only the statement that a human being is capable of cognition through an intellect – without an effort of a closer penetration into the cognitive process – but such an attitude would not be worthy of a philosopher.

Let us recall that a human mind does not create cognitive objects, but takes them from the outside, in some special way “creates a reflection of” them, although at the same time these objects do not lose anything in the process. So the point here is to clarify the method of “creating a reflection” – facing the fact of an essential difference existing between an external (material) object and cognitive (immaterial) power of an acting subject.

The aforementioned theory helps in avoiding the errors of sensualism, which proposes the exclusive existence of sensual cognition, as well as cognitive idealism, which states that a human being is not able to recognize external reality, but knows only his impressions, pictures of imagination and thoughts.

7. HUMAN FREEDOM

One of the elementary human attributes is freedom, constantly emphasized throughout centuries and especially stressed at present. The fuller understanding of a notion of freedom gets us closer to unraveling the human mystery, especially human essence, dignity, laws and duties, meaning of life and life's mission. Freedom is a fundamental element, which serves as a foundation for interpersonal structures and development of various interpersonal contacts.

What is freedom?, what is its basis?, and what is the proof that we are endowed with it? – these are the questions we will now try to answer.

The analysis of the phenomena of human cognition and free will shows that human beings are free in their decisions and their actions. This freedom is revealed in the ability to initiate or to renounce one's own actions, as well as in the ability to determine their essence.

In our reflection on the ontic structure of a human being we encounter the problem of the so called main “powers” (talents) of man as a person – cognitive power (mind, intellect) and volitive power, or human will. A human soul acts through these powers, and through the soul acts the whole human being. Both of these powers were already discussed in the first chapter of this part and

the cognitive power was explained particularly in chapters 3 and 5.

Currently we will take a closer look at the **human will** – or the power of rational desire, which is different not only from the instinctive and sensual desire, but is also different from the intellect. Most of all, however, we will direct our attention to the elementary feature of a human will, that is on freedom.

Freedom is an equivocal notion⁸. Among many of its meanings there are two that warrant special attention: **external freedom** (civic, political, social, freedom from external force) and **internal freedom** (individual), which will be the main object of our reflection.

In the notion of **internal freedom** we will point out two sides, two dimensions: **freedom from** (something) and **freedom to** (something). The first dimension takes into account especially the negative element (that, which is absent), while the second – the positive element (that, which is or should be present); *freedom* in the first sense determines freedom in the second sense.

Freedom from [something] – or freedom of choice – is the absence of physical necessity (imperative) from the inside, that is freedom from natural imperative, or an imperative coming from nature.

In other words: it is a power (talent, ability) which allows the human will to determine itself (auto-determination), make a decision:

⁸ It is worth mentioning that Latin word *libertas* means both freedom and free will, that is the so called power (constant ability) of a soul.

1. to act or not to act (*libertas exercitii vel contradictionis*),
2. deciding to act, it can choose one or the other character (species), form, kind of action (*libertas specificationis vel contrarietatis*).

Freedom is an ability to choose goals and to choose means of achieving them; this is essentially an ability to choose good, to open oneself on goodness as such, on all good. The choice of evil is not freedom, but a misuse of freedom. A human being should always choose good, but has a physical ability also to choose evil and sometimes does so. The problem of good and evil, the problem of making the appropriate choice – it is a timeless problem of human freedom, both in the individual dimension as well as in the social dimension. The goal is to *freely* choose *good*.

Various manifestations of evil which we observe in the world and sometimes experience ourselves, are often a price we have to pay for the fact of human freedom. This evil then is a result, effect and even a proof of human freedom, which still is, however, the primary value of a human being. Since man is free, he can abuse his freedom. He would not be able to abuse it if he was not free, but then he would not be a human being.

Freedom to [something] – or freedom as a goal appears before man as a challenge, as a chance given to a human being. This dimension of freedom is especially pointed out in the current times.

Freedom from is sometimes called *negative* freedom, which underscores a lack of compulsion, or *negates* the existence of force. *Freedom to*, in turn, is sometimes called a *positive* freedom (lat. *positio* – a putting, position),

freedom to act, to fulfill one's duty. *The negative freedom* is a prerequisite for *the positive freedom*.

Freedom assumes prior knowledge, which precedes all choices. A man is able to want only that which he gained knowledge about beforehand. This truth is shown in the Latin sentence: *Nihil [rationaliter] volitum nisi (prae)cognitum*.

Freedom, about which we speak:

1. is a characteristic of a human will;
2. is applicable to normally developed people (mature, with healthy psyche);
3. refers to finite (limited) goods.

In relation to the Absolute Being, however, which is perfect in every way, the human will does not have a possibility of choice: if He is adequately known, it is impossible not to want Him or not to aspire to Him.

This freedom manifests itself **at least** in certain acts of will. It is not rare that in particular decisions a human will is conditioned and limited by various circumstances, for example, through limited (not adequate) knowledge or through obstacles on the way to achieving the previously set goals. We often experience it ourselves.

Our actions or lack of them are influenced by various circumstances, which are independent from us and come both from the present and from the past. It was not up to us, for example, to come into this world (where and when?). We did not choose our parents, family or gender. We did not have a saying in the choice of our fatherland or nationality. We do not even know how long we will live on this earth. Our actions also have little bearing on our health, talents or beauty.

These facts in some respect show limits of a human being, but they do not subdue him: they do not force him to action nor do they deprive him of a choice and possibility of action.

There are certain areas on which a man acts basically in a free manner. He acts under the influence of good – real or apparent (that which he considers as good).

From the fact of freedom stems human responsibility for the chosen decisions and performed actions. Moreover, we are responsible not only for that which we do, but also for that which we do not do and should do.

There is a need to recognize the scope of one's own freedom, its limits and connected with it range of responsibilities in the individual and social dimension. The gift of freedom does not mean, however, that a human being may do whatever he wants. **Freedom is not a license to do whatever we want.**

Human freedom is more and more threatened by various means of influencing people with the help of **mass media**. Those means, often consciously and with full intention, employ various forms of manipulation and “informational processing” and it is not rare that they guide their listeners or viewers to the loss of objective view on a shown subject and consequently direct them to various forms of slavery.

The ethical dimension of a human being

The ethical dimension of a human being has its roots and its basis in the human freedom. This dimension reveals itself in the fact that man – able to do both good and evil – partakes in a worldwide “drama between good

and evil”. He is capable of choosing between various kinds of good and evil. Thanks to our freedom we have a possibility and duty to form our own personality, develop it and direct it toward perfection. We have the power and responsibility of “creating our own self”, or the history of our own life. We do not always do it, however, in the right way.

This ability of conscious formation of oneself, proper only to man, is sometimes called the *ability of autocreation*. In everyday life this autocreation manifests itself through proper choices, which “correspond” to the human being, his nature, his striving for excellence, or in other words through the choice of good. It is the realization of important values in life, especially the moral ones, which enables a person to form himself. A man uses his freedom properly when he responds to the “requirement of good” (*bonum faciendum, malum vitandum* – good should be done, and evil avoided) and acts with agreement with his rational nature. In this way he chooses authentic – and not only apparent – good, both in relation to himself and to another person, as well as in relation to the society within which he lives and acts.

Positions

The aforementioned position is sometimes called **indeterminism** (lat. *in* – not, *determinare* – determine, limit); more proper here would be the term **autodeterminism**. There exist, however, many other **deterministic** currents of thought. According to them the human will is not free or its freedom is limited in its essence. Marxists, for example, treat freedom as “an unconscious necessity”.

Arguments

1. From the reflection about the nature of a will:

The adequate object of the aspiration of a will is the absolute good as such. The ultimate end to which it aims is the perfect happiness.

The goods, which we encounter and realize in everyday life, are limited and narrow. In other words they are fragmentary, incomplete, almost as if containing the addition of evil; hence, they are not absolute and they cannot fully satisfy the aspirations of the will.

It follows from the above that the human will is not enslaved by temporal goods – it is free to choose them, but it does not have to do so.

2. Psychological – from the inner experience, or introspective obviousness:

The consciousness of freedom precedes choice, accompanies it, and continues after the act of choosing. Before the act of rational choice – during the time of making up one's mind – a person is conscious of the various possibilities of choice (alternatives) standing before her and notices that an object of choice does not have to be chosen.

In the act of choosing a human being is aware that he really has an influence on the flow of events, that he really controls the process of choosing and even has the power to end or suspend it.

After making the choice a man is aware that he is the one responsible for the choice and it is he that actually made the choice. If the choice was improper he

experiences the feeling of guilt and remorse, which can be temporarily stifled, though.

If we do something unintentionally, automatically or not freely (for example, when we react rudely), we have a totally different frame of mind than in the case when we act freely and consciously.

3. Moral:

The categories of good and evil, justice and injustice, imperative and prohibition, merit and fault etc. would be devoid of sense if man was not free.

These categories are commonly – although not without exceptions – accepted and play an enormous role in the social life. No rational person with enough foresight would even think about discarding or rejecting them.

4. From the intellectual nature of a human being:

A human mind is capable of giving a judgment about various goods; whether they are good, worthy of desire, or not.

Hence a will, after the previous recognition of a certain object or good can make a choice of desiring it or not – depending on its worth. Hence, the will is free.

These two powers – mind and will – are tightly connected with each other and have the same rational nature.

5. From the convictions of humankind:

There is a common conviction of a vast majority of people about freedom rooted in human nature. It cannot be only an illusion. If that was the case a human being and

the world would be contradictory in themselves, which cannot be accepted in light of the existence of purpose, order, rationality, etc. of the world and man, although there exists an admixture of nonsense and evil, which in the large measure constitutes *the price* of freedom.

