



THE POLISH
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY
IN THE 20TH CENTURY



Zofia Józefa
Zdybicka

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Zofia Józefa
Zdybicka

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THE POLISH CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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I.

ZOFIA JÓZEFA ZYBICKA USJK:
PERSON AND WORK

INTRODUCTION

The following book assumes a panoramic overview. Here, we intend to present the life and works of Zofia Józefa Zdybicka, by placing them within the background of the post-war history of Poland and on the horizon of the achievements of Polish philosophy with its well-established 800-year-old tradition, which can be traced back to the times of Vitello, a scholar considered to be the first naturalist, mathematician and philosopher of the pre-university period in Poland.¹ The authors of the book take particular notice of the situation of European (and, in broader strokes, global) philosophy at the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries, as it significantly affected the location and the impact of metaphysical realism, as proposed by Zdybicka, currently marginalised beyond solely scientific disputes regarding the issues that exhibit the actual significance to the entirety of mankind.

The authors of the book associate the view represented by Zofia Zdybicka with the phenomenon of existential Thomism that primarily draws upon the metaphysical and anthropological ideas of Thomas Aquinas. The Lublin scholar postulates that philosophy exercises its potential only when it brings one as close as possible, in the strictest manner, to actual reality, the existence of which is independent of human thought and human language. Additionally, the scholar opposes the existence of certain ideal or purely potential realms. The world simply exists, and its particular beings-objects exercise their essence and existence due to substantial forms independent of people.

¹ Cf. J. Skoczyński and J. Woleński, *Historia filozofii polskiej* (Kraków, 2010), pp. 24–27.

Therefore, ontological pluralism, the cognitive receptiveness of the human mind, the correspondent understanding of truth, accepting the theist view of the world and life, including the sources from the Christian revelation within the framework of philosophical speculation, the emphasis on participation as an ontological bond between man and God, directing attention towards the relation between religion and matters of death, the appreciation of the culture-making role of Christianity in the history of the West—all of the above factors present in Zdybicka's thought allow to include her among the prominent Polish Thomists alongside Stefan Świeżawski, Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec OP, Jerzy Kalinowski, Stanisław Kamiński, and, in a slightly different manner, Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II.

However, essentially, the authors intend to highlight the involvement of the Lublin scholar regarding probably the most significant issues, i.e. those related to religion directing human experience towards that which enables the fulfilment of all potentialities placed by the Creator within human nature and, eventually, transgressing these potentialities, when—as expressed in the theological aspect—man will be overwhelmed with the light of glory (*lumen gloriae*). In this state of salvation, his cognitive potential will surely surpass that attributed to the human being.

Obviously, Zdybicka draws a line between the realm of philosophical explanations and demonstrations, and the language of theological distinctions, however, she assumes that it is impossible to properly solve the problem of the final truth regarding man and God simply by one's own means. Therefore, one should consider the "aid" of God himself, who, in a way, complements the human cognitive potential with the light of Divine wisdom. The above does not refer to answering the question regarding which god is the God of Christians—Zeus, Hermes, Dionysus or Zarathustra—as it is none of the above. Zdybicka recalls God, to whom no polytheist prays. It is, to a degree, a God of the philosophers, to whom one may pray, contrary to Martin Heidegger's mockery, and who speaks to man; however, this concept of God was profoundly reconstructed by the Christian faith.

In short, as perfectly presented by Joseph Ratzinger,² this God appears in faith as a God of men, who is not only the thought of thought,

² J. Ratzinger, *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*, trans. Z. Włodkowska (Kraków, 1994), pp. 132–138.

or according to Aristotle, the eternal mathematics of the universe, but an *agape*, the power of creative love. This God is the “Fire” that Pascal experienced during that night when, on a piece of paper which he later wore sewn into his jacket, he wrote the following words: “Fire. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob” and “not of the philosophers and the scholars.” In this manner, the God of the philosophers is entirely different from how philosophers invented Him, however He does not negate the knowledge they achieved: that He is actually known, but only when one realises, while being the essential Truth and the basis of all being, He is simultaneously the God of faith and the God of men, whom men should address with love. The relation between man and God is permeated by love, which should be considered as *proprium* of the Bible.

That is why the Biblical God acts in history. He reveals Himself to men, coming to their aid at a time of their oppression. Additionally, he always remains free. He allows no one to dispose of him. However, he is prepared to do the unexpected. The God of the Koran, however, will not take such a risk. He remains outside the boundaries of history. He wishes to be recognised and worshipped as One God, in His greatness and majesty as a Creator, a Lawgiver and a Judge. In consequence, Islam will not be able to accept the revelation of God in Jesus Christ any more.

Zdybicka is aware of the fact that, for many contemporaries, this personal aspect of the Absolute is the most difficult to accept. However, if Christians accept the primacy of the Logos, the faith in the reality of the creating thought that precedes all and maintains the world in its existence, then God cannot be—contrary to the opinion of the still-influential Heidegger³—an anonymous, indeterminate conscience, but freedom, love and a person. Such principles served Zdybicka as the basis for her philosophical, and, in narrower terms, religious proposals, particularly ones focused on explaining the natural acts of religion, attributed to men on the basis of their spontaneous experience. The authors of this book present the particular phases leading to her philosophical—i.e. final—explanation of the fact that religion, as actually experienced by men, is already on the level of common sense knowledge, in a variety of cultural contexts.

³ Heidegger presented himself as a relentless opponent of the relations between philosophy and theology. According to him, where the voices of revelation appear, human reasoning goes silent. Therefore, theologians should treat philosophy as “Paul’s foolishness.” See M. Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics,” in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 287–288.

We intend to indicate the enormous erudition of the Author, her profound knowledge of philosophical literature, ranging from ancient to contemporary sources. Despite the fact that the author is well grounded in the classical understanding of philosophy, she does not disregard the achievements of other types of philosophical discourse, including the efforts of phenomenology or of the philosophy of dialogue. The author is occupied with issues that have troubled human culture for centuries, as well as those that appeared along with the modern development of science, technology, politics, law and medicine. Precisely what we have in mind is an assortment of issues including the expansion of globalisation, multiculturalism, secularism, and ethnic minorities; therefore, issues regarding immigration and refugees, tolerance, indifference often expanded to its limits, matters of upbringing and so-called political correctness.

On behalf of the Lublin philosopher, we hope that Christianity, supported by philosophical and theological truth, brings salvation, by inviting us to undertake the effort of earning salvation. The decisiveness of the aforementioned does not result in ceasing our efforts of searching. We remain on a certain path. It is not a path leading through a wasteland, but the Earth, where God cares for his creations. Proposals, suspicious in regard to truth, posed by many (however, not all) representatives of contemporary culture do not overshadow this joyful message, which inspires us with the spirit of peace.

Perhaps, some of these contemporaries fear the void of the universe, some are unable to deal with the Divine-shaped void that fills their consciousness, some focus on the love of other people, creating secular forms of spirituality that provide them with intuitive insights and ecstasies acquired via peculiar intellectual and spiritual exercise, while others await the coming of a universal human justice that would bring the feeling of final fulfilment.

However, the majority wish to remain within the framework of evangelical life, not for the purpose of living in a museum, but to discover the greatest part of the legacy that protects men from a demiurgic temptation which distorts the pursuit of progress, instructing them to forget about their limitations and weaknesses.⁴ Zofia Józefa Zdybicka

⁴ Cf. J. Sochoń, *Religia w projekcie postmodernistycznym* (Lublin, 2012), pp. 303–306; M. Bock-Côté, *Multikulturalizm jako religia polityczna*, trans. M. Chojnowski (Warszawa, 2017), p. 308.

is among such people, as her philosophical accomplishments indicate that we shall finally find happiness, with truth, particularly the one revealed by the Creator of all, being the sole path leading to this happiness. Post-modern difficulties are of little significance here, however, they enforce a more confession-oriented reflection, and increase—paradoxically—the need to affirm the actual reality that allows an existence worthy of a man who accepts his own irremovable relationship with God. We wish to express our joy that the effort undertaken by the scholar will not go in vain, as many of her successors have commented and creatively expanded on the realistic model of philosophy, as well as its related means of participation in culture.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ZOFIA JÓZEFA ZDYBICKA

Zofia Róża Zdybicka was born on 5 August 1928 in Kraśnik Lubelski—now a district within the town of Kraśnik (Lublin Voivodeship)—into a wealthy, religious, middle-class family, to Feliks and Helena (family name: Łukasik). She had one sister who was four years older. The premature passing of their father in 1939 proved a tragic experience for the entire family. After graduating from primary school, Zdybicka continued her education in war-torn Lublin, in a well-established A.J. Vetter's Merchants' Secondary School. In 1948 she passed her state exams. During her education at the academy, following the suggestion of her confessor, Father Stefan Dzierżek SJ (†2005), a pupil of St. Urszula Ledóchowska, Zdybicka established contact with the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonising Heart Congregation in Pniewy.

After passing her state exams, on 25 September 1948, Zdybicka entered the Ursuline Congregation. Her first task, as a graduate of the merchants' secondary school, was taking custody of the financial aspect of the activity of the congregation-ministered orphanage in Otorów, near Pniewy. Zdybicka's wish was to undertake university education, and—as a result of various overlapping circumstances—she began her university studies in the academic year 1956/1957 as Sister Józefa Zdybicka at the Faculty of Christian Philosophy, which had already existed independently, at the Catholic University of Lublin (hereafter referred to as KUL). The year was a breakthrough period for the faculty as, during that time, four specialist studies were introduced: Specialisation in Theoretical Philosophy, Practical Specialisation, Philosophical-Psychological Specialisation and Natural Philosophy Specialisation.

This structure was maintained until 1981.⁵ However, the people who contributed to the faculty at the time, as well as the ideas and issues discussed during lectures and seminars, were much more significant than the academic structure itself. Already the dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Zdybicka recalled the atmosphere of those years and the relationship with the professors who “to a degree unattainable these days, constituted a true community of scholars and students. In order to pursue, pass on and acquire truth, discussions were held and friendships were made, perpetuating beyond the university period, and, on many occasions, lasted until the end.”⁶

During her initial years at the university, Zdybicka would attend classes given by, inter alia, Father Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, Stefan Swieżawski, Rev. Marian Kurdziałek, Rev. Bishop Karol Wojtyła, and Rev. Stanisław Kamiński. One should highlight that, since the beginnings of KUL (1918), philosophy has played a significant role in the system of the university’s education, mostly due to the initiative of the first rector of the university, Rev. Idzi Radziszewski, who was fascinated by the Louvain neo-scholastic school.

The first phase of Zdybicka’s university studies ended with her Master’s thesis, written under the supervision of Father Krąpiec and titled *On the nature of reductive reasoning, present in the philosophy of being*. In the same academic year, Zdybicka began her doctoral studies in philosophy. In November 1965, she received her Ph.D. title, based on the submitted rigorosum and her dissertation titled *The philosophical basis for the knowability of God in H. de Lubac*,⁷ also written under the supervision of Father Krąpiec. Zdybicka’s research, resulting in the aforementioned dissertation, focused on the ontological, epistemological, methodological and historical determinants of the theory of knowledge regarding God according to the interpretation of the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac.

In March 1966, Dr. Zdybicka held contract classes, and, later on, was employed first as a senior assistant and then as an adjunct professor

⁵ S. Janeczek, *Filozofia na KUL-u. Nurty – osoby – idee* (Lublin, 1998), p. 64.

⁶ Z.J. Zdybicka, “Wydział Filozofii KUL w perspektywie Pięćdziesięciolecia,” in *Księga Jubileuszowa na 50-lecie Wydziału Filozofii KUL*, ed. A.B. Stępień and J. Wojtysiak (Lublin, 2000), p. 14.

⁷ The dissertation was published under the title *Poznanie Boga w ujęciu Henri de Lubaca* (Lublin, 1973).

in the Department of Metaphysics. Zdybicka held general lectures on metaphysics and core philosophical issues; additionally, she discussed issues regarding the current theories of knowledge regarding God and the theories of participation from an epistemological and ontic aspect, as well as from the aspects of participation and analogy.

On 29 October 1970, at the Faculty of Christian Philosophy, KUL, Zdybicka successfully passed her post-doctoral exam. Her scholarly achievements and her dissertation titled *An attempt to construct a Thomist theory of the participation of being* were reviewed by Father Prof. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec OP, Rev. Prof. Kazimierz Kłósak, Rev. Prof. Stanisław Kamiński and Rev. Doc. Marian Jaworski.

In 1971, Dr.hab. Zofia Zdybicka was appointed *docent*, and in 1973 she was appointed to be the head of a new Philosophy of Religion department, established on 22 June, which was a result of the academic speculation regarding the relation between metaphysics and the philosophy of God and the philosophy of religion.⁸ In 1978, Zdybicka received the titles of associate professor and professor of KUL, and in 1988 she received the title of professor of humanities. Therefore, Zdybicka became the first nun in Poland to achieve the title of professor.

Zdybicka's continued zeal in her pursuit and exploration of issues regarding the philosophy of religion can be demonstrated inter alia by her numerous academic research leaves: as a research fellow at Yale University (New Haven, USA in 1977/1978), at the Catholic University of America in Washington (1978), as well as at the Catholic University of Leuven (1972, 1981, 1984, 1990, 1994, 1995).

Zofia Józefa Zdybicka also proved to be an impressive teacher. Apart from general and special topic lectures on the philosophy of God and religion, as well pro-seminars, Master's seminars, and Ph.D. seminars on the philosophy of God and religion, Zdybicka also gave classes on metaphysics, anthropology and ethics. Her special topic lectures were dedicated to issues of such significance as the issue of God in process philosophy (1981/1983), the subject of contemporary atheism (1988/1989), the attitude of religion towards the multiplicity of cultures (1991/1992), and the concept of religion and freedom (1995/1996). Additionally, Zdybicka taught introduction to philosophy, as well as anthropology and ethics.

⁸ Cf. S. Janeczek, *Filozofia na KUL-u. Nurty – osoby – idee*, p. 64.

The most important area of Zdybicka's educational-academic activity was supervising ca. 100 Master's theses and 28 Ph.D. dissertations. Among Zdybicka's Ph.D. students, one could name an assortment of prominent scholars, inter alia Rev. Prof. Andrzej Kłoczowski OP, Rev. Prof. Jan Sochoń, Rev. Prof. Piotr Moskal, and Rev. Prof. Paweł Mazanka.

Zdybicka was the coordinator and co-coordinator of numerous scientific symposiums, scientific gatherings, as well as nationwide and international conventions. One of the greatest undertakings was the V World Congress of Christian Philosophy, titled "Freedom in contemporary culture," held on 20–25 August 1996, gathering more than 300 scholars from 30 countries.⁹ Additionally, Zdybicka organised or co-organised a number of other gatherings, notable among which were the International Philosophical Symposium in Kraków (1978), "The common Christian roots of the European nations" international colloquium (Rome 1981), the "Human's and nature's drama" international anthropological symposium (Lublin 1984), "The tasks of philosophy in contemporary culture" Polish symposium (Lublin 1986), "The Divine and the human in Christian culture" symposium (Lublin 1987), and the "Religion and the meaning of being a human" symposium (Lublin 1992).

One of the more important aspects of Zdybicka's scholarly and educational activity was her involvement in the expansion of international cooperation. Her involvement was exhibited in both the aforementioned academic contacts with European and North American universities, as well as in lectures and papers presented inter alia during the International Thomist Congresses (Rome–Naples 1974, Rome 1980, 1986), and at universities in Washington, Ottawa, Brussels, Baltimore, Edmonton, Montreal, New Haven, Waterbury, Chicago, Prague, Paris and Leuven.

Zdybicka is a member of the following scientific societies: the PAN Philosophical Sciences Committee (1987–1989), the Polish Philosophical Society, the KUL Scientific Society, the American Bibliographical Institute, the Societas Internationale St. Thomae Aquinatis, the Pontificia Academia Sanctae Thomae Aquinatis, the Polish Society of

⁹ As a result of this event, a work was published, titled *Wolność we współczesnej kulturze. Materiały V Światowego Kongresu Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej KUL. Lublin, 20–25 sierpnia 1996* (Lublin, 1997).

Thomas Aquinas, and the Società Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino (founding member).

The competence and involvement of Zdybicka were often demonstrably appreciated by the authorities and academics of the Catholic University of Lublin. As a sign of appreciation, she was appointed to significant functions within the structures of the university: in 1979–1984 she was the director of the Theoretical Philosophy Section, in 1984–1986 she was the pro-dean of the Faculty of Christian Philosophy, and from 1986–1987 and again from 1990–1999 she was the dean of the aforementioned faculty. Additionally, Zdybicka was a long-time director of the Senate Commission for Contacts with Foreign Scientific Institutions, a member of the Publishing Commission, the Scientific Commission, the Youth Commission, and the Accommodation Commission, an active member of the KUL Scientific Society Board, a co-editor of *Roczniki Filozoficzne* [*Philosophical Annals*], a member of the Scientific Council of the John Paul II Institute KUL, an editor of the “Philosophy of religion” section in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, an active participant in the works of the Universal Encyclopaedia of Philosophy Scientific Committee, as well as in the works of the *Biblioteka Filozofii Realistycznej* [*Library of Realistic Philosophy*] Scientific Council.

Zdybicka’s scientific-educational work, her devotion to organising scientific life, as well as her feeling of responsibility for the condition of culture often gained appreciative acceptance. Zdybicka was awarded the Gold Cross of Merit (1979), the Officer’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2000), the “Book of the Year” title, given by the *Życia i Myśli* [*Lives and Thoughts*] Scientific Council (1978), the “Woman of the Year 1998” title (American Bibliographical Institute, INC.), and the KUL Rector’s Award (1996). In 2014 she was presented with the Idzi Radziszewski Award, presented annually by the KUL Scientific Society, and on 8 October 2016 she was awarded the TOTUS Award, presented by the “Dzieło Nowego Tysiąclecia” Foundation, given to individuals and institutions whose activity makes a remarkable contribution to promoting human dignity in the spirit of the teachings of John Paul II.

Her activity within the structure of the Catholic Church in Poland, as well as within the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonising Heart of Jesus Congregation, constitutes an entirely separate chapter in Zdybicka’s life. In the years 1963–1983 and 2001–2007, Zdybicka

participated in the General Council of the Congregation, and from 1983–2003, she was the supervisor of the Lublin Centre of the aforementioned. She participated in the works of the Primatial Social Council (1986–1990) and the Polish Episcopate Commissions for Culture, for Catholic Teaching, and for Dialogue with the Irreligious, as well as the “Iustitia et Pax” Commission. Additionally, Zdybicka was included in the group of consultants of the Polish Episcopate Scientific Council. In 1987, Zdybicka entered the Committee that organised the visit of John Paul II to the Catholic University in Lublin. Among such activities, one may also note her numerous articles and works dedicated to the consecrated life and spiritual gifts of the Ursuline Congregation.

On 11 November 2015, Zofia Zdybicka was presented with Honorary Citizenship by her home town of Kraśnik, and on 16 November 2017, at the John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin, a ceremony to renew Zofia Zdybicka’s Ph.D. was held. During the latter ceremony, Bishop Prof. Dr.hab. Ignacy Dec gave a lecture in her honour, and highlighted that the “sister’s diligence, her kindness and knowledge could very well fuel a number of minds,” and probably—as we suggest beside the cited laudation—entire scientific groups, particularly those that continue the Lublin Philosophical School tradition.

WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE POST-WAR PERIOD IN POLAND

Philosophy is one of those scientific disciplines able to retain a fair scope of autonomy regardless of external circumstances. Primarily, it is because philosophy is practised without the need to apply complicated technologies and complex infrastructures. In its substantive aspect, philosophy is independent as it strives for the truth, which is in no way determined by social, economical or political conditions. However, no philosophy is entirely disconnected, or in a vacuum. Each philosopher enters a creative relation with time and space that in a way denotes his rational horizon, while the reality indicates which problems and concepts one should discuss. Therefore, the context of practising philosophy is a combined result of time, space and the pursuit of truth.

From this perspective, the education and scientific activity of Zofia Józefa Zdybicka falls into the period of post-war Poland, where institutional and ideological power was held by the communist party, into the Polish transformation of the turn of the 1980s and the 1990s, as well as the time of free Poland. These social-political events significantly influenced the intellectual and scientific life that developed in the country. Evaluating Zdybicka's activity in terms of location, one must say that it is a Polish philosophy. The above statement carries a number of simplifications, as it is difficult to strictly demarcate the territory of philosophy; furthermore, relating philosophy to a particular geographical location presumes its local character. Examining

Zdybicka's biography, one shall see that her scientific activity is entirely free from the above-mentioned determinations. The Polish character, if one may say so, of her philosophy consists primarily of its language, its conceptual potential and in the character of the philosophical arguments and debates that appeared in Polish culture.

Primarily, one should mention the system of Marxist philosophy that established itself in post-war Poland as the ideological grounds for communism and Stalinism. The latter was a political-ideological phenomenon, rather than philosophical; therefore, it could treat philosophy solely as an instrument or a victim, while Marxism itself became a structure created for the purpose of propaganda.¹⁰ Regardless, Marxist philosophy was taught at universities, in an ambiguous form, as a type of official teaching. However, only the events of October 1956 (the so-called "political thaw") allowed Marxism to open itself to ideas coming from the West and to engage in a discussion with Christianity. One may assume that it was the argument against Marxism enforced by the political agenda, yet which slowly opened to "new content," at least up until 1968, that stood as the axis of the debates where many concepts essential to the confessional philosophy would appear, particularly the two disciplines within philosophy closest to Zdybicka, i.e. the philosophy of God and the philosophy of religion. The appearance of Marxism in post-war Poland became a consolidating impulse for the group that was later regarded as the Lublin Philosophical School. According to Zdybicka:

... at the time of the dominating Marxist ideology in Poland, it was the stronghold of independent thought, as it was dedicated solely to knowing truth regarding reality, instead of an opportunistic adjustment of it to the dominant ideology. It was a unique phenomenon in Poland, as well as in Central and Eastern Europe.¹¹

¹⁰ W. Chudy, "Postaci marksizmu i ich ewolucja w powojennej Polsce," in *Oblicza dialogu. Z dziejów i teorii dialogu: chrześcijaństwo – marksizm w Polsce*, ed. A. B. Stępień and T. Szubka (Lublin, 1992), p. 94.

¹¹ Z.J. Zdybicka, "Filozof wierny prawdzie o rzeczywistości," in *Wierność rzeczywistości. Księga Pamiątkowa z okazji jubileuszu 50-lecia pracy naukowej na KUL o. prof. Mieczysława A. Krąpca* (Lublin, 2001), p. 7.

IN THE LIGHT OF PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS AND POLITICAL EVENTS

Despite the loss of a significant part of the intellectual elite during World War 2, three great philosophical traditions continued in Poland in the post-war period. The Lvov-Warsaw school practised the analytic philosophy of language, and the philosophy of science, logic and methodology. Another school practised phenomenology in Poland, represented by the disciple of Edmund Husserl—Roman Ingarden. The third school in Poland that developed significantly, and in the framework of which Zdybicka conducted her research, was Thomism, shaped primarily in the philosophical environment of the Catholic University of Lublin, the beginnings of which (1918) were strictly tied to philosophy and the resurging Louvain Thomism, while the sole idea of a Catholic university arose from the need to create Catholic elites after more than a hundred years of partition, which intentionally emaciated the intellectual life of the Polish nation. According to the ideas of Rev. Ignacy Radziszewski, the first rector of KUL, the university was intended to constitute a stronghold of enlightened patriotism in Poland. Apart from the Lublin school, Thomism was also promoted by scholar-philosophers of the Warsaw Theological Academy (ATK, now the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw).

Despite the fact that during the first period of post-war philosophy, up until 1949, the Marxists would aggressively attack prominent philosophers such as Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Roman Ingarden, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, and Stanisław Ossowski, as well as the representatives of the Lvov-Warsaw school and Christian philosophy, the traditions of philosophical schools prior to 1939 were not examined. One should also note that the war period was not an empty void in terms of practising philosophy. It was the time when the major works of Tatarkiewicz were accomplished: *On Happiness* and *History of Philosophy*, the latter of which functioned as the basic philosophy handbook for many years. During the Nazi occupation, Ingarden wrote his magnum opus, *Controversy over the Existence of the World*, and a number of translated works by foreign philosophers appeared, inter alia the selected works of Jacques Maritain, translated by Czesław Miłosz.

After 1945, although the Marxist school enjoyed many privileges granted by the state administration, which were exhibited inter alia in the availability of publishing opportunities and appointing Marxists to universities, one may observe attempts to communicate with the representatives of Marxism up until 1949. The founder of *Tygodnik Powszechny* [*The Catholic Weekly*], Rev. Jan Piwowarczyk, wrote a polemic against Marxism from the position of Thomist personalism. Rev. Michalski and Rev. Kłósak would also publish in the same spirit.

The event that would prove decisive for philosophy in post-war Poland was the Unification Congress of the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Worker's Party in December 1948, resulting in, inter alia: dismantling philosophy faculties at universities, with the exception the University of Warsaw and the Catholic University of Lublin, closing theology faculties at the Jagiellonian University and the University of Warsaw, and closing the Polish Academy of Learning and replacing it with the Polish Academy of Sciences with new staff, established by the communist authorities. Numerous prominent pre-war philosophy professors were removed from their educational-scientific positions and transferred to work as translators. Possibly the only positive result of the repressions was the establishment of the *Biblioteka Klasyków Filozofii* [*Philosophy Classics Library*], which prevails to this day, and which has published a total of 208 volumes (from 1952 to 2013) including works by, inter alia, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Schelling, Trentowski, and Husserl.

Christian thought was subjected to particularly violent attacks from communist ideology, as they in no way resembled a dialogue or a philosophical discussion, with the best example being the book by Leszek Kołakowski titled *Szkice o filozofii katolickiej* [*Sketches on Catholic Philosophy*], published in 1955. The author claimed that the efforts of Catholic doctrinaires were aimed at freeing men from the humiliating coercion of human history by entangling them in sacred history, which would determine their fate altogether. In addition, Kołakowski engaged in disputes, considering this activity as absolutely pathetic, with so-called Thomist realism, with Rev. Kłósak's views, with the "rights of a person," etc., arguing that Neo-Thomism eradicates science and human rights.¹²

¹² L. Kołakowski, *Szkice o filozofii katolickiej* (Warszawa, 1953), pp. 5–10.

Apart from ideological attacks, the Christian community was afflicted by administrative repressions. In consequence, many KUL professors were forced to leave the university: Rev. Pastuszka and Rev. Adamczyk were removed from the Faculty of Christian Philosophy. In the face of the dwindling surplus of academic staff, the Faculty of Philosophy was threatened with liquidation. Stefan Swieżawski and the new faculty dean—Jerzy Kalinowski—took on the responsibility of organising the new staff. As a result of their actions, Father Krąpiec OP, Rev. Mazierski, Rev. Kamiński, and later on Rev. Wojtyła appeared at KUL. The above-mentioned introduced a new style of philosophy, focusing on existential Thomism. Emphasis on the existential version of Thomism was characterised, primarily, by the openness to discussions with other philosophical schools, an attitude that was not preferred within traditional Thomism. Therefore, even in 1958, in the first “Philosophical Week” organised by KUL students, a number of students from different philosophical schools participated, and the lecture regarding Neo-Thomism, given by Father Krąpiec, was accompanied by a lecture given by A.B. Stępień on phenomenology, as well as a lecture on analytical philosophy, given by Rev. Kamiński.

As previously mentioned, the year 1956 was decisive, as, after the period of Stalinism, the general improvement in politics proved fruitful for the philosophical community. Professors previously removed from education and publishing duties were reinstated, inter alia Ajdukiewicz, Czeżowski, and Ingarden. Besides KUL, Christian philosophy was at that time developed at the Warsaw Theological Academy, the Theological Section of the Polish Theological Society, and, later on, at the Pontifical Academy of Theology, established in Kraków in 1981.

In Kraków, phenomenology thrived, particularly due to the work of Prof. Ingarden, who had been reinstated at the Jagiellonian University, and conducted research involving ontology, epistemology and aesthetics. The Lvov-Warsaw school dispersed; however, it had significantly affected the methodology of both Marxism as well as the philosophy practised within Christian philosophy communities.¹³ For example, at KUL, in the Methodology of Sciences Department, a wide array of research regarding the methodology of philosophy

¹³ Cf. W. Chudy, “Filozofia polska po II wojnie światowej. (Szkic),” *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 1 (1990), pp. 135–136.

was conducted, mostly based on the accomplishments of the Lvov-Warsaw school.

The changes that occurred within Marxism which shaped the philosophical overview of the times were of different natures. In the 1960s, two different schools appeared within Polish Marxism: scientific and anthropological. The former, at times referred to as the Engels orientation, preferred research on natural philosophy and dialectical materialism, while the latter, at times referred to as Hegelian, focused on the philosophy of man. Within the anthropological orientation, the so-called school of the history of ideas was born, which influenced the philosophical circles at the University of Warsaw significantly.¹⁴ Scholars identified with the school intended to get up the courage to exercise independent thought, drawing upon the greatest achievements of the European humanities, in a situation of political enslavement. Many of them travelled a long and a winding path of ideological self-determination, from hanging Stalin's photographs on their office walls up to accepting the ideals of "Solidarity." The continuity of this formation was broken after the events of March 1968. The aforementioned led to a forced emigration of a part of the Polish intellectual community, not excluding the scholars associated with the Warsaw school of the history of ideas. The removal of scientists and servicemen of Jewish provenance significantly impoverished not only the faculties of philosophy, but also other fields of Polish cultural life.

One should note the occasional constructive and fruitful cooperation between the followers of Marxism and other philosophical schools. One may mention the cooperation within the Polish Academy of Sciences between Stefan Swieżawski of KUL and Adam Schaff, a Marxist associated with the University of Warsaw and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, regarding research on 15th century Polish philosophy and medieval philosophy. In practice, however, the relations between Marxism and other philosophical schools were strongly determined by contexts outside the scope of philosophy.

¹⁴ Cf. J. Sochoń, "Biblioteka i życie," *Nowe Książki* 12 (2016), pp. 84–85.

THE ELECTION OF KAROL WOJTYŁA AS POPE

While searching for moments essential to the development of Polish culture, including philosophy, one should indicate the year of 1978 and the election of Karol Wojtyła, a philosopher associated with the Department of Ethics at KUL, as Pope. The works of Wojtyła, which focused on anthropological and ethical subjects, became objects of research, debates and popularisation. The events following 1978 constitute an illustrious phase in the history of Poland, when philosophy travelled beyond university departments and began to generate a real impact on the country's social and political life. One should mention the activity of the founders and followers of "Solidarity," a nationwide labour union aiming to defend labourers' rights. The veto of the followers of democratic ideas against the communist authorities was twofold, exhibited in both physical (strikes, manifestations, protests) as well as intellectual opposition. The tasks of the intellectuals were simultaneously related to the necessity of describing the processes occurring, placing them within a broader perspective of the struggle for religious principles and democratic values. An example of such activity was given by Rev. Józef Tischner, a Krakowian philosopher, essayist and priest, who, in his speeches and sermons, attempted to grasp the entire "philosophy" of the occurring events. Tischner spoke of the necessity for the Poles to undertake the "work on work," of the ethical aspect of national solidarity, and, finally, of the community of conscience which could eventually bring about the rebirth of the spirit of the Republic. He was discretely followed by Rev. Jerzy Popiełuszko, murdered a few years later by Security Office agents.¹⁵

The struggle against the communist regime, which increased after 1978, was drawing upon a particular vision of man, shaped by the circles of Christian philosophy: theological seminaries (where the educational aspect prevailed over the scholarly), KUL (Catholic University of Lublin), ATK (Academy of Catholic Theology) in Warsaw or PAT (Pontifical Academy of Theology) in Kraków. Owing to the graduates of the aforementioned, the Christian anthropology that emphasised the openness of men towards transcendence, and its resulting

¹⁵ For more on the subject, see J. Sochoń, *Tama. Opowieść o życiu i męczeństwie księdza Jerzego Popiełuszki* (Kraków, 2010).

consequences in other aspects of human activity, such as social order, labour, or bioethics concepts, survived in the intellectual fabric of the nation.

THE LUBLIN PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOL

The context of the philosophical activity of Zdybicka's *Alma Mater* is a separate matter, i.e. it falls within the activity of the Catholic University of Lublin, particularly the Faculty of Philosophy, established on 10 November 1946, which functioned as the Faculty of Christian Philosophy until the 1990s. Within the faculty, the so-called Lublin Philosophical School grew, shaping the Lublin community¹⁶ that gathered philosophers who worked in an area of Thomist philosophy.

Scholars who research the Lublin Philosophical School offer varying periodisations for its development. The main representative of the school—Father Mieczysław A. Krąpiec—distinguishes the following three phases:

- (1) 1950–1966: the development phase.
- (2) 1967–1980: the time of pursuing the direction established by the school's founders and its first students; specification and further exploration of the presented issues.
- (3) Since 1981: autonomous research, with emerging elements violating the methodological-epistemological unity of the school.¹⁷

A different periodisation is offered by Rev. Stanisław Janeczek, who highlighted that “in the substantive aspect, the history of the

¹⁶ At times, a distinction is made between the Lublin school, encompassing everyone associated with the KUL Faculty of Philosophy, and the Lublin Philosophical School, the latter being used to define the most prominent group of philosophers (cf. S. Janeczek, *Filozofia na KUL-u. Nurty – Osoby – Idee*, p. 10). A number of different names for it have appeared: the Lublin school of classical philosophy, the Lublin school of Christian philosophy, the Lublin school and the Polish school of classical philosophy.

¹⁷ Cf. A. Maryniarczyk and M.A. Krąpiec, *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, vol. 6 (Lublin, 2005), pp. 542–546.

Lublin philosophical community may be divided into two phases—before and after 1952. The basis for this distinction is, primarily, the dominant position of one of the three versions of European Thomism prevailing at the Faculty,¹⁸ i.e. the arguments and discussions regarding the impact of the schools of traditional, Louvain and existential Thomism. The background of these controversies was constituted by political events, which in 1952 resulted in the removal of certain professors associated with research on traditional Thomism from the Faculty of Philosophy. The situation forced the younger members to take responsibility for the Faculty, including Father Dr. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec OP from Kraków, who in 1954 became the head of the KUL Department of Metaphysics.¹⁹ As a result of the aforementioned staff changes, a transition occurred, leaning towards existential Thomism, visible in the attitudes of Father Krąpiec, Swieżawski, Kalinowski, and, later on, in the views of Zdybiska, Rev. Wojtyła, and Mieczysław Gogacz.

Philosophy at KUL after 1952 was characterised by the activity directed towards historical research, with the aim of apprehending Aquinas' authentic theory of being, as well as conducting a dialogue with the contemporary philosophical schools. The task was accomplished due to the translations of Aquinas' works—inter alia—the *Treatise on man* translated and commented on by Swieżawski, or *De ente et essentia. On being and essence*, prepared by Father Krąpiec.

The essential element of the characteristics of the Lublin Philosophical School was its methodological line, initiated by Rev. Iwanicki and Kalinowski, and illustriously continued by Rev. Kamiński. A volume by Father Krąpiec and Rev. Kamiński, published in 1962 and titled *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki [Of the theory and the methodology of metaphysics]*, described an innovative Neo-Thomist attempt to present the contemporary theory and methodology of classical philosophy.

The “reinvention” of existential Thomism by applying new methodological instruments aided both the opening of the philosophy practised at KUL to contemporary philosophical schools, and the critical and constructive debate.

The issue most profoundly discussed in the Lublin philosophical community was the significance of metaphysics and its actualisations.

¹⁸ S. Janeczek, *Filozofia na KUL-u. Nurty – Osoby – Idee*, p. 91.

¹⁹ See *Księga Jubileuszowa na 50-lecie Wydziału Filozofii KUL*, p. 302.

It was assumed as a general theory of being that would constitute the condition of the possibility to conduct research in more specific fields.

The formulation of the issues of specific metaphysics, often endowed with important world view references, therefore, anthropology, philosophy of God, philosophy of religion, philosophy of culture, philosophy of language and philosophy of politics, was accomplished in close cooperation between three individuals: Father M.A. Krąpiec, Rev. S. Kamiński and Sister Z.J. Zdybicka ... While Father M.A. Krąpiec and Sister Z.J. Zdybicka determined the particular fields of philosophy in regard to their object, Rev. S. Kamiński would examine them methodologically, particularly in terms of speculation regarding the actual achievements of the systematic philosophers.²⁰

Regarding this approach, two key disciplines in which Zdybicka would conduct her scientific and education activities—the philosophy of God and the philosophy of religion—were given methodological separateness. The philosophy of God is a phase that completes the efforts of metaphysics, which has no separate starting point or methods apart from those proposed by metaphysics,²¹ while the philosophy of religion is given a starting point of its own, i.e. the religious experience, as well as the entirety of the knowledge and research of religious sciences and humanities.

Therefore, one should conclude that the scientific and educational activity of Zdybicka fell into a time when Christian philosophy, despite all the unfavourable conditions around its development, had a significant impact on the formation of the intellectual profile and moral attitude of wide social circles. Zdybicka's accomplishments undoubtedly played a significant role in its development.

²⁰ S. Janeczek, *Filozofia na KUL-u. Nurty – Osoby – Idee*, p. 98.

²¹ S. Kamiński, *Jak filozofować?* (Lublin, 1989), pp. 241–247.

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY: THE METHODOLOGICAL PRIORITIES OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Zofia Józefa Zdybicka—as previously mentioned—is a prominent representative of the philosophy of religion promoted within the Lublin Philosophical School, the beginning of which may be traced back to the 1950s, when, at the Catholic University of Lublin, a philosophy emerged characterised by the turn towards classic philosophers, particularly Aristotle's philosophy of being. The representatives of the Lublin Philosophical School were placing significant emphasis on the analysis of source material, particularly the works of Aquinas, who revolutionised the school of the philosophy of being, initiated by Aristotle. The exceptional point in this philosophy, as stated by the aforementioned Lublin philosophers, is the act of being—the most perfect ontological factor. Existence is the first and most basic object of philosophical explanation, and, in consequence, a determinant of the aims of philosophy. Therefore, the aim of philosophy is to indicate the necessary and final reasons for explaining the existence of the world and man. Zdybicka undertook the first worldwide attempt at formulating a philosophy of religion as exact metaphysics built upon philosophical metaphysics and anthropology, constructed within the framework of the Lublin Philosophical School.

Zdybicka presented her theory of the philosophy of religion in a handbook, first published in 1977, titled *Człowiek i religia* [*Man and*

Religion]. This comprehensive work on classical philosophy was re-published many times, and was translated into English.

WHAT IS THE CLASSICAL THEORY OF PHILOSOPHY?

The classical theory is a type of philosophy which refers to tradition substantively; however, methodologically, it aims to be a more modern presentation of the proposed contents. For the aforementioned philosophy had grown within the grounds of Aristotelian tradition, complemented and modified by the accomplishments of medieval thinkers, both Arabic and particularly Latin, of Thomas Aquinas.

Currently, from the formal perspective, the aforementioned theory is characterised by an epistemological maximalism and a methodological autonomy in relation to other types of knowledge. It obtained its characteristics due to assuming a peculiar formal object of philosophical theory, as well as due to genetic empiricism, epistemological intellectualism and methodological rationalism. In terms of content, the aforementioned philosophy is characterised by ontological pluralism.²² The above general premises provide the basic outline of classical thought; however, there are several theories of the discussed philosophy that aim to specify its structure and methodology.

In searching for the original source of classical philosophy in a strict sense, one should reach out to the peripatetic thought shaped in the Middle Ages, particularly, by Thomas Aquinas, and later on clarified by the followers of such a style of practising philosophy. However, even such a limited theory is no monolith in regard to methodology. The variety of this aspect is determined by a variety of cognitive approaches. Here, we may distinguish two essential types of cognition: firstly, objective cognition, and secondly, meta-objective cognition. The former is related to the experienced or potential reality, while the latter—to the very cognition of reality.²³

Both means of cognition apply their own and proper methods. Classical philosophy, in a strict sense, finds only the first type to be

²² M.A. Krąpiec, *Teoria analogii bytu*, 2nd ed. (Lublin, 1993), p. 176.

²³ S. Kamiński, "O metodzie filozofii klasycznej," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 34, no. 1 (1986), p. 7.

appropriate, in which, due to its means of determination, the formal object and the explanation method of the former, we may distinguish between essentialist and existentialist schools.

Classical essentialist philosophy examines being by focusing on its essence. Therefore, it examines not only the actually existing being, but also the potential and the ideal. This type of philosophy most often employs the inductive-deductive method of explanation.²⁴ Classical existentialist philosophy primarily highlights the primacy of existence in being, without negating its essence of course, which is ascribed to existence. Hence, it solely examines real beings, assuming the name—metaphysics—as a theory of particulars, while the explanation used here is intuitive-reductive.²⁵

Classical philosophy perceived as such is, in methodological terms, independent of exact sciences. Its object is being insofar as it is being. It is no stranger to epistemological-methodological speculation, however it is a purely objective cognition, searching for the final reasons for the existence of particulars; therefore, it is, in a strict sense, a theory of being.²⁶ Classical philosophy intends not only to be maximalist and autonomous, but additionally to fulfil the conditions of rationality to the highest possible degree. By assuming the comprehensibility of the world and the possibility of providing an objectively and logically verifiable final explanation thereof, classical philosophy opposes the modern trends of irrationalism and praxism. Although the life experience carries a variety of situations that are vague and difficult to explain by means of science and technology, and such situations provoke reasoning beyond the boundaries of rationality, the history of culture shows that such reasoning eventually leads to the crisis of not only philosophy but also of the entirety of theoretical knowledge.²⁷

Classical philosophy is characterised not by a meta-objective, but an objective approach. Initially, it appreciates the common sense experience expressed with colloquial language, realising its imperfection as something involved in various theories. Therefore, a philosopher

²⁴ Cf. S. Kamiński, "Metody współczesnej metafizyki," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 26, no. 1 (1978), pp. 23–26.

²⁵ Tamże, pp. 32–34.

²⁶ Cf. P. Moskal, *Spór o rację religii* (Lublin, 2000), p. 120.

