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A SAINT AND THE SAGE: KAROL WOJTYŁA AND CONFUCIUS ON HEAVEN

INTRODUCTION

When someone says “heaven”, different people have different ideas of what it is. To a child watching cartoons, they will usually picture heaven as the place above the clouds where good people go to when they die, where they are given wings and play the harp. For a materialist, heaven could denote pleasure, hence the informal expression “heavenly”. In the Christian tradition, heaven (also known as Paradise or the Kingdom of God) is “the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness”.¹ In Chinese tradition, heaven (known as *tian*) is the highest sphere of existence among the three “spheres” of existence alongside Earth (*Di*) and humanity (*ren*), all of which are connected in a balance of harmony with life revolving around maintaining that harmony and balance.

In the spirit of interreligious and philosophical dialogue with Eastern and Western philosophy, in this paper, we seek to investigate, in brief, the notion of “heaven” as discussed by two philosophers from the Eastern and Western traditions. For the Eastern tradition, this study examines Confucius, whose *Analects* frequently appeal to *Tian* as a source of moral order guiding the cultivation of the superior man (*junzi*). And for the West, we will examine the thoughts of Karol Wojtyła, who, in his works on moral philosophy, stressed the role of God as the ultimate source of moral norms and hence ought to be followed to live a moral life towards self-fulfilment as a person and ultimately towards Redemption. While the two thinkers come from very different histor-

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¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1023–24.

ical and cultural backgrounds, both situate the moral life within a transcendental moral order. Thus, in this paper, I do not posit *Tian* and the Christian Heaven as direct counterparts. Instead, I examine the ethical dimension of the two thinkers' understandings of "heaven" in terms of transcendence, moral obligation, and human flourishing. Thus, the comparison is limited and analogical, being mindful of both points of convergence and irreducible differences.

Since this topic is exceptionally broad, the is limited to selected texts from both thinkers. For Confucius, the principal source utilised is the *Analects*, while for Wojtyła the primary sources are *Person and Act*, *Ethics Primer*, and *Man in the Field of Responsibility*. The study approaches the subject primarily from the perspective of comparative moral philosophy rather than systematic theology. However, certain theological themes will necessarily be referenced where relevant to the discussion of transcendence and moral order. Consequently, this paper does not aspire to offer an exhaustive treatment of either Confucian or Christian conceptions of heaven, but rather presents a preliminary investigation into selected points of convergence and divergence between the two traditions.

1. AN OUTLINE OF CONFUCIUS' AND WOJTYŁA'S NOTIONS OF HEAVEN

1.1 CONFUCIUS

Let us start by defining *tian* (天). Commonly translated as "heaven," for Confucius, *tian* has a dual character. It is both the transcendent principle of the cosmic order and the ultimate source of moral norms that structure the moral life in society.

While references to *tian* are rather sparse in *The Analects*, the ones that do appear reveal this aforementioned character. For instance, Confucius writes in 7.23 that "*Tian* has endowed me with virtue; what can Huan Tui do to me?"² This shows that virtue is neither arbitrary nor a mere social convention. Rather, it has ontological roots, being grounded in the structure of reality itself. Moreover, in 9.5, Confucius emphasizes the primacy of *Dao* (道, the Way)

² CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, trans. James Legge (self-published, 2021), 7.23. For context, Huan Tui was a powerful official in the State of Song who reportedly tried to kill Confucius. Here, Confucius says that since *Tian* has endowed him with virtue, no earthly power, not even Huan Tui, can undermine his moral authority. This also has implications for Huan Tui's mandate as a ruler.

over human institutions: “If *Tian* had wished that this Way should perish, it would not have given it to a mortal.”³ These confessions illustrate that *tian*, in Confucius’s thought, is both the ultimate source and arbiter of moral imperatives who transcends geographical or cosmological connotations.⁴

1.1.1 ‘*Tianming*’ (The Mandate of Heaven)

Tian has its origins in the Zhou dynasty as a political and religious concept. Historically, kingdoms legitimized their claims of right to rule through a divine mandate. In China, this was the understanding of *Tianming* (The Mandate of Heaven). However, in his *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Confucius goes deeper. Rather than a simple static grant of political authority, *Tianming* extends to morality of human acts.