8. THE HUMAN PERSON AND HIS/HER RIGHTS AND DUTIES

A human being is sometimes also called a person. What is a human person? What does it reveal in a man and what are its consequences? These are the next topics of our reflection. In order to continue, however, we will need the basic understanding of certain notions such as substance and nature, which we will explain below.

The spiritual and material constituents form one human substance, one nature and one human person, which is the ultimate subject of all activity and the basis of human dignity, its rights and duties.

Substance – lat. *sub-stantia* – a being, which exists in itself and not in another being as in a subject; a being, which is a base for accidentals; a being, which exists autonomously in itself, one and separate (see chapter 3, p. 52-54).

Nature – lat. *nascor, nasci, natus sum* – being born; it is a base, an interior base and principle of development of living things. It has various meanings. In the philosophical sense it is a substance as a principle of acting, base of all actions. It is the first and basic principle, proper to a substance, which enables a certain thing, some being, to act and react.

Person – lat. *persona* – a mask. Commonly known definition of a person is given by Boethius (circa 480-525; pronounced to be a saint by the Catholic Church), author of several books, such as *De Consolatione Philosophiae* – *About consolation given by philosophy*. His definition of a person Boethius included in the book: *Liber de persona et duabus naturis* – *A book about a person and two natures*. The definition is as follows: *naturae rationalis individua substantia* = an individual substance of rational nature (that is having a rational nature); or: individual rational substance, or a substantial being that is individual and rational. Later philosophical definitions often relate to the one given by Boethius.

The thesis developed in this chapter also includes the following definition of a person: a final subject of all acts and a base of human dignity along with his/her rights and duties.

Contemporary definitions of a human person usually include the following elements: “independently existing substance with a rational nature (spiritual)”⁹, or in other words: a spiritual-material subject, which is able to act rationally and freely. The rational nature of a person manifests itself through:

1. the ability of intellectual cognition;
2. the ability of choosing values;
3. the ability to love and the rich variety of emotions.

9 *Leksykon filozofii klasycznej* [Lexicon of classical philosophy], red. J. Herbut, Lublin 1997, p. 417; see also: Józef Bremer, *Osoba – fikcja czy rzeczywistość? Tożsamość i jedność Ja w świetle badań neurologicznych* [A Person – fiction or reality? Identity and unity of “I” in light of neurological research], Kraków 2008, pp. 488.

In relation to other beings a person is:

1. a subject of rights and duties;
2. distinguished through dignity proper only to him/herself;
3. complete, meaning that in the area of its specific features it does not need essential supplements, such as, for example, a society, although it helps in development of a person in various ways.

Person and **personality** are the most important characteristics of a human being. The term “person” is usually used in philosophical deliberations, while the term “personality” in psychological sciences; it denotes a *character*, meaning these human features which can be changed in the process of education and formation. Every human being is a person and every human being “has” a personality, but the personality of specific people is diverse.

In a person the human nature *as such* is specified individually, is single and unrepeatable: there are no two men having the same internal conditions and living in exactly the same external conditions.

A person has a spiritual way of existing and a spiritual level of existing, which belongs to the highest and most perfect ways of existing: a person is conscious of itself and has other cognitive abilities along with the ability to make free decisions concerning him/herself.

A person is an autonomous (independent) subject of spiritual nature. A person has a separateness proper to him/herself, which cannot be given away to anyone else.

A person is ascribed with an ability of acting and forsaking action or neglecting it. A person is an end in itself. It can never be considered as a means to an end and treated this way.

In the visible world only a human being is a person. He/She makes use of this world and of the goods of the world, in which he/she was placed, in which he/she lives, but a person is not an owner of the world; he/she is only a temporary “user” of the world.

A person and personality are not something static, unchanging, given to a human being once and for all, but something dynamic, something, which has a potential for auto-development and auto-perfection. Hence, there comes the inner, immanent moral duty to properly form one’s personality. The development of a person takes place mainly through a conscious and free realization of values.

Argumentation

The argumentation on this topic is contained in the analysis above, which has for its base the internal experience, or direct cognition of one’s “ego” and one’s own cognitive, volitive and emotional acts.

The results are as follows: a concrete man is a **subject** of actions, speeches and traits (attributes), or in other words is a center of human activity both immanent (cognition, decisions, emotions) and external.

This view is also supported by the fact of **unity of action** visible in man.

8. The human person and his/her rights and duties

A human being, as an autonomous subject endowed with a spiritual element and freedom, has a special personal dignity. It means that due to the fact of being a subject and a free person, a human being has a unique **value and dignity** and resulting from these, **specific rights, and also duties**.

Greatness, value and dignity of a man are based on the fact that thanks to the spiritual character of a human person he/she has consciousness and an ability to decide for him/herself. Through these properties a person reaches peaks of his/her existence: is a being cognitively and voluntarily unlimited and through that limitlessness in some way raises to **the order of Absolute**. In other words: in some aspect – analogically – a man is endowed with “divinity”.

Truth and freedom – the basic values of human existence and action – have an absolute, **unconditional** character. These values are possible and realize themselves on the level of all being, being in general, **being as such**, and not only on the level of concrete things and material values. Through free activity a human being is able to achieve the harmony of values, especially the moral values.

One can see from the above that a human being cannot be content with this limited world in which he is engulfed, in which he lives and acts; the possibilities of a man go beyond this world, they exceed it. In the philosophical terminology this truth is expressed in a sentence: **a man transcends the world**.

The source of the human dignity can also be found in: a man’s unique structure of being, in which there are

various factors that make up a unity (a microcosm); a soul created directly by God and existing in a man; and the fact of being destined – thanks to the immortal soul – to life without end.

The human dignity described above belongs to all men. There is, however, a distinct dimension of this dignity, concrete and individual – it is a **personal human dignity**. It belongs only to those who consciously try to gain it by an effort in self development.

The human dignity is often in danger of deterioration through the interference by mass media in the life of many people, their way of thinking and making decisions. The result from it is that listeners and viewers often lose their own critical and independent (objective) look at important matters, surrendering in larger or lesser extent to a certain kind of slavery.

A human being as a person, who has to realize his/her life goals, enjoys certain **capacities** usually called **rights**, and is also burdened with certain **duties**. Both rights and duties apply to the person itself, as well as to other people and society at large, where the person lives and acts. They make possible a comprehensive development of a person. The duties (obligations) apply to individuals (especially to parents, relatives, benefactors, people in need, etc.), as well as to whole societies, when they refer to the common good, especially in creating conditions that will promote reaching comprehensive development also for other people. Establishing in practice the proper proportion between the individual good and the common good often encounters many difficulties and becomes the source of conflicts.

The human rights have been collected and – after many debates – codified besides others in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, accepted by United Nations in Paris in 1948. They were recalled by the pope John XXIII in the encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963), which also includes the duties of a man and takes into account his broader religious dimension. These documents are not philosophical treatises, but they represent the results of reflection and experience of many generations of thinkers, they deserve special attention and being taken into account in various circumstances of life, especially in more systematic reflections on the topic of a human being.

Formulas included in the above and similar documents show different ways of realizing the good in the lives of individuals and whole societies. One should accept them as an apt reading of the natural law, on which all human personal acts and morality find the ultimate support.

Pope John Paul II in his speech on the forum of the United Nations in New York on the 5th of October, 1995 called the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* “one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time.” At the same time the Pope appealed for working out and adopting the *International Charter of the Rights of the Nations*.

The supplement to the already mentioned *Declaration* is the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*. It was signed in Paris in 1997 by representatives of 186 member nations of UNESCO. It is the first international document in the realm of bioethics. Among many other things, it includes prohibition of cloning and genetic manipulation of humans.

On the 7th of December 2000, representatives of 15 nations of the European Union adopted the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*. On the 1st of April 2008 the Parliament of the Republic of Poland accepted the so called *Lisbon Treaty of the European Union* from the year 2007, which gives a lawful character to the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*. Great Britain and Poland, however, reserved the right to certain limitations of using the Charter for their own citizens.

9. THE ORIGIN OF HUMAN BEING

The topic of the origin of man belongs to the most fundamental issues not only in the philosophical reflection, but also in other fields of study. It continues to generate interest, and at times also generates controversies. The answer to the question of the origin of man is so important, because it defines the ontic status and the place of a human being in the universe.

A human being as a whole could not have originated only from various dynamisms governing the non-human world. The possibility of creating “the human body” (i.e. without intelligence and freedom) through the process of evolution remains controversial.

The question about the origin of man has a wider background: where did everything that exists come from – especially biological species? Various answers which came up during the ages and that still come up today, can be reduced to a couple of major types:

1. Everything that exists came into being through creation by God. It is the position of the movement called creationism.
2. Everything that exists came into being on the way of systematic evolution. This is the view of evolutionists.

Up to the beginning of the 19th century the position of creationism was commonly upheld. It was not till Jean Lamarck (1744-1829), and then Charles R. Darwin (1809-1882), who partly referred to his predecessor, that creationism was challenged and a new theory was born called transformism, or changing of one species into another one. Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* was published in London in 1859. The theory of evolution (evolutionism) slowly gained more and more supporters. Currently it is a dominant view among naturalists and most current biologists think that the origin of man on the way of evolution from some kind of animal is an unquestionable truth.

The evolutionist theory applied to a human being is called the *anthropological evolutionism*. There are two main currents in this theory:

1. **The radical anthropological evolutionism.** – It is based on the assumption, that all reality is material, and that man is made up of two elements: a biological and a psychological one. The psychological element takes its origin from the biological element, while the biological one – from the material. Hence, it is a thesis of materialistic reductionism. These genetic (developmental) dependencies are the main statements of the evolutionist theory. Hence, the psychology of man, notwithstanding many differences to the psychology of animals, is derived from matter through biological forms and higher forms of animal psyche. The human being – according to evolutionists – came into existence in the distant past through the stages of development of higher animal forms, most likely the anthropoidal monkeys.

