THE POLISH
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY
IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Tadeusz Ślipko

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Tadeusz Ślipko

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THE POLISH CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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Tadeusz Ślipko

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Tadeusz Ślipko SJ: Person and Work

1.

Biography

In the last days of his life, Tadeusz Ślipko reminisced about Lvov, affectionately reciting a long poem about the loss of his mother city. These simple and most deeply rooted symbols: family home, mother, city, opened and closed all of the periods of his long life as a student, monastic, teacher, scholar, researcher. They opened up a new world before the young man, while at the same time closing the city gates of Lvov behind him forever. Ślipko never returned to his city, yet kept it alive in his memories, poems, and anecdotes.

Tadeusz Ślipko was born on January 18, 1918 in Stratyn, the former district of Rohatyn. His father, Jan Ślipko, was a local police commander, and his mother, whom he remembered as an exceptionally brave woman, took care of the children. In 1923, after his father's sudden death, Tadeusz moved with his mother and sisters Janina and Maria to Horodok, his parents' hometown. It was there that he went to primary school and then to King Władysław Jagiełło Humanities High School. At that time, Horodok was inhabited not only by Poles, but also by Ukrainians, Jews and those of German, Austrian or Hungarian descent. Thus, he reminisced about growing up in a "multinational, multicultural and multidenominational environment."[1]

In 1936, he passed the secondary school examinations, and a year later began geological studies at the John Casimir University in Lvov Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. It soon turned

[1] "Wspomnienia kresowe. Z Tadeuszem Ślipko, filozofem i etykiem, rozmawia Józef Augustyn SJ," *Życie Duchowe* 62 (2010), http://www.zycie-duchowe.pl/art-8584.wspomnienia-kresowe.htm (accessed: November 23, 2017).

out, however, that this was not a good choice, and in 1938 he moved to the Department of Humanities, choosing Polish philology and history as his major. He studied under the guidance of Professor Juliusz Kleiner and Professor Witold Taszycki. He also attended lectures in philosophy by Professor Roman Ingarden and Professor Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz.

His studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war. "My whole world collapsed," he later said. "For me, this was the end. I wanted to be somewhere else, away from what was going on around me. And I imagined that such a place far away from the world … was a monastery."[2]

On October 12, 1939, he was accepted by Fr. Włodzimierz Konopka to join the novitiate in Stara Wieś, where he had been referred by the Jesuits of Saint Barbara Church in Krakow. Ślipko saw this moment as a transformational one in his life. His monastic formation was largely influenced by Fr. Jan Bratek, who remembered him as a "truly spiritual person." After two years of the novitiate, Ślipko began a three-year course of studies at the Faculty of Philosophy run by the Society of Jesus, which had been transferred to Nowy Sącz because of the war. In that period, the teacher who most significantly influenced his education was Fr. Władysław Markucki. Ślipko remembered him for his extraordinary ability to precisely capture that which was essential. In the years 1944–1948, Ślipko studied at the Bobolanum Faculty of Theology, where he was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Theology and Philosophy. On June 29, 1947, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Franciszek Barda at Our Lady Basilica in Stara Wieś. He made his final vows ten years later, on February 2, 1957 in Krakow.

In 1948, as part of the effort to reconstruct the Society of Jesus in Krakow after the war, he was assigned to educational work, teaching social ethics at the Faculty of Philosophy. "I realized that in order to do this properly, I first had to complete a programme of studies in this direction myself," he recalled years later. He therefore began studies at the Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. As his earlier theological studies were recognized and acknowledged, in order to begin doctoral studies he only had to write and defend a master's thesis. He prepared a dissertation on the right to defend a society against the arbitrary rule of a tyrant based on the writings

[2] Ibidem.

of Francisco Suárez and was conferred the title of Master of Theology in social ethics. At the same Faculty, in 1952, based on a dissertation entitled "The Principle of Subsidiarity," he was awarded the title of Doctor of Theology. The formal supervisor of his thesis was Professor Władysław Wicher, but his actual promoter was Fr. Jan Piwowarczyk, the founder and editor-in-chief of *Tygodnik Powszechny*. The dissertation was never published due to state censorship.

At the same time, Ślipko also studied sociology at the Jagiellonian University, in the Faculty of Humanities. He chose this degree in order to expand and develop his philosophical studies. As Ślipko repeatedly emphasized, if philosophy is to be done properly, it needs the support of empirical sciences, particularly sociology and psychology. He completed his studies in 1952 by defending his MA thesis entitled "Rozwój narzędzi rolniczych i ich wpływ na świadomość społeczną mieszkańców małopolskiej wsi Golcowa" ["The Development of Agricultural Tools and Their Impact on the Social Awareness of the Inhabitants of the Village of Golcowa in Little Poland"]. The supervisor of his thesis was Professor Kazimierz Dobrowolski. Looking back on his student years, Ślipko said that "the studying conditions in postwar Poland were very poor. We did not even have chairs in the lecture halls. We sat on planks and boards,"[3] he recalled.

While studying he also continued his didactic work, lecturing on general and detailed ethics from 1953, as well as giving classes in social ethics. In that period, he also taught ethics at Higher Theological Seminaries run by the Pauline and the Franciscan Fathers. Between the years 1957–1963, he worked as a Dean at the Jesuit Society Faculty of Philosophy. In 1963, he began his didactic work at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Krakow (now The Pontifical University of John Paul II), where he worked until 1988.

In 1965, he was employed as an assistant professor at the Department of Ethics at the Faculty of Christian Philosophy of the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw (now Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University), where he obtained his *habilitation* in 1967 after defending a thesis entitled "Zagadnienie godziwej obrony sekretu" ["The Equitable Defence of Secrets"]. Its reviewers were Professor Stanisław Olejnik, Professor Władysław Poplatek, and Professor Władysław Strzeszewski. Soon after his habilitation, he was appointed Docent

[3] Ibidem.

and Chair of the Department of Ethics. In 1973, he obtained the academic title of associate professor, and in 1982 became a full professor. While working at the Academy of Catholic Theology, he combined didactic work with the duties of Department Chair and the function of an Associate Dean, and in the years 1977–1981 worked as the Dean of the Faculty of Christian Philosophy. He retired in September 1988, but continued his academic work, which included publications, participation in the meetings of a discussion group called "Myśl dla Polski" ["Thought For Poland"], and was invited by the Silesian University of Technology as a guest speaker to meetings dedicated to ethical and social problems in ecology.

He supervised 40 MA theses and 4 doctoral dissertations. He wrote more than 20 reviews of doctoral theses, 3 reviews of habilitation theses, and evaluated the academic achievements of 10 academics applying for the title of an associate and full professor.

Ślipko was the author of 13 books and more than 200 articles, essays and reviews. His most important works include: *Zagadnienie godziwej obrony sekretu* [*Equitable Defence of Secrets*] (1968) (reprinted in 2009 as *Godziwa obrona sekretu: zagadnienia* [*Equitable Defence of Secrets: Issues*]; *Etyczny problem samobójstwa* [*The Ethical Problem of Suicide*] (1970, reprinted: 2008); *Etos chrześcijański: Zarys etyki ogólnej* [*The Christian Ethos: An Outline of General Ethics*] (1974; 2nd amended and extended edition: *Zarys etyki ogólnej* [*An Outline of General Ethics*] 1984; 3rd extended edition: 2002; 4th edition: 2004; 5th edition:2009); *Życie i płeć człowieka*: *Przedmałżeńska etyka seksualna. Etyczny problem samobójstwa* [*Human Life and Sex: Premarital Sexual Ethics. The Ethical Problem of Suicide*] (1978); *Zarys etyki szczegółowej* [*An Outline of Detailed Ethics*], vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa* [*Personal Ethics*], vol. 2: *Etyka społeczna* [*Social Ethics*] (1982; 2nd extended edition: 2005); *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki* [*The Borders of Life: Dilemmas of Contemporary Bioethics*] (1988; 2nd extended edition: 1994); *Za czy przeciw życiu? Pokłosie dyskusji (Problem aborcji)* [*For or Against Life? The Aftermath of Discussions (The Problem of Abortion)*] (1992); *Rozdroża ekologii* [*The Crossroads of Ecology*] (1999) (co-authored by: A. Zwoliński; T. Ślipko is also the author of Part 1: *Ekologiczna doktryna Kościoła* [*The Ecological Doctrine of the Church*]); *Kara śmierci z teologicznego i filozoficznego punktu widzenia* [*Death Penalty from the Theological and Philosophical Point of View*] (2000; reprinted: 2002); *9 dylematów etycznych* [*Nine Ethical Dilemmas*] (2009); *Aborcja. Spojrzenie filozoficzne,*

teologiczne, historyczne i prawne [*Abortion: A Philosophical, Theological, Historical and Legal Perspective*] (2010) (co-authored by: M. Starowieyski, A. Muszala); *Historia etyki w zarysie* [*The History of Ethics: An Outline*] (2010); *Spacerem po etyce* [*Sauntering Across Ethics*] (2010); *Kara śmierci. Za czy przeciw* [*Death Penalty: For or Against*] (2010); *Bioetyka. Najważniejsze problemy* [*Bioethics. Main Problems*] (2012); *Przedmałżeńska etyka seksualna* [*Premarital Sexual Ethics*] (2012).

The authority he enjoyed in the academic community was testified to by the Gold Cross of Merit he was awarded in 1973, and the Order of Polonia Restituta Knight's Cross in 1979. In 1987, he received the title of a Meritorious Teacher of People's Republic of Poland. It is also worth noting that, during the 20th Catholic Publishers Fair, he was honored with the FENIKS 2014 Grand Award. The Award Committee took note of his "impressive scientific, didactic and organizational achievements, particularly during a time requiring a fragile compromise between authorities of the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw and representatives of the People's Republic of Poland; redeveloping the concept of Christian ethics referring to the achievements of Thomism, personalism and rational methods; as well as reliability, diligence, unpretentiousness and kindness in interpersonal relationships and research work."[4]

Ślipko is generally believed to be one of the most outstanding representatives of Thomist-oriented ethics. In his scientific work, he investigated systemic approaches to Christian ethics and presented his findings in three extensive studies: *An Outline of General Ethics* and two volumes of *An Outline of Detailed Ethics: Personalist Ethics* and *Social Ethics.* Their originality consists in that the basic presentation of Thomist ethics has been methodologically modified and extended in terms of its subject matter. One of his most important contributions was that he sought ways of combining the experience of morality and its theoretical description in his ethics. To do this, he referred to basic moral facts, which he believed to include: the pursuit of goals, conscious experience of values, obligations, and acts of conscience. While remaining faithful to the traditional sources of Thomist ethics, Ślipko performed its original modification and reinterpretation in view of contemporary developments in the socio-political situation and the

[4] "Nagroda FENIKS 2014 dla ks. prof. Tadeusza Ślipki," https://wfch.uksw.edu.pl/node/1072 (accessed: November 23, 2017).

findings of empirical sciences. The solutions examined in Ślipko's Christian ethics have their ultimate substantiation in an absolute and objective moral order. His ethics is theist, spiritualist and personalist, while at the same time being linked to moral experience.

In tandem with his work on a systemic approach to Christian ethics, he investigated detailed moral problems. He is the author of original solutions to the problem of moral substantiation of the defense of secrets. He also analyzed the problem of death penalty and suicide from the ethical point of view, and developed sexual ethics; in the last period of his academic work he also investigated bioethical problems, including the ethics of natural environment.

The third area of his studies involved discussion with the views of Marxist philosophers. Due to the contemporary social and political situation, Ślipko studied and analyzed Marxist concepts of morality. He discussed his findings in a monograph entitled *Marksistowska doktryna moralności* [*The Marxist Doctrine of Morality*], never published in print due to a prohibition imposed by state censorship.

Tadeusz Ślipko died on May 1, 2015 at the age of 97, having been the teacher and educator of several generations of ethicists and theologians.[5]

[5] E. Podrez, "Ksiądz Profesor Tadeusz Ślipko – życie i działalność," *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 40, no. 1 (2004), pp. 11–23; J. Koszteyn, "In memoriam Tadeusz Ślipko SJ (1918–2015)," *Rocznik Filozoficzny Ignatianum* 21, no. 1 (2015), pp. 93–97; J. Bremer, "Ks. Prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Tomasz Ślipko," in *Żyć etycznie – żyć etyką. Prace dedykowane Ks. Prof. Tadeuszowi Ślipko SJ z okazji 90-lecia urodzin*, ed. R. Janusz (Kraków: Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna Ignatianum; Wydawnictwo WAM, 2009), pp. 9–15; "Wywiad przeprowadzony z ks. prof. Tadeuszem Ślipko w dniu 19.12.2011 roku przez studentów IFiS," An interview by K. Sawczak, M. Farganus, P. Duchliński, http://www.pte.hekko.pl/wywiady (accessed: October 28, 2017).

2.

An overview of the epoch

Ślipko lived his long life during an extraordinary historical epoch, which involved many dramatic and painful events, particularly in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The last century saw the outbreak of two world wars, old empires falling into dust, the rise and fall of barbarian totalitarian systems, and the brutal murder of millions of innocent people in German concentration camps and Russian gulags. On the one hand, the 20th century was most interesting in terms of developments in science, technology, as well as various philosophical, moral and political ideas; on the other—it was undoubtedly the most tragic period in the history of the entire European continent. In the last century, Europe became drenched in blood.

The unimaginable barbarity of the last century affected the inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe in a particularly brutal way. During World War II, 6 million inhabitants of Poland were murdered, including 3 million Polish citizens of Jewish origin and 3 million Polish citizens of Polish origin. Hundreds of thousands of Poles were annihilated during the First World War, thousands more in the 1920s and 1930s in territories forming part of the Soviet Union, and in the years 1945–1956 when Poland was ruled by the communists. It should be emphasized that the German "final solution" of the Jewish question involved first of all the annihilation of Jews living in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. There were many victims also among Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, or Byelorussians.

In the years 1932–1933, several hundred kilometers to the east of Ślipko's home town, in Soviet Russia, on territories now forming

part of Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the communists perpetrated one of the most tragic genocides in world history. The Holodomor, a purposefully orchestrated famine, killed between 6 and 10 million people over a period of several months in a most barbarian way. Ślipko was 15 years old then; we can only imagine the impact of news about such macabre crimes on the mind and moral sensitivity of the future clergyman, philosopher and ethicist.

The specific nature and barbarism of the last century certainly had an enormous influence on Ślipko's philosophical interests and the moral issues he investigated. His thought is inseparably linked to the dramatic history of the 20th century, interpreted in philosophical terms through the prism of the history of ideas. As a philosopher and ethicist, personally affected by the unimaginable evil of the last century, he could not do otherwise but ask basic questions about the sources of moral norms, religion, social relationships, natural law, guilt, death penalty, responsibility, religious freedom, social justice, morality in public life, or forgiveness.

2.1. God's Playground

In 1979, the English historian Norman Davies published a book entitled *God's Playground. A History of Poland*.[6] It is a very valuable study, showing the important place of Poland in the history of the European continent. Davies emphasizes, among other things, the multicultural heritage of our country, where Poles had lived for centuries in concord and friendship with Jewish, Ukrainian, or German national minorities. The book was written in English, by an Englishman, and for English-speaking readers. Its goal was to introduce the character and content of Polish history to a global audience who, for a number of reasons, had been denied a scientific yet popular presentation of this important chapter of European history.

Of particular interest is the title of the book. Why does Davies say that the history of Poland was akin to being God's playground? How should this metaphor be understood? The term "God's playground" originally referred to the Renaissance view of man, who was

[6] Cf. N. Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

perceived by many thinkers of that period as a being subject to higher forces, participating in warfare, being an active subject in the dramatic struggle between good and evil on a stage which is the world. According to the English historian, the metaphor of "God's playground" accurately reflects the eventful history of Polish citizens who repeatedly lost and regained their independence, were persecuted by neighboring countries, fell victim to wars and revolutions, fought bravely for their own freedom and that of other nations.

The history of Poland, but also that of other Central and East-European countries, became a great "God's playground" particularly in the 20th century. When Ślipko was born, the First World War was still raging, and Poland did not exist as an independent country. Why? At the end of the 18th century, Austria, Prussia and Russia did away with the Polish state, which had been one of the largest monarchies in the world. Poland was invaded by foreign troops. Berlin, Moscow and Vienna divided the huge territory of the Polish Republic among themselves. For millions of Poles, the dark night of partitions began; the inhabitants of Poland were to live for more than 100 years in three separate parts, annexed to Austria, Prussia and Russia. Ślipko's homeland, lying in a region called Galicia near the south-eastern borders of the Republic, was annexed by Austria.

As a consequence of the political and military decisions of made in the 18th century by the rulers in Berlin, Moscow and Vienna, Ślipko was born as a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. He became a Polish citizen in November 1918, when Poland reappeared on the world map as an independent country after the end of the First World War. Unfortunately, in 1939, his homeland was attacked by German and Russian troops. World War II broke out, and Europe burst into flames. Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin partitioned Poland once again, with the Germans occupying 48% of the Polish land, and the remaining 52% was subordinated to the Soviet Union. Ślipko's native land, the beloved place of his childhood and youth, was occupied by the Russian Red Army, and then, in 1941, by the German Wehrmacht, when the German Third Reich began its aggression against the Soviet Union according to the Barbarossa Plan. For many people Russian and German occupation meant death, tortures, starvation, prison, and persecution.

In February 1945, an international conference was held in Yalta on the Crimean Peninsula. The heads of government of the United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union met to decide about

the political reorganization of Europe after the end of World War II.[7] The Yalta Conference confirmed the earlier arrangements made during the Teheran Conference, held at the end of November and beginning of December 1943. Unfortunately, the US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, United Kingdom's Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin made two decisions which were to have tragic consequences for Poland. The first one was to leave the country in the Russian sphere of influence, to the east of the "Iron Curtain." As a consequence of this decision, Poland was subordinated to the government in Moscow up until 1989. The second decision was about the annexation of the eastern part of Poland by the Soviet Union. In result of these arrangements, after 1945 millions of Poles were exiled from the eastern lands of the Republic; most of them found a new place to live in the west of Poland, on territories previously occupied by the Germans who had been expelled by the Red Army.

For Poland, the post-Yalta order in Europe meant that its borders were moved several hundred kilometers to the west, causing mass exiles and migrations, as well as the imposition of communist slavery on its citizens for several decades. The tragic aftermath of World War II affected Ślipko, his relatives and friends alike. Poles who had been expelled from the eastern lands of the Republic could not visit their homeland up until the 1980s, losing the places where they had been born and raised. They were cut off from their family traditions, deprived of the possibility to contact their little homelands where they had been educated, where they had worked, established families, developed their own culture.

On March 5, 1946, in the American town of Fulton in the State of Missouri, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered a speech in which he talked about the "Iron Curtain" running from Szczecin to Trieste. Since then, the "Iron Curtain," a popular name for the post-Yalta order on the European continent, became a symbol of Europe divided after World War II into non-communist West-European countries, and East-European countries remaining under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union.

[7] Cf. P.M. Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011); M. Neiberg, *Potsdam: The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

2.2. Communism and national socialism

Nearly all of Ślipko's life is related to the two murderous totalitarian systems of government in Central and Eastern Europe: Russian communism and German national socialism. Studies conducted by many contemporary scholars clearly show that these totalitarian systems caused extensive moral and social destruction and disintegration of civilization in the 20th century. Communism and national socialism should be seen as very similar barbarian systems of slavery and violence, responsible for crimes of genocide on an unimaginable scale.[8]

How did these totalitarian ideologies justify violence and the murdering of innocent people? Why was the extermination of millions of individuals considered a necessary condition for creating a brave new world? How did the Marxist interpretation of morality substantiate the murderous methods employed by the communists? What did the communist and national socialist project mean of creating a new man and a new political order in the world?

Many valuable answers to these questions can be found in the works of Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), who was one of the pillars of the communist system at the early stage of its development. It is worth noting that Trotsky was born several hundred kilometers away from Ślipko's hometown—near Odessa, in Tsarist Russia, on the territory that is now part of Ukraine. He was a Russian Jew and his eventful life belongs to the drama of Slavic nations, Jews, and the entire Central and Eastern Europe of the 20th century.

Trotsky developed the myth of a new man who devotes himself entirely to the work of revolution and strives most diligently to destroy any remnants of the old morality within himself. His book written in 1938, entitled *Their Morals and Ours*,[9] is considered to be the classical textbook on Marxist ethics. It presents the reasons why it is good to destroy any embers of the old morality so that a new man can be born. In order to create paradise on earth, communism used

[8] Cf. A. Kobyliński, "From Nihilism to Communism: In Search of the Philosophical Roots of Totalitarian Regimes," *Acta Moralia Tyrnaviensia* 6 (2015), pp. 151–160.

[9] Cf. L. Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973).

three great categories of human thought: justice, equality, and freedom. Trotsky refers in his ethics to the concept of man who is naturally good, developed by the French philosopher Jacob Rousseau—we have lost this original goodness, but communism will restore it by transferring our existence to an entirely new level. In order to achieve such high and noble goals, macabre atrocities, bloody revolutions and countless victims are necessary.

> Trotsky believed that these goals would be achieved with the support of new educational systems. The construction of a new communist society and the psychophysical self-education of man would represent two sides to the same process. Various disciplines of science and art would lend exceptional, perfect form to this work. This way, humanity's eternal dream of a new better world would come true—a new communist man would emerge and create a new worldwide civilization. The communist revolution would make the average person achieve the developmental level of Aristotle, Goethe and Marx. Is this not a prophetic vision of building paradise on earth? Is this not a secular version of salvation?[10]

Trotsky is one of the most important authors of communist ideology. His military, political and literary activities contributed to the murder of millions of people. Continuing along the lines of the philosophical work of Karl Marx, he analyzed man and the world referring to the basic categories of a materialist worldview. In his writings, he focused more on a criticism of the capitalist society than on building an adequate ethical model for a classless society of the future, which—according to the assumptions of Marxist coryphaeuses—should be free from violence.

A central place in Trotsky's ethical reflection is occupied by the category of revolutionary morality, which refers to the dialectic relationship between means and ends. A dialectic relationship means that there are no good revolutionary means unless they go hand in hand with the process of the emancipation of the masses, the liberation and moral enrichment of the people. Within the framework of this revolutionary morality, the wrong is what forces hostile to communists do, and the right is what is done by protagonists of the Bolshevik

[10] A. Kobyliński, "The Marxist Concept of Revolutionary Morality According to Leon Trotsky," *Acta Moralia Tyrnaviensia* 7 (2016), p. 114.

revolution. This moral paradigm not only justified violence and crimes perpetrated for the sake of a utopian vision of the future, but also caused tensions within the very circle of the advocates of the new communist order themselves. The division into revolution and counter-revolution is not a sharp one, after all. Very often various currents of the worldwide communist system accused one another of counter-revolutionary activities.

A similar vision of building paradise on earth and a thousand-year-old Third Reich was developed by the German national socialism, in which an important role was played by the concept of new morality. This element of the Nazi thought, linking national socialism and communism, was pointed out, among others, by the German philosopher Rolf Zimmermann (b. 1944). His studies confirm that the most fundamental substantiation of the alleged need for crimes in communism and Nazism is the so-called salvation morality (*Erlösungsmoral*).[11] It talks about the possibility of the whole humanity achieving paradise on earth, as it is in history that man finds the meaning of his existence and the possibility of salvation. This way the communist and the Nazi ideology encase the *eschaton* in that which is immanent. The departure point for the immanentisation of the *eschaton* is the attribution of evil to history and its projection outside of man—on social conditions which are external to him.

Salvation morality is based on a normatively limited concept of humankind. The claim this project entails, of "saving" humanity, is most clearly pseudo-universal, as it is based on the domination of national socialist ideology and aimed towards the implementation of a strictly specified form of living accepted by rulers of the Third Reich. SS troops and other murderous Nazi formations were typical communities of moral transformation. It should be emphasized that particularly the SS units were not only an elite in the military sense, guided in their actions by ideological motives and those related to racial struggle. Their members also embodied the paradigm of ideal Nazi socialization and moral transformation which should serve the entire society as an educational model. The virtues of faithfulness, obedience,

[11] Cf. R. Zimmermann, *Philosophie nach Auschwitz. Eine Neubestimmung von Moral in Politik und Gesellschaft* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 2005); R. Zimmermann, *Moral als Macht. Eine Philosophie der historischen Erfahrung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 2008).

honor and fellowship were directly referred to the relationship with Adolph Hitler. This personification of virtues in the figure of the Führer climaxed in the oath taken by every SS-man who vowed to be faithful to Hitler until death.[12]

2.3. The revolution of "Solidarity" and the fall of the Berlin Wall

During the last period of his life, Ślipko witnessed the birth of "Solidarity" in Poland in 1980, the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the demise of the post-Yalta order in Europe, the regaining of independence by the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, the gradual transition from communism to post-communism and liberal democracy by countries of the former Eastern Bloc, Poland joining the European Union in 2004. The last twenty five years of Ślipko's philosophical work belongs to an entirely new historical epoch in which new ideas and intellectual currents emerged along with unprecedented moral and worldview challenges.

On June 4, 1989, partially free parliamentary elections were held in Poland which can be treated as a symbolic date of transitioning from communism to post-communism in countries which had been dominated by the Kremlin for several decades. In 1989, post-communism was born in Central and Eastern Europe, which began to gradually transform over the years into various forms of liberal democracy in different countries.[13] One of the first important books on post-communism was published in 1997 by the Australian-British political scientist Leslie Holmes, entitled *Post-Communism: An Introduction*.[14] This inspiring study analyses the positive and negative aspects of the phenomenon in the political, economic and social dimension. One of the few Polish researchers studying the phenomenon of post-communism is the well-known sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis, for many years

[12] Cf. A. Kobyliński, "Problem nowej moralności w komunizmie, faszyzmie i narodowym socjalizmie," *Logos i Ethos* 42, no. 2 (2016), pp.137–156.

[13] Cf. F. Argentieri, *Post-comunismo, terra incognita* (Roma: Edizioni Associate, 1994); P. Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[14] Cf. L. Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

connected with Warsaw University. In 2001, she published a book entitled *Postkomunizm. Próba opisu* [*Post-Communism: A Description*], which introduced the category of post-communism into the Polish public domain.[15]

Staniszkis gave this term the rank of a scientific concept which could be listed among such categories as totalitarianism, modernization, secularization, globalization, or capitalism. Her reconstruction of the phenomenon of post-communism will most likely enter the history of social sciences to stay. How should post-communism be defined, then? What does its essence consist of? How should the phenomenon be analyzed today? Staniszkis says that one of the main elements in the transition from communism to post-communism was a radical change in the understanding of state authority.

> One of the most fascinating phenomena in post-communism is the particular way in which the state declines. This process does not so much consist in the disappearance of its form (which in fact may even expand), but in a radical change of rationality. What I mean by a change of rationality is an eclipse of that which in Weber's concept of the modern state prevailing in social sciences accounts for its very essence. It is the end of a state as a hierarchically organized structure of procedures geared toward the best interests of the whole and based on a formal rationality which is homogenous in its logic and standards. According to Max Weber, it is this rationality, called procedural, that was the distinguishing feature of the modern state, next to the monopoly—also disappearing now—on the legitimized use of force on its territory and sole representation of its society on the outside, as well as being governed only by its own legislation.[16]

Staniszkis says that political institutions typical of democratic states are not the main centers of power in post-communist countries. In the societies of the former Eastern Bloc, a depoliticization of group life has occurred to a certain extent. The main mechanism responsible for the demise of a traditionally understood state in post-communist countries is the legacy of communism and globalization.

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[15] Cf. J. Staniszkis, *Postkomunizm. Próba opisu* (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2001).

[16] Cf. J. Staniszkis, *Postkomunistyczne państwo: w poszukiwaniu tożsamości* (Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2000), p. 4.

In Central and Eastern European countries, this was additionally compounded by integration with structures of the European Union, which also—albeit in a different way than the aftermath of communism and globalization—corrodes the institution of territorial state. Consequently, "cobweb states" emerged on the territories of the former Eastern Bloc, otherwise called "network states," in which no transparent political structures or centrally administered democracy is possible.

After 1989, a decentralization of state authority took place in post-communist countries. What does this mean? According to Staniszkis, the lack of a clear-cut center has appeared such as would be able to manage the whole of the state organism. Consequently, the state ceased to be the locus of trust and the point of reference for individual decisions of social or economic nature. That is why in former Eastern Bloc countries the period of post-communism is related to numerous pathologies: the birth of oligarchies, economic crime, reprivatisation scandals, lack of de-communization, the theft of national wealth, corruption, violation of basic principles of social justice, etc. Post-communism never created any permanent institutional whole and was not able to lead Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe out of the peripheries. Post-communist players proved to be exceedingly weak compared to global economic entities. Consequently, former Eastern Bloc countries have remained on the peripheries of the western world.

An inspiring diagnosis of the systemic transformation in this part of Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall has also been proposed by the Polish sociologist and social philosopher Zdzisław Krasnodębski. In 2003, he published a book in Polish entitled *Demokracja peryferii* [*The Democracy of the Peripheries*].[17] His analyses are most valuable in that they point to a very important element of the process of transformation from post-communism to liberal democracy in former Eastern Bloc countries. What is his main point? The author of *The Democracy of the Peripheries* claims that in post-communist countries a version of so-called selective liberalism has been implemented, causing many negative consequences in political, social and economic life.