²⁷ Cf. S. Kamiński, *O metodzie filozofii klasycznej*, p. 11.

should reach a direct cognitive understanding with a critical approach. Zdybicka, similar to other representatives of the Lublin Philosophical School, argues against the hypothesis that the most profound philosophy begins with reflecting upon the contents of consciousness or upon the dynamic cognitive acts, or with an analysis and an interpretation of language, which is of highest significance. Classical philosophy rejects theories postulating that the subject and the object of cognition are one fused hermeneutic whole, or that subjectivity is the most certain medium of achieving objective cognition.²⁸ The path of thought, leading from consciousness to realistic knowledge, requires supplementary premises that are deductively stronger than the supposition of a direct objective cognition. In terms of the semiological starting point of philosophy, it often stops at the interpretation of a phenomenon rather than the phenomenon itself.²⁹

Within the perspective of a realistic philosophy of being, reason as a human cognitive power examines the actually existing, external world which provides reason with information and cognitive content: “the main aim of cognitive efforts is to know the truth on reality, i.e. so that the knowing subject is according itself to the trans-subjective reality.”³⁰ The classical theory of cognition, from its metaphysical perspective, always reaches out to the final ontological reason. It constitutes a guarantee of a true and full cognition of the surrounding reality. The peculiarity of this method allows material objects, but also personal beings, to be known by explaining the relation between the two.

The method of classical philosophy consists of the analysis of real facts in regard to the question “why” and of indicating the non-contradictory factors, the negation of which would lead to rejecting the fact that was initially meant to be explained. The above is accomplished by a method, invented by Thomas Aquinas, called separation. Separation consists of grasping the factors of being that constitute the very fact of its existence. Zdybicka embraced the accomplishments of metaphysics, as described above, in order to be able to examine, in particular, the fact of religion.

²⁸ S. Kamiński, “Osobliwość metodologiczna teorii bytu,” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 27, no. 2 (1979), p. 35.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

³⁰ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Bóg czy sacrum?* (Lublin, 2007), pp. 24–25.

WHY DOES RELIGION EXIST?

Religion is the principal field of Zdybicka's research, therefore, her proposed classical philosophy of religion will follow the question: "why does religion exist?" The object of the philosophy of religion, at its starting point, is an assortment of empirical data and religious facts—therefore, contents carried in the experience of both religious individuals and communities—as well as cultural facts that bear a historical, sociological and psychological meaning, perceived as a specific type of relation of the human person, a material-spiritual being, with the transcendent reality, constituting an ontic basis for their acts and religious states, as well as their religious behaviour.³¹

One should specify here how Zdybicka understands the particular concepts at hand. The religious fact comprises human acts (prayer, confession of sins, offerings and various other acts resulting from religious faith), religious truths, and the faith of an individual person, as well as that of the entire community. Additionally, the fact of religion is a variety of experiences in regard to deities or God (fear, repentance, worship), as well as religious communities, orders, churches, as well as both historical and current religions.³² The empirically given facts are grasped in the aspect of existence—"that they are," therefore, in the aspect of their reality. Therefore, the philosophy of religion is interested in the sole fact of the occurrence of the relation between man and Transcendence, a relation that is obligatory and dynamic. "Starting with stating the facts of religion given in experience, they are taken qualitatively-universally, instead of existentially-transcendentally. The intellectual grasp of that which is necessary in facts of religion and their transcendentalisation are essential for this sort of realistic philosophy of religion."³³

According to Zdybicka, the starting point of the philosophy of religion is "own facts" which are used as means to reach the most constitutive religious attitude defined in the most natural way. Simultaneously, Zdybicka indicates the elements of fluidity and stability present in the phenomenon of religion:

³¹ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia. Zarys filozofii religii* (Lublin, 1984), pp. 109, 121.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 120.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 109.

... what is religion, and why does it exist; what are the final ontic reasons for the fact that religion accompanies humans in every part of the world and at all times, despite the changing forms of religious life? If forms change, yet the very fact of religion persists, it must be something that is not socially and culturally determined. Therefore, the point of view of the pursuits of the philosophy of religion may be regarded as general-existential-final.³⁴

The philosophy of religion comes to the object, perceived as such, in a twofold manner: either “by directly reaching the existential, the original condition of man, or by the analysis of acts, states, and religious experience, that indirectly indicate their ontic basis (subject-object-relation).”³⁵ In her speculation, Zdybicka embraces both paths.

There is a significant difficulty in reaching these facts. It consists of the fact that experience does not present pure facts, as they are always placed within a theoretical context, being described in a particular language. Therefore, one should distinguish original facts from their philosophical interpretations.³⁶

The formal object of the classical approach towards religion is the reality of religion, i.e. the very fact that it is. Philosophy, as described above, does not aim at describing religious experience and the means of its expression, it is primarily interested in the fact of religion, given as empirically real. The above means that it is grasped in its existence, which indicates the existence of the relation between the human and the transcendent, powerful “You.” The relation is obligatory and dynamic.³⁷

According to Zdybicka, the philosophy of religion is not dedicated to the description of particular religions, or their rites or traditions; however, it is necessary to relate to the descriptions of other sciences concerning religion, religious studies in particular, which provide the much needed data. That way, they will be ready for philosophical interpretation which generalises the aforementioned data empirically. The only difficulty is that, since religion is a phenomenon of such a complex nature, there is a significant danger of reducing it to a single aspect and

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 119.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 121.

³⁶ R.T. Ptaszek, “Filozofia religii Zofii J. Zdybickiej,” in *Od myślenia religijnego do filozofii. Polacy o religii*, ed. J. Barcik and G. Chrzanowski (Kraków, 2005), p. 258.

³⁷ Cf. Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia*, pp. 146–147.

omitting the others, which would result in a faulty indication of the non-contradictory reasons of religion, an omission or a faulty definition of its constitutive elements.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE METHODS OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Zdybicka clearly postulates the aim of the philosophy of religion regarded as such, which is the conclusive diagnosis of the fact of religion given empirically and in a general-existential manner. Therefore, the question addressing the phenomenon of religion regards the very fact of the existence of religion—why does religion exist at all, what are the subjective and objective reasons for this phenomenon? Philosophy attempts to explain religion by means of the final principles of being (in terms of explaining both the structure within being and the structure between beings). Therefore, the philosophical cognition of the phenomenon of religion leads to a “justified answer to the question: how does one finally explain the fact of religion in a general-existential manner? What causes such an individual and cultural human fact as religion to exist? The answer lies in indicating the ontic, ontological grounds of the fact of religion.”³⁸

A characteristic feature of the philosophy of religion, as proposed by Zdybicka, is the holistic explanation of the phenomenon of religion, i.e. the reality of the religious relation, which encompasses the demonstration of both elements of the relation and the religious grounds of the religious relation of both the human and the Absolute. Therefore, it is important to indicate the necessity of the second element of the religious relation (the object of religion), which proves to be difficult, as it is not given in direct cognition. One may describe human intuitions regarding the existence of God, however, as often mentioned by Zdybicka, data related to direct experience may never fully determine whether the object is more than simply a projection of human features, constructing an absolute “You” in the image of a human “I”. Additionally, neither in the field of the exact sciences on religion, phenomenology, nor in that of the post-Kantian philosophy of religions is one able to decide on the hypothesis on the real

³⁸ Ibidem, pp. 109–110.

existence or non-existence of the object of religion. Only philosophy tied to metaphysics possesses the proper cognitive instruments in order to determine whether the object of the religious relation exists objectively or purely as a creation of human consciousness. Moreover, such cognition is strictly truth and necessity oriented, i.e. the hypotheses formulated within that paradigm, regarding both the existence of elements of the religious relation as well as its ontic grounds, are necessary clauses and refer to real states.³⁹

To summarise the contents regarding the method of inquiry of the philosophy of religion, as proposed by Zdybicka, one must highlight its independence from the methods of other sciences on religion. This is accomplished by the adoption, at the starting point, of one's own data and own means of finding the final reasons. The philosophy at hand may be reduced to three phases, highlighting that very "autonomy" of the method proposed by classical philosophy. The first of them is the statement of the existence of facts of religion, given empirically (individual and social religious experience), which is accomplished by sensual-intellectual means. The second phase is the universalisation and transcendentalisation of the given empirical material. Contrary to other sciences, inductive generalisation is not applied; instead, one employs intellectual intuition. The phase consists of searching the gathered experience data for that which is necessary. In other words, it is a search for the essence of religion, of that without which religion would not be religion. Moreover, it is a pursuit of discovering the element common to all religions. As a result, the metaphysical apprehension of the essence of religion is accomplished—religion perceived as a relational being, as a relation between man and a personal Absolute. The following and final phase of the investigation is the existential explanation of the fact of the existence of religion. It consists of the indication of the "final ontic subjective and objective factors explaining the existence of religion."⁴⁰ These factors are as follows: "the ontological structure of man, the existence of the personal Absolute and the relation of transcendental participation occurring between man and the Absolute, a relation that is ontologically prior (primary) in comparison to the personal religious relation."⁴¹

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 110.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 149.

⁴¹ P. Moskal, *Spór o racje religii*, p. 122.

The pursuit of the argument that would explain the existence of religion is a type of a philosophical cognition, therefore, it is dependent on general metaphysics and philosophical anthropology; however, it is methodologically autonomous in relation to theology or the exact sciences on religion (history, ethnology, geography, pedagogy or sociology).⁴²

It is worth mentioning that the followers of the realistic school of the philosophy of religion, including, therefore, Zdybicka herself, do not analyse a particular religion or a particular religious doctrine. The aforementioned analysis regards the very phenomenon of religion on an entirely different level, with the aim of “acknowledging the fact of religion, the grasping of its essential elements and the metaphysical definition of the character of the religious being, which constitutes the ontic grounds for the entire religious event.”⁴³ Therefore, the proposed philosophy of religion is a philosophy of religion in general, instead of being a philosophy of one or other religion in particular.⁴⁴

A suspicion may arise about whether the analysis of a fact of religion, such as a religious experience, could cause a departure from the methodological premises of realistic philosophy, and allow for the psychologisation of the research or for research with the use of the phenomenological method.

The philosophy of religion is interested in the religious experience as a source of knowledge regarding religion. The analysis of the religious experience is intended to reveal the particular, real ingredients of the fact of religion, as well as the factors that will be the object of philosophical interpretation. Therefore, it is an attempt to reach the fact given in experience, instead of the sole reality of experiencing, whereas, for psychology or eidetic phenomenology, the religious experience as a psychic fact is the object of knowledge in religion.⁴⁵

⁴² Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia*, pp. 148–149; Z.J. Zdybicka, *Religia i religioznawstwo* (Lublin, 1988), pp. 348–349; Z.J. Zdybicka, “Filozofia Religii,” in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 3, ed. A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin, 2002), pp. 526–539; P. Moskal, *Spór o racje religii*, pp. 121–122.

⁴³ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia*, p. 119.

⁴⁴ P. Moskal, “Filozofia religii w lubelskiej szkole filozoficznej,” in *Polacy o religii. Od myślenia religijnego do filozofii*, ed. J. Barcik and G. Chrzanowski (Kraków, 2005), p. 247.

⁴⁵ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia*, p. 131.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RECOGNITION OF THE BEING OF GOD AND OF HIS RELATION TO THE WORLD

According to Zofia Józefa Zdybicka, the question regarding the existence of God does not appear in philosophy directly, as it is a secondary issue. The question is related to the recognition of the actually existing beings that, in a philosophical analysis, appear as compound, contingent, accidental beings—i.e. beings whose existence is not identified with their essence, which, according to their essence and their mode of being, requires an external reason to exist. Contingent beings, by their very nature, demand the indication of causes that allow them to exist. Therefore, for Zdybicka, the starting point of cognition, and of the attempt of a philosophical understanding of what the Absolute is, is an analysis and an interpretation of beings given in natural sensual cognition. In cognitive terms, the existence of God is not given to men via means of direct experience. It is perpetually indirect and is accomplished on the basis of the cognition of the world of beings available in experience, the reasons for the existence of which are pursued by the rational human.

THE AFFIRMATION OF THE GOD PARADOX AND THE ISSUE OF CAUSALITY

In the philosophical analysis conducted by Zdybicka, the final, ontic reason that determines the existence of compound and therefore contingent (accidental) beings, which have no internal reasons for existence, is the acknowledgement of the existence of an Absolute Being. The Absolute Being's extreme distinctiveness from the world (in terms of His metaphysical structure), implies that one must exclude any possibility of a comprehensive and adequate cognition thereof. God, as an ontically transcendent being, is equally transcendent in terms of cognition. However, the simultaneous immanence of the Absolute in relation to contingent beings enables—according to Zdybicka—the acquisition of certain knowledge of Him and his relationship with the world. Obviously, as previously mentioned, such cognition would be indirect and, above all (however not exclusively), negative. The Absolute, even if one acknowledges His existence, will always remain “known as unknown”—Zdybicka refers to these issues as the “affirmation of God paradox.”

The inadequacy of cognition regarding the Absolute is the result of two distinct factors:

- (1) The ontic difference between the Absolute and the universe, i.e. the beings-effects that constitute the data serving as the basis for the cognition of the Absolute.
- (2) The limitations of human cognition in general.

While discussing human cognitive capabilities in regard to the Absolute, Thomas Aquinas indicated a cognitive “deficiency,” manifested in the inadequacy of our apprehension, even in regard to the material reality being the “proper object” of our cognition. Aquinas presents the disproportionality occurring between the statements formulated in our language and their corresponding thoughts, as well as between the thoughts and certain aspects of the trans-subjective reality. Even the essence of material objects is not known without any intermediate means. The process of cognition is only accomplished via indirect means, as the essence of material objects is apprehended as a reason of action of manifestations, and of the effects of the observed world.

On the basis of these notions, Zdybicka notes that the fact of the existence of the Absolute and the nature of the relation between Him and contingent beings may be apprehended philosophically, exclusively due to the analysis of His actions, which are also given indirectly, as manifestations (effects). Therefore, the Absolute is knowable exclusively due to the fact that He is the ontic reason of everything that exists. If so, then humans possess a type of cognition that Aquinas refers to as the *secundum habitudinem principii* cognition (the capability of knowing the secondary causes).⁴⁶ The above means that if there are existing effects dependent on a cause, then only through them are we able to know that God exists and know that He, as the first cause of all, exceeds all caused beings. The existence of the Absolute is known in a way that, by knowing the structure of the beings as the effects of His actions, one states the necessity of the existence of their correlate-cause.⁴⁷ Zdybicka finds it important to realise that the apprehension of the relations between the Absolute and the world is accomplished not by an apprehension of isolated content (essence, form), but primarily on the grounds of existence. That is why we are able to apprehend the Absolute in what is proportionally universal in Him and the entirety of being, due to the primal analogous aspect of being. It is a proportionality of the function of existence.⁴⁸ That means that, despite the ontic transcendence of the Absolute, there is a similarity between Him and His effects. Each finite being is made similar to God via the fact of existence. That is why, at least during the initial phase of cognition—as stated by Zdybicka—one should rather speak of the affirmation of the existence of the Absolute than speak of the cognition thereof. Therefore, if we examine the world in the aspect of existence and its final determinants, we have to affirm the existence of the Absolute as the first cause of beings given in experience. We know that He is, and that He is as the cause of all beings. Additionally, the above statement validates the fact of participation, i.e. that everything beside the Absolute exists on the principle of particular existential relations to the Absolute.

⁴⁶ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 1 resp. The works of Aquinas are cited from the following edition: S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae, cum textu ex recensione Leonina*, ed. P. Caramello (Romae: Taurini, 1952).

⁴⁷ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 12, a. 12; q. 13, a. 2.

⁴⁸ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 12, a. 1 ad 4.

ADDITIONAL WAYS OF KNOWING GOD, AVAILABLE TO MAN

Apart from the aforementioned way of causality (*habitus principii*), which, for Zdybicka, constitutes the basic way of knowing the existence of the Absolute on the basis of the existence of effective beings, the Lublin scholar also listed the ways of negation (*remotionis*) and of transcendence (*excellenciae*). According to Zdybicka, the aforementioned constitute supplements for our cognition regarding the nature of God as the first cause of effects. By means of negation, we remove the limits of certain perfections related to finite beings, while, by transcendence, we overcome them. The arrangement proposed by Zdybicka (causality, negation, transcendence) is no coincidence, and the particular ways are not entirely separate. They amount to one complete process of the cognition of the Absolute as the cause of finite beings. The ways of negation and of transcendence clarify that which is contained within the relation of causality, linking the transcendent cause with its effects within the plane of existence. The task at hand is to know what the Absolute is in relation to contingent beings. The very possibility of such cognition regarding the Absolute is a result of ontological participation. The world is not ontologically self-sufficient, it exists due to the actions of the Absolute; therefore, by means of cognition of the world (within the aspect of its final determinants), one may state the existence of the Absolute and know the relations between Him and the created reality. The fact of transcendental participation is an ontic basis for the cognition of God; however, the sole theory of transcendental participation may be constructed and validated only after the validation of the existence of God.

According to Zdybicka's approach, the philosophical knowledge regarding the Absolute and the nature of His actions is based solely on the cognition of worldly beings. The faulty or incomplete apprehension of the ontic structure of objects accessible via direct sensual experience determines an improper or incomplete character of the relations between the creatures and the Absolute. Therefore, within the natural (rational) speculation regarding God, men face substantial difficulties and an enormity of obstacles, and so may go astray while searching for the answers to that most significant question. By means of natural reason, God is only known by few, after a long period of time and with a hint of error.

THE METAPHYSICS OF PARTICIPATION

As has previously been highlighted, classical metaphysical realism, complemented by the aura of existential Thomism, determines the field of Zdybicka's philosophical proposals. Her entire scientific activity essentially focuses on the issues already present in the rich tradition of European thought; however, Zdybicka has presented them in a new light, with the significant issue of participation receiving a pioneering interpretation. The presented interpretation enables one to tackle (within the framework of metaphysics) the issues of monism and pluralism, of the transcendence and the immanence of God, and also to strengthen the significance of the theories of causality and analogy. Finally, the interpretation provides religion with its ontic grounds. Therefore, it is no wonder that Zdybicka's dissertation, dedicated to the attempts to explain the relation between the world and the Absolute (God), is regarded as one of the classics of realistic philosophy.⁴⁹ It remains important to properly understand the methodology of the aforementioned work.

FOLLOWING THOMAS AQUINAS

Zdybicka is aware that, since the times of Plato, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, philosophy has significantly moved away from its former principles, creating new disciplines, methodologies and its own technical language, leading to a post-modern blurring between the *stricte* philosophical and the literary narratives. Such a procedure has had a significant influence on the understanding regarding the accomplishments of the creators of realistic metaphysics, particularly those of Aquinas. Therefore, one should attempt to recognise these systems well, in order to recover the content which originally belonged to them as well as to avoid ascribing it to previously unstated issues. Zdybicka reacts to the above-mentioned dangers by accepting the theory of participation in accordance with the intentions of the Angelic Doctor, reaching the level of his doctrine, deprived of ideological additions,

⁴⁹ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu. Próba wyjaśnienia relacji między światem a Bogiem* (Lublin, 2017).

far exceeding the metaphysics of Aristotle and Plato, as well as focusing on an entirely new cognitive aspect, associated solely with the position of Aquinas.

Considering the above-mentioned, Zdybicka presents an original interpretation of participation. Her *ad mentem Thomae* stance indicates that the speculation regarding participation gains an ontic structure only after the initial acceptance of the realistic model of being and of realistic anthropology. The key arrangements regarding the primary role of existence in being must remain indubitable, as it is due to existence that reality remains what it is. Being—the essential category of metaphysics, recognised and expressed in language for the first time by Parmenides, yet in an intuitive and “poetic” interpretation within an idealistic scope—always denotes an actually existing object which, however, is not an “existential” source in and of itself, except for God Himself, whose absolute (and unimaginable for us) simplicity is accomplished by the fact that His essence is identified with existence. Thereby, the mysterious and simultaneous transcendence of God in essence is accentuated, i.e. an absolute separateness of the Absolute’s ontological structure in comparison to all other beings, and His immanence in action in regard to the world, manifested in such a way that it causally “touches” everything that exists, including the human. For in each case, the relation between God and His creation may be considered only within *c a u s a l c o n c e p t s*.

The human is capable of knowing the surrounding reality and truly seeing the essence of things; however, cognition will not be all-encompassing, absolute or complete, as this type of cognition is solely dedicated to God, but rather contextual and ambiguous, still—and Aquinas took particular note of this notion—a type of cognition that would evolve in a process that would enhance the subject of cognition. If that particular being is realising the existence of a certain, other being defined in its essence, and initiates the process of its cognition, then something incredible occurs: it alone begins to live anew, included in an ontological quality different from itself, to the extent that it becomes the object of its cognition. The being is of course aware that it does not exhaust the perfection of the entire universe, being one of many particulars, however it may cognitively absorb their perfections (forms) as forms of being something else.

Therefore, the being is aware of its existential situation, as a rational being, and so, recognising itself in its capabilities and limitations,

experiencing the presence of individuals, as well as of various relations, and building, within free acts of decision, its own personality and, in a broader sense, human culture. The being is aware of its existence, despite not being existence itself—by being born, the being enters an area that is inevitably reserved for death. The being, as something frail, temporary, experiencing fear and helplessness, particularly in border situations, is unable to conquer death. Highlighting the fact of the ontological contingency of the human, Zdybicka indicates the dynamic nature of the human person that spontaneously strives to exceed (transcend) the human in order to achieve goodness, which far exceeds the human horizon and allows it to pursue the final happiness within the Absolute Being, who, in religious terms, is called God. Man, as a corporeal-spiritual being, persistently attempts to break his corporeal binds for the sake of the spiritual; however, he understands that even his most subtle spiritual acts are tied to the corporeal order of things. The human realises that complete happiness is achieved only in contact with a strong, personally perceived, transcendent You. That is, where the meaning and aims of human life are fulfilled. Zdybicka expresses relief by accepting that reality was called into existence by the Creator in a free act of creation, resulting from love. From this absolute beginning, the entire cosmos, along with all living beings, belongs to the order of creation, burdened by material inconveniences, yet gifted (in the case of humans) with reason, free will, the ability to love and the responsibility for conscious actions. An ontic bond between God and His creatures is thereby established as an unbreakable relation. The bond is further solidified by the Incarnation; however, it may be rejected or omitted.

Christians consider the aforementioned bond as a fundamental gift which enables them to accomplish their essential mission, i.e. to develop their own creative capabilities, to improve morally, and to open themselves to the word of God and His grace, in order to earn their eternal participation in the Divine nature. They gain the consciousness that the instances of their languages such as “the beginning,” “today,” “tomorrow,” “the end,” and “the second coming” reveal their temporal-historical meaning, and that time belongs to the human way of life. God does not appear as deprived of personal features, contrary to the Absolute speculated upon in various intellectual conclusions and deprived of any contact with the world, but He

reveals himself as a living Person involved in the fates of the creatures, turning worldly history into a history of salvation, i.e. Sacred History.

Aquinas' specific theory of being and man afflicts the understanding of his philosophy and the theory of participation, as reconstructed by Zdybicka. The theory may be considered exclusively within metaphysically open systems, i.e. systems in which there is a visible reference of one reality to the other, while one of the elements of the relation is to the other, as a part to a whole, multiplicity to unity, the imperfect to the perfect, the unidentical to the identical, the limited to the unlimited, the compound to the simple, the secondary to the primary, the caused to the uncaused. The juxtapositions as indicated may be exhibited in various orders, i.e. the ontic, spiritual, logic, etc., however they are always unified by a single principle: that one participates in something that it does not possess out of nature. Hence, in systems deprived of parts, of a multiplicity of beings, as in the case of Heraclitus, Parmenides or Democritus, the model of participation cannot be accomplished. All types of monism, monadism and naturalism exclude the possibility of participation.

Therefore, it is no wonder that Plato is universally considered to be the inventor of the philosophical theory of participation. According to Plato, between the world of simple, transcendent forms that constitute the "truly existing" world and the world of phenomena, a formal-model bond is created. However, a number of questions arise: how are they co-dependent, co-existent, how do they connect in the mutual essential relation, determining that a particular object is this particular object, not the other, and that a particular object is of such particular quality and not a different one, if transcendent forms of ethical and aesthetic concepts are also apparent? In order to clarify the issue, Plato suggested that both worlds are bound by a relation of a peculiar mutual involvement, which he described using various concepts, with the most significant being μεθεξις [*métheksis*]—"participation." The philosopher would also use the following terms: μιμήσις [*mímesis*], emphasising the imaging, "reflection," mimicry, and similarity, as well as κοινωνία [*koinonía*], indicating the community between ideas and mutable objects, and παρουσία [*parousía*], highlighting the presence of the transcendent form in its effect.⁵⁰ Therefore, Plato assumed an

⁵⁰ Z.J. Zdybicka, "Partycypacja," in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 8, ed. A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin, 2007), pp. 31–42.

“internal composition” of particular phenomena as phenomena, and, by employing the theory of participation, attempted to tackle the issue of his dualistic (in this particular aspect) concept of the world. Plato would demonstrate that the material beings are secondary in regard to the reality of transcendent forms, as “mimicry,” “images,” “shadows”; they are “similar” to transcendent forms, participating in their ontological truth. Hence, he put forward the relation of similarity between the plane of transcendent forms and the plane of phenomena that, come what may, must be mutually separated.

However, the mutable beings, as they exhibit a similarity to what is ideal (resembling the transcendent forms), allow for a kind of spiritual entry into this absolutely perfect order, and for a return to the state of original contemplation. It is possible in the evidently intellectual intuition, preceded by a five-phase cognitive process, the last phase of which, encompassing the essence of the objects directly, is impossible to express verbally, or to apprehend in any way. Therefore, knowledge regarding the world of transcendent forms may not come from judgements, but exclusively from a certain kind of “seeing,” meaning an essentially intellectual activity, as—according to Plato—such mysterious cognition is impossible to achieve in the process of abstraction from material particulars. Still, such an opportunity, particularly valued by Plato himself, failed to solve the important issue, i.e. the issue regarding the generation of mutable objects, as the transcendent forms—the multiplicity of which Plato took as a fact that needed no explanation, nor did he argue for the relations that were established between transcendent forms, and between the transcendent forms and the form of Goodness—were not treated as active entities in his system. Therefore, he was forced to assume the hypothesis of a divine Demiurge, who generated the entire cosmos along with individual objects out of eternal matter, and, in the process, imitated the perfect model.

Platonism has fascinated numerous philosophers, including, historically, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite, John Scotus Eriugena, and Avicenna and, currently, Schelling, Hegel, Hessen, Heidegger, and Marion. Zdybicka highlights Augustine of Hippo, who made a significant impact on Western theology and culture in general as he promoted, in terms of the God-world relation, a philosophical exemplarism in which the transcendent forms of Plato were simply applied as individual forms in the mind

of God who created reality *ex nihilo*. These *rationes aeternae* are neither generated nor do they perish, however, everything that is generated and perishes is shaped according to them. A possibility of maintaining harmony and tranquillity in the world of matter thereby became possible, as each existing thing in the created reality is characterised by a double existence: one existence in itself, and the other in its divine form. It would be unimaginable for mutable beings to become comprehensible without referring to their external reason of being.

This significant metaphysical achievement went only halfway to explaining the fact of participation. Therefore, Zdybicka turned her attention to the Thomist theory of participation, bearing in mind the rule in force, that the meaning of the concept of participation should be recognised within the context of the entire system in which the concept is present. Zdybicka considered the accomplishments of Aristotle, who, though not exactly fond of the philosophy of participation, while constructing his theory of the four causes, did place the form in a particular object that had the ability for causal activity, creating an analogous concept of being and other perfections—the goodness and the truth—and contributed to the development of the concept of participation significantly.

Referring to the aforementioned tradition (particularly Plato and Aristotle), Aquinas presented a synthesis of metaphysical cognition, including an original theory of participation, to which Zdybicka would refer in her speculation, highlighting that Aquinas' impact on his descendants was a result of his brilliant theories of being and of cognition, which far exceeded everything that has appeared in metaphysics since the times of the author of *In libros de anima*. Unfortunately, his proposals were “frozen” for many ages, encapsulated in ideological interpretations by inept imitators who failed to properly interpret the “existential” formula of being and cognition (conceptual-judgemental, causal, transcendental-analogous), inscribed deep within the profound structure of Aquinas' works.

The matter of participation faded into obscurity. It was only in the 1930s that Étienne Gilson grasped—as did Maritain—the primary role of existence in Aquinas' metaphysical system, which is not a “disease of the essence”—on the contrary, it is its life (following the vocabulary proposed by Gilson) and it constructed the initial elements of cognitive realism, according to which judgement is the constitutive act of cognition, not the concept. Additionally, due to the

attention regarding the possible relations between the Thomist theses and Platonism, as well as that concerning the evocation of monist tendencies in contemporary philosophy, interest in the theory of participation was born anew. Zdybicka recreated the discussion that has been taking place then and, in the following years, she has presented and reviewed the proposed explanatory theories, particularly of Louis Bertrand de Geiger and Cornelio Fabro, siding with the interpretation of the latter, as it clearly highlighted that participation is to be conceived as a causal relation between contingent beings and the Absolute within the scope of efficient, formal and final causality.

However, Zdybicka held proposals by Gilson and Krapiec in significant esteem. Drawing upon their conclusions, she created an interpretation of the metaphysics of the actual being, presenting it as the metaphysics of participation, and the final result of the entirety of speculation regarding reality, with its source being the creative and lovable will of the Absolute. Since the language of metaphysics in which we make statements regarding the actual reality (on being) is of an analogous nature, such as all sorts of predications on man and on God, the theory of analogy is of great significance. Let us consider the above.

ANALOGY AND PARTICIPATION

The unambiguity of objects in existence is not apparent. At most, it is a result of abstract human cognition and is accomplished mainly in mathematics and technology. Does the general human exist? No. We are dealing with an individual reality expressed in the language of analogy, i.e. a reality expressed in certain proportions, relations. Therefore, reality is determined entirely internally, as integral and, simultaneously, mutable in various aspects. Reality continually reveals itself in complex systems; therefore, it is in language, which is neither unequivocal nor equivocal, that we discover the necessity of distinguishing the varying relations that connect the elements of the entirety of reality.

Here, Zdybicka reminds us that one cannot omit the proximity of “analogy” and “participation,” as the necessary and transcendental relations that bind particular beings in an analogous unity, constituting actual reality, are the grounds for the binding of contingent beings

with the Absolute, by means of efficient, formal and final causality. We are always dealing with the fact that beings are of an analogous nature, i.e. they are assigned to the mode of existence of a particular individual object. They are composed of many elements, essentially out of differing essence and existence. Essence and existence function in a potency-act relation, however the proportion between them is always fixed, and existence remains the greatest perfection, variously accomplished in particular beings, including in the so-called transcendental features. Since they are not self-explanatory, bound by analogous relations, they demand “that which is the highest,” i.e. an external and final reason—God, in whom they participate. Therefore, although the theory of analogy is applicable mainly to reality, the internal structure of particulars, as it apprehends reality from the bottom (here, the detailed issues regarding the Absolute are not considered), it constitutes—according to Zdybicka—the ontic and cognitive grounds for participation, where the relation of contingent beings and the Absolute is thoroughly examined.

The difficulty lies in the fact that both elements of the relation must be known if one is to understand in its entirety the character of the transcendental participation of being as an cause-effect relation occurring between the world and the Absolute. However, our direct knowledge applies exclusively to the reality in which we reside. Our notions regarding the Absolute draw solely upon the analysis and the “reading” of cognitively available beings; therefore, our “knowledge” regarding the Absolute God remains incomplete and, in a sense, shrouded in mystery. It cannot be otherwise, as human cognition is limited; moreover, the difference (in existence as well as in cognition) between our world and the Absolute must be maintained. Zdybicka firmly argues that while engaging in the process of cognition of the Absolute, His particular relations to the world are not known in a positive sense, nor is His existence directly grasped. What is available to us, we establish within philosophy, drawing upon the analysis of the effects and of the manifestations of the Absolute’s actions. We know Him insofar as He is the ontic reason for everything that exists. We must remember that this cognition is not accomplished in regard to the contents (essence, form) of the relation between the world and the Absolute, but in the aspect of existence. Therefore, a certain similarity occurs, as each finite being is similar to God, due to the sole act of existence; however, God is not similar to that finite being.

Therefore—let us emphasise this—we affirm God, rather than know Him in the entirety of His being. At most (and this is already quite a lot), we know Him as an external cause of the compound and mutable reality.

Therefore, it is of such importance to apprehend the ontic structure of reality properly, in order to be able to adequately apprehend the character of the relations of participation, accomplished between the Absolute and the world.⁵¹ However, a significant achievement of the theory of analogy by Aquinas was the demonstration of how, according to truth, to employ language in reference to God, and it was a positive one, although limited. We are unable, as Zdybicka emphasises, to know the nature of God, we are unable to recognise what the meaning of existence for the entirely simple God is, and we can say even less regarding what creation, love and suffering mean for God. Regardless, this should not cause unrest. We know, with full confidence, that God is, however we do not know what he is. Therefore, in order to discuss the aforementioned issue (as well as others), we employ the language of analogy and metaphor.⁵² Those of us who accept the message of revelation and consider themselves religious (believers) gain a more profound insight into the mystery of God's essence; however, even on this plane, they remain only on the brink of the speakable. The above attitude, however, exceeds the strictly philosophical view of the world.

⁵¹ Z.J. Zdybicka, "Transcendentalna partycypacja bytów," in *Filozofia Boga*. Part II: *Odkrywanie Boga*, ed. S. Janeczek and A. Starościc (Lublin, 2017), pp. 479–480.

⁵² Obviously, as highlighted by Zdybicka, similarly to Swieżawski, we must agree with the hypothesis that God remains the mystery among mysteries, and that is why apophatic (*remotionis*) theories, as well as theories of transcendence (*excellantiae*), are still convincing, according to the basic intuition of Dionysius the Areopagite regarding the greatest non-similarity between God and creatures, which was illustriously presented by the Fourth Council of the Lateran: "between the Creator and the creature there cannot be a likeness so great that the unlikeness is not greater (Canon: 2, 2, 7); cf. *Dokumenty Soborów Powszechnych. Tekst grecki, łaciński, polski*, vol. 2 (869–1312), *Konstantynopol IV, Lateran I, Lateran II, Lateran III, Lateran IV, Lyon I, Lyon II, Vienne*, ed. A. Baron and H. Pietras (Kraków, 2002), pp. 229. Simultaneously, we are assured that at the bottom of our darkness, at its roots, there is an independent existence, i.e. God. Cf. S. Swieżawski, *Święty Tomasz na nowo odczytany* (Poznań, 1995), p. 92; P. Vardy, *Krótko o filozofii Boga*, trans. B. Majczyna (Kraków, 2004), pp. 47–60; T. Dzidek, *Granice rozumu w teologicznym poznaniu Boga* (Kraków, 2001).

THE ONTIC PILLARS OF PARTICIPATION

As stated before, the theory of being, as assumed by Zdybicka and adequate to the existential version of Thomism, determines the character of the transcendental theory of ontic participation. If, in the reality we experience, we deal with externally compound beings, and existence is their most perfect act, as transcendent in relation to the contents of being and attributed to all beings, there must be one whose essence is one with existence, such that His essence is existence. It is God. Therefore, it is impossible for essence and existence not to be one and the same in God.⁵³ God is the necessary and sole cause for the existence of all beings that exist in Him by means of participation. Everything that is is entangled in the order of the relation of participation, which continues and still occurs in unity with the source of its existence. Any other order would make the structure of the entirety of reality incomprehensible. Therefore, Zdybicka concludes, the internal composition and the simultaneous unity of beings, i.e. the relation bound within being and the necessary relation to the Absolute, unified with it, constitute the ontic basis of the participation of beings. Whatever is should be considered as a relational being assigned to the Absolute.⁵⁴ Therefore, in terms of the efficient cause, the entirety of reality is dependent on the pure Act.

The aforementioned is followed by further external causation of a formal nature, determining the functioning of a being and, further on, its purpose. It would be difficult to imagine an action (including the actions of the Absolute) deprived of a joint and simultaneous presence of final, formal and efficient factors. Therefore, Zdybicka describes the above-mentioned types of causality. In reference to the ideas-models that exist in the mind of God, Zdybicka recalls the doctrine of Aquinas, where the world is not a result of coincidence, but an effect of the activity of the Divine intellect, hence, the world is governed by order and by a hierarchical structure of ends. The transcendent forms of all objects exist in the Divine mind, i.e. the model forms, varying in terms of objects, however, from the Absolute's perspective, not actually different from His Essence. Therefore, God is the model

⁵³ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, a. 4, ad. 2.

⁵⁴ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Transcendentalna partycypacja bytu*, p. 484.

form of everything that exists. To be more specific: each particular being has its own external form in the mind of God, and in result possesses its own unique form. For the amount of particulars in the world, there must be an equivalent number of Divine forms, which in no way violates the unity of God's mind. Therefore, it is clear that God creates the world according to His own thoughts and acts only due to Himself, as the Highest Goodness, identical—contrary to Plato—with the Highest Being. Therefore, it is the final end of the existence of the world. Beings exist, they are good, because they are desired and loved by God: “The only thing that moves God to produce creatures is His own goodness, which He wished to communicate to other things by likening them to Himself.”⁵⁵ Therefore, one should state that all existing beings, exercising the perfections of nature, in a way strive towards the Absolute as His “primordial source”; however, rational beings have a higher standing in this order, as they consciously establish a connection with the Absolute via cognition and love.

Closing her discussion, Zdybicka states that participation is a relation between the absolute Being and the contingent beings. The bond is:

- **A c t u a l**: it regards the granting of existence to the actual being by the Absolute Being.
- **N e c e s s a r y**: it enters the structure of the derivative being; there exists nothing that is not a participation of the Absolute.
- **D y n a m i c**: beings composed of act and potency are dynamic; they live, act, develop and are mutually tied by various relations, and always tied to the Absolute.
- **N o n - r e c i p r o c a l**, **a s y m m e t r i c a l**: laws of transition do not apply; each individual being, in terms of existence, participates directly in the Plenitude of existence. The relation of participation is actual and necessary in regard to derivative beings, and contingent in the aspect of the Absolute; the world and beings are a result of the free decision of God (out of love).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, II 46.

⁵⁶ Z.J. Zdybicka, “Analogia i partycypacja w wyjaśnianiu rzeczywistości,” in *Zadania współczesnej metafizyki. Analogia w filozofii*, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, K. Stępień and P. Gądek (Lublin, 2005), pp. 87–104.

Therefore, within the field of realistic metaphysics, we are able to nullify the enormous difficulties of ontological pluralism and monism. We indicate the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God, although we are unable to explain it completely, and refer to the category of similarity between God and beings that participate in Him, and we thereby open a path for strictly theological speculation. Finally, we fully realise that man is capable of opening himself to God (*capax Dei*), that he may strive towards Him, love Him, consider Him to be the highest Goodness of his life, and express that experience in cult and prayer. If so, man perceives himself as a religious person, accepting that everything that exists, including humans, exists due to participation in God's existence, which constitutes the ontic basis for religion. Additionally, it is a philosophical foundation for explaining the theological truth regarding the creation of the world. Obviously, Zdybicka does not limit her research to the field constituted by existential Thomism. She encourages the employment of the concept of participation in assuming metaphysical views different from realism. An examination regarding how the category of participation was employed by, for example, Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Louis Lavelle or Roman Ingarden, may prove fruitful.

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

While presenting the theory of philosophical participation, Zdybicka adds that, in Christianity, participation in God is accomplished by men due to the salvific work of Christ.⁵⁷ Thus, Zdybicka enters the area regarded as "Christian philosophy." The formula causes emotional debates in philosophical circles. It is said that creating a concept composed of two entirely contradictory and mutually exclusive terms causes havoc in the mind and creates an impression of methodological chaos. There can be no Christian or Catholic philosophy, religious philosophy, or credent philosophy, as there is no such thing as Christian physics, astronomy, etc. Both disciplines are significantly different at the level of rationality, as one refers to the revelation, while the other remains at a level of rationality deprived of any confessional imports. At most, one can speak of a specifically

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 103.

Christian way of practising philosophy, or of a Christian attitude in philosophy.

As the relations between reason and faith, religion and philosophy and, finally, theology and philosophy remain matters of debate, depending on the way in which particular thinkers understand the meaning of the aforementioned concepts, they assume an adequate position: accepting or negating the necessity of the relation of the composition of the term “Christian philosophy.” Some agree to use it but only in quotation marks, and always followed by an interpretative commentary. However, most scholars perceive such solutions to be false and superficial. Emphasising methodology, rationality and objectivity, out of necessity, one is forced to discard the “Christian philosophy” hypothesis. However, the significant issue of philosophy within Christianity remains.

Regardless, Zdybicka reminds us that the ideas of Christian philosophy appeared along with the process of solidifying evangelical doctrine in the culture of Western civilisation. An enormous effort, partly intellectual, must have been made in order to expand and promote the Christian world view, with the key message regarding the possibility of the salvation of each man, and to overcome the tension between the religious proposals of paganism and the speculation referring to revelation. St. Paul’s accomplishments, initiated spectacularly with the Areopagus speech, seem to have begun the process. St. Paul’s intentions were to express the good word in the language of the culture of the time (Stoic-Neoplatonic in essence), as only then could it be received properly and possibly accepted. The anthropological views that men still yearn for spiritual fulfilment achieved only by ascetic effort, subject to love, and that happiness exceeds the worldly plane were deeply rooted in human minds. It is only possible to achieve in supra-conscious silent ecstasy.

St. Paul proposed an interpretation of the Gospel that was consistent with the wisdom postulated by the Greeks, while simultaneously exceeding it. However, soon afterwards, in the 3rd and 4th centuries after Christ, Clement of Alexandria and the Fathers from his school, while attempting to name the expanding Christian doctrine, speak of “our philosophy” or of the “philosophy of God,” which, nevertheless, carries a system of wisdom much greater and much more complete than pagan wisdom. In any case, a bit earlier, in the 2nd–3rd century after Christ, calling the Christian doctrine a philosophy was very popular.

The aforementioned writers intended—contrary to Tertullian, Hermias, Cyprian of Alexandria and Ambrose, but in consistence with St. Justin—to unite the elements of Greek and Biblical experience. They searched for a metaphysical vocabulary in order to speak the truth of Christianity. Would it be proper to call their accomplishments a Christian philosophy?

Most often, scholars suggest otherwise, as by mixing the object of philosophy with the object of theology, referring only to certain achievements of Greek thought, the Christian writers remained theologians, fascinated by religious faith. However, they were unable to abandon philosophy completely. Intending to establish a connection with reality, the Christian writers were forced to employ a philosophical vocabulary, justify their views and, finally, understand the language of their opponents. Despite the clear objections contained within the New Testament, they were increasingly making attempts to attune philosophy to Christianity (the school of Alexandria, the theory of Logos and so-called evangelical preparation).