Confucius teaches that human beings answer to *Tian* for carrying out their moral duties. This accountability is especially true for rulers. For Confucius, the Mandate of Heaven is what legitimizes rule and maintains human social order. Rulers must cultivate virtue and moral example. Should they fail to do so, not only do they lose political legitimacy but moral sanction as well. This shows that *Tian* does not blindly favour rulers or social elites but commands them toward ethical conduct and benevolent governance.⁵ Thus, the ruler, the “Son of Heaven” (*Tianzi*), holds his position only insofar as he harmonizes society with the *Dao*.

This mandate, however, extends beyond the throne. Every moral agent, specifically the *Junzi* (Superior Man), acts under this mandate. The *Junzi* stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven, for he knows that his personal integrity—his loyalty (*zhong*), empathy (*shu*), and sincerity (*cheng*)—are reflections of the heavenly logic.⁶ Ergo, *Tianming* is a dynamic interplay between cosmic moral authority and human moral agency. *Tian* determines the legitimacy of human endeavour and hence worthiness.⁷

³ CONFUCIUS, *Analects* 9.5.

⁴ Robert ENO, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 4

⁵ CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, 16.8.

⁶ Tu Weiming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989), 23.

⁷ CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, 7.23 and 9.5.

1.1.2 Path towards sagehood

Consequently, *tian* forms the foundational core of Confucius's ethical framework. Man is a moral agent for he can recognize and respond to the Way. Following the mandate requires ethical self-cultivation—*xiushen* (修身). The Mandate of Heaven is thus a dynamic interplay between cosmic authority and human moral agency.⁸ And the moral life involves both responsiveness to *tian*'s normative claims and active engagement in self-cultivation that aligns one's conduct with those claims.

To cultivate the self is to realize the Transcendent within the Immanent. The *Junzi* does not need a voice from the clouds to know his duty; he needs only to look into the moral structure of his own nature, which *Tian* has constructed. As the contemporary scholar Yao Xinzong notes, the transcendence of Heaven is realized precisely in the moral practice of the human being. The "Mandate" is not a voice we hear; it is a nature we fulfil.⁹

This also has a big implication for education. It is not just about the accumulation of facts but the process of uncovering the "heavenly nobility" inherent in the self. As Mencius, the great developer of Confucian thought, argues, aside from the honours bestowed by society, there are "honors bestowed by Heaven"—virtue, benevolence, and righteousness. To cultivate these is to "serve Heaven".¹⁰

Because of this, to go against the Way is more than just a social or personal failure. It is an offence against the Way governing the cosmos, which causes rupture in the social order. No wrongdoing goes unnoticed by *Tian*, and incurs *Tian*'s correction as seen by rulers losing their legitimacy when they fail to perform their duty.

It follows, then, that the nature of *Tian* is paradoxically both distant and intimate. It is distant because "Heaven does not speak."¹¹ Instead, it works through the natural cycle of the seasons and life in general. Nevertheless, it is intimate for the mandate is written in the heart of every human being. To follow the Way is to live a virtuous life, not because society demands it, but because *Tian* establishes the moral order which humans participate in.

⁸ May SIM, "Remastering the Self: A Study of the Confucian Concept of Self-Cultivation" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 2001), 45.

⁹ YAO Xinzong, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153.

¹⁰ Philip J. IVANHOE, *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2002), 45.

¹¹ CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, 17.19.

To have a better picture of what it means to follow *Tian*, Confucius himself has his reflection on his own moral vocation. “At fifty, I understood the Mandate of Heaven.”¹² From this we can see that understanding the Mandate is both an intellectual achievement and an existential realization; one realizes their place under *Tian*’s normative authority and accountability. To know the Mandate of Heaven is to recognize that human life and ethical conduct are not self-constructed but have their ultimate referent in *Tian*’s moral will, even if that will remains partially mysterious and beyond full human comprehension. *Tian*, in the context of the moral life, serves as “a moral principle that guides and resonates within human nature”, though not without retaining a dimension of transcendence that exceeds human subjectivity.¹³

In sum, Confucius understands *Tian* primarily in the ethical context as the supreme normative source of ethical conduct and human responsibility. From it are derived moral principles, the sanction of moral worthiness, the virtues, and the authority to which human beings – individuals, rulers, and societies alike – are answerable. To live ethically, in Confucius’s view, is to align one’s conduct with this transcendent order; to deviate is to fall out of harmony with the cosmic moral framework that ultimately grounds virtue and its flourishing.

