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AN INTRODUCTION TO ACTING “TOGETHER WITH OTHERS”
AND PARTICIPATION AS THE BASIS FOR COMMUNITY
IN THE THOUGHT OF KAROL WOJTYŁA

INTRODUCTION

The philosophical thought of Karol Wojtyła is heavily invested in analysis of the human person. This is so much the case that his greatest philosophical works, and particularly his opus *Person and Act*, invest the majority of their efforts in explaining the nature of the human person and the intimately related aspect of his action. Even within his ethics and theology, the human person remains central to any and all endeavors, with alienation of this person being one of the greatest of evils. In fact, the oft cited *Culture of Life* and *Culture of Death* stem from person centric statements made by Karol Wojtyła after his ascension to the papal throne as John Paul II, thus showing how important this topic remained to him throughout his whole life.

Closely related to the human person is the community that emerges when these persons come together to act and live. How such communities emerge, and what serves as their basis, is an often overlooked aspect of Wojtyła’s thought. This is a shame, as inter-personal relations and how they emerge don’t just provide a rich and worthwhile avenue of Wojtyła’s research, but also serve as an important topic for consideration within contemporary metaphysics, personalism, political theory, ethics, and socially interested academic investigation generally. This work undertakes an analysis of the basis of Wojtyła’s conception of community, and argues that “acting ‘together with others’” and particularly “participation” are the two fundamental factors that

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allow a community of human persons to truly emerge. As such, it is a short introduction to the foundation of Wojtyła's conception of community and while being oriented towards an analysis of community, refrains from being an exhaustive discussion of the totality of the community of persons. Therefore, it focuses on the primary aspects of Wojtyła's conception of community and through following *Person and Act* and *The Person: Subject and Community*, is divided into an analysis of "acting 'together with others'" and subsequently an analysis of "participation." In doing so, it follows the development of Wojtyła's thought and reveals how community itself is dependent on the human person and the acts he conducts with other such human persons.

ACTING "TOGETHER WITH OTHERS"

The starting point for reflection on participation rests on the action of individual persons. When human persons act "together with others", there emerges a special relational form of acting which matures into participation. This form of action therefore requires preliminary analysis when discussing participation in the thought of Wojtyła. Such a definition sees acting together with others as of primary importance when discussing participation, and participation as the principle of community. This rests on the fact that acting together with others is central to discussion of the human person and how he relates to others and his community, to say nothing of how acting together with others is inherent to the acts of the human person generally, with acting together with others being nearly inseparable from human action itself. Continuing, acting together with others forms a primordial beginning which germinates into the development of community proper. Such a postulation of course plays into the dynamic nature of acting together with others and into human dynamism generally, and contributes both to the person in his individual personhood as well as to the identity of all individual human persons within a community. From viewing acting together with others in such a way, one can see, particularly in the thought of Wojtyła, how within acting together with others the human person preserves the personalistic value of his own action and that of the community of action, but also illumines how participation mutually contributes to the human person's ability to act together with others.

To begin, Wojtyła stresses with importance that nearly all of human action, as set within the multitude of individual acts a person undertakes, is

made in reference to other persons. This is to say that acting together with others is the genus under which most acts can be identified. The acts which an individual human person undertakes that are not in reference to other persons are incredibly rare and far between. This can be seen as arising from the dynamic character of the action of the human person, as "*an aspect proceeding from the fact that acts are performed by people 'together with other' people.*"¹ Continuing, it can be said that the act of the human person, when done together with others, "is not only frequent and usual, but indeed of universal occurrence."² When the human person acts, he by and large acts together with others, with his action having a nearly total orientation towards acting together with others. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to separate the act of the human person from acting together with others. To put it simply, given that the human person is also an acting person, and in reference to Wojtyła's thought, "acting together with others is a fundamental dimension of human action."³ As such, when viewing the dimension of the human person found within his acting, from his most intimate levels of his personal and subjective existence, one finds the basic experience of the human person, who exists and acts together with others, with this being contrary to any hyper individualism or alienation, both with regards to his own personhood and the personhood of other human persons.⁴

While viewing the inherent closeness of acting together with others with the action of the human person himself, one should take note of the fact that acting together with others also reciprocally, and somewhat through the dynamism of human action, provides an environment from which the acts of the human person emerge. This is rather obvious from the sociological perspective,⁵ in that the human person acts within the inter-personal relationships and dynamics in which he serendipitously finds himself. But Wojtyła goes further, stressing the importance of "the various relations of a communal

¹ Karol WOJTYŁA, "Person and Act," in *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 378.