Unfortunately, during the period of systemic transformation after 1989 a number of basic issues were eliminated from public debate in

[17] Cf. Z. Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii* (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2003).

post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe which are of fundamental importance for mature democracies of the western world. One of the most important problems was negligence in building a civil society and respecting the rules of social justice.

In the beginning of the 21st century, countries of the former Eastern Bloc began to reform their democratic mechanisms in various ways, gradually approaching the procedures which were in place in western countries. It should be stressed here that the adoption of selective liberalism in this part of Europe after 1989 as the prevailing model of political and economic life requires in-depth interdisciplinary studies today. Unfortunately, there are very few reliable scientific analyses of this problem.

Ślipko was born as a subject of the Austro-Hungarian empire. For many decades he had to struggle against the murderous ideologies of totalitarian systems; he was personally affected by the unimaginable atrocities of the 20th century. He died in a free and independent Poland, a member of the European Union. He lived in an exceptional historical epoch, and his philosophical studies were interwoven with the dramatic history of Poland and other nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, even today this region still largely remains a *terra incognita* for the citizens of Western Europe or the inhabitants of other continents. Consequently, many important intellectuals who write interesting books and articles in this part of the European continent remain largely unknown; Ślipko is certainly one of them. It should be most emphatically stated that his work cannot be understood without taking into account the specific nature of his times and their complicated history.

3.

The concept of philosophy

In his philosophical studies, Ślipko focused mostly on ethics, or practical philosophy, and he only investigated issues belonging to other philosophical disciplines to a limited extent. We may assume, however, that he embraced a collective understanding of philosophy, which according to him is made up of individual disciplines such as metaphysics, the theory of cognition, anthropology and natural theology. He believed in a systemic character of philosophy, in which metaphysics, the first philosophy, was to play the crucial role; first in the methodological sense, as its premises were supposed to provide the substantiation for all other philosophical disciplines.

3.1. Meta-philosophical views

From the point of view of contemporary epistemology, Ślipko was an advocate of metaphysical and epistemological fundamentalism. He claimed that we have certain irrefutable premises at our disposal which are the reason substantiating the whole of our knowledge. We find them in the theory of being, whose formal object, i.e. "being as being," determines the unity and coherence of the philosophical system. All other philosophical disciplines are distinguished by the fact that they usually have a separate starting point which provides them with relevant data for description and explanation. Metaphysics also provides us with schemes of argumentation, such as deductive and reductive reasoning, which allow us to obtain true and irrefutable

statements. Ślipko believed that for anyone doing philosophy (e.g. ethics) it was important to know its history. He understood it in a more problem-focused way, as a set of issues whose understanding allows us not only to develop our own viewpoint, but also to avoid mistakes already made by our predecessors.

Even though Ślipko never engaged in any philosophical disciplines other than ethics, he nevertheless clearly (though in general terms) presented his views concerning them. He did this particularly for the purposes of the system of Christian ethics he developed. Generally speaking, his views about the structure of being, cognition, man, or, within methodology, concerning the ways of substantiating theses, belong to essentialist Thomism. Contrary to many contemporary philosophical directions, Ślipko claimed that philosophy has its roots in common knowledge, and that man, using his natural cognitive skills, is able to capture the nature of being and the basic principles which determine the order of knowledge and action. He was an advocate of an autonomous concept of philosophy, which for him was not merely a generalization of empirical sciences. He saw the need for an autonomous starting point of philosophy, based on some kind of an experiential contact with reality. Yet he also saw a heuristic role of empirical sciences for philosophy, particularly ethics. He did not rule out the use of data obtained by sociology or the psychology of morality in ethics. The basic philosophical discipline is metaphysics, or the first philosophy. In metaphysics, under the influence of the Suaresian tradition, Ślipko emphasizes the essential element of being. This essence is captured in generic and specific notions. He accepted without proof the existence of the real world, which he understood in a pluralist and objectivist way. In philosophical epistemology, he was an advocate of (both metaphysical and epistemological) realism and objectivism of human cognition.[18] He distanced himself from constructivism derived from Kantian philosophy and from positivist phenomenalism, as well as extreme realism characteristic of various versions of Platonism and contemporary phenomenology. He rejected various forms of idealism which limited the object of knowledge to the immanence of consciousness. He was critical about all forms of extreme empiricism which narrowed down human experience to receiving various configurations of impressions or data coming from

[18] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2004), pp. 60–62.

the senses, making it impossible to rationally understand the supreme principles of being. He advocated moderate genetic empiricism as the source of knowledge, and rationalism in ways of substantiating it. He emphasized the role of intuition in obtaining initial premises and deduction in substantiating and systematizing knowledge. As for the status of general notions, he advocated moderate realism. He agreed with maximalist epistemology which says that the human mind can know not only truth about created beings, but also about God as the Absolute which is the ultimate reason for existence. With respect to philosophical anthropology, he was in principle an advocate of substantialism.[19] He rejected all forms of anti-substantialism which question the existence of an ontic "self" determining the identity of a moral subject. He believed in a theocentric and spiritualist anthropology. His anthropological views also have a clear personalist trait. In natural theology, he believed it is possible to know God rationally. He recognized the importance of this philosophical discipline in the substantiation of morality, particularly during the times of strong Marxist influences which radically negated the existence of any supernatural reality.

Ślipko made a number of meta-philosophical declarations when developing his system of ethics. He explicitly said that he was doing philosophy/ethics following the tradition of Christian philosophy, whose roots go back to antiquity.[20] He made it clear, however, that the name "Christian" belongs to philosophy not so much for methodological but rather for historical and cultural reasons. He was aware of the methodological difficulties posed by the name "Christian" used with reference either to philosophy or to ethics. He was an advocate of drawing on Thomism which he believed to be an adequate interpretation of Christian philosophy. He pointed out, however, that Thomism is not a homogenous philosophical system; in terms of its subject-matter and methodology it is significantly diversified; it would thus be more appropriate to talk about Thomisms instead. While advocating Thomism, he was of the opinion it needed to be supplemented with elements derived from other philosophical concepts. He ascribed particular role to Augustinian tradition in the development of Christian philosophy and ethics. While being aware

[19] Ibidem, pp. 62–63.

[20] Ibidem, pp. 19–25.

of shortages in both the Augustinian and Thomist approach, he attempted to create a synthesis of the two. He did not perform this synthesis on historical material, by confronting the texts of Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas, but referred to their contemporary interpretations instead. He proposed his own version as well, drawing on the achievements of contemporary phenomenology with a realistic undertone. He also took into account analyses of Christian existentialists. In his thought system as a whole, Thomism played a much more important role than Augustinism and its contemporary interpretations, which he believed included phenomenology, for instance. For Ślipko, Thomist philosophy in its corpus of fundamental truths is a "perennial philosophy" which despite criticisms has not in the least become outdated. It is still able to explain various data of experience, social and cultural phenomena. By challenging the premises of its criticisms, Ślipko believed that "after the entire line of argumentation has been thoroughly retraced, the final verdict will be in favor of the Thomist philosophy of morality."[21] The Jesuit philosopher did not claim that Thomism is a system which does not raise any concerns. In the criticism of Thomism formulated both in the circles of non-Christian (Marxists) and Christian philosophers (Tischner) he saw signs of a lack of objectivism and malevolence. He rightly stressed that there is no such thing as a neutral approach to philosophy, in particular to ethics which touches upon the most controversial issues of everyday life. Behind every view there are some arguments which are rooted in a particular philosophical concept, a certain worldview embraced by the philosopher.

3.2. Meta-ethical views

The metaethical analyses of the author of *An Outline of General Ethics* are rooted in his acceptance of a particular concept of philosophy. The Krakow Jesuit understood metaethics as a methodological reflection on ethics as a philosophical science.[22] It should be noted that he developed his ethical systems for specific didactic and educational purposes. The ethics he proposed belongs to the Augustinian and Thomist

[21] Ibidem, p. 22.
[22] Ibidem, p. 56.

tradition. It is a normative ethics, aimed at formulating specific norms and principles of human conduct.[23] The author himself called it an axionomic ethics, as apart from the experience of an ultimate goal and natural law it was also supposed to take into account the element of value. Ethics is a scientific knowledge which is intersubjectively verifiable and intersubjectively communicable. The scientific character of ethics consists in that it has at its disposal its own method of examining moral facts, a clearly defined objective goal, and its own object of study. In this sense, ethics is an ordered set of theoretical and practical statements. It is a philosophical science, because its goal is to discover the essential and constitutive components of human morality. No detailed science of morality undertakes such studies; this is prohibited by the methodology they employ. Moreover, ethics as a philosophical science is aimed at finding the ultimate explanation of morality. Its task is to identify a substantiation which is unchallengeable and unproblematizable. Ślipko says: "Its task is first of all to build a morally normative theory of human actions, by employing the methods of philosophical reflection to develop a logically coherent set of ethical propositions, properly systematized and substantiated."[24]

Based on findings of the classic methodology of sciences developed in the Middle Ages by Thomas Aquinas, Ślipko defines the material and formal object of ethics. The material object of ethics is human actions, and its formal object, i.e. the aspect from whose point of view human actions are analyzed, is the morality of these actions.[25] The formal object also determines the difference in the researcher's approach to human actions. Their morality is examined in a different way by so-called empirical moral sciences, and in a different way by ethics. Empirical moral sciences, such as ethology, are not interested in the normative aspects of actions, but in their descriptive aspects. They are interested in what morality "is" like, while ethics is concerned with what morality "should be" like. Ethics takes into account only normative aspects, which does not mean it neglects descriptive aspects; after all, they are important for the so-called specification of actions. Empirical sciences do not solve any normative issues. In its considerations, ethics

[23] Ibidem, pp. 35–40.

[24] Ibidem, p. 38.

[25] Ibidem, p. 41.

> ... thus goes beyond the phenomenal sphere of morality which includes so-called direct causes. Ethics as a philosophical and normative science tries to discover those reasons which determine the reality proper to morality; the reality which is transcendental to experience, but which—as has just been said—can be known through its mediation. This also means that in the search for the proper object of ethics within the framework of morality perceived as a whole, we must focus on the area which is delimited by its formal object. Only in this area can the authentic form of a moral being be developed, and not in the sphere of the material object constituted first of all by acts of choice.[26]

This goal, therefore, is the ultimate explanation of a moral being, which consists in identifying the ultimate reasons constituting its nature.

As for the objective source of ethics, it is first of all experience. Thus, philosophical ethics as a normative theory of human actions differs from moral theology. While the latter also studies human actions from the point of view of morality, its starting point is substantially different from that of ethics. Moral theology draws data for its analyses from religious revelation, which is its ultimate authority. While it is based on the data of revelation, in their interpretation it can use philosophy and empirical sciences. Philosophical ethics does not begin with any revelation, but states basic moral facts and explains them based on experience and using natural cognitive powers.[27]

At the starting point of ethical analyses, Ślipko consistently refers to the data supplied by common knowledge.[28] He believes them to be instructive in establishing ethical facts making up an integrally understood phenomenon of morality[29]. It consists of the experience of a goal, the imperative of natural law which is expressed by inclination and values. The reference to data of common knowledge is an

[26] Ibidem.

[27] Ibidem, p. 52.

[28] Cf. P. Duchliński, "Od fenomenologii do metafizyki wartości. Aksjologia tomistyczna Ks. Tadeusza Ślipko," in *Żyć etyką – żyć etycznie. Księga Pamiątkowa ku czci T. Ślipko*, ed. R. Janusz (Kraków: Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna Ignatianum; Wydawnictwo WAM, 2009), pp. 77–107.

[29] Ślipko also refers critically to the proposal of the ethics of decision developed by Krąpiec and personalistic ethics by Styczeń. He believes that both these proposals do not present the concept of integral moral fact.

analysis of consciousness, which does not presume any systemically determined point of view yet.[30] The analysis of common consciousness is supposed, the philosopher believes, to help us initially formulate a particular ethical problem. By referring to the data of common knowledge, Ślipko wants to emphasize, firstly, that the phenomenon of morality is not something that an ethicist constructs during his research work, and secondly, wants to uphold the empirical starting point of ethics. Experience is the only source of knowledge about ethical facts.

> Limiting ourselves to data derived from common knowledge, we may say that when people evaluate relevant classes of acts, they reduce them to three basic categories. They call some of them morally good, others morally wrong, and finally there are some which are called morally indifferent, i.e. such as at least at first sight do not have any moral classification. Thus, they should be called acts which are morally indeterminate.[31]

The description of an integrally understood ethical fact is the so-called pre-systemic and problem-generating stage. It is limited to the so-called philosophy of moral consciousness. That is why an important role at this stage is played by the construction of a system of phenomenological description. This description is realistic and eidetic. It engages cognitive activities such as intuition and abstraction. At this stage, we are not dealing, however, with explaining that which is revealed to us by experience. The phenomenological description only allows us to explicate data and perform their initial classification. Ślipko believes that ethics cannot limit itself to the descriptive stage, if it is to discover more constructive and essential structures of morality. From a phenomenological description it must move to employing more advanced research methods which will allow it to validate particular theoretical and practical statements expressing the constitutive features of morality. The transfer from the pre-systemic to the systemic stage, where we are dealing with the proper philosophy of moral being, clearly explicated using relevant premises of general philosophy, takes place by employing new methods of research which

[30] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 48–49. The author presents the method of the proposed ethics there.

[31] Ibidem, p. 165.

substantiate particular theses. Therefore, as the author of *An Outline of General Ethics* emphasizes,

> ... apart from referring to experience, strictly rational operations are employed as well. The most important of these include: a) intellectual intuition which consists in capturing and demonstrating the direct self-evidence of a statement by way of a logical analysis of the subject and the predicate; b) direct explanation, demonstrating the correctness of a statement by showing that it follows from other, more certain statements; and finally c) deduction, that is indirect reasoning. It should be pointed out, however, that aside from asserting the possibility of substantiating ethical statements (despite some directions negating this possibility) and listing the formal types of operations involved, no detailed assumptions in terms of content have been made on whose basis such substantiations could be built. Such findings, however, depend on the normative solutions of particular philosophical and ethical problems.[32]

The last problem which belongs to meta-ethics and which should be mentioned here is the issue of a methodological classification of ethics. The classification criterion used by Ślipko is an objective one. Ethics is divided into departments according to the problems it considers, or, more precisely, according to categorially grouped acts of action. This division does not remove the objective and methodological unity which is warranted by the formal object of ethics and the specified procedures of explaining moral acts. Consequently, all departments of ethics are related by content. The relationships between them are genetic, epistemological, metaphysical, and methodological. In line with the approach found in Thomist textbooks, Ślipko divides ethics into: general ethics, i.e. so-called fundamental ethics, and detailed ethics, such as e.g. bioethics, the ethics of individual or social life. This division, performed by the author in an improved form, was present already in traditional textbooks of neo-Thomist ethics. Fundamental ethics, in the concept proposed by Ślipko, includes the following treatises: general philosophical assumptions; the science of human acts; the science of the goal and meaning of human existence, or eudemonology as the science of man's ultimate happiness; the science of moral good and moral values, or axiology; the science of moral

[32] Ibidem, p. 49.

imperatives (natural moral law), or deontology; the science of conscience, i.e. syneidesiology; the science of moral virtues, or aretology; and the science of moral responsibility for actions performed by the subject. In detailed ethics, categorially defined groups of man's actions are analyzed, referred to God, oneself, or various dimensions of individual and social life.

Ślipko proposes to the contemporary audience a type of maximalist ethics[33]. In maximalist ethics of a metaphysical nature, of which Ślipko's ethics certainly is one, the questions asked are: "Why ought man to do anything at all?" or "Why is there good and evil?" Even though it is a systemic and maximalist ethics, it does not forfeit its open character. In the last years of his life, Ślipko did not claim he had created a closed and self-contained ethical system in which everything had already been definitively said on the issue of morality. The wealth of content we experience every day in moral facts makes it impossible to attempt a complete systematic study. Aware of the challenges brought by contemporary times, Ślipko pointed to the need for confronting his proposal of ethics with other contemporary concepts, which due to his old age he was unable to do himself. He left this task to those who would take over the creative effort of continuing his concept of ethics, full of a visionary momentum.

In conclusion, we may say that Ślipko was a thinker who remained faithful to the foundations throughout his life, but never to radical fundamentalism. In his research, he followed the Jesuit principle known as *praesupponendum* in Latin, and which means an attempt to save what is said by another person. In every viewpoint he always tried to see first of all that which is positive, while not overlooking the negative aspects. With his characteristic sensitivity, far from any radicalism, he knew how to talk about the most tragic ethical dilemmas which affected his contemporaries. With his attitude in life and with all that he created, he wrote a beautiful page in the Polish history of ethics.

[33] Terminology borrowed from Stanisław Kamiński.

4.

Christian ethics: An attempt at a systemic analysis

In the writings of Tadeusz Ślipko, the most important role is played by three textbooks he authored, including one on general (i.e. fundamental) ethics, and two representing detailed ethics: personal and social. It is here that the Professor's original views may be found concerning ethics and its philosophical foundations. These textbooks are partially based on the French, German and Polish models of treatises on morality. Taken together, they form a whole in terms of composition and are aimed at presenting the standpoint of Christian ethics on key moral issues. This standpoint will be considered in view of (1) that which distinguishes it from other interpretations developed in historic and contemporary concepts of ethics, and (2) that which characterizes Christian ethics, determining its specific nature and philosophical validity. Ślipko introduces two additional moments which determine the status of Christian ethics and its rooting in tradition and contemporary times. They consist in studies on the approach of ethics to general philosophical systemic assumptions, and its grounding in moral experience. The latter of these two moments refers to the hermeneutical layer of ethics, i.e. the description of problems, terms, categories, and traditional views. In other words, explanation/understanding encompasses not only the content of the problem itself, but also the possibilities of viewing and interpreting it, as well as the resulting meanings.

Thus, by learning what moral problems are and how they apply to man and his actions, Ślipko tries to explain to the reader the very essence of ethics, by arranging his discussion in the following sequence: description, characteristic, analysis, explanation, and interpretation. It follows in an arrangement, or rather arrangements, which are inspired by the question about the objective and absolute foundations of morality. When studying Ślipko's ethics, one must try to capture the meaning of these processes, arrangements, levels, and their functions. For this reason, this chapter will be divided into two main parts. In the first one, the first three volumes of ethics will be presented, together with the main assumptions of sexual ethics. The second one will discuss and analyze the monograph on bioethics mentioned above. At the foundations of each of these works on ethics, we will find common assumptions concerning the interpretation of ethics in the Thomist system, metaphysics, and anthropology. They concern the structure of being, the concept of man as a psychophysical being, and the normative character of human nature in which the objective order of morality is substantiated.

4.1. General ethics

Ślipko proposes an understanding of ethics that is broad enough to include all theoretically possible approaches. He is interested in a synthetic approach to ethics, such as would link extreme interpretations: for example, empiricism and idealism, or the ethics of values and the ethics of norms. Ślipko assumes that the normative dimension of ethics is a fundamental one, but in relation to other supreme categories, such as values, goals, good. The main question he addresses to ethics is concerned with objective and absolute foundations of morality. Reflections on these foundations are presented in his textbook on general ethics. The form of a textbook imposes certain specific, cognitive tasks, which the author expands and develops. It should be added that according to the Jesuit philosopher, textbooks should perform at least three functions. Their main purpose is to give a lecture on ethics with certain theoretical assumptions; in this case, this concerns systemic, general philosophical assertions. The second goal, related to the first one, is to develop ethical argumentation and identify its objective, rational foundations, free from

any worldview or ideological convictions. The third task of ethics is to undertake new problems and attempt at overcoming theoretically or practically conditioned antinomies and difficulties.

Moral reality was conceived by Ślipko as an integral, coherent whole made up of several different, essential elements, i.e. moral facts: good and goal, valuation and values, norms and moral law. This integrity is based on basic moral experiences and their content, which can be reduced to the following primary facts: goal, good, value, and obligation. The fact they are derived from experience has two-fold consequences for ethics: it determines its autonomy in terms of content, and implies the wealth and diversity of its source data. They have been submitted by Ślipko to a multi-layered moral analysis within the framework of embrace eudemonology, axiology, and deontology. From the two possible interpretations: the emotional and the rational one, Ślipko chooses the latter, referring to the general philosophical assumptions of the system.

Asking about the objective and absolute foundations of morality, Ślipko had to embrace the rational dimension of ethics. It is worth noting that the question about the nature of ethics determines the goal of studies, which are aimed at discovering the objective structures of morality rather than their subjective, emotional experiences. This way, the author introduced two very important changes in the area of traditionally understood Thomist ethics: by distinguishing several basic ethical facts, mentioned above, and by studying each of them separately. Christian ethics usually advocated either an eudemonological or a deontological interpretation of morality. Next to eudemonology and deontology, Ślipko also developed axiological problems. Special attention should be paid to the chapter on axiology, at least for two reasons. In the 1970s, these problems were not discussed in Thomist textbooks, so the author provided an in-depth discussion of the theory of values and moral valuation. By answering questions about what values are, what ontic status they enjoy, and what their hierarchy is, what moral and existential functions they perform, what determines their objective and absolute character, Ślipko analyses such difficult issues as, for example, the reasons for and possible solutions to the conflict between the scopes of values.

Ślipko also deals with such cognitively complex problems as defining the constitutive principle of moral values, pointing to the integrity of human nature and its being goal-ordered. This ordering

is determined by two elements: the personalist and the perfectionist one; moral values are thus concerned with the dignity of persons and with personal improvement. In his reflections on values, Ślipko refers to metaphysical, anthropological and moral analyses from which one can conclude both what morality is as a specific reality, and what essential functions are attributed to it. These studies show what moral phenomena are, what determines their existence, and what endows them with moral meaning. Owing to such an in-depth study of values, this is the best approach to these problems found in textbooks on Christian ethics.

In order to fully appreciate the importance of this work, we need to look at the description of the moral specification of man's acts, simple and complex ones, which precedes it. This is where Ślipko, like in all of his studies, expands the problem of specification, and provides detailed moral criteria of evaluation together with new definitions. The issue of moral typology of human actions implies axiological reflections, and this way a logical relationship is maintained between integral moral order and the results of analyses performed on human acts. This relationship includes both axiology, eudemonology, and deontology, and concerns various moral aspects of intentional and deliberate action. These aspects are not only moral postulates, but result from an analysis of the phenomenon which, in the case of eudemonology, is the pursuit of a goal. In the case of deontology, reflections are concerned with the structure of a deontic phenomenon and its moral meaning. In order to discover the moral sense of the phenomenon of moral obligation, Ślipko investigates both the structure of moral norm, the bases of its objectivity, universality and invariability, as well as their relationship with new experiences in terms of society and civilization. In result of these descriptions and analyses, we receive an account of the traditional interpretation of moral law with an extended argumentation, a descriptive layer, and modification of the understanding of the universality of the moral normative order. From the point of view of these reflections as a whole, Ślipko's standpoint can be defined as conventional, i.e. consistent with the tradition. Looking at it from the perspective of the integrity of the foundations of ethics, new findings and the resulting definitions, however, his development of deontology reveals considerable changes in the approach to the phenomenon. The reason for this is that Ślipko expands the foundations of deontology with

ontic and anthropological aspects, thus supplementing the Thomist approach with the personal dimension of obligation. They lead to ordering, synthesizing the findings made so far, and introduce new issues resulting from structural subjective-objective relationships.

Let us add that the methodically conducted studies presented in Ślipko's textbooks involve a carefully developed argumentation and corresponding substantiation of the main thesis. These changes encompass the entire notional apparatus, which lends precision to his standpoint. The term "precision" refers to interpretative procedures aimed at supplementing, enriching, and updating the analyzed problems as part of a dialogue held with contemporary philosophical concepts. Let us say once again that Ślipko's monographs on ethics are an attempt at a comprehensive, conceptual presentation of moral problems. At the same time, the main area of interest for the Polish philosopher is objective moral order, with the subjective moral order discussed to a lesser extent. This disproportion is substantiated both in tradition and in the main task the author endeavors to accomplish. It consists in looking for objective and absolute foundations of morality, that is, in capturing moral reality as a supra-individual order, primary with respect to human practices, choices and commitments. This procedure of substantiation encompasses several stages, the most important of which refers to the transcendent foundations of morality: God conceived as the ultimate goal, the prototype of virtue, and the absolute legislator. The preceding stages refer to human nature and its purposefulness, and to person and their dignity. These two categories, nature and person, are the foundations of morality, pointing to and substantiating the thesis that man is a moral being. And this means that his natural and personal development requires the presence of good, value, and obligation. Which leads to judgments of conscience, the acquisition of virtues, and to taking responsibility.

For these reasons the author of *An Outline of General Ethics* attaches so much weight to finding the correct answer to the question about the relationship which links objective moral order with man's individual actions and personal development. The point is, then, to identify the foundations which link the objective and the subjective order, while recognizing their separate existence on the one hand and personal freedom on the other, leading to subjective choices. This relationship is considered against the background of a description and analysis of conscience, virtues, and moral responsibilities. Their

functions and meanings are strictly related to the concept of will and reason in their subjective and objective dimensions, i.e. in the dimension of the acting subject seen in relation to the object of action in the form of particular choices, goods, values and obligations. By making a conscious and intentional choice, the subject makes use of virtues they have acquired, which render this choice effective. In their conscience, the subject evaluates their own acts based on the judgment of practical reason, and takes responsibility for them. Since they are personal acts, they have a real impact on man's development and his moral improvement. They are relationally linked to the ontic structure of a person, which creates a permanent relationship between the objective and the subjective moral order, and thus also between the subjective and objective side of personal agency. This linking consists of three "primary relationships."

Ślipko writes:

> Our reflections have thus led us to discovering three elementary structures within the immanent human reality on which morality ordering man's rational actions is based. They include the relationship of the human person to an immanent goal (optimum development of one's own personality), the relationship of the inner purposefulness of individual elements of human nature to actualization of the model of personal perfection (i.e. a rational, integral and ordered nature), and finally the relationship of the necessity for the human person to improve themselves by performing actions which are morally equitable (i.e. moral law).[34]

The issue discussed here concerns mutually interrelated problems which are fundamental for ethics and this is why their significance can hardly be overestimated considering the whole project of ethics, represented by its theoretical and practical coherence and consistency with the objective and absolute dimension of morality. The ontic structure of the human person, seen from the perspective of its integrity and goal-oriented ordering, explains and substantiates the existence of an inner relationship between the good of a person, their dignity, and the objective moral order. This relationship of dependence encompasses the primary structures and their dynamism, as well as the intentional side of morality, i.e. the desire to strive

[34] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 324–325.

towards good. Personal agency is based on individual choices, experiences and judgments, but goods which are realized in these acts are transitive. The person acquires moral qualities corresponding to the values and obligations they choose and implement, assuming that they are, with respect to the acting person, a transcendental and actual reality, in line with the assumptions of ethics discussed here. From this research perspective it results that on the ontic level, the meaning and essence of morality is determined by the concept of human nature, while on the level of acting and choosing goals, goods, values, and obligations, it is an individual personal subject. What, then, is a person, and why is it a supreme ethical category? Who is a personal subject and what are their functions in relation to personal agency?

The notion of the "person"[35] is related to yet another area of Ślipko's reflections, namely the problem of moral improvement. By implementing particular values and norms, a person acquires certain moral qualities: they become morally good or bad. As a result of personal acts of reason and will, as well as the judgment of conscience (there being antecedent and subsequent conscience), personal actions are characterized by agency. An attribute of personal action is the freedom of choice, and the capacity for self-determination that is connected to it. The choice of good is always related to an act of self-determination, to who one wants to be as a concrete person. Personal agency is expressed in this ethical turning towards oneself. An attribute of personal being, i.e. of existing and acting, is personal dignity, and which plays an exceptional role in Ślipko's ethics. Taking this into account, it is necessary not only to become more thoroughly acquainted with Ślipko's standpoint as regards the dignity of a person, but also think about how these reflections affect the understanding of the practical side of morality.

In the recently published anthology of texts written by Ślipko, there is an interesting fragment entitled "Moralne determinanty godności człowieka" ["Moral Determinants of Man's Dignity"], where the author points out that all personal moral determinants have their metaphysical, primary sources in the human nature. They can be reduced to two mutually complementary elements: the personalist

[35] "Man as a person is an autonomous being (*sui iuris*)—Ślipko claims—which means that he is a subject capable of acting in his own name, thus becoming the agent of his own development." Ibidem, p. 227.

one, related to dignity, and the perfectionist one, referring to a person's capacity for moral improvement. While dignity is the point of reference for agency, the process of personal improvement results from concrete personal acts. In each of them, dignity performs a regulating function with respect to the affirmed values or norms. This function consists in that the recognition of dignity, its acknowledgement, determine the moral value of a particular good or obligation. By introducing the term "regulating function," we want to point to the presence of two relationships, i.e. two ways of referring morality to a person: the affirmation of dignity in every moral act, and the person's improvement, i.e. their acquisition of certain moral qualities. Consequently, it is assumed that moral improvement is always a form of accepting personal value, and its essential function is to endow the moral order with a personal character. This way values, goods and norms always apply to a person, affirming and improving them. Taking into account its complex personal structure, this improvement encompasses its various spiritual dimensions. For this reason, ethicists refer to values and goods represented by ethics, religion, culture and art. Under the influence of moral improvement, a person acquires and develops virtues, which are dispositions to act in a good and rational, i.e. right way. Personal improvement seen as a process influences the person's subjective development. Ślipko links it to acts of conscience and willingness to take responsibility for one's own deeds. On this level, interpersonal relationships are formed and develop, such as love, friendship, or benevolence.