Philosophy appeared mostly in the context determined by the Christian faith, which indicated new concepts, previously not presented by traditional philosophical thought, even if presented within a completely different axiological spectrum. Therefore, the conditions arose for the creation of the concept of Christian philosophy, which, by definition, was to have an equivocal nature. The concept was not related to a particular type of philosophy or a certain school of speculation, but intended to be a general term, including the different schools of thought, that would refer to Christian faith, be consistent with the Christian revelation, and would apply a methodology proper of philosophy as such. Therefore, the idea of a philosophy renewed by Christianity never faded into obscurity.

Edith Stein, citing Maritain, asked about the meaning of a “Christian state” of philosophy. She concluded that reason deprived of the light of revelation would become “non-reason”; while maintaining the obvious belief in the existence of a comprehensible meaning of the contents revealed by God, however, they can never be completely exhausted or explained conceptually. The chief truths of faith (creation, sin, salvation) reveal a reality created within such a perspective, with which, in comparison, rational philosophy is unable to complete its tasks, i.e. accomplish the *perfectum opus rationis*. It requires supplementation from theology but does not, however, become theology

itself.⁵⁸ Therefore, Christian philosophy would be a perfect unification of the entirety of truths available to reason and the truths revealed by God, which were confirmed by great scientific accomplishments like the theological-philosophical *summae* in the past. It would serve as a specific preparation for faith. Whoever does not wish to combine the accomplishments of natural reason and of the revelation is allowed to proceed accordingly; however, he may make an “attempt,” thereby expanding own understanding of reality. Whoever is free of prejudice will surely accept the challenge.

We still hear of the “Christian motives within philosophy,” of the “philosophy directly related to Christ,” or of the “new metaphysics of love.” Advocates of the philosophy of dialogue highlight that Christianity fulfils inspiring roles, and creates a horizon of radiation in which the feeling of gratitude constantly appears. The Gospel is not tainted by human error, it contains formal models of human behaviour and obligations. It contains hidden references to all that is tied to the Person of Christ. Based on their primary models, evangelical values such as dignity, freedom, truth, heroism or responsibility become objects of research of various disciplines of the contemporary philosophy of hope. Christian tradition allows us to understand them better, whereas philosophy identifies their traces in the present world, inspiring a heightened sense thereof. According to Buber, Rosenzweig or Tischner, they are a common ideal of both philosophy and Christianity.

Zdybicka, considering the above-mentioned, thinks, similarly to Swieżawski, that philosophy is a type of knowledge and a type of science, which, in its very nature, is neither Christian nor non-Christian, as it is simply pre-confessional. It belongs within the scope of a natural knowledge and does not pertain to the truth of revelation. Zdybicka considers her views to be well grounded. Methodologically speaking, philosophy should remain autonomous knowledge in regard to religious faith. The tasks of philosophy are focused on the pursuit—as has already been clearly observed by Aristotle—of the final reasons of reality, apprehended by the senses, and do not require any references to revelation. Philosophy is equipped with its own internal

⁵⁸ J. Sochoń, *Przygodność i tajemnica. W kręgu filozofii klasycznej* (Warszawa, 2002), pp. 226–244; E. Stein, *Byt skończony i byt wieczny*, trans. I.J. Adamska (Poznań, 1995), p. 55.

methods and means of verifying the proposed hypotheses. It does not rationalise religion or faith, nor does it elevate itself to the level of apologetics. However, if we practise philosophy as Christians, does it not affect the way we act?

Gilson suggested that the future of Christian philosophy would be a mystery of times to come. It would be the third kind of cognition and, due to the interpretation of a new, changed form of the world of scientific reality, in the light of the immutable Christian faith, would remain on the map of worldwide culture.⁵⁹ Zdybicka would probably be able to induce that hope, understanding that, to a philosopher, the Christian faith is an instrument allowing one to control the results of philosophical inquiries. It does not constitute a structural element of philosophy, but rather remains an external negative criterion, without simultaneously banishing philosophical reasoning beyond the boundaries of the true overview of the world.

⁵⁹ For more on the subject, see É. Gilson, *Filozofia i teologia*, trans. J. Kotsa (Warszawa, 1968), pp. 152–174.

RELIGION IN CULTURE

Zofia Józefa Zdybicka believes that religion and culture meet in an area determined by the personal existence of man. In this regard, Zdybicka has considered the natural inclination of men towards religious mystery, variously determined and liturgically venerated in different parts of the world. Sanctity, as a bond—in love—between the human person and God, remains the criterion of the above actions. Therefore, Zdybicka presents sanctity as the peak point of all values, due to which men develop their personality, and, in a broader context, their humanity. Sanctity is defined not only by an assortment of vital powers (in the language of the early Slavic culture, the term *jar(y)* meant “spring-like,” “sown in spring,” referring to a metaphorical sense of “hearty,” “full of life,” and, in Old Polish, “white,” “sparkling,” “bright”), but, primarily, the plenitude of spiritual power, i.e. the high quality of supernatural life.

Therefore, there should not be, nor is there, any contradiction between that which actually constructs the world of men and sanctity in strictly religious terms. Given that within reasoning about values, including the sole category of sanctity, an assortment of proposals has appeared, often mutually inconsistent or based on erroneous anthropological and metaphysical principles, we stand witness to increasingly profound tensions in the relationship between culture and religion. Numerous factors contribute to that fact, including those of a historical and philosophical nature.

THE CRITICAL STATE OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Zdybicka notes that contemporary culture is in the state of a tragic maelstrom and of an axiological void. Liberal pluralist societies reject the Christian world view in favour of abstractly-perceived humanism, dignity and human rights. Their followers are committing an anthropological error by promoting such a way of life, in which human sensitivity regarding God, and therefore sensitivity regarding fellow men, i.e. dignity and personal uniqueness—derived from creative love—are obliterated. One should be honest and say that we live in an era of an enlightenment mentality, manifested in the negation of God and religion, which are to be replaced by the human or a certain human society. An explicit process of the deification of man ensues, along with the crisis of truth and an almost universal consciousness of the lack of meaning of human life. Societies that lead relatively calm lives have lost their religious sense, at least to a degree, of connecting their personal emotions and spiritual exaltation to any kind of experience, so long as the experience leads to strong agitation and a certain ecstatic shock. It does not have to be, and rarely is, a religious experience, but rather a quasi-religious one.

Such attitudes were brought to life via the subjectivism of modern reasoning, the roots of which should be traced back to the Christian theology and the philosophy of the late Middle Ages and the emphasis on the independence and autonomy of an individual, on the primacy of the will, and on the rejection of the natural order and tradition. If the above is to be supplemented with the loss of the meaning of the fundamental areas of culture (*teoria, praxis, póiesis, religio*) annexed, intermixed and reshaped by early modern science, so that their objects would be subject to processing (and, therefore, subject to manipulation), as well as the rampant relativism that is a consequence of the religious divide of the 16th century, with its discoveries and inventions, and, finally, the historicism and sociology of knowledge, then the increasingly strengthening position of nihilist attitudes, the advocates of which consciously abandoned the pursuit of any perpetual meaning, is no surprise. Therefore, religion, aiming to remain within culture, should limit its competences exclusively to the private aspect or—as postulated by Auguste Comte—become the secular religion of Mankind, or do the honours of morality.

Regarding the last mentioned case, the critique by Immanuel Kant proved to have the greatest impact. Creating a scientific metaphysics within a rational framework, he rejected the possibility of knowing God, who, “residing” in a noumenal plane, is not subject to human cognitive powers. The only possibility is to listen to the voice of moral obligations and act as if God actually existed. The concepts of traditional essential metaphysics (no concepts at all, it seems), not having a single equivalent in experience, cannot reveal anything of the Divine mystery. Additionally, as Kant believed, these blur one’s access to God rather than unify one in a spiritual union with Him. In any case, Kant considered religion exclusively as an expression of morality, rejecting the need for cult or a personal internal engagement.

THE POST-MODERN ABSTENTION

A question arises: why does this all happen? Zdybicka’s response is straightforward: because God was rejected as the Creator, and therefore the source of defining what is good and what is evil was annihilated. The plane that constructs humanity to the highest degree, i.e. the “human nature” category, was deconstructed and replaced with constructs of reason, liberally shaped in accordance with ever-changing circumstances. Authority and imitable moral models were lost, particularly the understanding of man, who seems incomprehensible without God. Even if, currently, there are proposals to return to religion, this religion is perceived in a very specific manner. Its followers discard the content based on revelation and limit religious thinking to what men alone are able to create with pure reason.

Thereby, the subject alone formulates the phenomenon of religiousness, accepting everything that satisfies his so-called spiritual needs as religious. Therefore, it is of no consequence whether the object or religious relation exists or not, or whether the object is perceived as a person or not. The only thing that matters is the fact of internal attention, which does not accept any confessional institutions or, moreover, a strictly determined dogmatically-grounded doctrine. Here, the concept of God the saviour is not assumed at all. Discovering the sole mystery of man suffices, without any traces of God. Religion becomes a kind of individual therapy, limited to strengthening people who withdraw to the spiritual plane. Simultaneously, this plane

offers them no definable message; therefore, they are forced to be on their own.

Moreover, the very understanding of religion in a traditional manner, exercised by Christianity, requires—according to post-modern philosophers—significant adjustments. The issue at hand is, primarily, the process of transferring religion from the aspects of faith and confession to the plane of politics, as faith and politics somehow belong to each other. In this “political” sense, Derrida, in his world vision, deprived of any ontological constancy, refers to messianism. If the course of history is “accidental” and does not fall under the principles of reason, the premise, then the assumption, that it would be possible for some messiah to appear who would change the unjust reality filled with suffering, seems well-founded.

If one undermines the very foundations of the philosophy of presence, particularly the correspondence theory of truth; if one speaks of the impossibility of reaching reality, and exclusively of the chance of deconstructive reference to cultural texts, then we accept the pragmatic demonstration of these opinions, imparting on them the qualities of expectation, the will to act, and highlighting their “prospective” aspect. Finally, if one considers the ethical value of the proposed truths to be one of their sanctions, one cannot omit the call to moral renewal and to the hope for the coming of justice.

Moreover, if one thinks that scientific treatises, the works of philosophers, historians and anthropologists are basically genres of literature, the “great narrative” of messianists may be as well-founded as Descartes’ epistemology, Hegel’s philosophy of history, the Freudian Oedipus complex or Marx’s dialectical materialism. The procedure is located within the very essence of deconstruction-invention, which, within the framework of rational immanence, gains a quality that could be taken out from philosophy of history, though leaning towards the *chora* of the future. It is reduced to the level of believing in a solidarity between men, a certain prophetic transformation of the world, a messianic strength of local communities, as strongly highlighted by Rorty and Bauman. The presented attitude does not touch messianism so much as a “collapse of messianism,” with its grounds formed by the Kantian universal peace and the programme of the universal religion of mankind, as well as the Hegelian thesis of the end of history.

CHRISTIANITY AS A VESSEL FOR TRUTH AND SALVATION

In this perspective, Christianity, according to Zdybicka, stands in a privileged position in comparison to other religions, allowing it to acquire the entire truth regarding men and God, as it is a place of encounter and cooperation with the truth revealed by Christ, with the philosophical truth, deeply rooted within Greek antiquity, Hebrew traditions, and Christian experience. Regardless, we became participants of a culture that John Paul II boldly named the “culture of death.”⁶⁰ We live and participate in a process of dramatic struggles in establishing the truth about religion and its place within culture in general.

However, we must remember that the representatives of religion, not excluding the followers of Christ, also contributed to many distortions and needless interferences in the matters of other areas of culture. Suffice to mention the arguments between the papacy and the empire (religion and politics), faith and sciences (e.g. the case of Galileo), as well as the activities of Christians themselves, who have often deviated from evangelical ideals. Wherever the testament of faith is distorted or even absent, religious indifferentism prevails, and a distorted image of God emerges.

If it is visible, that faith changes nothing in the lives of the religious and it does not change their actions in such a way that they would be tied closer to the Gospel; Christianity alone loses its meaning, being perceived as an abstract doctrine deprived of any grounding in the existential practice of particular individuals and entire societies. One may present himself as a religious person, accepting the world view of the confession, but act as if “there was no God.” That means that the person does not follow religious doctrine at all, whereas it should affect his life activity. Therefore, how does one escape this vicious cycle of a lack of authenticity, half-truths and cultural discretions with post-modern hints? How does one return the natural face, deprived of ideological implications, to culture?

Zdybicka offers no simple observations. First, as she proposed, one must resume the proper, i.e. the most general, basic, and neutral

⁶⁰ Cf. Z.J. Zdybicka, “Rola religii w kulturze współczesnej,” in *Kultura i religia u progu III Tysiąclecia*, ed. W. Świątkiewicz and A. Pethe (Katowice, 2001), pp. 11–23; Z.J. Zdybicka, *Religia w kulturze. Studium z filozofii religii* (Lublin, 2010).

world view in one's understanding of the terms "culture" and "religion" to eventually create a model of personal culture, and apprehend within this model a motivational, formal and efficient function of religion. The point of reference in these inquiries is the realistic view of being and of man, which allows one to answer the basic questions regarding the human way of existence, i.e. culture. Zdybicka assumes that culture—contrary to nature—encompasses all results of human creative activity, i.e. all that was created in accordance with his ideas, using contents from the actual reality. Thereby, the process of the intellectualisation of nature occurs. Man, using his own natural ontological instruments (reason, will, desirability), recognises the truth regarding the given reality. Based on his own ontological dynamics, man transforms the contents given in culture into new qualities, reveals the formerly unknown aspects of things, and proposes an original approach towards that which is subject to cultural convention.

However, as noted by Zdybicka, the question regarding culture ultimately remains a question regarding the human being: about that which indeed actualises his potentialities, causing men to perfect themselves and lead a more human life. The variety of cultural forms should not overshadow the question regarding which culture (or which of its elements) makes us more human, and which may be hazardous to us. A fitting criterion of the value and evaluation is formed by comparing each culture to the ontological structure of man. For it would be difficult to call culture something that distorts or blights that structure.

Therefore, the form of a particular culture depends on the priorly accepted hierarchy of values; on accepting the truth about man, worthy of man himself, namely, that he is derived from the creative love of God; and on accepting the achievements of culture as being a "mirror of culture," or the non-negotiable role of religion in culture, as culture without religion shrivels, forcing man to exist in its horizontal plane. Religion as a personal bond between man and a certain Transcendent (God, deity), articulated in particular actions, in a way, leads men out of the plane of earthly immanence and directs them to the transcendent aspect of human life, from which life itself originates and in which life will be rooted eternally. Therefore, religion provides all cultural action with meaning.

THE PERSONAL MODEL OF CULTURE

Zdybicka seems to be perpetually bound to the Christian cultural model, the beginnings of which may be traced back to the affirmation of the human person living within the perspective of God, and within the personal link with other people. The experience of love is incredibly significant here, as love constitutes the core of religious relations, as well as of interpersonal relations. Without love, each single existence would lose meaning, along with each impulse of human sensitivity, the significance of suffering and of responsibility. Models of social unity and of community would be non-existent. At the core of such recognition we find the love of the Creator, who is the Highest Goodness—the end and the model of all human activity, due to which we gain the assurance of a complete development of a human person, an appropriate hierarchy of values, as well as the correct functioning of culture in which humans are perpetually located.⁶¹

As it is with the aim of culture, only within such a horizon is it possible to develop all human potentialities, innately contained in human nature. No man is an entirely fulfilled being, he keeps developing, creates his own personality, wishes for new things every day, wishes for something better, deprived of the defectiveness of the contingent world. In order to achieve such a state, one must affirm life and its various manifestations; one should aim to do good and avoid evil. Whatever constitutes a manifestation of culture, it should serve the purpose of personal development and benefit the common good. Without participating in this task of religion, men would achieve nothing worthwhile. Why?

Zdybicka, in her conclusions regarding religion and culture, states that religion:

- Expands the sources of human cognition by presenting the truths revealed by God Himself, both those which are to be perceived by reason, as well as those that elude us, ones that Aquinas referred to as *revelata*, such as the Triune God or the historical fact of the Incarnation. Moreover, religion reveals the eternal perspective for human actions, which are not reduced to the finite plane, but

⁶¹ Cf. Z.J. Zdybicka, *Rola religii w kulturze współczesnej*, pp. 19–20.

gain a value that transcends the physically limited. Religion establishes the proper hierarchy of values, i.e. the primacy of spirit over matter, a human person over the community, morality over technology, as well as love over justice.

- Introduces a personal motivation to culture. All should serve the good of men, as shown by the works of Christ, who appeared among people to ensure their salvation. Additionally, religion serves a model purpose by presenting the personal models of existence; in Christianity, this was best accomplished by Christ, God-Man, or, in other religions, by their founders or exceptional individuals.
- Plays a supportive role in leading a truly human life, particularly due to supernatural means (grace, sacraments, prayer, liturgy). Without this spiritual-theological support, men would be unable to fulfil all of their ontological-existential opportunities.
- Inspires all other areas of culture: science, morality, art (literature, music, architecture, painting); however, religion also uses their “semantic possibilities.” One cannot imagine religion without the support of art, nor art deprived of a confessional core. The above does not amount exclusively to sacral themes, which permeate almost all of the literature; the key aspects are the linguistic and dogmatic-moral issues. Art venerates the questions of sanctity, good and evil (especially non-culpable evil), sin, responsibility and punishment to the highest level of exploration and understanding. It seems that both the language of religion and the language of art, particularly poetry, are focused on articulating that which is difficult to express in discursive speech, which hides beneath the surface of sensible reality, which Jacques Maritain—considering the poetic accomplishments of St. John of the Cross—referred to as the supreme incommunicable knowledge (*suprême savoir incommunicable*).⁶²

The conclusion of the inquiries performed by Zofia Zdybicka may be summarised within the following thesis: the conscience of the most profound bonds between culture and religion determines the

⁶² J. Maritain, *Distinguer pour unir ou Les degrés du savoir* (Paris, 1963), p. 616.

role of the Church in the contemporary world. The foundation stone established by the Gospel should never perish from the landscape of human life, if the world is to remain a human world. Christological anthropocentrism is the necessary course of action and the source of constant hope for Europe and the entire world.

MAN AND RELIGION

In her scholarly works, Zofia Józefa Zdybicka primarily analysed the phenomenon of religious life in order to understand and describe the essence of religion, both as a human attitude and a sociological phenomenon. The realistic position was always the starting point of her research. While describing the phenomenon of religion, Zdybicka indicated that the experience of one's own contingency, the need to strengthen one's own existence, and the dynamics of cognition, love and freedom are so fundamental and universal that they surpass all social, cultural and scientific determinants. It is a pre-philosophical experience, constituting the foundations of the truth about man and revealing his openness towards the Absolute Being—God—and, as such, it is a natural ground for all religions.

WHO IS MAN?

Zdybicka initiates her speculation regarding the phenomenon of religion by presenting who man is. Zdybicka shows that a human person, within their ontological structure (complexity), their temporality of perpetuation (being born and existence, being subject to continuous changes, and finally death), as well as the instability of their actions, reveals their own ontological contingency. As regards cognitive activity, human contingency is revealed in the aspective (men are able to learn something from a particular perspective, a certain viewpoint) and successive (we cannot learn everything at once, we must acquire knowledge in a step-by-step process) cognition, and with

the possibility of error. In the aspect of voluntary activity, contingency manifests itself in the fact that human decisions (freedom) are met with various limitations, e.g. related to his nature or being in the world.

Simultaneously, man is a material-spiritual being, experiencing his own ontological unity (his own “I”) and his own subjectivity, i.e. he is the cause of specifically human acts, particularly intellectual cognition (rationality) and voluntary will (love). Therefore, man is recognised in a realistic perspective as a substantial being (being in itself), experiencing his own identity, and as a potential being, i.e. a being that possesses certain dispositions and materialises (actualises) them in contact with other beings (things)—primarily persons—through actions in accordance with his own potential. Man achieves self-accomplishment as a person by actions adequate to his own potentiality, and develops and achieves a plenitude according to the needs of his own nature. It is accomplished in particular aspects of human activity such as cognition (particularly intellectual), love (moral life) and creativity (art, technology). A tension is present within each of the above-mentioned disciplines between the relative and the unlimited, i.e. the absolute.

Zdybicka notes that, of all the powers and potentialities of men, intellect stands out as the highest, as the cognitive power, as well as will, as the power of striving and love. According to classical philosophy, potentiality always perfects (i.e. actualises) itself in accordance with its own object. The object of intellect is truth, and the object of will is good. Therefore, human intellect is oriented towards the knowledge of truth and will—on acquiring good, therefore, man is intellectually able to learn everything that exists and to love everything. His potentiality in this area is unlimited; however, ultimately—as noted by Zdybicka—it is oriented towards the Greatest Truth and the Greatest Goodness.

While the essence of material things remains the primary object of human intellect, which the intellect actualises as it knows the essence of these things, the aim of intellectual cognition is the entire truth: truth in general, the universal truth. By knowing material things or human persons, man recognises and understands their ontological character: mutable, finite—therefore, non-primary, effective, and derivative. Zdybicka argues that men remain in their pursuit and potentiality until they accept the existence of their cause, i.e. the Absolute Being, as a plenitude of existence and an absolute truth. None

of the partial truths will fully actualise the potentiality of the human intellect. Not even the affirmation of the existence of God can accomplish this as, in this life, it is always an incomplete, indirect cognition, as an effect-necessary affirmation, rather than an overview. The complete fulfilment of the potentiality of the human intellect may be accomplished exclusively in direct contact with the absolute truth, which proves to be the ultimate aim of human cognitive activity.

According to Zdybicka, a similar situation occurs in the second manifestation of personal potentiality, i.e. will—the power of love. Just as the human intellect is directed towards the cognition of the entire truth, will is directed at all that is good (good in general and universal goodness). Each man recognises, within himself, his struggle towards boundless goodness. This aspiration is not satisfied in a particular aspect, as it cannot find full contentment or satiation in anything particular. Due to his own most internal depth, man transcends every partial good, striving towards the plenitude of goodness.

THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF THE HUMAN BEING

The analysis of human action—particularly cognitive and volitional acts, where the nature of man as a person is manifested—leads to the discovery of that which constitutes his natural end, his maximum. According to Zdybicka, it is the contact with the plenitude of goodness that cannot be lost, that would satiate all human pursuits entirely, and would constitute the end of cognition and love. However, it cannot be a contingent being (i.e. a material being, even a human person); it must exclusively be a Person that is perfect in its entirety—God. Realising that fact simultaneously indicates that which may be the end for religious reference. If a man is a person, a conscious being, loving and free in regard to the choice of the object of love, then the world of persons would be the most fitting environment for him. Furthermore, as the capacity of his cognition and love exceeds contingent persons, he may bind himself exclusively with a personal plenitude of being, freedom and love. Only such a religious object may be worshipped by man, and the bind with it may be beneficial and constitute the final end of life and action. It seems that, in Zdybicka's analysis, everything except the Absolute Person is way below human aspirations.

However, the issue of human freedom is linked to the pursuit of absolute goodness. Human existence—says Zofia Zdybicka, drawing upon her analysis of the natural potentialities of men—may be regarded as an “existence-towards-God,” as “being-within-the-perspective of the transcendent You.” The “existence-towards-God” particularly manifests itself from a negative perspective, including human freedom as the ability to choose and make decisions. As a result of his freedom, a human person is not determined when choosing his object of cognition, particularly, his object of love, in terms of finite good. A human person chooses his goods independently, being bound with them via love, conscious of his own freedom in this matter.

However, human freedom would be incomprehensible if one did not assume that it has an unlimited, infinite perspective and is ultimately open to the transcendent “You.” If any good, beside the transcendent “You,” were to be a necessary end for man, he would have to achieve it, but, at the same time, he would be deprived of freedom in regard to that particular end. The essence of human dignity lies in the fact that he is not entirely externally determined in regard to any contingent (relative) good. That causes man to pass beyond the world of nature, the actions of which are not themselves free, but always determined by a certain good. Only a conscious, free person is able to choose the plenitude of goodness—the highest person—who, as long as man lives on Earth, will not reveal himself with full clarity.

Therefore, man retains a certain freedom even in relation to the Absolute. The ontically highest goodness constitutes the necessary end for man, as he refers to it while choosing various goods and means. However, the analysis of human action leads Zdybicka to a conclusion that men do not, objectively speaking, choose their ultimate end—the “transcendent You”—as the greatest value and the greatest goodness deliberately. It is given. The greatest value must be willed by man as if by necessity.

The aforementioned means that man must wish to unify himself with the “transcendent You,” as he must strive for the complete development of his own natural capabilities. Therefore, freedom refers exclusively to the path and the means of pursuing the achievement of the ultimate end. According to Zdybicka, a seemingly paradoxical situation appears: the lack of freedom in relation to the greatest value is simultaneously the greatest freedom.

Such conclusions posit one more thesis, crucial for the philosophy of religion as conducted by Zdybicka: if the moment of death were to be followed by an absolute end of human existence, men would be unable to achieve the aim of their lives—complete actualisation. If physical death were to end the existence of a human person, the human being would be somewhat irrational in its potentiality, internally false, unnatural, as, due to its own nature, it would be directed towards that which is ultimately unavailable to it. The longing to transgress death and negate it as the ultimate end for human life is included in almost all the activity and psychological experience of men. Each religion refers to these intuitions and desires and, therefore, indicates the solutions to this most dramatic problem, intriguing for the human person. Each religion offers a path of salvation from this “calamity,” attempting to somewhat expand the boundaries of the human being beyond the spatial-temporal dimensions, and to open the human being to eternity.

Zdybicka demonstrates that both within the natural perspective as well as within social bonds, one may clearly notice the transcendence of the human person, the human “spirit.” Man—the reflecting “I,” a subject conscious of its actions, experiencing its own separateness and freedom from everything, which is not within it—does not constitute a function of the world of things or even the world of persons, despite being immersed in it to such a degree. Being immanent in relation to the world, man transcends the world and is capable of a dynamic direction of his self toward the most perfect being. Man, as a conscious subject, is directed at absolute subjectivity, the source from which his existence flows and for which man strives as a person, particularly in spiritual terms. Moreover, man draws his own subjective completeness and dignity from this “being-towards-God” and “for-God” irrevocably.

THE DEFINITION OF RELIGION AND THE NATURE OF THE RELIGIOUS RELATION

The analysis of the personal human being, conducted by the Lublin scholar, reveals the ontic foundations related to the nature of the human person, explaining the appearance of the religious relation as a bond between man and the personal God—the source of existence (the greatest value) and the ultimate end. Therefore, according

to Zdybicka, from the perspective of the subject, the ontic status of a human being—personal and simultaneously contingent (potential)—abolishes the contradiction of the fact of religion. The ends and unlimited powers of human activity, particularly the intellectual-cognitive and the voluntary (love), constitute the objective conditions of the possibility of an appearance of such a contact with the transcendent person, which may be accomplished exclusively within the religious activity of a human.

Religion is an ontic personal-personal relation (the “I”–“You” relation) between a human person and a personal Absolute, in which the human person participates as the ultimate source of their own existence and the ultimate end of life. It is a real-existential, necessary, intersubjective (personal), “modal,” dynamic relation composed of bilateral activities, however, perfecting the human subject.⁶³

By employing such a definition, Zdybicka explains the meaning and the scope of the relations that constitute the phenomenon of religion:

- **Real-existential relation:** The religious relation is a real relationship for a twofold reason. First: it possesses real foundations imprinted within the structure of the personal human being and refers to an actually existing, personal Absolute Being. Second: in order to accomplish this relation within the personal aspect, proper action from the human part is necessary, consciously and freely (personally) exercising the ontic dispositions of the human person, out of nature, directed at the transcendent “You.” The aforementioned action permeates the entire personal life of a human; therefore, religion does not constitute some isolated aspect of life, but provides the means of human existence “towards” and “for” the transcendent “You”.
- **Personal-personal relation (intersubjective):** This occurs between beings, who, as persons, are an existence of the subjective “I,” determine themselves within the scope of conscious and free action, and are able to engage different “I”s. The religious relation is dialogic-responsional, i.e. it is a relation of encounter, granting the self, exchange, and mutual giving of a “gift from self.”

⁶³ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia*, pp. 307–311.

- **Moral relation (conscious and free):** Man as a person, free and able to make decisions, is exclusively a moral being, and only as such may he be a religious being. Religion is not only a natural union with God, i.e. a relationship exercised by means of the laws of nature, taken as an entirely determined source of action. Its action is accomplished within the plane of the personal life of a human, and only by means of personal decisions, allowing the human to pursue God consciously and unite with him within the spiritual-moral life. At this point, Zdybicka indicates that although religion is characterised by the moral aspect, the former may not be reduced to the latter. Religion, having its own ontic aspects and appropriate psychic experience related to reasoning that God constitutes the greatest value achievable, delighting the human as a particular person, makes morality dynamic, granting it an actual aspect and a more human tone. Therefore, without the religious context, morality becomes a certain formally apprehended accordance or discordance between human action and the moral law, instead of being a personal affirmation of the personal good.
- **Dynamic aspect of the religious relation:** This assumes a “being-towards-God” potentiality within the human, which may be exercised exclusively by conscious and free human action. Indubitably, the potential direction of a human towards God and the entire transcendent plane alone do not constitute religion, as it is a conscious and voluntary actualisation of the potential reference to God, accomplished by religious acts. The religious bond, generated by means of religious activity, is not the sole work of a human. God plays an active role within the relation as well. The dynamic aspect pertains to both elements of the relation.
- **Necessary aspect of the religious relation:** This means that, due to the ontic dependence of the human on the Absolute, religion is necessary for the full actualisation of the human person as a material-spiritual being. By means of his spiritual activity, leading to his self-spiritualisation (ontically and morally), man becomes more of a person. The religious bond with God is irremovable. The aforementioned necessity, to a degree, pertains to the second element of the religious relation as well.

If God created humans out of love, and He himself is love, the plenitude of goodness and truth, and is bound to love men, then He is therefore bound to wish for the fullest development of the human person. Therefore, if the human person achieves his fullest development by means of unity with God, then God is bound to wish for this unity, as He is the Creator of human nature.

- Religion as a relation perfecting the human subject: This is manifested subject-wise, within the activity of the subject. Therefore, one may say that every cultural, and thus cognitive, moral and aesthetic activity develops the spiritual aspect of a human. However, it is the activity leading to the accomplishment of the relation to God (religious acts) that particularly perfects the person to the highest degree. Therefore, although moral actions dignify the acting subject and, simultaneously, cause actual good in others, and each act of cognition enriches men to some degree, only the religious act perfects the subject itself (the human perfects the self). For Zdybicka, religious experience constitutes the most engaging, integral, and, in consequence, the most merging act, in which human subjectivity, by touching the Divine subject, not only retains its own individuality, but discovers and affirms it to the highest degree. If external and internal actions shape the personal “I” of a human, then religious acts accomplish that to the highest degree—man become a person to the fullest. The end of the reference, the Absolute, is the plenitude of all perfections. The greatest act in all respects. Therefore, religious activity yields Him no benefits—it is directed entirely at the human, oriented to his fullest actualisation (perfection). If human existence is an existence within the “transcendent You” perspective, such perspective grants meaning and value to all human activities (including but not only religious), without altering their internal contents.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ M.A. Krąpiec and Z.J. Zdybicka, “Tomistyczna koncepcja świętości,” in *W nurcie zagadnień posoborowych*, ed. B. Bejze (Warszawa, 1972), pp. 405–418.

RELIGION AND *SACRUM*: THE DIFFERENCE OF PARADIGMS

Within the philosophical speculation regarding the meaning, content and reasons of religion, Zofia Józefa Zdybicka indicated the proper understanding of the currently significant concept of *sacrum* and its relation to the concept of God, as well as of religion.⁶⁵ Zdybicka reminded us that the process of the transformation of the *sacrum* category, and the related change from the understanding of religion as a real relationship between man and an actually existing God to an indeterminate religiousness, was initiated in the Neo-Kantian sacrological movement and the theory of values as human decisions (Nietzsche, Weber).

Zdybicka highlights that the sacrological movements, particularly the phenomenological one, introduced a significant number of valuable analyses and interesting interpretations to the studies on religion. Owing to the efforts of phenomenologists, a number of incredibly abundant contents constituting the religious phenomenon were presented. What seems to be most curious within phenomenological enquiries is the opposition against atheist and anti-theist evolutionist tendencies in understanding religion, popular at the turn of the 19th and the 20th century, as well as the highlighting of the necessary bond between religion and man (human consciousness), the continuity of the phenomenon of religion and its original status, irreducible to other aspects of human life.

⁶⁵ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Bóg czy sacrum*, pp. 39–42.

GOD OR SACRUM?

Zdybicka demonstrates that *sacrum*, as a concept to replace the term “God,” initially ignited discussions among philosophers; however, it was eventually accepted not only within religious studies, but also within the entire culture of the 20th century. Many found the concept of *sacrum* to be more comfortable than the term “God,” as it implicates religious and moral requirements. Unfortunately, the lack of precision in defining the contents of the term, as well as the separation of religion from manifestations of human life other than confession, contributed to disadvantageous—however, probably unintended—changes to the understanding of religion. The contents of the concept of *sacrum* were subject to transformation, leading to the reshaping of the historically shaped form of religion into an unspecified “religiousness.”

Sacrum as an object of religious experience common to all religions was grasped in various ways. Therefore, according to Nathan Söderblom, *sacrum* is an “impersonal force,” Rudolf Otto describes it as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, Mircea Eliade considers it to be an “element of the structure of consciousness,” Wilhelm Windelband states that it is “an ideal of life indeterminate in content,” and Martin Heidegger claims that it is an established “aspect of being.”

Therefore, *sacrum* became a specific objectification of religious acts of the subject, relativised with regard to the intentional object of religious acts. As a result of the aforementioned process, *sacrum* became an object given in consciousness, and was also somewhat constituted by it. In consequence the concept gained a subjective character and its role in culture was reduced.

Zdybicka notes that, in the secular world, the concept of *sacrum* as perceived in religious terms is either declining, or is subject to significant deformation. Although the secularisation processes did not eradicate the idea entirely, they contributed to significant transformations in the perception and evaluation of the concept. Currently, one may speak of a semantic and axiological ambivalence of *sacrum*. The concept was translated to secular areas of human activity so that it would replace traditional religion. The phenomenon of the so-called sacralisation of art. According to this theory, art is able to replace religion and become a kind of “secular religion.” The other example of

the aforementioned is the project of sanctifying e.g. Marxism, an anti-religious doctrine by definition, but limiting religion in its external forms, indicating paths to liberation and the fulfilment of man in times of secular temporality.

Changes in regard to understanding and experiencing the contents of the term *sacrum* lead to the emergence of a “new religiousness” and “new spiritualities” hidden under different names, e.g. invisible religion, New Age, alternative or creative spirituality, as well as feminist spirituality. This is due to the fact that, despite considering himself as a *homo religiosus*, man pursues a *sacrum* that reflects his preferences and desires. As a result of turning away from classical metaphysics and the Christian revelation, man considers *sacrum* to be that which he creates, i.e. a closely unspecified principle of the spiritual satiation of the need for the meaning of life; an “instrument” of personal spiritual or psychological fulfilment; a climactic “experience” to provide a feeling of final satisfaction (sex, narcotics, virtual reality experience).

For the Lublin author, the aforementioned means the rejection of religion as a real, personal relationship between man and a personal Absolute, from whom men originate and whom they pursue their entire lives, and the acceptance of an undetermined religion as a social-cultural phenomenon. Zdybicka adds that, even within atheist perspectives, there is some feeling of religiousness, which is meant to prove the existence of a secular spirituality. However, it is an expression of the absolute subjectivisation of *sacrum*. Therefore, Zdybicka suggests that numerous contemporary forms of *sacrum* should be treated as erroneous, as only the personal, conscious and free bond with the personal God, whom man is able to know and with whom he may establish a relation, guarantees proper and complete development, fulfilment and happiness. All remaining forms of *sacrum* are beneath human dignity, and accepting them leads to a deformation of human existence.

THE REASONS BEHIND THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF THE SACRUM CONCEPT

In her works, Zdybicka poses a question, almost insistently: what reasons led to the fact that the theory of God as the Absolute Existence, the Greatest Goodness, Love, the Most Perfect Person, whom

men perceive as the ultimate source of own existence, and the Greatest Goodness, bestowed meaning upon their lives and actions? This theory, which in European culture was a synthesis of philosophical speculation and faith and functioned in Christian religion, was, to a great extent, replaced by the theory of *sacrum*. What events regarding reasoning and culture led this category to become, theoretically and practically, one of the most popular determinants of understanding religion?

Zdybicka indicates the pretence of early modern philosophy. Within the Kantian perspective, the issue of the actual existence of God is—as we know—undecidable. Adopting the *a priori* theory of God as a structural element of human reasoning is not identical with the possibility of knowing Him. The contents of the idea are indeterminate; it is solely a sign of the unknown. We may, however, reason about God, but only with the use of symbols, otherwise we would be forced to introduce God to the sensible world. Therefore, the idea of God is regulative, not constitutive. Considering the above, Kant related religion to the practical aspect, i.e. morality—the order of *Sollen* (duty). In consequence, it appeared that God, perceived as such, was fused with the aspect of human experience, where human will assumes the primary position, and is transferred from the ontic plane to the plane of morality, i.e. practical morality. Therefore, accepting one's moral duty requires a practical belief in the freedom and immortality of man and in faith in God.

The anti-metaphysical and agnostic position of Kant, along with relating religion to the practical (psychological) aspect, became the inspiration for pursuing the “roots” of religion in the human subject, usually equipped with the *a priori* capabilities of establishing contact with the object of religious reference. Therefore, in the post-Kantian philosophies of religion and in phenomenological pursuits regarding religious studies, the concept of *sacrum* appeared as the basic religious category. It began to signify the object of the religious cult, regardless of the type or form of religion, replacing God, perceived as a personal Absolute.

The process of reducing religion to morality, initiated by Kant, with the necessary acceptance of God as the guardian of morality and moral religion, found its continuation in post-Kantian philosophy. Such direction in describing the phenomenon of religion was established by Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher and his extreme reaction to

Kant's position, along with the interpretation of religion in the spirit of Protestant sentimentalism and irrationalism. Schleiermacher distinguished three powers of the human: reason (the domain of metaphysics), will (the domain of ethics) and feeling (the domain of religion). The essence of religion is the experience of "absolute dependence" as a result of encountering infinity—the Universe. Schleiermacher considered *sacrum* as something lastingly hidden away from profanation. Therefore, he did not disconnect religion from that which is essential to the human person—reason and will—and did not reduce it primarily to the expressions of the supra-rational experience of the subject.

The Neo-Kantian sacrological school, primarily represented by the Baden School and its main representative, Wilhelm Windelband, became the strategic point for shaping the understanding of *sacrum*. Windelband, following Kant, accepted the primacy of practical reason over theoretical, and established a critical theory of cultural values, with a critical philosophy of religion.⁶⁶ In distinguishing between that which is and that which should be, Windelband assumed a judging (evaluative) conscience, i.e. the normative conscience. It is the awareness of that which is essential and absolutely necessary for the justification of intersubjectively significant actions and results, within the scope of what is good and beautiful. The normative conscience is the postulated ideal, realised during human cognitive, moral and creative actions, and partially accomplished by men. The value of sanctity and grasping the "saint" is in the expectation and aim. However, by sanctity, Windelband meant no particular class of universally significant values such as truth, goodness and beauty, but rather all values taken as one, as far as they refer to the "supra-sensual" reality.

How does one define religion properly? What are its constitutive features, which are not to be found within the concept of *sacrum*? Reminding ourselves that religion is a real relation of man to God indicates two aspects that must necessarily be considered in order to be able to answer these questions:

- (1) Man is pre-philosophically, i.e. naturally and spontaneously, able to know the truth—that a certain reality, transcendent in comparison to man, exists. That explains the fact of the existence of

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 49.

religion, which has accompanied men since their appearance on Earth. Philosophical speculation, much younger than religion, may not be, as it is, treated as the primary or sole source of the appearance of the idea of God.

- (2) The affirmation or negation of God is practical, as it decides on the understanding of the meaning, aim and perspectives of human life, and manifests itself in religious and moral activity encompassing the entirety of existence. That causes feedback between the moral stance of the human and accepting or not accepting God. The cognition and acceptance of God by a particular human suggests *recta ratio* and *recta voluntas*.

Only from this perspective, by asking about the ultimate reason for the existence of contingent beings, does one enter realistic philosophy, the necessity to accept a being that is the Plenitude of Existence—*Ipsum Esse Subsistens* (Subsistent Being Itself). Further philosophical analyses lead to a statement that the Absolute of Existence is a reason, i.e. the cause, of the coming to existence of all beings, their determinacy, intelligibility (cognisability) and—as the Highest Goodness—the ultimate end of existence and action.

THE METAPHYSICAL ABSOLUTE AND THE GOD OF RELIGION

As the absolute transcendence and immanence, the Absolute of Existence causally permeates all beings in a threefold aspect—as the efficient, formal and final cause. Therefore, the world is derived from the Absolute (God), who is the Thought (He creates everything on the basis of His transcendent forms) and Love, as He creates freely, motivated by no necessity. Thus—as stated by Zdybicka—the Absolute and the derived reality constitute an analogous community. Why should the Absolute, discovered with metaphysical procedures, be associated with the God of religion?⁶⁷ Demonstrating that everything

⁶⁷ The issue seems controversial. Kierkegaard wrote that philosophy and Christianity will never reach reconciliation and, as a validation of his position, quoted a scholastic thesis: “a thing may be true in philosophy, and false in theology” (cf. S. Kierkegaard, *O chrześcijaństwie*, trans. A. Szwed [Kęty, 2011], pp. 21–22). However, in the 20th century, J.-L. Marion stated that such an

that is (including human beings) exists due to its participation within the Absolute, metaphysics indicates the basis of religion. A profound ontic bond occurs between man and God. Man is able to recognise that the Absolute is the source of his existence and the Greatest Goodness which gives meaning to life. Accepting this truth is the basis of a religious relationship.