² Jove Jim S. AGUAS, *Person, Action and Love: The Philosophical Thoughts of Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II)* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2014), 162.

³ Ferdinand TABLAN, "Preliminary Notes on Wojtyła's Personalist Ethics," preprint, submitted 2006, 21, <https://philarchive.org/archive/TABPNO>.

⁴ Dean Edward A. MEJOS, "Against Alienation: Karol Wojtyła's Theory of Participation," *Kritike* 1 (2007): 85.

⁵ The field of sociology provides a discipline's worth of perspective of such relations, but in a somewhat post-factum way. While naturally admitting to the importance of such inquiry, this work does not aim to undertake such an investigation as this would be beyond both the scope of the current analysis as well as the thought and work of Wojtyła.

or social character in which human acts most often take place.”⁶ Therefore, in a way opposite to the one stressed in the previous paragraph, acting together with others also is the grounds from which the human person acts. As to the method of this dynamic, it “is a simple and natural consequence of the fact that man exists ‘together with others.’ The feature of community—the social feature—is impressed upon human existence itself.”⁷ Ergo acting together with others also serves as a basis from which the human person acts. In order for the human person to act at all, it must be within acting together with others. This is not to define the human person as simply a social being, as only the *animale sociale* popular to modern thought, but to provide a metaphysical-anthropological view of the human person that begins to hint at the modes of his sociality which are “essentially imprinted in human existence.”⁸ For Wojtyła this “sociality” of the human person is of paramount importance, in that it rests on something deeper than accidental⁹ conclusions of particular modes and methods of inter-personal organization, and has at its root “the fundamental experience that man exists, lives and acts together with others.”¹⁰

Following from the basis of acting together with others and how this serves as the way in which nearly all actions of the human person are undertaken while also allowing for the human person to act more generally, it would be wise to delve into the development of acting together with others, and what such action results in. Wojtyła creates a very clear logic in this regard, arguing that the act of the human person leads to co-action with others, develops into acting together with others, and finally ascends into community proper. Beginning, there is a noted importance given to the human person as an acting subject. Before anything else, the human person acts. This is invaluable in that the act for the human person both constitutes the center of the concerned vision of the person and because “*only an earnest understanding of human action can lead to a correct interpretation of co-operation, and not vice versa.*”¹¹ Now the acts of human persons can be, and nearly always are, done in concert with and with regards to other persons, this showing how from the inherent act of the person there develops the concept of co-action or co-operation with others that can only be properly understood

⁶ WOJTYŁA, “Person and Act,” 378.

⁷ WOJTYŁA, 378.

⁸ AGUAS, *Person, Action and Love*, 163.

⁹ In the sense of classical Thomistic/Aristotelian metaphysics.

¹⁰ AGUAS, *Person, Action and Love*, 163.

¹¹ WOJTYŁA, “Person and Act,” 379.

through an "understanding of human action."¹² From here one can see how this acting together with others emerges inherently from "the conscious experience of my own *I*," particularly through the individual acts of the human subject.¹³ At this point the human person steadfastly is seen as acting together with others, and community is realized through the subsequent development of inter-personal social action found within acting together with others so as to highlight "not the *plurality of subjects* alone but always the *specific unity of this plurality*."¹⁴ Therefore, one can see that Wojtyła's position has a solid direction that progresses from the acts of individual human persons to the community of persons. This shows how "Human life is accurately described as life in the community and the reasons for this are fundamental,"¹⁵ while avoiding any kind of erroneous definition of community that would place itself before the human person, thus leading to the anthropological alienation.

Closely related to this human person and action based development of community are the concepts of participation and alienation. These two topics are central to the development of inter-personal actions. The fact that they are discussed by Wojtyła in relation to the development of the action of the human person within community necessitates some brief overview. Participation is central to the act of the human person in relation to others and is the mode by which the individual human person is able to go beyond the self and have inter-personal and eventually social action, while maintaining and even developing his own personhood.¹⁶ Any act that would lack such participation or place anything above or before the human person, and therefore see him as nothing more than a means to certain communal ends, would at best give an improper interpretation of the human person and at worst actively restrict him from actualizing his transcendence, personhood, or subjectivity, and thus constitute alienation.¹⁷ Therefore, to understand the development of the human person and his act into the community of acting human persons,

¹² WOJTYŁA, 378.