Dignity not only endows morality with the new quality of personal value, but represents an ethical value itself, rooted in human nature. For this reason, a person not only develops, but also improves under the influence of their own acts. Values in Ślipko's ethics are seen as models, ideals of action, which is why dignity is said to act as the axis of moral life, directing it towards the model, or ideal, of personal dignity, which not only ensures the person's improvement, but also their relationship with others, including God. Thus, the issue of personalism introduces into man's life a certain moral order, determined by personal dignity. In acts of self-determination, a person freely chooses goods. Their moral measure is personal dignity, or the value of a person. It is given together with human nature, and posed as an affirmative value. Personal improvement is a process related to moral self-determination of a particular subject in their acts of com-

prehensive development. We may now take the next step and explain what moral determinants of man's dignity consist in. Ślipko lists four of them in order to emphasize the main moral functions attributed to dignity: (1) dignity places before men the supreme ideal of man's personal perfection, (2) dignity refers directly to objective values and moral imperatives, (3) dignity, referring to supreme values, is one of the most important ethical motives of personal action, links the good of the person with the good of others, and defines the obligations of one person with respect to another, (4) dignity also influences the judgments of conscience in which the affirmation of a person becomes the proper norm and criterion in judging human behavior.

These functions, in reference to moral order, also lead to a number of general conclusions. The most important one of them concerns the position of dignity which binds moral order with a person, their perfection, agency, and conscience. This is possible because dignity as a personal value is the model, measure and criterion of that which improves a person, what is good for them, and what is dictated by moral imperatives. This is why the situation of a person/persons is exceptional, because it applies directly to their way of existence. To be a person means to have dignity, and this entails the highest moral obligation to accept it. This, in turn, requires the actualization of relevant values and norms. This moral obligation applies to all persons. This is what the exceptionality of dignity consists in—it links morality with every person, which translates into judgments of conscience, into the motivation to act well. The meaning of morality has its roots in the linking of three moments: the absolute obligation to affirm a person in moral acts, the person's improvement, and their self-determination. Morality thus determines the way of being a human person in accordance with their dignity and capacity for self-improvement. As regards actions performed by a person, i.e. personal agency, morality is therefore complex, dynamic, and real.

In general ethics, Ślipko studied, in a logically systematic way, the moral foundations of human actions, their goals and functions, with particular emphasis on the good of the human person. The most important conclusions of these studies can be summarized as follows: (1) it is assumed that ethics is a theory of morality[36] (or the science

[36] "Christian ethics in its Thomist form still represents a valid and relevant theory of morality." T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, p. 35.

of morality), i.e. the science of general principles of moral conduct; (2) general ethics develops a comprehensive outline of the moral order, which is then reflected in detailed ethics[37]; (3) the science of morality has its ontic foundations in rational human nature, thence its objective and universal character; (4) the structure of morality encompasses the subjective and objective order—seen from the perspective of human nature, moral order is goal-oriented,[38] and considered from the perspective of a person, it aims at attaining their good. Judgments of practical reason are the source of deliberate choices of good, the will enables such choices and the selection of appropriate means, and dignity links free and deliberate personal acts with comprehensive development ensuring the person's moral improvement; (5) comprehensive moral development is directed towards and subordinated to the good of the person, requires their participation in various forms of interpersonal relationships in the private and public sphere; (6) human nature is open to man's individual and social development, and therefore the good of a community is directly related to the good of an individual. In its moral aspects, common good is related to personal good; it is a kind of participation and symbiosis; (7) deliberate violation of personal dignity by a community, or depriving a person of the possibility to participate in the choice and realization of common good, or a person's deliberate resignation from participation in common good create a field of conflicts which from the moral point of view are equally wrong; (8) dignity as the value of a person requires affirmation, and as a norm expressing the imperative to recognize the dignity of every human being is the moral foundation of the relationship between an individual and a community,

[37] This "traditional" standpoint, which Ślipko adopts in his works on detailed ethics, is generally abandoned today, particularly in the field of applied ethics where it is assumed that the structure and goals of ethics do not coincide with the specific nature of these particular domains of human activity to which they apply. It is therefore not possible to simply "transfer" general norms to other domains without taking into account the "ever wider, consensual horizons of application." H. Kramer, *Etyka integralna*, trans. M. Poręba (Nowa Wieś; Toruń: Wydawnictwo Rolewski, 2004), p. 261.

[38] Ślipko writes: "Since the capacity of a particular good to improve a person as person is grounded in the internal purposefulness of particular powers or the existential structure of particular things, then it presumes a permanent relationship of correspondence between such powers or things and the ideal model of personal perfection." T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, p. 228.

as well as that between an individual and other individuals. Understood this way, dignity does not constitute morality, but endows it with its specific quality of perfection represented by the good of a human person.

Making all of the above assumptions, Ślipko builds a two-fold system of ethics: a general and a detailed one. General ethics points to universal norms, goals, goods and values, which are then transferred to the field of detailed ethics and are applied to specific situations. This way, a concept of ethics with Thomist roots becomes a system transcribed into three levels: the transcendental, the immanent (human nature) and the dynamic (person as a moral subject) dimension of morality. The third level points to the exceptional role of dignity which links the subjective and the objective, i.e. personal order, and consequently represents the moral point of reference for all interpersonal relationships. Understood this way, dignity refers to the personalist assumptions made in Ślipko's ethics.[39]

The subject's activity, as described by Ślipko, finds its foundations in a goal-ordered and integrated human nature and in its personal striving towards perfection, identified with its good. The essence of morality, Ślipko says, consists in improving a person in line with their destination to eternal life. This ordering of personal nature encompasses the meaning of life and the truth about the purposefulness of human existence. Moral development has its ontic foundations in the human nature, in its purposefulness and integration, and is accomplished by the human person, i.e. by a subject who is capable of acting in a conscious and deliberate way. It is worth noting that the last two claims do not only determine the moral status of a person, but also the person's existential self-determination. The good of a person remains in a two-fold relationship to their dignity and striving towards moral improvement. These claims assert, respectively, that (1) "the human person is a fundamental moral value which constitutes the world of generically specified values and the corresponding world of moral norms that are based on it … . (2) A special manifestation of the moral content of the human person is that it represents the source of man's fundamental rights … and the corresponding

[39] "The personalist aspect—Ślipko explains—reveals the dignity of the human person and their capacity for development unto the fullness of their own, proper, personal perfection." Ibidem, p. 227.

obligations."[40] These claims, as well as some others, point to the nature of relationships between the personal subject and moral values and norms. There are numerous relationships and interdependencies between the value of a person, i.e. their dignity, and values actualized in their actions. Reference should also be made to relationships occurring between the essence of a person and the subjective moral (axiological and normative) order and between the essence of a person and their rights and obligations. These relationships result from the recognition of who a person is as a value and what morality is as a reality which corresponds to the subjective condition of a person. In the light of what has been said so far, personal improvement explains not only the meaning of morality, but is first of all an implementation of its inherent purposefulness. The initial reflections we have made should be supplemented with yet another statement, namely that the goal of a person is moral improvement, which can only be achieved in contacts with other people. It is together with them that a person establishes valuable relationships, open to various forms and kinds of justice and love.

It results from the above conclusions that none of the stages in the analysis of morality mentioned above fully explains what the moral phenomenon is and what functions it performs. Only when all stages of description and analysis are synthesized can we reconstruct the objective and universal moral order which consists of many complex elements, forming a diversified arrangement of mutual relationships of dependence: goal-good, good-happiness, value-norm. The foundation of objective and absolute moral principles is made up of: the purposefulness of human nature, and the good of a person. They find their end and fulfilment in becoming united with God.[41] Man's calling and the meaning of morality mutually complement each other, since the question about how man should live and act is related to the reflection on why he—a free being—is bound by any particular

[40] Ibidem, p. 94.

[41] In his reflections on the problem of the ultimate goal and meaning of human life, Ślipko, like other Thomist authors, presumes the existence of a transcendental and immanent goal, taking as the point of reference man's striving towards a goal, good and happiness which will find its complete fulfilment in God. "The actual strength of the argumentation"—Ślipko explains, "consists … in the assumption that there is a God, a being who is absolute and who is the efficient cause of human existence." Ibidem, p. 124.

moral principles. Dignity understood as a personal value is one of the essential elements of the answer to the question about how to act morally and why moral principles should be observed. It is because, let us repeat after Ślipko, these principles lead to moral development, and consequently to the improvement of the human person in line with that person's natural purposefulness and good. Ślipko's reflections on the object of practical reason concern both the subjective and the objective side of acting. Referring to the objective and subjective order, it is worth paying attention to three moments characteristic for the approach we are discussing here. The first one has to do with the integrity of diversified ethical facts, the second with relationships occurring between goal and good, and between value and obligation. Consequently, this leads to the construction of a hierarchy of goods, values, and specification of the importance of normative principles, so that they can be ultimately linked to the goal and good of a person, realized in their acts of self-determination. Man's ability to take deliberate and free actions points to his agency, which finds its moral foundations in the conscience and the sense of responsibility. This means that principles given in the conscience represent the source of practical judgment, and thus moral evaluation encompasses the action (or the intention) and its doer.

The wealth of topics and issues touched upon in general ethics suggests further comments about the position of this ethics with respect to contemporary ethics, including moral philosophy of Christian orientation. It should be most explicitly emphasized that Ślipko's standpoint in ethics should be defined as a dialogical one. This dialogue concerns both the way of doing ethics, its goals and tasks, as well as its Christian roots; it is both external and internal. It encompasses various versions of "secular" philosophy as well as Thomist approaches. In this "conversation," arguments are proposed, views are contrasted, confrontations occur, all resulting in the specific shape of the ethical system. Such approach is consistent with Ślipko's belief that the wealth and cognitive possibilities of ethics can be fully developed only when it is based on the tradition of Christian thought. This tradition, however, must be read anew and linked to the inner logic of morality.

The subjective-objective concept of ethics developed by Ślipko and analyzed herein serves as the background for studies concerning the problems of detailed ethics and bioethics. This provides for their

systemic continuity, with further reflections being focused on concrete topics related to the life and selected fields of man's activity and community (i.e. society). In this part of Ślipko's ethical work, the emphasis and the tasks are different than on the pages of *An Outline of General Ethics*. The topics he discusses are inspired not only by older textbooks of neo-Thomist ethics, but also by contemporary concepts, often presenting radically different solutions of the same moral problems.

4.2. Detailed ethics

Ślipko defines detailed ethics as a "philosophical science formulating rules, or judgments and norms of moral actions, applicable to generically defined categories of human acts."[42] This definition is structurally similar to the definition of ethics as a philosophical science. It should be noted, however, that it includes a new, rather important expression, namely: "generically defined categories of human acts." General ethics considers human acts (actions) seen *in genere* and the morality they reflect. Detailed ethics, on the other hand, according to this definition, considers human actions grouped into genres, or categories. This classification is only possible because, as the author of *An Outline of Detailed Ethics* asserts, "there are certain fixed elements in the structure of these acts, identical in each one of them."[43] These fixed, essential elements of human acts are captured by the capacity of the human reason for abstract cognition. Discovering the essential elements contained in the structure of these acts, the reason formulates individual, categorically ordered classes of human acts. "Examples of generically defined human acts include telling the truth, doing a favor to someone in need, paying back one's debts, doing one's job; but also their contradictions, such as telling lies, being unkind, etc."[44] Grouped into various genres and subgenres, human acts are the "material subject matter" of detailed ethics, whose goal is to develop rules and moral judgments for these acts. The so-called formal subject matter of detailed ethics, on the other hand, is morality

[42] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2005), p. 21.

[43] Ibidem, p. 20.

[44] Ibidem, p. 41.

which is actualized in particular actions. An assertion to the effect that a particular action is morally good or bad consists in referring it to a certain normative standard which has been developed on the grounds of general ethics. There is one problem which needs to be noted here, related to the transition from general to detailed norms. In view of this difficulty, Ślipko says:

> On the other hand, detailed moral rules are general enough to encompass within their scope all specific acts belonging to their relevant genres, and represent the overriding moral directive common to all of them.[45]

Having generically defined human acts as its subject matter, detailed ethics thus moves away from the general and abstract notion of a human act, and towards the practice of morality which is always implemented in specific human acts, in specific situations and circumstances.

Personal ethics

Detailed ethics has several domains, the first of which is the so-called personal ethics. In personal ethics, Ślipko discusses problems considered in view of three fundamental relationships linking the human person to God, to themselves, and to other people and nature. The goal, therefore, is to identify the norms which regulate a person's relationship to God, to themselves, and to other people and the natural environment. These three relationships, referred to in Thomist ethics, point to the theist, spiritualist and communal dimension of personal ethics. In line with these distinguished relationships determining the categories of personal activity, the entire discussion has been divided into several basic parts, i.e. treatises which include chapters and sections. Both the treatises and their chapters have been subordinated to three general departments. This complex structure is consistent with the author's intention to retain the traditional division of regulatory norms (departments, treatises), with an extensive descriptive and analytical part, and include new elements of the problems discussed together with a new conceptual apparatus (chapters and sections).

[45] Ibidem, p. 21.

In the first part, the author deals with moral rules determining man's relationship to God, which may be considered from two points of view: the theist and the atheist. Issues discussed in this part include the specific features proper to a religious and an atheist approach, namely: a sense of dependence upon God, belief in his goodness, greatness and superiority, faith in the actual existence of Transcendence. Features proper to the atheist approach, on the other hand, include conviction about non-existence of any Transcendence, and belief in the existence of the temporal world alone. This philosophical description of approaches has been based on internal and external experience, studied by various sciences. The source of moral obligations towards God is the acceptance of religion, related to the general norm which makes it imperative to perform morally good acts. Asking whether there exists any general, moral imperative to adopt the religious approach, the author refers to man's existential dependence on God. This dependence is the basis for the conviction that there is a moral imperative which says that man should adopt a religious attitude, providing that this imperative applies to true, i.e. revealed religions. Against this background, an interesting evaluation is presented of the atheist approach which denies the existence of God and considers the temporal world to be the only source of morality. The basis for making this evaluation is the objective and general moral order from which it results that there exists an imperative saying that the religious attitude should be adopted. The Polish philosopher points to difficulties of intellectual nature, unable to understand the nature of God and his attributes. This kind of ignorance is a mistake that cannot be blamed on any particular subject, which means their conscience remains in a condition of insurmountable error. Linking together the problem of a person's moral obligations towards God and the atheist attitude, Ślipko followed two premises which say that religious obligations can be explained relying on natural factors, without referring to theological assertions. Once the imperative nature of this obligation is recognized, the point is to explain how atheism is possible and how it can be morally classified. Two difficulties appear here, as with an insecure and incomplete knowledge of God the will and the heart certainly play an important, if not the decisive role. Of which Ślipko is well aware, by the way, which makes his attitude to atheism full of tolerance and understanding. He therefore warns against "...

insensitivity to the complicated oddness of the human heart and conscience."[46]

The next domain of personal ethics is devoted to norms regulating man's attitude towards himself, in relation to three separate types of acts. The author of *Personal Ethics* refers to acts directed towards man's substantial whole, acts addressed to the body and concerning man's spiritual sphere. This division results from anthropological assumptions, and it is the task of ethics to identify a person's obligations and rights towards themselves. In line with the logic of lecture, the first treatise concerns the rights and obligations of a person towards themselves. Even the initial explanations suggest it is a matter of heated disputes, doubts and polemics which accompany any philosophical discussion of the moral right to keep one's life. And even though it is an obligation that is universally accepted, difficulties and controversies appear with the discussion of suicide. Thus, the issue becomes objectively valid in light of the reasons and arguments Ślipko presents in his text. The issue of suicide was of interest to him since the 1960s but in this matter Ślipko never had any doubts. Any form of suicide is wrong, even though it is not always the perpetrator who is to blame. Ślipko developed the most developed moral interpretation of suicide ever to be found in Polish textbooks on Christian ethics.

In order to substantiate the moral judgment of the act of suicide, Ślipko invokes the moral specification of human acts, pointing to two of its factors: the primary one, which is the inherent purposefulness (the intended side effects), and the secondary one, which is the goal of the action, i.e. the goal of the doer of the act. Thus, the only factor leading to the invariable and objective qualification of acts of suicide is the goal of the action related to the direct intention. This takes place when the direct intention involves suicide. Pointing to the action itself as the fixed, moral, normative basis for the judgment of suicide, Ślipko contraposes the stance of absolute ethics to the views of relativist ethics which treats the intentions of the doer of the act as the principal moral criterion. Further analyses performed by the author lead both to the confirmation of the main thesis about the fixed and objective judgement of suicidal acts, and to defining situations in which acts of directly and indirectly intended suicide may be

[46] Cf. ibidem, p. 72.

distinguished, and those involving conditional permissibility of exposing one's life to certain death or the risk of death. After a thorough analysis of each of these cases, Ślipko emphasizes that where no act of direct suicide occurs, it is necessary to allow for acts of suicide which are conditionally evil, i.e. where the disposition of the subject's will determines the qualification of suicide. The author points out that in view of such complicated matter, the criticism of traditional Thomism, next to the criticism of relativist ethics, results from an analysis of suicidal acts and those external and internal factors which decide about their moral qualification. His substantiation of the main thesis has its sources in a generally understood structure of the human nature, in conceiving the human person as an independent being and value, and first of all in thinking about man as a created being whose existence goes beyond the "here and now."

Other issues discussed by Ślipko concern a person's obligations with regard to their physical constitution. On the grounds of Christian ethics, man's physicality is the object of interest in terms of the proper way of sustaining vital functions and in view of man's sexuality. Issues related to the essence of sexuality include values (pleasure, love) and norms encompassing various spheres of sexual behavior. In order to understand the unique nature of these norms, judgments and rules referring to man's rights and obligations to himself, it is necessary to develop both descriptions and anthropological characteristics of specific human actions. Pointing to the moral evil of drunkenness and drug addiction, Ślipko emphasizes, on the one hand, that the traditional position of authors representing the Christian trend in ethics is insufficient, while on the other hand arguing that the moral evil of such actions occurs both in acts of complete and incomplete drunkenness. This comment seems correct and thus it is worth considering whether we are in fact dealing with Ślipko taking a new stance, or whether it is merely a kind of supplementary correction. The evaluation of this state of affairs depends on how his ethics is interpreted: whether from the position of the system and the general philosophical assumptions he makes, or by taking into account its new method of research and new conceptual apparatus. We are certainly dealing with a new approach to ethics and with its personalist version, supplementing the traditional model of Thomist ethics.

This new approach, one which complements Thomist ethics, is also visible in Ślipko's discussion of man's rights and obligations

in the spiritual sphere, when he analyses such phenomena as conscience, science, freedom (of conscience, religion), or the ethical conditions of dialogue and conflicts concerning worldviews. A more detailed discussion follows with his development of the ethics of personal relationships, or, more precisely, the norms and rules which determine how persons should behave with respect to one another. These relations have their normative foundations, both in personal dignity and in the good of human life. Thus, the commandment to love and respect one's neighbor flows from the same source, i.e. the good of the human person, understood with reference to their dignity and to their life, seen from various cognitive perspectives and investigated using separate tools.

The whole of this discussion is logically arranged in line with system he adopted in the field of personal ethics. The relationships of persons with respect to one another are arranged on three planes: Ślipko calls the first one substantial, then discusses the spiritual and physical side of nature, and finally points to those norms binding persons which refer to the material side of life. The substantial plane is dominated by the problem of love and a very subtle discussion of the philosophical interpretation of the love of one's neighbor. These beautiful and profound comments lead to a new category, i.e. benevolent love, linking the affirmation of another person with benevolence, i.e. with personal dignity. Benevolent love is absolute in nature, as it applies to all people, irrespective of any individual differences which always exist between persons. Consequently, the author discusses cases which contradict the norm of benevolent love, such as killing a man in various situations, including in self-defense. Being of the opinion that man has the right to effectively defend his own life in extreme cases, even at the cost of the life of the aggressor, Ślipko analyses and defines anew such concepts as: killing a man, non-culpable aggression, necessary defense. In doing so, he upholds the objective and absolute foundations of moral order and the related fixed hierarchy of values and moral norms. This additionally imposes the need for a collision-free link between two assertions which at least on the surface appear to be contradictory. He says that killing a man is an act that is inherently evil, and that man has the right to effectively defend his life in the case of non-culpable aggression. The solution proposed by Ślipko demonstrates to the same extent both the theoretical possibilities of ethics and the scholar's integrity.

Writing about abortion, transplantation or cell cloning, Ślipko follows the same principles as determined by the dignity and value of life. This part of his work includes a chapter on duties to the sick, the dying, with emphasis on the right to dignified death allowing for the use of anesthetics; in a similar vein, Ślipko solves the problem which is now called persistent therapy. In these issues, like in all ethics, an important role is played by the language, terminology, nuances in meanings, which translates into moral judgments and analyses of particular phenomena. An example of these procedures is the sexual ethics developed by Ślipko.

For sexual ethics, the most important thing are the anthropological assumptions, as they determine which behaviors and attitudes are considered to be morally positive, i.e. affirming personal dignity, and what attitudes are wrong and prohibited. Ślipko refers to the category of dignity and its value. He emphasizes the elementary fact that the essence of morality is founded on the act of affirming a person. And this means that man's deliberate actions are inherently personal, i.e. directed towards the affirmation of dignity. On the other hand, his analysis of erotic love leads to the question of its moral value, about whether it consists of pleasure or in the purposefulness of the structure of sexuality. The supreme principle of Ślipko's detailed sexual ethics considers erotic love to be the primary factor constituting the moral value of man's sexual behavior, which should be inherently consistent with the moral meaning of sexuality. Understood in this way, erotic love is supposed to include subjects, i.e. persons who accept their dignity, or ethical value. Consequently, judgments and norms of behavior in the sexual sphere include respect for one's own sexuality and a range of behaviors which are related by moral culture, based on the primacy of reason over emotions. This is supplemented by two more norms, one that prohibits the treatment of one's own sexuality or that of others (partners) in a purely instrumental way, and another which does not allow for erotic love to be reduced to a purely hedonistic approach. Criticism of such attitudes and actions includes pre-marital intercourse, as well as homosexuality, masturbation, etc. Let us try to follow his line of reasoning. It has its source in the structure of erotic love and its relationship to the purposefulness of sexuality, corresponding to the category of personal dignity. This inherent linking of love and sexuality has its moral dimension in the improvement of the human person. On this basis, Christian ethics

asserts that intercourse outside of marriage is morally evil in an objective and absolute way. This is determined by the complex emotional and moral dialectic occurring between erotic love and sexual purposefulness directed towards procreation. Consequently, all homosexual relationships are subject to the same prohibition, as are acts of masturbation, contraception or abortion. Norms regulating these behaviors are rooted in the concept of person and their moral structure which is closely related to the integral and goal-ordered human nature.

In the case of sexual ethics developed by Ślipko, it is important to note two aspects of this interpretation, concerning the relationship between the erotic sphere and the purposefulness of the structure of sexuality, and the relationship between the good of actions and the good of the human person and their dignity. These relationships may be analyzed as those between emotions and reason, and between love and desire. From these two detailed assumptions/principles result all other assertions concerning particular behaviors in the sphere of sexual life. They endow this ethics with personalist traits, as the person appears here in a triple, creative role: as an agent who is aware of and responsible for their decisions, as a co-partner, and as a carrier of particular values and emotions. It should also be stressed that these principles refer to the anthropological structures of human physicality rather than to theological or religious doctrines.

Moving to the last treatise of *Personal Ethics*, it is necessary to touch upon issues concerning material goods in the form of property and labor. These issues include: the right to own economic goods, the right to a healthy natural environment, and the right to work and just wages. On what anthropological assumptions does Ślipko try to establish moral norms regulating the issues of property and labor? Man's development and his obligation to sustain his own life provides the anthropological and ethical foundations supporting detailed norms concerning the ownership of material goods and labor, i.e. natural rights and obligations arising from natural law. Their detailed discussion calls not only for an analysis of the phenomena related to these issues themselves, but primarily for a distinction between positive and negative factors which determine the normative evaluation of these human actions.

In his ethical analyses, Ślipko also discusses certain additional problems, concerning such issues as: colloquial and literary fiction, untypical forms of untruth, man's right to a healthy natural environment,

or the moral problem of leisure time. Undertaking these issues, Ślipko points to their moral significance for man's life, his comprehensive development, and responsibility for his own humanity. Man's dignity is revealed and confirmed by others within the framework of fundamental spiritual goods, i.e. honor, good reputation, and truth. Chapters in which the author discusses these problems complement his reflections on the objective and absolute moral value of truthfulness, speech and language, falsehood and useful lies. Ślipko introduces important distinctions into traditional approaches, changes the conceptual apparatus, adds clarity and order. All issues touched upon in *Personal Ethics*, irrespective of their weight and significance, are based on the ontic, fundamental relationship linking the human nature with person. Thus, they refer to norms and rules determining the moral meaning of a personal, individualized way of living and acting, relationships with other persons, and attitude to material goods.

Social ethics

Another department of detailed ethics which Ślipko devoted considerable attention to is social ethics. Stemming from the same natural foundations, it deals with the evaluation and normalization of a person's social behaviors as a community member, citizen and representative of a particular nation. The core of social ethics is determined by anthropological assumptions; what changes is the object of study and the related social experiences of man as a community member. Social ethics deals with the normalization of behaviors and attitudes of socially active subjects rather than private persons. It thus applies to social groups, and not individuals; for it is only within the framework of a group that the foundations of moral order can be defined. From the perspective of Christian social ethics, the principles and evaluations of activities within a community are objective and absolute in nature.

The topics and structure of the monograph entitled *Zarys etyki szczegółowej* [*An Outline of Detailed Ethics*] vol. 2: *Etyka społeczna* [*Social Ethics*][47] are arranged into a coherent theoretical whole. Explaining his interest in Catholic social ethics, Ślipko emphasizes that it is based as a science on an objective and absolute moral order. Subsequent

[47] Cf. T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 2: *Etyka społeczna* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2005).

chapters of his work deal with analyzing man as a social being, i.e. with establishing the ontic foundations of social subjects and communities. These problems link metaphysics with ethics, as they concern social beings and general principles which regulate actions within a community. Each of the chapters in the second treatise, under the telling title *Metafizyka społeczności* [*The Metaphysics of Community*], are concerned with such issues as the description and analysis of the elementary community treated as a source, definition of the ontic rights of this primary society and the related fundamental moral principles, and in the final parts of the treatise, with two normative, essential categories: justice and love. In the next, third treatise, Ślipko deals with the ethics of natural, i.e. inherent societies. i.e. the marital and family community, professional community, ethnic (i.e. national) community, and the state. He endeavors not only to study these natural communities in terms of the principles which determine their moral order, but also aims at substantiating their roles and functions referring to the imperative power of natural law.

Trying to reconstruct the most important theses in Ślipko's discussion of social ethics, we need to take a closer look at the assumptions which are made for the purposes of this theory. The primary, basic theses are concerned with the social nature of man, the social essence of a person related to their development and personal improvement. A more thorough analysis of human nature performed by Ślipko points to the presence of three elements which contribute to creating a community as man's social environment. The author of *Social Ethics* refers to them as the community of needs, the community of actions, and the community of goods. Each of them performs a different function, and is thus aimed at preventing limitedness, which is possible thanks to communal satisfaction of these needs, so that within a community people can complement one another (in terms of talents, achievements, abilities, etc.). It results from his studies that it is the moral imperative of man's personal development and improvement that is the foundation of community, i.e. appropriate interpersonal relationships. It is thanks to them that the achievement of personal goals becomes possible. Ślipko concludes his reflections by emphatically advocating man's personal and social ontic condition. He analyzes man's complex and goal-ordered structure in terms of the personal and social aspect of the ontic human nature. The inner unity of human existence should be considered in terms

of natural social and personal structures. By making this assertion, Ślipko makes it clear that his stance in this form is separate from and cannot be identified with the traditional Thomist ethics. The personalist moment has weighed on the meaning of his thesis, and consequently on his interpretation of social ethics and its anthropological assumptions. What is society, then, and how should its essence be understood? Analyzing the traditional Thomist concept, Ślipko finds in it a certain theoretical weakness which results from reducing society to its external manifestations, i.e. to a network of personal interactions. Looking for a deeper, ontic rationale behind the existence of a society, Ślipko refers to the moral imperative of personal improvement and its relational character. It is a transcendental and essential rather than a casual, accidental relationship.