2. **The moderate evolutionism, or evolutionary creationism.** – It accepts the view of existential independence of the human intellect from the sphere of biology, instincts and the senses. This independent existential element is called “a spirit” or “a soul.” The biology of man and the lower spheres of his psyche developed – according to the proponents of this movement – through accidental mutations and “natural selection”, or in other words through mechanisms which are accepted by Darwinists. When a body achieved a certain high level of development, God induced “a spirit” (a soul) into the body and in this way the First Man came into existence.

Currently, during the development of the body and the animal characteristics of the human psyche, the role of an effective cause is played – similarly as in animals – by parents. At a certain unspecified moment of embryo-genesis God injects into the newly developing human being his own “immaterial soul.” This or similar views are presently held by many catholic scientists and philosophers.

Contrary to both of the above views is another movement called **philosophical creationism**, which is different from biblical or theological creationism. According to philosophical creationism a human being exists as a whole (in totality) – both in the mature form, as well as in the process of development called embryo-genesis. In the development of the highest forms of human activity, the biological and psychic phenomena are an essential and necessary foundation. The separation of these elements is made only on the level of thought, in the process of abstraction. A human being originates and

acts as a whole. The element which integrates all stages and forms of human development is “the soul” which is not “matter.” A matter, which makes up one of the two elements of a human being, is a physical-chemical matter coming from physical or biological bodies reduced through the process of digestion into simple chemical particles (see chapter 4, p. 58-59).

The characteristic part of the view described above is the notion of a soul (a spirit), which is different than in the previous propositions. Thanks to this specific concept of the soul a man is a human being in the biological, sensual and instinctive sense, as well as in intellectual, volitive and moral sense. Such view is represented, for example, in Poland by P. Lenartowicz and J. Koszteyn.¹⁰

The evaluation of evolutionism

In the critical process of evaluating various theories on the topic of origins of man it is important to pay close attention especially to the justification of the initial assumptions of the given theories.

In so doing it is noteworthy to see that the radical evolutionism assumes that the inanimate matter is the only form of being, which really exists and is the only effective cause taken into account. It is important to see that this matter is the most reduced element of reality in terms of its dynamics. From this most limited dynamics, evolutionists

¹⁰ P. Lenartowicz, J. Koszteyn, *Fossil hominids – an empirical premise of the descriptive definition of homo sapiens*, Forum Philosophicum, 5 (2000), p. 141-167.

try to derive all forms of dynamics perceived in the world. Such approach does not explain in the satisfactorily manner the uncommon riches of reality.

The moderate evolutionism, or evolutionary creationism, assumes an essential difference on the level of being between the human instinctive-sensitive sphere and a sphere of intellect and will – not even mentioning the biological sphere. It is granted, that such differentiation is possible on the level of human thought in the process of abstraction, but there could appear certain doubts as to whether it reflects the real characteristics of intellectual dynamics of a man.

The Pope John Paul II in his address to the members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, assembled in Rome on 22-26 X 1996, stated that “Today, [...], some new findings lead us toward the recognition of evolution as more than an hypothesis.”¹¹ It provoked many commentaries and various – sometimes contradictory – interpretations from the evolutionists’ side, as well as the creationists’ side.

¹¹ *Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on Evolution, 1996.*

10. HUMAN BEING AND VALUES

Living in the world, a human being from necessity takes up certain actions, which usually facilitate his development. This development occurs most of all through the realization of values.

The achievement of various values allows a human being to realize the sense of his life through a harmonious development of all his potentials.

The aim of a human being on earth is to realize his humanity through the achievement of the good, especially through the fulfillment of values; a truly human action is the one of acquiring values.

Meaning (sense) – is an attribute of action that is proportional to a good aim and is in agreement with it. A meaning is a property which makes something understandable.

Possibilities – a capability proper to man, especially the main **powers** and **skills** that spring out from them, which are permanent abilities to do something and are acquired through practice (*habitus* – virtues). The main powers of a human being are:

- cognitive power – includes development and deepening of the level of knowledge;

- volitive power, or will – the need of forming, exercising the will, reigning over it, increasing the scope and freedom of action.

An important role in a human action is also played by:

- the emotional sphere connected with the will (emotions, feelings, affects) – the fact of the development of feelings and a need of their proper formation, a certain “control” over them; love as a culmination of the emotional sphere – a propagation of *the civilization of love*;¹²
- the physical sphere, the health – a concern for it, a good state of the biological sphere of a human being.

Harmonious development – versatile, proportional, without neglecting any of the possible areas of development; gr. ἁρμονία – *harmony* – tuning of all elements (especially in music), consonance.

Realization – fulfillment, or in other words incorporating something into life, a process of passage from ideas and plans into action and carrying them out.

¹² *The Movement towards the Civilization of Love* was created in Poland in 1983 as an answer to the call of the pope John Paul II. The civilization of love pronounces: 1) primacy of „being” over „having”; 2) primacy of a person over a thing; 3) primacy of ethics over technology; 4) primacy of mercy over justice. Beside these four rules it is also guided by the motto: “conquer evil with good.”

Value (lat. *valor*) – a term that originally comes from economy (a value of things or goods; useful or exchange value); a value is not the same as a price, which can be lowered for various reasons and then it will be below the real value of a certain object.

In philosophy the term *value* was adopted permanently in the second half of the 19th century, although it was used earlier, for example by Kant. In the past there was a different terminology used to denote the same meaning: *good* and *goodness* (lat. *bonum*, *bonitas*). The good usually refers to a concrete being, while goodness denotes an abstract thought.

The philosophy of values is also called axiology (gr. ἄξιος – *axios* = worthy, valuable; λόγος – *logos* = knowledge, science; ἄξια – *axia* = value). Max Scheler (†1928) and Nicolai Hartmann (†1950) are two of the more famous axiologists.

There exist various definitions of values. They depend on the philosophical trend and their author – whether he accepts *subjectivistic* or *objectivistic* conception of a value. Below are some of the more common definitions:

1. A value – something that is precious (wanted, worthy of desire or having) or that, which makes something else precious (wanted). Hence, it is a being (an attribute) which in its content includes some kind of perfection. It is this perfection that induces in a human being a desire and a need to acquire it.
2. “A value is a quality of a being, inasmuch as it is an object of intentional cognitive-desiring acts.” (M. A. Krapiec).

3. “A value is a being which through its objective-qualitative attributes is recognized by a man, and then desired and often realized; a value always corresponds to the needs of a human being as a psycho-physical person. Speaking about the needs of man we have in mind not only biological-living needs, but also and most of all higher needs – psycho-spiritual (i.e. moral, ideological, religious).” (S. Kowalczyk).

Values are sometimes considered as everything that allows giving a meaning and sense to the human existence; which contributes to everything that makes a man more human.

It is necessary to distinguish between **things**, or material and spiritual beings, which are carriers of values (*bona*), and a **reason**, for which these things are **good** or valuable (*valor = ratio bonitatis*). Hence, a value is a kind of a reason; an aspect of a given being (an aspect of good).

Goods and values are respectively: beings and attributes existing in beings. A value is a base which makes it possible for a thing (a being) to be recognized as a good. In other words: a value is an attribute (characteristic) of an object, while a good is an object which contains this attribute.

In ethics values are usually tied to an ideal of a personal perfection of a human being. They create a separate domain of morality. In the past it was called “a moral good” (*bonum honestum*), while today it is commonly known as “the world of values.”

Values make up a special world of *relational* beings. Values manifest themselves in things (beings), but – at least some of them – are not exclusively structures or attributes of beings, existing independently of man. Values include a *correspondence*, a relation to a human being, who, thanks to them, can develop his own existence, give it a deeper sense and come closer to the ideal of human perfection. Certain things “gain” a value, if they are included in the process of the humanization of man.

A human being does not establish values arbitrarily. The **foundation of values** is on one hand a structure of the rational nature of man as a person and his action, while on the other hand – internal attributes of beings – values.

Certain goods, for example, material goods, exist earlier, even before they are used by a human being. There are other goods, however, such as knowledge, self-control, virtue, etc., which do not exist earlier; they develop alongside a man thanks to his auto-determination, as long as he desires to gain them autonomously.

The domains of values

Among values there can be distinguished the following domains:

1. **Life** values (vital, biological) and **material** (bodily) values: for example, eating, drinking, sleeping, clothing. These are the primary values, necessary for biological life. A house, a car, cosmetics, etc. – these are secondary values.

2. **Spiritual** values – belong to a higher, spiritual sphere of human life and usually link an individual with other people. It is the place taken over by widely understood culture, especially art, science, law, reflection, etc.

Among spiritual values it is possible to identify several other domains:

a) **Personal** values – referring to the whole person: life, coexistence with others, respect for life, caring for one's health; values connected with knowledge and the truth about reality: scientific, philosophical, religious; interpersonal values – connected with interactions between people: sincerity, respect and esteem for other people, friendship, love, marriage, family;

b) **Religious** values – characterize a relationship between man and God: respect for *sacrum*, cult, prayer, obedience to religious rules, devotion to matters connected with religion.

This domain of values also includes, beside others, Judeo-Christian values, which have their roots in the biblical tradition and the faith in Christ, the Christian faith, e.g. values based on the *Decalogue*. The **typical Christian** values are represented by mercy and forgiveness, love of enemies, equality of people (races, sexes), the indissolubility of marriage, etc. It is also necessary to include here the commandment of love of God and one's neighbor, if the meaning of the term neighbor includes all people, and not only one's compatriots or fellow citizens (an extension of the love of the neighbor to all people – according to the parable of the Good Samaritan).

c) **Moral** values – constitute another important domain of values. The leading Polish ethicist T. Ślipko defines this term as follows: “Through the term moral values we will understand general norms, or ideals of behavior (for example justice, truthfulness, sense of duty, love), which:

1° refer to typologically defined categories of human action (for example, returning to others that, which is due to them; speaking the truth, performing one’s duties, loving others);

2° express the norms of perfection relevant to this behavior, which are realized in this behavior through imitation of ideals, but

3° in the process of their realization, they also improve a human being as a person, not only his particular talents.”¹³

Argumentation

The statement given in the beginning of this chapter is composed from two parts:

1. A human being should develop harmoniously all of his potentials.
2. The above is accomplished through the realization of values, which includes acquiring them, or putting them into action in life, creating new values and spreading them in the world.