1.2 KAROL WOJTYŁA: THE PERSON, THE TRUTH, AND THE ABSOLUTE

If Confucius situates the battleground of moral life within the order of Heaven, Karol Wojtyła situates it within the drama of the person.¹⁴ While maintaining that moral norms ultimately originate in God, Wojtyła does not begin his analysis with abstract law; rather, he begins with the human subject, whose own nature and reason serve as the “codex” where these norms are discovered.¹⁵

In *Person and Act*, Wojtyła presents the human person both as a subject and an object in the world. Objectively, the human person is a rational animal who is capable of grasping the moral norms and directing his actions towards

¹² CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, 2.4.

¹³ Philip J. IVANHOE, “Heaven as a Source for Ethical Warrant in Early Confucianism,” *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 6, no. 3 (2007): 211–20.

¹⁴ Kenneth KEMP, introduction to *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, by Karol Wojtyła (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2011), xi.

¹⁵ Grzegorz IGNATIK, *Person and Value: Karol Wojtyła’s Personalistic and Normative Theory of Man, Morality, and Love* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 90–91.

a certain end, not being totally subordinated to the whims of sense appetites. As Wojtyła writes, the moral norm is intelligible because it corresponds to the structure of the person himself.¹⁶

More profoundly, however, as a subject, the human person is able to internalize these rational realizations through experience and thus oriented towards self-determination and transcendence. The person reveals himself in action, he writes, and through action the person both manifests and constitutes himself.¹⁷ Thus, when the human person, as a moral agent, acts morally, not only does he fulfil a mandate but fulfils himself in the process. Consider a simple example from children’s literature: when Noddy returned the 10 coins he saw dropped on the floor to Mrs. Skittle, he does so because he knew it is the right thing to do and so fulfils himself by participating in the truth.

This shaping of a person through his actions is known as self-determination.¹⁸ Each action both reveals the person’s character and becomes part of it – this is why there are habits. Thus, man’s actions are not mere happenings that come and go, but they leave a lasting impression in him shaping his character. This is the intransitive dimension of human action: I do not just do a “good thing”; I *become* good. For this reason, responsibility is inseparable from freedom, which in turn consists not in doing whatever I want but in the moment I realize that “I can but I don’t have to.”¹⁹

This structure reveals why moral norms, though objective, acquire a profoundly personalist meaning. Moral norms are not arbitrary commands given by a cold, tyrannical king; they are the “truth about the good” which the person recognizes as the condition for his own flourishing.²⁰ As Wojtyła states in the encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor*, moral truth is not an alien imposition but “the truth about the good” inscribed in the being of the human person.²¹ To act against moral truth is not merely to violate a rule; it is to contradict oneself.

The transcendence of the person further expounds this personalist character of morality. Horizontally, the person transcends the immediacy of instinct by

¹⁶ Karol WOJTYŁA, *Love and Responsibility* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books and Media, 2013), 52.

¹⁷ Karol WOJTYŁA, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła / John Paul II 1, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik, ed. Carl A. Anderson et al. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 114.

¹⁸ WOJTYŁA, 207.

¹⁹ WOJTYŁA, 203.

²⁰ Grzegorz HOLUB, *Understanding the Person Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, European Studies in Theology, Philosophy and History of Religions 29, ed. Bartosz Adamczewski (Bern: Peter Lang, 2021), 153.

²¹ JOHN PAUL II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 41.

consciously apprehending goods and freely determining himself in relation to them. This enables him to gain a form of superiority over the object of the will “based on one’s knowledge of the truth about the cognised goods and the ability to choose appropriate means to attain them if pursued”.²² Vertically, he is able to gain access to the truth about the good where he can “question his values and integrate them according to some higher standard of goodness”.²³