¹³ Alma S. ESPARTINEZ, "Karol Wojtyła on Participation and Alienation," *Studia Gilsoniana* 12, no. 1 (2023): 36.

¹⁴ Karol WOJTYŁA, "The Person: Subject and Community," in *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 490.

¹⁵ ESPARTINEZ, "Karol Wojtyła on Participation and Alienation," 38.

¹⁶ WOJTYŁA, "Person and Act," 379-80.

¹⁷ WOJTYŁA, "The Person: Subject and Community," 489.

one must understand participation as the agent of this development and alienation as the lack of proper development.

Seeing how acting together with others is central to communities, one may ask how the action of the human person is able to undertake such an endeavor. How is action able to bring the human person from his own individual action into the community so as to actualize and transcend himself? This comes from the inherently dynamic nature of the acts of the human person. This is based, as Wojtyła argues, on the “dynamic correlation of act and person that results from the fact of existing ‘together with others’ and acting ‘together with others.’”¹⁸ Therefore, the act of the human person has a dynamic relation that “is in itself a fundamental reality and remains such within an action.”¹⁹ From here, it becomes apparent that the action currently understood has a part of its nature that “remains the principal and fundamental reality for the entire wealth of actions having a social, communal, or inter-personal character.”²⁰ In other words, the dynamic found within the act of the human person per se orients action towards others, and action in itself is dynamic and provides a basis from which all possible modes and forms of acting between human persons become possible. Thus, action allows the human person to go beyond the self and interact with others in a way that develops into the processes mentioned in previous paragraphs. It is fundamental and central to have such an understanding of action, as the concept of action presented by Wojtyła posits that “the integrally understood dynamism of man, allows us to better and more properly understand the subjectivity of man.”²¹ Therefore, there is a necessary metaphysical and anthropological need to understand action as being inherently dynamic. But this should not be seen as surprising since the human person is a dynamic being, with dynamic action being part of his identity.²²

Playing off the dynamism of action, and how this is inherent to the nature of the human person, it is important to see how acting together with others still concerns acts of individual human persons and intimately relates to the development of the identity and subjectivity of individuals. This is to say “that by acting ‘together with others’ the person performs the act and fulfills himself in it.”²³ As such, individual human personhood is realized through

¹⁸ WOJTYŁA, “Person and Act,” 378.

¹⁹ WOJTYŁA, 379.

²⁰ WOJTYŁA, 379.

²¹ WOJTYŁA, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 473.

²² TABLAN, “Preliminary Notes on Wojtyła’s Personalist Ethics,” 5-6.

²³ WOJTYŁA, “Person and Act,” 386.

acting together with others, with such a kind of acting being an important aspect of personal development, subjectivity, transcendence, and realization. By acting together with others, the human person becomes a person, with this being "the property of the person in virtue of which man by being and acting together with others is nonetheless able to fulfill himself in this acting and being,"²⁴ which thus enables the human person's auto-realization and actualization of his very humanity.

In seeing that acting together with others allows the human person to be realized, it also becomes apparent that when individual human persons act together with others, the individuals' acts still retain their inherently personalistic value. This is to say that the acts of individual human persons done while acting together with others are still inherently the acts of a particular person and retain their personalistic value. Wojtyła stresses this when he states that "by acting together with others man preserves in this acting the personalistic value of his own act, and at the same time he realizes what results from the community of action."²⁵ Therefore, acting together with others is also an inherently personal act of value to individual human persons, in that, in the particular sense, it is theirs as well. Any other sense of acting together with others, one that would take away this personalistic value, would become a kind of mass passion wherein the mass thinking of a crowd would alienate the human person.²⁶ Such a situation should be avoided, as by truly acting together with others "*man preserves all that results from the community of action and at the same time-precisely by this means realizes the personalistic value of his own act.*"²⁷ To abandon this would be an anthropological mistake of the highest order.