The justification of the above is based on the obviousness coming from internal experience (introspection) and

¹³ Ślipko, T., *Zarys etyki ogólnej* [Outline of general ethics], ed. 4: Kraków 2004, p. 211-212.

on the objective obviousness (external to an individual). Here are a few relevant elements of this explanation:

1. A human being has various possibilities. These possibilities naturally “demand” their realization, i.e. putting them into action.
2. *Bonum faciendum, malum vitandum* – Good should be done, and evil avoided.
3. Values generate a certain appeal to a human being; they give him a challenge, which is recognized through a reflection on them. Values bring forth a desire in a man leading him to their possession.
4. Doing good, especially the realization of immaterial values in life, is an aspect, which differentiates man from animals. It exposes his superiority over them, and through that superiority it reveals in man a certain existing “obligation”, some internal steering in the direction of values.
5. A man benefits from various human achievements – past and contemporary (without the help of other people he would not be able to develop, would not be able to live). Hence, he takes on a certain debt of gratitude, which should be repaid. He is not able to do it properly, unless he achieves a certain level of development, which is possible only through realization of values.
6. The humanity in its vast majority is convinced about the need (necessity) of authentic human development. Since the times of the distant past there has existed on this topic a large dose of encouragement from thinkers, philosophers, scientists.
7. The realization of values is demanded by **the ethical dimension of a human being**. Thanks to his

freedom, a man is able to choose between different forms of good and evil. He has a possibility and an obligation to form and perfect himself. In everyday life this *autocreation* is realized through the proper choices of that which benefits a man and his nature, which improves him. In other words the autocreation is realized through the choosing of the good, especially through the realization of values in life, most of all the moral values. In this way a man properly uses his freedom, when acts in agreement with the rational nature in all spheres of his activity.

John Paul II wrote the following on this topic:

It is essential, therefore, that the values chosen and pursued in one's life be true, because only true values can lead people to realize themselves fully, allowing them to be true to their nature. The truth of these values is to be found not by turning in on oneself but by opening oneself to apprehend that truth even at levels which transcend the person. This is an essential condition for us to become ourselves and to grow as mature, adult persons.¹⁴

Axiological dilemma – a perfectionism in the sphere of values: I should do more and better, I should choose higher values. How far is enough? The answer depends on the concrete individual. It is necessary to remember, however, that relaxation and concern for one's health are also values, which oblige a human being; he should be far-seeing.

¹⁴ John Paul II, encyclical *Fides et ratio*, 25.

11. HUMAN BEING AS A CREATOR OF CULTURE

Culture plays an unusually important role among human activities and is a valuable factor in complementing and perfecting a human being. Hence, the philosophy of man naturally contains at least some of the elements of the philosophy of culture. Various currents of philosophical anthropology have an essential influence on philosophy of culture; this is the reason for the existence of at least several views on that philosophy.

A human being is a creator and a main recipient of culture. Cultural activity, proper only to man, is the fundamental sphere of human activity in the world.

The term *culture* comes from the Latin – *colere* [*cultum*], which means: to cultivate, to care.

The term *culture* originally denoted caring for development of human abilities and possibilities, especially of the human mind, which is in opposition to everything that comes from inborn biological structure, or from birth, from nature (lat. *nasci* [*natus*] – being born). In the 17th and 18th century the notion of culture slowly acquired a wider meaning. It also referred to everything that man added to nature through his activity; hence, the term *culture* also denoted cultural goods.

In the current times there is a widespread view, that **nature** refers to that which is inborn or exists outside of a human being and without his influence or activity, while **culture** encompasses everything, which was developed through conscious and free human acts.

Nature and culture, however, are mutually and closely intertwined. The cultural abilities of a man are in some way a consequence of nature; they are in some sense in-born. In other words: the direction and the scope of culture-developing activities is essentially defined by nature. It is important to add that the proper aim of a culture is to express and perfect the nature of the concrete human being.

Hence, a culture is something, which has its roots in a human being, as his autonomous, personal activity or his personal creation.

Culture develops through the cooperation of many individuals and various societies. The cultural contributions of specific social groups and nations (national culture) make up what we refer to as the culture of humanity. The ability of exchanging ideas between people and inter-human communication practiced with the help of a widely understood language (speech), enables and facilitates the development and the growth of culture.

The cultural activity, or the creation of the culture and “living by the culture”, is one of the main tasks of human activity in the world. A certain cultural minimum is necessary for a human being to live and is especially needed for the broader development of individuals and societies.

The cultural domains

Culture in the *subjective* sense is a human culture-developing activity.

Culture in the *objective* sense is a cultural product, a cultural creation.

A *spiritual* culture is a cognitive and volitive activity along with its results. It includes domains such as: cognition, decision-making, controlling the world, science, art, etc.

A *material* culture refers to material things and is often called *civilization*. It encompasses widely understood “devices” and “tools”, especially the technical innovations such as: a radio, a TV, a phone, a computer, a car, etc. The material culture is characterized by an enormous growth and progress, especially in the area of technology. It easily transcends national borders and is a specifically human creation; such phenomena are not seen in the animal world, which consequently realizes its instinct-driven aims.

A *personal* culture is an activity relating directly to the human person. Its aim is the good of a person, or aspiration to the fullness of one’s own personality and perfection, and progressive realization of this fullness (language, science, morality, religion, social life).

The term “*objective* culture” denotes objects, which once created by man, continue to exist without their creator (technology, art).

The majority of cultural achievements are the result of both personal and objective cultures, because the subject

of the last one is a man, a psycho-physical being (psycho-somatic, spiritual-corporeal).

Culture is also sometimes divided into *elitist-culture* (characteristic for the chosen, specifically prepared individuals) and *mass-culture* (a wider scope). The last one in general has a lower status (the morality and obedience to the law of the masses, however, may be higher than of the elites).

The characteristics of a culture

Culture is *humanistic*, or human – refers to a human being, exists for him and serves him;

- social – is a collaborative work of individuals and whole generations;
- open to various values and forms;
- creative, active and dynamic.

Culture is possible only within the realm of spiritual-material beings.

Throughout centuries the heritage of the human culture has developed and has been used by following generations. Inheritance of culture, however, is limited only to **objective** or external cultural goods. The **personal** goods are not directly transmittable. Parents, for example, cannot directly give their children their best traits of character or the knowledge of some foreign language. This cultural heritage is transmitted only through the process of education.

A certain level of culture has been discovered in the activity of all tribes and of all times.

The cultural goods are characterized by a certain durability and imperishableness.

It is not rare to encounter a question: “Is it possible to see throughout the ages a certain cultural progress?” Generally speaking there are several elements suggesting such progress, but there is also obvious stagnation and even cultural regress. Thus the answer has to be differentiated – it depends on the cultural domain, on the epoch, group or even individual that it refers to.

General statements on the topic of culture:

- I. It is an obvious fact that culture exists and is developed and transmitted by a human being.
- II. Only a human being develops culture, lives by it and lives through it; the cultural activity is a manifestation of his humanity, his elevated nature.
- III. Culture is a fundamental area of human activity; it is a premise in the proof of existence of a spiritual element in a human being.

Argumentation

There are several fundamental concepts used in discussions on the topic of culture:

1. Internal experience, or direct recognition of one’s own “I” and one’s own cognitive, volitive and emotional acts, which are viewed as culture-developing activity;

2. External experience, or recognition of subjects, i.e. people who are authors of culture, and the recognition of objects existing “on the outside”, external to the cognitive subject; culture-developing activity of other people and its creations, i.e. the works of culture.
3. Various statements and testimonies of people, especially those who are knowledgeable on the topic of culture.

A philosophy of culture

The area of philosophy dealing with culture is called *a philosophy of culture*. Its main task is to study various expressions of culture in light of their general and fundamental causes and conditions. More specifically, the philosophy of culture tries to identify the essence of culture and to point out its major goals. Thanks to this area of human thought it is possible to describe and trace out directions and the scope of human culture-developing activity.

The philosophy of culture as an autonomous scientific discipline has developed in the beginning of the 18th century. The specific areas of culture have their own, particular philosophies of culture, which are branches of the philosophy of culture as a whole (history, science, art, religion, education, law, etc.).

Human work

An important role in the human activity is played by work, through which a human being *expresses* himself,

reveals his talents and creativity. Work is placed in the center of human life and is most time-consuming. It determines one of the most fundamental dimensions of human existence on earth, and so it has an anthropological dimension.

There are many definitions of work. Below is one of the explanations which takes into account various sides and characteristics of work:

Work is “a realization of personal potentialities in a human being, which have as an aim the consolidation of one’s own existence (in the vegetative, sensitive and cognitive aspect). The development of a man in his humanity is an actualization of rational potentialities, and so the actualization of a personal side of life. An element that separates a human being from the natural world is his mind, because all acts performed as truly human acts are the result of rational cognition. The activities of the mind and those which are directed by the mind, can be called work in the widest sense. Here we encounter a work of a mind, an effort and a work of a will, a work of creative artistic and technical thought, a work of human muscles directed by a mind and rationally acquired abilities. Such understood work is an expression of humanness, and through this trait it is a self-development of a human being.”¹⁵

¹⁵ M.A. Krapiec, *Praca [Work]*, in: *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii [Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy]*, vol. 8, Lublin 2007, p. 431.