Personal perfection performs two functions here: the explanatory and the integrating one. It explains the sources and meaning of morality, and integrates two dimensions of human nature: the social with the personal, the personal with the social. Commenting on this objective and real unity, Ślipko says that it is a factor—binder—of social community. The objectivity and reality of this binder means an existing reality which can be rationally known, analyzed, and evaluated. Consequently, the goal of a society is determined by a set of values and goods which enable a particular society to fulfil itself. These goods divide into material and spiritual ones, with the help of which man as a person strives towards perfection and happiness. Based on the traditional classifications of societies he refers to, Ślipko identifies their basic structural principles. These principles refer to three relationships which determine social structures, namely the relationship of the whole to its elements, the relationship of elements to the whole, and the relationship between elements. They are subordinated to three rules: the supremacy of the whole over the elements, the autonomy of the element with respect to the whole, and the principle of diversity and functional interdependence between individuals. These rules correspond to three moral principles, namely: solidarity, subsidiarity, and social coordination. Moral order is shaped by these principles. It is based on the primary social structure formed by the three fundamental relationships mentioned above. We are thus dealing with a well-thought and planned theoretical construct, made up of three mutually complementary layers: the basic social fabric in its relational arrangement and the principles of social life. They both

create these relationships and regulate them, and this whole is subordinated to fundamental moral principles. They endow the whole and the individual structures of social life with moral order.

When discussing the problem of natural, intrinsic societies, traditional for Christian ethics, Ślipko introduces even more changes, first of all in terms of ontic foundations and anthropological assumptions. The same applies to his analyses of marriage as the primary, fontal kind of society. The starting point for adding more precision to the traditional standpoint is the personal concept of man, which implies the imperative of moral improvement. Based on the assumptions of Christian ethics, the fact that marriage is oriented towards procreation means that it is able to realize the social conditions of personal improvement. Within its framework, a relationship occurs between personal and social development and improvement. These processes take place within a permanent community, united by the love between parents and children. From this description it results that marriage is a community which unites, improves, and lasts, purposefully oriented on procreation. Such interpretation of marriage refers to human nature and to the imperative of moral improvement, while on the other hand being based on the permanence of this primary community. In practice, this means that marriage provides conditions for social improvement and creates an indissoluble community. It is supported by and stems from marital deontology which enjoins mutual love and faithfulness of the spouses. In this way, Ślipko wanted to characterize marriage as a special and primary kind of community. Along the same lines he conducted his studies on family in the part devoted to the ethics of family as a community, with analyses focused on bringing up children.

The next part of the ethics of natural societies deals with determining the genesis and moral status of professional communities. The factor which determines the significance of philosophical deliberations on professional communities is concerned with their ontic foundations. They are considered in view of the subordination of professional communities to the whole which is the state, as well as in view of their proper purposefulness and specific functions. The Krakow philosopher points, on the one hand, to the self-sufficiency of this community and its focus on the production of material goods, and on the other hand to its dependence on common good understood in terms of the state as the superior whole. This group's right to autonomy is strictly related to its duty to contribute to the welfare of the whole. All particular

norms and moral principles regulating the activity of professional communities are based on autonomy and the duty of cooperation. These findings are of fundamental importance for the moral qualification of a strike, the role and autonomy of labor unions or other disputed issues. Similarly, much practical importance should be attached to analyses on the ethics of a nation, i.e. ethnic community. The description and characterization of various standpoints on these problems lead to a number of fundamental questions which need to be answered by ethics.

These questions oscillate around the sources and genesis of a nation, of national unity, the nation's essence and purpose, as well as the rights and obligations of national communities. Ślipko believes that national culture is the source of bonds uniting a nation. The culture itself, as a set of products, ideas, values, notions, institutions (e.g. cinema, theatre, philharmonic), behavioral patterns, etc. creates a certain social paradigm which shapes the spiritual development of the human person. The shaping of this culture influences personal spiritual development, thus becoming a moral postulate. It is the task of a national community to cultivate this culture, as it has two performative functions. In a spontaneous and ethnically rooted way, it creates an objectivized world of values which makes up the collective and social spiritual culture. It represents an overriding good which binds together members of the same community, and thus culture as the binder creates and unites the national society, determining its identity and autonomy. On their basis, three moral rights of a nation as a community based on its own culture may be formulated. These natural rights are concerned with the right to exist, the right to unity and freedom, and the right to a proportional share in common good. Writing about these rights, Ślipko emphasizes their relation to the good of individual members and the good of the whole community as the basis for spiritual self-determination of the national society. These rights entail the duties of a person towards the nation: the duty of solidarity, faithfulness, patriotism, love of homeland, respect for other nations—all of these norms must be subject to moral qualification taking into account the position of a person and their natural striving for improvement.

Ślipko's discussion of national ethics continues into the ethics of state community. He performs a number of analyses which demonstrate the ontic relationship between the reality of state community and man's development. This community represents a structural unity which binds persons and its subordinate communities by the power

of law. This very structural unity was identified by Ślipko with the objective relation of human nature to its development and improvement of the human person. This relation is objective and essential, as the good realized by the state refers to man's comprehensive development. The social and personal dimension of human nature defines and determines moral rules and principles which govern particular societies. They are delineated by ontic relations to a person's perfection and to the comprehensive development of their nature. Thanks to such primary, ontic findings, the state community is a subjective one, i.e. it unites persons into a single social being; it is thus a rational, sovereign and perfect subject. Ślipko explains that this subjectivity of the state being makes it similar to a rational human person. Consequently, this leads to the conclusion that the state, understood this way, is a common good, meaning a common, objective, superior and hierarchically structured value. The subjective and rational character of the state has its ontic roots, wherefore the state actualizes the good which leads to man's comprehensive development. Ślipko thus assumes that the social and personal constitution of man's moral nature is the basis for linking metaphysical and anthropological foundations. This relationship concerns not only the substantiation, but also understanding of the relation of morality to an objective, i.e. rationally recognized reality. In the last part of *Social Ethics*, Ślipko discusses the ethics of international life, including the problems of war and peace. Dealing with these issues, he consistently modifies the traditional approach by introducing personalist foundations of morality, while at the same time disambiguating the existing terminology.

The above analysis of social ethics is limited to the most important, selected problems, which the author enriched, added depth to and reinterpreted. On this basis, we can certainly speak of Ślipko's very consistently developed views on ethics, for which of key importance are the relationships between metaphysics and anthropology. Factors which bear most on these relationships are two elements of the goal-ordered human nature: the personalist and the perfectionist one. Their primary role for ethics determines the character of changes Ślipko introduced into the traditional understanding of the philosophy of morality. Personal ethics is based on the moral imperative of personal moral improvement, and social ethics reaches to the social roots of the human nature and their personal character. From these two descriptions of morality it results that the source of morality in

its personal and social dimension is the moral human nature. It is here that the ontic and ethical dimension of humanity is focused, in man's dignity and his strive towards perfection.

4.3. Bioethics

Ślipko was one of the pioneers of Christian bioethics in Poland. His interest in bioethics began already in the 1970s, when the development of biotechnologies became more and more noticeable in both the individual and the social dimension. It soon transpired that the scientific and technological revolution posed man with new moral challenges. Ślipko saw the need for a synthetic discussion of the most important problems around which normative bioethical reflection should be focused. In endeavoring to do this, Ślipko not only had the theoretical goal of writing another textbook, but also the practical goal of introducing students, particularly those of theological seminaries and divinity schools, to problems they would be faced with in their pastoral work. Ślipko was undoubtedly very good at understanding "the spirit of the time." Realizing the challenges posed by these developments, he wanted to build a normative ethics which would safeguard the dignity of the human person, defending it against various threats stemming from erroneous anthropologies and ethics. In one of his last books on bioethics, he wrote:

> Therefore, Christian philosophy and ethics must do their best—without regard to any misunderstandings or distortions of its thought—to develop bioethics in a way which shows, in various contexts, the moral dignity of the human person and defends it against the numerous threats on the part of contemporary forms of relativism and pessimism, and which ultimately represents one of the frontlines in the struggle for the Christian and universally human sense of our civilisation.[48]

In line with his systemic approach to ethics, Ślipko believed that bioethics as a normative science must be incorporated into the whole of this system, from which it should take the basic anthropological

[48] T. Ślipko, *Bioetyka. Najważniejsze problemy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Petrus, 2009), p. 451.

and ethical principles. His concept meets halfway with the contemporary need for autonomous bioethics which is independent both from the data of Revelation and that of empirical sciences: natural ones and humanities. This concept also corresponds to the postulate of epistemological maximalism as regards the substantiation of morality. He is not satisfied with minimalist proposals of bioethical reflection, and abandons its strategies of substantiating bioethical norms. The model of normative bioethical reflection proposed by Ślipko is an applied one. In this model, bioethical solutions are analyzed using the principles of a previously endorsed theory of ethics. Understood this way, bioethics is then a detailed ethics, methodologically dependent on general ethics.

The way the Polish Thomist bioethicist understands it, bioethics "is a department of detailed philosophical ethics whose aim is to establish moral judgments and norms (rules) applicable to the area of human conduct (actions) consisting in any intervention in borderline situations related to the initiation of life, its duration and death."[49] This definition projects the material and formal object of ethics. The material object of ethics is a categorially defined group of human acts, which Ślipko called "intervening actions." They occur in so-called borderline situations related to the beginning, duration and end of man's life. As for the formal object of bioethics, it is the moral evaluation of such actions. Acts of intervention are addressed first of all to human persons who find themselves in such borderline situations. In all of these cases we are not dealing with life as something abstract, but with life as something that is actually lived and experienced in a multitude of ways. It is always the life of a particular human being, a person, who in result of various internal or external factors is faced with a situation of borderline intervention. Consequently, normative bioethical reflection, as can be seen from the very name of this discipline, is not concerned with life taken *in genere*, but with life *in concreto*. Which is why the category of the dignity of the human person plays such an important role in the evaluation of the morality or immorality of such interventions in human life.

In his bioethical works, Ślipko discusses a very broad range of problems. He was initially interested in meta-bioethical issues, where

[49] T. Ślipko, *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki* (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1988), p. 16.

he focused on determining the methodological status of bioethics and its relationship to other sciences. In accordance with his designed definition of bioethics, he believed that it encompasses three important areas of normative bioethical reflection. The first is the bioethics of the origins of life, which includes such problems as the beginning of human life, animation of the human embryo, prenatal diagnostics and its moral qualifications, genetic engineering, and the moral evaluation of abortion. In the bioethics of the duration of human life, Ślipko discussed such problems as the moral evaluation of transplantation, the moral aspects of broadly conceived sexual life (e.g. contraception, masturbation, etc.); this part of his bioethical analyses also included the problems, extensively discussed already during his times, of the limits of medical therapy (e.g. experiments on patients), as well as an in-depth discussion of problems related to suicide and the limits of fighting against suffering. Special attention should be paid to his analyses concerning the ethics of the death penalty, in which the author of *Granice życia* [*The Borders of Life*] argued in favor of its permissibility. In terms of his third field of bioethical reflection, which dealt with the end of human life, Ślipko discussed the problem of persistent therapy, various forms of euthanasia, and the ultimate sense of human suffering. Next to problems concerning the human person entangled in various borderline situations, he also discussed issues related to broadly understood ethics of the natural environment and the ethics of defending the rights of animals. He was a pioneer in Christian ecology and the ethics of the natural environment. He saw the need for a Christian ethics of animals which would take into account the normative dimension of their life and the various kinds of goods to which they are entitled. In his works on ecology, he called for a humanitarian treatment of animals and for avoiding their pointless suffering, standing in stark opposition to the design of God the Creator. He also pointed to the need for a normative bioethical reflection in the field of broadly understood ecology, which is also concerned with broadly conceived *bios* after all. He endeavored to develop elements of a Christian ethics of the natural environment, which was to provide an answer to the threats and challenges posed to the natural environment by contemporary biotechnological development. Criticizing contemporary proposals of bio-centrically oriented environmental ethics (e.g. Z. Piątek), he argued in favor of the outdated and inadequate—from the point of view of the advocates of biocentrism—anthropocentric foundations

of the ethics of natural environment, where the primary role is played by the principle of personal dignity.

Detailed bioethical problems discussed by the Krakow Jesuit were always presented in a multifaceted way, taking into account empirical facts and normative assumptions. This way, he tried to realize the postulate of interdisciplinary cooperation between ethics and empirical sciences in practice. In formulating moral judgments of various problems, an important role was played on the one hand by detailed factual knowledge (e.g. in the field of genetic engineering), and on the other hand by the principle of personal dignity as the normative criterion. In his substantiation of the normative evaluation of these borderline situations, Ślipko provided arguments combining the deontological (personalist) approach with the consequentionalist one.

In bioethical investigations, factual knowledge concerning various borderline situations in which a living person may find themselves is of great importance. It requires interdisciplinary cooperation between those engaged in normative bioethical reflection and representatives of various empirical sciences who have such knowledge.

> Therefore, even though bioethics is always an essentially normative philosophical science, and in this respect it enjoys its own methodological identity and autonomy, it also remains in a permanent relationship of dependence on the non-ethical experience of empirical sciences, which entails an interdisciplinary cooperation between them.[50]

In order to provide a factual answer to the following questions: Why should the dignity of a person be respected? Why is their life valuable? Why can no experiments be conducted on man such as lead to destroying his integrity?—it is necessary to refer to relevant anthropological knowledge about human nature.[51] A more thorough introduction to such knowledge makes it possible to formulate detailed moral norms taking into account various kinds of goods, both moral and otherwise. Reference to anthropological arguments substantiates

[50] T. Ślipko, *Bioetyka. Najważniejsze problemy*, p. 19.

[51] Similar postulates are found in T. Styczeń, "Problem ogólnej ważności norm etycznych. W aspekcie epistemologiczno-metodologicznym z uwzględnieniem indukcyjnych nauk o człowieku," *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 24, no. 1 (1981), pp. 41–42.

the rightness or wrongness of actions performed in situations of biomedical intervention.[52] The combination of factual knowledge with the structure of detailed norms is not easy, however. The difficulty resides in the generality of the ethical principle of personal dignity. The question is how to move from the generality of the supreme principle to its detailed instantiations?

Ślipko suggests the following answer: in bioethics, which he defines as a department of detailed ethics concerned with specific borderline situations involving an intervention in human life (abortion, prenatal examinations, euthanasia, etc.), the principle of personal dignity is assigned fundamental importance. He wrote:

> Christian bioethics is based on a spiritualist concept of man as a person and a social being. In the centre of this anthropological doctrine is the concept of a non-material spiritual element welded with a material substructure to create a unity of substantial being. These premises are accompanied by an indeterminist understanding of man's freedom and his essential focus on the realisation of ultimate moral destinies, towards which he is led by moral order based on absolute foundations.[53]

With respect to bioethical issues, the philosopher argues that in such situations man cannot act without any rules or moral guidelines. Factual knowledge itself is only a necessary condition for an adequate moral evaluation of an action, yet it is not a sufficient condition. In the case of such situations, the ethicist who evaluates them must never rely on some kind of moral counselling, as ultimately it places the "weight" of making a moral decision in the hands of man's autonomy. Any moral intuitions are out of the question, as due to their vague and unclear nature they cannot ultimately define the direction of man's actions, particularly in situations involving risks. An essential problem appears, therefore: the issue of the normative evaluation of those specific situations which bioethics deals with. Consequently,

[52] Cf. P. Kamiński, "Zdania praktyczne a zdania teoretyczne," *Roczniki Filozoficzne KUL* 8, no. 1 (1970), pp. 79–80; A. Buczek, "Ku określeniu charakteru związku między zdaniami teoretycznymi a praktycznymi," *Roczniki Filozoficzne KUL* 23, no. 1 (1975), pp. 31–45. The author presents a critical evaluation of the proposal of deducing "ought to" statements from theoretical ones by way of reduction.

[53] T. Ślipko, *Bioetyka. Najważniejsze problemy*, p. 443.

the Polish bioethicist says, "it is necessary to engage in a moral discourse in order to establish those values and rules of conduct to which a particular kind of actions should be referred, so that with the help of moral reflection and a comprehensive analysis of the case, we can arrive at conclusions that are binding for the conscience."[54]

Saying that the principle of the dignity of life should be respected is not sufficient for ethics, however. It is too general and needs to be rendered in more detail.

> The point is that the principle of moral dignity must be made successively more and more detailed in terms of its reference to man's practical actions. Otherwise, being too general, it would not contain any moral guidelines ordering man's existential practice.[55]

This reduction to "more and more detailed values and their corresponding rules of conduct is based on an objectively constituted moral order and is its normative expression."[56] This order, Ślipko argues, "encompasses the fundamental categories of human actions, and by being defined in detail provides a basis for formulating normative conclusions for the whole of human behavior."[57] In his opinion, such strategy of argumentation may be challenged by claiming that transition from general moral norms to their detailed instantiations is in fact impossible. Particularly the advocates of ethical situationism point out that we are dealing with a unique situation in each case. Situationism, however, makes it impossible to morally evaluate such circumstances at all, as it questions the absolute validity of detailed moral norms. Arguing against such an approach, Ślipko says that:

> ... all of these evident observations fail to provide sufficient bases to deny general norms or their more concrete applications the ability to normatively order and inform the conscience of the acting person even in the most complicated situations, much less to challenge their universal axiological validity and imperative power.[58]

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54 T. Ślipko, *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki*, p. 121.

55 Ibidem, p. 118.

56 Ibidem, p. 120.

57 Ibidem.

58 Ibidem, p. 122.

The detailed situations which bioethics is concerned with are not unique to the extent claimed by the advocates of extreme ethical situationism. Ślipko argues:

> For in recognising a particular situation in which an action is performed, there are always some basic elements on whose basis we can recognize their being part of a certain general category of actions, and thus capture the moral sense they have in common. In a concrete situation, this sense does not become obliterated, but is supplemented by factors that make up the situation concerned. Objective morality thus remains normatively valid also with respect to complicated manipulations and techniques of genetic engineering.[59]

Ślipko assumes a certain general type of situation. It consists in general essential features which in his opinion make it possible to identify, or assign a particular instance of a situation to adequate moral judgment. The essential element of every bioethical situation is man—a person, who is a personal subject. The dignity of a person is for Ślipko the objective determinant of the good they are entitled to. And it is this good that is at stake in the type of situations which bioethics has to deal with. Moral good, identified with the principle of personal dignity, is primarily expressed in respect for life. The dignity of a person makes it imperative to assume such attitudes with respect to them which preserve and maintain the good of life instead of destroying it. Where can information about the good to which a person should be entitled be derived from? In determining this good, according to the author of *The Borders of Life*, we can draw on philosophical anthropology and contemporary science. With the knowledge we have about man, there is a real possibility of establishing an objective hierarchy of goods to which every man should be entitled, without any exceptions. As regards the basic good, i.e. life, and its value, it is not established by any anthropology, particularly by such as supposes any naturalist view of man. The good of life is one of the fundamental inclinations of our nature, based on which the reason formulates normative recommendations making it obligatory to preserve life in any situation. Man by nature wants to maintain his existence, not only as a metaphysical, but also as an axiological fact. Therefore, any interventions which result in violating life, threatening

[59] Ibidem.

it, or even annihilating it in the worst case scenario, are morally inherently wrong.

In his normative evaluation of detailed situations, Ślipko uses consequentialist argumentation, which he describes as "the calculus of a person's dignity understood in personalist terms."[60] This is not about any utilitarian scheme of calculating goods, however. The author explains that this calculus concerns

> treating the moral value of every human person as a value equal to the analogical value of any other actually or potentially (as in the embryo) existing persons. It is, therefore, dignity in the universal dimension, and in this sense it provides the basis for formulating the general principle which may be called that of "the axiological equality of all men." It is this dignity of a personal subject that provides the basis for the axiological principle of equality. It says that "every man has the same psychophysical nature, and is thus endowed with the same ontic dignity which, taken with reference to the transcendental model of its perfection, determines the same fundamental moral value of every human being.[61]

The dignity of a personal subject is normatively binding. It is a principle which reveals its binding power in all situations in which man's life is at risk; it calls for absolute respect and recognition of its value. Ślipko writes explicitly that "based on the concept of man's personal dignity in its moral dimension, we have concluded that directly killing a man is an inherently wrong act called murder, which cannot be morally justified in any way."[62] This principle also serves as a premise in determining the moral qualification of detailed situations which normative bioethics has to deal with. Consequently, in all categories of human acts which involve an intervention in human life, the principle of respect for personal dignity applies in an absolute way. For this reason, any activities which interfere with the human genome: cloning, where embryos are used for instrumental purposes, abortion or euthanasia, are inherently wrong from the point of view of the personalist principle, as they lead to the loss of life and violation of the metaphysical integrity of a person.

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60 Ibidem, p. 327.

61 T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa*, p. 234.

62 T. Ślipko, *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki*, p. 223.

The value of this theory consists in that it makes us think without offering any ideological solutions, as the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur used to say. When evaluating this bioethical theory, it is necessary to take into account the period during which Ślipko conducted his bioethical investigations. His interest in bioethics began when it was still in its initial stages, and ended in fact when it was entering a stage of tumultuous development and transformations which have determined its present shape. His bioethics touches upon some very basic issues, which he solves from the point of view of a particular ethical paradigm, accepted in result of specific social and cultural factors, particularly due to Ślipko's affiliation with a particular religious tradition. At the time when contemporary bioethics was developing and faced ever new challenges in the area of interference with human life, Ślipko ended his research and did not follow closely the developments in biotechnology during the last years of his life. Neither did he follow the bioethical discussions which gained in intensity both in the Polish and worldwide literature of the subject. Does this mean that Ślipko's proposal is only of historical value? Are the solutions he proposed no longer valid in the contemporary bioethical discourse? Not at all! For bioethics, particularly that developed within the Christian paradigm, they have a value that is not merely historic. Ślipko was very well aware of the transformations in bioethical reflection at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the first decade of the 20th century. He saw a very serious risk of politicizing and ideologizing bioethical disputes, and was very much concerned about the development of procedural bioethics which, in the name of various social consensuses, purposefully distanced itself from any positive view of man, thus shifting the weight of bioethical disputes from the person to procedures, to which their advocates began to assign fundamental importance in the normative evaluation of interventions in human life.

During the final years of his life, he no longer participated in any discussions with the ever more pluralized bioethics, which even within the paradigm of Christian ethics seemed to him to become more and more ephemeral. For bioethics conducted within the paradigm of Christian ethics, the solutions proposed by Ślipko remain original; not only in the pioneering time when he first attempted to formulate and resolve them, many of them have remained valid until today. The solutions he proposed, both in terms of their object and

argumentation, can most certainly be used in today's bioethical debates, but taking into account the newly emerging social practices and knowledge contributed by contemporary natural and social sciences.

5.

Discussions and polemics within the Polish philosophical community

In the second part of the 20th century, philosophy in Poland fell victim to communist slavery which radically limited straightforward discussions and polemics between various intellectual circles. The worst period for free philosophical thought were the years 1945–1956, the so-called Stalinist era. During that period, communist authorities threw many well-known and independent philosophers, such as Władysław Tatarkiewicz, out of universities; promoted the teaching of Marxist-Leninist philosophy; and eliminated the presence of other philosophical currents in Polish intellectual life.

In the years 1956–1989, communism in Poland took on a milder form. During that period, representatives of various philosophical directions were allowed to speak, albeit to a limited extent. One must not forget, however, that censorship in Poland continued up until the fall of the Berlin Wall. Thousands of functionaries decided upon every scientific and journalistic text to be published. Consequently, only those books and articles could be published in Poland which were approved by communist authorities. Censorship terribly impoverished Polish philosophy and radically reduced the general level of philosophical knowledge across society as a whole.

5.1. Philosophy in Poland in the years 1945–1989

What philosophical school did Tadeusz Ślipko belong to? What intellectual trend should this thinker be identified with? Where could Ślipko be found on the philosophical map of Poland in the second half of the last century? How did Polish philosophical thought develop under restrictions imposed by the totalitarian state? What main philosophical currents existed in our country during communism?

After World War II, Marxism became the mandatory philosophy of the totalitarian communist state in Poland. During the first decades after the war, Marxism was in the offensive and developed at a dynamic pace, led by such authors as Tadeusz Kroński, Zygmunt Bauman, Adam Schaff or Leszek Kołakowski. The end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s was a time when Marxism moved to a defensive position. In this context, the change made by Leszek Kołakowski in the 1960s was a spectacular event, as he became a critic of some of the elements of the Marxist view of man and the word. In 1976, his three-volume work entitled *Główne nurty marksizmu. Powstanie, rozwój, rozkład* [*Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution*] was published in Paris, in the Polish language.[63] Two years later, the book was published in English, and soon became one of the best studies on the Marxist philosophy worldwide.

The most important Polish philosophical circle in the last century was the Lvov-Warsaw School, founded by the well-known Polish philosopher and psychologist Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938). The philosophy conducted in this School was of the analytical variety. In the second part of the 20th century, its most important representatives included Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Izydora Dąmbska, Tadeusz Czeżowski and Tadeusz Kotarbiński.

In the second part of the last century, an important role in Polish intellectual life was played by phenomenological currents. The founder of phenomenology in Poland was Roman Ingarden (1893–1970)—a student of Edmund Husserl and a friend of Edith

[63] Cf. L. Kołakowski, *Główne nurty marksizmu. Powstanie, rozwój, rozkład* (Paryż: Instytut Literacki, 1976); English edition: *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution*, vol. 1–3, trans. P.S. Falla (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

Stein. Thanks to Ingarden, Poland is one of the few countries in which phenomenology was developed directly by Husserl's students. In the United States, phenomenology was promoted by the Polish philosopher Anna Teresa Tymieniecka. An original form of phenomenology was developed by Karol Wojtyła, who made an important contribution to philosophical anthropology and ethics.

An important trend in Polish philosophical thought, and which Tadeusz Ślipko belonged to, was neo-Thomism, or broadly understood philosophy drawing on the heritage of Thomas Aquinas. After World War II, this form of philosophical thought began to develop mainly through the Catholic University of Lublin. In the second part of the 20th century, there were five main varieties of Thomism in Poland: the traditional, Louvain, existential, consequentionalist and phenomenologising ones. The most significant branch of Polish neo-Thomism in the second part of the last century was existential Thomism, represented by Mieczysław Krąpiec and Stefan Swieżawski. An inspiring proposal was the phenomenologising Thomism of Antoni Stępień, which was an attempt at synthesizing Thomist thought with certain discoveries made by phenomenology.

As for Ślipko, he aimed at combining neo-Thomism in his philosophical studies with selected elements of Saint Augustine's thought. In a sense, he combined these two great traditions shaped by classical philosophy. Ślipko also drew on the achievements of contemporary orientations in Christian existentialism and the phenomenological tradition. Wiesław Szuta comments on his philosophical thought as follows:

> He represents neo-scholastic thought developed at the turn of the 20th century based on traditional Thomism, sometimes referred to as conservative, though in his case it would be more appropriate to describe it as classical. His Thomism forms part of classical philosophy, as the general philosophical foundations of his philosophy of morality, i.e. his ethical reflection, are anchored in "perennial philosophy" (philosophia perennis).[64]

For Ślipko, the roots of this philosophy stem from the pre-Christian era, mainly from the philosophical tradition of Platonic, Aristotelian,

[64] W. Szuta, *Wprowadzenie do etyki Tadeusza Ślipki* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Petrus, 2015), p. 9.

and Stoic thought. For this reason, many of the philosophical achievements of these directions entered the world of ideas of the "perennial philosophy" system based on them. Ślipko claims that this is philosophy in the proper sense of the word, one that relies solely on man's inherent cognitive abilities. In this respect, it does not refer to theological, i.e. revealed sources of knowledge, nor does it reach into new areas of reality revealed by these sources in the form of supernatural order. Ślipko expanded classical Thomism with selected elements of Augustinism, wherefore his thought can be described as one of the many varieties of Augustinian-Thomist thought.

A very important element of this philosophy in Ślipko's approach is the personalist understanding of human existence. He perceives man as a person who is a psychophysical being, rational and free. A person is the acting subject who is independent and sovereign in the order of incidental beings. A person is an individual substance of intellectual nature, governing their own actions, autonomous in the proper sense of the word.

> Ślipko places the person at the top of the hierarchy of created (incidental) beings, characterized by dignity proper to a rational being who achieves their essential greatness. He exalts the human person, equipping them with spiritual powers whose ordering capacity and content automatically open before them ever higher perspectives of development, up to the transcendental limits of the human condition.[65]

Ślipko's philosophical investigations focused not so much on engaging in discussions or polemics with other philosophical communities, but rather on a personalist analysis of the phenomena of man's moral life within the framework of Augustinian-Thomist philosophy. At some points, however, he did polemicize with other philosophical views. One interesting discussion he became involved in with the neo-Thomist community was concerned with the existence of moral values; a good example of disputes with other intellectual currents was his dialogue with the Marxist thought.

[65] Ibidem, p. 21.

5.2. Theory of moral values

Ślipko confirmed in his ethical analyses the neo-Thomist conviction about the existence of objective moral values. Objective and absolute, i.e. unchangeable moral values represent a separate category of moral goods. He defined the objective property of moral values in a way that differed from that followed by many Thomists. How did Ślipko understand this kind of objectivity? How do we discover moral values? What is the foundation of their existence?