Having come to a point where the personalistic value of acting together with others is observable, Wojtyła stresses that such a foundation allows us to see the relation presented in the previous paragraph from the opposite direction. That is, through acting together with others, individual human persons, in the totality of their subjectivity,²⁸ serve as the basis for community in that community rests upon "*the experience of the person.*"²⁹ As such, in Wojtyła's view, community is a pluralistic entity made up by the multiplicity

²⁴ WOJTYŁA, "The Person: Subject and Community," 489.

²⁵ WOJTYŁA, "Person and Act," 385.

²⁶ WOJTYŁA, 387. The problem of alienation, while important, is too wide for proper analysis in this work.

²⁷ WOJTYŁA, "Person and Act," 385.

²⁸ WOJTYŁA, 387.

²⁹ WOJTYŁA, 393.

of human persons residing therein and should always be seen as such. This is to say that the purely material fact of community is that it is composed of different individual human persons acting together with others,³⁰ with this action being personalistically and individually their own. Therefore, it would be improper and unrealistic to define community as strictly a mass of people or to see community as the sole arbiter of personal identity; this is to say as the starting point for understanding the human person.

While acting together with others forms a basis for understanding community as presented by Wojtyła, and this section has provided an analysis of such an understanding, it is important to both stress the importance of acting together with others, but also admit that such a conception of inter-personal act does not explain community or even inter-personal action in their totality. Acting together with others is a kind of first step into understanding the Wojtyłaan conception of community, as it lacks any analysis of the way in which such action plays directly into the human person's subjectivity and personhood. It serves as a statement of ontological and personalistic fact for the person and community, but the current investigation needs to go deeper. Acting together with others is the "how", but not necessarily the "what". Such a place is reserved for participation as well as the rich, important, and fundamental place it stands both in relation to the individual human person and the communities he finds himself a part of.

THE TWO MEANINGS OF PARTICIPATION

After having discussed "acting 'together with others,'" it is necessary to discuss "participation" proper in the Wojtyłaan sense. For Wojtyła, participation is the basis from which one can understand the totality of community, and the particulars discussed in the previous section. Participation serves as the basis for any personal conception of community and is the vehicle by which all senses of acting together with others are given their proper meaning, are able to be manifested, and serve as the basis for community. To simplify, participation serves as the basis of the human community, and is that which enables persons to act together with others, thus developing into a community. As such, a fundamental understanding of participation is paramount to any understanding of Wojtyła's ideas regarding community, society, or inter-personal action. Wojtyła himself defines participation in two ways,

³⁰ AGUAS, *Person, Action and Love*, 171.

doing so both in *Person and Act* and in *The Person: Subject and Community*. The former serves as a primary introduction to participation while the latter is a more mature explanation which develops from the first. At first glance, in describing participation, it may seem somewhat disjointed to define participation in two ways in two separate texts, but further analysis shows how these twin definitions³¹ play into one another and together explain the division of definition that Wojtyła makes.

Nonetheless, and in the vein of Wojtyła's thought, a preliminary note must be made of the common meaning of the term "participation." In the colloquial sense, and pertaining to the etymological origins of the word, "participation" is used to describe taking part in something. Therefore, when we say that someone participated in, for instance, a seminar, we say that they took part in it, were present, attended, and the like. But such a definition does not go far enough when discussing the depth of the human person, and only describes participation in a "statistical way, without reaching the foundations of this partaking."³² Wojtyła acknowledges this, and calls for a more complete and fundamental philosophical explanation of participation in its totality, with particular reference to the inter-personal acts of the human person and how this conception allows the community of human persons to emerge.

Such an explanation is provided in the final section of *Person and Act*, so as to "reach the foundations that inhere in the person."³³ Here, participation is first described as that "which corresponds to the transcendence of the person in the act when this act is performed 'together with others,' in various social or inter-human relations."³⁴ Therefore, it is through participation that individual human persons are allowed to transcend themselves within their acts, given their actions are done in concert with other human persons. This then leads to a division wherein participation is both described as "a property of the person himself acting 'together with others'"³⁵ and "as a manifold ability for the person to relate to 'others.'"³⁶ As for the first within this division, it concerns a development from the previously stated importance of the human person and his ability to act together with others. "Thus, participation denotes a property of the person himself, an interior and homogenous

³¹ Which themselves each define participation in two ways.

³² WOJTYŁA, "Person and Act," 385.

³³ WOJTYŁA, 385.