This capacity for transcendence is best seen in conscience, the subjective norm of morality. Conscience itself is not the basis for the moral norms, nor is it a mere passive acknowledgement of them.²⁴ Instead, it is a creative function of the human person that mediates and explicates the norm, and the duty commanded.²⁵ Through conscience, the human person experiences moral obligation internally. It is a gift from his Creator “so that through conscience and acceptance of the Truth the person may faithfully reflect the image to which he was made, the image of God.”²⁶ To be fair, it is true that conscience can err. Hence, Wojtyła emphasises that conscience must always reflect the truth for the person to attain transcendence and self-fulfilment. It enables the human person to be constantly aware of the norms that their actions depend upon. The formation of conscience does not consist in memorizing the law – it is about fine tuning the interior faculty that hears the voice of the Creator. So, as Crosby notes, Wojtyła’s thought preserves both realism and existential depth in ethics. Truth is not reduced to feeling, yet it is encountered personally.²⁷

Ultimately, this self-fulfilment through moral actions is theological in character. The human person, the only being “willed for its own sake” created in the image of God, is made out of love and for love. The commandment to love is not a vague expression but the deepest truth of personal being.²⁸ To love authentically is to love as God has loved us, which is the only path to self-integration. As Kelechi Ehiemere observes in his phenomenological study, “The person finds himself only through a sincere gift of self.”²⁹ This “gift” is the content of moral law. When I follow the norm, I do not restrain my freedom; I liberate it from the slavery of instinct and selfishness. The moral norm

²² IGNATIK, *Person and Value*, 35.

²³ Adrian REIMERS, “Experience and Knowledge,” in *Karol Wojtyła’s Personalist Philosophy Understanding Person and Act* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 59.

²⁴ SCHMITZ, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 84.

²⁵ Peter SIMPSON, *On Karol Wojtyła* (New York: Lucarios Occasio Press, 2014), 77.

²⁶ SIMPSON, 78.

²⁷ John F. CROSBY, *The Personalism of John Paul II* (Steubenville: Hildebrand Press, 2019), 103.

²⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptor Hominis* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979), 10.

²⁹ WOJTYŁA, *Love and Responsibility*, 242.

thus becomes the path of salvation—not because it constrains, but because it directs the person toward his ultimate fulfilment in the Absolute.

In the end, heaven acquires a deeply personalist character for Wojtyła. The moral norm finds its origin in the Absolute and possesses objective validity. Yet it is not experienced as purely external decrees but as invitations to self-realization. The person, as a rational and free subject, recognizes the truth about the good, appropriates it in conscience, and fulfils himself by acting in accordance with it. Moral life is, therefore, not mere conformity to law but participation in divine love. The path of the moral law is not separate from the path of salvation; they are one and the same trajectory. In choosing the good, the person does not lose himself—he becomes himself.

2. MANDATE OF HEAVEN VS WILL OF GOD

Having examined the thoughts of the pope and the sage, one can notice their many striking similarities in discussions on morality. Both Confucius and Wojtyła teach the objectivity of the moral norms which human beings must follow to maintain order and harmony both in the self and in others. They both affirm that the human person does not *create* the good but he *discovers* them. In this sense, the Confucian *Junzi* and Wojtyła's understanding of *Person* share a common structural posture. Man fulfils himself by following the moral norms. Moral life, therefore, consists in obedience leading to true freedom. Whether one is cutting and polishing the self like jade³⁰ or forming the conscience in light of truth, the trajectory is the same: the integration of the subject into the objective Good.

Tianming can be likened to the will of God, where following them leads to righteousness, but going against it leads to evil. In both cases, it is by heaven's decree that one will be judged. Life, thus, involves a constant through the acquisition of virtues (which can be acquired by effort or bestowed from above—cardinal and theological virtues) to become morally upright and attain self-fulfilment. Man is thus oriented towards something higher—transcendence—both in the axiological and the ontological sense of the word.

While it is clear that *Tian* is not as a Personal God of the Judeo-Christian understanding, it can be analogous to the Divine Logos or the Eternal Law. Its nature is both transcendent and immanent: transcendent insofar as it trans-

³⁰ CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, 1.15.

cends finite human life and remains mysterious, and immanent insofar as its normative commands are intelligible. And with Confucius' description of it being inscribed in the very heart of man, it runs parallel to the natural law that is inscribed in the hearts of all persons.