> The objectivity of moral values consists in that their ontic content ultimately consists of elements given in the real world independently from the acts of the mind of a particular moral subject. In people's moral awareness, they occur as values which are discovered rather than created by an act of reason, or an inner experience. In other words, moral values are something real in the sense of epistemological realism, and not only something that is thought, as is assumed in idealist philosophy.[66]

Ślipko presents moral values against the background of exemplary ideals of moral conduct, and from this starting point tries to add more insight to the genesis of these values by explaining their constitutive principle. He does this by founding their constitutive principle on two pillars: the idea of the dignity of the human person, and the relationship of correspondence in which the purposeful structure of the basic categories of human acts remains with respect to the actualization of the exemplary perfection of the human person. Man's dignity resides in the spiritual element of the human nature and the freedom of will conditioned by this spirituality, i.e. man's deliberate striving towards a good he has recognized. The supremacy of good, which is the driving power behind all rational human acts, turns into a postulate based on which at the end of these efforts, as their unifying reality, is the model form of the perfection of the human person given man to actualize.

> Christian ethics claims that at the foundations of the moral order of good there are values which are universal and unchangeable.

[66] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, p. 207.

> They are the ones which determine the inherent good of those categories of moral actions which are defined by the essential structure of man. In addition, they serve as guideposts, enabling man to shape the moral good of other actions with variable ethical content. Only in these assertions is the essential meaning of the Christian concept of value expressed; we will word it as follows: there is a certain set of absolute and objective moral values defining ideal models of conduct corresponding to basic categories of human actions and representing the essential components of the order of moral good irrespectively of any individual attitudes or social or historical conditions.[67]

One innovation introduced into the traditional Thomist theory of values is the lack of reference to the theory of transcendentals and the showing of objective moral values as ideal models, or ideals of man's moral conduct; actions which are capable of actualizing man's perfection as a person. In the order of existence, the foundation of their objective reality is the rational nature of man, and their constitutive principle—the structure of man's free subjectivity and his personal dignity.

For Ślipko, the dignity of the human person is an inalienable attribute, a certain excellence, a value that is the foundation of morality. It is an important normative factor of the morality of an individual, as well as that of a social group and of social order. Dignity also means a capacity for personal development, one that is dynamic and depends on the growth of the moral dimension in a particular human being.

> It is man's task and duty to strive towards the inner unification of the subjective image of truth and good with the objective order of existence and action. At the same time, any truth, once recognized, requires constant efforts to be confirmed and preserved. Man, by the power of his inherent abilities, may and should confirm his dignity with the truth about himself and the world. Thus, he should attest to it with his deeds, recognize it in his own conscience.[68]

The foundation of human dignity supports the concept of the ideal model of man's perfection as a person and the dynamic purposefulness

[67] Ibidem, p. 208.

[68] E. Podrez, "Myśl etyczna Księdza Profesora Tadeusza Ślipko," *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 25, no. 1 (1989), p. 38.

of the basic categories of man's acts in their reference to the goods they actualize. Moral values ultimately belong to the category of relational beings, and their deepest sense is "being towards" (*esse ad*).

5.3. Dialogue with Marxist philosophy

One of the important elements of Ślipko's intellectual work were his analyses of Marxist thought and polemics with some representatives of this philosophical trend. In many countries around the world, no dialogue between Catholic and Marxist circles began in fact until the 1960s. Before then, their relationships were dominated by mutual hostility and distrust. On the one hand, Marxist ideology justified unimaginable atrocities perpetrated by communists in many regions of the world, on the other—the Catholic Church published a great number of official documents which most explicitly condemned communism and the Marxist view of reality.

From the time the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917 until the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, any philosophical dialogue between Catholic and Marxist circles was out of the question. A radical change in the Catholic Church occurred during the pontificates of John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. Various forms of dialogue between these circles in the global dimension gained in intensity, particularly after the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

It should be noted here that certain circles in the Catholic Church did not accept this change. In many countries, the opponents of this form of dialogue emphasized Marxism's hostility towards religion, the responsibility of Marxist ideology for justifying crimes on an unimaginable scale, the impossibility of reconciliation between Marxism and Catholicism. Such tensions also occurred within the Catholic Church in Poland and the Jesuit order to which Ślipko belonged. He was one of the advocates of a dialogue with representatives of the Marxist philosophy. What was his attitude to Marxism? How should his polemics with the Marxist thought be evaluated?

Ślipko focused his attention on analyzing the Marxist ethics and socialist morality in Poland. He believed that dialogue between the Catholic Church and Marxism should not be a hostile confrontation aimed at defeating the opponent, but should lead to actually getting to know the other party's standpoint while at the same time presenting

one's own worldview to them. The main goal of such dialogue was to find common ground and identify differences, as well as possibilities and limits in removing them.[69]

Very important evidence of the studies carried out by Ślipko in this area is a detailed presentation of the views of Polish Marxist ethicists who published their books and articles in the years 1974–1984. The most important representatives of Marxist ethics in Poland during that period included Zdzisław Cackowski, Marek Fritzhand, Henryk Jankowski, Stanisław Jedynak, Mieczysław Michalik, Adam Schaff, and Zbigniew Szawarski. As regards philosophical studies, the work Ślipko valued most highly was Fritzhand's article entitled *Wartości a fakty* [*Values vs. Facts*].[70] The conclusions of Ślipko's analyses concerning Marxist ethics in Poland in the years 1974–1984 were compiled in two extensive articles published in the years 1985–1986.[71] The main goal of these publications was not so much to provide a critical evaluation of the views of Marxist philosophers, but rather to present the views of Marxist ethics on the most important moral problems of contemporary times: the meaning of life, happiness, the philosophy of work, social justice, technical progress and civilization, genetics, war and peace, professional ethics, etc.

There is a tremendous chasm between the Christian and the Marxist view of man and the world, particularly as regards the existence of God, religion, anthropology and religious freedom. Ślipko claimed that the possibility of finding any common ground in Marxism and Christianity depended to a large extent on the possibility for Marxists to see in religion something more than an institution which imposes a spiritual yoke on the working masses. Christianity stands strongly on theist positions, while various currents of Marxism represent an atheist or agnostic standpoint. This essential difference in worldview entails equally profound differences between Christian

[69] Cf. M. Fritzhand, "Materializm, metafizyka, etyka," *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 25, no. 1 (1989), pp. 47–58.

[70] Cf. M. Fritzhand, *Wartości a fakty* (Warszawa: PWN, 1982).

[71] Cf. T. Ślipko, "Marksistowska doktryna moralna we współczesnej rzeczywistości polskiej. Cz. 1: Teoria moralności socjalistycznej w podręczniku 'Etyka'," *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 21, no. 2 (1985), pp. 129–144; T. Ślipko, "Marksistowska doktryna moralna we współczesnej rzeczywistości polskiej. Cz 2: Teoria moralności socjalistycznej w publikacjach z lat 1974–1984," *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 22, no. 1 (1986), pp. 115–157.

and Marxist ethics, since every ethical system stems from some general philosophical system on which it is based. This applies in particular to anthropology. Ethical solutions must be preceded by anthropological ones.

Ślipko analyzed first of all a certain version of Marxist humanism, incompatible with the Christian view of man, in which certain elements shared by Marxist and Christian circles could be identified. This common ground includes understanding man as a person, the category of human dignity, the dynamic character of man's personality, and seeing the human person as a social being. Ślipko treated them as the kind of ideals which should be realized by people of different religions and worldviews.

For the Polish Marxist ethicists analyzed by Ślipko, a clear demarcation line existed between Marxist ethics and socialist morality: Marxist ethics defined the most general bases and normative principles, while socialist morality was their practical application and actualization. Marxist ethics only formulated general worldview assumptions and normative rules, while socialist morality encompassed the whole of moral norms related to overall historical conditions of a socialist society. In this approach, socialist morality is a practical application of the criteria of Marxist ethics, its practical implementation. Consequently, the theory of Marxist ethics can be identified with general ethics, while the theory of socialist ethics is a form of detailed ethics.

Ślipko did not publicly express any negative judgments of any particular ethical solutions proposed by Polish Marxist ethicists. He made it very clear, however, that there was one serious fault in Marxist ethics, namely its relativism *tout court*. For Marxist ethics, elementary moral norms are not the basis of moral order, but are seen only as the "external setting" of class-based moral systems. The varied ethical principles propagated by Marxists are very general and can at the most be applied to simple situations of individual life, never to social life.

> Such concept of variable moral norms has serious consequences. The principle of situational relativisation of moral norms and admissibility of exceptions certainly adds normative flexibility, but at the same time it imposes a tribute on relativist ethics which it will have to pay, sooner or later. The problem is that the idea of situational changeability of moral norms introduces into their content a broad range of indefinite deviations and exceptions, so that

> the borderline between moral good and bad necessarily becomes largely obliterated. This, however, makes it necessary for the acting subjects, i.e. individuals and groups, to independently decide to what extent they are allowed to apply exceptions from norms, and where the field of moral "you must not" begins. In this situation, an arbitrariness, or—as Marxists sometimes say—voluntarism of decisions must squeeze in, one way or another, into the moral awareness of these subjects, which will be reflected in their practical actions.[72]

Naturally, Marxist ethics is not the only philosophical current which involves ethical relativism. Ślipko says that his criticism of the historical and cultural variability of moral norms applies to all directions of secular ethics or the humanist ethical tradition, which could be referred to as humanist ethical relativism, or ethical relativist humanism. In Marxist ethics, this theoretical orientation is expressed first of all in the thesis about the changeable nature of morality depending on historical and class-related factors.

[72] T. Ślipko, "Marksistowska doktryna moralna we współczesnej rzeczywistości polskiej. Cz. 2: Teoria moralności socjalistycznej w publikacjach z lat 1974–1984," pp. 154–155.

6.

Influence on the domestic and international community

Ślipko is one of the most important Polish ethicists of the second part of the 20th century and the beginning of the present one. During the communist period, his influence on the domestic and international community was considerably limited by the censorship imposed by the functioning of the totalitarian state, small print runs of any publications, limited opportunities to travel abroad, no translations of his works into other languages, no access to mass media as a way of publicizing his philosophical views, etc.

In the Poland governed by the communists, censorship was a form of supervision exercised by the state over various kinds of information (the press, scientific and cultural publications, shows, etc.) intended for publication. There was a special institution in place to perform these tasks, the Main Office for the Control of the Press, Publications and Performances. Censorship in Eastern Bloc countries was designed as a preventive measure, aimed at eliminating politically undesirable content before it could be published in books, scientific magazines or the mass media. When communism collapsed in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, Ślipko was 71 years old. Thanks to his good health, his scientific work in the free Poland gained a new momentum—particularly after the lifting of censorship which had previously limited the editions of his publications and affected the public presentation of his views.

Under communism, Ślipko's main contribution was to develop a contemporary concept of Christian ethics, taking into account new international findings in this area, and applying philosophical analyses to new moral issues related to the development of science, technology, culture and social life. In this context, a particularly important role was played by his three-volume textbook on ethics. In 1974, the first volume was published under the title *Zarys etyki ogólnej* [*An Outline of General Ethics*], followed by two more volumes published in 1982, entitled *Zarys etyki szczegółowej* [*An Outline of Detailed Ethics*].

In that period, this impressive study encompassing about 1300 pages was a unique ethical textbook not only in Poland, but in the entire Eastern Bloc. The fact all this work could be performed in a communist state, behind the Iron Curtain, confirms not only the exceptional intellectual competences of its author, but also proves that in Poland communists were unable to entirely destroy or marginalize Christian communities, unlike in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, or Hungary.

For several decades this three-volume textbook on ethics, repeatedly reprinted, has shaped—together with other books by Ślipko—the moral views of each new generation of philosophers, ethicists, clergy, teachers, and students in Poland, as well as many other people interested in broadly understood ethical and humanist problems. It is worth noting that during communism, his works were read not only by representatives of the Christian community, but also some of the Marxist circles as well. One example is the Marxist philosopher Marek Fritzhand, who said in one of his articles that he had learned a lot from reading these publications.[73]

Another important contribution made by Ślipko is the popularization of bioethical issues in Poland, and shaping adequate moral sensitivity in the context of the fast development of biotechnologies. He began studying these problems already in the 1980s, and was one of the precursors taking up ethical challenges posed by scientific and technological progress.[74] The modern biotechnological revolution has most certainly affected all dimensions of our life. It influences the way we eat, experience our sexuality, enter into marriage, give birth

[73] Cf. M. Fritzhand, *Materializm, metafizyka, etyka*, p. 47.

[74] Cf. T. Ślipko, *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki*, op. cit.

to children and raise them. In the biotechnological era, profound changes affect all aspects of our individual and social life.

The term biotechnology refers to the application of science and technology to modify living organisms: microorganisms, plants, animals and people. For several decades, biotechnology has certainly been one of the fastest developing fields of knowledge. Nearly every day the mass media provide new information on attempts at cloning man, genetically modifying plants and animals, marketing genetically modified food, new ways of obtaining stem cells. Ślipko is one of those thinkers who soon realized that the sudden development of broadly understood biotechnology is a serious challenge for ethical reflection. New methods of modifying living organisms require first of all a moral evaluation. Not everything that is technically possible must necessarily be morally good. Ślipko was most emphatic in his publications about the need for upholding the primacy of ethics over science and technology—we need moral reflection on the sphere of biotechnology in order to ethically evaluate new technological methods, procedures, and possibilities.

How should Ślipko's dialogue with Marxist thought be evaluated? What influence did his publications have on representatives of Christian circles and the advocates of Marxism in Poland? It seems that interpretation of this area of his work requires particular intellectual diligence. On the one hand, Ślipko's studies on Marxist ethics introduced Christian circles to the views of thinkers advocating the Marxist view of man and the world. Thanks to such works, it was easier to see similarities and differences between the Christian and the Marxist worldview. On the other hand, Ślipko's publications until 1989—due to communist censorship—could not take into account many important negative elements of Marxist philosophy. Consequently, his studies did not mention communist crimes, or the criminal and moral responsibility of communists for the evil perpetrated in many countries around the world. Thus, Ślipko's interpretation of Marxism was limited and had little impact on Polish citizens.

It is worth noting here that many Polish thinkers—who lived in exile during that period—presented much harsher evaluations of communism and the Marxist philosophy. One of the best known Sovietologists and radical critics of communism was the Polish philosopher Józef Maria Bocheński, who spent most of his life in Switzerland. Another Polish author who lived in Italy after World War II and who called communism and national socialism two twin-like totalitarian

systems was Gustaw Herling-Grudziński. His book entitled *Inny świat. Zapiski sowieckie* [*A World Apart: The Journal of a Gulag Survivor*], written in the years 1949–1950 and first published as a translation into English in London in 1951, was one of the first literary documents showing crimes perpetrated by the communist system.[75]

A similar view of communism was developed, among others, by the French philosopher Alain Besançon, who referred to communism and Nazism as "diovular twins" or "heterozygous twins." In medical terms, such twins come from the fertilization of two separate egg cells by two separate sperm cells. Thus, from the very beginning there are two separate and different embryos. In analogous way, two totalitarian regimes were born in the 20th century: communism and national socialism. Communism and Nazism should be seen as equally criminal systems—bestial mass-scale murders were the basis of their functioning and formed part of their nature.

Besançon's claims about the criminality of communism were confirmed at length by an international team of historians who published *The Black Book of Communism* in 1997, documenting the 100 million victims of this ideology in the 20th century. The main thesis of the book, consistent with Besançon's findings, is that crime should be considered one of the elements proper to the communist system throughout the whole period of its existence. *The Black Book of Communism* puts the two totalitarianisms—the brown and the red—side by side as equally murderous.

> Having gone beyond individual crimes and small-scale ad-hoc massacres, the Communist regimes, in order to consolidate their grip on power, turned mass crime into a full-blown system of government. After varying periods, ranging from a few years in Eastern Europe to several decades in the U.S.S.R. and China, the terror faded, and the regimes settled into a routine of administering repressive measures on a daily basis, as well as censoring all means of communication, controlling borders, and expelling dissidents. However, the memory of the terror has continued to preserve the credibility, and thus the effectiveness, of the threat of repression.[76]

[75] Cf. G. Herling-Grudziński, *A World Apart: The Journal of a Gulag Survivor*, trans. J. Marek (London: Arbor Publishing House, 1951).

[76] P. Courtois, *The Crimes of Communism*, in *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repressions*, ed. P. Courtois, N. Werth, J.-L. Panné, A. Paczkowski,

Unfortunately, in the last decade of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century, Ślipko did not actively participate in the global debate held in some countries about the evaluation of communist crimes. It seems that in view of his personal experiences and intellectual competences, his voice could have mattered a lot both in Poland and beyond. One of the most interesting elements of that discussion was the inequality, pointed out by some thinkers, in the manner in which the crimes perpetrated by communism and national socialism are remembered.

Even today, international memory does not treat communist and Nazi crimes in the same way. While the evil of Nazism has been thoroughly documented and condemned, the crimes of communism are still largely covered by a veil of silence. The settling of accounts with communism and its condemnation should be as important as the settling of accounts with and condemnation of national socialism; even more so, in fact, as Nazism, unlike communism, was not a worldwide phenomenon.

How should Ślipko's influence on foreign philosophical circles be evaluated? Unfortunately, living in a country behind the Iron Curtain, he could not actively participate in the international intellectual debate. If it had been possible for him to travel abroad and be in touch with other scientific centers around the world, perhaps Ślipko, being a member of the Jesuit order, could have cooperated more closely with the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome which belongs to this order and which, especially in the second part of the 20th century, was the venue of many interesting and inspiring philosophical, theological and worldview debates.

> The Pontifical Gregorian University played an important role in defining the essence of Christian ethics and identifying Christian inspirations in the analysis of man's moral experience. In this important work, it would be hard to overestimate the contribution of three of the University's professors: Joseph de Finance, Nick Sprokel and Paolo Valori. De Finance referred in his moral studies to transcendental Thomism; Sprokel entered into a creative dialogue with the thought of Martin Heidegger, and Valori was one of the coryphaeuses of phenomenology in Italy. What these three

K. Bartosek, J.-L. Margolin, trans. J. Murphy, M. Kramer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 2.

> authors had in common—despite many differences—was first of all the fact they entered into a dialogue with contemporary thought in the ethical dimension, and combined phenomenological analyses of moral experience with metaphysical substantiations.[77]

From among the few texts by Ślipko which have been translated into other languages, the significance of two papers should be emphasized. One was the publication of a German translation of his texts on Polish Marxist ethics. With this book, German-speaking readers could learn about the evaluation of Marxist thought in Poland developed from the perspective of Christian worldview.[78] The other was *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki* [*The Borders of Life: Dilemmas of Contemporary Bioethics*], issued in Slovakian in 1998.[79] Its publication became an important point of reference for many worldview debates held in Slovakia in the recent years.

The promotion of Ślipko's thought, the popularization of his ethical or bioethical solutions, and the examination of his great intellectual heritage is still an important task to be performed. It was with this task in mind that Professor Ewa Podrez, a student and then collaborator of Tadeusz Ślipko, initiated the foundation of Tadeusz Ślipko SJ Centre of Christian Ethics, opened on May 13, 2016. The Centre is an organizational unit of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow. Its main task is to conduct research and scientific work, and to promote the great intellectual heritage left by Ślipko who strove on the one hand to remain faithful to the fundamental categories of traditional Thomism, while on the other attempted a reconstruction of the Thomist foundations of ethics so that it could better respond to the moral challenges of our times.

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[77] P. Duchliński, A. Kobyliński, R. Moń, E. Podrez, *Inspiracje chrześcijańskie w etyce* (Kraków: Akademia Ignatianum w Krakowie; Wydawnictwo WAM, 2016), pp. 197–198.

[78] Cf. T. Ślipko, *Die Marxistische Morallehre und Probleme der polnischen Gesellschaft der 70er und 80er Jahre*, trans. H. Dahma (Köln: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, 1990).

[79] Cf. T. Ślipko, *Hranice života. Dilemy súčasnej bioetiky*, trans. A. Capiak (Trnava: Vydavateľstvo Dobrá kniha, 1998).

7.

Glossary

Act: that which man causes, brings about, gives existence to, i.e. all changes within himself or in the world around him, produced through man's agency. Acts can be divided into rational and irrational ones, providing that the material object of ethics are only rational acts, i.e. those which are caused by man's will, made to act by rational knowledge of a good (goal) as its intended result. Rational acts may be free or imperative. The latter occur when the will is determined to act by the specific nature of a particular good, which is infinite good, or the Absolute. In the conditions of actually given existence, man does not perform such acts at all, as infinite good is not accessible to his direct knowledge. A human act, being the proper object of normative ethics, is a free rational act, i.e. such in which the will, unhindered by external obstacles and not subject to the constraints of the laws of nature or the strongest motive, chooses a particular good from among several recognized options. They divide into: (1) natural acts and dictated acts (in view of the ontic structure of the act); (2) fully conscious and partially conscious acts (in view of the degree of consciousness necessary to perform the act); and (3) actually, virtually and habitually intended acts (in view of the awareness of the intention with which the acting subject performs the act). The object of the act (the purpose of the action, the objective goal) is the result of the act towards the actualization of which it is oriented by the power of its proper inner purposefulness.

Act absolutely inherently good or bad: an act whose object involves moral good or evil. An act which is absolutely inherently bad

can never be justified; it is bad always and everywhere. This notion determines the objectivist and absolutist nature of Professor Ślipko's Christian ethics.

Act restrictively inherently good or bad: an act made up of two elements: (1) the essential content of good or evil, and (2) the moral neutrality and its proper restriction (e.g. false talk in the case of protecting a secret). The morally neutral character of an act to which a restriction applies makes it serve the actualization of one value without infringing another, as the limited axiological scope of the latter eliminates the possibility of a conflict of values both in the sphere of objective and absolute order and on the grounds of acts performed by man.

Axiological conflict: A conflict which occurs when by upholding one moral value the acting subject violates another one. According to Professor Ślipko, the idea of a conflict of values is logically inconsistent and should be replaced with that of their coordination. If the acting subject derives moral content from a value limited by another value, their act becomes inherently good or bad restrictively, i.e. within the limits of the axiological scope of the value concerned. An object which goes beyond this scope and which actualizes the content of limitation proper to this value (determined by the need to defend the higher value) is neither good nor bad. This moral neutrality represents a restriction which is inherent to the moral structure of the act. The morally neutral character of an act affected by the restriction means that it actualizes one value without violating the other, as the limited axiological scope of the latter eliminates the possibility of a conflict of values both in the sphere of objective and absolute order, and in the field of acts performed by man.

Bioethics: a department of detailed philosophical ethics whose aim is to determine moral evaluations and norms (rules) applicable to the sphere of human actions (acts) consisting in interventions in borderline situations related to the initiation of life, its duration, and death.

Christian ethics: the Christian philosophy of morality, which is theist, spiritualist, and objectivist. Recognizing the existence of various versions of Christian ethics, Professor Ślipko considers Thomist ethics

to be Christian ethics *par excellence*. Consequently, his way of doing Christian ethics is based on the fundamental assumptions of the Thomist system, while at the same time drawing on non-Thomist sources, in some cases even taking a stance that is different from the traditional Thomist one.

Circumstances of an act: the combination of variable factors in the structure of an act which, together with the goal of the agent achievable as a side effect, supplement the dynamic reality of the human act based on the permanent foundations of the purposefulness of that act. The circumstances determine the concrete context of individual acts, i.e. their proper situation. They can be considered in physical or moral terms. In order for a circumstance to be morally relevant, two conditions must be met: (1) the primary moral quality of the act must be presumed as flowing from the object; (2) the circumstances themselves must contain relevant moral sense which modifies that primary moral quality by either determining the good or evil of a neutral object, or increasing/decreasing the good or evil that already exists. In such case, the circumstance is morally relevant.

Common good: the common good of a state which represents all elements (institutions and products) of legal, economic, intellectual and moral nature, conditioning the comprehensive fullness of the development of persons and subordinate societies forming part of the state.

Community: a collective realistic being, really given, characterized by unity and permanence of existence despite the differences between individuals who make it up. The essence of community in Professor Ślipko's approach consists in the unity of the moral imperative conditioning the rights and obligations to be realized by the social members of this community of goals. The inherent basis of the essential bond of human community is the moral need for communal existence and action which applies to all of its members, uniting them into a single, collective, but internally homogenous moral body. Professor Ślipko lists two basic types of communities: (1) simple, and (2) complex ones. The former is made up solely of people bound by a permanent unity of life, while the latter includes other smaller communities.

Conscience: the judgment (made in view of a general evaluation or norm) about the good or evil of a specific act intended by man, whose performance becomes for him the source of inner approval or a sense of guilt, of his being a good or a bad man. According to Professor Ślipko, conscience is developed in result of simple inference, where the place of the upper premise is taken by a general value judgment, and that of the lower premise—by a specific act of the judging subject, and ultimately by a conclusion saying that a particular act does or does not correspond to the idea of good contained in the evaluation. The complexity of its structure allows it to be viewed from various standpoints. On this basis Professor Ślipko makes the following distinctions: (1) antecedent and subsequent conscience (depending on whether the judgment of conscience is concerned with a future or past action); (2) true and erroneous conscience (depending on the relationship of the judgment of conscience to the norms of an objective moral order); (3) certain, doubtful, or confused conscience (depending on the type and degree of certitude present in judgments of conscience); (4) accurate, broad and scrupulous conscience (depending on man's general disposition).

Defensive speech: deliberately misleading an aggressor as a necessary and proper means of protecting a secret in the event of unjust verbal aggression. The permissibility of defensive speech is based on the restrictive nature of the moral evil of falsehood. In view of the moral obligation to protect a secret, defensive speech is, in Professor Ślipko's approach, an act that is morally equitable and imperative.

Ethical experience: man's reflection on his own moral awareness and its ideas, i.e. the ability to realize the condition of one's own moral awareness. Ethical experience consists in intellectual acts whose object is moral content. Its essential form is inner experience which provides data about moral content experienced by particular individuals. According to Professor Ślipko, ethics can also be concerned with external experience which occurs when inner content becomes objectivized. External experience may be common or scientific.

Ethical fact: a complex of phenomena detected in man's moral awareness, which Professor Ślipko refers to as the phenomenon of

morality. It consists in a combination of such elements as e.g. the experience of value, obligation, striving towards goals, conscience, act of choice and decision, determining our moral conduct in their proper way. Professor Ślipko postulates that the basic moral fact should be understood as an integral whole made up of three essential elements, which he calls primary facts: striving towards a goal, the experience of a value, and the experience of an imperative. The definition and description of a basic ethical fact represent the first two stages of Professor Ślipko's method of doing ethics.

Ethics: in Professor Ślipko's interpretation, it is a philosophical science which formulates general moral principles and detailed norms of human action using man's natural cognitive powers. In view of the theoretical tasks it has to perform, Professor Ślipko distinguishes between general and detailed ethics. General ethics includes: (1) the science of human acts, (2) the science of the goal and meaning of human existence, or eudemonology; (3) the science of moral good and moral values, or axiology; (4) the science of moral law, or deontology; (5) the science of conscience, or syneidesiology; (6) the science of moral virtue, or aretology; and (7) the science of moral responsibility. The task of detailed ethics is to formulate rules, or evaluations and norms of moral action, applicable to generically specified categories of human acts. It divides into personal and social ethics. As regards personal ethics, Professor Ślipko discusses the normative aspect and defines the proper moral order of fundamental categories of human actions on three planes determined by a person's relation to God, to themselves, to other persons and to animate and inanimate nature. As for social ethics, on the other hand, Professor Ślipko understands it as a philosophical science which aims to formulate basic principles and moral evaluations and norms based on them, applicable to the sphere of relations between social subjects and their actions rather than individuals acting as private persons.

Ethics of natural environment: ethics which considers two problems: (1) the general one concerning man in relationship to nature, and (2) the detailed one whose object is the relationship of man to the world of animals. The task of the ethics of natural environment is to formulate the most important moral principles binding man in his relationship to nature.

Euthanasia: Professor Ślipko distinguishes between suicidal and homicidal euthanasia. The former means killing oneself directly by a person who is terminally ill in order to end excessive suffering they experience. Such decision is taken under the influence of realizing that there is no hope of a cure or losing faith in being able to bear suffering any more. Homicidal euthanasia is the direct killing of a terminally person in order to end their excessive suffering. In either form, it is a morally evil act. Professor Ślipko lists three types of homicidal euthanasia: (1) euthanasia on demand (when the death-dealing agent is a private person, motivated by compassion towards the suffering person, most often on their own demand); (2) exclusively legal euthanasia (when the death-dealing action is performed by a person authorized by the state without the knowledge of the person being killed), and (3) voluntary euthanasia (when the death-dealing action is performed by a person authorized by the state with the consent of the person being killed, or even at their request).

Gender: the sexual differentiation of human persons into a male and a female population, which in the biological sphere is manifest in a different anatomy and physiology of sexual organs, corresponding to differentiation of psychical structures, i.e. sexual differentiation of man as a whole. Despite its physical background, human sexuality forms part of the rational structure of the human person and becomes an element of man's sexual culture. In accordance with Professor Ślipko's concept, man actualizes his sexual abilities on the physical and spiritual plane. Human sexuality encompasses three basic components: polar sexual duality, procreative complementarity, and personal nature of the life-giving capacities of sexuality. In Professor Ślipko's interpretation, the purposefulness of sexuality is inherently related to personal human life, which endows the Christian understanding of sexuality with personalist meaning.

General moral imperative (moral law): general imperatives or prohibitions present in people's moral awareness which by the power of relevant authority enable rational subjects to perform morally good actions.