A man has a duty to work; firstly because it is work which allows him to develop and perfect himself, and secondly because the fruits of one's work fulfill the human needs: his own and other people's. A man through his work participates in the growth of the common good, and so he also serves others. Such understood work enriches the sense of the human life on this earth.

The proper understanding of work, or *the culture of work*, should take into account the holistic vision of man as a material-spiritual being who extends beyond the temporal reality (humanization of work).

A man, acting in the world, or working, is not totally "immersed" in the world, but extends beyond this world through his existence and activities, needs and destiny. These aspects have a dual dimension: not only temporal, but also extra-temporal; they are directed beyond this world. The world, then, makes up a human homeland, but it is not his only one.

12. HUMAN BEING AS A HISTORICAL BEING

The life and activity of a human being takes place in a specific time and in a specific space; it occurs in history. This circumstance makes up a distinctive feature of a human being, his specific dimension which creates characteristic conditions for a given individual. Let us take a closer look at this issue.

A human being is a historical being. He exists and acts in the history that he creates and on which he depends.

The issue considered here encompasses a set of reflections which have their root in human life experiences and are characterized by a high dose of obviousness. They have their foundation in the truth that man is a *historical* being by nature.

A human being is not only “placed” in time, and not only conditioned by “the flow of time”, but is also conscious of time and its passing. The **historicity** of man is fundamentally different from time limitations and its passing. This passing is characteristic for all beings existing in the world. Only a human being, however, has a *history* in the strict sense and only a human being can create history. It is possible, because man has something in himself which resists passing, transcends it and surpasses it. A human being in his passing is able to stop in

the face of everything which does not pass with time. He is able to “hold” the past, especially its lasting elements, and “preserve” them for himself and for others.

Historicity determines the mode of human existence. A man in his passing-away is able to keep his identity. He has a great historical chance, which he should take advantage of – thanks to freedom – in the proper way, as a unique subject – a person.

A human historicity is closely tied to **tradition** as one of its elements (lat. *tradere* – to hand down, to transmit). Everything which is present and new is always tied to something previous, in the past, and is more or less dependent on it. Thanks to tradition a human being is able to tie the past with the future, forms the present and the future on the basis of the past, or tradition, from which he grows. Tradition makes it possible to know the past and get closer to it, but it can also create the danger of closing a man in the past and separating him from the present and the future.

The reflections above have several consequences. The first is the fact that man as a historical being always has in himself a reference to his **beginning** and his **end**. Both the one and the other are independent of man: nobody asked us if we wanted to exist, and in general the end of our existence does not depend on us, too. Usually the beginning and the end of human existence somehow elude his consciousness.

Besides, our human existence is fragile, delicate, uncertain, exposed to many dangers... So many causes can

end our life! So very little is needed to lose our life, such as a mistake in driving a car.

If the foundation of historicity is composed of human consciousness and freedom, then there also exists a **possibility of departure** from being human, a risk of self-injury or even self-annihilation. It can happen not only in the physical sense, but also – and maybe most of all – in the **cognitive** sphere, which is more exposed to errors, falsehoods, or involuntary and often not fully conscious distortions of the picture of reality. The possibility of an error generally has its base in two sources: the limitations of our cognitive powers and the enormous richness and complication of reality.

The second major form of departure from being human often takes place in the domain of **freedom**. It is possible for a man to abuse his freedom and do something false, wrong, bad, and he sometimes really does it. Such action has its consequences both in relation to an individual and to the whole society. It is not impossible that these actions are carried out freely and consciously.

The fact that a human being is not only an object of history, but also her subject and creator, carries with it the responsibility for the fate of the world – depending on the influence he has or can have on shaping it. The contemporary form of the world and its future depends most of all on the whole humankind. Unfortunately, the difference and even divergence of opinion on the topic of what is better in a given moment of history, as well as disagreements and wars are the most common causes of evil, which we experience, and maybe even participate in.

A historicity of man is connected with his **passing**; a dimension of life, which so often fills people with wonder, or even uneasiness and sadness, and repeatedly forces them to reflect more deeply on their lives and the outside world, and often leads them to a persistent search for the meaning of human existence. Our reality is always on the run; it consists of some strange passing of the future into the past. This passing is relentless, necessary: it is not possible to stop the time and the flow of events. From time to time man is able to better grasp this truth, sometimes he rebels against it, at other times he tries to slow down the time or even altogether stop the flow of events. Such tries have their fulfillment in the works of art (literature, music, architecture, etc.), which aim to preserve certain elements of the passing reality.

In spite of change and passing, which are the features of human and earthly reality, there exists something in man, which is **constant**, which does not pass away with time, which is the foundation of his identity and consciousness. This constant element in a human being cannot be matter, since it is changing and passing, but an immaterial, spiritual element.

Historicity refers not only to specific individuals, but also to society, which consists of a group of individuals and manifests its susceptibility to the influences similar to those experienced by people in their individual existence.

The conditions of human existence shown above have their root in a feature which in philosophical language is called **accidental**. It can be explained by pointing out that man is a being, which may exist or may not exist. In other words a human being does not have to exist, he does not exist from necessity. It is for this reason that man does

not find the final explanation of himself – not in himself, nor in the outside world. He does not know the origins of his condition, whose synthesis is somehow enclosed in the *historicity*. In the process of getting to know these conditions a human being receives the *first*, direct answer to the question of the aim and the meaning of his life and activities on the earth, and especially of the sense and the cause of realizing his humanity, or being more fully a human being. Such answer, however, is not always satisfactory. The moments of deeper reflection, provoked, for example, by certain dramatic life events, bring forth persistent questions about the meaning of the *whole* of his existence on earth, about the meaning of the history of humankind and the world in general, and about that, which comprises the final purpose, which is the aim of man and everything that exists.

The philosophical reflection cannot give the full and totally satisfying answer to all questions troubling the human heart. Therefore, there are other disciplines that come to an aid, such as religion and faith.

Hence, a man is a historical being: his life unfolds in history, which he also creates. All of this is happening within the world. Hence, existence in the world becomes one of the human conditions.

This existence in the world is limited and continues until the moment of death. The consciousness of this moment, especially its inevitability, should and usually does influence human life decisions. Therefore, man in his acts should take into account the fact that he exists on this earth only for a certain time.

The moment of death, however, does not end the total human existence. The spiritual element – as immaterial,

and hence indivisible – cannot disintegrate, cannot die and so it continues to exist. What is the fate of the human spirit (the soul) after death – it is a question, which philosophy cannot fully answer. And here also religion comes to an aid giving answers to at least some of the problems tormenting the human heart.

From the philosophical point of view it is only possible to say that a human being has a purpose that is both **worldly** and **beyond this world**. The worldly aim consists of full and versatile development of a human person and the corresponding action and perfection of the human habitat, understood in a widest sense. In the holistic dimension the goal of a human being is a full, perfect and lasting happiness. This desire for happiness accompanies a human being all of his life, and it is unsuccessfully looked for in the passing world. This happiness can be granted only by a fully perfect being, the highest being – God, who put this longing into man. Religion shows the conditions necessary to gain this happiness.

13. HUMAN BEING AS A DIALOGICAL BEING

A human being does not live alone. Among beings, with which he makes and upholds various ties, a special place belongs to another human being. Man by his nature is directed to and dependent on others.

A human being, as a person, is oriented towards other humans; he is a dialogical being. Through a dialogue he is able to discover, understand and realize himself.

The currently described issue is usually called a philosophy of dialogue, a philosophy of a meeting, dialogics or philosophy of the *other*. The “philosophy of dialogue” is in contrast to the “philosophy of monologue”, which is characteristic to various old and contemporary philosophical views. The philosophy of dialogue developed most rapidly in the 20th century; it has become a reaction to certain currents of subjective philosophy, which had their origins in the German idealism.

The main representatives of the dialogical thought were: Martin Buber (1878-1965), Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1927), Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) and Emmanuel Lévinas (1906-1995).

Thinkers of this philosophical movement start out from the truth inherited from an older philosophical tradition. This truth states that man is a being – understood and interpreted in many different ways – turned towards another

man, towards other people; he is a dialogical being. This motive becomes the main subject for development and exploration. The elements common to most thinkers in this category can be reduced to the following statements.

The experience of the other (that is the other human being and other people) is something essentially different from and higher than *experiencing things*. Hence, the experience of *the other* cannot be reduced to the experience connected with things, with objects. The experience of *the other* is primary when compared to experiencing things and this first experience becomes a base for the second one.

Through the *experience of the other*, one can understand various kinds of contacts established between people, especially meeting others, relation I – you, speech and talk (especially dialogue), gestures, using someone's name, asking questions and receiving answers (listening), the moment of experiencing identity between I and you (taking into account the essential distinctiveness of the *other*), "The Absolute of the other" (Lévinas), a face of the other (Lévinas says that a person manifests itself through a human face) and in a general, broad understanding of "experiencing" another person. The fundamental phenomenon in experiencing the *other* is love.

The experience of *You* (the other) is for *I* a source of identification, i.e. consciousness and understanding of one's own identity, and the source of enrichment: through the meeting with the other I become myself in the fuller sense. And in reverse: this experience is a source of mutual transformation. It also opens a human being to transcendence.

The philosophers from the dialogical circles emphasize that *the experience of the other* is something more than *knowing* another person; cognition is something secondary to experience and is only one of its many forms.

Hence, according to them, a different approach to philosophy is born. According to this approach, philosophy is not exclusively *cognitive* knowing of reality, but it becomes the *experiencing* of reality.

“The central metaphysical phenomenon in the essential thinking of Lévinas is the phenomenon of personal world; personal meeting; responsibility, in which there are involved people that meet together; or – as it is described by Lévinas in more personal language – the characters of drama or intrigue. [...] The first phenomenon, whose exposition and analysis constitute the first philosophy or metaphysics, is for Lévinas the personal phenomenon, and is also called by him the ethical phenomenon.”¹⁶

Certain representatives of the philosophy of dialogue point out many various issues concerning a dialogue of a human being with God.

