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SELECTED ASPECTS OF UNDERSTANDING CULTURE  
IN THE LIGHT OF KAROL WOJTYŁA  
CONCEPTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

INTRODUCTION

Culture has various meanings. There are varied interpretations, especially from socio-cultural anthropology and cultural psychology point of view. This paper examines culture from a philosophical perspective, and it is limited to Karol Wojtyła's view. The expected achievement is in the form of capturing the essence of culture in relation to the human person in Wojtyła's philosophical thought.

As a matter of fact, culture cannot be separated from a human being. It is rooted and originates from human being. In order to understand culture as a product that springs from human nature, it is necessary to investigate the problem of human person's subjectivity which then shows the relationship between culture and the human person.

Wojtyła comprehends that "a culture without human subjectivity and without human causality is inconceivable: in the cultural field, *man is always the first fact: man is the prime and fundamental fact* of culture."<sup>1</sup> There are no other entities in the visible world that deals with culture, other than a human being; it is the property of a human being. For Wojtyła, culture is nothing more than a specific way of manifesting human existence and being.<sup>2</sup> He

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<sup>1</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to UNESCO (June 2, 1980), Interdisciplinary Encyclopedia of Religion and Science, 8, accessed July 30, 2023, <https://inters.org/John-Paul-II-UNESCO-Culture>.

<sup>2</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to UNESCO, 6.

talks about culture in two senses, that is, the culture of human works and the culture of person. Culture in both meanings will be highlighted from the standpoint of human subjectivity and human causality. I will, therefore, begin with a brief explanation of the problem of the human person's subjectivity in Wojtyła's conception so that we can understand his conception of culture.

### 1. THE SUBJECTIVITY OF A HUMAN PERSON

The problem of subjectivity is a formidable issue in philosophy. Subjectivity began to be recognized as a philosophical issue in the early modern period. It was René Descartes who first brought this issue to the main stage of philosophy, and then it became popular in the modern and contemporary epoch.<sup>3</sup> However, there are a number of scholars who argue that this problem has already emerged in classical philosophy from Protagoras and Aristotle. Many commentators hold as well that the problem of subjectivity has also been a concern of St. Augustine in his notion about the inner of a man (*interiore homine*).

Wojtyła pays serious attention to the analysis of the subjectivity aspect of the human person in his anthropology in order to achieve an adequate understanding of a human being. He states:

Many of the analyses presented in *The Acting Person* are closely connected with the problem of the subjectivity of the human person; one might even say that they all in some way contribute to an understanding and disclosure of this subjectivity [...]. The problem of the subjectivity of the human being is a problem of paramount philosophical importance today.<sup>4</sup>

There are two main reasons that encourage Wojtyła to be so concerned with the aspect of subjectivity as an important issue in understanding the human person. Firstly, the problem of political ideology, social and economic orientation.<sup>5</sup> According to him, political ideologies with brutal tyrannical

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<sup>3</sup> Kim ATKINS, "Commentary on Descartes," in *Self and Subjectivity*, ed. Kim Atkins (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Karol WOJTYŁA, "The Person: Subject and Community," In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 219.

<sup>5</sup> Jove Jim S. AGUAS, "Karol Wojtyła: On Person and Subjectivity," *Ad Veritatem* 8, no. 2 (2009): 416.

regimes, like Nazism and Communism, as well as consumerist economic orientation cause suffering and degrade human dignity. Secondly, one of the main problems found in the realm of anthropology and ethics is the problem of human subjectivity. In connection with the problem of subjectivity, he points out to the existence of a sharp line of demarcation between subjectivism–objectivism and idealism–realism in the history of western philosophical thought. The Polish philosopher says: “the antinomy of subjectivism vs. objectivism, along with the underlying antinomy of idealism vs. realism, created conditions that discouraged dealing with human subjectivity—for fear that this would lead inevitably to subjectivism.”<sup>6</sup> Basing on these two reasons, he demonstrates his stance in investigating the problem of subjectivity from a realistic perspective.<sup>7</sup>