Writing as Pope John Paul II, Wojtyła himself would praise Confucianism and other religions of the Far East for their robust systems of morality that beckons the person to self-transcendence, serving as a preparation for the Gospel.³¹ Nevertheless, it is important to note their divergences to avoid reducing one to the other. Alongside the different epochs, background and traditions they come from, a close examination reveals a crucial difference. This difference lies in the tension between the Impersonal Order that the Sage works in and the Personal Call of the Saint.

The two thinkers give a different answer as to whom the person is responsible. According to Confucius, *Tian* regulates, sanctions, and endows nature. However, it does not *speak* in the manner of a person, i.e. an *I* addressing a *Thou*. Instead it is *something* that operates with the moral weight of *someone*. The relationship is one of alignment. The *Junzi* aligns himself with *Tian* the way a planet aligns with gravity—it is a relationship of awe, reverence, and fear, but not necessarily of interpersonal communion.³² *Tian* is silent; its will is found in the rhythm of the seasons and the structure of the state, not in the intimacy of a personal voice.

In contrast, the Absolute for Wojtyła is a person. Personhood is the highest mode of existence; therefore God is a person, a communion of persons in fact. It is no surprise then why man is made to love because the Divine Essence is love, subsisting in a communion of persons.³³ The relationship between heaven and man is of response. The moral law is not just a blueprint but a call. When a person acts, he does not just maintain the balance of nature, he enters into a profound relationship built on love.³⁴ As John Crosby notes, the theocentric character of Wojtyła's personalism means that the moral agent is never alone; his action is always a response to a Divine Subject who knows and loves him.³⁵

³¹ JOHN PAUL II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 79.

³² ENO, *Confucian Creation of Heaven*, 50.

³³ JOHN PAUL II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.

³⁴ Jarosław KUPCZAK, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 122.

³⁵ CROSBY, *The Personalism of John Paul II*, 105.

Because *Tian* is not clearly articulated as a dialogical subject in the personalist sense, unlike the Christian God whom people can beg for and who grants forgiveness by grace, it operates with an inexorable morality. It keeps a strict gaze on the world. Any violation of the principles of *ren* or *yi* is not just a social faux pas; it is a cosmic offence. Confucius himself articulates the severity of going against *Tian*: “He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray.”³⁶ There is no intercessor, mediation or bargaining. There is only alignment or misalignment. As Eno notes in his analysis of Confucian metaphysics, *Tian* does not speak in words but in events and mandates; to violate it is to cut oneself off from the source of one’s own legitimacy.³⁷

Because of this, Wojtyła would read Confucian ethics as having a cosmological view of the human person. The lack of a personalist dimension and emphasis on the cosmic order risks subsuming personal interiority under cosmic harmony. Action becomes functional and not personal inasmuch as responsibility is highlighted. Wojtyła warns against a purely cosmological view for it fails to capture the *irreducibility* of the human person as a subject.³⁸

Moreover Wojtyła teaches that the person can only find himself through a sincere *gift of self*. But a gift requires a *receiver*. One cannot give oneself to heaven in the dialogical sense of reciprocal personal communion. The Confucian *Junzi*, in his most tragic moments, realizes this solitude: he stands before the law, but he does not stand before a face.

Finally, while both traditions share a similar template of moral perfection, the nature of this perfection differs between them. For Confucius, man strives ultimately for sagehood, which is realised most concretely in the *Junzi*, and ultimately in the *Sage* (*Sheng Ren*; 圣人/聖人). While all men are called to moral cultivation as *Junzi*, the Sage is seen as a transcendent ideal, a figure of extraordinary harmony with *Tian* and moral wisdom. In both cases, the principal concern is of moral alignment with the cosmic-moral order rather than communion with a personal Absolute.

The saint, on the other hand, is a person who has lived an exemplary life and has been relationally transformed (sanctified) through participation in the divine. Sanctification involves grace to achieve ethical perfection and involves communion with the personal God. Whereas the *Junzi* and the Sage are concerned with alignment with the cosmos, the Christian saint is concer-

³⁶ CONFUCIUS, *Analects*, 3.13.

³⁷ ENO, *Confucian Creation of Heaven*, 50.

³⁸ WOJTYŁA, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man,” in *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 538–40.

ned with communion through love, grace, and eternal beatitude. Thus, while both traditions emphasise that becoming fully human requires alignment with a transcendent order, they differ in their telos.