³⁴ WOJTYŁA, 385.

³⁵ WOJTYŁA, 386.

³⁶ WOJTYŁA, 387.

property that determines the fact that by existing and acting “together with others” the person exists and acts as a person.”³⁷ From this quotation we can discover two important aspects of participation described in this way. Participation is a property of individual human persons and a part of the human person within his very anthropology. For a human person to participate is to partake in his very nature. Thus, when the human person participates, his acts done together with others are still grounds from which the individual person is acting as that same individual human person. The individual human person’s identity is not lost or superseded when he acts in participation with others, and in fact, given the personalistic nature of participation, his very personhood is realized. The human person is the starting point and end of participation, while simultaneously bringing him out, with participation therefore being the antithesis of any kind of alienation thereof, with it even allowing the human person to transcend himself within inter-personal action.

Continuing, *Person and Act* then defines participation, within the context of being a “manifold ability for the person to relate to ‘others,’”³⁸ as “*a form of the person’s relation to ‘others,’ a form that is adapted to these relationships and is thus itself diverse.*”³⁹ This therefore means that participation is present in the diversity of ways that human persons act together with other persons and itself reflects this diversity. Participation is not something that can be restricted to a particular kind of acting together with others, even if it has its limits,⁴⁰ and instead forms the basis for inter-personal actions as “the very basis of such forms that inheres in the person and is proper to him.”⁴¹ Now participation from this perspective is more of an ability of the human person, as understood as:

the property thanks to which man by acting “together with others” at the same time realizes the authentic personalistic value: he performs the act and fulfills himself in it. Action “together with others” therefore corresponds to the transcendence and integration of the person in the act when man *chooses what others choose* or even when he *chooses because others choose, seeing in this object of choice the value that is in some way homogeneous and his own*. Self-determi-

³⁷ WOJTYŁA, 386.

³⁸ WOJTYŁA, 387.

³⁹ WOJTYŁA, 387.

⁴⁰ These limits being one and the same with alienation, which is itself incredibly important to the thought of Wojtyła but with a full analysis thereof being outside the scope of this work.

⁴¹ WOJTYŁA, “Person and Act,” 387.

nation is linked to this-and in the case of acting "together with others," self-determination includes and expresses participation.⁴²

This is to say that participation as an ability of individual human persons in relating to others is an agent of action within a person, intimately related to his action that while, as stated in the previous paragraph, being part of his anthropological identity in his self-determination, transcendence, and integration, also stands as the mode by which through the action of the individual human person his self-determination, transcendence, and integration emerge. Participation is not only a property of the human person, but also an ability closely related to the individual's personal identity "in his dynamic correlation with the act."⁴³ This is thus one and the same with the basis of the capacity of the human person to act together with others, allowing for the "community of action to be realized",⁴⁴ while simultaneously realizing the personalistic value of an individual human person's acts. From the property of participation as a capacity, the ability of participation as an actualization follows. Wojtyła thus defines participation, in *Person and Act*, in these two ways.

Nonetheless, these twin definitions deal with the human person in his value as a person. Participation in both definitions has an inherently personalistic value and deals with the human person's identity both in his inherent anthropology and metaphysical reality. To discuss participation, and then the rise of communities proper, one must see the personalistic value of participation, without which errors in definition emerge.

Continuing, Wojtyła further discusses participation in *The Person: Subject and Community*. It should be noted that the definition found here is more developed and while being based in the analysis made in *Person and Act*, nonetheless attempts to give a more complete definition of participation and further the work began in Wojtyła's earlier text. This is to say that while at first glance the twin definitions of participation made in *The Person: Subject and Community* may seem to be different from that formulated in *Person and Act*, it is actually a continuation of the analysis made in the earlier work and goes even deeper in its description of participation, particularly at the level of relations in defining the ontological meaning of participation. This is unsurprising, as the later work itself evidences that the analysis made in

⁴² WOJTYŁA, 387.

⁴³ WOJTYŁA, 388.

⁴⁴ WOJTYŁA, 388.