Undoubtedly, his realistic stance and attention to the problem of subjectivity in his anthropology greatly assisted him in capturing and understanding the truth of the reality of man. Wojtyła adheres to Aristotle’s cosmological idea *homo est animal rationale* (man is a rational animal) and adopts Thomistic personalism which was rooted in Boethius’ definition of person that *persona est individua substantia rationalis naturae* (person is an individual substance of a rational nature). He also enriched his ideas about the human person by accepting the definition of the Roman Law *persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis* (person is a being which belongs to itself and which does not share its being with another),<sup>8</sup> a human person is unique, irreplaceable and untransferable. This shows that he is not in opposition to Aristotle’s cosmological ideas and Thomistic personalism; instead, he develops these ideas by combining the subjective aspect of human experience. Wojtyła therefore understands subjectivity at the level of metaphysics and phenomenology. At the former level, the human person is the *suppositum* or subject of his existence and activities, whether it is action or activation. The human person is an objective autonomous being and, in this sense, subjectivity has an objective meaning.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, in the latter one the human person is a self-experiencing subject; he experiences himself as the subject and

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<sup>6</sup> Karol WOJTYŁA, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 209.

<sup>7</sup> See Karol WOJTYŁA, *The Acting Person*, Analecta Husserliana: The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research 10, trans. Andrzej Potocki, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht–Boston–London: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1969), 57.

<sup>8</sup> See Tomasz DUMA, “The Foundations of the Human Person’s Dynamism in Karol Wojtyła’s Anthropology. A Study in Light of ‘The Acting Person,’” *Verbum Vitae* 38, no. 2 (2020): 447.

<sup>9</sup> See WOJTYŁA, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible,” 211.

agent of his activities, especially his actions and also the effects of his actions.<sup>10</sup> In this case, subjectivity also contains subjective meaning, and thus, Wojtyła comprehensively views subjectivity in an objective and subjective sense, as he affirms:

we can no longer go on treating the human being exclusively as an objective being, but we must also somehow treat the human being as a subject in the dimension in which the specifically human subjectivity of the human being is determined by consciousness. And that dimension would seem to be none other than *personal* subjectivity.<sup>11</sup>

As said previously, investigating the problem of subjectivity from a realistic perspective guarantees Wojtyła to embark from the given facts in experience, and these facts are human actions. According to him, through the analysis of action, as a proper activity belongs to the human person, we can arrive at the principle of subjectivity which is a person himself. He moulds to the enchanting metaphysical principle of scholasticism that human actions follow human existence—*operari sequitur esse*—and not vice versa. Nevertheless, in and through action, a person reveals or manifests himself, and his work is the place for realization of his humanity.<sup>12</sup> Here, a person is understood as a unity or a whole composed of body and soul, in which he appears as a concrete self, as well as a self-experiencing subject and not only as a species. Personal human subjectivity, which originates from the person himself, is then irreducible,<sup>13</sup> but it can be revealed and manifested on the basis of experience. The irreducibility of the subjectivity of the human person “is not just the metaphysical objectification of the human being as an acting subject, as agent of acts, but the revelation of the person as a subject *experiencing* its acts and inner happenings, and within them its own subjectivity.”<sup>14</sup>

In addition, human action towards values (the truth of goodness), as a manifestation of an act of self-determination, as an act of will, demonstrates the transcendence and integration of the person, leading to self-fulfillment in a moral sense. It turns out that the act of self-determination indicates the

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<sup>10</sup> WOJTYŁA, *The Acting Person*, 57.

<sup>11</sup> WOJTYŁA, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible,” 210.

<sup>12</sup> See Rocco BUTTIGLIONE, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, trans. Paolo Guietti and Francesca Murphy (Grand Rapids, MI—Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 301.

<sup>13</sup> WOJTYŁA, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible,” 211.

<sup>14</sup> WOJTYŁA, 213.

structure of self-possession and self-government as well as a tendency towards self-fulfillment. Self-fulfillment is achieved if there is fulfillment of action which is juxtaposed with performing action. In turn, the performance of action reveals at the same time the human person as *suppositum humanum*, self-experiencing subject and also moral subject. It seems that Wojtyła echoes the peculiarity of his own thought that by means of performing actions, in which a person governs himself, the personalistic value is revealed, where he as the subject becomes good or evil, and this is determined by his actions. Consequently, when a person determines his actions, he also determines or fulfils his self. Wojtyła insists: "I am not only the efficient cause of my acts, but through them I am also in some sense the 'creator of myself.'"<sup>15</sup>

How to relate the explanation of subjectivity and culture then? Roughly speaking, understanding and justifying the truth of the human being as a person through analysis of the problem of subjectivity confirms that culture as a result of actions stems from the human person as its source. On the other hand, elucidations of the constitution of culture also affirm firmly that the human person is the determining subject as well as culture is created, and it evolved in the self-determining dimension of the subject. The further parts of this article will expound this relationship.