In this context, we can understand—argues Zdybicka—that *sacrum* never forms a bond similar to that given by religion. Only religion constitutes a relation of the human person to the personal God, dependence on whom is recognised by man. Additionally, men accept God as the ultimate goodness—the end of one’s own life. Recognising this fact, the human being should express religiousness in a conscious and free (personal) manner, in moral action. Therefore, it is not the feeling of *sacrum* but the metaphysical basis of religion that is so important: it demonstrates that religion is exclusively the mode of men’s existence “from God” and “towards God.” For a personal being, as human beings are, only the personal Absolute may become the “object” of religious cult and the guarantor of moral life. Classical metaphysics argues that such a God exists independently of human thought, of human affirmation or negation. Obviously, man, as a free

association, particularly following Heidegger’s total critique, is of no meaning. Speaking of the God of faith and religion within the categories of being perceived metaphysically is to include Him in a rational system, whereas God is the infinity of Goodness and—according to Plotinus’ intuitions—God is above being (cf. J.-L. Marion, *Bóg bez bycia*, trans. M. Frankiewicz [Kraków, 1996]). Within the Biblical order, the bond between man and God is based on the covenant, a free and mysterious work of God’s love and the corresponding human attitudes of trust and faith, radically different from theoretical certainty. God is recognised in a way fitting for man, i.e. by His actions and His revelation. Thomas Aquinas assumed that one should associate the metaphysical Absolute (pure independent existence) with the God of religion, particularly the God of Christianity, as this pure existence, which he reached at the end of metaphysics, and which he also found in Scripture, as a theologian, as the revelation given by God alone to all of humanity, so that men would accept it via faith. God simply revealed to men that His essence is identical to His existence. Therefore God is the very same object of both philosophy and faith, however the content of the theological concept of God, in theology, is much more abundant due to the acceptance of the supernatural content taken from the revelation within the order of faith. See L. Strauss, *Jerozolima i Ateny oraz inne eseje z filozofii politycznej*, trans. R. Mordarski (Kęty, 2012), pp. 76–93; É. Gilson, *Tomizm. Wprowadzenie do filozofii św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, trans. J. Rybałt (Warszawa, 1998), p. 117.

being, may—as Zdybicka consciously acknowledges—negate the truth about God, denying His existence and refusing to establish a relation with Him. Such is the price of human freedom.

ATHEISM: HISTORY, PARADOXES, HAZARDS

Zofia Józefa Zdybicka has dedicated many of her works to the issue of atheism, and not only in terms of her polemics against Marxism. One of her major works regarding the subject is the one titled *Pułapka ateizmu* [*The Atheist Pitfall*],⁶⁸ containing a collection of articles dedicated to the matter, previously scattered across various journals over the years, including *Roczniki Filozoficzne*, *Studia Philosophiae Christianae*, *Znak* and some entries in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*.

THE SOURCES AND THE TYPOLOGY OF MODERN ATHEISM

In the analysis of the sources of early modern and contemporary atheism, the author notes the changes that took place in the understanding of philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries, identifying them as the sources of abandoning faith and of the negation of God. The figure of Descartes appears, who, by directing himself towards the subjective aspect, led to the rejection of the former cognitive tradition in referring to the primacy of an objective trans-subjective reality. The position was strengthened by Kant, who, by undermining the cognitive abilities of the human and indicating the impossibility of knowing the reality *in se*, led to the rejection of metaphysics as a science. The cognition of God was situated beyond the cognitive powers of the human. God had become only (or “as much as,” for

⁶⁸ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Pułapka ateizmu*, p. 44.

some) a postulate of practical reason as a guarantee of the coherence of ethical theories. Kant stated that, by removing God from the rational plane, he created space for faith, but in reality, he led to a negation of the rational discourse regarding the existence of the Absolute.

According to Zdybicka, the process initiated by Descartes and Kant, in combination with Hegel's philosophy, who considered human consciousness as a place of "becoming" of the Absolute, led to the establishment of the atheistic thesis: that God is a product of human subjectivity.⁶⁹ Materialistic monism, epistemological or ontological immanentism, or the imperialism of the positivist theory of science would strengthen the beliefs of numerous thinkers, in that referring to the Transcendence as an explanation of reality is non-scientific and should be discarded altogether.

The typology of contemporary atheism, as proposed by Zdybicka, distinguishes between: (1) theoretical atheism (as a result of a flawed theory of man or of the world); (2) metaphysical atheism (monism); (3) epistemological atheism (the limitation of human cognitive capabilities); (4) axiological atheism (the rejection of the Absolute in favour of other values); and (5) practical atheism (an existential attitude renouncing the existence of God).⁷⁰

What are the causes of atheism according to Zdybicka? Primarily, the possibility of such an attitude is a result of the fact that God is cognitively transcendent, that the cognition of the existence of such a being is not given to the human directly but indirectly, requiring particular cognitive activities, and due to the fact that "we are facing reasoning, demonstration, and reflective cognition, prone to error."⁷¹ The difficulties that prevent the cognition of the Absolute have remained similar through the ages, and are as follows: the existence of a physical and moral evil, or the character of our reason and will. In arguing against one of the principal accusations of atheism, i.e. the existence of evil, which is impossible to accommodate with a merciful and omnipotent God, Zdybicka refers primarily to the preferred theory of evil, according to which evil is the privation of proper good. Therefore, one may not predicate evil on God; He is the cause of being

⁶⁹ Ibidem, p. 59.

⁷⁰ Z.J. Zdybicka, "Ateizm," in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 1, ed. A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin, 2000), p. 379.

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 387.

prone to privation. Regarding moral evil, God is the Creator of the personal being who makes decisions autonomously, according to their own attitudes and personal knowledge. Therefore, according to Zdybicka, the conclusive response to the issue of evil does not come from philosophical speculation, but is provided by religion.

Within the framework established above, Zdybicka presented the tendency towards a distancing from realistic metaphysics, traced back to early modern times. Zdybicka described philosophical processes in which the rationality of reality was not accepted and truth was a result of subjective agreements, instead of an objective reason for things. Thus, the thesis that cognitive freedom is more important than reality. The aforementioned attitudes would assume a twofold form, i.e. collectivism (e.g. in Marxism), where *praxis*—the social-economic activity—would construct the truth about man, or individualism, according to which man as an individual creates his own essence via conscious actions that are not determined by the law of nature. Both situations exclude the existence of the immutable nature of man and his Creator—God. The cultural strength of these philosophical tendencies spawned anthropological theories free from the concept of God, religion, and the supernatural, directly negating the existence of the Absolute (atheism) and striving to eliminate such categories as God and religion from human nature.

Therefore, let us highlight the fact once more—atheism may simultaneously be a philosophical, existential or a practical human attitude. As a doctrine, atheism gains a metaphysical aspect when it negates God on the ontological level—therefore, ontic atheism is the strongest. Additionally, we may list epistemological atheism, which assumes the form of agnosticism (the unknowability of the existence of God), and scepticism (the impossibility of settling the issue regarding the existence of God). Atheism may also manifest itself in theories that assume some absolute reality, however, deprived of the characteristics of a personal God, e.g. pantheism (everything is god), panentheism (there is no ontic separation between God and the world) or deism (God created the world, setting it in motion and granting it a constant amount of movement, but has not been interested in it since then).

THE HISTORY OF ATHEIST IDEAS

Zdybicka has demonstrated that we are witnesses to the process of increasing secularisation, which has been damaging European culture for over a dozen decades.

The essential elements of the process are as follows:

- (1) The philosophical turn towards the plane of subjectivity—the intentional plane of consciousness (*cogito*), initiated by Descartes, strengthened by Kant, and, currently, continued in various forms of phenomenology and hermeneutics.
- (2) Hume’s empirical scepticism.
- (3) The radical rationalism of the representatives of the Enlightenment.
- (4) Hegel’s idealistic system of panlogical evolutionism inspiring atheist ideologies.
- (5) The radicalism of positivism (with its scientific belief that empirical science is exclusively the form of valuable cognition), generating a scientific-technological mentality.
- (6) The relativism and subjectivism of post-modernism, consciously acknowledging that all judgements are equal, and demanding the renouncement of rationality and truth, directly.

As early modern scepticism had been accepted as the proper method of philosophy, directed at practical aspects and perceived as a way of life (Montaigne, Charron, Sanchez, Bayle), a belief emerged within modern societies that the issues of the existence of God and of the soul cannot be solved, and that speculation regarding unsolvable issues is basically a waste of time. Humanism had become naturalistic, and man had been reduced exclusively to being a part of nature. Within this perspective, religion is a purely human creation.

The explicit strengthening of atheism had been accomplished due to Auguste Comte, who narrowed the field of human rationality down and introduced a new theory of science. According to this theory, men are able to know things that are done solely in their direct experience, by describing them, interpreting them and articulating them in mathematical relations. By means of Comte’s positivism, questions such

as “due to what?,” “what for?” and “why” (questions regarding the efficient and final cause) were ultimately eliminated from the field of rational cognition, and, in effect, metaphysics was rejected. Positivism and scientism adopted a theory of knowledge that eliminated the issue of God from the cognitive horizon. This positivist-scientistic agnosticism contributed to the formation of a scientific-technological mentality which, in consequence, leads to practical atheism. The inability to determine the issue of “whether God exists” scientifically and the lack of the empirical verifiability of the thesis regarding the existence of the Absolute, along with the inability to demonstrate it with the methods of mathematical physics, resulted in the perpetuation of the norm of the individual and social action “act as if there was no God” in culture.

Analysing the sources of contemporary atheism, Zdybicka reminds us that, apart from Comte, Nietzsche also considered himself as a prophet sent to initiate a cultural and moral revolution, the essence of which was to reveal the “lies regarding the faith in God.” According to Nietzsche, the concept of God, which had existed within human consciousness for centuries, is a myth. It is a purely human creation and contains the projections of human desires and various needs, including, primarily, the need to have a master. Nietzsche’s announcement of the “death of God” was to reveal the falsity of religion and to result in the elimination of God from culture. Morality was to be built on new, re-evaluated values, so that the development of the stronger would not be hampered by the weaker. The process is necessary, as the cult of God and of transcendent values degrades and enslaves men, and was enforced on a man externally in the form of a codified morality distinguishing between good and evil. The man, freed from the myth of religion, would be able to establish values freely and maturely, as a superman, already living in a world without religion. Nietzsche’s radical atheism not only gained the status of a philosophical idea in the 20th century, but gained a social and a very practical character.

French existentialists—such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty—advocated atheism in the name of man, particularly in the name of human freedom, granting the atheist beliefs an explicit, vivid form. They perceived religion solely in negative terms, alienating the human psychologically and distorting human tasks and duties. In order to become a man amongst men, one

should—they argued—renounce God definitively in favour of the human.

All these philosophical ideas, cultural tendencies and social factors contributed to the creation of an atmosphere favourable to the rejection of God. Both in philosophy and in culture, it definitely led to breaking the bond with the objectively existing reality, and, in consequence, the bond linking the human person with the personal Absolute Being—Truth, Goodness and Beauty. The ideological, philosophical and cultural tendencies perpetuated the model of human life, reduced to a purely temporal perspective (terrism), to acknowledge a solely material plane of the entirety of reality (materialism), to pragmatism, utilitarianism, and hedonism, closing off the cognitive (rational) plane of human existence from the issues of God, the soul and supernatural spirituality. Therefore, Zdybicka perceives early modern subjectivist idealism to have absolutised the human conscience and established man as the place of the Absolute's becoming. All the above aided the appearance of the belief regarding the greatness and self-sufficiency of man, and his creative power, which makes him equal to the gods of former religions. In the presented perspective, God not only becomes obsolete, but additionally—as Zdybicka notes—may be perceived negatively, as he limits the human and endangers human freedom and self-sufficiency.

Seeing agnosticism and atheism being strengthened in such a complex and multifaceted way, one may understand how, in the 20th century, a number of radically anti-religious ideologies emerged, claiming that, in order to live life to the fullest and achieve absolute self-sufficiency, man should renounce God entirely and radically.⁷² Certainly, apart from the historical-philosophical perspective, Zdybicka additionally indicates the objective causes of the difficulties in acknowledging the existence of God, which are present to this day. Many people do not understand and do not realise the philosophical processes that have occurred in the last three centuries and, simultaneously, accept arguments in favour of renouncing God.

⁷² Z.J. Zdybicka, "Alienacja zasadnicza: człowiek Bogiem," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 45/46, no. 2 (1997–1998), pp. 51–68.

THE FLAWS OF ATHEISM

Zdybicka, however, not only determines the cultural, real life and historical-philosophical processes leading to the renouncement of God, but also analyses their causes, carefully identifying the metaphysical flaws of atheism. They are as follows:

(1) Misidentification of the act of being (*esse*)

Personal *esse*, i.e. that which is substantiated in the soul (the spiritual reality), is not—contrary to what is said by all kinds of evolutionists—a creation of matter, whether animate or inanimate. According to the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of the reason of being, the less inferior being—in this case the matter, unaware and unable to perform deliberate actions—cannot be the ultimate cause of the coming to existence of a spiritual being, capable of conscious, free and deliberate actions. The adequate answer to the question regarding the source of the coming into existence of a human person and its ultimate end is provided by metaphysics, conducted within the realistic philosophy of being, following the principles of non-contradiction, identity, and the reason of being. It indicates the rational procedures of demonstration, from which it results necessarily that the personal existence of man demands a transcendent cause, i.e. the acceptance of the ontological derivativeness from the personal Absolute, the Plenitude of Existence, Truth, Goodness and Beauty. The ontic structure of the human person indicates that man has Divine origins and a Divine destiny.

(2) The omission of the realness of the God-man relation

The ontic relations between man and the personal God are explained by the metaphysical theory of participation. Man is a being by participation in the personal Being, in His rationality (a primeval law) and love (the ultimate fulfilment). A number of incredibly close, strong ontic relations occur between man and God, regardless of whether man realises it or not. They indicate an unimaginable intimacy between man and God. All personal actions (cognitive, moral and religious) result from these ontic

relations. Therefore, the ontic reference to the Person of God is inscribed in the structure of the human person.

(3) A misconception regarding the meaning and the end of life

Man's life, deprived of meaning and an end, becomes a tragic existence. Therefore, every human exhibits an urge to recognise the ultimate end with regard to life, which grants meaning. It is a relationship with God, accomplished by cognition and love. Only God, as the Greatest Goodness, may be the end of the deliberate dynamism of man, directed at accomplishing good and the deeds of love. The most significant good that can be recognised is another (person). However, despite man's exceptional importance and the fact that love for the human being helps to complete the loving person, he does not fill the entire human capacity for good and love. Only the Divine Person is able to accomplish that—the "Transcendent You." Therefore, cognition and love for God—the Plenitude of Truth and Goodness (Love)—fully actualise the personal capabilities of a human. The ability to love people and love the Personal God is inscribed in human nature. Therefore, all other proximate ends (goods) are incomprehensible without accepting the ultimate end, as the primary good of all human action is Goodness without boundaries—God.

**THE RESULTS OF ATHEISM AS A PHILOSOPHICAL IDEA
AND AS A SOCIAL PROJECT**

In Zdybicka's work, one finds a strong thesis regarding the results of atheism, which encourages discussion. Atheist ideologies have been built on the grounds of flawed concepts of man, God and religion. Their actual accomplishment would lead to a spiritual and moral enslavement of man by totalitarian systems, as well as to an eradication of millions of people. In the 20th century, we experienced the consequences of banishing God from the context of human life on a grand scale. Atheist tendencies led not only to the distortion of truth about God and man, but, additionally, to the spiritual and physical "death of man." Humanism excluding God became "vile humanism," inducing entire societies to forget about specifically human values

and to be subjected to the atrocities of various forms of totalitarianism. Therefore, man became a being deprived of foundations, reduced to the “reality of ideas” or an “element of matter”, unaware and deprived of deliberate action.

Why is atheism still presented as the proper and fair alternative for the contemporary world? Zdybicka claims that the negation of the existence of God results from a lack of profound consideration regarding reality. Atheism always spawns from the rejection of the objective truth. It is a position secondary to the affirmation of God. Why? Zdybicka states that we live in among an endless amount of beings that, by its own ontological contingency, points man in the direction of his reasoning: there must be something transcending the visible reality, something existing “further,” “deeper.” These spatial metaphors show that the attitude of affirming the world is primary, and it is the one determining the understanding of the place of man within the hierarchy of creatures. Man craves to prolong his own existence beyond the material realm, while either experiencing the frail nature of his own life, or experiencing the joy of it. In each act of cognition, reason recognises its own insufficiency spontaneously. Reason has the feeling of possessing existence, but not being existence. At the level of the primary encounter with reality, man does not think of particular principles, but realises that cognition is a cognition of “something” that is independent of the subject of cognition. This “reading” of the world is not philosophy yet. It is only a clouded belief about the existence or, at least, about the actual possibility of the existence of God. Therefore, as Zdybicka states, following Gilson,⁷³ we notice a particular kind of natural cognition of God, acquired spontaneously, as a result of reflections upon the world and upon the existential situation of the human, previous to religious faith and philosophical knowledge. This pre-philosophical reference of the human to the Divine reality is the explanation for the existence of all religions that, in their various forms, have accompanied men since their appearance on the Earth, and are present in all cultures. Human history notes no culture without religion. Therefore, atheist tendencies are essentially anti-human.

In Zdybicka’s opinion, the renouncement of God as the Greatest Goodness almost entirely destroys dynamism and impedes human

⁷³ É. Gilson, *Constantes philosophiques de l'être* (Paris, 1983), pp. 111–112.

development. Only opening himself up to the Absolute Goodness causes man to gain a chance (via cognition and love) to bestow the most important meaning upon his own life. At the same time, atheist solutions deprive the human person of the spiritual, transcendent dimension and encapsulate the person in a world of passing values and, therefore, man does not fulfil his own natural inclinations and essential pursuits.

PHILOSOPHY WITHIN THE SPACE OF AN OPEN DISPUTE

The work of Zofia Józefa Zdybicka was related to numerous debates of a scientific nature. In order to simplify these debates, we may divide them into two different types: direct arguments against different views, and polemics appearing as a result of the conducted analyses and problem argumentations. The first type consists of the arguments against Marxism and atheism; the second, of the discussions held within the debates on the various means of practising philosophy of God, or on different understandings of religion. The above does not, however, exhaust all issues discussed by Zdybicka within the scope of the philosophy of culture, taken in broad terms.

THE POLEMICS AGAINST MARXISM AND ATHEISM: THE ALIENATION ISSUE AND THE ARGUMENT OF THE THEORY OF MAN

Initiating her polemics against the Marxist interpretation of religion, Zdybicka notes that one should not undermine the existence of the sole fact of religion; however, one should recognise the controversies that appear in interpretations and explanations of that fact. It is possible only if one responds to the more basic questions: who is man, and what is the reality in which man functions? Therefore, the philosophy of religion is not an entirely autonomous philosophical discipline, and should not be practised in separation from either the philosophy of man or the general theory of reality, i.e. metaphysics.

One should initiate a debate with the Marxist theory of religion in a similar way, i.e. by indicating the general system premises that determine the interpretation of the religious fact.

Zdybicka highlights the practical aspect of Marxism. The system is oriented not on cognition, but action.⁷⁴ The author dedicates little space to the origins of the Marxist theory of religion, and cross-refers to Czarnecki's works⁷⁵; instead, she focuses on the semantic approach. Zdybicka indicates that on the one hand it is an idealistic tradition, postulating the primacy of ideas over reality, where the object is solely a resultant of the subject's cognition and the "thing-in-itself," while on the other, it is materialistic. Summarising the philosophical theory of man, Zdybicka indicates some of its essential elements: man is a natural being and a social one; alienation constitutes a meaningful anthropological category that echoes in religion as well. The origins of the latter may be found in economic-social alienation.

In her polemics against Marxism, Zdybicka focuses on the alienation category as the essential foundation for understanding religion within this school of thought. However, an explicit critique of social organisation based on the division of labour and private property, creating interpersonal inequalities and injustice, had appeared in Rousseau's works. Therefore, the process of alienation increases in strength (however, Rousseau did not use the term), causing men to lose their innate goodness and, out of necessity, enter various games of appearances that prevail in society. However, only in Hegel's philosophy do we have a metaphysical interpretation of the phenomenon—alienation is the basic dialectic mechanism, enabling both the expansion of nature as well as of the absolute spirit. In particular, it plays a major role in Marx's system, which projects a philosophical-economic meaning on it—a product created by man within the scope of private property gains an autonomous state of being and turns against man, endangering his essence.⁷⁶ The essential flaw of the theory is the lack of a metaphysically justified theory of the subjectivity of man, which, for Marxism, is the totality of social relations.

⁷⁴ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Pułapka ateizmu* (Lublin, 2012), pp. 142–144.

⁷⁵ J. Czarnecki, *Filozoficzny rodowód marksistowskiej teorii religii* (Warszawa, 1971).

⁷⁶ W. Chudy, "Alienacja," in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 1, ed. A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin, 2000), p. 190.

Zdybicka highlights that religious alienation in Marxist theory is the result of economic-social alienation, caused by the unjust social relations that prevail in capitalism. Therefore, religion is to be reduced to the aspect of an “idealistic illusion,” as all inconveniences and incompletenesses of life are complemented in it by the “unreal” reality, i.e. God, that negatively affects all human action, human *praxis*.⁷⁷ The impact of religion is negative in a twofold manner. First, religion is founded on maintaining the established social order (unjust in its essence); second, it constitutes the “opium of the people,” as it impedes the actions of the oppressed proletariat. Hence, the radical Marxist postulate of eliminating religion from individual and social life. Both Marx and Engels believed that religion would disappear at the very moment of eliminating the “base,” constituting the foundation of its existence. The above was followed by the postulate of propagating a scientific world view as an antidote for religious alienation.⁷⁸ Like many other critics of Marxism, Zdybicka indicates the paradoxical character of Marxist ideology. The ideology criticises religion as a manifestation of a diverse perversion of man, while at the same time introducing a soteriological aspect, replacing religious salvation with secular salvation, often horizontal. Marxism aims to build a society where man is not endangered with any type of alienation, whether social-economical or religious.⁷⁹ Renouncing religion is the only way of achieving this humanistic paradise in Marxism.

According to Zdybicka, Marxists make a mistake, primarily by posing binary alternatives—either God, or a happy and fully accomplished man—as well as by reducing the phenomenon of religion to purely social facts, simultaneously omitting its personal-relational character. They also present oversimplified theories regarding the origins of religion by assuming that, initially, men experienced an absolute dependence on nature, taming it by the personification of its powers. The fear of these powers, in consequence, led to their impoverishment. However, these theories give ground to the basic Marxist thesis acknowledging economic-social-political relations as the primary religiogeneous factor, and, at the same time, presenting it within

⁷⁷ Z.J. Zdybicka, “Ateizm,” p. 379.

⁷⁸ Cf. M. Rusecki, ed., *Z zagadnień światopoglądu chrześcijańskiego* (Lublin, 1989); Z.J. Zdybicka, ed., *Nauka – Światopogląd – Religia* (Warszawa, 1989).

⁷⁹ Cf. Z.J. Zdybicka, *Pułapka ateizmu*, p. 154.

the concept of private property—the basis of capitalism, and a visibly dehumanising factor.

Here, the function of religion is twofold, though negative in both cases. It “sanctifies” the established order, and impedes the possibility of acting and changing, directing human needs towards speculative and “spiritual” areas. It may constitute a form of protest, illusionary however, as it makes men passive as they await a radical metamorphosis which is to occur in the afterlife. Instead of pursuing economic development, religion proposes passive anticipation and a patient endurance of the present state. Therefore, illusion and slavery keep men from taking revolutionary steps, despite the fact that followers of Marxism renounce any possibility of revelation, both that which is accomplished within the process of creation as well as the historical revelation, finalised with the Christian revelation.

After a profound analysis of each of the theses of the Marxist theory of religion, Zdybicka poses a number of questions: is that theory true? Does it truly constitute a neutral explanation of the religious fact? Or is it simply an interpretation enforced on the facts?⁸⁰ Her opinion regarding the less than mediocre value of the Marxist interpretation of religion is strengthened further by two factors rooted within the theory itself: materialistic monism and atheism. They are accepted without any validation, constituting an explicit legacy of Hegelian idealism. In this case, idealistic monism was replaced with materialistic monism, where matter gains an eternal attribute (it gains the properties of the Absolute), and the principle of non-contradiction does not apply entirely. As Wojtysiak noted, what we are dealing with here is a necessaristic cosmism: the universe explains itself, it is a material and an absolute being.⁸¹ Zdybicka considers the conclusion to be obvious—within Marxism we are dealing with pantheism.⁸² Moreover, the thesis regarding materialistic monism demands the renunciation of two fundamental intuitions, already formulated at the level of pre-scientific cognition: the intuition of contingency and rationality (primarily regarding the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of sufficient reason).⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibidem, p. 172.

⁸¹ Cf. J. Wojtysiak, *Spór o istnienie Boga* (Poznań, 2012), p. 58.

⁸² Z.J. Zdybicka, *Pułapka ateizmu*, p. 173.

⁸³ For more on the subject, see J. Wojtysiak, *Spór o istnienie Boga*, pp. 29–36.

Additionally, Zdybicka's dispute with Marxism touched on the issues of the theory of man. The scholar states that Marxist theory undermines the basic capability of man, who seeks the truth continuously because—as already formulated by Aristotle—“all men by nature desire to know.”⁸⁴ The criticised ideology treats truth as something borrowed, as philosophy is no longer associated with action; it is no longer a truth cognition of a trans-subjective reality, but changes it according to abstract ideas. What we are dealing with here is a pragmatic theory of truth, where action determines what is true and what is not. Everything that stays on the path of accomplishing that aim, religion for example, is subject to gradual elimination. Additionally, the value of man is accomplished in action and the constitutive features of a human person, such as subjectivity and freedom, play a minor role (the latter is nothing more than being aware of the laws of nature in action and of the development of societies).

Therefore, the—probably rhetorical—question posed by Zdybicka is: should such a view, held by many, be considered as a humanist and an anthropocentric theory, as intended by its creators?⁸⁵ Moreover, the Marxist accomplishment of the “new humanity” is to take place in a distant, undetermined future. It is a radically utopian project, deprived of any references to the actual reality, to the “here and now.”

Additionally, Zdybicka notes the Polish experiences of debates with Marxism, which assumed various forms: from open confrontation to intriguing dialogues. The examples of open attitudes of the Marxist party can be found primarily in the figures of such thinkers as Janusz Kuczyński, Tadeusz Ludwik Płużański, Tadeusz Maciej Jaroszewski, and from Catholicism in the figures of Antoni Bazyli Stępień, Mieczysław Gogacz, Father Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, Rev. Stanisław Kowalczyk and Rev. Józef Tischner. Zdybicka directly refers to the suggestions of Tischner, included in the work titled *Polski kształt dialogu* [*The Polish Form of Dialogue*],⁸⁶ and particularly to the notion that “not a single thesis regarding religion checked in the history of socialism. Religion left the confrontation cleansed, strengthened by the enormous moral authority.”⁸⁷ The author speculates on how it happened.

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I, 1, 980 a 21.

⁸⁵ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Pułapka ateizmu*, p. 178.

⁸⁶ J. Tischner, *Polski kształt dialogu* (Paryż, 1981).

⁸⁷ Z.J. Zdybicka, *Pułapka ateizmu*, p. 185.

She claims that the Church always defended the integrated view of man not just in theory, but also in practice, highlighting the primacy of human dignity over politics and omnipotent ideologies.

Unfortunately, her evaluation of the encounters of Marxism and Christianity was disapproving. No changes took place in Marxism, and atheism and materialism remain integral parts of this already passing ideology. As we know, Zdybicka is radically critical of atheism, as it is the “mirror of human errors, particularly cognitive ones”⁸⁸; however, its presence is not always negative, as it proves, inter alia, the constancy of the idea of God, as well as indicates the necessity of pursuing increasingly better forms of expressing truths regarding Him and His existence.⁸⁹

The fullest justification of the statement regarding the existence of God may be found in classical philosophy, where—as it is often said—God is known indirectly as a necessary being, due to which we are able to explain the existence of the trans-subjective reality ultimately and truthfully. This, it must be noted, is not a necessarily dialogical attitude towards atheism, however it is a result of the principles of classical philosophy and the metaphysical interpretation of reality which ends in the Absolute, consequently adopted by Zdybicka.

REGARDING THE NON-CLASSICAL THEORIES OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Zdybicka concentrated the entirety of her work around the classical philosophy of religion, attempting to present its object, aims and method. At times, in her works we may notice numerous “signs of objection” against non-classical theories of philosophy. The proposition of a typology of various ways of conducting philosophy of religion is essentially reduced to a distinction between the so-called autonomous philosophies of religion (constructed on a strictly philosophical basis) and the non-autonomous philosophies of religion (allowing for a non-philosophical basis).⁹⁰ The author presents the

⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 103.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, p. 390.

⁹⁰ Cf. Z.J. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia. Zarys filozofii religii*, 3rd ed (Lublin, 2006), pp. 111–113.

contemporary paradigms of conducting the philosophy of religion with care: intuitive-experience, phenomenological, hermeneutic, linguistic, critical, *a priori*-speculative, transcendentalist, sociological, psychological, and religious; she subsequently points at their inadequacies regarding the ultimate explanation of the religious fact. She claims that, for example, the phenomenological philosophy of religion, prevailing in Europe, is limited to a purely intuitive apprehension of the content-formal structure of religion, and omits the ontic, existential and ultimate determinants of the phenomenon entirely.⁹¹ Phenomenology provides knowledge about how deity or sanctity appears in consciousness; additionally, it describes the layers that constitute a religious experience. However, this cognition does not travel “beyond meanings constituted in these experiences, and determined by their intentions.”⁹² Focusing solely on experience, we receive no answer to the essential question regarding the objective existence of their object, i.e. the Absolute. Zdybicka forms a similar charge against all humanist interpretations of religions, as they are unable to settle the essential issue of religion, i.e. whether it is true. Religion is true when a correlate of its acts is as well, i.e. God.

Accordingly, philosophies that examine the religious experience, for example, only seemingly explain the religious fact, as they reduce religion to a formerly adopted philosophical theory and evaluate it by means of forms, types, models and world views acknowledged *a priori*.⁹³ Often, the philosophy of religion was practised non-rationally, i.e. regarding faith or experience. Most often, it is a theologised explanation of a certain fact or a doctrine of a particular belief. Unfortunately, such an approach loses objectivity in cognition and in the explanation of a religious fact; however, it constitutes an interesting type of hermeneutics within religion. Thinkers such as Kierkegaard or Barth perform an interesting rationalisation of Christian faith. However, as was acutely pointed out by Zdybicka, such attempts only “shed light on” rather than explain the phenomenon of religion, although, surely, these interpretations include premises of some form of philosophy of religion.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 133.

⁹² Ibidem, p. 141.

⁹³ Ibidem, p. 133.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, p. 128.

In polemics against non-classical philosophies of religion, Zdybicka argues for the importance of the *a posteriori* philosophy of religion (directed theoretically-explicatively), particularly on the grounds of the necessity of grasping the empirical religious fact within ontic explicatory categories, instead of normative or evaluative.⁹⁵ Moreover, only the classical philosophy of religion demonstrates the fact of religion, considering the openness of the human being to the Absolute. The use of natural language in anthropology and in metaphysics is an additional value of such demonstration, as it allows one to transcend the structure of conventional sign cognition.

As has been noted, the charges against classical philosophy of religion that are often presented are meta-objective, focusing more on renouncing classical philosophy (metaphysics) and less on discussing the solutions on the grounds of the philosophy of religion proposed by this school of thought.⁹⁶ Zdybicka presented the need to adopt the classical understanding of philosophy on numerous occasions, including the interpretation of the phenomenon of religion. Only truth, that necessary cognition that interprets facts from a general existential point of view, allows us to establish the ultimate ontic reasons of the examined phenomenon. Such cognition is typical of classical philosophy.⁹⁷

Zdybicka's philosophy may be accused of Eurocentrism. Her understanding of religion as an actual, personal and dynamic relation of man to the personal Absolute, on whom man is dependent both in existence and in action,⁹⁸ indicates theories of religion characteristic of monotheistic religions, completely omitting the religious systems of the Far East. However, it is a consequence of adopting the classical version of metaphysics, where the demonstration of both the existence of the Absolute, as well as His personal nature, is entirely justified.⁹⁹

The philosophy of religion represented by Zdybicka practically associates with classical philosophy. Regardless, this does not mean that it is a hermetic philosophy closed to any sort of dialogue. Zdybicka

⁹⁵ Ibidem, p. 133.

⁹⁶ Cf. R.T. Ptaszek, *Filozofia religii Zofii J. Zdybickiej*, p. 266.

⁹⁷ Cf. Z.J. Zdybicka, *Religia i religioznawstwo* (Lublin, 1992), p. 348.

⁹⁸ Ibidem, p. 365.

⁹⁹ Cf. J. Wojtysiak, *Spór o istnienie Boga*, pp. 214–227; S. Judycki, *Bóg i inne osoby* (Poznań, 2010), pp. 201–222.

boldly initiates debates both with views that are completely different (Marxism) as well as with other theories of the interpretation of the philosophy of religion (phenomenology or hermeneutics). In both cases, Zdybicka clearly demonstrates her position, defending the rationality of the classical philosophy of religion. Her actions surely deserve recognition and scientific respect, so to speak.

STUDENTS AND COMMENTATORS

Zofia Józefa Zdybicka—as we have often mentioned—made a breakthrough direction within the studies on religion, referred to as the classical philosophy of religion. Her activity included not only scholarly studies, but also didactic work dedicated to teaching future scholars, who would continue and creatively expand on the patterns of the classical philosophy of religion in the future. She supervised almost thirty dissertations. Her students included Jan Andrzej Kłoczowski, Jan Sochoń, Włodzimierz Dłubacz, Piotr Moskal, Maria Małgorzata Boużyk, and Paweł Mazanka.

Currently, the direct follower of her philosophical legacy is Rev. Prof. Piotr Moskal, who became the head of the Department of the Philosophy of Religion at the Catholic University of Lublin after Zdybicka retired. He practises philosophy in the classical meaning, employing metaphysical-anthropological themes of his female predecessor. Additionally, Moskal presents new aspects that were not as clearly present in the studies performed by Zdybicka.

THE DISCUSSION WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF THE FOLLOWERS OF THE CLASSICAL THEORY OF RELIGION

The discussion regarding the very definition of religion, as an expansion on the works of Zdybicka, proves interesting. The debate is related to the critique of Zdybicka's definition of religion by Rev. Prof. Andrzej Bronk. The philosopher accused her of employing the Christian

theory of the Absolute. Therefore, apprehending religion as a relation of man to the potent “You” (God) is mirrored in Christian religion, where it was established. Therefore, the character of the definition is partially postulative, as “that which was established on the grounds of a particular religion is treated here as essential to religion in general.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the definition has a limited operative value within empirical religious studies. Bronk proposes placing the issue of the definition of religion within the problem of universals. He claims that the concept of religion is general and that, therefore, it must encompass all historical religions and should indicate that which is common to them.

According to moderate realism, only historical religions exist, in the forms of institutional religious communities with defined ends, beliefs and forms of cult. The generalised concept of religion created by philosophy (of religion) is abstract, the content of which is exercised analogously in the form of an assortment of features common to historical forms of religion.¹⁰¹

The only possibility of answering the question about what religion is may be found within the framework of the theory of universals, as the term “religion” is abstract. Therefore, the concept of religion becomes a theoretical concept, the content of which is not accomplished in a separate object, but in the form of an assortment of features common to historical forms of religion, given empirically as human behaviour and their products.¹⁰²

PIOTR MOSKAL’S VIEWS REGARDING RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Piotr Moskal accepts that the world of religion is analogous, and that the name “religion” is analogous as well. The primary analogate is the Catholic religion. Catholicism, being paradigmatic, constitutes the primary object in his philosophy of religion. This philosophy of religion relates to other religions inasmuch as they are similar to the Catholic religion.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ A. Bronk, *Nauka wobec religii* (Lublin, 1996), pp. 86–87.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 82.

¹⁰³ Cf. P. Moskal, *Religia i prawda*, 2nd ed. (Lublin, 2009), pp. 26–27.

Moskal mentions three objectives of his philosophy of religion.¹⁰⁴ The first is the philosophical description of religion answering the questions regarding the essence of religion, the category of being that is religion, as well as its place in the personal, social and cultural life contexts.

The second objective is the explanation of religion regarded as an evaluation or justification of religion. It is the answer to the question asking whether religion is not a mistake, whether it is something adequate in relation to objective reality. Moskal writes:

For the evaluation of truth value of religions, two types of issues are essential. First is the issue of God: whether He really exists outside of the subject of cognition, or if He is but an intentional correlate of human cognitive-affective acts, and whether His nature and His relations to the world are such that it is rational to be directed towards Him in religious acts. ... The second type refers to the issue of man. His existence does not pose a problem, however it is an issue whether and, eventually, how man needs God and religion.¹⁰⁵

The third type is “the reflection upon the means of cognition, available to religious and potentially religious men.”¹⁰⁶

The author declares that “following the threefold objective of the philosophical inquiries regarding religion, the applied methods of cognition will include the method of general metaphysics (including natural theology), the metaphysics of man, and of epistemology.”¹⁰⁷

Another aspect of philosophy developed by Moskal, and less present in the works of Zdybicka, is a specific “philosophical apologetics of Catholicism.”¹⁰⁸ The aim of such apologetics is the indication of the substantiating reason for the Catholic religion to be the *religio vera*. Moskal perceives apologetics as a substantiation or a justification of the Catholic doctrine, or as accepting the doctrine intellectually, including life in accordance with the doctrine.¹⁰⁹ Such a position is possible,

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, pp. 30–31.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem, pp. 30–31.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁸ P. Moskal, *Apologia religii katolickiej* (Lublin, 2012). Similar apologetics may be found in the works of Jacek Wojtysiak and Stanisław Judycki.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, p. 9.

as the Catholic doctrine contains truths that—according to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church—are knowable via the natural cognitive powers of man, e.g. the truth regarding the existence of a personal God.

The first segment of the discussed apologetics is also explicitly present in the works of Zdybicka, which is the objective and subjective substantiation of the phenomenon of religion, i.e. an indication of the necessity of accepting God as the only explanation of the reason for existence of all contingent beings, and an indication of the element of openness towards Transcendence in the potentialised human being. The substantiation of the existence of the absolute being is possible only by simultaneously indicating His features such as: simplicity, perfection, non-corporeality, immutability, eternity, singularity, love, or the personal character. The analyses conducted by Moskal refer to classical metaphysics and to Thomas Aquinas. The subsequent phases of his proposed philosophical apologetics pertain to the rationality of faith in revelation and the pragmatic reasons of the Catholic religion. The analyses related to revelation are to confirm the thesis regarding the rational stance of man, who accepts revealed truths through faith.¹¹⁰ In its essence, revelation is an assortment of cognitive content regarding God and His salvific intentions that man accepts as his own.¹¹¹ However, faith in revealed truth is not only propositional but also interpersonal as an act of trusting God, who presents these truths. Still, the basis for the act is the belief in the existence of God taken from an indirect cognition, prior to faith, of the cognition of God as the primary cause of all things.

Another level of the rational character of the Christian revelation is its credibility, primarily manifested in the authenticity of Christ, as well as by miracles as signs that confirm the truth of the Christian doctrine. Pragmatic reasons speaking for the truth of Catholicism positively influence man's personal, social and cultural life. According to Moskal's proposal, within Catholicism, man finds answers to the most fundamental questions regarding the meaning of life, suffering and existence after death. Therefore, religion allows him to overcome

¹¹⁰ Regarding the philosophical interpretation of revelation see, among others, J. Krokos, "Objawienie," in *Panorama współczesnej filozofii*, ed. J. Hołówka and B. Dziobkowski (Warszawa, 2017), pp. 479–502.

¹¹¹ Cf. P. Moskal, *Apologia religii katolickiej*, p. 54.

the most basic fear related to our existence.¹¹² Discussing the culture-forming role of religion, Moskal directly refers to numerous works of Zdybicka, who found faith to positively enrich our cognition—in particular, when it universally explains the mystery of man by affirming his capabilities to love both God and men. It is a shame that Moskal's elaborate apologetics of the Catholic religion lack polemics against radically different positions, e.g. atheism or secular humanism. Such polemics are a significant determiner of Zdybicka's works.

The symposiums organised by Moskal, dedicated to practising philosophy within the context of theology, are noteworthy. As a result of these colloquiums, a significant number of works were released, including joint publications regarding the matter of religion and mysticism, the truth of religion, as well as the metaphysical and anthropological premises of the philosophy of religion, the affective cognition of God, revelation, religious apologetics, and conversion.¹¹³

JAN SOCHOŃ'S PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW

Rev. Prof. Jan Sochoń, head of the Philosophy of Culture Department at the Philosophy Institute at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, is also an exponent of Zdybicka's philosophical thought. His way of practising philosophy is characterised by a variety of philosophical speculations, ranging from traditional metaphysical texts, through classical essays to modern media (Internet). The sources of his thought should be traced back directly to the thought of Thomas Aquinas and the historical experience of the Lublin Philosophical School. Metaphysical realism enables him to speculate with an open attitude to various currently formulated views and always to perceive them in a broad historical context. Therefore, Sochoń perceives philosophy as a hermeneutic process, consisting not of creating new qualities but of a non-standard supplementation of nodal philosophical

¹¹² Ibidem, pp. 104–105.

¹¹³ P. Moskal, ed., *Filozofować w kontekście teologii. Religia – natura – łaska* (Lublin, 2003); P. Moskal, ed., *Filozofować w kontekście teologii. Problem religii prawdziwej* (Lublin, 2004); P. Moskal, ed., *Objawienie* (Lublin, 2005); P. Moskal, ed., *Afektywne poznanie Boga* (Lublin, 2006); P. Moskal, ed., *Metafizyczne i antropologiczne założenia filozofii religii* (Lublin, 2007); P. Moskal, *Apologia religii katolickiej* (Lublin, 2012); P. Moskal, ed., *Nawrócenie* (Lublin, 2015).

points. Thus, he allows the classical speculation to remain alive and appealing, including for people presenting different philosophical beliefs. In this newly created perspective, philosophy becomes a dialogue, similar to the Socratic method, but also a school of political involvement and a higher plane of theoretical knowledge. Additionally, philosophy gains a moral and an eschatological aspect, preserved in particular works.