General value judgment (moral evaluation)**:** a judgment of the moral good or evil proper to generically specified categories of human

acts. Depending on whether the subject matter of the judgment is moral good or evil, Professor Ślipko distinguishes between positive value judgments (e.g. being faithful is morally good) and negative value judgments (e.g. breaking an oath is morally bad). The source of value judgments is the intellectual perception of consistency between a particular act and its proper perfection referred to the good of man. The truth of such judgment resides in its consistency with the objective reality of its corresponding value. General value judgments are for Professor Ślipko the criteria of moral good and evil. Thus, they play the role of a tool in ethics which makes it possible to distinguish good and bad acts, providing grounds for forming judgments of conscience.

Goal: the good intended by a subject for its own sake. Taking into account the objective measure of good represented by a particular goal, Professor Ślipko distinguishes between immediate goals, the supreme goal, and the ultimate goal. Immediate goals have such measure of good that they can satisfy man's desires to a certain extent only, so that he may strive towards a further goal. The supreme (immanent) goal has the fullest measure of good within a particular system, i.e. an order of goals; it presumes the existence of other systems of goals to which it is subordinated. The immanent goal of human life is the fullness of personal development. Finally, the ultimate goal has such measure of good which is capable of satisfying man's desires completely, so that he does not only cease to pursue any further goals, but is in fact unable to pursue them.

Good: within the framework of Professor Ślipko's Christian ethics, it is understood as the formal object of the will. The will only intends a particular object to the extent this object presents itself to it as good. In the objective order of things, good is thus identified with a goal, as only good can be the object of man's striving.

Happiness: the conscious employment of a good which serves man's improvement and causes corresponding experiences of inner contentment (joy and pleasure). Depending on the goods possessed by man, Professor Ślipko divides happiness into: (1) imperfect happiness; (2) relatively highest happiness; and (3) perfect happiness. Imperfect happiness means the conscious possession of a good serving man's improvement and causing his contentment to an incomplete

degree, i.e. such as allows him to strive towards higher degrees of perfection and proportionately better states of contentment. Relatively highest happiness is the state of conscious possession of a good serving man's improvement and causing his contentment in the fullest way available in a given arrangement of goods, yet allowing for the possibility of his striving towards higher degrees of perfection and proportionately better states of contentment within the framework of another, higher arrangement of goods. Perfect happiness is the result of consciously possessing a good serving man's improvement and causing his contentment to a comprehensively complete degree, i.e. such as makes man not only cease striving, but makes it impossible for him to strive towards higher degrees of improvement and proportionally better states of contentment. Thus, man's happiness is permanently dependent on the goods in his possession.

Human freedom: the right to act within the framework of an objective moral order and in compliance with applicable norms. Man's freedom understood as a moral category is an instrumental value according to Professor Ślipko. It actualizes its proper moral sense within the framework of moral order, making objective moral norms based on the moral nature of the human person the principle of rational actions. The basis of freedom is the spiritual element of human nature, which makes it an attribute of man alone. In accordance with Professor Ślipko's interpretation, freedom is also conceived as a moral right and encompasses the freedom of conscience and religion, the freedom of thought, speech and science.

Human person: according to Professor Ślipko, the nature of the human person is integral and goal-ordered. In contains two elements: the personalist and the perfectionist one. The former refers to the fact that thanks to the spirituality and rationality of his nature, man is first of all a person. In the order of substantial beings, a person represents the highest existential perfection due to their being endowed with spiritual rationality, self-awareness, and the corresponding freedom. Man as a person is an autonomous being for Professor Ślipko, i.e. a subject who is able to act on his own behalf and who is therefore the author of his own development. He has personal dignity which endows him with the features of a fundamental value as a being oriented towards rationally becoming a different, ever more perfect being. The

perfectionist element, on the other hand, is related to the fact that there occurs a relation of correspondence between the inner purposefulness of individual parts of man's integral nature and his personal perfection. This is why perfection of the human person is the most profound and central creative principle of absolute moral values.

Human rights: the fundamental rights of man having its source in the human person. Their purpose is to create an appropriate framework for man and enable him to take those actions which condition the actualization of his moral destiny. In his concept, Professor Ślipko lists the following rights man has as a person and a social being: (1) the right to life and to bodily integrity; (2) the right to property and wages; (3) the right to the freedom of conscience and thought; (4) the right to choose one's marital status and occupation; (5) the right to participate in social life; and (6) the right to defend these rights.

Improvement of the human person: the capacity of the human person to realize their humanity by creating within themselves new areas of perfection, which make them an ever more complete and perfect person. It consists of man's going beyond himself to strive towards a more perfect fullness of existence. Factors contributing to man's personal perfection are moral goods, corresponding to the ideal model of man as a person. Since the capacity of a particular good to improve a person as person is based on the inherent purposefulness of particular powers or the existential structure of particular things, Professor Ślipko assumes that there exists a permanent relationship of correspondence between a particular power or thing and the ideal model of personal perfection. This is why perfection of the human person represents the most profound and central creative principle of absolute moral values.

Justice: in the concept proposed by Professor Ślipko, justice is understood as an ethical virtue and as a principle of social life. The virtue of justice enables man to give everyone what is due to them according to the measure of justice. The measure of justice, according to Professor Ślipko, is determined by an objective system of the rights and obligations of individual moral subjects, i.e. a juridical order constituted on fundamental norms of natural and positive law. As a principle of social life, justice is a plane on which detailed ethical social

norms are developed. Professor Ślipko supplements the classical division of justice into commutative, distributive and legal justice with social and international justice.

Man's moral nature: encompasses three elementary structures on which morality ordering man's rational actions is based: (1) the relation of the human person to an immanent goal (optimum development of one's own personhood); (2) the relation of the inner purposefulness of individual elements of human nature to the actualization of the model of personal perfection (i.e. rational, integral, and well-ordered nature); (3) the relation of self-improvement of the human person through actions that are morally equitable (natural law).

Moral obligation: absolute (i.e. unconditional) necessity, caused by a relevant imperative, which without violating man's physical freedom determines him by way of a supreme order to perform good acts and refrain from bad ones. With respect to the phenomenon of obligation, Professor Ślipko talks about two basic elements: (1) the unconditional necessity to act which is borne out of the imperative; and (2) the orientation of this necessity towards good in the form of a relevant moral value. The essential one of these two elements, determining the authentic sense of moral obligation, is its orientation towards the value related to a particular action.

Moral truth (equitable reason)**:** the whole of general value judgments, i.e. the logical content of relevant judgments to the extent they adequately express the objective content of relevant values. Moral truth has its ontic dimension in the world of absolute objective moral values corresponding to the logical dimension. It represents the consistency between human intellect and the objective moral world.

Moral values: general models or ideals of conduct (e.g. justice, truthfulness) which (1) refer to generically specified categories of human actions (e.g. giving everyone what is due to them, telling the truth); (2) express models of perfection which correspond to these actions and are actualized in them by way of reflection; but which (3) by being actualized in them, at the same time improve man as a person, and not only his particular abilities. This way, these exemplars are

models of perfection proper to man alone, which makes moral values the highest hallmarks of humanity. Christian ethics as done by Professor Ślipko defends the thesis that there exist moral values which are objective and absolute (universal and unchangeable). They are values which define ideal models of conduct that correspond to the basic categories of human actions and represent the essential elements making up the order of moral good. The constitutive principle of objective and absolute moral values in the integral and goal-ordered nature of the human person.

Moral vice: a permanent disposition acquired by man, i.e. the inclination of his will to perform certain morally evil acts. In accordance with traditional ethics, Professor Ślipko distinguishes the category of cardinal vices which are the equivalent of cardinal virtues on the side of moral evil. They are: vanity, gluttony and intemperance, unchastity, greed (stinginess), apathy (faintheartedness), envy, and irascibility. A separate place is given to pride. Professor Ślipko supplements this traditional list of moral vices with hatred as one of the main forces destructive to man's moral value.

Natural law: the set of categorical, objective and absolute (i.e. universal and unchangeable) norms based on fundamental imperatives which enable rational subjects to perform acts that are inherently good and avoid those which are inherently evil. The fundamental imperatives of natural law include the supreme imperative "do what is morally good and avoid what is morally evil," and the similarly general imperatives: "serve justice," "comply with the obligatory moral order." Categorical norms, according to Professor Ślipko, are defined in their content depending on the generic differentiation of basic categories of human actions and represent the rules of practical moral conduct. Due to their normative dependence on supreme imperatives, they form a system of laws which are inherently consistent and ordered. The normative scope of natural law is limited to acts that are inherently good or inherently bad, which makes it fit within the world of values, while the world of values permeates this law with its axiological content.

Obstacles to human acts: the whole of those factors which, by affecting a particular human act, either hinder the normal functioning

of the reason or will, or prevent it entirely. In Christian ethics, there are two basic categories of obstacles: (1) actual, i.e. such as emerge in man at a certain point, affect his spiritual faculties for some time, and then subside; and (2) habitual, i.e. such as represent a fixed element of man's psychophysical structure which hinders or even prevents him from performing acts that are entirely deliberate. As for actual obstacles, Professor Ślipko lists ignorance, emotions, fear and constraint; as for habitual ones, he mentions false opinions, addictions, and mental illnesses. Whenever any of the elements of the voluntariness of an act is limited, man's ethical competence in performing that act becomes overexerted, which limits his responsibility.

Ought judgement: a judgment which expresses a specific obligation, or necessity, applicable solely to rational subjects and determining these subjects to act in accordance with their proper rationality. Thus, for Professor Ślipko, the object of ought judgements includes only rational acts, and the necessity to act which they express does not violate the psychological rationality of the subjects who perform the act concerned.

Personal autonomy: the moral sovereignly and inviolability of man's personal dignity, representing a moral value which is not subordinated even to the society and its good. From the fact that man retains his personal autonomy in all possible circumstances of life results the moral imperative to treat him as a subject.

Principles of social life: principles defining the mutual relationships of dependence occurring between the whole of a community and its members, between the members and the whole, and between the members themselves. In Professor Ślipko's concept, they consist in the fundamental structural principles of a community and the basic moral and social norms. The former are: (1) supremacy of the social whole over its members within the life of the whole; (2) the autonomy of members with respect to the whole within their autonomous life activity; and (3) the equality and functional dependency of individuals on one another. The corresponding moral principles are: (1) the principle of solidarity; (2) the principle of subsidiarity; and (3) the principle of social coordination.

Responsibility: the property of a subject by the power of which moral good or bad present in the content of the action they have performed leaves a mark on the moral content of their personality, whereby they incur the consequences related to their act. Based on responsibility, man becomes a morally developed subject and at the same time a participant of the reward or punishment, happiness or suffering depending on their moral conduct.

Sacrifice of one's life: an action that is occasionally lethal and which consists in performing an act that is not lethal in itself, but which entails a threat to the life of the acting person due to other causes, or is performed in equally dangerous external circumstances. If a person does not intend to take their own life, and they perceive the threat or even certitude of death as an evil which they risk for a proportionally important reason, in the opinion of Professor Ślipko such action becomes endowed with high moral value.

Sexual ethics: ethics whose material object are the most important categories of sexual behavior. Its task is to define moral norms applicable to the sphere of human sexuality, determine the normative factors of sexual morality, and show their moral sense.

Suicide: Professor Ślipko divides acts of suicide into two basic types: (1) direct suicide and (2) indirect suicide. The former includes all suicidal actions intended by the subject, i.e. such as consist in using tools and performing external actions which are aimed by the power of their inner objective purposefulness at directly causing the death of the acting subject. Direct suicide is an inherently wrong act which is always, i.e. absolutely and unexceptionally, prohibited. Indirect suicide, on the other hand, includes all occasionally suicidal acts of a particular person which cause their death not by way of their inner, proper purposefulness, but due to the lethal result of an accompanying cause which is, however, deliberately intended by a separate act of the acting subject. It is an act externally and conditionally evil, i.e. it remains evil as long as the will persists in its evil disposition.

Virtue: an acquired permanent ability of man's will to perform acts which are morally good. Professor Ślipko divides virtues into naturally-theological and ethical ones. The immediate object of the former

is God. In the natural order, this group of virtues includes wisdom, love, hope, and devotion. Ethical goods refer to equitable incidental goods. In this category, Professor Ślipko lists five basic types of moral virtues: prudence, justice, self-control, fortitude, and love.

II.

Tadeusz Ślipko: Selected Writings

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Christian ethics: Its object, the need for it, and its tasks

T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2004), pp. 19–56.

An Outline of General Ethics is to be an introduction to the arcana of "Christian ethics," or the "Christian philosophy of morality." This preliminary declaration includes several questions which need to be clarified at the very beginning of this lecture.

The first reason for confusion may be the very term "Christian ethics." The difficulty is as follows: only "religious ethics" may be referred to as "Christian," i.e. based on principles derived from the Gospel or the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, or another Christian denomination; in short—based on some authority. If in this study we are indeed dealing with a "philosophy of morality," however, then it must draw on non-Christian sources of knowledge, and refer first of all to principles of reason, and not to any authority. Such is the case with Aristotelian, Kantian or existential ethics. There are no grounds, therefore, for calling them "Christian ethics."

The key to solving this difficulty is found in two assertions. One must agree that any ethics, if it is to be a "philosophy," must draw on non-religious sources of knowledge. In this regard, "Christian ethics" is no exception. It derives its essential data from the same sources as the philosophical and ethical directions mentioned above in order to formulate its particular philosophical language and method used in constructing and substantiating its theses. This is further confirmed by an irrefutable historical fact: Christian ethics is rooted in the world

of Antiquity, in non-Christian, Platonic and Aristotelian ideas, and continues the style of doing philosophy which was initiated by these directions.

We are thus faced again with the question of on what grounds this ethics is called "Christian." The answer is: it is not in view of methodological criteria, but due to historical and cultural reasons. The origins of this system date back to the time in history which was thoroughly Christian, namely to Middle Ages; the essential elements in building its ethical theories were contributed by philosophers representative of Christianity, such as Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas; the system has been embraced and is still developed mainly in academic institutions related to the Church. More importantly, this ethics, being an integral part of "Christian philosophy," shared its historical fate for many ages. Both of them remained in a close symbiosis with theology up until the 19th century. It was not a relation of partnership, however. Philosophy was considered "a servant of theology" (*ancilla theologiae*); in other words, it was an auxiliary discipline whose task was to develop a synthesis of rational concepts and statements necessary for a theological interpretation of the articles of faith. In performing these tasks, it received an input of ideas from theology, which prompted some revealing philosophical investigations (for example, development of the anthropological concept of person), while maintaining a methodological distinction between the two disciplines.

It was in this historical context that the philosophical system developed by Thomas Aquinas and generations of those who continued his thought was born. Despite some initial difficulties, this system became established in the intellectual culture of the Catholic societies of Europe, mainly because its worldview foundations, particularly theism and spiritualism, were compatible with the truths of Christian faith. Against the background of this historical context, it may be claimed that Thomist philosophy, as regards its doctrinal corpus, satisfies two essential conditions for being referred to as "Christian philosophy." Thus, leaving the fascinating history of this term aside, along with the multitude of meanings it was endowed with over the ages,[1]

[1] Cf. H.M. Schmidinger, "Zur Geschichte des Begriffs 'Christliche Philosophie'," in *Christliche Philosophie im Katholischen Denken das 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1: *Neue Ansätze in 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. E. Coreth (Graz: Styria Verlag, 1987), pp. 29–45.

there are grounds for Christian philosophy and ethics to be called in this textbook interchangeably as "Christian philosophy/ethics."

The above observation poses a new problem, however: Why should a term be introduced with such a broad meaning, if we have terms at our disposal which have long been used in the literature, and which are, moreover, less ambiguous, such as "Thomist ethics," or "Augustinian and Thomist ethics"? The question is a most legitimate one, and we need to account for this change. Generally, the reason was the development of a new situation in European philosophical thought. The beginnings of this process date back to the 19th century, but it was in the 20th century that it took a distinct form. The point is that also on Christian grounds some new philosophical and ethical orientations emerged at that time, alongside with Thomism. Certainly, a crucial role was played here by modern philosophical currents. It was under their inspiring influence that D. V. Hildebrand sketched a broad outline of phenomenological ethics, M. Blondel did the same for personalist ethics, and G. Marcel for existential ethics. The important thing, however, is that these philosophers, as well as other innovative Catholic thinkers, despite their differing views of the phenomenon of morality, represent theist, spiritualist and objectivist ethics in the philosophy of morality alongside with Thomist ethics. This unity of fundamental worldviews and assumptions proves that all of these currents make up a separate group of Christian directions in philosophy and ethics. In this respect they differ fundamentally from numerous modern systems of secular ethics, as well as from philosophical and ethical schools of Antiquity. The term "Christian ethics" is designed to signal the existence of this sharp borderline.

With this in mind, it becomes clear that the designate of the term "Christian ethics" is not a single, specified "ethics," but various "Christian ethics." It is an umbrella term, which is why it is inherently burdened, as is the case with any such term, with difficulties in using it to identify one of the actual designates within its scope. We should therefore consider whether it could not be disambiguated to a certain extent by identifying one of the ethical directions to which it would refer in this handbook as a general rule. This direction is precisely the system of Thomist ethics, whose distinguishing features include the fact is that it is a work encompassing many ages of doctrinal tradition, that its contents are comprehensive and well-developed, and that it has been cultivated for ages by a significant number of adherents.

For this reason, it may be deemed "Christian ethics" *par excellence*, as a flagship system of theistically and spiritually oriented ethics.

These words may sound sophisticated, but are they not an exaggeration? We may agree that this was the case in the history of Christian philosophical and ethical thought. For many centuries, Thomism was indeed the dominant philosophy in a Europe which was defined by Christianity. Today, however, the situation has changed radically. Even the very fact, mentioned above, of the pluralist differentiation of philosophical Christian thought weakens the position of Thomism together with its ethics. Its position is even more undermined by charges brought against Thomist ethics. It is accused of proposing a static view of morality, of being permeated by a spirit of rigid legalism; it is claimed that in the maze of casuistic meticulousness it is no longer able to understand the broader contexts of human actions. In short, it is not an ethics capable of speaking to the contemporary man.

The charges brought against Thomist ethics should not be sidestepped. In fact, they may contribute to introducing even more profound improvements into this ethics. There are no reasons to fear, however, that they toll the funeral bells over the validity of this ethics in the modern world. Cartoonish exaggerations in the wording of these charges suggest that they belong to the arsenal of techniques aimed at producing negative attitudes towards Thomist ethics, rather than being the outcome of a reliable analysis of its doctrinal shortcomings. It is easy to see that the bugbear of a "static" (obviously: stationary and self-contained) view of morality is a blow aimed at the Thomist thesis about the stable foundations of moral order. The charge of its "legalism," on the other hand, immediately casts a shadow over the Thomist idea of natural law being rooted in unchangeable structures of human nature, while a similar aversion to submitting practical situations of life to the regulating functions of this law is to be produced by charges clothed in the robes of "casuistic meticulousness."

There is only one way out of this unhealthy situation. We must employ one of the basic principles of reliable scientific criticism, which must satisfy at least two conditions. Firstly, it must be based on reading the authentic thought of the doctrine being evaluated, and secondly on its thorough analysis. These two procedures will bring optimum results when they focus on those issues which are fundamental for the doctrine concerned. As regards the issue of continuing

relevance of Thomist ethics in today's changing world, this general directive takes the form of a question whether Thomist ethics has anything valuable to say in philosophical and ethical investigations continued over many ages, whether the transcendent, absolute theory of morality founded on the primacy of objective good has solid foundations in experiential data and rational premises. …

An apology of the unexpired validity of doctrinal values represented by Thomist ethics was aimed at blunting the sharp edge of contestation directed against this ethics by its contemporary adversaries. Yet this does not negate, however, the need for continuous critical reflection on this system, also on the part of its supporters. Guided by this belief, the author of this handbook has also submitted it to various, sometimes quite profound reinterpretations. The inspiration behind these initiatives was drawn from the author's own conclusions, but also from the discoveries of non-Thomist thinkers, mostly phenomenologists. The most important changes include shifting the emphasis from the eudemonian orientation of neo-Thomist authors, even though they have the authority of Saint Thomas on their side here, towards the world of values. This was followed by a different understanding of principles constituting the foundations of moral good, as well as the theory of moral specification of the human act, the conflict of values, and several other innovations introduced on the same level. All of these modifications concern doctrinal elements of Thomist ethics of such great importance that they substantiate the need for a terminological distinction between them and the neo-Thomist version presented in 19th and 20th century handbooks. If the feature distinguishing this version is its eudemonian orientation, then the form of Thomist ethics developed in this handbook may be referred as "axionomic." Both views fit within the normative foundations of the ethics of Saint Thomas (let us call it "St. Thomas ethics"), and are merely two different varieties of Thomist ethics.

The feasibility of such internal transformations of Thomist ethics clearly proves that it is a system well-consolidated in its fundamental premises, while at the same time being open to further development, also with the use of creative elements coming from non-Thomist sources. It supports the legitimacy of the thesis that it takes a prominent place among "Christian ethics." It may thus be considered its typical form, simply as "Christian ethics" with no additional qualifications. …

Explanations concerning the term "Christian ethics" do not, however, bring an end to our troubles related to the handbook presentation of the doctrine it proclaims. We need to go back to the fact that the scope of this term also encompasses other directions, such as are, moreover, of recent, thoroughly modern origin. Is it advisable, therefore, to make the subject matter of out lecture only one direction of Christian ethics, and that in its traditional, albeit modernized, form of Thomist ethics? Would it not be more beneficial to try and compile a textbook written from a "super-systemic" or "asystemic" point of view, in other words—from the standpoint of an observer who does not advocate any particular direction? Does not a lecture on ethics which is endorsed and developed by the author narrow down the horizons of thought for young students by imposing ready-made patterns of thought and solutions? ...

One thing, however, appears to be beyond doubt. Christian ethics in its Thomist form still represents a valid and relevant theory of the philosophy of morality, capable of taking a proper stance both on fundamental philosophical and ethical issues, and on proposed solutions of detailed moral dilemmas based on these foundations. The ungrounded widespread opinion which would have it restrained and locked in the past is opposed by a well-founded, comprehensive doctrine which can take up a substantive discussion on any topic within its domain. It only asks that opinions addressed to it are based on a good understanding of the authentic sense of its proper language and structure of thought.

Definition of ethics, its sources and method, ethics and other sciences

Definition of ethics

Anyone wishing to practice normative ethics must first answer the question about what ethics is, at least in the most general meaning of the word. From preliminary explanations it is clear that we are talking about "ethics" as a "philosophy of morality." We may thus conjecture that elementary information in this respect will be provided by one of philosophical disciplines, even though considerably differing from the other disciplines, namely the history of philosophy, and in particular—the history of ethics. It turns out, however, that

instead of a short and simple answer to our question, we encounter, at least in the beginning, an ever greater obstacle.

The history of ethical doctrines proves that even in the fundamental, downright essential ethical issues there have been great differences in the views of particular thinkers. This process has also encompassed the very concept of ethics, which has consequently undergone some modifications of content and does not, in fact, have a homogenous meaning, understood by all philosophers of morality in the same way. Indeed, there have been philosophers who questioned the possibility of building a scientifically substantiated system of ethics at all. Considering this deep-seated pluralism in understanding the philosophical identity of ethics, there is nothing else for us but to take up this task from the standpoint of the philosophical system we have already accepted. In our case, this system is Christian philosophy in its broadly understood Augustinian and Thomist version. It turns out, however, that even within the framework of this ethics, there is a number of variants in its preliminary definition. There appears to be just one solution to this problem. By way of a provisional proposal, we will accept a definition of ethics which has the advantage of being composed of terms all of which have a non-systemic meaning acceptable to everyone. This definition is as follows:

> Ethics is a philosophical science which formulates general moral principles and detailed norms of human action using man's inherent cognitive faculties.

Each of the elements in the above definition require a more detailed specification.

(a) Science

We understand this term in its objective meaning as:

> a methodically arranged set of propositions about a particular object which are verifiable (i.e. properly justifiable), communicable, and comparatively intersubjective (i.e. expressed using a scientific language composed of explicitly determinate terms).

The term "science" is thus used in a neutral sense, not identified with any of the meanings assigned to it by particular philosophical interpretations of the notion of science … . Quite on the contrary, it encompasses all of these interpretations in its scope as scientific, as they

attempt to satisfy the criterion of verifiability and intersubjectivity. This does not imply, however, that they are all true.

(b) Philosophical

Means that it draws on the primary and elementary components of morality which cannot be explained with any preceding ones, but are themselves used as reasons to explain all others.

(c) General principles and detailed norms

This point plays a crucial role in this definition, and therefore deserves a more detailed discussion. It is identified with that which in everyday language is called "morality" and which is the main object of ethical studies. In order for the reader understand what this is about, let us refer to some simple data taken from our everyday life. For example, when we read in a newspaper that a soldier walking by a river jumped into the water to save a drowning child, we will all say that this was a good and a most noble act; while a report about someone who murdered an elderly couple to rob them of their savings will have everyone indignant, and the murderer's act will be judged as vile and profoundly morally evil. Everyday experience also shows that we use similar qualifiers when referring to ourselves, judging our own behavior as more or less commendable, or, conversely, passing a verdict on ourselves which condemns us.

Moreover, both our own and other people's consciousness tells us that all of these particular "judgments" and "self-judgements" function in us by the power of relevant general moral convictions which present certain categories of acts to us as good, commendable, noble, imperative or recommended, while their opposites as evil, prohibited and below man's dignity. Such convictions include, for example, our easily detectable moral intuitions—for instance that one should act fairly, that it is better to suffer harm than to inflict it, that one should speak the truth, while stealing or lying is forbidden, just like many other acts, some of which are morally commended and others condemned.

This last observation, resulting from a preliminary reflection on prevalent moral intuitions, deserves our particular attention. The general moral judgments and imperatives we have just described do not come to our awareness only when we are about to do or have already done something to which they apply. They are present in our subconscious prior to our moral praxis as permanent elements of our mental

life. It is, in fact, a distinct, specific world hidden in the depths of human psyche, which is always there with us, even if it is for us a source of painful experiences and quandaries. Yet this is precisely the world which contains in it the complex of phenomena which are the main object of ethical studies. If we want to explain the term "general moral principles and detailed norms" in the definition of ethics discussed here, we must take a closer look at the self-evident category of morality and provide it with a preliminary philosophical description.

As a result of this procedure, we discover three basic elements which are expressed in the above definition by the term "general principles." These are: the goal or goals of human acts whose achievement determines man's happiness and the meaning of his existence; the moral good (or, alternately, evil) inherent to these acts and the corresponding moral values; and, finally, the moral imperative, obligation, also referred to as moral law, by the force of which man is obliged or entitled to do or not to do something. These elements—each in their own way—encompass and organize the very foundations of all moral phenomena, and in this sense are the general moral principles of human actions.

On the foundations of these principles, ethics formulates detailed norms of human conduct in the course of its further studies. It is its task, therefore, to develop a set of judgments determining what is morally good (e.g. showing respect to one's parents is a good thing), norms which, again, say what should be done and what should be avoided (e.g. one should respect one's parents and should not offend them), and personal attitudes (e.g. an honest, noble, perfect man). Christian ethics, accomplishing all of the above tasks, builds its proper normative system of morality regulating man's conduct in two primary spheres of life: individual and social. Man thus finds in it a way of acting which helps him achieve the optimum state accessible in his pursuit of comprehensive personal growth.

To avoid misunderstandings in the above explanation of the term "general moral principles and detailed norms," we should note three things. Firstly, both the words "goal," "good," and "imperative," as well as the qualifier "moral" sometimes standing next to them (that is, a moral goal, moral good or evil, moral imperative), presume a colloquial meaning of these words, yet to be specified in philosophical terms. This allows us to distinguish at least between typical components of

morality from other elements which belong to non-moral spheres of reality, while it does not reveal its nature, or the essential content of this morality. One could hardly do otherwise in the preliminary phase of analysis, anyway. The philosophical notion of morality depends on how its basic elements (goal, good, imperative) are interpreted. Such interpretation is the final outcome of methodical, philosophical and ethical analyses which we cannot refer to as yet. Thus, to avoid jumping into conclusions, we must base our preliminary definition of the foundations of morality on data taken from everyday language. ...

What, then, according to the above definition, is the proper task of ethics as a philosophical science? Its task is first of all to build a morally normative theory of human actions, by employing the methods of philosophical reflection to develop a logically coherent set of ethical propositions, properly systematized and substantiated.

(d) Human actions

"Human actions" mean the total of man's rational acts. Thus, ethics does not refer to those of man's acts which are not deliberate or which are performed in a state of coercion exerted on his mind or will; in other words, it is not concerned with acts in which man does not know what he is doing, or those performed under constraint and against his will. ...

Structure of the definition

1. General specification of the material and formal object

In accordance with Thomist philosophy, a properly built definition should include elements which describe three basic aspects of the science concerned, in our case ethics, i.e. its material object, formal object, and sources. Since various Thomist authors differ in their understanding of the terms "material object" and "formal object," we first need to decide which of these meanings we will want to use.

The material object (*obiectum materiale*) of science is understood, generally with one accord, to mean a particular class of objects which a particular science is concerned with. The material object of a particular science thus represents material which requires theoretical studies on its part. Its formal object tells us what these studies consist in.