## 2. THE CULTURE OF HUMAN WORKS

Culture must be understood within the apprehension of man in terms of praxiology and metaphysics. That means the explanation of culture must be placed within the framework of human action and the human person himself as a personal being. In the metaphysical sense, action comes from an already existing subject. The constitution of culture is an effect that arises from actions originating from a human being as self-determining subject, who is directed at external objects outside himself. Man as a person therefore exists as the ontic cause of culture.<sup>16</sup> In the praxiological sense, culture is not solely caused by human existence but by human actions. In this meaning, the person's performing action/praxis, which springs from the person and is determined by himself, immediately forms himself so that the essence of the

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<sup>15</sup> Karol WOJTYŁA, "The Personal Structure or Self-Determination," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 191.

<sup>16</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to UNESCO, 7.

action is found in the realization of the auto-teleology and the formation of a humanistic external reality. Consequently, the constitution of culture through actions defined by the metaphysical and praxiological dependence of the human person explains human subjectivity. It needs to be emphasized, of course, that culture is not only limited to its external actions and products, but it is also the issue of subjectivity. It seems that Wojtyła adopted St. Thomas Aquinas' notion of transitive and intransitive aspects of human action in the formation of culture. In ancient Greek, Plato had at least classified two types of culture, namely external (material) culture, which includes food, clothing, technique and so on, as well as internal (spiritual) culture, which was found in the search for obtaining wisdom through philosophy, art and religion.<sup>17</sup> Wojtyła follows this tradition by focusing on human action as found in the philosophy of activity of St. Thomas. In connection with transitive actions aimed at external objects, we can talk about the culture of human works. Undoubtedly, the culture of human works goes hand in hand with the transitive actions of a human being. In accordance with that, the products or creations of human actions as cultural facts are included in this cultural meaning.

Culture in the aforementioned sense referring to the products of human works exhibits that a human being is the subject and creator of culture through his activities. Besides he lives in culture and is influenced by it. The Polish thinker states: "Man who, in the visible world, is *the only* ontic *subject of culture*, is also *its only object and its term* [...]. Man, and only man, is the 'protagonist,' or 'architect' of culture: man, and only man, expresses himself in it and finds his own balance in it."<sup>18</sup> The created culture, of course, can both enrich and challenge the human way of existence. There are cultures that truly strengthen a human being in his humanity, but there are also those that enslave him by emphasizing priority only on human activities and his products, exploitation of nature and consumerism,<sup>19</sup> while ignoring the greatest work of culture, namely the self-constitution of man. Wojtyła insists: "in other words, that which conditions the value of human beings and comprises the essentially human quality of their activity is more important than that which is objectified in some product or other and serves to 'trans-

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<sup>17</sup> See Dariusz RADZIECHOWSKI, "'Culture of the Person' and 'Culture of Works' According to Karol Wojtyła," *Logos i Ethos* 56, no. 1 (2021): 87-100, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15633/lie.3940>.

<sup>18</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to UNESCO, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Imelda CHŁODNA-BŁACH, *From Paideia to High Culture. A Philosophical-Anthropological Approach* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020), 171.

form the world' or merely exploit it."<sup>20</sup> Thus, human actions that are only oriented towards exploiting nature and consumerist attitudes, and also the actions that make man a tool are not the basis for the formation of true culture. These kinds of actions do not lead man more human and the world more human place. Meanwhile, a society or civilization that only cares about the use of nature, the progress of the multiplication of objects and consumerism will lead to the civilization of death of humanity.<sup>21</sup> In line with that, there is also a crisis facing contemporary society, namely the existence of anti-human culture and civilization that destroys human dignity, rights, family, and freedoms, etc. Nazism and communism are examples of totalitarian regimes which support anti-human culture.