Person and Act is both cursory and incomplete, serving more as an introduction to participation than an exhaustive analysis, with *The Person: Subject and Community* serving to contribute to a fuller explanation of participation.⁴⁵ In this later analysis, Wojtyła again describes participation in two complementary ways, these being participation as relating to the “I-thou” inter-personal dimension of community⁴⁶ and to the “we” social dimension of community.⁴⁷ It is important to note that here participation is directly discussed while referencing community, particularly when considering “the connection that occurs between the subjectivity of the man-person and the structure of the human community.”⁴⁸ As with the previous text, the starting point here is the human person and his relation to those around him, although context is given within the concept of human community. The human person is still the starting point and end of participation, and especially as the personally subjective “I,”⁴⁹ but now consideration is made more towards his common anthropological nature, and what arises thereof.

In *The Person: Subject and Community* Wojtyła first introduces participation within the context of the relation of the personal “I” to the “thou”, with the former being the common understanding of the individual as a subjective and singular human person, and the latter being another such individual and subjective human person. This opens up the uniqueness of the “I-thou” relation within participation for Wojtyła. As this relation admits that:

a certain plurality of personal subjects exists at the starting point of the “I-thou” relation. Although this plurality is minimal (one + one), we must nonetheless base the analysis of unity, which is essential for the concept of community, on acknowledging this plurality. “*Thou*” is another “*I*” different from me.⁵⁰

From this understanding, Wojtyła explains that the “I-thou” relation thus allows for the human person to relate to others in a way that emerges from his own individual personhood, but through experiencing the personhood of the other, the relational understanding of the person returns to this first, personal “I.” Thus, “[t]he ‘thou’ is not only an expression of division, but also

⁴⁵ WOJTYŁA, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 488, 508.

⁴⁶ WOJTYŁA, 492.

⁴⁷ WOJTYŁA, 500.

⁴⁸ WOJTYŁA, 488.

⁴⁹ WOJTYŁA, 493.

⁵⁰ WOJTYŁA, 494.

an expression of contact.”⁵¹ As such, there is within the “I-thou” relation a focus on individual human persons, both the individual proper and the other being seen as an individual as well. Ergo this relation distinctly separates the “thou” from the mass of persons and makes him appear in his concreteness of personhood, but while also being potentially orientated towards all people, the “I-thou” relation binds the individual human person (I) to another individual human person (thou), and in doing so the relation returns to the former from which it proceeded, revealing the distinct personal subjectivity of the primary “I” in that “it embeds me more firmly in that subjectivity”⁵² and confirms “the structure of the subject and the subject’s primacy in relation to it.”⁵³ Continuing, the “I-thou” relationship can come to its height in participation through the lived experience of inter-personal relationships as enabled when two human persons become for one another both an “I” and a “thou”, with Wojtyła stressing that this constitutes “the full specificity of the community that is proper to the “I-thou” inter-personal relationship.”⁵⁴ Interestingly, this opens up the possibility of proper participation as participation in the humanity of other human persons, with participation construed in this way becoming an essential part of any emergent community. To put it simply, human persons need to participate with others through identifying the other as another human person, and therefore both have a point of reference for their own personhood and reciprocally allow their own personhood to serve as the “thou” for the multitude of other individual “I” persons.

Developing from the “I-thou relation” and its position towards participation, Wojtyła enumerates on the “we” relation. This serves as an introduction to the social aspect of participation and community, focusing more so on the plurality found within a community and less so on the persons belonging to this plurality, as opposed to the strictly individual based inter-personal relation presented in the “I-thou” relation. Nonetheless, the importance here emerges from “*the specific subjectivity of this plurality*”,⁵⁵ that is to say the unique relation that is found among the human persons who are the many “I’s” making up the “we.” The specificity of the “we” relation is fundamentally how it gives the relations of the human person, and human persons in the pluralistic sense, a social dimension. In the current relation the “I” and “thou” remain, but with reference to their mutual relation to the common

⁵¹ WOJTYŁA, 494.

⁵² WOJTYŁA, 495.

⁵³ WOJTYŁA, 495.

⁵⁴ WOJTYŁA, 496.