The formal object of a science is two-fold: referring to content and to method (in scholastic terminology: *obiectum formale quod* and *obiectum formale sub quo*). The former expresses this side or aspect of the material object which a particular discipline of science chooses as its special, or direct and substantial, focus of attention. The formal object in terms of content thus defines the field of study proper to a particular science. The formal object in terms of method means the approach a particular science adopts with respect to the object it studies, or, in other words, the particular theoretical point of view which it takes with respect to its object.

2. The material and formal object of ethics

Applying the above notions to the definition of ethics we have proposed, we must conclude that its material object is human action, and its formal object in terms of content are the general moral principles and detailed norms, or, in short, the morality of human action. As far at the formal object of ethics in terms of method is concerned, the issue is more complicated. It is hidden in the term "philosophical science." From this it results, firstly, that ethics is an integral part of philosophy as its detailed discipline; and furthermore that just like any other branch of philosophy, it aims to explain its proper object (the formal object in terms of content, which, as we have already stated, is the morality of human actions) in its ultimate elements, also referred to as primary causes. It thus goes beyond the phenomenal sphere of morality which includes so-called direct causes. Ethics as a philosophical and normative science tries to discover those reasons which determine the reality proper to morality which is transcendental to experience, but which—as has just been said—can be known through its mediation.

This also means that in the search for the proper object of ethics within the framework of morality perceived as a whole, we must focus on this area which is delimited by its formal object. Only in this area can the authentic form of a moral being be developed, and not in the sphere of the material object constituted first of all through acts of choice.

3. Sources of ethics

The answer to the question of the source of data ethics considers in its studies is found in the last element of our definition of ethics,

in the term: "man's inherent cognitive faculties." As has been explained above, this refers to strictly rational and experiential knowledge. With respect to the sources of ethics, however, these notions undergo a certain modification. Previously, we emphasized the subjective aspect of the cognitive faculties of human reason. We took into consideration mostly the fact that reason represents a certain specific capacity for abstract thinking, and reflection on the states of one's moral awareness. Now we look more to the products of human reason, expressing the objective aspect of man's cognitive powers. Reason is thus the source of ethics first of all in the sense that it creates notions and general rational principles which, once they are recognized as true propositions, serve to legitimize relevant ethical statements. Likewise, experience in this context means first of all the content of our moral convictions, or that which we experience as moral beings and which is cognitively expressed by an act of our mind's reflection directed towards these experiences.

The method of ethics

Having established the formal and methodological object of ethics and its sources, we now move to the method of ethics—the research tools ethics uses to build its intended systematic collection of ethical statements from its available sources. ...

1º Establishing an ethical fact

This is an important procedure. This is where the problem indispensable in the philosophical method of thinking is settled, in our case referred to as the point of departure for philosophical and ethical studies. In line with the accepted empirical orientation, it is necessary at this stage to take into account, aside from the data of inner experience, also the facts of external experience in the broadest possible sense, but without any philosophical admixtures. This way we discover in man's moral awareness a complex of elements which may be referred to as the moral phenomenon. It consists of a combination of such elements as for example the experience of value, obligation, pursuit of goals, conscience, acts of choice and decisions determining our moral conduct in their proper way. In essence, however, the question is: which of the elements found in man's moral experience

should be considered fundamental for the structure of morality. In this situation we must look for help to the history of ethical doctrines. The history of ethics teaches us, however, that at this point exclusive tendencies often came into play. They usually identified the basic ethical fact with one of these elements (e.g. phenomenology with the experience of value, and Kantianism with the category of obligation, to transform it into a principle to which all other elements are subordinated and in the light of which they are explained).

These approaches should be contrasted with the postulate of an integral understanding of the basic ethical fact. It says that the necessary components of the basic ethical fact are three elements, which may therefore be defined as primary facts: the pursuit of a goal, the experience of a value, and the experience of an imperative. While they are inseparably related and mutually interdependent, they also represent heterogeneous parts of this experience, flowing from different sources and requiring different explanations. For the same reason, none of them taken separately will suffice to express the essential content of the phenomenon of morality and to explain the other elements. This fact faces us with a new task: to determine which place is taken by each of these elements in the philosophical theory of morality, and discuss them in this order.

As has already been mentioned, the experience of a basic ethical fact does not exhaust the whole content of moral experience. This experience also includes other components of morality (e.g. the act of conscience or decision), which differ from the former ones, however, in that their content is determined by corresponding elements of the basic ethical fact. They cannot be ignored in ethical analyses, but, on the other hand, they must be treated in the right proportions determined by the nature of the matter.

2º Description of the basic ethical fact

In line with the assumption we have made, it will be the sum of three separate descriptions of its components in the form of primary facts. Each of these descriptions has to perform the following tasks. It must be aimed: firstly—at listing the most characteristic features of a particular moral experience, to the extent it is revealed in our awareness; secondly—at determining their mutual relationship; thirdly—at stating the problem. Describing the first two stages of this method in general terms, it should be stressed that they capture ethical

facts in the aspect of their experience in awareness. Thus, they represent a philosophy of awareness, even though they do not, as yet, imply a systemic point of view. Their culmination is only in stating the problem, not in solving it. As such, they are pre-systemic and problem-defining stages.

3º Legitimization of ethical and normative statements (theses)

The implementation of this last stage of the method presupposes some intermediate steps. We will discuss the most important ones here.

The first thing we need to do is to perform a philosophical analysis of this phenomenon. This procedure differs from description in that an analysis looks into the dynamic reality of the established ethical fact, trying to discover the basic components in its objective reality, and see their mutual interdependence. Its purpose, therefore, is to discover the internal structure of this phenomenon and to apply the resulting data in order to precisely define relevant notions and terms, i.e. formulate the ethical and philosophical language proper to the problem at hand. This is necessary in order to achieve clarity and avoid confusion of terms so frequent in modern philosophy.

The most important task, however, and one that is most difficult at this stage, is to build a logically correct substantiation of the thesis considered to be true. In order to do this, it is first necessary to look at the arguments and to establish their value as evidence. This may be done using logical procedures corresponding to the rank and place of the statement concerned in the structure of ethics. Apart from a reference to experience, strictly rational operations are employed as well. The most important of these include: a) intellectual intuition which consists in capturing and demonstrating the direct self-evidence of a statement by way of a logical analysis of the subject and the predicate; b) direct explanation, demonstrating the correctness of a statement by showing that it follows from other, more certain statements; and finally c) deduction, that is indirect reasoning.

It should be pointed out, however, that aside from asserting the possibility of substantiating ethical statements (despite some directions negating this possibility) and listing the formal types of the operations involved, no detailed assumptions in terms of content have been made on whose basis such substantiations could be built. Such findings, however, depend on the normative solutions of particular philosophical and ethical problems.

Aside from this, in line with beliefs prevalent among Thomist ethicists, it should be stated that at various points in its method, and in particular when constructing its proper apparatus of notions and ultimate substantiations of its basic theses, ethics cannot do without certain notions and rational principles borrowed from other philosophical disciplines. At least some of them should be mentioned, therefore. And thus, ethics takes from ontology (general metaphysics) the notion of goal and good, and the notion of existential relationship, and in particular that of essential relationship; philosophical anthropology provides it with the concept of the psycho-physical nature of man; while theodicy, substantiating the thesis about God's existence and man's dependency on God, supplies the theist and transcendental foundations of morality. Thus, in the discussion about the method of Christian ethics, the point is not to eliminate metaphysical assumptions. The point is rather to make use of them in the right place, that is not in the point of departure, but in the final stage of reflections. ...

Ethics and metaphysics

In light of the method of ethics presented above, it is clear that normative ethics, being a philosophical science, is always built on relevant metaphysics, or a set of general philosophical assumptions. It is from them that it derives its proper view of man and his place in the universe, which entails its proper understanding of man's actions and the morality by which they are governed. The relationship between Thomist ethics and metaphysics, or, we should rather say, Thomist philosophy, is close and inseparable. It determines its systemic consistency and cohesion. ...

Ethics and other sciences

Our discussion of the method of ethics has demonstrated that ethics remains in multilateral and close relationships with other philosophical and empirical disciplines. Since these relationships significantly affect the development of the theoretical profile of ethics, they need to be discussed in more detail.

1. Ethics and other philosophical disciplines

Ethics shares its formal and methodological object with philosophical disciplines, which makes them but parts of one organic whole jointly referred to as philosophy, or philosophical sciences. Nevertheless, each of them has its own material object and formal object in terms of content which distinguishes them from the others.

All philosophical disciplines divide into two general groups: some of them form the so-called practical philosophy, while other represent theoretical philosophy. They differ from each other in that theoretical philosophy develops a general theory of all existence and its basic detailed categories, while practical philosophy aims at building a theory of the actions of a rational being, in our case—of moral, equitable actions. With this assumption, it is clear that ethics belongs to the so-called practical philosophy. ...

2. Ethics and empirical sciences

They include first of all psychology, sociology, ethnology and the science of morality. Ethics shares with them its material object and its formal object in terms of content, and differs from them in its formal object in terms of method. Empirical sciences are limited to studying morality within the framework of phenomenal data of a temporal and spatial nature, and provide explanations which are only valid within these boundaries, while ethics looks for ultimate solutions in terms of worldview.

From the point of view of Christian philosophy, empirical sciences play an auxiliary role with respect to ethics. Their significance is revealed first of all in that they supply ethics with scientifically processed experiential data. Thomist philosophy appreciates them all and acknowledges their indispensability for ethical studies, as long as they stay within their proper boundaries. The only thing it objects to are the philosophical implications they often include, usually derived from naturalist and scientist philosophy, and the resulting conclusions. ...

3. Ethics and moral theology

The essential difference between these two consists in that each of these sciences draws on different sources for its reflections.

Ethics as a philosophical science is based on reason and experience as natural sources of knowledge, while the source of moral theology is revelation (*Scripture and Tradition*), thus presuming the authority of God and the Church as the interpreter of revealed knowledge. In its studies, moral theology often uses elements of philosophical thought, and therefore the works of moralists include plenty of philosophical material which an ethicist cannot ignore; moreover, learned in theology, he can derive subjective motivations from these sources to consider certain problems in the categories of philosophical thought. Ethics as a philosophical science, on the other hand, abstracts from theological sources, limiting itself solely to the empirical and rational side of phenomenological studies. Failure to understand this state of affairs sometimes leads to one-sided judgments which are not consistent with objective truth and lead to confusion. ...

Branches of ethics

In the definition of ethics proposed above, two main theoretical tasks were listed which it has to accomplish as a practical philosophical science: 1º establish the normative bases of human conduct, and 2º formulate the most important rules governing it. Correspondingly, in the traditional Thomist approach, ethics is divided into two main parts. One is the so-called f u n d a m e n t a l, or g e n e r a l, ethics, and the other is the so-called d e t a i l e d e t h i c s.

In this study, fundamental ethics consists of the following treatises: g e n e r a l p h i l o s o p h i c a l a s s u m p t i o n s; the science of h u m a n a c t i o n s; the science of the goal and meaning of human existence, or e u d e m o n o l o g y; the science of moral good and moral values, or a x i o l o g y; the science of moral imperatives (moral law), or d e o n t o l o g y; the science of conscience, or s i n e i d e s i o l o g y; finally, the science of moral virtue, or a r e t o l o g y; and the science of m o r a l r e s p o n s i b i l i t y. ...

Directly related and corresponding to these three treatises is sineidesiology. In its assumptions, it sets out to provide a theoretical analysis of the s p e c i f i c and s u b j e c t i v e side of morality as the necessary supplement to its absolute aspect. The next three treatises, that is: the science of human actions, moral virtue and responsibility, are—generally speaking—concerned with examining

the conditions in which the moral subject acts. In other words, it studies the factors without which morality could not function, or its functioning would be very difficult, in the practice of man's life. While the theory of human actions considers these conditions in pre-moral, physical, or—we should say—psychological terms (for it is concerned with the rational side of human actions), aretology and the science of responsibility aim at defining these conditions in moral terms. Thus, they presume the functioning of both absolute and subjective normative structures of morality. For this reason, they represent the final stages in reflections on morality, while the treatise of human actions has its place before ethical considerations proper. ...

The history of ethics proves, however, that the structural model of ethics outlined above is not accepted at all by all ethicists. First of all, non-Christian philosophers of morality either do not take into account all of the ethical problems discussed above, or organize them from a different point of view. For example, in antiquity the central ethical issue was the problem of man's goal and happiness; utilitarianism and phenomenology focus mainly on the issues of good and moral values. Kant and the advocates of ethical deontologism move the problem of moral obligation to the foreground. Christian ethics aims at an integral concept of the phenomenon of morality. Therefore, in its analyses it takes into account all of the aspects of ethical problems mentioned above. Contrary to the opinion of many contemporary philosophers, it hopes to build an ethical system that is as universal as possible.

Disambiguation of the term "detailed ethics"

T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2005), pp. 20–27.

It is clearly the task of detailed ethics to formulate the principles of conduct with more precision in terms of content than the general moral principles (goal, good, imperative) which have been established in general ethics. Such a more precise definition of these principles is what is meant by their "detailed specification." On the other hand, it is equally clear that such "detailed specification" cannot be identified with the concrete nature of human actions which characterizes judgments of conscience, where the action of an acting subject is located in a particular place and time as "this particular act performed here by *x*." Thus, the detailed specification of the rules of moral conduct we are concerned with is found somewhere between the generality of the basic principles of morality and the specificity of judgments made by conscience. Normative statements formulated by detailed ethics will be general in comparison to judgments of conscience, while at the same time being narrower in their scope, or more "detailed" compared to the fundamental principles of morality.

Nevertheless, the placing of detailed ethics between judgments of conscience and ultimate moral principles is not enough to provide a precise answer to the question asked above. To do this, we need one more, auxiliary notion—that of g e n e r i c s p e c i f i c i t y of particular categories of human acts. It has been described in general ethics in a treatise on the moral specification of human acts,[1] so it will be enough here to restate its essential properties.

[1] Cf. T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2004), pp. 163–196.

Particular human acts are certainly diversified in many respects. Nevertheless, there are certain fixed elements in the structure of these acts, identical in each one of them. The cognitive identification of these fixed elements by human reason makes it possible to assemble human acts into separate classes sharing the same basic reality, common to all of them, which may be referred to as their proper "essence" or "nature." This dynamic reality they share also provides grounds for distinguishing certain classes of acts from other parallel classes. This, in turn, leads to forming them into relevant notional categories, referred to as "genres" or "subgenres," depending on their relationship in terms of content to the superior category of notions, namely the generic concept of "human act." Examples of generically defined human acts include telling the truth, doing a favor to someone in need, paying back one's debts, doing one's job; but also their contradictions, such as telling lies, being unkind, etc. They are not as general as the notion of "human acts," but are less specific than "this particular act performed by *x*" of telling the truth or repaying one's debt. They are "generically" defined acts, and as such take the intermediate place in the category of human actions, between that which is most general and that which is specific.

Their two-fold, objective and intentional (cognitive) identity makes acts grouped into particular genres the object of explicit assertions, or judgments and statements. These judgments do not only refer to the "physical," or, to use a better word, "ontic" (traditional authors used the term "material") aspect of specific human acts, but—and first of all—to their moral aspect. In the latter case, two types of judgments are particularly important, known also from general ethics: general value judgments, or evaluations,[2] and imperative judgments, or norms.[3] They represent integral elements of the moral awareness of individual persons and entire social groups, while at the same time becoming the object of a methodical philosophical and ethical reflection which aims at transforming them into a rationally legitimized system of normative statements, making up the philosophical theory of morality, or ethics.

This statement is decisive for the problem we are concerned with. It allows us to develop a view of the specific nature and tasks of detailed

[2] Cf. ibidem, pp. 243–247.

[3] Ibidem, pp. 253–255.

ethics which is free from ambiguities and pleonasms. Based on these detailed specifications, we may define d e t a i l e d e t h i c s as:

> a philosophical science formulating rules, or judgments and norms of moral actions, applicable to generically specified categories of human acts.

In light of this formula, the meaning of two ideas which have so far been somewhat understated becomes clear. First of all, we now understand what the "intermediate nature" of detailed ethics we have already talked about exactly consists in. It is now clear that by identifying its proper "detailed nature" with the "generic specificity" of human acts, its object of study moves away from the uppermost degree of generalization with respect to human acts as such, and the corresponding most general moral principles, and moves towards man's moral practice as its integral element. The detailed norms of moral conduct participate in the process of decision-making, determining their moral sense and role in developing the perfection proper to man. On the other hand, detailed moral rules are general enough to encompass within their scope all specific acts belonging to their relevant genres, and represent the overriding moral directive common to all of them. While remaining "detailed" with respect to general ethics, they are also "general" with respect to the ethics of conscience.

The traditional expression saying that detailed ethics is the application of general moral principles to specific, essential relationships of the acting subject, takes on a fuller meaning. One may disagree with the opinion of traditional ethicists that this application consists in making use of deductive reasoning in which general moral norms act as premises in the substantiation of detailed rules.

It is still true, nevertheless, that in the philosophical legitimization of detailed judgments and moral norms, the starting point must be general ideas and moral principles. Applied to specific categories of human acts through more or less complex notional analyses or direct reasoning, they enable us to read the normative aspect of these acts and to formulate relevant judgments and norms. The procedures described in these words represent the "application of general moral principles to the detailed relationship of the acting man" as proposed by Christian ethics.

Theoretical rank of detailed ethics

By bringing detailed ethics to the level of specific categories of human actions, we draw a clear demarcation line separating detailed from general ethics on the one hand, and ethics from conscience on the other, but at the same time we run the risk of a certain misunderstanding. It is sometimes believed that, compared to reflections on the bases of morality, this kind of problems is—precisely due to its detailed nature—of a lesser sort. It looks too much like a catechism, it gets lost in the dullness of particular cases, narrowing down the horizons of ethical studies. Which is why there are both individual philosophers and entire directions focused almost exclusively on considering the great problems of the genesis of morality, the axiological status of the world of values, on moving from "is" to "ought," on the possibility of applying the category of truth and falsehood to normative statements; while questions concerning, for example, the ethical limits of truthfulness, respect for one's own life and the life of others, sexual behaviors, or issues related to social life are treated as quite marginal.

Sometimes, they are left aside entirely; at other times, they are settled based on common opinions or intuitions, in a cursory and superficial way, particularly when they become a tool of philosophizing based on studies into the meanings of ethical language rather than on studies into the moral reality; or they become the object of situational bargains. It is a most disastrous approach. First of all, it is inconsistent with the very nature of ethics as a normative science. For if we understand ethics as a philosophical, methodical reflection on the morality of human actions, it seems indeed inconceivable why only the fundamental layers of morality should deserve proper theoretical studies, while detailed spheres of life stemming from these layers and manifesting them should not be of interest to ethics. This would mean stopping half-way, failing to consistently perform the tasks proper to ethics, all of which would cast a shadow over its philosophical maturity. …

The theoretical weight of studies in the field of detailed ethics becomes much more prominent when it is considered against the background of social requests made in the course of moral practice by both individuals and groups. Under the pressure of specific choices and

actions, they often ask questions about the right course of action which they are unable to settle on their own. And it is clear that an "average man" forced to constantly take moral decisions is not interested in the great problems of the metaphysics of morality. What he wants to know is what is "moral" and what is "unmoral" in his particular life, what he "may" and what he "must not" do. These questions finally arrive—one way or another, in one form or another—before the tribunal of philosophical normative ethics and demand a competent answer. What should we think about an ethics which, faced with this situation, can only provide solutions which are intuitive at best, not going in any way beyond or above the level of those who came to it with their doubts? What is the use of high-sounding rhetoric of general slogans, or even the most elevated vision of morality in its most general aspects, but without any practical, vital applications—because these applications have been removed in advance from the list of research goals of ethical reflection? Wouldn't such state of affairs prove there are some defects in the very foundations of a particular philosophical and ethical theory? A self-admitted depreciation of detailed ethical problems thus entails the risk of disgracing general ethics. The relationship between theory and practice in ethics has a very weighty, but also very specific substantiation. The idea of ethics as an academic science, or a science of principles, does not pass the test. …

The problem of "code ethics"

At this point, however, the postulate of making philosophical and ethical considerations more detailed is often countered with the claim that by fulfilling this task, detailed ethics transforms into an "ethics of codes," which entails a number of undesirable consequences. It results in distorting the authenticity of moral conduct by applying ready-made formulas, imposing onto man certain external and formal patterns of behavior which replace free, existential choices and decisions flowing from the depth of one's experience.

This charge, often put forward by existentialist ethics, proves that it has its eyes fixed on the positivist idea of law which it mechanically, but incorrectly, transfers onto the grounds of the Thomist concept of objective and unchangeable norms of natural law. In accordance with the Thomist doctrine, all moral law, and natural law above all, stems from particular moral values and stays within their boundaries. The law must endow these values—due to its proper imperative

power—with new sources of moral validity, and thus engage man more fully in the work of their implementation. This is the purpose and role of a moral norm in man's actions: it shows him what he ought to do in order to realize the perfection to which he is called. Moral norm, properly understood, does not suck dry the juices of moral authenticity, whose source is found in the experience of its corresponding value, but enlivens and strengthens it, defending it at the same time against distortion resulting from ignorance. Indeed, it is necessary for this authenticity to function. Without clear moral rules, doomed to an existential formula of searching for his own paradigms in every situation, man finally gets lost in a sense of unsurmountable helplessness, and usually chooses the path of least resistance. No lofty suggestions will be of much use here. The final effect of an existential ethics is therefore man's spiritual demobilization which plunges him into his own weakness. Existentialism starts with man, but at the end of the road it turns against him. So even though the ethical ideas of existentialism are still attractive and enjoy much (though somewhat delayed) popularity also on the grounds of Christian ethics, it is the task of this ethics to reveal the germs of error it contains. An important element of this task is to build a detailed ethics; this is the positive answer to objections made by existentialism.

The constitutive principle of objective and absolute moral values

T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2004), pp. 225– 231.

The meaning of terms "constitutive principles" and "integral and goal-ordered nature of the human person"

By way of a brief reminder, we should provide a definition of the constitutive principle of moral values. In Christian ethics, this term refers to a basic factor or set of factors which determine and create the specific moral reality proper to moral values, endowing them with the features of universality and invariability. This may also be expressed by saying that the constitutive principle determines the objective content of moral values. Just like the rational element (soul) determines the specific content of human nature, so the constitutive principle of moral values places them in an objective reality, making them into a particular ontological category.

The main weight of our considerations rests however on the term "integral and ordered nature of the human person." How should this term be understood? Since it is a complex term, each of its components must be taken and discussed separately. Let us first define what is meant by integral nature of the human person, and then discuss its ordered property.

(a) The integral nature of the human person means the whole of man, in all dimensions of his reality. He is first a psychophysical

being, made up of soul and body as the basic essential elements of his nature.

That being, existing in a real world, is equipped with sets of powers and faculties, grouped into three layers: vegetative, sensual, and rational.

In addition, that being remains in relationships to other beings: to God, to men, and to nature.

All of these elements (body and soul, vegetative, sensual and rational powers, basic relationships), as long as they make up an internally consolidated unity of an actual human being, represent integral human nature. It could be called an existential nature (without referring to the existentialist concept of man, however);

(b) Ordered human nature. The notion of ordered human nature expresses the idea of order inherent to the rational nature of man and representing the factor directly determining the objective content of moral values. It contains two components, again, a personalist and a perfectionist one.

1º The personalist element. It takes the central place in the structure of moral order. Because of the spirituality and rationality of his nature, man is first of all a person. In the order of substantial beings, a person is the ultimate existential perfection. It is so because in man's personhood, his spiritual rationality is in the foreground, which in turn conditions his self-awareness (the awareness of one's own "self") and the freedom that it entails. It is these spiritual perfections that man's greatness rests upon, determining his supremacy over other creatures. The spiritual equipment of man's nature also makes him more akin to absolute Being than any other beings. Man's personalist affinity to God based on these foundations justifies the saying, inspired by the Bible but used in philosophy as well, that man is a living image of God.

The existential content of personhood also includes something more, something that is thoroughly proper to it. Man as a person is an autonomous being (*sui iuris*), which means he is a subject capable of acting in his own name, thus becoming the agent of his own development. He achieves it by first discovering his versatile abilities and the possibility of their further improvement. It is not here, however, that the main current of man's developmental possibilities is

found. For in addition, he recognizes within himself a plane of development which surpasses all others and subordinates them to itself as the highest actualization of his humanity. It is the development of a person as person, i.e. a rational acting subject, aware of themselves, of their place in the universe, of their ultimate destinies, while at the same time capable of actualizing their humanity by creating, or rather revealing in themselves ever new shapes of perfection which make them an ever more complete and perfect person. This same ability to go beyond oneself in pursuit of a more perfect fullness of man's personal existence means a certain ennoblement of his nature. While remaining a physical personal being, thanks to this ability man becomes a "super-physical" being, oriented towards ever new degrees of perfection, actualized within himself by the power of his own actions. Thus, he becomes entitled to p e r s o n a l d i g n i t y proper to man alone, which endows the human person with the properties of a fundamental moral value as a being oriented towards rationally becoming another, ever more perfect being.

The personalist aspect thus reveals the dignity of the human person and his capacity for development unto the fullness of his own, proper, personal perfection. "Being fully a person" thus represents a category of excellence distinct from "being an excellent sportsman, craftsman, scientist or engineer." No wonder, then, that this dynamic orientation towards the fulfilment of man's personal perfection by his free acts, not determined by any external factors; this orientation reaching down to the very foundations of his personal structure conditions the existence of an i d e a l m o d e l of this comprehensively understood personal perfection. It is in it that man finds the image of optimum forms of his own existence, striving towards which he may transform himself through his own acts. And yet, these acts have their own specificity and may only realize the perfection of a person within the particular kinds of goods he accomplishes. Thus, the ideal model of a comprehensively conceived personal perfection needs to be fulfilled in the form of objective regularities applicable to the basic categories of these actions, so that they mark out the roads on which the work of the moral perfection of the human person is to be accomplished. These regularities contained in detailed models of human conduct are revealed in the perfectionist element inherent to the nature of a person.

2º The perfectionist element. In order to understand what this concerns, we must return to the concept of integral nature. It encompasses a number of heterogenic components which, determining the shape man's existential reality in different ways, at the same time define the essential categories of actions proper to him. Moreover, both the particular powers and faculties man possesses and employs to perform his acts (e.g. the ability of his mind to know the truth, the ability to speak and express his thoughts, etc.), and external beings to which his basic relationships refer (other people, animate beings, or material objects) have an internal purpose inherent to them, and a dynamic organization which enables them to accomplish particular goods. This is what their proper perfection consists in. Among these goods, there are some which improve only certain faculties nature is endowed with, without referring to the perfection of a person, and thus only accomplish a partial perfection of man. This category of goods includes skills such as those of a sportsman, chess player, sculptor, or intellectualist. Other, on the other hand, are directly related to the ideal model of personal perfection, conditioned by the personalist aspect. This happens when these goods prove capable of multiplying the perfection of this person as person; in other words, as they become factors contributing to the development of man's personal excellence. And since the capacity of a particular good to improve a person as person is grounded in the internal purposefulness of particular powers or the existential structure of particular things, then it presumes a permanent relationship of correspondence between such powers or things and the ideal model of personal perfection.

Thus, as soon as man takes an action, in accordance with the purpose of particular powers or abilities (e.g. using speech) or an appropriate structure of external beings (e.g. taking food or—in the spiritual sphere—learning the truth), he actualizes a good which, while being conditioned on the above-mentioned purposefulness of the powers or structures of beings and improving them (the powers), also brings about another result. For this good turns out to be a personal good, a good which corresponds to the ideal model of man as a person, i.e. a moral good (e.g. the capacity of speech to express cognitive content in accordance with one's belief is also the capacity to enrich the human person as a rational and social being; similarly, appropriate use of material things serves to improve a person as

a psychophysical being by enabling them to sustain their vegetative life or to create appropriate external living conditions). In other words, as long as a particular action is only a conscious actualization of the potential strength of a particular power or natural inclination, it remains only a physical good. Once it turns out that it is also capable of improving the human person in accordance with the model of the fullness of humanity, it becomes a good of a higher rank, i.e. a moral good. Therefore nothing else but perfection of the human person, which, as we already know, represents the fundamental moral value, plays the role of the deepest and central creative principle of absolute moral values. They are generically differentiated in accordance with the structural distinctiveness of individual elements of an integral nature, but are also united in the unifying form of an ideal model of perfection of the human person. This way, a specific moral order emerges from the goal-ordered human nature. Its roots stem from the moral content of the human person, from which it also derives its unifying bond, but it is manifest and actualized in the generically differentiated multitude of values, expressing the exemplary perfection of particular categories of human actions. This order is given to man to know and to comply with.

In light of the above analysis, we can already clearly see the answer to the question about the deepest meaning and essential content of moral value. In accordance with the proposed view, moral value expresses the relationship of correspondence between the internal purposefulness of individual parts of the integral nature of man, and the perfection of a person as person accomplished through acts consistent with the content of this relationship. Moral value could also be referred to as the relationship of correspondence between, or the assignment of, particular structures of integral nature directed by the power of their inherent purpose towards shaping the perfection of the human person as person.