### 3. THE CULTURE OF PERSON

The essence of culture is that it originates from a human being and penetrates into human interiority, namely its nature and existence. In this sense, culture is closely related to the intransitive actions of a human being that contribute to the formation of human value. Culture is not only related to the transitive dimension of action, but it is more important than that, namely the intransitive dimension, which aims at self-formation or self-fulfillment. This is the deepest meaning of culture. Culture, in this sense, shows that a human being is the subject and goal of culture, while the products of human creation should radiate and correspond to human nature. External products resulting from creative activities are radiation of the openness of humanity to the values. Thus, culture is not limited to the human actions and its products but to the consideration of the person as the subject of his actions and the self-fulfillment by means of actions and the humanization of the environment. Wojtyła states: "Culture is basically oriented not so much toward the creation of human products as toward the creation of the human self, which then radiates out into the world of products."<sup>22</sup> In accordance with that he directly confirms: "*in the first place in relation to man then only in a secondary and indirect way in relation to the world of his products.*"<sup>23</sup> Thus,

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<sup>20</sup> Karol WOJTYŁA, "The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 272.

<sup>21</sup> WOJTYŁA, 272.

<sup>22</sup> WOJTYŁA, "The Problem of the Constitution of Culture," 265.

<sup>23</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to UNESCO, 7.

culture is first about “being of man” or “what man is,” and then about “having” or “what man has.” That means, in terms of culture, human value and the quality of activities take more priority than products.

The re-emphasis on the constitution of culture in the metaphysical and praxiological sense through transitive and intransitive actions also demonstrates the relation of transcendence of the human person to universal values as the personalistic principle in the formation of culture. Culture that shows conformity between humanity and universal values is what is called true culture. True culture will be created if human actions that express human transcendence are directed towards the truth, good and beauty. The realization of this culture is made possible by the synthesis of integral humanistic knowledge, act of human freedom and universal values. Because of this, the Polish philosopher claims: “A true culture cannot be conceived of without humanism and wisdom.”<sup>24</sup> The deepest connection between actions and values in the formation of the true culture exemplifies the character of disinterestedness or selflessness. According to him, actions directed at *bonum honestum* create true culture. On the other hand, actions that are only aimed at utilitarian goodness (*bonum utile*) or are influenced by benefits for oneself do not form a true culture; and this process is doomed to failure. Strictly speaking, the actions derive from the disinterested inner communion with truth, good and beauty, and they signal the immanent activity of the soul. And the true culture which emanates from this kind of action discloses the realisation of act of the faculties of the soul. Wojtyła confirms that by quoting a compelling passage from “Promethidion” by Cyprian Kamil Norwid: “beauty exists that we might be enticed to work.”<sup>25</sup> For him, “when the poet speaks of beauty and enticement, he is pointing to the eternal sources of culture that spring forth from the human soul.”<sup>26</sup> Apart from that, the human person as the subject and creator of true culture expresses and fulfils himself completely in and through true culture. He lives a free and responsible human life there. However, Wojtyła insists that culture is not only formulated by human action which has inner reference to universal values but at the same time it influences and determines a human person in creating and performing his action. He states: “for not only is culture constituted through

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<sup>24</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to the Plenary Session on “The Emergence of Complexity in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology” (October 31, 1992), The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, accessed February 7, 2023, <https://www.pas.va/en/magisterium/saint-john-paul-ii/1992-31-october.html>.

<sup>25</sup> WOJTYŁA, “The Problem of the Constitution of Culture,” 269.

<sup>26</sup> WOJTYŁA, 270.



praxis, but human praxis in its authentically human character is also constituted through culture. ‘Beauty exists that we might be enticed to work.’”<sup>27</sup>

The true culture expresses total existence a of human person. The entire human person is related not only to the material aspect but also the spiritual one. Therefore, the true culture is another name for “complete culture” or “culture of person,” which reveals human material and spiritual coexistence. It would be naive if the culture of person was only narrowed to one aspect of human being, let alone more emphasis was put only on material aspect. In relation to the formation of true culture or culture of person, religion has a significant role because religion introduces true knowledge about God, the human being and the world. As such, the true culture includes the convergence of human freedom which demonstrates its transcendence with universal values and faith. Or in other words, there is an emphasis on the unification of faith, human freedom and the truth of the gospel, contributing to the constitution of culture which also has implications for the fulfillment of the human person and social transformation since “the purpose of the Gospel, in fact, is ‘to transform humanity from within and to make it new.’”<sup>28</sup> In turn, dealing with Christianity, Wojtyła argues that culture is not only a tool of life or expression of faith, but it also plays a role in determining how Christians live out their faith. We could figure it out that based on this understanding it is certain for the creators of culture to take into account the main motivation or reasons for creating culture. Wojtyła states:

I am thinking above all, Ladies and Gentlemen, *of the fundamental link between the Gospel, that is, the message of Christ and the Church, and man in his very humanity*. This link is in fact a creator of culture in its very foundation. To create culture, it is necessary to consider, to its last consequences and entirely, man as a particular and autonomous value, as the subject bearing the transcendency of the person. Man must *be affirmed for himself*, and not for any other motive or reason: solely for himself! What is more, man must be loved because he is man.<sup>29</sup>

Accordingly, no wonder that religion plays a significant role as an inspiration for the formation of culture – as a culture of person in the main sense

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<sup>27</sup> WOJTYŁA, 271.