Sochoń is primarily interested in the man-Absolute (God) relation and conducts research regarding language in which the aforementioned relation is often articulated. Similarly to Zdybicka, Sochoń examines the phenomenon of atheism, specifying the proposals made by Gilson.¹¹⁴ He presents atheism in its metaphysical-cultural environment, simultaneously posing an unpopular (from the philosophical aspect) thesis regarding the impossibility of the existence of a so-called philosophical atheism, legitimated solely within the scope of realistic metaphysics.¹¹⁵

Sochoń directs special attention towards the main aporias of European culture (as discovered during the conducted research), beginning with the first Greek philosophers, referred to as archeics,¹¹⁶ through the views of medieval philosophers and early modern thinkers, up to the philosophers regarded as the thinkers of post-modernity. A significant as well as interesting expansion on the works of Zdybicka consists of the analysis dedicated to religion in the post-modern world, where Sochoń confronts the classical understanding of religion as a man-God relation with the views of contemporary philosophers such as Baudrillard, Bauman, Deleuze, Derrida or Vattimo.¹¹⁷ The scholar proposes methodological interpretations of the proposals of contemporary philosophers, the so-called post-modernists, as well as

¹¹⁴ Cf. J. Sochoń, *Ateizm* (Warszawa, 2003); J. Sochoń, "Ateizm, obojętność, nieufność," *Więź*, no. 2 (1995), pp. 126–130; J. Sochoń, "Kościół wobec ateizmu (Kilka uogólnień)," *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* 12 (1999), pp. 197–204; J. Sochoń, "Wobec ateizmu," in *Filozofia Boga. Part I: Poszukiwanie Boga*, ed. S. Janeczek and A. Starościc (Lublin, 2017), pp. 441–460.

¹¹⁵ See J. Woleński's polemics against J. Sochoń in *Tygodnik Powszechny* 13, no. 11 (March 2005).

¹¹⁶ Cf. J. Sochoń, *Spór o rozumienie świata. Monizujące ujęcia rzeczywistości w filozofii europejskiej. Studium historyczno-hermeneutyczne* (Warszawa, 1998).

¹¹⁷ Cf. J. Sochoń, *Religia jako odpowiedź* (Warszawa, 2008); J. Sochoń, *Religia w projekcie postmodernistycznym* (Lublin, 2012); J. Sochoń, *Człowiek i twórczość. Szkice z filozofii kultury* (Lublin, 2016).

indicates that they should be referred to as “the philosophers of post-modernity.” While these philosophers confirm the accusations against religion formulated by the so-called masters of suspicion, they also refer to religion in positive terms, however, in the non-confessional aspects. Sochoń indicates the space of possible agreement, determined by the theory of co-suffering God, and by the recognition of God, who reveals Himself as a gift already in revelation (a reference to Marion’s proposal).

Surely Sochoń, as well as Zdybicka and Moskal, are located in the circle of Christian philosophers. Obviously, there is no Christian practice of philosophy as something specific; however, one may indicate a certain impact of revelation on the means of practising philosophy, particularly as a heuristic principle. One should separate the order of faith from the rational order with precision. Philosophy, even if it applies certain instructions given by religious cognition, remains a knowledge autonomous in relation to religious faith, and employs philosophical methods of verifying its proposed theses.

In regard to the philosophy of religion, Sochoń engaged the essential issues pertaining to the relation between the God of philosophy and the God of religion, particularly the concept of the expressibility of religious experience and the articulation of the mystery of God. He also studied the place of religion in art, proposing a model indicating means of understanding and of the functioning of literature as a “theological place,” while, in a broader context, he asks: why do philosophers read literature? He argues that many factors contribute to the fact, depending on how particular authors perceive philosophy and literature. In any case, both disciplines constitute numerous mutual combinations and their coherence seems irrefutable.

While analysing the issues of the language of religion, Sochoń first provides the solutions of the ancient philosophers (the mythical language), and then he notes the great significance of the solutions provided by Aquinas who, while maintaining the value of metaphorical enunciations, indicates the necessity of employing the language of analogy. We live, as he states, in a pluralistic world of contingency and, therefore, we must apply the natural language, i.e. a system of phonic characters, established by means of natural development, which allows men to communicate and to know the world.¹¹⁸ Cognitive and

¹¹⁸ For more on the subject, see J. Sochoń, *Bóg i język* (Warszawa, 2000).

language structures in spontaneous cognition are not “that which we know” but that “by which” the cognitive processes, regarding being, take place. Reflection is needed to objectify concepts and language, the instrument of our contact with the world and men. Aristotle and Aquinas, while conducting their analyses, did not overemphasise just one aspect (syntactic, semantic or pragmatic) of language, but linked them together. Therefore, Sochoń perceives the language of classical metaphysics as integral, where the aforementioned aspects of language determine each other. Language is a system of signs that reflect the known reality reached by the aforementioned sciences. The issues of philosophy begin when we reduce it to an analysis of the plane of language.

Although Sochoń does not provide a detailed examination of the analogous patterns, he leads to an encounter with the analogy of the cognition of reality in the analysed sources that are testimonies of religious experience. He often travels beyond strict philosophical analyses, as is common in his philosophical works, including statements by individuals related to art and religion. Sochoń indicates the abundance of language that expresses and communicates all human experience, including religious.

Currently, Sochoń’s main object of study is the assortment of issues regarding the philosophy of culture. The philosophy of culture is a relatively young philosophical discipline; therefore, providing a single, satisfying definition thereof proves a challenge. It comes in numerous versions as a consequence of the previously adopted philosophical paradigms, particularly as related to the understanding of what man is. The question regarding culture is always a question regarding man: what causes man to develop and to live more as a human? The criterion of evaluation is the reference of culture to the ontological structure of man, whether it is being developed or demolished by culture.

Therefore, Sochoń highlights the dependence emerging between the understanding of the philosophy of culture and the previous adoption of a proper philosophical attitude. One cannot possibly imagine (as a result of cultural pluralism and the fact that many paths lead to truth) one restrictively all-encompassing methodology and theory of the world. The very concepts of culture and philosophy are dynamic, they are subject to internal expansion. Therefore, the philosophy of culture must first deal with philosophy as it is and assume

a determined model of philosophy, as well as relate to other disciplines of human intellectual activity—in particular, to aesthetics, cultural studies (Chris Barker) or cultural criticism, the exponents of which often examine all that is located within the scope of culture in general, favouring the matters of the relations between power and politics above all else. Regardless, Sochoń acknowledges philosophy of culture as an important discipline within philosophical speculation. Its main task is to explain (using strictly metaphysical instruments) the phenomenon of culture, related by various links, with the typically human activity of the human person. He does not intend to describe these various forms of cultural expression accomplished by men (this is a matter for other disciplines: aesthetics, the theory of literature, sociology or the theology of culture), but instead to grasp the constitutive elements that shape the phenomenon of culture in general. The field of the conducted studies is located within the horizon determined by four—already recognised in the Greek tradition—basic disciplines of culture, i.e. theory (*theoria*), practice (*praxis*), art (*poiesis*) and religion.

Sochoń indicates the important relations between culture and religion. Unfortunately, according to Sochoń, certain areas of culture gain the aspect of confession, and reduce it to a secondary component. Culture, although indeed emphasising the emotional benefits of religion, does not require a price as high as religion would demand. Despite this fact, religion, by directing everything towards the absolutely ultimate end of human life, provides culture with the meaning and dynamism necessary to initiate activities for the development of man.

JAN ANDRZEJ KŁOCZOWSKI'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Professor Jan Andrzej Kłoczowski OP, a long-standing lecturer in the philosophy of religion at the Pontifical Academy of Theology, Kraków (later the Pontifical University of John Paul II), is also among Zdybicka's students. His dissertation, written under Zdybicka's supervision, was dedicated to the analysis of the understanding of religion in the works of Ludwig Feuerbach.¹¹⁹ Scholarly works by Kłoczowski

¹¹⁹ Cf. J.A. Kłoczowski, *Człowiek bogiem człowieka. Filozoficzny kontekst interpretacji religii w myśli Ludwika Feuerbacha* (Lublin, 1979).

show his departure from the classical philosophy of religion, as practised at the Catholic University of Lublin, in favour of dialogue with and searches for inspiration in contemporary trends in philosophy, which—more or less critically—engage the analysis of the phenomenon of religion.

One may mention the interesting examinations of the theory of myth, as presented by Kołakowski, that lead to a conclusion that natural sciences are subjected to the practical aspect, while describing the objective world. References to values are accomplished by means of myth, irremovable and irreplaceable. Moreover, it is by the very act of faith in the mythical message that we are given access to values, allowing us to experience the world fully, as a world endowed with a meaning. In the above meaning, nothing may replace religion.¹²⁰ For Kłoczowski, it serves as an interesting example of pursuing a non-reductive understanding of religion, even if one departs from engaging with the concept of the real existence of the Absolute.¹²¹

A significant issue in philosophy, expanded on by Kłoczowski, is the analysis of the religious experience, particularly its mystical forms. The latter is ambiguous, which makes it similar to faith in which we love God, however we are unable to comprehend Him. One who has not experienced the unification of the soul with God cannot know what it is, whereas those who have experienced it are unable to describe the phenomenon. Therefore, it is difficult to provide one comprehensive definition of mysticism. It seems that indicating certain essential features of the specific relation of the subject to the transcendent reality would be a more appropriate approach. These would allow one to isolate the phenomenon of mysticism from other spiritual-religious experiences, and Kłoczowski lists exactly such features.¹²² The first one is the experience of radical passivity. The mystic feels overwhelmed and permeated by a greater reality, transcending him entirely. He feels “surprised” and somewhat chosen. The passivity of the mystic highlights that the greatest act is accomplished as if it is beyond him, on a different, religious plane. Passivity does not

¹²⁰ Cf. J.A. Kłoczowski, *Więcej niż mit. Leszka Kołakowskiego spory o religię* (Kraków, 1994).

¹²¹ Cf. J.A. Kłoczowski, *Drogi i bezdroża. Szkice z filozofii religii dla humanistów* (Kraków, 2017), p. 227.

¹²² Cf. J.A. Kłoczowski, *Drogi człowieka mistycznego* (Kraków, 2001), pp. 22–26.

imply the mystic's complete inertia, as he, due to the spiritual experience, reaches the most profound layers of his soul that, when filled with light, become the source of his new activity.

The second "diagnostic" feature of mysticism is reduced to the so-called idea of the Whole. A mystic experiences his existence being part of something bigger, and only in this entirety (e.g. God, the Universe) may he find his plenitude. For example, in Eastern religions, man is a part of a cosmic order, and only after fusing with it does he find his place. In regard to theistic religions, one may not speak of dissolving in God. Mysticism, including Christian mysticism, does not lead to being deprived of one's own ontological individuality, but to the complete accomplishment of all of man's capabilities due to the supernatural bond with God. Only God is able to satisfy all human desires and needs.

According to Kłoczowski, the type of cognition, entirely different from common, scientific or philosophical cognition, is the third characteristic feature of mystical experience. As the object of the mystic's cognition is a reality entirely separate from the whole of known reality, the very means of cognition must be specific. It is most often described as intuitive or affective cognition. It is also much more intimate and internalised, and may be followed by some external manifestation of the supernatural, e.g. stigmata.

Finally, the last feature of mystical experiences is the unquestionable transformation of being. According to Kłoczowski, "a mystic becomes a 'new man,' and is born towards a 'new life'; not only does he experience the transformation of consciousness but, additionally, his actions are changed dramatically: influenced by the practice, the mystic follows a much more demanding value scale."¹²³

Kłoczowski's works are plentiful; apart from the aforementioned, he conducted analyses regarding the concept of *sacrum*, the phenomenology of religion, the language of religion, and, additionally, he examined thinkers such as Mircea Eliade, Edith Stein, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Simone Weil, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich, Hans Jonas, and many others.¹²⁴ He is among the most popular priests within the intellectual, particularly academic, circles of Kraków.

¹²³ Ibidem, p. 25.

¹²⁴ Cf. J.A. Kłoczowski, *Filozofia dialogu* (Poznań, 2005).

OTHER SCHOLARS REFERRING TO THE REALISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Among the other students of Zofia Józefa Zdybicka, one may list her former Ph.D. students who are active at numerous academies in Poland. Dr. hab. Włodzimierz Dłubacz, who defended a study dedicated to the subject of the Prime Mover in Aristotle's works, is currently a lecturer at the Catholic University of Lublin. He studies issues regarding metaphysics, the philosophy of God and religion, anthropology, the philosophy of society and politics, as well as the philosophy of education.¹²⁵ Rev. Prof. UKSW Dr. hab. Paweł Mazanka, in his dissertation written under Zdybicka's supervision, examined the theory of (the philosophy of) religion proposed by Welte. In his subsequent scholarly work, Mazanka has focused on trends in the philosophy of religion outside the classical scope and, particularly, on the works of Schopenhauer and his understanding of religion, Nietzsche and his critiques of religion, as well as the phenomenology of von Hildebrand and Stein. Additionally, he has analysed the subject matter of Jewish philosophy, as well as the philosophical causes of anti-Semitism and of opposing positions. His post-doctoral dissertation was dedicated to contemporary secularisation and secularism from the perspective of establishing their philosophical causes.¹²⁶ Currently he is the head of the Department of Metaphysics at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

Dr. hab. Maria Małgorzata Boużyk defended her Ph.D. titled *Dlaczego mit? Próba wyjaśnienia współczesnego renesansu mitu* [*Why myth? An attempt to explain the modern renaissance of myth*], and is currently a research associate in the Faculty of Education at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. In her scholarly work, she has continued her research within the scope of classical philosophy, focusing on the philosophy of education. Her post-doctoral dissertation

¹²⁵ See, among others, W. Dłubacz, *O kulturę filozofii. Zagadnienia podstawowe* (Lublin, 1994); W. Dłubacz, *U źródeł koncepcji Absolutu od Homera do Platona* (Lublin, 2003); W. Dłubacz, *Problem Absolutu w filozofii Arystotelesa* (Lublin, 2015).

¹²⁶ See, among others, P. Mazanka, *W kierunku religijności autentycznej. Bernharda Weltego filozofia religii* (Warszawa, 1996); P. Mazanka, *Źródła sekularyzacji i sekularyzmu w kulturze europejskiej* (Warszawa, 2003).

was dedicated to the very subject itself: *Wychowanie otwarte na religię. Polska Szkoła Filozofii Klasycznej o roli religii w wychowaniu* [Education open to religion: The Polish School of Classical Philosophy on the role of religion in education].¹²⁷ It contains an explicit constatation that the educational tradition that one should refer to is related to the accomplishments of Greek education (*paideia*), supplemented by the achievements of metaphysical realism, and complemented by the values of Christian culture. This seems more likely than the alternatives, as establishing one model of “open” education seems practically impossible due to the variety of philosophical models of man and the philosophical substantiation of the role of religion in education.

Additionally, one should list the older and younger doctors supervised by Zdybicka, who have either retired or are just starting their scholarly activity. These include: Wiesław Szurek (1980 dissertation titled: *Religia a kultura w filozofii Leszka Kołakowskiego* [Religion and culture in the philosophy of Leszek Kołakowski]), Marek Kiliszek (1981 dissertation titled: *Filozofia religii Iana Thomasa Ramseya* [The philosophy of religion of Ian Thomas Ramsey]), Tadeusz Michałek (1994 dissertation titled: *Jacques’a Maritaina koncepcja “szóstej drogi”* [Jacques Maritain’s theory of the “sixth way”]), Robert Ptaszek (1999 dissertation titled: *Filozoficzne implikacje współczesnych polskich koncepcji filozofii religii* [Philosophical implications of the contemporary Polish theories of the philosophy of religion]), and Anna Kawalec (2000 dissertation titled: *Teatr jako znak osobowy człowieka. Studium filozoficzne* [Theatre as a personal sign of man: A philosophical study]).

¹²⁷ M. Boużyk, *Wychowanie otwarte na religię. Polska Szkoła Filozofii Klasycznej o roli religii w wychowaniu* (Warszawa, 2013).

FINAL REMARKS

The fields of research conducted by Zofia Józefa Zdybicka generally encompass matters regarding the man-God and world-God relations and their main resulting issues. Therefore, Zdybicka argues, it is time to drop the belief regarding the separation of culture and faith, theology and philosophy. They are not sufficiently separate that they would be unable to cooperate with and require each other. Let us remind ourselves of the postulates of Thils, Chenu and Schillebeeckx, let us remind ourselves of Kołakowski and Miłosz, who strengthened the “substance” of European culture with the ideals of Christianity, sensitive to the unique personality and confessional nature of man’s imagination.

Within the depths of such a perspective, a question regarding God arises, the sole and greatest question, which is the primary concern of theology and philosophy, within a particular aspect of science, if one were to understand it as (methodologically ordered) speculation regarding the world and man thrown into natural necessities. Obviously, it so happens—as we have presented in this book—that some philosophical projects that speak of God do not transcend the models developed on the brink of European modernity. They are permeated by the spirit of rationalism taken from the Cartesian belief in reason, as well as the visible urge to rid the world of all elements of mystery. Suddenly, it occurred that we live in a space deprived of divinity. Thomas Aquinas emphasised that although the existence of God is not obvious *per se*, knowledge of Him is possible; Descartes, an indubitably pious man, led his philosopher followers to the negation of God; Nietzsche, with Zarathustra’s cry, announced His death; while

Kołakowski, in his later works, noticed that the absence of God may implicate the loss of the chances to achieve truth.

Such is the state of the age: nihilism and secularisation, the feeling of a lack of moral order and utopias related to values created by man himself, who—only by his own means—is able, according to his own reason, to create a kingdom of freedom and happiness. In the meantime—Zdybicka claims—by discarding religion, we have no means of recognising ourselves among the mysteries of reality and, moreover, that we assume, to a quite significant level of probability, that man is a religious being, i.e. he refers to someone who is perceived as being in possession of a power that grants meaning to the surrounding world. However, there is no agreement on that matter. Religion remains a field of quarrel—even worse, a field of ideological coercions—while true atheists claim that they create something of an aristocracy: not everyone can become one.

Zdybicka jumped into the maelstrom of the aforementioned argument. It is worth mentioning that her scholarly activity has a certain unifying power and contributes to dialogue. Philosophy, Zdybicka states, should achieve an existential format, and be a manifestation of personal life. Understanding man—a being in search of God—may not be accomplished by omitting the aspect of His existence. One must descend to the level of actual facts (and this very term is debatable), and ask about man being in conditions of finiteness, in a particular “here and now.” Ask not of a “pure consciousness,” but of the experience of contingency as being common, a form of participation for every reasoning person. One should expand such speculation with the cognition of being, as a faulty understanding of man leads to a misguided perception of God.

Some readers may find Zdybicka’s proposals, as presented above, unappealing, deprived of phenomenal depth, such as are present in some of the works of contemporary phenomenologists. However, Zdybicka’s aim is not the meticulous analysis of religion, its essence and its object, but a presentation of its most general ontological foundations in a metaphysical format, i.e. those that pursue the ultimate reasons of being (of something existent) in the light of the so-called first principles. Hence, Zdybicka’s reply to the question “what is religion and why does it exist?” is of a general nature: it aims to constitute a structural network where other elements of the phenomenon may be (and are) placed, e.g. psychological or sociological factors. Despite

the fact that the view presented by Thomas Aquinas is losing popularity, accused—most often unjustly—of many faults, only realistic philosophy, as the core of the Christian world view, provides the instruments allowing us to acquire an authentic view of man and of the entirety of reality.

Religion, as the present book shows, is an incredibly rich phenomenon, encompassing individual-social planes, entangled in culture and the experience of tradition, particular cult behaviour and—finally—remaining a “way of being,” due to which the essence of man is revealed. Additionally, it is a relation between man and a variously perceived deity, God. All the above explain the differences in understanding religion. However, Zdybicka highlights one thought the most, a thought common to all classical positions. The belief in the existence of God as a result of a spontaneous contact with the world is irrefutable. In experiencing our own frailty, thinking and reasoning, each of us discovers the internal need to encounter the person who he dares to call God, and who ensures his achievement of death-conquering happiness.

It was exactly these most primeval theses of the thinking man, even at a germinating stage, that gave birth to religion, and its connection to the ontological condition of man. The issue of God is the issue of all, while atheism is a secondary fact, as the belief in the existence of God is man’s primary, natural view. There must be an idea of God that is being opposed. Philosophy of religion attempts to expand on these basic intuitions on the grounds of metaphysics, presenting the general ontological basis for the bond between man and God, which substantiates the fact of religion from the subjective perspective. It is by no means a speculative philosophy, as it draws from an empirically given fact of a sensual-intellectual nature.

Naturally, the very analysis of religious experience will not reveal whether the object of religious reference is real. Here, a metaphysical perspective is necessary. In this way, religion presents itself as an assortment of the relations of man to some Highest being or Highest value, a conscious assortment manifested in the special behaviour of man, in accepting dependence, in the need to worship, in striving for the most strict relation with the being. It is crucial not to believe blindly, but to walk the path of Divine secrets with courage.

We are susceptible to the value of “sanctity” by experiencing human fate, and in the religious experience, one of the most complex of facts, we discover the following phases: a personal contact with

the religious object (Otto, Scheler); the response of the object, when we consider that God is a personal value deserving of highest respect and worship; and the complete religious act, when, via cult, prayer and sacrifice, we establish a profound bond with Him. Simultaneously, we remember that God may not be known within an overview. He manifests himself via signs; according to the ecstatic testimony by Heraclitus, God does not speak, but gives signs that demand interpretation. The response to God's gifts should engage human will. Therefore, religious experience is located within an event of encounter–dialogue–union with the personal God.

Most importantly, religion is primarily the response to the stimulus of death, strengthening man in his belief that, due to Christ's *kenosis* (already within the plane of faith), a perspective of eternal life opens. Here, a line is drawn, revealing the similarities between reasoning and faith which complements philosophy. A Christian activity of reason exists. Revelation sensitises those aspects of life and contents of faith that are necessary for salvation, which are incomprehensible by means of reason. The grace of accepting the gift and the possibility of participation is everlasting.

Indubitably, we are able to suppress religious hopes, as we live in an age that created a new religion—the religion of man alone; however, we will never cast out the unrest coming from the situation of existing between existence and non-existence. Wishing to avoid danger, we face God as, without His presence, we would be absurd creatures, thrown into the unsolvable tragedy of existence.

It remains essential that Zdybicka developed and promoted—let us highlight this once more—the theory of the classical understanding of the philosophy of religion on a worldwide scale. In her works, we see a unique fusion of the gift of monastic vocation with the nerve of an educated philosopher, open to the Christian aspect of human existence. The bright optimism of the Lublin scholar allows for an agreement with different means of asking about God and religion. Zdybicka's strictly scholarly works and her educational activity mark a recognisable way of thinking and of social behaviour, as well as of loyalty to Christ who—despite the increase in secularising trends—will never perish from the horizon of human culture. For as long as man exists.

GLOSSARY

Absolute: a one and perfectly simple being. Looking at the surrounding world, we see that the significant variety of beings would imply that it would be difficult to speak of any other community within reality than the one coming from the fact of existence. Therefore, such an enormous assortment of contingent beings becomes incomprehensible, absurd even, without accepting the existence of the Absolute as the sole, simple, necessarily existent being, bestowing existence upon all contingent beings, deprived of an internal reason of existence. Therefore, one cannot deny the existence of the Absolute and not fall into contradictions with the necessary laws of being and reasoning.

Immanence: the causal presence of the Absolute in everything that exists, manifested in the fact that derivative beings are internally constituted by the creative action of God. Relating to the Absolute lies in their nature, as they are contingent beings. The issue of how to explain the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of the Absolute in relation to the world has always been shrouded in mystery; therefore, it remains a meaningful object of particular philosophical interest. The overemphasis on immanence may result in the dangers of pantheism. However, accepting absolute transcendence would lead to a belief that there are no ontic relations between God and the world. The issue leads to the discovery of an ontic bond, which must be present between the Absolute and derivative beings, at the “crossroads” of the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of the Absolute in relation to the latter. Therefore, the proper understanding of ontic

transcendence and immanence of God in relation to the world remains one of the most difficult philosophical issues. The solution determines the theory of God, the relation of God to the world, the theory of religion, and the practised world view. At a certain time, the issue of immanence and transcendence was one of the primary issues of Protestant theology in the 20th century. The issues were discussed, inter alia, by Karl Barth (1886–1968), Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976), Paul Tillich (1886–1965), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), and John A. Thomas Robinson (1919–1983), as well as the exponents of the “death of God theology” who denied the ontic transcendence of God. Understanding the immanence and transcendence of the Absolute is strictly related to the philosophical cognition of Him as the cause of all that exists, and is always dependent on the way of apprehending sensible beings as effects. The transcendence of God reveals the natural imperfection of the derivative being and the greatness of the Absolute, whereas immanence bestows a unique format upon beings, participation in the greatness of the very God. God is in all things not only as a part of the essence or by chance, but as the acting one in that which acts. The acting one is linked to that which acts, and permeates it with own power, as the mover and the moved must be together. In classical metaphysics, God is cognitively recognised as a being whose essence is identical with existence (*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*); therefore, the created being must be His proper effect. However, God is the cause of the finite being not only in the moment of creation, but also as long as the created—which still exists—is kept in existence. Hence, as long as being exists, God must be present in the given thing according to its existence. Existence (*esse*) is that which is most internal and most profoundly present in each thing, as it is a formal factor in regard to all that resides in it; therefore, God is present in all things and in a most internal manner.

Man: a personal, reasoning and free being. Man is a material-spiritual being, experiencing his own ontological unity (his own “I”), i.e. being the cause of specifically human acts, primarily consisting of: intellectual cognition (reason) and voluntary action (willing, love). Recognised in the realistic perspective as a substantial being (being in itself), by experiencing his own identity, man understands that he is a potential being, i.e. a being endowed with certain dispositions accomplished (actualised), in contact with other beings (things), by

action according to his own abilities. Man accomplishes his self as a person by deeds according to his own potentiality, by self-development and achieving plenitude according to the needs of his own nature. By discovering the Absolute intellectually, as the reason for all that is, man may know, accept and express, in a human way, i.e. consciously and freely, his own dependence on God, regarding his own existence and action. The theory of God and man, and of their ontic relations, formulated as such, constitutes the basis of religion. From such a perspective, at each level of development of his own culture, man is capable of discovering and realising the ties with the Transcendent (God) that permeate his existence. Realising and expressing these ties is manifested in the religious attitude. Analysing this basic human experience, we conclude that man is a religious being, and may be referred to as *homo religiosus*. The contingency of a human person is manifested in its ontological structure (complexity), his temporary nature (man is born, subject to constant changes, and eventually dies), and the unsustainability of action. In cognitive activity, the contingency of a human person is manifested in the aspect nature of cognition (it is always a cognition from a certain point of view), successiveness (man is unable to know everything at once, he must gain his knowledge step by step), and the possibility of various errors. In terms of voluntary activity, the contingency manifests itself in the fact that human decisions (freedom) meet various limitations, related to, for example, the nature of man or his functioning in the world.

Participation: a theory explaining the character of the relation apparent between two realities, where one of the parts is related as a part of a whole: the multitude to oneness, the imperfect to the perfect, the different to the identical, the limited to the unlimited, the compound to the simple, the derivative to the primary, the caused to the uncaused. In metaphysics, the term “participation” describes the particular type of ontic relation in which the nature of one being determines the essence and the features of a second being, or bestows existence (being) upon the other, while both remain separate beings and, simultaneously, constitute a relative unity. The theory began with the philosophy of Plato, where the term means an ontological and epistemological relation between singular objects and transcendent forms as their models, as well as the relation between the transcendent forms themselves. In the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas,

the theory of participation is firmly established within the theory of being, constructed of ontically different factors: the act of existence and the contents that are in a potency-act relation. The primary principle of being is the Absolute, in which finite and contingent beings participate. This fundamental relation reveals the ontic and epistemic transcendence of the Absolute, as well as His presence (never leading to pantheism) in everything that participates in being bestowed by Him. On the basis of the theory of participation, one may speak of the transcendence and the immanence of the Absolute in relation to objects and persons. Transcendence is expressed in the essential difference of ontological structures between the Absolute and His derivative beings. The Absolute is a pure act, the plenitude of perfection, fully actualised and simple, non-compound, immutable, and He cannot be a part of a certain whole. The structure of derivative beings is compound, mutable and directed at accomplishing their own potentiality. The immanence of the Absolute consists of the fact that all beings existing in the Absolute via participation are constituted by His causal action—efficient, formal and final. The consequence arising from the theory of participation is the adoption of a vision of a universe of beings as an assortment of determined, organised beings in existence, endowed with various levels of existence and transcendental perfections, whereas particular beings are mutually related categorically, and primarily, by the necessary, first and final cause, i.e. their common origin in the Absolute.

Religion: an ontic personal-personal relation (“I”–“You” relation) between the human person and the personal Absolute, in which the human person participates, as in the ultimate source of their own existence and the final end to life. It is a real-existential, necessary, intersubjective (personal), moral, dynamic relation consisting of bidirectional activities and perfecting the human subject. Religion is a conscious and free relation of man to the personal, really existing God, on whom man feels dependent, and to whom man aspires as the Greatest Goodness that provides his life and actions with meaning. The experience of his own contingency spawns in him the need to strengthen in existence, and is manifested in the open attitude towards cognition, love and freedom. It is such a fundamental and universal experience that it transgresses all social and scientific determinants and all cultural formations. The relation to the world and

the discovery of the contingency of beings is a pre-philosophical experience which reveals the foundation of the truth about man and his openness to God, constituting a natural basis for all religion.

Sacrum: the object of religious experience, common to all religions: the sacred, a particular sacred object or a sacred activity. The term is used to determine signs that refer to the experience of faith, and in a radical understanding, *sacrum* is related to every presentation of the world different from the real one associated with evil, sin and cruelty. At times, almost every way of life that goes beyond conventional behaviour and creates a separated space in which there is a chance to experience something maximally incredible and climactic, often leading to the maximal unification both with other men and with the variously perceived deity, is considered as sacral. Hence, the mutual permeation of the sacred with the tainted somewhat characterises the presented phenomenon; however, only in proximity, as the encounter between man and the Absolute is always veiled in mystery. In the philosophy of religion, the term *sacrum* relates to the fathomless “impersonal power” (Söderblom), causing the feeling of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (Otto) in man; it may also be regarded as the “element of the structure of consciousness” (Eliade), an “ideal of life, indeterminate in content” (Windelband), or as an “aspect of being” (Heidegger). *Sacrum* is a term that replaces the word “God” and is related to the renouncement of religion as a real, personal relation between man and the personal Absolute, from whom man originates and to whom man aspires for his entire life, in favour of adopting an indeterminate religiousness as a social-cultural phenomenon. In post-Kantian philosophies of religion and phenomenological speculation regarding religious studies, it is the primary religiological category. It determines the object of religious cult, regardless of the kind and of the forms of religion, introduced instead of a God perceived as the personal Absolute.

Secularisation: a social and political attempt to accomplish life as if God did not exist. It consists of separating religion from social life, and treating religion as something strictly private. The essence of the phenomenon is the absolutisation of man’s autonomy in the moral aspect, and ascribing to him the power to decide right and wrong, as well as the limitation of the influence of religious narratives

on the aspects of earthly life. Secularisation leads to reducing scientific cognition to exact, particularly natural, sciences. Precisely speaking, the primary role of science and its resulting scientific (scientist) mentality have inspired literature, culture and art since the 17th century, emphasising the unlimited freedom of man and ascribing to him the limitless possibilities of accomplishing life on Earth. Secularisation is characterised by accepting earthly existence as the only plane of human life.

Transcendence: the complete separation of the ontological structure of the Absolute from all other beings. The ontic transcendence of being is strictly related to cognitive transcendence in regard to every object of exact human knowledge. Ontological transcendence manifests itself in structural disparity. The Absolute is absolutely simple, a pure actuality, whereas all other beings exist by participating in Him, as they are compounds of various elements related to each other as potency to act.

II.

ZOFIA JÓZEFA ZDYBICKA USJK:
SELECTED WRITINGS

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THE COGNITIVE AND THE ONTIC TRANSCENDENCE OF BEING

Zofia Józefa Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu. Próba wyjaśnienia relacji między światem a Bogiem*, Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2017, pp. 167–202.

The primary issue one should consider, regarding the ontic principle of the participation of being, is the notion of the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of the Absolute's relation to the world. Transcendence consists of a complete separation of the Absolute's structure of being in relation to all other beings, whereas immanence is manifested in the causal presence of the Absolute within all that is.¹ The aforementioned is of great consequence. The ontic transcendence

¹ The issue regarding how to explain the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of the Absolute in relation to the world has always been an object of significant interest. Excessive emphasis on the aspect of immanence results in the hazards of pantheism. However, the acknowledgement of complete transcendence would lead to a belief that no ontic relations occur between God and the world. Cf. J.G. Caffarena, "La inmanencia de la absoluta trascendencia," in *De Deo in philosophia S. Thomae et in hodierna philosophia*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1965), pp. 273–278; G. Munzio, "Il rapporto tra il Creatore e le creature. Immanenza e trascendenza," in *ibidem*, pp. 235–242; R. Gumpfenberg, "Immanenz und Transzendenz," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie* 16 (1969), pp. 222–247. The proper understanding of the ontic transcendence and immanence of God in relation to the world is located among the most difficult philosophical issues. The solution of the issue determines the concept of God, His relation to the world, the concept of religion, etc. The aforementioned issue was one of the principal issues within the Protestant theology of the 20th century. Among many commentators regarding the subject, one could list Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and John Arthur Thomas Robinson, as well as the exponents of the "Death of God theology" negating the ontic transcendence of God.

of the Absolute is strictly tied to cognitive transcendence in relation to every object of our particular knowledge. However, the position of Thomas Aquinas, regarding the ability of overcoming the boundaries of the empirical world in cognition, is far from agnostic. There are various means of accomplishing the above. Apart from the natural and spontaneous cognition of God, available to all men, and the cognition by means of faith, highlighted by Aquinas, an additional mode of cognition is worth mentioning, referred to by Aquinas as “demonstrative,” i.e. simply one that is achieved within strictly philosophical discursive cognition.²

Demonstrative cognition is initiated by the analysis and interpretation of beings presented through direct experience. The existence of the Absolute constitutes the sole, final, and ontic reason that determines the existence of compound, and therefore contingent, beings. The radical separation of the Absolute from the world (structure-wise) implies the necessity of excluding the possibility of a final and adequate cognition. However, the simultaneous immanence of the Absolute in relation to contingent beings allows for a certain degree of cognition regarding Him and His relationship with the world. Cognition will always be indirect and, above all (however, not exclusively), negative. The Absolute, although recognised within the scope of existence, will remain “known as unknown.”³

Two principal factors affect the inadequacy of our cognition of the Absolute: (1) the ontic difference between the Absolute and the beings-effects that constitute the basis of our cognition of the former and (2) the limitations of human cognition in general.

While discussing the human cognitive capabilities in regard to the Absolute, Aquinas indicates a cognitive “deficiency,” manifested in the inadequacy of our apprehension, including the material reality being the “proper object” of our cognition. Aquinas demonstrates the

² The three ways of achieving the cognition regarding God—spontaneous, through faith, and *per demonstrationem*—are discussed by Aquinas in *Summa contra Gentiles*, vol. 2, ed. C. Pera (Taurini; Romae, 1961), book III, chapters 38, 39 and 40.

³ The concept refers to the so-called “Affirmation of God paradox,” meaning that to know that He is, and to state that He is transcendent, is to know God. This concept, within the background of the entire philosophical and theological process of the cognition regarding God, was thoroughly presented by Jean-Hervé Nicolas in his book *Dieu connu comme inconnu* (Paris, 1966).

disproportion apparent between the statements formulated in our language and their corresponding thoughts, as well as between the thoughts and certain aspects of the trans-subjective reality. In terms of human cognition, even the essence of material objects is not known directly. The process of cognition is accomplished indirectly, as the essence of material objects is apprehended solely as a reason of action, manifestations, etc.

Moreover, due to the contextual nature of human cognition, the contents of our apprehension, taken separately, fail to reflect the entirety of reality, revealing only certain aspects of it. If such is our cognitive condition, then the fact that the aforementioned is reflected in our path of reason towards the Absolute, and towards the cognition regarding His relations to the world, seems clear. The inadequacy of cognition is further pronounced due to the ontic differences between the aforementioned objects.⁴

The statement that the Absolute exists implies neither a positive cognition of His particular relationship with the world, nor a direct apprehension of His existence. Additionally, the created concepts, based on the cognition of beings directly available through experience, cannot be directly related to God. Therefore, one should initially dismiss any historically “positive” accounts on participation that emphasise the contentual similarity between God and created beings. The aforementioned accounts were constructed either by drawing upon an unequivocal, formalised theory of being, or were the result of an extrapolation of theological terms (a specific, disambiguating theology) to philosophy; therefore, they do not offer any cognitive value to metaphysics. They may only serve the purpose of a metaphorical analogy.

The existence of the Absolute, as well as the character of the relationship between the Absolute and contingent beings, may be defined

⁴ “Voces sunt signa intellectuum, et intellectus sunt rerum similitudines. Et sic patet quod voces referuntur ad res significandas, mediante conceptione intellectus. Secundum igitur quod aliquid a nobis intellectu cognosci potest, sic a nobis potest nominari. ... Deus in hac vita non potest a nobis videri per suam essentiam; sed cognoscitur a nobis ex creaturis secundum habitudinem principii, et per modum excellentiae et remotionis. Sic igitur potest nominari a nobis ex creaturis; non tamen ita quod nomen significans ipsum, exprimat divinam essentiam, secundum quod est ...” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, ed. P. Caramello, vol. 1 [Taurini; Romae, 1963], 1, q. 13, art. 1, resp.).

within the scope of philosophy only on the basis of the analysis of His action, which also is not given directly, but through manifestations (effects). The latter consist of the existence and the structure of beings-effects of his action, given through direct experience. Therefore, the Absolute is knowable exclusively due to the fact that He is an ontic reason for everything that exists. Therefore, we are equipped with a type cognition, regarded by Aquinas as *secundum habitudinem principii* cognition. “Because effects depend on their cause, we can be led from them that God exists, and to know, that He, being the first principle of everything, exceeds all caused beings.”⁵

Therefore, the existence of the Absolute is known in a way that, by knowing the structure of the beings-effects of his action, one states the necessary existence of their correlate-cause.⁶ Importantly, one should recognise that the apprehension of the relationship of the Absolute with the world is accomplished not by apprehending particular content (essence, form), but mainly within the plane of existence. Therefore, the Absolute is apprehended within what is proportionally universal in Him and the entirety of being in regard to the primal, analogous aspect of being, i.e. the proportionality of the function of existence.⁷ Within the initial phase, the affirmation of the existence of the Absolute should be spoken of, rather than the cognition of the Absolute. We must affirm the existence of the Absolute, if we examine the world regarding existence and its final determinants. We affirm the existence of God as a primary cause of beings given through experience. We know that He is, and that He is as a principle. Simultaneously, it is a statement regarding the fact of participation, i.e. that everything beside the Absolute exists on the principle of particular existential relations with the Absolute.

⁵ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 12, art. 12.

⁶ “... cum effectua dependeant a causa, posito effectu, necesse est causam praexistere. Unde Deum esse, secundum quod non est per se notum quoad nos, demonstrabile est per effectua nobis notos” (ibidem, I, q. 2, art. 2). Cf. ibidem, I, q. 13, art. 2, resp.

⁷ However, despite the ontic transcendence of the Absolute, there is a similarity between Him and His creations. Each complete being is similar to God due to its existence (ibidem, I, q. 4, art. 3). “... potest esse proportio creaturae ad Deum, in quantum se habet ad ipsum ut effectus ad causam, et ut potentia ad actum. Et secundum hoc, intellectus creatus proportionatus esse potest ad cognoscendum Deum” (ibidem, I, q. 12, art. 1 ad 4).

Because effects [beings apprehended via senses] depend on their cause, we can be led from them that God exists, and to know that He, being the first principle of everything [all beings], exceeds all caused beings. We also know His relation to creatures, that is, that He is the cause of all [beings] and how He is different from creatures, that is, that He alone is in no way part of what is caused [beings]; and that they are not removed from him by reason of Him being defect in any way, but because he exceeds them all.⁸

Therefore, the philosophical cognition of the Absolute is a cognition of the Absolute as a cause. The aforementioned cognition is always dependent on the means of apprehending effects. Comprehension of the principle of being is enhanced as we reflect upon the nature of being itself.⁹ One should constantly remember that it is not a matter of explaining the nature of God, but of explaining being. Additionally, the theory of participation clarifies the plenitude of beings, as well as their ontic unity, i.e. facts given through experience.

The means of the complete cognition of the Absolute, available to philosophical speculation, are described by Aquinas, who employs the vocabulary of Pseudo-Dionysus. However, within the context of the system proposed by Aquinas, the vocabulary is given a different meaning.¹⁰

The way of causality (*habitus principii*) constitutes the basic cognition, and consists of the statement regarding the existence of the Absolute, based on the existence of effective beings. The two remaining ways—of negation (*remotionis*) and of transcendence (*excellenciae*)—constitute a supplement for our cognition, especially regarding the nature of God, precisely, as the first cause of effects. Negation removes the limits of certain perfections related to finite beings,

⁸ Ibidem, I, q. 12, art. 2, resp.

⁹ Even in philosophy, the affirmation and the cognition of God are dynamic, i.e. there is a possibility of making them increasingly profound through a more complete cognition regarding the determinants of being. Therefore, the metaphysical cognition is contemplative; it clarifies and makes the stated truth more profound. The issue regarding the existence of God is a result of reflections upon numerous metaphysical issues.

¹⁰ The terms in question are: *habitus principii*, *modus excellentiae* and *modus remotionis*. Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, art. 1, resp.; I, q. 10, art. 10 ad 5; I, q. 12, art. 12; M.A. Krąpiec, "Filozofia i Bóg," in *O Bogu i o człowieku*, vol. 1, ed. B. Bejze (Warszawa, 1968), pp. 37–38.

whereas transcendence enables us to overcome them. The particular arrangement (causality, negation, transcendence) is no mere coincidence.¹¹ Nor are the aforementioned completely separate, as they constitute one complete process of the cognition of the Absolute as the cause of finite beings.¹² The ways of negation and transcendence clarify that which is contained within the relation of causality, linking the transcendent cause with its effects within the plane of existence. Therefore, the aforementioned is still an issue of knowing what the Absolute is, in relation to contingent beings. The very possibility of such cognition regarding the Absolute is a result of the participation of being. The world is not ontologically self-sufficient—its existence is a result of the actions of the Absolute and, therefore, cognition regarding the world (within the aspect of its final determinants) allows for a statement on the existence of the Absolute, as well as the cognition regarding the relationship of Him and the world.¹³

The philosophical knowledge regarding the Absolute and His actions draws solely upon the cognition of the surrounding beings. A flawed or incomplete apprehension of the ontic structure of beings available through direct experience leads to defining an improper, or at least an incomplete, overview of the relations between the aforementioned beings and the Absolute. Therefore, a new cognition of being, formulated by Thomas Aquinas, constitutes a true revolution regarding the apprehension of the relations between God and the world.