The dialogical dimension versus the social dimension of man

What is the difference between the **dialogical** dimension of a human being, which is our point of interest in this chapter, and his **social** dimension, which we will study in the next chapter.

1. The relationship **I – You**, usually called interpersonal or even “social” relationship, is **the principle of philosophical thinking in general** – according to the philosophy of dialogue – and not just a principle

¹⁶ A. Jarnuszkiewicz, *Emmanuela Lévinasa metafizyka spotkania* [Emmanuel Lévinas' metaphysics of meeting], in: R. Janusz (ed.), *Towarzystwo Naukowe Księży Jezuitów w Krakowie* [Academic Society of the Jesuit Fathers in Cracow], Kraków 2008, p. 224.

“data” for one of many philosophical disciplines such as social philosophy. Thus the “dialogical principle” often expressed in the terms such as: “being of a person with a person”, “meeting with the Other”, “responsibility for the Other”, becomes the main ontological (metaphysical) principle. The social philosophy, on the other hand, is a part of a broadly understood **philosophy of man**. It takes into account the anthropological reflection encountered in some of the particular sciences: psychology, cultural studies, sociology, economy and other social sciences.

2. The philosophy of dialogue emphasizes straightforwardness and closeness of a relationship with the Other. It points out that a relationship between “a person and a person” is not the same as a relationship between “an individual and a society”.
3. The social philosophy practiced outside of the philosophy of dialogue looks at a place of a human being in a society through the lens of needs that an individual has for his/her personal growth and/or the needs that a society has for its own existence and activities. A social reflection of the philosophy of dialogue starts out from the ethical and even religious dimension of the relationship between the subject and the *Other*. This point of view enables it to avoid extremes, such as individualism or collectivism.
4. Both dimensions discussed above differ in the number of subjects they consider. In a dialogue, which is a freely chosen option, the number of participants is relatively small; it has a somewhat “elitist” character. The social dimension, on the other hand, includes all and as such has a “common” character.

14. HUMAN BEING AS A SOCIAL BEING

A field of study interested in a human being in its social aspect is called *social philosophy*. But even here, there is a need of concise presentation of this subject on account of the fundamental role of society and community in the life of an individual and in philosophy of a human being.

A human being is a social being. Therefore, he can fully realize himself only in the union with others. He needs and seeks mutual company and together builds various forms of communities.

A human being is open to other people thanks to his cognitive and volitive abilities. These abilities enable him to gain knowledge about others, desire others and pursue them, as well as establish various forms of contact and cooperation with other people. It is not only that a human being has these *abilities*, but he can also put them into practice. These actions make it possible to create interpersonal relations: *I-you*, *I-we*, *we-you*. The backbone of these relations is constituted by cognition and love. Thanks to interpersonal communication there is a possibility of a mutual interchange of values. The means by which this communication takes place is facilitated by human speech.

A human being needs various contacts with others and in fact establishes these contacts. He is not sufficient for

himself: only in a society he can achieve and achieves fuller development of his capabilities: physical and psychological, intellectual and moral, economical, social and political.

The entrance of a human being into this world is dependent on others, most of all on parents. A human being after birth is not yet capable of independent living. For many years he depends on others, is at their mercy, and not only in the physical aspect, but also in various other ones (up-bringing, education). The help of other people is necessary also in the later years. In order to fully develop, he needs an environment, other people, especially in the periods of childhood, adolescence and in the old age.

The development of a human being requires him to join other people and together with them create various communities (personal associations, groups). He cooperates and works together with others on many different fields. Taking advantage of the work done by others, he incurs an obligation to **work** for others, to facilitate their development as individuals and as a group. The goal of associating and the goal of various societies is the common good of all.

There are many different forms of communities, which bring together people with various ties between them. The most important communities include: **marriage and family, nation, state, international community**. These are *natural* communities. The Church is a *supernatural*, religious community.

Within these fundamental communities, there exist many smaller *conventional* communities, such as parties,

organizations, unions, associations, groups, and others, which have various characteristics, for example political, scientific, professional, artistic, athletic, social, etc.

Societies in the special and deeper sense are those groups which form a *community*. The community develops through conscious and free personal choice, and its fundamentals and aims usually consist of higher *values* and not only utilitarian ones.

The relation of individuals to communities, and communities to individuals was often and still is a source of tension and even conflict. There have developed three main perspectives in this regard throughout the ages:

individualism, which preaches the absolute primacy of the interests of an individual over the interests of a group (liberalism);

collectivism (anthropological), which accepts the absolute primacy of the interests of a group over the interests of an individual (for example Marxism).

A more moderate (mediating) stance in this area is connected with a broadly understood humanism and is called **personalism**, which takes into account both the individualistic and also the collective, social and communal aspects.

In both of these aspects of personalism, there are two main components: *a person* (a human being as spiritual-material unity) and *a value* (its domain, exchange and community of values). The fundamental values of societal life are justice and love.

We know from our earlier considerations that a human being is a person and it is his essential characteristic. A person is defined as *individual rational substance*.

The society, however, is not a person, because it is not one substance. It is a collection of substances, a collection forming one whole set, a collection of individuals, that is people.

A society joined together by various human ties is not exclusively a sum of individuals. It is something more. It is a real being – so called *relational being*. Therefore, a society has its **own** domain of activity and its **own** rights and duties.

A society has its root and foundation in the human rational nature. Hence, it cannot, or strictly speaking **should not** limit the correct development of a person. On the contrary, it should foster such development.

The social dimension of a human being and his participation in the societal structure imposes on him certain duties towards the society. It entails a responsibility of a human being not only for himself, but also for the society to which he belongs and in which he lives. A degree of that responsibility depends on the influence which the individual exerts or can exert on the society. This responsibility extends in some way on the whole of the human race.

15. HUMAN BEING AS A RELIGIOUS BEING

A reflection on a human being reveals in him a religious dimension. Hence, in order to fully understand a human being, it is essential to recognize and respect this dimension. This dimension is the subject of the philosophy of religion, which is concerned with the essence, aim and argumentation for religion. Here we will deal only with essential anthropological aspects of this issue.

A human being, as a rational and free being, conscious of his self-insufficiency but also his transcendence, actively seeks the Absolute (i.e. God) with whom he may engage in a dialogue called *religion*.

The existence of religion is a known fact. Religion is an inherent phenomenon of a human life since time immemorial. Hence, there comes a question of what is religion and how can we explain the continuing phenomenon of religion and being religious?

[...] religion is a relationship between a human being and a variously understood and interpreted religious object. The historical experience gained from many religions allows for the conclusion that the object of religious relationship is treated by a religious human

being as “Someone”, who is able to establish a dialogue with a man [...]”¹⁷.

The main manifestation of religion is being religious, or certain religious acts (activity) which usually engage the whole person. These acts are directed towards a particular religious object (*sacrum*), which is a being that is real, existing, transcendent-immanent, personal and constituting a value.

The acknowledgment of the existential dependence of a human person on the personal Creator constitutes the foundation of a religious act, or a conscious response of a human being in the face of God.

The main reasons for acknowledging this dependence are as follows:

1. The existential insufficiency of a human person. This insufficiency is connected with the human characteristic, which in the philosophical language is called existential *accidentality*. The human being experiences this accidentality in his life in many different ways; for example, when he is aware of the impossibility to rationally explain and understand certain facts in his own life and in the lives of other people, and even more so in the social, political and economic life.
2. The consciousness of his own *transcendence* in relation to the world in which he lives. It manifests itself especially in the specifically understood *superiority* in relation to nature and in an

¹⁷ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia* [*The human being and religion*] Lublin 2006, p. 377.

effort to conquer it; for example, in endeavors to free himself of the natural limits imposed by his corporeality.

The human being, through his spiritual element, can transcend nature and the world in which he lives. In this world he can satisfy his material needs. He cannot, however, satisfy many needs of the spiritual nature, such as his thirst for happiness. Hence, there is a visible disproportion between the human need for perfect happiness and the possibility of achieving it in this world. This disproportion shows that the highest human desire cannot be satisfied here.

Argumentation

The existence of religion and religious behavior as well as the fact of common occurrence of religion – both in the past and today – can be satisfactorily explained only by the existence of the Absolute Being, that is God as the personal and absolute cause of these phenomena.

The starting point of the argumentation includes various anthropological facts, especially psychological and sociological ones which take place in the human life. The uniqueness of these facts stems from the special status of a human person which surpasses in dignity all other beings in this world.

There are two main movements among philosophers who deal with the topic of *man-God*. The proponents of the first movement are in favor of continuing the Greek-Roman philosophical tradition, where the essential role is played by the abstract and discursive way

of thinking. Others belong to the Hebrew tradition, which emphasizes the role of intuition, feelings and action. The argumentation given below is closer to the Hebrew tradition, although it is not contrary to the first movement, which is often called classical. This classical philosophy can also start out with the facts of spiritual life asserting human nature and interpret them in light of metaphysical principle of sufficient reason and finality. Below are three arguments on the current topic.

1. From the natural desire of perfect happiness

The desire of perfect happiness, which inevitably accompanies all men, has its root in the unique psychological structure of a human being. With the use of abstract thinking, a human being is able to create general, analogical and transcendent ideas, through which he is open to every being. This general cognition is followed by human will, which thanks to generality of ideas and the possibility of various ways of making them concrete, has the ability to choose freely and is open to all forms of good.

It is true, however, that in this temporal life, a man can satisfy only some of his needs and desires. On the other hand, the rationality of the world requires that the natural human desires should not be illusive and deceptive. Hence, it is befitting that there should exist such a Being, that could satisfy these desires. It should be a personal Being, because only such a Being is able to secure true and perfect happiness for a human being, who is a person.