⁵⁵ WOJTYŁA, 500.

good, allowing a new “we” unity to emerge and be identified.⁵⁶ Thus, in relation to the common good, a community of human persons gains “a new profile and a new dimension in action and existence.”⁵⁷ As such, the “I-thou” becomes and enriches the “we” through the common good corresponding “to the transcendence of persons being the objective basis for their constitution in the social community.”⁵⁸ An orientation towards a common good allows individual human persons to participate in a transcendent “we” that goes beyond individual personhood, and has its own identity that itself participates with the identity of the human persons within the “we.” Naturally, this transcendence is one and the same with the “transcendence proper to man as a person”⁵⁹ in that it is in close relation to the self-fulfillment of the human person as a subjective “I.” Therefore, in referring to the common good, individual human persons transcend beyond the individual “I” of their personhood, establishing a “we”, with the formulation thereof contributing to the subjectivity, integration, and fulfillment of the primary “I” so as to fundamentally correspond to it and find “*itself more fully and thoroughly in the human ‘we.’*”⁶⁰ Thus, the common good alone most intimately fulfills the individual goods of the individual human persons within the “we,” with the “we” relation of participation being inseparable from this.

From here, the two definitions of participation Wojtyła makes in *The Person: Subject and Community* can be seen in their complementarity. There is a focus on the primacy and starting point of the individual human person as an “I.” The subjectivity of this “I” allows both the “I-thou” and “we” to emerge, with both relations serving in the realization, transcendence, and integration of the “I.” But it should be noted that these relations have a particular order, the “I-thou” is more primary and serves as the basis for the emergence of the “we.” However, from here, we also see how participation directly serves as the basis for community. Through participation in its many forms, human persons are able to transcend the bounds of their individual subjectivity, thus sharing this subjectivity in particular participative relations that are oriented in certain ways towards the common good so as to allow communities to emerge. The beauty therein being that the human person is not lost in these communities, with the plurality of individuals always being stressed by

⁵⁶ WOJTYŁA, 501.

⁵⁷ WOJTYŁA, 501.

⁵⁸ WOJTYŁA, 503.

⁵⁹ WOJTYŁA, 503.

⁶⁰ WOJTYŁA, 504.

Wojtyła, so as to admit "the specific primacy of the subject-person over the community."⁶¹

Participation, as described by Wojtyła, is a diverse concept that always relates intimately to the human person. This is so much the case that this commonality permeates the four definitions of participation made previously. Additionally, stress is given to the fact that the human person is not a solitary being, and his own identity relies heavily on his participation with the human persons around which he finds himself, no matter what form this participation takes. Continuing, human persons are presented as having a unique subjective identity, with participation taking place through "the subjectivity of the man-person and the structure of the human community."⁶² Therefore, participation, in all the ways defined here, is a property of the human person that "is expressed in the ability to confer a personal 'personalistic' dimension on his own being and acting when he exists and acts together with other people."⁶³ Importantly, as can be seen, action serves as a foundation for participation, in that the human person participates through his action, with this exposing the individual human person to the personhood of other human persons. But, as stated in the paragraph discussing participation in the context of the "we" relation, such acts must be done in reference to the common good, or else participation is made impossible.

CONCLUSION

As can be seen, Karol Wojtyła's conception of community has a rich basis, from which "acting 'together with others'" and "participation" allow for full, proper, and person-centric relations between individual human persons to blossom into communities that promote and are oriented towards the human person in his totality. There is a certain reciprocity between these two concepts, in that they both enrich each other and are fundamental to the existence of the other, but this is common to the thought of Wojtyła. For this philosopher-Pope, the mutual dependence and enrichment of different things is common, with him embracing the "both and" of Catholic thought. The basis for community is no different.

⁶¹ WOJTYŁA, 507.

⁶² WOJTYŁA, 488.

⁶³ WOJTYŁA, 488.

Such an understanding of the basis of community is of incredible importance, particularly to current discussions regarding the human person and his sociality. Without a realistic philosophical background for analysis of persons in communities, one that embraces the human both in his metaphysical-anthropological and personalistic reality, mistakes in conclusions about the nature of the human person can be made, to say nothing of possibly harmful conclusions that would at best embrace a certain kind of positivism, or at worst alienate the person from who he truly is and ergo treat him improperly. Additionally, much of the contemporary confusion regarding the nature of the human person, as well as the crisis in seeing society as purely accidental, could be solved with the conclusions posited by Wojtyła. This is of course in no way to belittle the work and conclusions of contemporary anthropology and sociology, whose value speaks for itself, but rather to embrace a perspective that would in no way see the human person and his relations as a fundamentally unknowable accident within a world of other such accidents.