Despite these divergences, Confucianism remains a potent insight and serves as a robust system that has remained embedded in the hearts of those who follow it. With its many convergences with Christian ethics, Confucian ethics is able to prepare the ground for the personalist revelation. The *Mandate of Heaven* creates the structure of obligation—the *categorical imperative* written in the cosmos. One could say that the *Junzi* represents a morally cultivated subject whose discipline prepares the horizon for a personalist understanding of transcendence. The Mandate is valid, but in the light of personalism, it is revealed to be a mission—an invitation not just to order, but to communion.

3. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have attempted to present the many convergences and differences of the Sage and the Saint regarding their respective views on heaven. We have also seen the value of the need for a personalist dimension in ethics and remaining in the cosmological dimension. Finally, we tried to answer whether the Confucian structure of obligation can be integrated into the Wojtylian drama of the person. It is evident towards the end that though the two approached heaven from different perspectives, we can still conclude that they illuminate each other, as the discipline of the *Junzi* provides essential groundwork for authentic personal freedom. Many themes were left out for future investigations, i.e., the relationship between *li* (ritual) and liturgy, the communal dimension of self-cultivation, and a more rigorous comparison with the Thomistic natural law. Ultimately, this dialogue between the wisdom of the East and the personalism of the West demonstrates what John Paul II himself foresaw: that the thought of Confucius and other classical Chinese philosophers can serve as a *praeparatio evangelica* (preparation for the Gospel). By aligning the Confucian pursuit of sagehood with the Christian vocation to sainthood, this cross-cultural synthesis provides a robust philosophical foundation for what John Paul II termed the civilization of love. It illustrates how the indigenous wisdom of Eastern cultures does not merely parallel Christian thought, but organically anticipates and participates in the universal truth of the Gospel.

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KAROL WOJTYŁA AND CONFUCIUS ON HEAVEN

SUMMARY

This article explores the concept of heaven as defined by St. Karol Wojtyła and Confucius. By comparing the structural parallels of heaven from both perspectives, we can see how each thinker illuminates the other. Both emphasise the objectivity of the norms and that the ultimate goal of sagehood (for Confucius) and sainthood (for Karol) necessitates alignment with a transcendent moral order. However, there are crucial differences between the impersonal order of the Sage and the personal call of the Saint. Whereas the *Junzi* espouses alignment and harmony with the cosmic order, the Saint responds dialogically to a Divine Subject, thereby discovering that true self-determination consists in a genuine gift of self. Ultimately, the paper argues that classical Confucian thought parallels Christian ethics, thus serving as a *praeparatio evangelica* for Western personalism by demonstrating how the ethical discipline of the *Junzi* lays the foundation for a civilization of love grounded in interpersonal communion.

Keywords: heaven; *tianming*; personalist, transcendence; moral norms

ŚWIĘTY I MĘDRZEC:
KAROL WOJTYŁA I KONFUCIUSZ O NIEBIE

STRESZCZENIE

W niniejszym artykule autor analizuje koncepcję nieba według św. Karola Wojtyły i Konfucjusza. Porównując strukturalne podobieństwa nieba z obu perspektyw, widzimy, w jaki sposób każdy z tych myślicieli rzuca światło na poglądy drugiego. Obaj podkreślają obiektywność norm oraz to, że ostatecznym celem mędrca (według Konfucjusza) i świętego (według Wojtyły) jest dostosowanie się do transcendentnego porządku moralnego. Istnieją jednak istotne różnice między bezosobowym porządkiem Mędrca a osobistym powołaniem Świętego. Podczas gdy *Junzi* opowiada się za dostosowaniem i harmonią z porządkiem kosmicznym, Święty odpowiada dialogicznie na Boży

Podmiot, odkrywając w ten sposób, że prawdziwe samostanowienie polega na autentycznym darze z siebie. Ostatecznie w artykule dowodzi się, że klasyczna myśl konfucjańska jest zbieżna z etyką chrześcijańską, służąc tym samym jako *praeparatio evangelica* dla zachodniego personalizmu poprzez wykazanie, w jaki sposób dyscyplina etyczna *Junzi* przygotowuje i kładzie podwaliny pod cywilizację miłości opartą na międzyludzkiej komunii.

Słowa kluczowe: niebo; *tianming*; personalizm; transcendencja; normy moralne