2. From the sense of duty

The sense of duty manifests itself through the voice of conscience, which suggests the existence of the highest Lawmaker, on whom a human being is dependent in making moral decisions, and whose authority prompts obedience to the moral law. Peer pressure or personal prudence of individuals does not provide sufficient cause for the existence of the sense of duty, because this moral fact is universal and irremovable.

3. From the universal human convictions

The existence of religion, both currently and in the prehistoric times, is affirmed by ethnology and paleontology. The universality of the occurrence of religion shows that it is a phenomenon which complies with the human nature. The problem of genesis of religion, however, is complicated. The religiousness of prehistoric people in the stage of hunting and gathering did not have a philosophical character, but rather an existential one. Hence, it was not the result of theoretical thinking. Moreover, the tradition of these people includes legends about the original contact with the Highest Being and their religiousness, even of the cultures far apart from each other, is quite unified. These facts suggest that at the root of prehistoric religiousness stands the original Revelation.¹⁸

¹⁸ See also S. Ziemiański, *Teologia naturalna*, Kraków 2008.

Religion versus atheism

In light of the reflection above, atheism, or the negation of God, does not have objective justification. It flows out from various subjective reasons such as:

1. insufficient, skewed or erroneous knowledge about disciplines connected with religion;
2. imputation of erroneous function to the human will, such as exorbitant voluntarism, which manifests itself in the sense of too much independence (“everything depends on me”) and the sense of unrestricted freedom in the choice of life decisions and consequent actions;
3. excessive succumbing to emotions and allowing them to be decisive in the decision making process, sometimes as a reaction to reprehensible behavior of the faithful, especially the clergy.

In connection with the reasons above (signaled in point 1), which have an influence in the decision not to accept the existence of God, we point out the occurrence of the following conditions:

- a) some people did not have a chance to acquaint themselves with reasonable arguments for the existence of God;
- b) others were biased against such argumentation and did not want to acquaint with it;
- c) furthermore, others were not convinced by the arguments they have encountered.

In connection with the last case (c), there are certain other conditions to consider:

- the arguments were not convincing in themselves;
- the way of making these arguments was inadequate;
- their receivers did not have the proper intellectual preparation to be able to understand them;
- they had a preconceived opinion on the subject and even after acquainting with the arguments they were not convinced.

HUMAN BEING – AN ABSOLUTE?

Juxtaposing these two terms: *Human* and *absolute* can be surprising. The title of this work is not, however, a univocal thesis; as the question mark at the ending of the title suggests. It is more an issue under reflection or a question: is human an absolute? – and if so, in what sense and on what basis?

Before we try to answer this question it is necessary to define the “absolute” and to understand what (who) has “an absolute character?” The term *absolute* stems from a Latin adjective: *absolutus*, which comes from a verb: *ab-solvere* = *unbind, let free*. The rudimentary meaning is then: unbound, free, and thus in consequence: (a being) which is not relative, conditionless, without boundaries, not limited by anything, independent, prime and complete, and in some sense *infinite* – characterized by some completeness of being. The term *absolute* has been appearing in the history of human thought from the ancient times to this day, and it has taken on various, often quite distant meanings.

An *Absolute* written with a capital letter very often stands for a being which is perfect, uppermost, complete and independent. It appears in many different philosophies and religions, usually, as an equivalent of the notion of God, sometimes, however, without paying attention to personal attributes; it is impersonal. In some philosophical and religious systems the notions of God and an Absolute are in fact equivalent.

Reflection about a human being leads to a conclusion that a man is characterized by some marks of limitlessness, which constitute some dimension of his ‘infinite-ness,’ and thus some form of an ‘Absolute.’

‘Infiniteness’ in the case of a man has its foundation in consciousness (reason) and freedom (free will). It manifests itself by various ways in which a human being is open to reality. Let us take a closer look at some of the forms of human *openness*.

1. LIMITLESS COGNITIVE HORIZON

Openness in cognitive sphere, that is in terms of truth, means that a human being has unlimited cognitive capabilities: he can get to know every being, not only material, but also immaterial, that is spiritual. A man is also open to an absolute being, to an infinite being, that is to God.

A human being makes use of the cognitive capabilities to a lesser or greater extent, by acquiring more and more knowledge about himself, as well as the reality which surrounds him. The research field which opens in front of him, and which is accessible to him, is also limitless. The main domains of such research are: consciousness, reasoning, reflection, getting to know the truth, planning, culture in the broadest sense, and science, in particular.

Cognitive openness reveals itself at every stage of human cognitive development, beginning with the creation of not only specific, detailed (individual) notions, but also general notions (e.g. goodness, truth, love, being), which is done through the formulation of judgments (statements, thesis). The most perfect form of cognition revealed in

a man is reasoning (inference, argumentation, explanation, verification). In this way it is also possible to get to know the existence of an Absolute (God) and at least some of his attributes.

Such *openness* of a human being is expressed among others by *speech*, based on sounds which are *symbols*. The basis of speech constitute general notions, which are unconnected to matter. Being as such (being in general) becomes the subject of thought and speech.

2. OPENNESS IN THE SPHERE OF FREEDOM

A man is a free being, capable of choosing various aims and means to reach them. It is the freedom of choice, that is a lack of physical necessity (violence, compulsion) from the outside; it is the freedom from the necessity ensuing from nature. In other words: it is a capability (competence, endowment) thanks to which a human will can determine itself, can decide to act or not to act, and while deciding to act, it can choose one or the other form of action.

A man not only possesses the above mentioned cognitive and volitive capabilities (related to will), but also realizes them, that is, makes use of them, and it is done in two main domains: the internal (immanent) and the external (transcendent).

A human being not only really knows and desires, but also chooses and does various external activities. The main areas of these activities are: consciousness, the process of thinking, getting to know the truth, planning, speech, work, culture (including art), realization of values, technology, civilization, progress etc.

Cognitive and volitive openness are possible because a human being possesses a specific, unique, characteristic only to himself ontic structure of being.

3. LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES OF CHOICE

Human freedom is not so much a freedom to select various choices, but rather to direct these choices towards a certain good. In making use of his freedom and in deciding to act, a human being has at his disposal an unusual wealth. He possesses limitless possibilities of choice; is capable of desiring, searching for various goods, not only material, but also immaterial (spiritual). A man can embrace all kinds of goods and through the use of his capabilities he can eventually reach them.

The objects of human desires, wants, strivings and achievements are not limited only to one particular category of being, but include beings of all kinds, also immaterial, such as: truth, goodness, beauty, love, happiness, God.

The richness of goods which humans can reach is unlimited. The following are the most significant domains in which a man can and does realize his own freedom: work, realization of values, creation of cultural goods, progress, technology, civilization, etc.

A human being, however, is not almighty and cannot achieve everything he sets out to do. He does have at his disposal, however, many ways to choose from and to realize further possibilities, also different from those which are being realized at present.

4. THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT

The unlimited cognitive and volitive openness of a man and his uniqueness in the world must have their proportional basis. It is the spiritual element comprising the human being.

There is a spiritual element in a man – the soul, in the strict sense of the word, which in its *spiritual* aspect is in some way absolute. We are convinced about it by facts both in the domains of cognition and will (desire). In the process of cognition we make statements about various cognitive activities and their results, that is, cognitive acts. In particular, these activities are: observing, imagining, associating, creating notions, making judgments, and reasoning; and as for the results there are the following: impressions, observations, images, associations, notions, judgments and conclusions.

The psychological-philosophical reflection discerns between sensual and mental cognition, drawing, in the first place, on an analysis of general notions and judgments, which being connected to the sensual cognition, cannot be limited only to the senses. They are characterized by generality, which is not typical of sensual cognition.

A notion unbound to individual features of particular being of a given species, a general notion, bearing essential features of a being to which it refers to, and predicating about many designates of the same species – such a notion is immaterial. Everything that is material is always individual; possesses spatial and temporal features. If general notions are spiritual, by the same token, a cognitive capability which creates them, that is – mind, must also be spiritual. Hence, this source, this basis for both the mind, as well as – indirectly – notions, we call

a human soul. A judgment and its external expression: statement – is a further manifestation of the existence of the immaterial element in a human being. Similar evidence is even more clearly seen in the case of reasoning.

Free will and its particular manifestations, such as: wish, desire, decision, choice, striving, execution (achievement of the goal one aims at) – are further arguments for the existence of a spiritual element in a human being. From our inner experience, from our reflection on the activities of the will, we know that there exist in us both sensual desires, which aim at reaching some individual material goods, as well as desires and aspirations of our will relating to immaterial beings, which can be grasped only intellectually, e.g. goodness, beauty, love, justice, devotion, perfection.

Hence, the argumentation in favor of the existence of a spiritual element in a man is based primarily on the analysis of rational cognition. Certain cognitive activities of a human being, as well as some objects of cognition, are spiritual. They must have the proportional basis, which should also be spiritual – according to the principle of sufficient reason as well as the rule of causation.

The spiritual constituent is also revealed by an analysis of natural human desires (the human will). The aims of human desires and aspirations – alongside with material ones – are purely spiritual ones, eternal, and everlasting: goodness, the highest values, God. These desires are directed to immaterial beings, which a man is able to reach more or less often. Hence, if such desires are present in a man and are realized by him, they must be based on something, they must have some proportional, immaterial basis. That very basis, independent of temporariness and transience, we call a spiritual element (soul).

5. HUMAN BEING AND BEAUTY

A human being possesses unlimited possibilities also in the sphere of beauty. “God’s element”, also called “God’s spark” is noticeable particularly in this domain. A man is capable of creating beauty through artistic activity, is capable of creating pieces of art and of contemplating them. And not only does he possess such capabilities, but also realizes such possibilities, thus creating beautiful works, especially pieces of art. Apart from that, a human being learns about beautiful objects, “savors them”, uses them, ennobling himself, that is enriching his personality with new values.