¹¹ In order to specify our mode of cognition regarding the Absolute, Aquinas makes a very informative distinction between *res significata* and *modus significandi*, i.e. between the perfection signified by its name and the symbol apparent in the human mind, or the mode in which the mind portrays it (cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, art. 3).

¹² Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In librum Boethii de Trinitate questione quinta et sexta*, ed. P. Wyser (Fribourg, 1948), q. 6, art. 3; idem, “*Questiones disputatae de potentia*,” in *Questiones disputatae*, vol. 2, 10th ed., ed. P. Bazzi (Taurini; Romae, 1965), q. 7, art. 5 ad 2.

¹³ Transcendental participation is an ontic basis for the cognition regarding God; however, the transcendental participation theory may be formulated by following the demonstration of the existence of God.

THE ONTIC-STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE EXISTENCE OF PARTICIPATION

The theory of being presented by Aquinas determines the proper character of the transcendental, ontic participation.¹⁴ The constituents of the ontic fundamentals of participation are as follows: (1) the internal composition of being; (2) the identity of the function of existence within all beings; and (3) the accomplishment, to varying degrees, of the perfection of existence and other transcendental features manifested in the existence of the multiplicity of separate objects. Let us briefly examine each of these participation-revealing factors.

(1) Every existent object is “one of multiplicity”¹⁵ and, therefore, it consists of layers of mutually complementing elements which remain in a relation similar to the relation of potency to act.¹⁶ Within the philosophical analysis, one should consider the composition apparent within all beings, i.e. the universal composition. The primary composition consists of essence and existence, remaining in a potency-act relation. According to Aquinas, the final factor constitutive for the ontological status of beings is the act of existence, transcendent over all content, and proportional for each particular essence.¹⁷

¹⁴ The theory of being within Thomism has been an object of constant interest. Numerous authors have given the theory significant attention: Étienne Gilson, Joseph Owens, Cornelio Fabro, and, in Poland, Mieczysław A. Krąpiec. They vary in certain aspects of their interpretation, as presented in Chapter II. For the sake of research, the existential variant of Thomism is adopted as the established theory of being.

¹⁵ Discussing the composition of the contingent beings in opposition to the simplicity of the Absolute, Aquinas enumerates a series of various compounds: of integrating parts, matter and form, of nature and individual sustenance, of subject and accident, and of essence and existence (cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, art. 1–3). Therefore, Krąpiec defines the individual as a “network of [ontological] relations,” manifesting in the relations of potency to the act (cf. M.A. Krąpiec, *Teoria analogii bytu* [Lublin, 1959], pp. 296–299).

¹⁶ “... in omni composito oportet esse actum et potentiam. Non enim plura possunt simpliciter fieri unum, nisi aliquid sit ibi actus, et aliquid potentia” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, vol. 2, ed. C. Pera [Taurini; Romae, 1961], book I, chapter 18). Cf. idem, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, art. 7.

¹⁷ “... ad ipsam etiam formam comparatur ipsum esse ut actus. Per hoc enim in compositis ex materia et forma dicitur forma esse principium essendi, quia est

Therefore, existence determines the reality of being as its most perfect factor: “Existence is the most perfect of all things, for it is compared to all things as that by which they are made actual; for nothing has actuality except so far as it exists. Hence existence is that which actuates all things, even their forms.”¹⁸

The existing particulars, as they are not pure acts, are “limited,” bound to a certain assortment of contents, i.e. the substantial or accidental essence, as a certain “measure,” “form,” or “portion” of the act.¹⁹ Therefore, each being contains potential and actual elements, and in no way is, or can be, a pure actuality. The internal composition of potential and actual elements within beings determines their imperfection, dependence (their non-absoluteness), effectiveness and derivativity. Additionally, composition explains the possibility of an existence of a multitude of beings, as many “combinations” and “assortments” may be determined in the analysis of elements. A simple (non-compound) being would be one out of necessity.

Each of the known objects, however it may be composed of various elements, is an ontic unity, one being. The essence of each object exercises content adequate to existence. All particulars vary in content and in their according acts of existence. However, an identical relation of particular content to the existence occurs in each being. In each being considered, a unique content and a unique existence

complementum substantiae, cuius actus est ipsum esse” (St. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book II, chapter 54).

¹⁸ St. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 1 ad 3. “Inter omnia esse est illud quod immediatius et intimius convenit rebus ...” (*Sancti Thomae de Aquino opera omnia*, vol. 24, 1: *Questiones disputatae de anima*, ed. B.-C. Bazân [Romae; Parisiis, 1996], chapter 9); “Esse est nobilius omnibus aliis quae consequuntur esse: unde esse simpliciter est nobilius quam intelligere si posset intelligi intelligere sine esse. Unde illud quod excedit in esse, simpliciter nobilius est omni eo quod excedit in aliquo de consequentibus esse” (St. Thomae Aquinatis, *Scriptorum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*, vol. 1 [Paris, 1929], d. 17, q. 1, art. 2 ad 3). Cf. St. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book I, chapter 28.

¹⁹ “Esse formalius se habet ad rem constituendam in genere entis, quam ipsa forma rei quae hoc ipsum esse dat, vel materia cui datur, ex quibus compositum resultat cuius est hoc esse ut entis. Intimius ergo ad rem ipsam, quae est ens inter omnia, est ipsum esse eius; et post ipsum ipsa forma rei qua res habet ipsum esse, et ultimo ipsa materia: quae licet sit fundamentum in re inter omnia ab ipso esse rei magis distat” (*Tractatus Doctoris Sancti Thomae De universalibus et De natura accidentis* [Leipzig, 1488], I, no. 4687).

are mutually tied together, identically to the contents and acts of other beings.

(2) The act of existence, internally bound to the content of a particular being, is transcendent to given content, and transcendental to particular assortments of content (being is not exhausted within any of them). In any given case, existence plays an identical role—it exercises, actualises content.²⁰ As the function of existence is universal, existence cannot be caused by a compound being, as the latter would also have to be actualised by a different act. There is no indirect participation of being (a difference from Aristotle’s account). Existence is transcendental. There must be an existing, pure act granting existence, and which is the cause of the actuality of each compound being. The occurrence of relations between particular contents and the act of existence necessarily requires referring to a non-relational, and therefore non-compound, structure, i.e. the Absolute. The multiplicity of compound beings that exercise being proportionally would be incomprehensible without adopting the concept of a simple being causing the existence of others. A necessary relation to the Absolute as a source of existence occurs in each compound being.²¹

Regardless of significant differences (varying contents and varying acts of existence) occurring between particular beings, they are similar due to the identity of the relation of the content element and the existence within being. The aforementioned implies a certain variety, and therefore a certain graduation and hierarchy of beings. Particulars, considered within the aspect of being, appear as proportionate accomplishments of potency and act. Potency and act are exercised by each being, in accordance with its own mode. Each being is a specific “measure” of actuality; none of them is an absolute perfection, a pure act.²²

²⁰ “... esse ... est actualitas cuiuslibet formae existentis, sive sine materia sive cum materia” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 1 ad 3).

²¹ If beings are compared in regard to their context, their separateness is clearly visible. However, one could compare the aforementioned regarding the being itself; therefore, it is visible that beings possess a certain amount of existing properties and that their being (existence) is not exhausted in any of them, but occurs in various proportion-wise combinations. Therefore, such a structure of reality, given through direct experience, requires the Absolute as its final explanation.

²² Only within the transcendental perspective, determined simultaneously by the compound structure of being, the universality of existence and other properties exercised by all beings, is the following statement comprehensible:

(3) The multiplicity of unique particulars, in regard to the internal (within being) and external (regarding the Absolute) relations, constitutes a certain unity. Despite the actual pluralism of being, i.e. the multiplicity of separate particulars, there is a real connection between all beings, bound by necessary relations. As each being is one of multiplicity, similarly, the whole of reality is one of multiplicity. The multiplicity and unity of both the particular being and the entire universe can be explained using the categories of potency and act.

The internal composition and the simultaneous unity of beings, i.e. the relation-based connection within being, apparent in all particulars, and the related, necessary relation to the Absolute, constitute the ontic foundation of the participation of beings. Whatever exists in regard to its necessary relation to the Absolute. Therefore, it is not a self-sufficient being, but a relational being, existing due to participation, i.e. due to its connection, link and assignment to the Absolute.

The occurrence of the multiplicity of particulars, i.e. the pluralism of beings, is caused by the composition of the particulars of potential and actual elements. Each being, particularly, solely and uniquely participates in the Absolute, not unlimitedly, but according to a measure determined by form. That implies the aforementioned multiplicity and variety, as well as the related gradation and hierarchy of beings, when they are considered in regard to the exercise of being or other related perfections universal to all that exists.

In Thomistic philosophy, the relations within beings, as well as the mutual proportionality of beings, and their relation to the Absolute are called the “analogy of being.”²³ Therefore, there is a strict relation between the theory of participation and the theory of analogy as a similarity between states of being. Beings are analogous (there is an immutable proportion of parts) and exercise the perfection of existence,

magis et minus dicuntur per respectum ad unum. Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book II, chapter 15.

²³ The aforementioned relates to the analogy within beings, i.e. a relational connection occurring within particular beings (a number of transcendental compounds within being occurs in each being), and the analogy between beings, i.e. the objectively existing similarity between the structures of existing beings. We shall limit ourselves to stating the relation between participation and analogy. The issue of analogy is presented within Polish literature by Krapiec, and constitutes a separate issue, albeit one closely linked to the issue of participation.

as well as other universal (transcendental) perfections, to various degrees. Therefore, they are similar, as they all exist due to their participation in the Absolute. Each being, an analogate, using the vocabulary of the theory of analogy, uniquely exercises its analogous perfection (particularly existence) while not exhausting its plenitude. There is a multiplicity of beings-analogates that exercise the analogous perfection, as well as the primary analogate—the plenitude of perfection. Therefore, the transcendental perspective, i.e. the apprehension of being from the aspect of the exercise of perfections regarding existence and universal to all beings, allows us, obviously indirectly, to apprehend existence in its full perfection. The actual existence of beings limited by their essences, i.e. incomplete beings, not identical with their essence, cannot exist without absolute existence.

The theory of analogy is an apprehension of the entirety of reality from the viewpoint of being and the perfections that are exercised by all beings (transcendental perfection). It consists of an arrangement, i.e. a gradation of the entirety of reality from the viewpoint of existence, and the generated transcendental properties. The arrangement results in the statement regarding the hierarchical nature of beings. Each particular exercises existence to a greater or lesser degree.

The theory of the analogy of being constitutes an explanation for the existence of the contingent reality. The latter exists due to its varied participation in the Absolute, i.e. participation in Him.²⁴ However, the theory of participation takes on a much broader role than the theory of the analogy of being, as it not only accepts the structural similarity among beings, the exercise of universal perfections and the existence of the plenitude of the existence, it also determines the character of the relations between Him and the participating beings, i.e. the character of the causality of the Absolute.

²⁴ Participation and the analogy of being constitute the foundations of the analogy as a metaphysical means of cognition. Therefore, participation rationalises cognition by analogy: “Within the analogy of proportionality, the transfer from the statement of the primary analogate is exercised only on the grounds of transcendental terms that, similar to being, implicate existence and are, in a certain way, gradual, as a result of the actual unequal participations in the existence of the Primary Being” (M.A. Krąpiec, *Teoria analogii bytu*, p. 149).

PARTICIPATION AS A CAUSE-EFFECT RELATIONSHIP

As the analysis shows, the existence of numerous, internally compound beings presents a contingent, non-absolute and, therefore, derivative (effective) character of the entirety of reality. It is not ontologically self-sufficient, but is a result, an effect of the activity of the transcendent cause. Currently, the issue at hand is to determine the action which causes the occurrence of the multiplicity of compound beings that constitute a hierarchical system, i.e. to define the causative character of the Absolute. The analysis of being excludes the derivation of beings from the Absolute in the aspect of material and formal causation, i.e. internal causation.²⁵ There have been a number of philosophical systems adopting the material-formal causality of the Absolute, however they have inevitably led to pantheism or panentheism. Moreover, these systems are incoherent, as they attribute mutually exclusive features to the Absolute: perfection, immutability, and simultaneous mutability. Monism is incoherent with universal experience.

The relations between the internally compound being and the Absolute occur along the line of external causality.²⁶ Dependence on existence is apparent here, i.e. the efficient causality, which, however, postulates formal causality; both of these manifestations of causality are related to formal causality. A joint and simultaneous presence of the final, formal and efficient factors is adequate for every conscious activity, including the activity of the Absolute in regard to the world. Each conscious activity must include a motive encouraging a subject to act. The motive is regarded as the final causality and its necessity is expressed in the well-established principle that “every agent acts for an end.”²⁷ Action must be directed and determined; therefore, the causality of the formal factor is included, according to Aquinas, “for

²⁵ “Deus autem ponitur primum principium, non materiale, sed in genere causae efficientis, et hoc oportet esse perfectissimum. Sicut enim materia, in quantum huiusmodi, est in potentia; ita agens, in quantum huiusmodi, est in actu” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 1, resp.).

²⁶ “Omne enim quod alicui convenit non secundum quod ipsum est, per aliquam causam convenit ei ... nam quod causam non habet, primum et immediatum est, unde necesse est ut sit per se et secundum quod ipsum” (St. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book II, chapter 15).

²⁷ St. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, art. 4.

the production of anything an exemplar is necessary ... in order that the effect may receive a determinate form.”²⁸ Finally, the factual accomplishment of an action, i.e. the accomplishment of an exemplar, is exercised by the involvement of the efficient factor. All of the aforementioned factors appear jointly in action, and the effect is a result of their joint activity. Historical systems of participation, e.g. Platonic or Augustinian participation, would strongly emphasise the influence of the formal factor, and the theory of participation was related to divine exemplarism. However, formal causality is not independent in its functions, as it is inseparably linked to the efficient factor; therefore, it cannot be a sufficient foundation for creating the theory of the participation of being. Therefore, neither Plato nor Augustine would employ participation in explaining the existential dependence of finite beings on the Absolute. Additionally, the aforementioned regards the explanation of participation exercised by a number of contemporary Thomists.²⁹

THE EFFECT-EFFICIENT RELATION

As has been repeatedly demonstrated, the coming into existence and the perpetuation of being (actualised by existence which, however, is not identified with the essence of a given being as transcendent to it) indicate, out of necessity, the action of a being that exists *per se*, and may grant existence to numerous beings. The final actuality of compound, contingent beings requires the existence of a pure actuality which is the cause of the effect, as it makes it actual—existent.³⁰ The aforementioned is linked to the ontic priority of the act:

²⁸ Ibidem, I, q. 44, art. 3.

²⁹ Mostly regarding the interpretation by Geiger. The differences in interpretation may result from the fact that the evolution of Aquinas' views has been insufficiently considered. The first period of his work includes the dominant formal causality, which resulted in the acknowledgement of form as the ultimate act of being. Due to the evolution of his understanding of being, the efficient causation and a new approach towards participation are emphasised (cf. B. Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin* [Louvain; Paris, 1963], pp. 55–60).

³⁰ “... primum principium activum oportet maxime esse in actu” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 1, resp.).

It is in the nature of every act to communicate itself as far as possible. Wherefore every agent acts inasmuch as it is in act, while to act is nothing else than to communicate as far as possible that whereby the agent is in act. Now the divine nature is the supreme and most pure act, wherefore it communicates itself as far as possible. It communicates itself to creatures by likeness only; this is clear to anyone, since every creature is a being according to its likeness to it [the divine nature].³¹

One should consider the type of similarity accentuated by Aquinas regarding the Absolute-contingent being relations. The similarity regards actuality, i.e. existence. The Absolute is a Pure Act, an Absolute Actuality. Everything that exists beside the Absolute is actual as well, however incompletely (fragmentarily, partially).

Granting the act of existence, i.e. the efficient causality of the Pure Act, does not consist of the granting of the act, proper for the Pure Act, as such actuality may not be granted and constitutes the essence of the Absolute. The Pure Act causes the effects to obtain an actuality proportional to their essence; therefore, actuality has a measure of its own, different in every being.³²

The act of existence of a being is the primary and direct result of God's activity, and is the core of a being, an "existential energy," due to which a given thing is a being and, therefore, due to which everything is real and actual, namely, it is a particular, existing being.³³

The efficient causality of God and the character of the existence of being are far from any schematic or static approach, often imposed on every "arranging" philosophy that isolates structures and substructures within being. Aquinas often explains that such existence, i.e. the actuality of things, is a primary and direct result of the activity of the Absolute:

The more universal effects must be reduced to the more universal and prior causes. Now among all effects the most universal is being

³¹ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Questiones disputatae de potentia*, q. 2, art. 1.

³² "Primum autem actus est esse subsistens per se; unde completionem unumquodque recipit per hoc quod participat esse; unde esse est complementum omnis formae, quia per hoc completur quod habet esse, et habet esse cum est actu; et sic nulla forma est nisi per esse" (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Questiones quodlibetales*, 9th ed., ed. R. Spiazzi [Taurini; Romae, 1956], XII, q. 5, art. 1).

³³ According to Aquinas, the act is not a closed perfection, but rather something dynamic, which, out of its very nature, consists of granting (cf. É. Gilson, *Elementy filozofii chrześcijańskiej*, trans. T. Górski [Warszawa, 1965], p. 165).

itself: and hence it must be the proper effect of the first and most universal cause, and that is God.³⁴

Existence plays a transcendent role regarding the content, and a transcendental role towards the particular exercises of content; therefore, none of the categorial causes constitutes a sufficient factor to explain participated existence.

Every being in any way existing is from God. For whatever is found in anything by participation, it must be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially. ... all things which are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by one First Being, Who possesses being most perfectly.³⁵

Aquinas most clearly presents the approach towards participation as a causation of existence in one of his last works, the preface to the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*:

Since all things which exist participate in existence [esse] and are beings by participation, there must necessarily be at the summit of all things something which is existence [esse] by its essence [*aliquid ... quod sit ipsum esse per suam essentiam*], i.e. whose essence is its existence. And this is God, who is the most sufficient, the most eminent, and the most perfect cause of the whole of existence, from whom all things that are participate in existence [esse].³⁶

Aquinas' theory of existence as a primary ontological act that causes the reality of a particular is significant in establishing the relations between God and the world. There are two possible solutions to the issue: either the Absolute is the highest expression and manifestation of being, or it is ontically primary and "organises" the universe. Aquinas adopted the latter solution, determined by the cognition of the internal structure of being. The primary act within the philosophy of participation manifests itself in a twofold manner: there can be only one absolute act, and the absolute act constitutes the final factor of actualising and organising everything beside it as well as existence, which is in the act of all acts (the final act of being) within each being.

³⁴ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 45, art. 5.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, q. 44, art. 1.

³⁶ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, 6th ed., ed. R. Cai (Taurini; Romae, 1972).

Granting existence, i.e. actualising beings, encompasses not only the coming into existence, but also perpetuation. Therefore, the participation of being is a dynamic and permanent process:

... the preservation of things by God is a continuation of that action whereby He gives existence.³⁷

A direct, existential relation between beings and the Absolute, manifested in the granting of existence directly by Him to particular, individual beings, does not exclude, however, according to the Thomistic theory of the joint action of the efficient causes, the involvement of the secondary causes in the process of the generation of being.³⁸ However, the latter relate to the “categorised being,” i.e. all that may be regarded as “this here being.” However, regarding existence itself, a transcendental (necessary) relation between existence and the Absolute occurs.³⁹

Therefore, the Absolute is the final, necessary and sole cause of the existence of all beings, i.e. their efficient cause. However, efficient causality, most viable for apprehension within the analysis, postulates additional types of external causation, particularly formal causation.

³⁷ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 104, art. 1 ad 4. “Impressio agentis non remanet in effectu cessante actione agentis, nisi vertatur in naturam effectus. ... Formae enim generatorum et proprietates ipsorum, usque in finem manent in eis post generationem, quia efficiuntur eis naturales. ... Quod autem pertinet ad naturam superioris generis, nullo modo manet post actionem agentis: sicut lumen non manet in diaphano, recedente illuminante. Esse autem non est natura vel essentia alicuius rei creatae, sed solius Dei ... Nulla igitur res remanere potest in esse, cessante operatione divina” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book III, chapter 65).

³⁸ All causality comes from the first cause. That does not mean that contingent beings have no causality of their own. However, in regard to existence, these causes are secondary, superior in relation to the main cause. “All created causes have one common effect which is *being*, although each one has its peculiar effect whereby they are differentiated: thus heat makes a thing *be* hot, and a builder gives *being* to a house. Accordingly they have this in common, that they cause *being*, but they differ in that heat causes fire, and a builder causes a house. There must therefore be some cause higher than all other by virtue of which they all cause being and whose proper cause is *being*: and this cause is God” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Questiones disputatae de potentia*, q. 7, art. 2).

³⁹ On this subject, see S. Adamczyk, “Udział stworzenia w powstawaniu naturalnego istnienia substancjalnego,” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 9, no. 1 (1961), pp. 101–116.

THE EFFECT-FORMAL RELATION

Historically speaking, the idea of formal causality constituted the source for the very idea of participation, and its essence was determined in Plato and many of his followers. As mentioned above, within a realistic philosophy of being, exemplarism cannot be separated from efficient causality, and it cannot constitute the sole foundation of the relation of similarity between contingent beings and the Absolute. In terms of the numerous misunderstandings present to this day regarding the foundations and character of the similarity between the Absolute and His creations, the aforementioned type of causality deserves particular attention. In what sense does efficient causality require a necessary supplementation of formal causality? The Absolute grants no general existence. There is no such existence. That which exists is always determined and defined in the slightest detail. Being becomes actual in regard to its form, and it occurs proportionally to its form and measure. The relation between act and form, i.e. the content aspect of being, is of such strict nature that Aquinas was inclined to regard to it as *forma dat esse*. However, one should not reason that existence is derived from form, nor that form is the cause of existence, but that something indeterminate cannot exist, and that form as a content determination (a content act) is a necessary factor “defining” reality and the actuality of being (existence).⁴⁰

Assuming the transcendental truth, in order for a subjective form to come into existence, organising the being internally, there must be an external form, which would be the model and the foundation, that allows this particular being to be known. The matter concerns the issue of ideas-models existing within the mind of the acting Absolute, causing multiplicity, variety and their knowability. “The world was not made by chance, but by God acting by His intellect ... there must exist in the divine mind a form to the likeness

⁴⁰ Form is the act of constituting being, defining its content—i.e. “allowing” the reception of existence: “... per formam enim substantia fit proprium susceptivum eius quod est esse” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book II, chapter 62). The *forma dat esse* statement is widely commented on by Fabro in *Participation et causalité selon S. Thomas d’Aquin* (Louvain; Paris, 1961), pp. 344–362.

of which the world was made. And in this the notion of an idea consists.”⁴¹

Ideas described as *id quod respiciens artifex operatur* play a role in the causation of the Absolute, a role similar to a design, plan or concept within human creation. Divine, formal causation is considered by Aquinas with the use of the example of human creation.⁴² In granting existence, the Absolute does so according to a particular idea, plan, design, and that is why it is the source of the entire effect not only of existence, but additionally its nature, definition and knowability. The absolute is simultaneously the cause of the actuality of the effect and the transcendent model of everything that exists. The character of this relation is described in numerous places. The briefest description is available in the *Summa theologiae*:

Existing beings are naturally equipped with particular forms. The determination of their forms must come from the Divine wisdom as First Cause that determines the order of the universe based on distinguishing things. The ideas [*rationes*] of all things exist within the Divine wisdom, i.e. the model forms present in the mind of God. In regard of things, they vary, however, they are not really different from the Divine Essence, whose similarity may be participated by various beings in numerous ways.⁴³

The issue, which is always related to the theory of ideas, is the matter of their generality and particularity. According to Plato, ideas were separate, general beings. According to Aquinas, ideas-models do not exist separately but within the intellect of the Absolute. However, difficulties occur in terms of whether the Divine ideas regard individual beings or are general, as well as whether there is a multiplicity of ideas or just one idea. Aquinas clearly states: *unaquaeque creatura*

⁴¹ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, art. 1. The entire question is dedicated to the Godly ideas and the action of the Absolute model.

⁴² Note the following passage of Aquinas: “Deus est prima causa exemplaris omnium rerum. Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum est quod ad productionem alicuius rei ideo necessarium est exemplar, ut effectus determinatam formam consequatur: artifex enim producit determinatam formam in materia, propter exemplar ad quod inspirit sive illud sit exemplar ad quod extra intuetur, sive sit exemplar interius mente conceptum” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, art. 3).

⁴³ *Ibidem*, I, q. 15, art. 2, resp.

habet propriam speciem. Each particular being possesses an external form within the mind of God, i.e. each thing has a unique idea. Therefore, object-wise, there are as many Divine ideas as there are particulars, simultaneously not affecting the unity of the subject, i.e. the Divine mind. Neither in reality, nor in the mind of the Absolute, do ideas-species or kinds, i.e. general ideas, exist. Species and kinds are no more than a logical category, a result of human, abstract reasoning of certain classes of objects that are mutually similar due to their universal derivation, rather than the power of participation in the general ideas, as in the theory of participation of Plato.⁴⁴

Depending on the understanding of transcendental exemplarity and the implied similarity, various accounts of the theory of participation are generated. The foundations and the character of the similarity of effects to the first cause constitute an essential issue in establishing the character of the participation. According to Aquinas, the causality of the Absolute encompasses the entire being: its existence and its essence-nature. The first cause is, of necessity, the cause of the entire being, each particular taken separately, and of all beings altogether. Therefore, the complete dependence is apparent, and there is nothing within being, outside of the causation scope of the Absolute. Similarity, effect-wise caused by the aforementioned derivativity, is in total accordance with the *omne agens agit sibi simile* principle. Existence is the foundation of the aforementioned similarity, and the factor that draws derivative beings closer to the nature of the Absolute. Absolute exists, beings exist. The *natura essendi*, i.e. the actuality of the Absolute and of the remaining beings, is the foundation of their similarity.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the aforementioned postulates similarity within the scope of transcendental perfections.⁴⁶ In turn,

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, q. 16, art. 1, as well as a commentary by Krąpiec in *Metafizyka. Zarys podstawowych zagadnień* (Poznań, 1966), pp. 462–470.

⁴⁵ “... sicut hic homo participat humanam naturam, ita quodcumque ens creatum participat, ut ita dixerim, naturam essendi: quia solus Deus est suum esse...” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 45, art. 5 ad 1).

⁴⁶ “Bonum relationem ad finem verum relationem ad formam exemplarem; ex hoc enim unumquodque verum dicitur quod imitatur exemplar divinum, vel relationem ad virtutem cognoscitivam ... bonum habet rationem causae finalis, esse autem rationem causae exemplaris et effectivae in Deo” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Scriptorum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*, t. 1, d. 8, q. 1, art. 3).

all categorial determinations, however derivative from the form of the Absolute, distinguishing beings, are the foundation of their dissimilarity regarding the Absolute. Neither man, plant, animal, nor any other being is, due to its nature, dissimilar to the Absolute which, as a cause of its nature, is transcendent in relation to all specific limitations of species and kinds, and is beyond any kind.⁴⁷ Therefore, the participation of being cannot possess a formal character. Participation cannot be apprehended as an exercise, to various degrees, of a universal form. It may only constitute a participation in being, i.e. a unification in the aspect of existence.

For the purpose of explaining the similarity between the Absolute and derivative beings, a concept of the “heterogeneous cause” is employed.⁴⁸ Heterogeneous cause, due to its perfection, is superior to all its derivatives, unable to create an effect equal to the self, as that would exclude all diversity. The heterogeneous cause may only cause less perfect effects and, therefore, these effects are imperfectly similar to the cause. The concept of a homogeneous cause results in effects of the same kind, and relates to categorial causes: a human gives birth to a human, a dog to a dog, etc. It is related to the famous scholastic distinction between *formaliter eminenter* regarding existence and *virtualiter eminenter* regarding matter and form. Therefore, God, within the aspect of existence, is infinitely similar to the created beings, but within the aspect of matter and form, he is their Creator.

The imperfect similarity of the effects to the transcendent cause is a result of the perfection of the aforementioned cause. Effective beings are similar and unified with the first principle in regard to existence, however, in regard to their ontic structure and the categorial determinations, they are infinitely dissimilar, “remote.” The aforementioned is related to the matter of the transcendence and immanence of the Absolute within contingent beings. He is transcendent in regard

⁴⁷ “... Deus non se habet ad creaturas sicut res diversorum generum: sed sicut id quod est extra omne genus, et principium omnium generum” (*Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 3 ad 2); see also “creaturae non pertingant ad hoc quod sint similes Deo secundum suam naturam similitudine speciei, ut homo genitus homini generanti; attingunt tamen ad eius similitudinem secundum repraesentationem rationis intellectae a Deo, ut domus quae est in materia, domui quae est in mente artificis” (ibidem, I, q. 44, art. 3 ad 1).

⁴⁸ Cf. B. Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 47–49.

to everything that exists, due to His ontic structure, absolutely simple, implying total actuality, i.e. perfection, and immanent in the sense that the actuality of each being is caused by the Absolute.⁴⁹

EFFECT-FINAL RELATION

The causation of the form “directs” action. In terms of the action of the Absolute, the ideas-forms, existing in His intellect, determine His action of creating particular effects, exercised by efficient causation. The most important moment within action is yet to be examined: the motive, i.e. the end of the action. Why did the action, leading to particular effects, occur in the first place? The end, as a reason of action, explains the occurrence of the action within the efficient factor. The end is regarded as *finis cuius gratia*.⁵⁰

Aquinas, while analysing the end as a cause, i.e. that which allowed the action to occur, presents two possibilities. An end may exist which, being a motive of a given action, may become a means to reach a different end. It relates to beings that are not the plenitude of good, i.e. all contingent beings. The second possibility is the existence of a goal that, being the plenitude of good, is desired *per se*, rather than *per alium*. It cannot be a means to achieve a different end, as all other ends are inferior to it. The second possibility obviously refers to the highest good, which is the final motive of creative action.⁵¹

⁴⁹ “... Deus est supra omnia per excellentiam suae naturae: et tamen est in omnibus rebus, ut causans omnium esse ...” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 8, art. 1 ad 1).

⁵⁰ The end may be perceived as a reason, motive, or effect of an action. When speaking of an end as a cause, we are considering end as a motive which causes the occurrence of an action within the efficient cause.

⁵¹ “... omne agens agit propter finem: alioquin ex actione agentis non magis sequeretur hoc quam illud, nisi in casu. Est autem idem finis agentis et patientis, in quantum huiusmodi sed aliter et aliter: unum enim et idem est quod agens intendit imprimere, et quod patiens intendit recipere. Sunt autem quaedam quae simul agunt et patiuntur, quae sunt agentia imperfecta; et his convenit quod etiam in agendo intendant aliquid acquirere. Sed primo agenti, qui est agens tantum, non convenit agere propter acquisitionem alicuius finis; sed intendit solum communicare suam perfectionem, quae est eius bonitas. Et unaquaeque creatura intendit consequi suam perfectionem, quae est similitudo perfectionis et bonitatis divinae. Sic ergo divina bonitas est finis rerum omnium” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, art. 4, resp.).

The Absolute, as the highest being, is the plenitude of good, and cannot act by means of anything other than Himself. If an action by the Absolute occurred that manifests itself within the existence of contingent beings, then only the Absolute may be the motive, i.e. Himself as the highest good. However, the Absolute cannot be determined to act by means of something that is beside Him. The coming into existence and the perpetuation of contingent beings are expressions of the will of the very Absolute, rather than a manifestation of some external necessity.⁵² In these terms, the Absolute (being the plenitude of good) is a final end, the motive for the coming into existence of the world of contingent beings.

A peculiar encounter of Thomism with Platonism comes into play regarding the role of good. Indubitably, both Plato and Aquinas agreed that the highest good is the highest cause. However, according to Plato, the causality of good surpasses the order of being. In the philosophy of Aquinas, although the end, i.e. the good, is a reason-motive for everything that exists, and everything exists due to the good, the primacy of being is not endangered. The existence of the multiplicity of various beings assumes the existence of an efficient and formal cause, while the good is interchangeable with being. The highest good is simultaneously the highest act, i.e. the highest being.⁵³

⁵² The free action of the Absolute regarding the coming into existence of contingent beings is discussed and demonstrated by Aquinas with the following words: "... necesse est dicere voluntatem Dei esse causam rerum, et Deum agere per voluntatem, non per necessitatem naturae. ... Quod quidem apparere potest tripliciter: Primo quidem, ex ipso ordine causarum agentium. ... secundo, ex ratione naturalis agentis. ... Tertio, ex habitudine effectuum ad causam. Secundum hoc enim effectus procedunt a causa agente, secundum quod praeexistunt in ea: quia omne agens agit sibi simile. Praeexistunt autem effectus in causa secundum modum causae. Unde, cum esse divinum sit ipsum eius intelligere, praeexistunt in eo effectus eius secundum modum intelligibilem. Unde et per modum intelligibilem procedunt ab eo. Et sic, per consequens, per modum voluntatis; nam inclinatio eius ad agendum quod intellectu conceptum est, pertinet ad voluntatem. Voluntas igitur Dei est causa rerum" (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 19, art. 4, resp.), as well as "Ad productionem creaturarum nihil aliud movet Deum nisi sua bonitas, quam rebus aliis communicare voluit secundum modum assimilationis ad ipsum ..." (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book II, chapter 46).

⁵³ "To be in act [*esse actu*] is for each being its good. But God is not only a being in act; He is His very act of being [*est ipsum suum esse*], as we have shown. God is, therefore, goodness itself, and not only good" (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, chapter 38); "... ratio boni praesupponit rationem

Therefore, the Absolute is the ultimate end—the motive for the coming into existence of the world. Considering the issue from the perspective of derivative beings, God, as the highest good, appears as the ultimate end—the horizon of pursuits of all contingent beings. The aforementioned is accomplished by means of beings exercising perfections determined by their very nature. The nature of each being is ultimately determined by the model-form, existing within the intellect of the Absolute, therefore, by means of exercising action appropriate for a given being; derivative beings strive to become similar to the Absolute.⁵⁴ To be of a determined nature and to act accordingly to specific determinations of a given nature means to strive for God. “All things, by desiring their own perfection, desire God Himself, inasmuch as the perfections of all things are so many similarities of the divine being [esse].”⁵⁵ If the aspect of similarity between contingent beings and the Absolute is grounded within existence as a certain actuality of things, then the exercise of an action according to nature is a striving to exercise this actuality. Hereby, beings that attain actuality according to their own nature liken themselves to the very actuality.

All contingent beings strive for the Absolute as a “primordial source.” The “return,” as noted, consists of exercising perfection and nature. A different position in this aspect is assumed by rational beings. Rational beings are solely privileged to strive for the Absolute consciously, via cognition and love.⁵⁶

This does not exclude, however, the third moment within striving for an end, not yet analysed and related to the arrangement and subjection of beings to others. In creating “by intellect,” God simultaneously created an order visible inter alia within the hierarchy of ends, described by scholastics in the proverb: *Deus voluit hoc esse propter hoc*.⁵⁷

causae efficientis et rationem causae formalis” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, art. 4, resp.).

⁵⁴ “... omnia appetunt Deum ut finem, appetendo quodcumque bonum sive appetitu intelligibili, sive sensibili, sive naturali, qui est sine cognitione; quia nihil habet rationem boni et appetibilis, nisi secundum quod participat Dei similitudinem” (ibidem, I, q. 44, art. 4 ad 3).

⁵⁵ Ibidem, I, q. 6, art. 1 ad 2.

⁵⁶ Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book II, chapter 46.

⁵⁷ “Sic igitur et in partibus universi, unaquaeque creatura est propter suum proprium actum et perfectionem. Secundo autem, creaturae ignobiliores sunt propter nobiliores sicut creaturae quae sunt infra hominem, sunt propter

The action of the Absolute in regard to derivative beings encompasses a simultaneous, threefold causation—efficient, formal and final—which is clearly stated by Aquinas, particularly in his last works: “... everything is therefore called good from the divine goodness, as from the first exemplary, effective, and final principle of all goodness [*totius bonitatis*].”⁵⁸

Whereas in Plato, participation was perceived as a cause-effect relation solely within the scope of the formal-model cause, in Aquinas it refers mainly to the efficient cause, implying the formal and final causation.⁵⁹ The transposition was accomplished regarding the change within the theory of being, where the act of existence without content is the final factor, ultimately actualising reality, rather than an act of content (form). Therefore, being, considered within the perspective of existence, particularly requires a cause that would actualise being which is not a complete actuality but possesses factors of potentiality.⁶⁰ The being *per participationem* statement, within Aquinas’ philosophy, refers to beings that are granted existence by the Absolute, an existence proportional to their form, and, simultaneously, by expanding their capabilities, i.e. by developing within the measure denoted by nature (actualising their potential), they draw near to the Absolute as their ultimate end.

hominem. Uterius autem, singulae autem creaturae sunt propter perfectionem totius universi. Uterius autem, totum universum, cum singulis suis partibus, ordinatur in Deum sicut in finem, in quantum, in eis per quandam imitationem divina bonitas repraesentatur ad gloriam Dei: quamvis creaturae rationales speciali quodam modo supra hoc habeant finem Deum, quem attingere possunt sua operatione, cognoscendo et amando” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 65, art. 2, resp.).

⁵⁸ Despite the fact that Aquinas speaks of the causation of the good, the text relates to the causation of being, as the good is interchangeable with being. Moreover, Aquinas writes elsewhere that: “... cum Deus sit causa efficiens, exemplaris et finalis omnium rerum et materia prima sit ab ipso, sequitur quod primum principium omnium rerum sit unum tantum secundum rem” (ibidem, I, q. 44, art. 4 ad 4).

⁵⁹ For remarks regarding participation as a “coupled” action of the efficient, formal and final causality of God, drawing upon the analysis of action, see M.A. Krąpiec, “O tomistyczną koncepcję prawa naturalnego,” in *W nurcie zagadnień posoborowych*, vol. 2, ed. B. Bejze (Warszawa, 1968), pp. 21–23.

⁶⁰ Therefore, the Thomistic theory of participation is often referred to as the theory of the primacy of act, emphasised by A. Hayen in *L’Intentionnel selon Saint Thomas*, 2nd ed. (Paris; Brussels, 1954), p. 94.

To be a being via participation means to be a necessarily caused being, a derivative being bound to the Absolute by relations of necessity.⁶¹ The relation that constitutes the actual participation is transcendental (it encompasses all beings); necessary (it enters the very nature of the derivative being, everything that exists is a participation of the Absolute); and dynamic—beside the static apprehension of the structure of beings, the relation presents a structure that implies progress, the further accomplishment of existence (act-potency). The relation is non-reciprocal, asymmetrical, non-transitive (in terms of existence, each individual being participates directly in the Absolute), actual, and necessary from the perspective of derivative beings, though contingent from the perspective of the Absolute.⁶²

Participation in such terms is not only not opposed to causality, but is a comprehensive apprehension of the causal action of the Absolute and of its consequences: the community of beings and their similarity to God.⁶³ Emphasising similarity in the participation doctrine was related to the essential theory of being and led to many inconsistencies, as is apparent in the example of Plato's philosophy.

The theory of transcendental participation, based on the necessary relations occurring between compound beings and the Absolute, simultaneously encompassing efficient, formal and final causation, constitutes a philosophical foundation for explaining the theological truth regarding the creation of the world.⁶⁴

⁶¹ "... habitudo ad causam non intret definitionem entis quod est causatum, tamen sequitur ad ea quae sunt de eius ratione: quia ex hoc quod aliquid per participationem est ens sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio" (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, art. 1 ad 1).

⁶² For a broader perspective regarding the relation of participation, see Z.J. Zdybicka, "Analiza pojęcia partycypacji występującego w filozofii klasycznej," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 18, no. 4 (1970), pp. 5–78.

⁶³ Fabro made particular note of the relation between participation in Aquinas' philosophy and causality, contrary to Geiger, hence the title of his second monograph: *Participation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*. He did not, however, explicate the joint formal, efficient, and final operation as irremovable factors determining participation.

⁶⁴ It does not seem that Geiger was right in opposing participation as referring to relations between the Absolute and the derivative beings in a static manner, or in opposing creation as referring to the same in a dynamic manner. The aforementioned distinction is a result of a narrow understanding of participation. If participation is considered as a relation between God and the world in the sense of efficient, final and formal causation, the theory of participation

THE UNITY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTUALITY (OF EXISTENCE)

The unity of reality particularly consists of the existential unity (the unity of act). Therefore, the community regards existence itself. The Absolute as an absolute value, a Pure Act, grants existence (act) to all remaining beings. Within every being, existence is a principle of unity and actuality.⁶⁵ The participation of the entire supradeific reality in the existence of the Absolute constitutes the principal foundation of the unity of the cosmos, as well as the foundation of analogy (similarity) between derivative beings, and between derivative beings and the Absolute. The absolute unity of the Pure Act is a principle of all limited unities and actualities. Through the sole fact of being (existence) and the fact of internal unity, as a result of possessing a single act-existence, contingent beings are similar to the Absolute—the plenitude of actuality and the perfect unity. The Absolute is a being, and everything that exists beyond Him is a being as well.⁶⁶

The ontic cohesion of the entirety of reality (the cosmos) is caused by the unity of the principle of actualisation. Participated acts are, out of necessity, tied to the autonomous act.⁶⁷ These acts together

and the theory of creation may be regarded as equal. Obviously, one should always remember that the theory of creation, being theological, assumes a “top-down” perspective, i.e. the perspective of God, whereas the theory of participation is an approach from the perspective of contingent beings. The philosophical content of the theory of creation is constituted by such an understanding of participation. Within the philosophical explanation of creation, the most interesting analyses refer to the *ex nihilo* concept, as they are conducted in regard to the existential theory of being of Aquinas. The implied juxtaposition of being and non-being is grounded in existence. The contradiction refers to the affirmation or negation of existence (exist, not exist). “Nothingness” is a negation of the act of existence, therefore it is not a name but a function word.