This begins to suggest the opportunities for further research that the concerned understanding of the Wojtyłaan basis for community provides. Firstly, questions regarding alienation, and what happens when there are issues regarding inter-personal actions or analysis thereof, would prove to be fruitful and enlightening. Questions of what happens when human persons act in a way that alienates the other deserve further, possibly ethical, investigation. Continuing, further analysis could be made in reference to the communities that emerge from the basis discussed in this work. This could be multidisciplinary, in that fields such as metaphysics to anthropology and sociology could provide valuable and worthwhile research in this regard. Naturally, given the complexity of the communities that human persons create, such a wide scope of interest is all but necessary. However, given this diversity of investigation, a fundamental realistic metaphysical outlook must always be applied. In this respect, the development of a “metaphysical sociology” that invested its efforts into analyzing strictly the modes and communities of human action themselves would be indispensable.

Ultimately, if such a realistic and personalistic understanding of community is not understood and investigated, issues regarding the alienation of human persons will continue to grow. This is to say nothing of issues regarding the abandonment of any realistic view of human community, and the popular contemporary post factum understanding thereof. We may then become talented in researching and providing analysis of the accidentals of the

relations between human persons, but the nature of these relations, in their most fundamental way, will remain a mystery. Such a situation must be avoided, lest the uniqueness of the human person be lost.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO ACTING "TOGETHER WITH OTHERS" AND PARTICIPATION AS THE BASIS FOR COMMUNITY IN THE THOUGHT OF KAROL WOJTYŁA

Summary

Karol Wojtyła's conception of community is an often overlooked part of his vast body of writing. While much energy is dedicated to his ethics and theology, little attention is given to how he defined the way in which human persons interact with one another and build the communities and societies wherein they find themselves. Central to this definition of community are the concepts of "acting 'together with others'" and "participation." For Wojtyła, these two intimately personal and subjective aspects of the human person serve as both the basis and mode from which authentic human communities emerge. This work presents an introduction to Wojtyła's basis for community through analyzing "acting 'together with others'" and "participation," thus placing the primary impetus for inter-personal action strictly within the tradition of metaphysical anthropology and personalism which Wojtyła himself embraced. In doing so, an overview of Wojtyła's thought is presented that is based on his most influential philosophical works concerning community, particularly *Person and Act* and *The Person: Subject and Community*, with this serving as a realistic philosophical background for subsequent analysis of both the human person and communities generally.

Keywords: John Paul II; Karol Wojtyła; community; acting together with others; participation; metaphysical anthropology; personalism

WPROWADZENIE DO DZIAŁANIA „WSPÓLNIE Z INNYMI”
I UCZESTNICTWA JAKO PODSTAWY WSPÓLNOTY
W MYŚLI KAROLA WOJTYŁY

Streszczenie

Koncepcja wspólnoty Karola Wojtyły jest często pomijaną częścią jego ogromnego dorobku pisarskiego. Podczas gdy wiele energii poświęca się jego etyce i teologii, niewiele uwagi zwraca się na to, jak definiował on sposób, w jaki osoby ludzkie wchodzą ze sobą w interakcje i budują wspólnoty i społeczeństwa, w których się znajdują. Kluczowe dla tej definicji wspólnoty są pojęcia „działania wspólnie z innymi” i „uczestnictwa”. Dla Wojtyły te dwa bardzo osobiste i subiektywne aspekty osoby ludzkiej służą zarówno jako podstawa, jak i sposób, w jaki wyłaniają się autentyczne ludzkie społeczności. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia wprowadzenie do podstawy wspólnoty Wojtyły poprzez analizę „działania wspólnie z innymi” i „uczestnictwa”, umieszczając w ten sposób główny impuls do działań międzyludzkich ściśle w tradycji antropologii metafizycznej i personalizmu, które reprezentował sam Wojtyła. Czyniąc to, przedstawiono przegląd myśli Wojtyły oparty na jego najważniejszych dziełach filozoficznych dotyczących wspólnoty, w szczególności *Osoba i czyn* oraz *Osoba: Podmiot i wspólnota*, co posłużyło jako realistyczne tło filozoficzne dla późniejszej analizy zarówno osoby ludzkiej, jak i społeczności w ogóle.

Słowa kluczowe: Jan Paweł II; Karol Wojtyła; społeczność; działanie wspólnie z innymi; uczestnictwo; antropologia metafizyczna; personalizm