An aspect of human limitlessness in this sphere is underlined by the fact that the beauty of an authentic piece of art is everlasting, that is, it possesses a particular way of existence, as well as a particular feature of eternity and indestructability, although beautiful works – e.g. pieces of art – are physically “fleeting” and often get destroyed. The same relates to music and other spheres of esthetic values.

The beauty of a human being in himself is another matter. It manifests itself in many aspects, which also show various forms of limitlessness. Among these, a special place of particular beauty is reserved for human intellect and will.

6. IMMORTALITY

A man as a whole, as a determined material-spiritual being, experiences death, but his substantial element: a spiritual element, that is soul – thanks to its spirituality – does

not cease to exist with the moment of death, but exists further; it is immortal, and so uniquely absolute.

Immortality – as the name itself indicates – is a freedom from mortality, and through that freedom, it indicates lasting forever. Thus, it is an aspect of being which does not cease to exist, does not die and is indestructible. In a human being there is a spiritual element (soul) that is immortal, and this immortality ensues from human nature, from a human being itself, from his structure of being; a human soul is immortal because it is spiritual.

These are the arguments, which among others, speak in favor of the soul's spirituality and immortality:

A human soul in its essential activities, that is, in its cognitive and volitive activities, is internally independent from matter, from the body. Hence, it must also be independent in its being and therefore it does not cease to exist when the body dies. Thus the soul is immortal, since its essential activities ensue from existence and are based on it.

A human being is destined to live forever.

- a) A man possesses unlimited capabilities of learning the truth. Since the object of the human mind is that which exists (a being as such), a man can get to know all beings; everything which is possible to comprehend. An expression of it is a never satiated human curiosity. We want to know more than we know at present. This cognitive capability cannot be exhausted even with an exceptionally extensive and deep knowledge. The convincing argument for this is provided for us by testimonies of famous scientists and the history of progress of human knowledge.
- b) A human will possesses similar capabilities in the sphere of goodness. The object of a human will

is goodness as such, which means: all goodness. Thus a man desires a certain good, strives for it and – to a lesser or greater extent – achieves it. A man is not content with just *any good*, a limited good. He does not limit himself to such limited good, but always strives for more.

The desire of truth and good is something fundamental in a human being and is not something secondary or peripheral. It is also universal, since it existed in the past and does exist now in practically all people. This leads to the conclusion that the desire of truth and good results from human nature, and that such is the very structure and condition of a human being, and that such is the human destiny.

However, the unlimited capabilities of a human intellect and will are realized on this earth only in a small percentage. It is evident that they cannot be realized here in full. That is why one has to assume that they will be fulfilled after the earthly life, through participation in an infinite cognition and an infinite good, in God. Otherwise, the rationality of human nature would be contradicted. This is the argument in favor of the immortality of the human spirit.

The issue, that some people might not achieve this aim, is a matter of their free choice. It is a consequence of their free will and the price, which a human being pays for a great but difficult gift of freedom he is endowed with.

The innate sense of justice also demands the existence of afterlife, since here, in this world, it is often evil, violence, injustice, and even trampling of righteousness and goodness that dominate.

There is a need for a special “place”, where justice, which is often not respected in this world, will be served.

7. EXISTENTIAL COMMUNITY

There exist both a human being as well as an Absolute, that is God. God's existence is reflected upon and demonstrated in a philosophical discipline known as the natural theology or the philosophy of God. The notion of existence is common for both categories of being: for man and for God. This existence, however, is not identical, univocal, it is thus different in the case of man and in the case of God. There are great differences between these two, but also some similarities. In philosophical terminology a science about this reality is often named *the analogy*. According to this science, the existence in the case of man and God is analogous; in some ways the same, in some ways different. God is the essential existence, and a human being only participates in existence. Despite this difference there is a particular existential community – a community of existence. In this sense a man has something of the Absolute.

8. METAPHYSICAL INSUFFICIENCY

A human being is characterized by a specific *insufficiency*, which is often called the *metaphysical insufficiency*. It expresses itself in our desire to know more and to have more than we know or have at present, and it is relevant to different spheres. It is not relevant only to the material sphere, but also to the spiritual domain. As a matter of fact it relates mostly to the spiritual domain, and potentially to every sphere of human activity.

The desire of truth, good, love, happiness points to a specific human inclination and his orientation towards

full cognition and complete happiness, which cannot be achieved in the sphere of matter. This specific insufficiency shows that there exists in a man some element which is lasting and which surpasses matter.

The characteristically human desire for truth and good is systematically realized, for a human being, as the time passes, increases his knowledge about himself and about the reality which surrounds him. In this way, he increases and enriches the wealth of truth. This human drive and capability never cease. Although a human being cannot actually reach infinity, he is always potentially open to it.

9. "GOD'S INVOLVEMENT" IN HUMAN AFFAIRS

The greatness of a human being is attested not only by his openness to God, but also by the unique "interest" in a man on the part of God, or even more: the unique initiative and God's involvement in human affairs.

Reflecting on a human being uncovers in him also a religious dimension. The acknowledgement and respect for this dimension are indispensable in order to fully understand man. This very dimension is the subject matter of the philosophy of religion, which deals with the essence, aim and justification of religion.

The existence of religion is a fact. It is an inseparable phenomena of human life and it has been so since the oldest of times. The main expression of religion is religiousness, that is, particular religious acts (activities) which usually involve the whole man. They are directed towards a particular religious object (*sacrum*), the form of being which is really existent, transcendental-immanent, personal and of particular value.

The main reasons for the acknowledgement of this “dependence” are the following:

1) The existential “insufficiency” of a human being. It is connected to the human characteristic, which in the philosophical language is called “*ontic contingency*”. A man experiences this contingency in a variety of ways: among others, stating the impossibility of rational explanation and comprehension of some facts in his own life and in the lives of other people, especially in the social, political and economic life.

2) The awareness of one’s own transcendence in relation to the world in which a man lives. It manifests itself in a specifically understood superiority in relation to nature and in attempts to surpass it, that is, in attempts to attain freedom from the limitations resulting, in particular, from the corporeality which is characteristic to man.

Thanks to his spiritual constituent, a human being surpasses nature and the everyday world he lives in. In this world he can satisfy his material needs, but cannot satisfy many of his spiritual needs, among others – the need for happiness. There is a disproportion between the human need for perfect happiness and the possibilities of satisfying this need in this world. This disproportion signifies the impossibility of reaching the perfect happiness.

Christian theology goes in this respect even further: it emphasizes human freedom as a foundation for any activity proper to a human being, and asserts that the Son of God accepted the human nature, redeemed humankind through his passion, death and resurrection. The Son of God gives to a man his grace and love, bestows mercy, and eventually destines him for eternal happiness.

10. UNIQUE DIGNITY

Thanks to being so richly equipped, a man possesses a unique, personal dignity. This dignity, greatness, and value of a human being are revealed in human consciousness and capability of deciding about himself, which all naturally ensue from the spiritual character of a human person. A man is a limitless being in the sphere of cognition and will, and thus in some respect reaches the order of an Absolute. In other words – by analogy – a human being is endowed with “divinity”. Through his free activity, he is capable of realizing the order of values, including especially the order of moral values.

Apart from that, the human dignity has its basis in: the specific ontic structure, in which various elements constitute a unity (microcosm), and further: the soul, which is directly created by God and exists in a human being, as well as the fact of being destined – thanks to the immortal soul – to living forever.

This fundamental dignity is inherent in all people. There exists, however, a separate dimension of human dignity – the concrete and individual dimension, that is the personal dignity of an individual man, as well as his individual good features and virtues. The virtues are possessed especially by those, who consciously strive and work to acquire them.

A human being as a person capable of realizing his life goals, is bestowed with particular entitlements, usually called rights, and also specific duties, called obligations. Both rights and duties apply to a man as a person, but also to other people and the society in which he lives and acts, as well as to the environment

in which he dwells. They enable him and others to fully develop. Duties relate both to individuals, especially parents, relatives, benefactors, those in need etc., as well as to various communities; they relate to the common good, and especially to the creation of such conditions, so that others can develop too.

CONCLUSION

The greatness of a human being manifests itself primarily in the fact, that through his consciousness and the possibility of deciding about himself, a man reaches the peak of his existence, and through this he rises to the order of an Absolute. In other words: in some respect – by analogy – we are gifted with “divinity”.

Truth and freedom – the fundamental values of human existence and activity – have an absolute character, are conditionless, that is they are possible and are realized in the sphere of every being, being as such, and not in the limited domain of particular, concrete objects and values restricted to the material world.

Gifted in this way, a human being has a unique place in the universe. He is not content with this limited world; human capabilities go beyond this world, they transcend the visible world. One of the important characteristics of a man, realized every day, is his ability to cross various boundaries and limitations.

Hope, taking on different dimensions, plays a significant role in the process of shaping human life on various levels, that is, in the sphere of an openness to future, to “being more” and “having more”.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one must state that bearing in mind relevant proportions, distinctions and objections mentioned earlier, it is possible to say that **in some way a human being is absolute**. One can claim so, because **a human being really is so**.

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Roman Darowski

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Our times are characterized by the heightened awareness that every person has a right to be a creator of one's own destiny. Although this truth is not universally realized yet, the resignation of implementing this truth would be tantamount to a betrayal of a human being, his values and dignity, which belong to him as a human person.

At the same time there exists a large uncertainty and divergence of views on who is a human being. Therefore there is an urgent need of reflection about man in order to accurately get to know him in all of his dimensions and aspects. There is a need of looking for the truth about man. This book joins this reflection. It is written to serve people who look for the truth about a human being.



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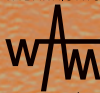
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