<sup>28</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Evangelium Vitae* (March 25, 1995), 95, accessed January 1, 2024, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25031995\\_evangelium-vitae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html).

<sup>29</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to UNESCO, 10.

and also as a culture of human works in the narrow sense.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, we should keep in mind that culture and religion have the same goal, namely self-fulfillment. Dealing with religion directs a human being to the holiness/*sacrum* as self-fulfillment. Achieving this self-fulfillment is a synthesis of the actions of human freedom and religious faith towards the search for the truth.<sup>31</sup> So to speak, the self-fulfillment is identical to felicity, which originates from a relationship with God and the union with Him.<sup>32</sup> While misunderstanding the human freedom, religion and truth are the primary causes of various forms of human slavery and keeps people away from their self-fulfillment.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, Wojtyła argues that true culture is formed not solely because of one person's efforts, but there is also divine help behind it. Divine assistance is in the form of God's grace which has creative power enabling everyone to think and act based on truth. He asserts: "Grace awakens, frees, purifies, orders and expands the creative powers of man. While it invites asceticism and renunciation, it does so in order to free the heart, a freedom eminently conducive to artistic creation as well as to thought and action based on truth."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the Polish philosopher contends that it concerns the relationship between faith and culture, where faith is in the private and personal realm but then penetrates or merges into culture and has a broad influence on wider life of human person and his community.

A culture that makes faith its strength can defeat the influence of anti-human culture and anti-values more powerful than all other forces. He experienced first-hand the influence of Christianity in Polish culture, which was able to defend its national identity and sovereignty from its neighbours who attempted to occupy it and enforce an anti-human culture. He testifies:

<sup>30</sup> See CHŁODNA-BŁACH, *From Paideia to High Culture*, 176.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Arkadiusz GUDANIEC, "Karol Wojtyła on Semiotically Expressing the Great Ideas of the True and the Good," in *The Great Ideas of Religion and Freedom: A Semiotic Reinterpretation of the Great Ideas Movement for the 21st Century*, ed. Peter A. Redpath, Imelda Chłodna-Błach, and Artur Mamcarz-Plisiecki (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 77.

<sup>32</sup> GUDANIEC, "Karol Wojtyła on Semiotically Expressing the Great Ideas," 90.

<sup>33</sup> See Tomasz DUMA, "The Great Ideas: Causes of Human Transcendence or Enslavement?" in *The Great Ideas of Religion and Freedom. A Semiotic Reinterpretation of the Great Ideas Movement for the 21st Century*, ed. Peter A. Redpath, Imelda Chłodna-Błach, and Artur Mamcarz-Plisiecki (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 151-54, 157-59.

<sup>34</sup> JOHN PAUL II, "The New PCC's Tasks: Dialogue With Non-Believers and the Inculturation of Faith" (March 18, 1994), accessed February 19, 2023, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pon\\_tifical\\_councils/cultr/documents/rc\\_pc\\_cultr\\_doc\\_20000126\\_jp-ii\\_addresses-pccultr\\_en.html#10](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pon_tifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_20000126_jp-ii_addresses-pccultr_en.html#10).

In all that I am now proclaiming, which I will develop still further, my words express a particular experience, *a particular testimony* in its kind. I am the son of a Nation which has lived the greatest experience of history, which its neighbours have condemned to death several times, but which has survived and remained itself. It has kept its identity, and it has kept, in spite of partitions and foreign occupations, its national sovereignty, not by relying on the resources of physical power, but solely *by relying on its culture*. This culture turned out in the circumstances to be more powerful than all other forces.<sup>35</sup>

Wojtyła also reminds of the existence of various very particular trends of thought and knowledge which influenced the emergence of “shattered culture” as opposed to the culture of person. He claims:

Contemporary culture demands *a constant effort to synthesize knowledge and to integrate learning*. Of course, the successes which we see are due to the specialisation of research. But unless this is balanced by a reflection concerned with articulating the various branches of knowledge, there is a great risk that we shall have a ‘shattered culture,’ which would in fact be the negation of true culture.<sup>36</sup>

In *Fides et ratio*, he also mentions that desiring the truth is the essence of a human being, and by living based on this truth a human being lives a more humanistic life. The intended truths involve the principle of non-contradiction, purposefulness and causality, the idea of a person as a free and rational subject, able to discover God, truth, good and fundamental moral norms.<sup>37</sup> Philosophy emerged as one of the noblest of human tasks to direct to the humanist and wise life because it directly asks the question of the meaning of life and sketches an answer to it.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, philosophy also plays a large role in the formation and development of culture as a special way of human existence.

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<sup>35</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to UNESCO, 14.

<sup>36</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Address to the Plenary Session.

<sup>37</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio*, 4 (September 14, 1998), accessed September 14, 2023. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14\\_0919\\_98\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14_0919_98_fides-et-ratio.html); see also CHŁODNA-BŁACH, *From Paideia to High Culture*, 176.

<sup>38</sup> See JOHN PAUL II, *Fides et ratio*, 3.

## CONCLUSION

Only the perfect being in the natural order deals with culture. It is the human person endowed with rational nature as we find in the famous dictum of St. Thomas, *persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet subsistens in rationali natura* (person signifies what is the most perfect in all nature, that is, a subsistent individual of a rational nature).<sup>39</sup> Culture is nothing other than the cultivation of the rational soul (*cultura animi*) as comprehended in the Roman tradition.<sup>40</sup>

In the light of Wojtyła's conception of subjectivity, culture is understood, in relation to its constitution and purpose, through human action in the metaphysical and praxiological sense. Only the actions of the human person which are oriented towards universal values such as truth, goodness and beauty supported by faith and freedom will present a culture of person or complete culture which is nothing other than a true humanistic culture where the human person lives it and realizes himself in it. This culture, of course, is certainly not haphazardly oriented at products alone or does not ignore universal values, but instead is directed at self-realization or self-fulfillment and creating a more humanistic world. Thus, culture, based on the problem of subjectivity and culture analysis, essentially shows that it generates from human nature, and the human person is the subject and the goal of culture. Meanwhile, we should appreciate the significant role of religion and philosophy in contributing to the constitution of the true humanistic culture.

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I<sup>a</sup> q. 29 a. 3 co, Corpus Thomisticum, accessed June 14, 2023, <https://www.corpusthomisticum.org/sth1028.html>.

<sup>40</sup> CHŁODNA-BŁACH, *From Paideia to High Culture*, 57.

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SELECTED ASPECTS OF UNDERSTANDING CULTURE  
IN THE LIGHT OF KAROL WOJTYŁA CONCEPTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

Summary

The purpose of this article is to present the essence of culture in the view of Karol Wojtyła in relation to his conception of the subjectivity of human person. Culture, as a specific way of human existence and being, is confirmed through the analysis of the problem of subjectivity which it is created through actions as the proper activity of the human person. In the light of the conception of subjectivity, Wojtyła brings to light his notion of the constitution of culture of human work in relation to the transitive actions and human culture or culture of person in relation to the intransitive actions. In this notion, he accentuates the subject and goal of culture that is the human person himself.

**Keywords:** subjectivity; human person; culture; action

WYBRANE ASPEKTY ROZUMIENIA KULTURY  
W ŚWIETLE KONCEPCJI PODMIOTOWOŚCI KAROLA WOJTYŁY

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie istoty kultury w ujęciu Karola Wojtyły, w odniesieniu do jego koncepcji podmiotowości osoby ludzkiej. Kultura, jako specyficzny sposób istnienia i bycia człowieka, potwierdza się poprzez analizę problemu podmiotowości w tym, że jest ona tworzona poprzez działanie jako właściwa aktywność osoby ludzkiej. W świetle koncepcji podmiotowości Wojtyła ujawnia swoje pojęcie konstytucji kultury pracy ludzkiej w odniesieniu do działań przechodnich i kultury ludzkiej czy kultury osoby w odniesieniu do działań nieprzechodnich. W pojęciu tym akcentuje podmiot i cel kultury, którym jest sama osoba ludzka.

**Słowa kluczowe:** podmiotowość; osoba ludzka; kultura; działanie