⁶⁵ “Esse est id, in quo fundatur unitas suppositi.” “Unum est ens in quo non est distinctio per ens et non ens” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*, vol. 1, d. 19, q. 4, art. 1 ad 2). For more on the subject, see S. Kowalczyk, “Próba opisu jedności transcendentalnej,” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 10, no. 1 (1962), pp. 119–134.

⁶⁶ “Et hoc modo ilia quae sunt a Deo assimilantur ei in quantum sunt entia, ut primo et universali principio totius esse” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 3, resp.).

⁶⁷ “... ipsum esse est perfectissimum omnium: comparatur enim ad omnia ut actus. Nihil enim habet actualitatem, nisi in quantum est: unde ipsum esse est actualitas omnium rerum, et etiam ipsarum formarum. Unde non comparatur

constitute a community, necessary from the perspective of the ones participating in the community. The Absolute exists, and all other beings coexist with the Absolute or coexist with the remaining derivative beings. The community consists of two aspects: horizontal and vertical. The presented unity of everything that exists may be regarded as formal only if one precisely defines the meaning of the term “form.” Aquinas, making an analogy between the form, as something truly perfect with regard to content, and the act of existence, which is perfect in terms of being,⁶⁸ regards the existence within being as *maxime formale*.⁶⁹ However, the intent was to emphasise the perfection of the act of existence, rather than any relation to the aspect of content, to which the form is referring. The Absolute, as the infinite and perfect form⁷⁰ (the highest actuality), ensures the cohesion of beings by means of efficient causation. The formal similarity between the Absolute and derivative beings indicates that it is based on that which is the most perfect element of being, i.e. the act of existence. The existential dependence of all beings on the Absolute constitutes their actual unity, despite the multiplicity and variety of beings.⁷¹ All various, actual beings exist by means of participation in the existence of the Pure Act, the sole, final cause of all that exists.⁷²

ad alia sicut recipiens ad receptum: sed magis sicut receptum ad recipiens” (ibidem, I, q. 4, art. 1 ad 3).

⁶⁸ Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa contra Gentiles*, book I, chapters 26–52.

⁶⁹ “Illud autem quod est maxime formale omnium, est ipsum esse ...” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 7, art. 1, resp.).

⁷⁰ “... cum Deus sit ipsa forma vel potius ipsum esse, nullo modo compositus esse potest” (ibidem, I, q. 3, art. 7).

⁷¹ “Divinum esse producit esse creaturae in similitudine sui imperfecta” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*, vol. 1, d. 8, q. 1, art. 2).

⁷² “Deus autem est principium totius esse, ut infra ostendatur. Unde non continetur in aliquo genere sicut principium” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, art. 5, resp.); see also “Omne igitur quod est post primum ens, cum non sit suum esse, habet esse in aliquo receptum, per quod ipsum esse contrahitur; et sic in quolibet creato aliud est natura rei quae participat esse, et aliud ipsum esse participatum. Et cum quaelibet res participet per assimilationem primum actum, in quantum habet esse, necesse est quod esse participatum in unoquoque comparetur ad naturam participantem ipsum sicut actus ad potentiam” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P.M. edita*, vol. 24/2: *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, ed. J. Cos [Romae; Parisiis, 2000], art. 1).

The analysis of the functions of the act of existence within beings confirms the existential unity and community of beings constituting the cosmos. However separate and unique it is in every being, the act of existence serves the same purpose—it makes beings real and unifies them, so that every being is separate from others.

It is in this way that one should interpret the statements, often present within the works of Aquinas, that would suggest otherwise, while taken out of context. The statements under question are, inter alia: *esse commune*, *ens commune*, and *totum esse*. Explaining the truth regarding the creation of the world, Aquinas defines the process of creation as an “... emanatio totius esse ex non ente, quod est nihil,”⁷³ as well as an “... emanatio totius entis universalis a primo principio ...”⁷⁴ The terms used by Aquinas, i.e. *totum ens*, *ens universale*, would suggest that he treated the existence of God as universal existence, common to all beings, or assumed a certain universal, general existence, or a universal being, whose particular accomplishments or fragments would be particular existing beings, or—in terms of the system of Proclus—*esse* would constitute the first hypothesised emanation of the Absolute (*prima rerum creatarum est esse*).⁷⁵ The entire

⁷³ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 45, art. 1, resp.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁵ Additionally, Pseudo-Dionysius adopted the *esse commune* as a “common being” coming directly from God. Therefore, the existence of the particulars would be a participation in that common being. Aquinas considers the account by Pseudo-Dionysius, however he does not adopt it: “.. deinde, cum dicit Dionysius ... Et ipsum ... ostendit quomodo esse se habet ad Deum; et dicit quod ipsum esse commune est ex primo Ente quod est Deus, et ex hoc sequitur quod esse commune aliter se habeat ad Deum, quam alia existentia, quantum ad tria: primo quidem, quantum ad hoc quod alia existentia dependet ab esse communi, non autem Deus, sed magis esse commune dependet a Deo; et hoc est quod dicit Dionysius quod ipsum esse commune est ipsius Dei, tamquam ab Ipso dependet et non ipse Deus est esse, idest ipsius esse communis, tamquam ab ipso dependens. Secundo, quantum ab hoc, quod omnia existentia continenter sub ipso esse communi, non autem Deus, sed magis esse commune continetur sub eius virtute, quia virtus divina plus extenditur quam ipsum esse creatum: et hoc est quod dicit, quod esse commune est in ipso Deo sicut contentum in continente et non e converso ipse Deus est in eo quod est esse. Tertio: quantum ad hoc quod omnia alia existentia participant eo quod est esse, non autem Deus, sed magis esse creatum est quaedam participatio Dei et similitudo Ipsius; et hoc est quod dicit quod esse commune habet Ipsum scilicet Deum, ut participans similitudinem Eius, non autem ipse Deus habet esse quasi participans ipso esse” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In librum Beati Dionysii 'De divinis nominibus' expositio*, ed. C. Pera, P. Caramello and C. Mazantini [Taurini; Rome, 1950], chapter 5, lecture 2).

context of Aquinas' system renders such an interpretation impossible. Aquinas is clear when stating that:

If we say that God is existence only, we still do not have to fall into the error of those who stated that God is that universal existence whereby each and every thing formally exists. For the existence that is God is of such a condition that nothing can be added to it, it is distinct from every other existence by its own purity itself.⁷⁶

Additionally, Aquinas does not accept the existence of certain general beings. However, when speaking of *esse commune* or *totum esse*, he indicates the universality and the community (identity or, rather, qualitative identity) of the function of existence, served by the act of existence within every particular. The act of existence, as an adequate, particular, individual act of substantial or accidental essence, varies in each being (one could speak of the singularity of each act, in terms of uniqueness), however, there is a qualitative identity, i.e. the community of its functions. The act of existence actualises and exercises a given essence and arranges it in an order of being. That which is universal to all beings is the fact of their existence as the foundation of reality, action and of their affecting other beings. Existence causes beings to be, to act and to actually strive for the Absolute along with other beings. Therefore, one can speak of the community, the entirety or the universality of *esse* (existence) only in terms of qualitative identity and the universality of the function of *esse*, rather than in terms of a single, universal type of being. Therefore, the term *esse commune* would be a cognitive apprehension of the universality of the act of existence functioning within each particular.

THE UNITY OF THE TRANSCENDENT MODEL

The existence of every being is caused by the Absolute. Everything that is is either constituted by the Pure Act, or exists by means of participation in His plenitude of actuality. The unity of reality is an analogous unity of act and its function. However, the aforementioned does

⁷⁶ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P.M. edita*, vol. 43: *De ente et essentia* (Romae; Parisiis, 1976), chapter 5.

not constitute an existential monism. Reality consists of beings of varying formal structure: the Absolute, which is an absolutely simple being, compound beings, independent beings (substances), and, finally, beings that exist in something (accidents). There is one Absolute, but there are countless substantial and accidental beings. The variety of beings is so vast that it would seem that speaking of a community of reality, other than the one emerging from the fact of existence, would prove difficult.

Therefore, how does one explain this vast multiplicity of beings? The ultimate factor allowing for the explanation of the multiplicity, variety and actual separateness of accidental beings is the transcendent model which determines the diversity of beings.⁷⁷ The relations occurring between derivative beings and the Absolute, as their transcendent model, allow us to specify the character of the ontic community of beings. Participation relates not only to the act of existence; the entire being exists by means of its participation within the Absolute. The “degree” of actuality of each particular is determined by a form-model, existing in the mind of the first cause. The Absolute, as a Transcendent Model, explains the multiplicity of beings. Beings were planned as numerous, however the very unity of the transcendent model unifies that multiplicity. Each being exercises a given “thought” (idea) of the Absolute, thereby imitating Him, according to its own measure, which characterises its own being, limited by the essence (potency).⁷⁸ Being in itself is separate in regard to all other beings by

⁷⁷ “Omne ens quantumcumque imperfectum a primo ente exemplariter deducitur” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*, vol. 2, ed. P. Mandonnet [Parisii, 1929], d. 3, q. 3, art. 3 ad 2); “Sicut ergo divina sapientia causa est distinctionis rerum propter perfectionem universi, ita et inaequalitatis” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 47, art. 2, resp.); “... distinctio rerum et multitudo est ex intentione primi agentis, quod est Deus. Produxit enim res in esse propter suam bonitatem communicandam creaturis, et per eas repraesentandam. Et quia per unam creaturam sufficienter repraesentari non potest, produxit multas creaturas et diversas, ut quod deest uni ad repraesentandam divinam bonitatem suppleatur ex alia: nam bonitas quae in Deo est simpliciter et uniformiter, in creaturis est multipliciter et divisim. Unde perfectius participat divinam bonitatem, et repraesentat eam, totum universum, quam alia quaecumque creatura.—Et, quia ex divina sapientia est causa distinctionis rerum ...” (ibidem, I, q. 47, art. 1, resp.).

⁷⁸ Aquinas regards to the aforementioned type of similarity as analogy, i.e. the similarity, not due to belonging to the same species or kind, but by possessing the most universal perfection—being: “... Non dicitur esse similitudo

means of participation in the Absolute Being, according to a mode determined by God's "plan" (model, idea). Therefore, all beings constitute a community and, due to the fact that they are all derivatives from the same model, they participate in its being by the measure determined by its form.⁷⁹

The singularity (in terms of uniqueness) of the model, according to which all beings are internally shaped by what they are, is the foundation of the community of beings and their specific (asymmetric) similarity to God, with a simultaneous infinite dissimilarity. The dialectics of the similarity and dissimilarity of beings, existing by means of participation in the Absolute, is based on the composition of derivative beings of actual (transcendental) and potential (categorical) elements. A particular being considered *in se* appears to be separate from different beings. Simultaneously, the being considered in a transcendental aspect constitutes a "fragment," a "part" of the great community, a "part" which requires a necessary reference to the "whole" conceived as the plenitude of actuality and the plenitude of perfection.⁸⁰ Everything that exists is imperfect, limited, fragmentary, and, simultaneously, is tied to other beings as well as being tied—and similar—to the plenitude by the means of being. Form causes beings to be limited *in se*, closed, and categorical. Simultaneously, the very same

creaturae ad Deum propter communicantiam in forma secundum eandem rationem generis aut speciei: sed secundum analogiam tantum; prout scilicet Deus est ens per essentiam, et alia per participationem" (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 3 ad 3).

⁷⁹ Aquinas explains the precise means of the derivation of diverse beings from one cause: "... agens per naturam agit per formam per quam est, quae unius tantum est una: et ideo non agit nisi unum. Agens autem voluntarium, quale est Deus ut supra ostensum est, agit per formam intellectam. Cum igitur Deum multa intelligere non repugnet unitati et simplicitati ipsius ut supra ostensum est, relinquitur quod licet sit unus, possit multa facere" (ibidem, I, q. 47, art. 1 ad 1); "... nulla creatura repraesentat perfecte exemplar primum, quod est divina essentia. Et ideo potest per multa repraesentari.—Et tamen, secundum quod ideae dicuntur exemplaria, pluralitati rerum correspondet in mente divina pluralitas idearum" (ibidem, I, q. 47, art. 1 ad 2).

⁸⁰ Here my use of terms such as "fragment," "part," and "whole" is not in a material or a geometric sense (unequivocal), but in an analogous sense. Between the Absolute conceived as the plenitude of actuality ("whole") and beings existing by means of participation ("parts," "fragments"), an essential structural separateness is apparent; therefore, there is no danger of interpreting the aforementioned terms in a pantheist way.

exercised form causes beings to be related to the plenitude, as they exercise its ideas. Therefore, the Absolute grants some of His actuality to the measure He set. The basis for the cohesion of various, diversified beings is the multi-level participation in the sole perfection.⁸¹

THE SIMILARITY OCCURRING BETWEEN THE WORLD AND GOD

A consideration of the derivation of being of one transcendent model allows a closer definition of the character of the existential community of beings, denoted by the relations occurring between the participated being and the participating beings. It is an existential relation (indicated while discussing efficient causation), as well as the relation of similarity, resulting from the reason of the very fact of being. The Absolute and the contingent beings exist—however, the Absolute exists in a perfect, unlimited manner, whereas the participating beings exist in a partial and limited manner. The limitation is not a result of some foreign, hostile element, as Plato would have thought, but an ordinary state, planned by the Absolute.⁸² An alternative situation would be impossible. There can be only one simple being. Derivative, compound beings, out of necessity, cannot constitute the plenitude of actuality.⁸³

The existence of derivative beings and the mode of their existence are accomplishments of the plans of the Absolute. Such a mode of existence (limited) implies, out of necessity, a structural separateness from the Absolute and constitutes the reason for dissimilarity to Him. Unity and community remain at the level of existence and other properties of being, transcendental and related to existence. Therefore, Aquinas clearly states that similarity by means of participation

⁸¹ Hegel's account, including the theory of the whole *Identität—Differenz*, was an attempt to tackle the issue of unity and multiplicity (monism—pluralism) without transcendentalism. As a result, the ultimate solution of Hegel and his followers was monist, as it negated the independence of individuals.

⁸² Regarding the ontic primacy of existence over essence and the fact of pure existence and existences composed of essence and existence, a problem arises—what causes the ontological inequality? This is an issue regarding the limitation of existences by the essence, the act by the potency (cf. M.A. Krąpiec, *Struktura bytu*, p. 294).

⁸³ Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *De ente et essentia*, chapter 4.

between beings and God does not occur by means of a generic or a species community, but solely due to the universal “form” of being.⁸⁴ Therefore, one may speak of an imperfect, unilateral similarity. Existing beings are, by means of participation, similar to the Absolute, however He is not similar to them.⁸⁵

Similarity, as related to the model nature of the Absolute, is static. It is rendered dynamic by the fact of existence and by the related action of beings, striving for the exercise of possibilities contained within the nature of a given being. The aforementioned regards all beings, whereas within rational beings, it is complemented by the act of striving for the Absolute by means of cognition and love. Therefore, it is a conscious pursuit.⁸⁶

The unity and uniqueness of the first efficient, formal, and final cause of everything that exists is an ontic foundation of the analogous unity and cohesion of the entire cosmos. The aforementioned community of contingent beings and the Absolute is complemented by relations occurring between derivative beings. The derivative beings, as existing natures, exercise their being by various activities, affecting each other, and engaging in new, actual, categorial relations. Exercising being and acting specifically, separately, they exercise being and act with others. Therefore, the community of beings is made more profound within certain parts of reality.

The relation of all beings to the Absolute, based on the efficient, formal and final causation, leads to the establishment of an ontic similarity between beings existing by means of participation and the Absolute, as well as between derivative beings. Similarity, as shown above, is exceptional. Contingent beings are similar to the Absolute by means of exercising being as well as that which is inherently related to being and universal to all beings, i.e. the reason for transcendental properties. However, in the instances where they are only similar to each other, they differ from their cause; therefore, in these instances, they are dissimilar to their cause (categorial properties). This is a result of the fact that derivative beings are similar to their

⁸⁴ Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 3.

⁸⁵ “... creatura sit similis Deo, nullo tamen modo concedendum est quod Deus sit similis creaturae ...” (St. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, art. 3 ad 4). The relation of metaphysical similarity is not symmetrical (reversible).

⁸⁶ I.e. the pursuit of achieving the optimal mode in terms of a given nature.

sole, transcendent model partially and unequally. The similarity between beings that exist by means of participation and the Absolute may be expressed exclusively with the use of transcendental concepts, and the unity of reality may be expressed exclusively with the use of transcendental analogy.

Transcendental participation and analogy “meet” by unveiling the specific unity of the cosmos, and by the ontic community of beings. Transcendental participation, the fact that everything that exists participates within the being of the Absolute, i.e. is dependent on it in an efficient, formal and final sense, is apprehended within the transcendental analogy which reveals the community of transcendental perfection and its proportional exercising by particulars. Transcendental participation and the inter-being and trans-being analogies constitute ontic foundations for the possibility of employing analogy as a method of philosophical cognition, i.e. a possibility of creating transcendental and analogous terms, as well as an analogous mode of predication. The ontological bond, apparent between derivative beings and the Absolute, allows for the creation of one transcendental concept apprehending reality in what is universal to all beings, however, exercised by each of them to a different degree; one concept of being, thing, unity, separateness, truth and good. The ontological unity of perfections exercised by various beings, a result of the ontological dependence on the Absolute, i.e. the universality of participation, constitutes the foundation of unification for both the concept of being and other transcendental concepts.

The unity of the source of participation rationalises the method of metaphysical analogy and the potentiality of predicating analogous (transcendental) concepts regarding God. The transcendental aspect of metaphysical cognition, apprehending that which is universal in beings without narrowing the scope to either of the ontological universes, implies an “open” character of the metaphysical concepts which—although created on the basis of derivative beings—may be predicated on the Absolute.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ The issue of analogy as a method of metaphysical cognition and as a mode of predicating the analogous and transcendental concepts regarding God constitutes an enormous problem, widely discussed within philosophical literature. Hereby, I limit myself to presenting the relations between participation and cognitive analogy. The issue at hand is to highlight that only the transcendental concepts are “open” for the Absolute, however all categorial concepts may be

The theory of the transcendental participation of being, within the philosophy of Aquinas, constitutes an apprehension of reality in regard to its universal properties. It is the most general denominator of the entire system, solving the argument between monism and pluralism. The theory reveals the separate nature of every particular (all being considered *in se* is real and constitutes a certain ontological unity), however, it simultaneously apprehends particulars transcendently, as elements of a certain “whole,” encompassing all beings that constitute a specific, mutual unity by means of co-participation in one cause—absolute unity. Therefore, it is not only a cognitive unification of one (analogous and transcendental) concept of being, but primarily a real unity of beings, which may be cognitively grasped in one concept. This unity is a result of the unifying power of the act: there is a principle of the actuality of all—the pure act; all other beings derive their actuality from the act. Therefore, the entire relation of participation may be expressed using the categories of potency and act: “the participating being is related to the participated being, as potency is related to act.”⁸⁸

The ontic bond between the Absolute and the derivative beings is found at the “intersection” of the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of the Absolute in regard to the aforementioned beings. Ontological transcendence is manifested within the structural separateness: the Absolute is absolutely simple, a pure actuality. Beings that exist by means of participation are internally composed of various elements related to each other, as potency is related to act. Beings are not static—they are subject to constant change and actualisation. Therefore, participation is dynamic as well.

The immanence of the Absolute is manifested within the fact that the derivatives are internally constituted by the creative actions of God. The reference to the Absolute lies in their nature as beings.

predicated on God metaphorically: “Quaedam vero nomina significant ipsas perfectiones absolute, absque hoc quod aliquis modus participandi claudatur in eorum significatione, ut *ens, bonum, vivens*, et huiusmodi: et talia proprie dicuntur de Deo” (S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, art. 3 ad 1), as well as “Unde quaelibet creatura intantum eum repraesentat, et est ei similis, in quantum perfectionem aliquam habet: non tamen ita quod repraesentet eum sicut aliquid eiusdem speciei vel generis, sed sicut excellens principium ...” (ibidem, I, q. 13, art. 2, resp.).

⁸⁸ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, III, q. 8.

The transcendence of God reveals the natural imperfection of the derivative being and the greatness of the Absolute. Immanence, however, provides finite beings with an incomparable greatness: participation in the greatness of God Himself.

God is in all things; not, indeed, as part of their essence, nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it works. For an agent must be joined to that wherein it acts immediately and touch it by its power ... the thing moved and the mover must be joined together. Now since God is very being [*esse*] by His own essence, created being must be His proper effect ... God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being ... as long as a thing has being, God must be present to it, according to its mode of being. But being [*esse*] is innermost in each thing and most fundamentally inherent in all things since it is formal in respect of everything found in a thing ... Hence it must be that God is in all things, and innermost [*intime*].⁸⁹

The transcendental participation of being, within a philosophical perspective, demonstrates the truth that “it is in Him that we live, and move, and exist,”⁹⁰ simultaneously excluding pantheism.

⁸⁹ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 8, art. 1.

⁹⁰ Acts 17:28.

EXPLAINING THE FACT OF RELIGION

Zofia Józefa Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia. Zarys filozofii religii*, Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1984, pp. 282–294, 307–311.

Here, we shall focus on explaining the fact of religion by indicating the real existence of the elements of the relation (in particular, the demonstration of the real existence of a transcendent “You”), recognizing their internal, ontological structure, and their mutual ontic relations.

A. SUBJECTIVE FOUNDATIONS OF THE FACT OF RELIGION

(1) The contingency of the human person. The ultimate, ontic explanation of the fact of religion, from the perspective of a subject, is the contingent and potential ontic status of a person.

A person, like all other beings available through direct cognition, is a being composed of different co-constitutive elements that are regarded, in the metaphysical explanation, as compounds of essence and existence, as potency to the act. The foundation of the unity of the compound human being is a single act of life—the act of existence.¹

¹ We shall omit the issue of the material-spiritual structure of a human, however it is a substantial one for explaining the fact of religion. Human spirituality and the fact of relating the existence of a human person to the soul, which—as form—constitutes the existence of the entire human, constitute the ontic foundation of the perpetuation of a human after death and the possibility of engaging in a dialogue with the transcendent “You,” a spiritual being. On the

Therefore, a human being is constituted by existence that is not identified with the properties of a human being, its nature, or its content (essence). Human existence is contingent, and ultimately must be derivative (existence is not granted by the human person, the perpetuation of the human person is not self-dependent, and the self-dependency does not belong to its nature). The contingent nature of the human person is manifested in its ontological structure (its composition), its temporality of perpetuation (a human person is born, in existence is subject to constant change, and eventually dies), as well as in its action. In terms of cognitive activity, the contingent nature of the human person manifests in the aspect nature of cognition (the cognition may only be accomplished from a certain viewpoint), its successive aspect (a human person does not acquire knowledge immediately, the process of knowledge is gradual), and the possibility of error. In the aspect of voluntary activity, the contingent nature of the human person is apparent in the fact that the decisions made by men (freedom) face different limitations related to nature, being in the world, etc.

(2) Potentiality of the human person. Humans are material-spiritual beings, experiencing their own ontological unity (their “self”) and their own subjectivity, i.e. that which causes specifically human acts—mainly, intellectual and voluntary longing (love). As a substantial being (being *in se*), experiencing its own identity, it is a potential being, i.e. it is equipped with certain dispositions and exercises (actualises) them in relation to other beings (things)—mainly personal—by means of actions appropriate to their capabilities. Human beings exercise themselves as persons by actions adequate to their potentiality, and develop and achieve their completion according to the requirements of their nature.

The potentialisation (therefore, actualisation) of a human person is bidirectional: internal and external.

(1) *The internal actualisation of man.* Humans actualise and create themselves by means of cognition (particularly intellectual), love

material-spiritual structure of a human and the accidental nature of the human being, see Krąpiec, *Ja – człowiek* (Lublin, 1974), particularly pp. 101–140 and 228–231.

(moral life), and creation (art, technology). In each of the aforementioned aspects, human action consists of a certain tension between the relative and the direction to the unlimited Absolute. How is the human accomplished in these basic aspects?

Metaphysically speaking, the act is perfection, whereas potency is an imperfect state. Therefore, action, as an act of the acting, is an actualisation, i.e. perfection. Man, by means of action, particularly the specifically human action, i.e. intellectual cognition, love and culture, accomplishes his self.²

The highest potencies of humans are their intellect, as a cognitive power, and will, as a power of inclination and love. Potency is perfected, i.e. actualised, according to its object. The object of intellect is truth, whereas the object of will is good; therefore, the human intellect is inclined to know the truth, and the will is inclined to acquire good. A human may intellectually know and love everything that exists. Human potentiality within that scope is unlimited, however it is ultimately inclined to the Highest Truth and the Highest Good. However, the proper object of intellect is the essence of material things; although intellect is actualised inasmuch as it knows the essence of these things, the aim of intellectual cognition is the entire truth (truth in general—universal truth). By knowing material things and human persons, humans know the ontological character of these things, the mutable and the finite, and, therefore, secondarily and derivatively: humans remain in the state of searching and potentiality until they adopt the existence of their cause, i.e. the Absolute Being that is the absolute existence and absolute truth. None of the partial truths will actualise the full potentiality of human intellect. Not even the affirmation of the existence of God, as in this life such knowledge will always be incomplete, indirect, an effect-necessary affirmation, instead of an overview. The complete actualisation of the potentiality of intellect may only be accomplished by means of a direct contact with the absolute truth. The absolute truth, as an end of the actualisation of the potentiality of human intellect, appears to be the final end of human cognitive activity.

A similar situation occurs in the second instance of a human person's potentiality, i.e. will—the power of love. Will is inclined to good

² This issue is broadly discussed and analysed by K. Wojtyła in *Osoba i czyn* (Kraków, 1969).

in the entirety of the latter (good in general, universal good), just as the intellect is inclined to know the entire truth. The activity of will is strictly related to cognition (due to human unity).

We recognise, within ourselves, an inclination to all good, good that is without bounds. The inclination does not stop at a certain aspect, as it cannot be satiated and satisfied with it. The most inherent depth of the inclination allows it to transgress every particular good, striving for its plenitude. Here on earth, humans, in their inclination to the plenitude of good, are deceived, but the inclination remains. The dissatisfaction with the lack of fulfilment is expressed in experiences such as boredom, excess, aversion, disgust, and despair. Even if, following Sartre, we consider such passions as useless suffering or absurdity, they cannot be fully suppressed.

In the process of knowing various goods (being and interchangeable good), some of them made objects of particular longing, the human is inclined to face and unify with them. The essence of voluntary longing (love) is the inclination to and the unification with the known God. Humans, knowing anything as good, may love everything, i.e. unite with everything in the act of love. For a particular personal being, the adequate object of love is other beings who are personal, therefore conscious, knowing and responding to love with love, i.e. objects that can engage in a dialogue. Even a person, as a relatively high good for a human being, is unable to fully actualise human potentiality in that regard, and that relates to other infra-human goods to an even higher degree. Both the goods and the persons are incomplete, contingent beings, therefore they are not absolute goods: they are perishable and prone to loss. Even if there were no interferences within interpersonal contacts, there would still remain a possibility of losing contact as a result of the departure of the loved. That always leaves the human with a deficiency. The ultimate object, and which may exercise the human potentiality of love, is the transcendent “You”—the perfect person, the highest, absolute good, which may be engaged in a dialogue of love.

The analysis of human action—particularly of cognitive and voluntary acts—in which the nature of the human as a potential person is manifested leads to the discovery of that which constitutes the natural end, the maximum achievement of the human. The natural end, as stated above, is the contact with the plenitude of irremovable good. Such irremovable good, which could fully satiate natural human

inclinations and constitute the end of cognition and love, may consist of no contingent being (no material being, or even a human person), but only the perfect person, i.e. God.

The aforementioned simultaneously indicates the possible end of religious reference. If the human is a person, a conscious, loving being, free to choose the object of love, then the environment fitting for the human is the world of persons. As the capacity of human cognition and love surpasses contingent persons, it may bond only with the personal plenitude of being, of freedom, and of love. That sole religious object may be revered, and the bond may be beneficial for the human, constituting the ultimate end of human life and action. Everything except the Absolute is below the aspirations of the human. However, the proper concept of the Absolute is not easily achievable. The concept is mostly related to all Western philosophies and established within them, truly flourishing within the Christian religion.

Considering the personal ontic status of the human, one should agree with Scheler, who states that a material being, a contingent personal being, may not constitute the end of religious relation. The “You” adequate for the potentiality of the human person is provided exclusively by the personal Absolute.³ Such is the “capacity” of human cognition and love—the end of human potentiality. Only the personal relationship of man and the personal Absolute allows for complete satisfaction, proportional to man’s capabilities (nature), and therefore it ensures the full accomplishment, which is—according to Aquinas—the plenitude of happiness. However, the latter does not regard an emotional state, a psychic joy or a feeling of happiness. Aquinas treats happiness dynamically, as a complete actualisation of the potentiality of a human person, accomplished exclusively by means of unifying the intellect and will of the human with the personal God.⁴

The inclination towards the absolute good is strictly related to the problem of human freedom. Human existence—as shown by the analysis of the natural potentialities thereof—may be regarded as an “existence-towards-God,” a “being-within-the-perspective of the transcendent ‘You’.” The “being-towards-God” is manifested, particularly in the negative perspective, in human freedom as the ability to choose and make decisions. A human person is not determined in choosing

³ M. Scheler, *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (Leipzig, 1921), p. 535.

⁴ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 1, a. 12.

the object of knowing, particularly the object of love, when the choice of a finite good is at hand. The human person single-handedly chooses the goods to relate to by means of love, being aware of the freedom of choice. The human person does not need to love any of them; as such, it is a personal decision. Choosing from a variety of goods, the human person selects certain goods and unifies with them. The experience of human freedom is expressed in the experience of responsibility (satisfaction or guilt) in decision-making. Additionally, freedom is strictly related to morality as an indubitable fact of human reality. Without the experience of their own freedom, humans would be unable to distinguish between “I have to” and “I must,” between the moral and natural order.

Human freedom would be incomprehensible, if not for adopting the view that the human has an unlimited, infinite perspective, ultimately being open to the transcendent “You.” If any good, other than the transcendent “You,” were an end, humans would be forced to achieve it, therefore, they would be deprived of freedom. Humans, however, are not entirely externally determined in relation to any contingent (relative) good. Humans direct their actions in such a way that they transgress the entire world of nature, whose action is always determined by a particular good. Humans choose to select the plenitude of good in a conscious and, to a degree, free manner—the plenitude of good that is the most perfect person, who, on the earthly plane, does not appear to humans in its entire clarity. Therefore, humans retain their freedom, even in relation to the plenitude of good.⁵ The ontically highest good constitutes the necessary end for a human, because it is due to this end that humans choose goods-means.

Resulting from the analysis of human action, the ultimate end for humans, the greatest value (good), the transcendent “You,” is not, objectively speaking, chosen by humans; it is objectively given (the highest value must be an object of longing out of necessity). Humans must long for their unification with the transcendent “You,” as they must pursue the full development of their natural capabilities. Therefore, freedom relates exclusively to the path and mode of achieving

⁵ Objectively, the ultimate end is “given” to the human. Subjectively, humans only think that they select that end. Moreover, until God presents Himself to the human as the absolute good and truth, the human may or may not accept Him as a consciously selected end.

the ultimate end. A seemingly paradoxical situation appears—the lack of freedom in relation to the highest value is simultaneously the highest freedom.

One should not oversimplify the issue at hand. Everything seems clear within theoretical speculation, but, practically, humans have difficulty in recognising the highest value. Humans perceive the highest value in so many ways, ascribing numerous values to it. Therefore, humans may err in recognising the highest good. It is due to the fact that humans, being directed by all their being towards the transcendent “You,” sense it, rather than know it. Therefore, there is plenty of room for mistakes: humans can ascribe the highest value to something relative. Humans may ascribe the divine reality to a sign, a word of God. The minds and hearts of humans, in the worldly life, are filled with unrest, searching, as they have not yet reached full knowledge and unification with the highest good.

In addition to freedom, humans were given morality and its legitimacy, by means of which humans are conscious of their tasks, but in terms of duty, rather than coercion. The duty binds humans, but even then they remain free, i.e. humans may cancel their actions or proceed differently. Moral obligations assume freedom. However, duty is simultaneously presented as unconditional, particularly regarding the universal end of morality, i.e. to act according to the dignity of a person, and regarding the means leading to that end, including the loss of life. Duty consists of an inclination to the highest good and to freedom—to the choice of the path, the means, and the type for accomplishing this duty.

The absolute moment is manifested in the creative activity of humans (*poiesis*). Craftsmanship and technology relate to the relative and limited, however they reveal the transcendence of the human spirit in relation to the creations of nature that, in their actions and always according to the laws of nature, is deprived of spontaneity and inventiveness. The absolute moment is particularly apparent within the arts, where human inventiveness reaches its highest level. In the arts, humans create works that, despite their particular place, time and recipient, and therefore relativity, unveil the necessary and the essential, becoming transparent and absolute.⁶

⁶ This is pointed out by J.B. Lotz in *Ich – Du – Wir. Fragen um den Menschen*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1968), pp. 206–208.

The further rationalisation of the transcendent mode of the human person is being “towards death,” therefore, towards a certain end, which, also negatively confirms the contingency and potentiality of human persons that, insofar as they live within the boundaries of time, remain in a phase of actualising, not actualisation. The contemporary philosophy rightly highlighted the dynamic character of death as an end to actualising, as well as an end to a path leading to achieving full actualisation, i.e. perfection. Currently, death is regarded as the ultimate choice (decision) in relation to God—the plenitude of good. Therefore, death is considered to be the “most crucial act of humans, by means of which they ultimately fulfil their existence.”⁷ Then, a complete actualisation of the potentiality of the human person occurs.

If death were accompanied by an absolute end of human existence, humans would not be able to reach the ends of their lives—full actualisation. If it were so, human beings would be, in terms of their potentiality, somewhat irrational, internally false, unnatural, as they would be directed at something essentially unattainable. The experience of death and the longing for its transgression, the negation of death as an end of human life, is included in almost all human activity and psychological experience.⁸ Each religion refers to this experience, and each religion ultimately constitutes the solution to this most human and most dramatic problem of the human person. All religions provide salvation regarding this issue, this “calamity.” Religion is an expansion of the boundaries of human being, beyond the spatial-temporal dimensions, providing humans with an eternal perspective. Religion roots the entirety of humanity and its activity within eternity.

⁷ K. Rahner, *Zur Theologie des Todes* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1958), p. 85. With death, the period of the self-actualisation of the human person, the period of “being on the path” (*status viatoris*), comes to an end. Therefore, the moment of death is the moment of the highest actualisation. Christian theology highlights the religious character of death: “Man’s last decision, finalising and accomplishing the earthly existence of a peregrine, is in a strict sense, a cult act of loving devotion. Within the act, clearly accepting the destiny of death, man devotes self to God and hands self over to him, along with the passing life” (J. Pieper, *Śmierć i nieśmiertelność*, trans. A. Morawska [Paris, 1970], p. 98).

⁸ The fact of death has been philosophically discussed by: Krąpiec, *Ja – człowiek*, pp. 391–423; L. Boros, *Istnienie wyzwolone. Rozważania teologiczne*, trans. B. Białecki (Warszawa, 1971); J. Krasieński, “Być tajemnicą,” in *Być człowiekiem*, ed. T. Bielski (Poznań; Warszawa 1974), pp. 281–310.

(2) *The external actualisation of the human.* The potential human person actualises and creates his self by means of relations, particularly interpersonal. Therefore, the natural context of the person is the society of persons (family, state, etc.). Humans are born within a society, they live and flourish in it. Society is the necessary condition of living and self-development. However, no human society, no matter how perfect, can be the ultimate end or the highest value for human persons. As a necessary condition of life and development, society does not constitute or ultimately rationalise the end of the person's love. Humans transgress not only the world of things, but also the world of men. As the highest being within the ontic hierarchy (a person is a substantial being, whereas society is a relational being), the person is an end for society, not *vice versa*. The society, in ontic terms, perfects the person, but does not rationalise it. Therefore the human person retains its autonomy and freedom in regard to all social relations. The transcendence of the human person in regard to society is possible only when accepting that there is an absolute person which is the highest value, towards which the human person is directed.

The transcendence of the human person in relation to society is additionally manifested in the fact that the person is not an object, but a subject of laws, i.e. humans may select goods considered as the proper means for achieving the selected ultimate end. However, as a particular human is not the only personal being, there is therefore a necessity to establish the rules of the mutual usage of goods, to avoid depriving other persons of goods necessary to achieve their ends.

Therefore, the transcendence of the human person, the human "spirit," appears within the context of its relations to natural and social bonds. The human—a reflecting "I," a subject conscious of its actions, experiencing its own separateness and freedom from everything which is not within it—does not constitute a function of the world of things or the world of persons, despite being immersed in it. Being immanent in relation to the world, the human transcends the world and is capable of a dynamic direction of the self to the most perfect person. The human, as a conscious subjectivity, is directed towards the absolute subjectivity, the source, from which existence flows and towards which the human strives as a person, especially in spiritual terms. Eventually, the human derives his own subjective completeness and dignity from "being-towards-God" and "for-God."

Therefore, the analysis of the personal human being revealed the ontic, ontological foundations related to the nature of the human person, explaining the appearance of a religious relation that is a relationship of the human person with the personal Absolute as a source of existence, as well as the ultimate end (the highest value) of the former. Therefore, from the perspective of the subject, the ontic status of a human being—personal and simultaneously contingent potential—abolishes the contradiction of the fact of religion. The ends and boundaries of human activity, particularly the intellectual-cognitive and voluntary (love), constitute the objective conditions for the possibility of an appearance of such a contact with the transcendent person, which is accomplished within the religious activity of a human.

Although the human person is directed directly at the transcendental “You” within religious acts, thereby exercising the adequate aspect of human existence, the potentiality of the human person appears here as well; it is always a phase of actualising. Moreover, the aforementioned direction of a human person at the transcendental “You,” as with everything within human life, is a disposition that may or may not be actualised, or actualised to a lesser or greater degree. However, such human activity assumes the involvement of the second party of the religious relation—God, who still honours the freedom of the human person. That explains why there is a possibility for some people to be religious in an erroneous (improper way) or people who do not treat religious activity with particular care. Numerous people do not acquire broad perspectives from different aspects of life and, therefore, they may lack the acuteness as well as the accomplishment of proper religious perspectives. Humans may not exercise the disposition to religious life (although they should), or may exercise it improperly.

B. THE OBJECTIVE FOUNDATIONS OF THE FACT OF RELIGION

The discussed foundations encompass the rationalisation of the existence of a personal Absolute (God), as well as the demonstration of the ontic relations occurring between the human person and the personal, transcendental “You” (participation of being).

The existence of a personal Absolute

The proper field for solving the issue of the existence of God is the realistic philosophy of being, providing objective, real and necessary knowledge regarding the subject. Therefore, the arguments formulated within the aforementioned philosophy possess a principal value (objectively), and could be presented solely, without any additional premises. However, in order to present a more comprehensive overview of the possibilities of demonstrating the existence of God, we shall offer some additional supra-metaphysical arguments that serve a significant world view role.

Metaphysical evidence. The question regarding the existence of God is not directly present in philosophy, but serves as a secondary question. It is further related to the question directed at actually existing beings that, within philosophical analyses, appear to be compound, non-necessary and contingent beings, i.e. beings that, due to their essence and their mode of existence (existence is not identical to essence), require an external reason for their existence. If, out of nature, they do not exist out of necessity, one could inquire about the reason for their existence. The ultimate reason for their existence is the personal Absolute.

One should mention the specific character of philosophical cognition, allowing for the affirmation of the existence of God, i.e. the transcendentalising cognition (different from the universal cognition, appropriate for the special sciences), which consists of the cognitive apprehension of the entire objectively existing reality (being as being) in the most general, and therefore basic, aspect. Such cognition serves the purpose of discovering the necessary ontic conditions of everything that exists (the entire reality, cognitively apprehended within the concept of being as being). The necessary character of the aforementioned cognition as well as its most universal, i.e. transcendental perspective (it may transgress the empirically given world), are denoted by: (1) the type of the initial issue: why does a contingent exist (thereby denoting the aspect in which the reality is examined, i.e. the general existential aspect); (2) the direction of reason at all beings (everything that exists, in terms of its existence); and (3) enabling the human intellect, which can “read” the most general, basic existential laws from existence, i.e. the law of ontic identity, the law of the non-contradiction of being and the ontic reason of being.

Analysing the reality given through experience intellectually, a philosopher discovers identity, non-contradiction and the possession of reasons as the necessary conditions of being a being, and simultaneously states that beings given through experience do not possess *in se* a sufficient reason for one's own being. A question arises: what are the necessary and ultimate ontic conditions, as well as the reasons, for the existence of beings which constitute the world (the cosmos)? Existence lies not in their nature, it is prone to loss, mutable and frail. As the reasons cannot be found within the material world, as all beings contained therein possess the same structure (they are compound, mutable and *in se* they do not possess the explanation for their existence), then, by means of the laws of being, simultaneously being the laws of reason, the empirical world must be transgressed, and one must accept the existence of a transcendent being of a different structure (simple), which, due to its essence, is necessary, and needs no explanation, and is additionally able to explain compound beings. The world—an assortment of contingent beings—would be incomprehensible and absurd without accepting the existence of the Absolute as a necessarily existing being, granting existence to contingent beings. Therefore, when negating His existence, one is forced to contradict the necessary laws of being and reasoning.⁹

C. THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF THE RELIGIOUS RELATION

In light of the above, regarding the ontological structure of the human person and the existence of the personal Absolute, we are given an extended view of the nature of the fact of religion (the religious relation) as well as the character and functions of the religious value (sanctity).

The nature of the religious relation

The human as a person possesses an “inscribed” openness to the second personal “You” and ultimately to the “You” of the personal

⁹ Regarding the character of the cognition allowing for the solution to the issue of the existence of God, see M.A. Krąpiec, S. Kamiński, *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki* (Lublin, 1962); M.A. Krąpiec, “Niektóre uwagi na temat uwarunkowań poznawalności Boga,” *Znak* 16 (1964), pp. 662–666; A. Stępień, “Metafizyka a istnienie Boga,” *Znak* 13 (1961), pp. 638–645.

Absolute. Therefore, human life should be regarded as a “for-the-second-you” form of being and, in the ultimate perspective, as a form of being for the transcendent “You.” One could say that the human person is a “religious being” as a being, in which the reason for existence and dynamics (development) within the scope of cognition, emotions, inclination and behaviour is the second person and, ultimately, the person of the Absolute.

Ultimately, the transcendent person, participated in by human persons, creating a “proximate context” (horizontal) of the personal life of a human, is the appropriate context for the life of a person. The human, as a person, by means of being a unique existence of a subjective “I,” creates his self by means of personal acts of cognition, love, decision, etc., and prepares for the plenitude of personal life within the ultimate context of the Absolute person as the highest plenitude.¹⁰

Therefore, religion is an ontic, person-person relation (“I”-“You” relation) between the human person and the personal Absolute, in which the former participates as in the ultimate source of existence, and the ultimate end of life. The relation is real-existential, necessary, intersubjective (personal), “moral,” dynamic and composed of bilateral activities, variously perfecting the human subject.

- (1) **Real-existential.** The religious relation is a real relationship for a twofold reason. First, it possesses real foundations imprinted within the structure of the personal human being and refers to an actually existing, personal Absolute Being. Second, for the exercise of this relationship within the personal aspect,

¹⁰ Cf. Krąpiec, *Ja – człowiek*, pp. 387–388. The issue of the openness of the human person for the transcendental “You” is revealed to a broader and fuller degree within theological speculation (cf. W. Hryniewicz, “Człowiek—istota otwarta na uczestnictwo w Bogu,” in *Być człowiekiem*, ed. T. Bielski [Poznań; Warszawa 1974], pp. 233–255): “The participation of man within the Divine nature (2 P 1:4), resulting from the very essence of the image of God within the human, shows the mutual ‘openness’ of both God and the human. God is ‘open’ for the human, whereas human nature is not autonomous and self-encapsulated, but theocentric, ‘open’ for God. God Himself meets this openness and makes the human truly human. The participation of the human in God does not disturb the authentically human existence of the human. Out of his own nature, due to his creation in the image and likeness of God, man is relational, responsorial and dialogic, and his depth cannot be comprehended without the reference to God. That is the most profound, anthropological sense of the participation of man within Divine nature” (ibidem, p. 255).

proper action by the human party is necessary, consciously and freely (personally) exercising the ontic dispositions of the human person which, out of their nature, are directed at the transcendent “You.” The aforementioned action permeates the entire personal life of a human; therefore, religion constitutes not some isolated aspect of life, but provides means of human existence “towards” and “for” the transcendent “You.”

- (2) *Personal-personal (intersubjective)*. This occurs between beings who, as persons, are an existence of the subjective “I,” determine themselves within the scope of conscious and free action, and are able to engage different “I”s. Therefore, the religious relation is dialogic-responsorial, i.e. it is a relation of encounter, granting the self, exchange, and mutual giving of a “gift from the self.”
- (3) *Moral (conscious and free)*. Only as a person, a rational and free being able to make decisions, is a human a moral being, and only as such may he be a religious being. Religion, having ontic foundations, is not only a natural relationship with God, i.e. exercised by means of the laws of nature as an entirely determined source of action. It proceeds within the aspect of the personal life of the human. Only by means of personal decisions may the human consciously pursue God and unite with Him within the spiritual-moral life.

Aquinas consequently places the issue of religion within the aspect of moral experience as specifically human. The choice is deeply rationalised within his anthropological account, implicating metaphysics and affecting theology. Moral life appears to be an internal path of the “return” of the human to God; therefore, religious acts are necessarily related to morality to such a degree that any attempts to isolate these two aspects would render the religious experience less human.¹¹

¹¹ Experience and religious acts belong to morality by a twofold means: (1) they are, as personal acts, conscious and voluntary (they are human acts); and (2) the object of religion (God) is an ultimate ontic rationale also regarding the moral order. However, the aforementioned in no way impedes the fact that religion has its own object and its separate value—sanctity—whereas the object of morality is good.

God is the one who causes existence, as well as the highest value for humans (the ultimate end); additionally, he is present within each human action and conscious existence, enhancing them with His power. Within such a perspective, religiousness does not abolish morality nor present God within some vertical abstract, but apprehends Him as coexisting within the horizontal transcendence, as present in the personal human life, and as granting humans with ultimate and infinite perspectives.

Although, according to Aquinas, religion belongs to morality, the former is not reduced to the latter, as in the case of Kant and his followers. As a result of the response to Kantianism, a tendency arose of a too far-fetched distinction between the moral and the religious. Meanwhile, religion, possessing its own ontic aspects and appropriate psychic experience related to reasoning that God constitutes the highest value delighting the human as a particular person (an achievable value), makes morality dynamic, granting it an actual aspect and a more human tone. Without the religious context, morality would be a formally apprehended accordance or discordance between human action and the moral law, instead of a personal affirmation of the personal good.

If morality is expressed in the alignment or misalignment of a decisive practical judgement with the norm of morality, realised by the human within a theoretical judgement regarding things and persons, then religion indicates the most profound reason for being of all decisive human acts. Without the religious aspect, the very human decisions, in terms of secondary persons (or the self as a subject or moral action), would be deprived of the ultimate personal rationale. They would possess solely a rationale regarding the relations of things, or relations occurring between contingent persons, unable to fully and adequately rationalise human life. The secondary person, contingent, although a necessary motive, is insufficient for decisive acts, particularly for exceptional, heroic acts which men are sometimes obliged to carry out.

Religion, related to the moral human life, may manifest itself in acts of love directed at secondary persons or in specifically religious acts, inasmuch as they directly relate to the transcendental “You” as a source of existence and an ultimate end of human action—a person present and, in a way, co-experiencing human fate with men.

- (4) *D y n a m i c*. The discussed relation assumes a “being-towards-God” potentiality within the human, which may be exercised exclusively by appropriate human, and therefore conscious and free, action. The potential direction of a human to God, and the entire transcendent plane, does not constitute religion, as religion is a conscious and voluntary actualisation of the potential reference by means of religious acts (passing from potency to act). The religious bond, generated by means of religious activity, is not the sole work of a human. God plays an active role within the relation. Therefore, the dynamic aspect encompasses both parties within the relation.¹²

- (5) *N e c e s s a r y*. Due to the ontic dependence of the human on the Absolute, religion is necessary for the full actualisation of the human person as a material-spiritual being, who becomes more of a person by means of spiritual activity, leading to self-spiritualisation (ontically and morally). The religious bond with God is irremovable. The aforementioned necessity, to a degree, encompasses the second party of the religious relation as well. If God created humans out of love, and He himself is love, the plenitude of good and truth, He must love men and, therefore, He must wish for the fullest development of the human person. Therefore, if a human person achieves his fullest development by means of unity with God, then God must wish for this unity, as He is the “author” of human nature.

- (6) *P e r f e c t i n g t h e h u m a n s u b j e c t*. The relation is manifested subject-wise, within the activity of the subject. One could say that every cultural, and therefore cognitive, moral and aesthetic activity develops the spiritual aspect of a human. However, it is the activity leading to the accomplishment of the relation with God (religious acts) in particular that perfects the person to the highest degree. For example, a moral action perfects the acting subject, but is simultaneously directed at the good of others; cognitive activity mostly aims at the practical

¹² Within Catholic theology, the action of God regarding the constitution of religious bonds is regarded as providence, sanctifying grace, as well as deeds and special help from the Holy Spirit in order to perfect and spiritualise the human as preparation for his full unity with God (the gifts of the Holy Spirit).

effect of cognition (yields of knowledge); truth often serves as an instrument of processing and creating something; and, similarly, artistic activity perfects a certain material and is embedded in the work—therefore, it is a transitive relation. However, the religious act perfects the subject exclusively (the human perfects the self). The end of the reference is a plenitude of all perfections, the highest act in every aspect. Therefore, religious activity cannot provide it with any additional benefits—it is entirely directed at the human, and entirely set at the fullest actualisation of the human (perfection).

Therefore, human existence is an existence within the perspective of the transcendent “You,” and this perspective grants sense and value to all, not only religious, human activities, without changing their internal contents.

The religious act, as an experience and the real expression of the personal relationship between the human and the transcendent “You,” encompasses the entirety of the human person, permeating all aspects of its existence and action. The religious act fuses the cognitive, voluntary and emotional elements into one, within the deepest personal core of the human. Therefore, the entire human self is involved in the religious act. Religious experience constitutes the most engaging, integral and, as a result, the most merging act, in which human subjectivity, while merging with the divine subject, not only retains its own individuality, but—as Kierkegaard rightly puts it—discovers and affirms it in the deepest sense. If external and internal actions shape the personal “I” of a human, then religious acts accomplish that to the highest degree; the human becomes a person and a “spirit” to the fullest extent.¹³

¹³ Cf. A. Usowicz, *Psychologia religii w zarysie* (Kraków, 1951); W. Gruehn, *Religijność współczesnego człowieka*, joint trans (Warszawa, 1966); L. Kaczmarek, “Człowiek – istota religijna,” in *W nurcie zagadnień posoborowych*, vol. 2 (Warszawa, 1968), pp. 171–210.

GOD OR SACRUM?

Zofia J. Zdybicka, *Bóg czy sacrum?*, Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasz z Akwinu, 2007, pp. 22–23, 72–90.

The object of our interest is that particular moment in the history of philosophy, of our civilisation, where the concept and reality of God were replaced with the concept and reality of *sacrum* as an object of pursuit for religious people. A question arises: why is it that the theory of God as the Absolute of Existence, the Highest Good, Love, the Most Perfect Person, considered by people as the ultimate source of their existence, and the Highest Good projecting sense upon human life and action, who had been the synthesis of Western philosophical thought and faith, remaining in Christian religion for ages, was replaced by the theory of *sacrum*, introduced to religion theoretically and practically, and made present in contemporary culture, receiving a well-established reputation?

What were the mechanisms and reasons behind that change? What are the sources and consequences of such a replacement for men, for understanding and practising religion, as well as for the functioning of culture? In order to explain the replacement of God with *sacrum*, one should examine the roots of the prevalent philosophical accounts initiated within ancient Greek philosophy, and continued throughout the years in the Western tradition. The accounts vary, mainly regarding their object of speculation and explanations, as well as in the sources and modes of cognition. One such account is the realistic philosophy of being (metaphysics), which establishes the aim of knowing the truth of the entire existence, drawing upon direct contact with the trans-subjective reality. Another is the philosophy of transcendent

forms, which establishes humans and their interior as the main object of examination, assuming a type of cognitive or emotional *a priori* regarding information about the trans-subjective world.

GOD—SACRUM—RELIGION—RELIGIOUSNESS

The accounts of the prominent philosophers of the aforementioned schools, the school of being and the school of ideas, regarding the issue of God, indicate significant consequences to resolving the issue of the existence of God, to defining His essence, and to the understanding of religion.

The philosophy of being, as a discipline of cognition regarding the actually existing reality, leads to the necessity of accepting the existence of God as an actually existing Being, who exists *in se*, independently from human conscience, as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*.

By means of reason directed by the existing reality, and particularly by affirming the very fact of its existence, men, in order to explain the existence of reality, indirectly reach (with effort) the affirmation of the Existence of God (that He is), defining who He is, as well as establishing the relationships between the world and God, and between humans and God.

Within the aforementioned cognitive perspective, the world and humans are dependent in their existence on God. God as the perfect Person, the Highest Good, is additionally the ultimate end to all activity of all that exists, that comes from God and that strives towards God.

Humans—personal beings, rational and free creatures—may know, accept and express this dependency on God regarding their existence and action in a human and, therefore, a conscious and free way. Such a theory of God and the human, as well as their mutual ontic relations, constitutes the foundations of religion. In the described perspective, religion is a conscious and free relation between humans and the personal, actually existing God. Humans feel dependent on God, and strive for God as the Highest Good, projecting sense on the life and actions of humans.

The knowledge acquired by means of natural reason, within the philosophy of being, in Christian thought is complemented by the self-revelation of God, which may be comprehensibly and freely accepted by humans (faith). God, as an actually most perfect Person,

enhances humans with participation in the internal Divine life. Religious life becomes a challenge for humans, a challenge of imitating God and the divination by means of Divine power. Humans, as they are not Divine by nature, may be divined by cooperating and involving themselves in the life of God, in the internal life of the Holy Trinity, in Christian religion. Religion is a path of an actual fulfilment of humans, who come from God, are created in His likeness and consciously and freely pursue Him in their lifetime.

In the philosophy of transcendent forms, with its appropriate speculative starting point, the issue of God is not related to the truth regarding the world, the trans-subjective reality, but to human reasoning, the human interior. The human is considered as a spirit (Plato), *res cogitans* (Descartes), and a structured and creative self (Kant). The human, regarded as such, is equipped, previously to cognition, with certain instruments, including the idea of God. God is perceived as a transcendent idea of the Infinite Being (Descartes), a form of theoretical reason (Kant), “divinity” and “sanctity,” and as objects of intentional religious acts (Scheler) given to humans.

The idea of God in such types of philosophy is not related to the cognition of truth regarding the human and the world, but to human reasoning, the *a priori* equipment of the human consciousness. The idea of God is, and will always remain, immanent in relation to human thought. The question of whether God exists beyond human thought is unsolvable.

This issue has often been emphasised, particularly since Kant. The emphasis is related to his critique and refutation of metaphysics. Agnosticism, in regard to metaphysics, primarily relates to God. The negation of metaphysics, the exclusion of God from the plane of theoretical cognition, leads to pursuing the foundations of religion within the “human spirit.”

Kant referred religion to human experience, and particularly to moral obligation, the moral consciousness that requires (postulates) accepting God as a guarantee of harmony between virtue and happiness. Therefore, God is a postulate of practical reason, i.e. it is—according to Kant—“the faith of reason” and, therefore, an act of will. The human wants God to exist, but does not know whether God actually exists or not.

Scheler relates “divinity” and “sanctity” (value) to religious, intentional acts. These acts are always directed at an object. Scheler attempts

to “objectivise,” to objectify that process of religious acts; therefore, he assumes the ideal plane. Religious acts do not reach the actually existing God. Moreover, the ideal plane constitutes a barrier which ideally separates the human from the real God, independent from the human.

Therefore, neither the acceptance of the innate idea of God, nor postulating Him by means of moral consciousness or religious acts, objectified by the ideal plane, transfer the issue of God beyond the human consciousness—rational, believing or feeling. Eventually, everything occurs and ends in the human.

Within the aforementioned types of philosophy, one can easily recognise a certain tendency to “create God” out of what comes from the human, the subject, and his consciousness and acts. Humans are conscious, rational and creative subjects. They are autonomous—humans may discover everything within themselves, including the idea of God, or postulate it on the basis of their own consciousness. The solution to the issue, offered by Scheler, is also accomplished within the human consciousness from which religious acts, directed at “divinity” and “sanctity,” are derived. Although the religious acts, as previously noted, are objectivised by the ideal plane, the overview of the object by the subject confirms the hypothesis that, within the spirit from which the religious acts emerge, they are already “tailored” to divine measure, suggesting a certain absoluteness of the subject. Moreover, there is no passage from the ideal plane to the actually existing God. In the philosophy of ideas, humans possess something divine *a priori*. The human is principally the spirit, and is involved in the “creation” of God. The aforementioned is clearly confirmed by Kant, who states that we are “subjectively self-creators (*Selbstschöpfer*) of the objects we think,” and Scheler, who writes that “man ... is endowed with the higher dignity ... of the co-creator of God.”¹

How should we define religion, within the perspective of an *a priori* divinity placed within the human? Who would be the object of acceptance, reverence and unity for the human? Would the human unite with his self? With other humans? With the creation of his own mind? Neither Descartes nor Kant assumed that perspective, as they were Christians. However, there is a certain logic involved. The belief

¹ M. Scheler, *Pisma z antropologii filozoficznej i teorii wiedzy*, trans. S. Czerniak and A. Węgrzecki (Warszawa, 1987), p. 428.

regarding a certain divinity of the human has been present within idealist philosophy since Plato. The motif, seemingly hidden, was present in both Descartes and Kant. However, it was Feuerbach who first stated *expressis verbis* the crucial feature of the philosophies of the self, of the rational and creative self: humans have divine features, they co-create or ultimately create God. Therefore, the simple conclusion of Feuerbach: that the human is god for men. The idea of God, according to Feuerbach, is nothing more than a species idea of a human. The thought was undertaken and exercised by Nietzsche, Marx, and later Sartre. The deification of the human, presented in various ways by the aforementioned philosophers, denoted the negation of the existence of God. The negation resulted in grave consequences, encapsulating the idea of God within human consciousness. Atheism, or even anti-theism, and the pursuit of eliminating religion from human life and culture had become inevitable, and expanded during the 19th and 20th centuries.

One should highlight an additional result of eliminating the questions regarding God from the aspect of the existing being, namely, the negation of metaphysics and transferring the foundations of religion to the subjective human experience. The philosophy of being provides solid grounds not only for concluding whether God exists, but, additionally, for determining His identity by means of the analogous and transcendental cognition of the existent being. However, the philosophy of consciousness lacks such foundations and is prone to relativism, as well as to encapsulating religion within the culture.

The history of the term *sacrum* provides the best evidence for the aforementioned. The Neo-Kantian sacrological school, i.e. the theory of values as human decisions (Nietzsche, Weber), constitutes the focal points in the transformation of the *sacrum*, as well as the transformation of religion, from an actual relationship between humans and the actually existing God into an indeterminate religiousness—a social-cultural phenomenon.

The sacrological school, particularly the phenomenological school, provided the studies regarding religion with valuable analyses and interesting interpretations. The school helped to reveal numerous aspects of the religious phenomenon. Particularly valuable, within phenomenological speculation, was the opposition to the evolutionist, atheist or anti-theist tendencies within the understanding of religion, prominent at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. The exponents of

sacrum, particularly the phenomenologists of religion, highlighted the necessary relation between religion and man (the human consciousness), the perpetuation of the phenomenon of religion, and its unique status, irreducible to other aspects of human life.

Sacrum as a replacement for the term “God” (the personal Absolute) spawned a debate among philosophers, however the term not only perpetuated within the studies on religion but was accepted, and flourished in 20th century literature. One could say that it fashioned a “career” for itself. Many regarded it as more plausible to accept than the term “God,” which was followed by not only a religious but also a moral obligation. It was found more plausible, as well as more “modern.” Unfortunately, as a result of the lack of precision in defining its contents, as well as of separating religion from other aspects of human life, the term *sacrum* significantly contributed to adverse—however, probably unintentional with regard to some of its exponents—changes in the understanding of religion. The contents of the term *sacrum* were, under the influence of thought-cultural changes, subject to transformations, leading to changing the understanding of religion to indeterminate religiousness.

Sacrum as an object of religious experience, universal to all religions, has been presented differently in various accounts. Söderblom regarded it as an “impersonal power,” Otto as a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, Eliade as “the element of the structure of consciousness,” Windelband as an “ideal of life, indeterminate in content,” and Heidegger as “an aspect of being.”

One should highlight that *sacrum* was endowed with a special ontic status. If religion was rooted in the human subject, as a subject of religious experience, especially for phenomenologists, then *sacrum* was a peculiar objectification of the religious acts of the subject. *Sacrum* was reduced to an intentional object of religious acts; therefore, it was an object given to and, to a degree, shaped by consciousness. Within this perspective, the existence of the *sacrum beyond* human consciousness is irresolvable. It is purely subjectivist.

While appreciating the achievements of phenomenologists, in terms of penetrating the religious phenomenon, one should not omit the limitations of the phenomenological method. John Paul II, who knew the method well and, to a degree, employed it, reminds us of the aforementioned limitations:

Using the phenomenological method, one could analyse experience, such as the experience of morality, religion or humanity, enriching our cognition significantly. However, one cannot omit the fact that all analyses assume the reality of the human being, i.e. the created being, as well as the reality of the Absolute Being. If we do not begin with this “realistic premise,” we are travelling the void.²

The philosophy of being, realistic metaphysics, is irremovable if we are to properly interpret the fact of religion. Moreover, in highlighting the absolute autonomy of religion as a separate field, unconnected to other aspects of human life (which results in a radical opposition between *sacrum* and *profanum*), the exponents of sacrology separate religion from the context of life, particularly from rational cognition and morality. Treating religion as an isolated field is clearly opposed to the classic, realistic understanding of religion as a personal relationship between the human and the personal Transcendent (personal God)—the source and end for man and the entirety of reality, as well as the Highest Legislator. Within the realist perspective, the religious bond encompasses the entire personal life of the human and all its manifestations. Religion as an aspect of culture transcends other aspects, thereby creating a focusing synthesis of culture.

Over the years, the transformation of the term *sacrum* has progressed. Although the theories of religion, particularly the phenomenological, opposed the anti-religious and secular tendencies born during the Enlightenment period and radically formulated by the great critics of religion, such as Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Sartre, they failed to stop the secular processes that took place in Western culture.

This secularisation consisted of separating religion from social life, treating religion as purely private. The moral autonomy of the human was absolutised, ascribing to the human the capability to decide on what is right and what is wrong. The influence of religion on the secular was limited. The reduction of scientific cognition, particularly to the special sciences, the superior role of science and the resulting scientific (scientist) mentality inspired literature and media

² John Paul II, *Pamięć i tożsamość* (Kraków, 2005), p. 21.

that emphasised human freedom, and granted the human with the infinite power of arranging life on earth. Temporality, as well as considering the earthly life to be the only aspect of human life (terrism), were consequences of that approach. Submitting to anti-religious influences and the scientist mentality, many contemporaries live as if “God didn’t exist,” they live beyond the context of values derived from God. Our culture is stricken by the phenomenon that John Paul II called the “detachment from the source.” The last overview of the world by John Paul II, expressed in his testament, is far from optimistic: “Much was done in the 20th century in order that the world would stop believing and renounce Christ.”³ Desolation in individual and social morality emerged. According to John Paul II, Europe, at the turn of the 20th and the 21st century, was a “continent of desolation.”

In a secular world, the religious *sacrum* either perishes or is subject to significant deformations. Although the secular processes did not entirely renounce *sacrum*, they contributed to the significant transformations in its understanding and evaluation. Currently, one could speak of a semantic and axiological ambivalence of *sacrum*.⁴

The presence of *sacrum* was transferred to the secular areas of culture that were supposed to replace traditional religion (sacralisation). The most evident example is the phenomenon known as the sacralisation of art, i.e. the belief that art may replace religion, being therefore a “secular religion.”⁵ Another example is the sacralisation of certain ideologies, e.g. Marxism, which is inherently anti-religious and would assume forms imitating religion, indicating the ultimate end for man, the path of liberation and fulfilment. In this case, one may speak of an “atheistic religiousness.”

In the second half of the 20th century, sociologists of religion discovered a change of approach towards religion within Western culture. Atheism, particularly as it related to the great anti-religious ideologies (communism), preaching faith in the “earthly paradise” and promising its accomplishment, collapsed, revealing its anti-human face, since technological progress, consumerism and hedonism cannot protect people from the emptiness of human life. The need for religion

³ Ibidem, p. 124.

⁴ Cf. W. Stróżewski, “O możliwości *sacrum* w nauce,” in *Sacrum i sztuka*, ed. N. Cieslińska (Kraków, 1989), p. 24.

⁵ Cf. H. Kiereś, *Człowiek i sztuka* (Lublin, 2006), pp. 79–88.

once again becomes apparent. Sociologists of religion have begun to speak of a progressing process of the desecularisation and deprivatisation of religion. They speak of the “return of religion” and of the “return to *sacrum*.”⁶

Indeed, interest in religion has increased. Traditional churches and branches of the Church are increasing in activity. Within the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council, as well as the activity of the great Pope John Paul II, an inspiring religious leader, contributed to the increase in religiousness.

Simultaneously, there has been an increase of interest regarding different cultures, particularly Eastern. A variety of sects is developing and multiplying, now counted in their thousands. We are witnesses to the rebirth of Gnosticism, magic and the occult. New para-religious phenomena are arising. The complex and diversified New Age phenomenon is a clear example. A belief is spreading that the revolutionary changes within the world and its ways of life should encompass religions. Many express the belief that “nothing will change as long as the gods do not change.”⁷

Therefore, the understanding and contents of the term *sacrum* change. The changes are in the direction of a “new religiousness,” adjusted to contemporary life. *Sacrum*, which, naturally, was a partially defined term, allowing for various interpretations, is subject to significant transformations. The term appears in new forms. Although man considers himself to be *homo religiosus*, he searches for the *sacrum* according to his liking and desires that he has projected himself. As a result of the complete renunciation of metaphysics and revelation, *sacrum* may be regarded as something that men can design—a *sacrum* “according to the measure of men.” Such *sacrum* is: (1) an unspecified principle of spiritual satiation of the need for the meaning of life; (2) an “instrument” of personal spiritual or psychic accomplishment; and (3) a peak “experience,” supposed to replace the feeling of ultimate fulfilment (e.g. intercourse).

⁶ Cf. J. Casanova, *Religie publiczne w nowoczesnym świecie*, trans. T. Kunz (Kraków, 2005).

⁷ E. Trias, “Myślenie o religii,” in *Religia. Seminarium na Capri prowadzone przez Jacquesa Derridę i Gianniego Vattimo, w którym udział wzięli Maurizio Ferraris, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Aldo Gargani, Eugenio Trias i Vincenzo Vitiello*, trans. M. Kowalska et al. (Warszawa, 1999), p. 125.

In the context of the “return to *sacrum*” phenomenon, the “return of religion” motto, postulated by exponents of the newest school of thought—post-modernism—seems particularly interesting.

Post-modernism, as a school of thought, is related to cognitive relativism (there are no necessary, constant truths) and moral relativism (there are no binding moral principles). The post-modernist approach towards man emphasises his creative freedom in the field of culture. The traditional concepts of God and man are discarded. Post-modernism assumes a programme of atheism. Speaking of the “return of religion,” post-modernists claim that what they mean is the “religion of reason,” interpreted as “a space of spiritual freedom and moral impressionism.”⁸ According to exponents of post-modernism, religiousness is a purely human phenomenon, assuming that the human builds his own *sacrum* and endows it with content. Such religiousness would be set within human needs, encapsulated within human immanence. Post-modernists postulate that it is to be a “rational immanence”; therefore, they speak of the “religion of reason” which does not refer to any transcendent order. It is supposed to be an indeterminate “religion of the spirit.”⁹

The above-mentioned history of the transformation of *sacrum* is related to the replacement of religion with religiousness, i.e. renouncing religion as a real, personal relationship between the human and the actually existing God (the personal Absolute), who is the source and the ultimate goal of human pursuits, and to adopting an indeterminate religiousness as a social-cultural phenomenon. Therefore, even in atheist culture, a certain natural inclination and a need for religiousness are apparent, resulting in the pursuit of satisfying this need for *sacrum*.¹⁰ Therefore, the absolute subjectivisation of *sacrum* has become apparent.

Numerous contemporary forms of *sacrum* should be treated as erroneous answers created and adopted due to the natural religiousness of men, inconsistent with the nature of man as a personal being. Only the personal, conscious and free bond between man and the personal God, intelligible and open to relations, guarantees the appropriate and full development, fulfilment and happiness of a human.

⁸ Cf. J. Sochoń, *Ponowoczesne losy religii* (Warszawa, 2004), p. 213.

⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 121, 140.

¹⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 130.

All remaining forms of *sacrum* are beneath human dignity, and acceptance of these forms leads to the deformation of one's personal life. The above is often expressed by the co-relation between the "death of God" and the "death of man."

Examining the contemporary situation of thought and culture in terms of knowing God and understanding religion, a thought by G. K. Chesterton comes to mind: "The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything"¹¹—in mages, charismatics, searching for *sacrum* in the religions of the East, magic and Satanism.

Many people renounce the personal God, the Creator and the Redeemer of man, thinking that they are godlike themselves—that they create their own fate. The New Age phenomenon is a perfect example, a gnostic-magical sect which places the human self in the centre and offers self-salvation with the use of cosmic powers. The consequences for the human are tragic.

As John Paul II reminded us, as a conscious and free being "Man cannot give himself to a purely human plan for reality, to an abstract ideal or to a false utopia. As a person, he can give himself to another person or to other persons, and ultimately to God, who is the author of his being and who alone can fully accept his gift."¹²

CONCLUSIONS:

- Man is, as a result of his nature, able to know the truth, that there is a transcendent reality in relation to him (God). That explains the existence of religion, which has been present within the life of men since their coming into the world.
- The philosophy of being highlights the role of the act of existence in each particular being. The act of existence causes the reality of being, and, within this reality, is most perfect. The philosophical analysis indicates that the act of existence does not belong to the essence (nature) of being given through direct experience. Therefore, the existence of such beings requires an explanation

¹¹ Cited in U. Eco, *Trzecie zapiski na pudełku od zapatek. 1994–1996*, trans. A. Osmólska-Mętrak (Poznań, 1997), p. 119.

¹² John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 41.

by external factors. Therefore, by inquiring about the ultimate reason for the existence of contingent beings, within the philosophy of being, we arrive at a point of necessity in accepting such a being that is the Plenitude of Existence, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. The Philosophical Absolute, the Plenitude of Existence, the Truth, the Good, the Beauty, from which everything is, by the means of His will (love), and according to His thought, is the personal Absolute.

- Descartes initiated the turn, away from realistic metaphysics—the metaphysics of being for the sake of philosophy that granted primacy to the human conscience. The turn had an enormous impact on the speculation regarding the existence of God and the understanding of religion. *Cogito ergo sum* constitutes a fundamental principle, as in *cogito*, i.e. the human mind, the ideas are innate, given by nature or by God. The entirety of scientific cognition is a process of knowing of innate ideas, or of knowing by means of these ideas. According to Descartes, the idea of God is also innate, particularly as an idea of infinity.
- The philosophy of Kant became the impulse to renounce the idea of God and replace it with the idea of *sacrum*. The elimination of the issue of God from the theoretical order and bonding it with the practical order, i.e. the order of the will (“faith”), should be considered as the core of the replacement of God as the Highest Being, the Most Perfect, with the indeterminate postulate of human will. The belief of a certain divinity of the human was present within the idealistic philosophy of Plato. The motif was present in both Descartes and Kant. However, it was Feuerbach who *expressis verbis* revealed the crucial features of the philosophies of the self, the rational and creative self: humans have divine features, they co-create or ultimately create God; the human is the God of men.
- In a secular world, religious *sacrum* either perishes or is subject to significant deformations. Although the secular processes did not entirely discard the *sacrum*, they contributed to the significant transformations regarding its understanding and evaluation. Currently, one can speak of a semantic and axiological ambivalence of *sacrum*.

ATHEISM AS HAZARDOUS FOR THE HUMAN PERSON

Zofia J. Zdybicka, *Pułapka ateizmu*, Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasz z Akwinu, 2012, pp. 19–21, 32–41.

THE MAN REPLACING GOD

The modern subjectivist idealism that absolutises human consciousness, the evolutionary idealism that postulates the man as a place of the accomplishment of the Absolute, the rationalism of Enlightenment that abolishes the relations between man and God and venerates human reason, as well as the positivism which excludes God from the perspective of human cognition, established for the perfection and the transformation of the world, ascribing a great creative power to men—all the above served beliefs regarding the greatness of men and their creative power, as well as granting them divine features and powers. Within such perspectives, God is not only unnecessary, but also exercises a negative function, limiting man, endangering human freedom and self-sufficiency. God has become a source of competition for man. Therefore, the postulate appeared to renounce God, so that men would lead their lives to the fullest and exercise absolute self-sufficiency and freedom (L. Feuerbach, K. Marx, F. Nietzsche, J.-P. Sartre).¹ According to the exponents of the concept of the “divinity of men” and of putting men in the place of God, who,

¹ For a broader explanation of the above, see Z.J. Zdybicka, “Alienacja zasadnicza: człowiek Bogiem,” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 45–46, no. 2 (1997–1998), pp. 51–68.

in their opinion, does not exist objectively but is a creation of human conscience, God plays a negative role in the development of men, depriving them of absolute freedom, impeding their individual and social development. Therefore, the postulate of renouncing God is not limited to a personal decision. It became the inspiration for the social ideologies of the 19th and the 20th centuries: National Socialism (Nazism), Marxist communism as well as naturalist liberalism.

These ideologies possessed cognitive grounds prepared by flawed concepts of man, God, and religion. Their practical application led to a spiritual and moral enslavement of men by totalitarian systems, as well as to the extermination of millions of people.

One did not have to wait long for the consequences of these flawed ideologies. The 20th century, in Western culture, experienced the consequences of abolishing God from the human context, which led not only to the death of the truth regarding God and man, but also to the spiritual and physical death of man. “A humanism which excludes God is an inhuman humanism.”² In consequence, the “ideological rejection of God and an atheism of indifference, oblivious to the Creator and at risk of becoming equally oblivious to human values, constitute some of the chief obstacles to development today.”³ The rejection of God, and the belief in the divinity of men, turned out to be a dangerous trap.

THE REJECTION OF GOD (ATHEISM)—THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

As highlighted, the personalist theory of man, accentuating the relationship with the personal God, is the essential outline of European culture. As a result of philosophical turbulence and cultural change, this bond has been questioned, resulting in the phenomenon of atheism, which increased in strength in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Atheism assumes different forms and is led by various motivations.⁴

² Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, no. 78.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ There is a vast amount of literature regarding atheism. For a synthesis, see Z.J. Zdybicka, “Ateizm,” in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 1, ed. A. Maryniarczyk (Lublin, 2000), pp. 371–390.

Atheism can be a philosophical or an existential theory (doctrine), as well as a practical attitude of man. The doctrine can be metaphysical when negating God at the ontological level (ontic atheism, the strongest one). Atheism may occur within epistemology, assuming a form of agnosticism (the impenetrability of the existence of God) or scepticism (the problem is irresolvable).

Additionally, atheism may be expressed within theories that accept an absolute reality, albeit deprived of the features of a personal God, e.g. pantheism (everything is God), panentheism (there is no ontic separateness between God and the world) or deism (God created the world, but now shows no interest in it).

Furthermore, atheism may also assume an anthropological form when it ascribes divine features to men, religious when one renounces God (infidelity, ungodliness). It may be a psychological result when religion (a certain *sacrum*) is reduced to psychic experience, therefore leading to a phenomenon called "religion without God."

Currently, a sociological type of atheism is present as well which eliminates religion, regarded as personal, unlike social and political life (secularism, laicism). One can also add the atheism of indifference (indifferentism, the omission of God), a result of the fascination of the earthly life with acting "as if there was no God."

The issue of the existence of God, as shown in the speculation above, is the most important and most essential thing for man. The personal God is the ultimate source of personal existence, the creator of human nature (natural law), the guarantor of human freedom, the end of dynamism (particularly the dynamism of love), the ultimate end for human life, the guarantor of the dignity of life of the human person, and the granter of primacy to the person, within societies (the common good). The rejection of God is the most tragic mistake, depriving men of their personal dignity, a transcendent, spiritual aspect.

Why atheism? We should remind ourselves that the negation of the existence of God is simultaneously a lack of in-depth speculation regarding reality. Atheism is always born out of the negation of objective truth. However, such negation is objectively unfounded. Atheism is secondary to the affirmation of God. The thought of God, affirming Him, is spontaneously born in men in cognitive contact with the existing world. Such spontaneous and universal cognition, the pre-philosophical reference of men to the divine reality, provides an explanation of the existence of all religions that, in their various

forms, have been present within human life since men appeared in the world, and have been present in all cultures. Human history mentions no cultures without religion.

Despite the contemporary atheist phenomena, often aggressive,⁵ religions persist in our culture, particularly Christianity—Christianity manifests dynamism, the ability to exist in a changing culture. A number of propositions have appeared, documenting the development of Christianity and presenting optimistic prognoses.⁶

Philosophy, particularly European philosophy, has established—and to this day is continuing to establish—rational paths, arguments for personal existence. Although the cognition is indirect, it is specific and properly rationalised. A negation of the existence of God, i.e. atheism, is deprived of rational arguments. Atheism is most often a premise (e.g. in Marxism), or a conclusion established by means of erroneous world views (e.g. idealism, materialism). Therefore, Étienne Gilson defined the account negating God as a “difficult atheism, as it is deprived of profound reason.”⁷

The rejection of God as the ultimate source of existence and of the structure of persons, their great dignity and capabilities, leads to absurd consequences. Men would be deprived of their foundation, reduced to a “reality of ideas” or an “element of matter,” unaware and lacking intentional action. However, by means of his own experience, the human discovers the existence of “I,” the self-consciousness of his subjectivity, efficiency, and transcendent aspect. If we were to discard the ultimate source of the existence of such a being, we would be bound by contradictions.

The rejection of God (the Absolute Truth) would demolish the foundation of all truth, of the entire intelligible order. It would contest the existence of rational human nature, of the human, of the existence of natural law as a source of moral principles, of the entire moral order, and it would lead to cognitive and moral relativism.

⁵ An example of contemporary atheism, where the emotional reluctance towards religion and God prevails over the rationality of a scientist, is the work of Richard Dawkins: *Bóg urojony*, trans. P.J. Szwejcer (Warszawa, 2007).

⁶ Cf. P. Jenkins, *Chrześcijaństwo Nadejście globalnej Christianitas*, trans. S. Grodź (Warszawa, 2009).

⁷ Cf. É. Gilson, *Ateizm trudny*, trans. S. Piwko, T. Kuczyński and E. Romek (Warszawa, 1990).

The rejection of God as the Highest Good would abolish the dynamism and development of men—the openness for all cognition and the acknowledged good, for the Transcendent—the Absolute Good, which, as an object of conscious and voluntary relation by means of cognition and love, is the end of the dynamism of human love, providing all life with sense. Therefore, within atheistic speculation, the person is deprived of the spiritual, transcendent dimension as well as encapsulated and ascribed to the world of variable, perishable and instrumental values. Eventually, the aforementioned leads to materialism, pragmatism, consumerism, a lack of moral pointers, a spiritual void and a lack of the ultimate meaning of life.

These rejections and the “trampling of the soul” negate the perspective of the eternal persistence of the human person. Men would be contradictory, filled with infinite desires and inclinations, and simultaneously would be deprived of ways for their satiation. By rejecting the personal God—the Highest Good—human life is deprived of the ultimate foundation and end. Life becomes meaningless. Men would die without fulfilling their natural inclinations.

The consequences of the negation of God (atheism) are additionally related to the social and political order. “The denial of God deprives the person of his foundation, and consequently leads to a reorganization of the social order without reference to the person’s dignity and responsibility.”⁸ The character of the social and political order depends on the assumed theory of man:

- (1) Personalism is the proper solution, drawing upon the human person related to the personal God, i.e. the acceptance of the autonomous value of the human as a person who, existing *in se* and for the self, possesses a social aspect. The person exists along with others and for others, i.e. in communities (family, social and political). Love is the key ingredient of social bonds (affirming the person *per se*), and the end of all societies is the man as a person, particularly the development of every human (common good).
- (2) Liberalism, particularly naturalist liberalism, considers the human as an individual, without the natural reference to society. Usually, it results in a negation of the objectively existing moral laws,

⁸ John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, no. 13.

independence from God and egoism. Such an approach towards the human usually results in ethical-customary liberalism, relativism, permissivism, a specific approach towards “tolerance” and the atomised society.

- (3) Marxist collectivism denies the existence of a particular human nature, stating that men are created by social relations and are subject to collectivism, which denies the personal character of the human, human dignity, the instrumental approach towards men and depravity, accomplished by a total enslavement by the collective. Materialism, atheism and the contempt for the human person lead to the primacy of the principle of force over the principles of equity and law.⁹

The denial of the existence of the personal God leads to the meaninglessness of human life and the meaninglessness of the world. The rejection of God (faith, religion) leads to an abolition of complete humanity. A demolition of the foundations of European culture.

One can understand the call of Benedict XVI, directed to young people in Madrid, not to fall for the false promises of a lifestyle without God, and to oppose contemporary relativism and secularism.¹⁰ Ultimately, it is all about the human and his good. In order to save the human, one must save God. Only God guarantees the great, indestructible, transcendent dignity of the human person.

CONCLUSIONS

- Men, as rational beings, have the capability, right and duty to know the truth regarding the surrounding reality, particularly regarding the meaning and perspectives within life. Truth is the fundamental value of human life and action.
- In European culture, in the process of truth-seeking, philosophy assists men, particularly the classic, metaphysical philosophy shaped over the years, as well as the related theology. Their fruit

⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, no. 14.

¹⁰ Cf. Benedict XVI, “Świat potrzebuje radości, którą rodzi wiara,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 32, no. 10–11 (2011), p. 25.

was the establishment of the theory of man as a person, i.e. a conscious, free, dynamic being, equipped with a transcendent aspect and open to the absolute personal being—God. Additionally, philosophy provides rational justifications of His existence and indicates the ontic relations to the human person. God, in relation to the human, is the ultimate source of existence, the Logos defining the nature and the ultimate end of human life, endowing it with meaning. A conscious and free relation appears between the human person and God, i.e. religion.

- Modern and contemporary philosophical schools undermine the possibility and value of a realistic metaphysical cognition, and have contributed to creating erroneous theories of man (anthropological errors) as well as an erroneous understanding of God, and even rejecting God and generating, directly or indirectly, a variety of atheisms.
- The atmosphere and shape of modern and contemporary philosophy were shaped by: (1) Descartes with his turn to the subjective aspect, to thought—*cogito* (but not cognition), i.e. a renouncement of the bond of cognition with the objectively existing reality (Kant expanded on this account); (2) Hume and his empirical scepticism; (3) exponents of the Enlightenment with their radical rationalism; and (4) positivism and scientism, by generating the scientific-technical mentality.
- Atheism is considered by many to be a competition for man. Hence the postulate regarding the rejection of God, in order for men to achieve absolute independence and freedom. Atheism is always born out of the denial of objective truth. Atheism is rationally unfounded. Therefore, Gilson claims that it is “difficult.”
- The rejection of the existence of God (atheism) leads to significant consequences for man—it deprives man of his personal dignity. The rejection of God (the Absolute Truth, Good, Beauty and Sanctity) demolishes the foundations of the entire truth, the entire intelligible and moral order. That path leads to a complete cognitive and moral relativism, depriving man of his proper dynamism (attaining God), and, primarily, deprives man of his ultimate perspectives and of the ultimate meaning of existence.

- Atheist responses encapsulate man in a world of variable, perishable, instrumental values. The aforementioned leads to materialism, consumerism, terrorism, and a spiritual void (the “trampling of the soul”). It deprives man of the eternal perspective.
- The consequences of the rejection of God and denying the relations between God and man influence the social and political order as well. The denial of God leads to the creation of social and political situations where dignity and responsibility are omitted, proven by the examples of Marxist communism and naturalist liberalism.
- To accept the existence of the personal God—the plenitude of Truth and Good—is to “save the human,” to establish the great perspectives, and to save human culture, which, in order to remain human, should be constructed on the premise of the “mystery of God.”

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