The totality of all of these relationships represents the objective order of values, a singularly distinct category of reality which, despite being separate from physical beings (and thus also from the physical aspect of the rational human nature) is nevertheless based on the objective order of things and derives from it its proper objective character. The order of values considered from this point of view presents itself as a rationally arranged order of free human

actions, aimed at enhancing and developing the perfection of the human person as person. It reveals the dynamics of development proper to man alone, in utterly diverse shapes of its integral reality, yet focused on the central point of the perfection of the human person. It is not only the ultimate perfection of man, but a total perfection, as it encompasses the whole of his being, on both the static and the dynamic plane as well.

The axiological status of rights and obligations to oneself

T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2005), pp. 78–80.

Personalist directions

The opposite view is held by personalist directions in ethics, including Christian ethics. In line with its fundamental assumptions, it is the deepest sources of the humanity of the human person that its existential autonomy (*esse sui iuris*) and incommunicability (*incommunicabilitas*) flows from. These attributes are vested in the person on account of the dignity constituted by the spiritual elements of his psychophysical nature, as well as the link between this nature and the absolute Being. And they are the ones which make the person a self-existing subject of rational actions taken in his own name. The ontic perfection of the human person expressed in this means his independence from the society, and even his supremacy over the society, valid within the boundaries of his entirely personal dimension. It is not until we cross the boundaries of this dimension that we enter into the field of the person's strict dependency on the society.

This entails two important consequences. Firstly, this way the human person is the primary source and foundation for all morality that is prior to society; secondly, within this morality it finds ideal models for rational treatment of his own self in the pursuit of his proper perfection. On this ground, specific moral imperatives are developed which determine the human person to act towards himself in a way

that is ethically good. In this way, a separate category of specific judgments and norms emerges within the objective moral order, in which the human person is both the object and the subject of moral actions. The concept of the human person sketched out here as an autonomous subject of his own, "private" morality represents the methodological basis and justification of the deliberations we have embarked upon.

Intrapersonal or extrapersonal nature of the person's rights and obligations to self

The issue has not been brought to a close yet, however. Even within Christian ethics, its personalism is sometimes interpreted so that at the foundations of the phenomenon of morality its creative power is taken to be the principle of affirmation, or the love of a person by a person. Consequently, even utterly individual actions fit within the scope of morality only to the extent they are "a special and at the same time a borderline case of an interpersonal relationship."[1] And this relationship is created in result of a doubling of the ethical role of the acting person. According to this view, the same person plays two roles at the same time: the person who affirms and the one being affirmed. The act of a person's self-affirmation creates a certain axiological space within him, at the extreme ends of which the person places himself in two different ethical embodiments, which makes it possible to reduce this configuration to the order of interpersonal relationships.

In philosophy, a mistake is never far off, it seems that this theoretical construct represents a solution that is more verbal than substantial, however. This judgment requires a foundation of philosophical reasons. The ontic identity which in the case of a purely individual act exists between the subject and the object eliminates entirely the possibility of applying to it the notion of an actual interpersonal relationship. Even in the "borderline case of an interpersonal relationship" its essential element must be validated, namely the ontic distinction of persons involved in the relationship. If this distinction is not present, an "inward" or "inbound" act takes place, distinct from interpersonal

[1] T. Styczeń, A. Szostek, "Uwagi o istocie moralności," *Rocznik Filozoficzny* 22, no. 2 (1974), p. 26; T. Styczeń, *Etyka niezależna* (Lublin: Wydział Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej KUL, 1980), pp. 13, 31, 67–70.

acts. And yet it does have its own moral specificity, based on the foundations of man's objective moral nature which is a supreme category, integrating in it all aspects of man's moral activity.[2] At most, due to the grammatical form of judgments and norms of purely personal acts, it may be said (in a metaphorical sense, of course) to express "a kind of relationship" between the subject and his own self. This metaphor is substantiated by the fact that the subject of this act is capable, by an act of his intellect, to conceive himself as the object of this act. In reality, this means a reflexive realization by the subject of the specific ontic structure of this act and his own role in determining its moral aspect. The realization of a given person that it is him who constitutes the structure of the act and its moral value does not result in an actual distinction between the subject and the object of this act, however, and does not transform it into a "borderline case" of interpersonal relationships. This act retains its own immanent form, and thus represents a specifically separate category of purely personal human acts whose moral aspect is built upon the foundations shared by all human acts.

Key categories of rights and obligations to self

The complexity of the ontic structure of the human person makes it both possible and necessary to perform a further classification within the category of acts we are interested in. Based on the assumptions of philosophical anthropology, we may distinguish three major groups of acts.

The first are acts a human person performs towards himself as a substantial whole; the second are acts performed towards the human body; and the third are acts whose object is the spiritual side of the human nature, first of all reason and will.

Our task is to arrive at a formulation of moral judgments and norms which correspond to each of these categories of acts. It is clear, as has already been emphasized, that out of the broad range of this area of ethical issues, only the most essential problems will be taken into account, those which are most intriguing from the theoretical point of view.

[2] Cf. T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 324–326.

The duty to respect human life and the permissibility of killing in self-defense

T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2005), pp. 227–237.

Preliminaries of a solution

Having studied the history of the problem of the moral aspects of self-defense, we have discovered a configuration of the most important concepts, and seen the central problems of this discussion against their background. In order to prepare the grounds for a solution of the problem, it is necessary to explicitly specify one's standpoint at least on two things. Firstly, on the basic moral qualification of the act of killing a man; secondly—on the physical structure of this act.

(a) Killing a man as an inherently evil act

S t a n d p o i n t s. A number of standpoints have emerged on the issue of the basic moral qualification of killing a man. One of them asserts the unrestricted moral neutrality of this act (naturalist relativism, teleologism); other assert the inherent moral neutrality of killing a man as such with the superimposed argument of the inherent evil of killing an innocent man (mostly Thomists); still other assert it is inherently evil without providing any more detailed reasons, but allowing for the possibility of suspending this evil in the case of a conflict of rights (De Lugo, Cathrein, Moral Gonzalez).

C r i t i c i s m. The first concept is definitely to be rejected. Both in the naturalist and in the teleological version, it is based on a false view of man's moral value. Particularly in opposition to Catholic teleologists, it should be pointed out once again that human life—just like man himself—is a fundamental moral value, and not merely a highly valued pre-moral good. An act directed against such value certainly goes beyond the boundaries of morally neutral acts. Moreover, one should not disregard the risk of the ever-progressing relativization of the moral value of human life, down to sanctioning behaviors which are condemned by teleologists themselves (e.g. legal euthanasia). For these same reasons, the concept proposed by van Hove is equally questionable. For if the idea of common good serves as the starting point for arguing that it is permissible to kill a man in the event of aggression, then the permissibility of killing a man in many other situations may be arrived at by starting from the same source. From the context of van Hove's argumentation it results, however, that he believes the act of killing a man to be inherently evil, and therefore prior to the reason of common good, thus permissible only in necessary defense of one's own life. Van Hoven's concept is therefore logically incoherent and does little to solve the problem.

Neither is the traditional concept convincing, based as it is on the distinction between the moral neutrality of killing a man as such, and the inherent evil of killing an innocent man. We will provide a brief account of the relevant reasons.[1] They can be reduced to a simple question: taking these two factors of the moral value of the act of killing a man, we need to determine their mutual interdependence. The answer may go along the lines of two suppositions, both leading into a logical wasteland.

1° If the qualification of moral neutrality is decisive, the "innocent man" aspect—leaving its indeterminacy aside—is reduced to the level of secondary factors, or so-called circumstances. Consequently, it would be hard to refute the conclusion that the fundamental moral neutrality of killing a man must be accepted, which would bring this version of the traditional theory to common grounds with theological teleology, with all consequences this entails.

[1] A more extensive discussion of this problem can be found in: T. Ślipko, *Zagadnienie godziwej obrony sekretu* (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1968), pp. 152, 162.

2° Assuming that the first and decisive element is the moral evil of killing an innocent man, we are now faced with an even greater difficulty: how should the property of "man's innocence" be understood such that it brings about the moral evil of "his life being taken unjustly"? What evaluation criteria should be applied here? If we try the criterion of "not posing a threat" to the life of another, then everyone who "threatens" another person's life will be "guilty." And then we must also ask about the indeterminate notion of "threat"—such situations may be very frequent and very diverse, not only in the case of aggression, but also including any borderline situations, particularly those involving a conflict. This would lead to the conclusion that in all of these cases it would be permissible—on certain conditions—to kill a man, for example to terminate pregnancy in order to save the mother, sacrifice one man in a lifeboat to save another, etc. The advocates of this view refuse to acknowledge these conclusions. Yet in doing so, they question the legitimacy of the notions of "innocent man" and the "unjust" taking of his life which they have introduced themselves.

One more supposition could be made, however, namely that the property of man's "innocence" and the "unjust" taking of his life only apply to acts of aggression, and do not apply otherwise. Such approach would require a separate line of argumentation based on the moral analysis of the content of humanity. In such case, however, we would face an obstacle in an idea which has already been accepted, namely that of the moral neutrality of killing a man as such. For it applies precisely to this fundamental reason of humanity which is supposed to provide us with the criterion for determining the moral evil of aggression. The authors mentioned above consider it to be morally indeterminate, however.

3° Finally, let us note that the notion of "man as such" fits within the category of common notions. The real equivalent of this notion is the "essential structure of man," his "nature" which—as has been mentioned more than once in the course of our discussion—is not a morally neutral being, but a moral good protected by natural law.

T h e s i s. Looking at all of the criticisms discussed above, we finally arrive at the general conclusion that none of the theories we have analyzed provides a satisfactory solution to the problem of the permissibility of killing a man in self-defense. Therefore, we must consider as valid the principle which says that killing a man is an inherently evil

act, since it takes away the life of a person whose moral dignity determines the moral inviolability of his life and makes it imperative to respect it. In the content of this act, there is no room for moral neutrality, even in some general, unspecified aspect of "killing a man in itself, as such," or "killing a man as such." The basic reason of killing a man expresses a moral evil, and any modifications to this qualification are only possible in terms of limiting this evil, and not by transforming an initial neutrality into the moral evil of killing "an innocent man."

(b) Killing a man in self-defense as a directly lethal act

The developing discussion around the permissibility of active self-defense has also brought about tensions in the interpretation of the physical structure of this act. Beginning with Thomas Aquinas, a conviction has become established in Christian ethics that, in order to substantiate its permissibility, it is necessary to accept the indirect nature of the intentions behind it. The integral elements of this theory include: the principle of double effect, and the idea of "tolerating," "allowing for" the death of the aggressor. Advocates of this view believe that the intent of the will is ultimately aimed at moral good, and not evil, which is sufficient to justify the act itself.

Only a few Christian authors (De Lugo, Cathrein) have argued against this theory, claiming that in the act of self-defense, the acting subject in fact intends directly to take the aggressor's life.

This claim, while not advocated by many, deserves to be upheld. Of essence here are objective reasons. The first one is to deny that the act of killing a man in self-defense brings about two results at the same time: taking the life of the aggressor, and saving one's own life. For if facts are not measured against theory, one must admit that the action taken in defense against aggression is, considering its inherently deliberate nature, precisely the same as the action of the aggressor, about which there is no doubt that in view of its inherently deliberate nature it is directly lethal. Thus, in both of these actions, death is the natural outcome. The difference between them only consists in that the aggressor was not able to accomplish this outcome, while the one defending his own life did achieve this purpose. Therefore, the fact that he saved his own life is, in terms of causality, a result that is external to the purpose of his action. One may thus say that there is a clear analogy between saving one's life in an unsuccessful act of aggression, and for example taking revenge, or robbing

someone of money in the case of successful aggression. Consequently, the only logically legitimate conclusion to this reasoning is to reduce the intent of both of these types of results to the category of motives which are otherwise known to be a circumstance incapable of moral evil, brought into the moral structure of killing a man by its inherently deliberate goal of destroying the moral value of a personal human being, as we have discussed above.

In order to bring this matter to the end, let us take as our starting point the assumption, made by many authors, that in an act of self-defense the saving of life is the other outcome, simultaneous to the death of the aggressor, which provides grounds for applying the principle of double effect. The killing of the aggressor, however, is the killing of a man, and thus an inherent moral evil. Still, the conclusion remains the same: the presence in the structure of the act of killing the aggressor of moral evil, even if it is only concomitant, makes the act of defense morally evil, and thus impermissible. It is this consequence that made many traditional Thomists create various artificial constructs in order to reduce the act of even indirectly killing the aggressor to the order of morally neutral acts. It is clear from all of the above argumentation, however, that these efforts are doomed to failure.

If this is the case, one may not claim that the death of the aggressor is merely "tolerated," "allowed for," since the act of the acting person's will is directly aimed at saving himself. One may concur with the claim that the intent of the acting person in his subjective experience is ultimately aimed at saving himself. It is still true, however, that it must be aimed with equal directness at the death of the aggressor. It is determined as such by the deliberate nature of the action taken in order to put the aggressor to death.

An indirect intent to kill the aggressor would only be possible if his death was the result of some incidental cause.[2] This possibility is eliminated, however, by the assumption that the assaulted person is defending himself.

This leads to the second assumption which must be made as an indispensable premise in solving the problem of the moral permissibility of killing a man in self-defense. It is the thesis that the action taken with this purpose in mind is directly lethal, and consequently

[2] Cf. pp. 92–93, 96–97 of this work [T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa*]; T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 419–429.

the acting subject who takes it intends the death of the aggressor just as directly, his death being inherent to its deliberate nature. This assertion does not promise an easy solution to the problem; in fact, it exacerbates it even more. Considered together with the first assumption that the killing of a man is an inherently evil act, it leads to a very complicated situation: we are faced with the conclusion that in the act of killing a man in self-defense, an inherently evil act is directly intended. This obstacle appears to be unsurmountable! We will see later whether it is really so. At the moment, we need to take advantage of the progress we have made in our discussion, and move to defining two basic terms: "killing a man," and "self-defense."

Basic notions

Key data for affording more precision to the first of these terms are found in the chapter on suicide.[3] On their basis, we will define k i l l i n g a m a n as a deliberate combination of appropriate actions and tools in order to endow them with such consequence that actions taken in line with this consequence lead directly to causing the death of a particular person (aggressor). It is therefore an action that is directly, or "inherently" lethal. We will need more reflection to define what "self-defense," or "defending oneself," is. First of all, in analyzing this notion we find that explaining it entails explaining the act of "aggression."

A g g r e s s i o n, in our case, is understood as a directly lethal act of a person (aggressor) directed against the life of another person who is defending his life. The death of the person defending himself is inherent to the structure of the act of the aggressor as its natural outcome, and the aggressor's act itself was not provoked by an identical act by the person defending himself, but was taken of his own accord.

Moreover, speaking of aggression as a condition for self-defense, we mean a c t u a l a g g r e s s i o n, understood either as the initiation of aggression, or immediate readiness to take it, that is aggression in the state of attack. Thus, the scope of this notion does not include

[3] Cf. pp. 98–102 of this work [T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 1: *Etyka osobowa*]; T. Ślipko, *Życie i płeć człowieka*, pp. 433–434.

the intent of aggression (e.g. threats), or even things done in preparation to it (such as buying weapons), just as aggression would cease if the aggressor aborted his action aimed against the life of another.

The term "s e l f - d e f e n s e"—as a result of what has already been established—means an act that is as directly, or inherently, lethal as the act of aggression. This kind of self-defense may only take place when it is n e c e s s a r y. And this happens only when it is the l a s t and s o l e means of defense against actual aggression. Due to this criterion of necessity, it does not include those situations in which other ways of saving one's life are available (such as escape, calling for help), or if it would be enough to hurt the aggressor. If such means of defense are an actual option, taking a directly lethal action would be unnecessary defense, which ethics puts outside the parentheses of the possible permissibility of defense against aggression.

As can be seen, a very important role in the problem discussed here is played by two criteria: the actuality of aggression, and the necessity of defense. At the same time, the explanations provided show that these are s i t u a t i o n a l n o t i o n s which cannot be reduced to strictly defined formulas. Thus, at the end of this point in our reflections, it must be stressed most emphatically that for the proper practical functioning of these criteria, a subjective factor is required: the s e n s e o f r e s p o n s i b i l i t y of the acting person, his self-control and prudence. And these moral faculties cannot be "taught" to anyone, they must be "acquired" through one's own moral practice. Thus, from the philosophical and ethical point of view, we can only formulate the postulate and delineate its general boundaries, while the rest is in the hands of the acting persons. It is our task to prepare premises for the solution to our problem which seems most probable from among the proposals which have been developed so far.

Premises of a solution

At the end of our reflections on the moral qualification of the act of killing a man and the structure of killing a man in self-defense, we are now facing a very serious difficulty. The act of killing a man in self-defense appears to be an act aimed directly at performing an inherently evil action. For Christian ethics, such formulation is unacceptable. What are the roads left for us to choose from, then?

In order to find a solution, it is first necessary to reject the concept of a "conflict of laws."

(a) Negation of the conflict of laws idea

A solution based on this idea does not contradict any of the theses which have already been established. It admits that man has an inherent right to live, and in the event of necessary defense the direct object of his intent is the death of the aggressor. At the same time, it makes the assumption that the person who is being attacked does not only have the right to live, but also the right to defend this right using violence, even if this were to cause the death of the aggressor. This is the case of a conflict of laws, and in this case the right of the person defending his life outweighs the right of the aggressor.

This line of reasoning—which may be justified in the field of positive law—does not work with reference to the natural moral order. As has already been said,[4] the idea of a conflict of laws within the objective world of values and natural law leads to a contradiction. This is due to the source and point of reference of these laws, namely the dignity and perfection of the human person. In a situation of conflict, these laws would become a factor affirming this dignity (as the right, or moral capacity, to do the right thing) while at the same time being detrimental to it (as the right to threaten or violate someone else's right). And we can hardly invoke the principle that the right to live is accompanied by the right to use violence in order to defend it. There is no doubt that man does have this right, but not at the cost of violating the right of another. And if we accept that the right to live is vested in man "on account of his humanity, his personal dignity,"[5] and that this right is invariable, then it also remains valid in the situation of aggression. The reason is obvious. For in making an assault at someone else's life, the aggressor does not forsake either his humanity, or the human dignity that stems from it, and thus also any of the personal rights based on this foundation. A person defending their life by an act that is directly lethal would violate the aggressor's real, objectively valid right to live. This would mean the aggressor and the person being assaulted were mutually doing harm one another. This conclusion can hardly be accepted, however.

[4] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 235–242.

[5] S. Olejnik, *W odpowiedzi na dar i powołanie Boże. Zarys teologii moralnej* (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1979) p. 534.

Therefore, the conflict of laws theory does nothing to help solve the problem of the moral aspect of defending one's life against aggression. If we want to achieve this goal, we must choose another path, then.

(b) The principle of the axiological equality of men

The direction towards a solution is provided by the principle which, while giving all people the right to live, also provides moral grounds for its effective defense. As can easily be guessed, it is the principle of the basic axiological equality of all people. It says that every person has the same psychophysical nature and is thus vested with the same ontic dignity which, referred to the transcendental model of its perfection, defines the equal fundamental moral value of every human being.

This elementary assertion has a very important implication which will serve as the cornerstone of the solution proposed here. The principle of axiological equality of all men retains its authentic moral meaning only on the grounds of the assumption that it excludes any inconsistent axiological privileging of some people to the detriment of others. Such privileging would occur if in the objective moral order there was some arrangement in which the moral value of one man caused detriment to the corresponding value of another man. Objective moral values and the rights founded on them must remain in such mutual arrangements and systems of interdependence as correspond to the basic postulate of mutual harmony and equality.

Solution of the problem

Having established in the course of our reflections the necessary assumptions and notions, we can now move to substantiating the thesis, proposed in line with the entire philosophical tradition, that in the situation of actual aggression, when acting in necessary self-defense one may use effective means, including the act of killing the aggressor.

While the thesis proposed here is shared by all ethicists, we will found it on a motivation different from those presented so far. The basis of this motivation and the starting point is the assertion

that every person—both the assaulted and the aggressor—has the right to live in view of their moral value. The principle of the axiological equality of all people requires, however, that this dignity also be upheld in the situation of actual aggression. Due to the imperative nature of this principle, the scope of the moral value of human life and the corresponding right to have his life respected by others does not include the situation of actual aggression. Otherwise, the moral po-sition of the aggressor—the evildoer—would be better than the position of the person who is being assaulted and who defends a moral good. The objective evil which defines the meaning of aggression would not have any moral counterbalance on the side of good. Therefore, the elementary premise of equality makes it necessary to ensure that the moral value of the life of the aggressor and the right stemming from it have a normative status which narrows down their validity and imperative power, placing the situation of aggression outside of their borders. Thus, they retain their objective and intact axiological status up to the borders beyond which aggression begins. Aggression is outside of this perimeter. Consequently, any activities directly threatening human life other than aggression are morally evil and prohibited, while in the act of aggression, even if they are also directly lethal, they are not morally evil. They become morally "non-evil," in other words, they are not inconsistent with the objective moral value of the aggressor's life and do not violate his right. This is so because this value and this right do not go so far as the grounds of aggression, so they are simply "not there." It is a situation covered by a moral r e s t r i c t i o n.

Assuming such state of affairs in the objective world of values and imperatives, it becomes entirely clear that the act of intent in which the will takes as the object of its deliberate desire the goal of directly causing the death of the aggressor in the moment of actual aggression, it is not directed towards a morally evil act, and therefore does not entail moral guilt. Set before it is an object in its restrictive aspect of the lack of moral evil due to the restriction applied here to the norm which protects life. And if he undertakes this act in order to protect his own life, whose value is the same as the value of the life of the aggressor, and he does not have any morally exceptionable motives (such as revenge or cruelty), then he performs an act that is comprehensively free from the blemish of moral evil and which—considering the greatness of the goal—is morally permissible. This is the moral conclusion we needed to substantiate.

The motivation presented here to support the thesis about the moral permissibility of the act of directly killing the aggressor in the case of necessary defense of one's own life thus implies the concept of a restrictively inherently evil act. In this way, the moral content of the act of killing an aggressor no longer contains any element of initial moral neutrality, either in the radical understanding of teleologists, or in the moderate interpretation of both old and new Thomists. This protects the moral qualification of the act of necessary defense against the impact of situational factors, and provides the moral structure of human life with a permanent and objective, albeit restricted, axiological status. It also avoids the difficulties involved in the idea of a conflict of laws, introducing instead the principle of axiological equality of objective rights (in this case) of the person defending their life and the aggressor. Finally, it avoids the ambiguity and inconsistency of the traditional concept of the death of the aggressor being intended indirectly and the double effect thesis. It asserts explicitly the directly lethal nature of the act of self-defense, without which one can hardly talk about effectively defending one's life.

Both in the logical content of the very problem of the moral aspect of defending one's life against aggression, and in the solutions discussed above, there is a certain tension between two opposite poles: the concern for ensuring the efficiency of self-defense collides with the need to reconcile it with the moral content of human life. This can be seen in the history of the problem, where any proposed theories usually remain under the pressure of one of these poles, and while securing the aspect of the problem they postulate, stretch the other. It appears, however, that in the solution presented here these two opposite aspects have been adequately accommodated, and not by way of an eclectic combination of incongruent elements, but by showing their foundations in the objective moral order.

Nevertheless, one could ultimately ask whether all of these interpretative efforts are worthwhile if all concepts equally speak in favor of the moral permissibility of the act of self-defense against aggression. Are these not purely academic disputes without any practical relevance?

An answer to this question will emerge in the course of our discussion of other issues related to the morality of human life. They will show to what extent the principles explained in relation to the

issue of defending one's life against aggression contribute to providing a correct solution to other ethical problems imposed by the practice of life. The ethical meaning of these principles and the rules of applying them depend precisely on what interpretation of human life and means of its defense they are based on. This determines the theoretical weight of the philosophical and ethical discussion of human life, aggression and defense.

Extending the applicability of the self-defense principle

With reference to the principle we have established, two questions are asked in the literature of the subject: 1º Is it permissible to kill a man only in self-defense, or is it permissible also in defense of someone else's life?; 2º Is it permissible to kill a man only in self-defense, or is it also permissible in the defense of other personal goods of great importance (e.g. personal freedom, vital resources, corporal inviolability)?

Christian ethics does not have much trouble permitting the use of violence even to cause the death of the aggressor in defense of both the life of the acting person and the life of other persons. It is assumed, naturally, that in both of these cases the general conditions required by this norm are satisfied (actual aggression, necessary defense). This view deserves full support, as in the situation of aggression directed against someone else's life, the principle of the basic axiological equality of human persons remains as valid as ever, restricting the axiological scope of the aggressor's right to live. And the social aspect of human nature results in various bonds being established in the interpersonal community, some of which authorize man to take all measures to defend the life of another (e.g. the community of all mankind, national community), while others make it downright imperative (e.g. parental bonds).

Similarly, Christian authors are also generally in favor of the right to employ even bloody means of defense in the case of assault on man's existentially essential personal goods. They make the assumption that a real human being is not only the existence of a psychophysical human person, but a person integrally related to basic categories of goods which determine the way he exists. This equivalence between human existence and the types of goods mentioned above provides

grounds for extending the principle of active self-defense to include situations in which these goods are threatened as well.

It appears, however, that this solution needs a more detailed explanation. First of all, one must take into account the real difference between assault on someone's life and an assault on these goods. Taking a man's life means an irreversible evil which cannot be repaired, while the loss of freedom or of material goods, even of high value, is not an irreversible evil; it does create a state of great evil, but one that can be repaired. Even violation of a woman's corporal integrity means inflicting physical harm, but does not touch upon her moral value, so is a partial evil.

On the other hand, one can hardly deny that also with respect to these goods man has the right to resort even to violence in order to ward off an actual threat. If an aggressor intending an assault on any of these goods encounters resistance, and in turn an assault on his life ensues, the person defending their goods is provided with grounds for the application of the principle of active self-defense. This permissibility is reductive, as it moves from the defense of a particular good to the defense of life.

The genesis, philosophical description, essence and purpose of community

T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 2: *Etyka społeczna* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM), 2005, 102–113.

The philosophical theory of community is a logical derivative and application of knowledge about man's approach to social life. Consequently, idealist theories proclaim a doctrine which raises community to the order of a self-contained hypostasis, a super-individual creation governed by its own laws and directions of development, and treat the individual as an epiphenomenon and the substance of communal good. A similar approach is adopted by collectivist theories: the collective, shaping the human face of the individual, represents a reality whose meaning is realized in the dialectics of history, in the construction of a new world, and the existential goals of individuals are to serve these purposes. It is the other way round in individualism, which sees in the community a collective, but also an atomized (broken down into components) formation of individual acts, called into being in order to warrant individual freedom and provide individuals with the possibility of developing their own activity depending on their inherent inclinations in various spheres of social life (economic, cultural, political, etc.).

In this state of affairs, it does not seem necessary to sketch the history of philosophical views on the nature of community. This would be a repetition of the outline provided above. We may therefore move immediately to discussing the basic elements of the Christian philosophy of community.

1. The genesis of community

According to this philosophy, the social determination of man represents a source, a kind of mechanism inherent to human nature, which does not need to be set in motion as it operates perpetually by the dynamic power of man's very existence. Its actualization is not accomplished in the course of historical processes involved in the development of a society, nor can it be located in any specified moment in time which could be called the "formation" of community. From the standpoint of Thomist philosophy, we can hardly talk about the historical genesis of community. It takes the genesis of community to be merely a philosophical fact, and understands it to mean the actualization of capacities man is endowed with as a social being, which simply means an actual, existing community, as long as it is conditioned by the social nature of the human person.

In such understanding of the genesis of community, however, there is an initial principle of decisive importance. In accordance with the accepted interpretation, the driving force behind the social mechanism of the human nature is the moral imperative for the human community to create a comprehensive set of conditions enabling the development and perfection of the human person. Therefore, man's social determination includes the direction of its postulated creations towards the human person and his good. The principle contained in this direction, linking community to the good of the human person, constitutes the very foundations of the reality proper to the human community. The idea expressed in these words has accompanied Christian social philosophy for ages, as can be seen in the words of Thomas Aquinas who says that any community must be governed by the law which "refers to man as its purpose."[1] In view of its being directed towards a person, determined by the very genesis of community, the social structure proper to this community is then developed. The following analysis will be aimed at revealing what elements constitute a community, and what system of mutual relationships exists between them.

[1] *Res exteriores ordinantur ad hominem sicut ad finem*. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, a. 2, q. 73.

2. A philosophical description of community

Until a philosophical definition of community is developed, we must settle for its understanding borrowed from the dictionary of sociology. In the light of its findings, community presents itself as a collective form of the existence of a certain number of persons, having its external organization based on institutionally regulated models of behavior, as well as an internal principle of distinctiveness expressed first of all in the awareness of the collective "We," which makes it capable of collective action, i.e. such as cannot be referred to individuals, but only to the whole as a distinct acting subject.[2]

A community is therefore characterized by a specific unity and permanence, despite the diversity of individuals making up the whole, and often also their existential flow. Already in the family, the birth of new children and even the passing away of some of the living does not impair its social identity. The community thus represents a certain collective being, different from physical persons, but nevertheless given in reality.

From the philosophical point of view, however, other features of the structure of community attract our attention.

(a) There are two general types which may be distinguished among societies: non-complex and complex ones.

A non-complex community will be understood here as a community which is made up exclusively of individual human persons, bonded by a permanent community of life. A classic example of such community is marriage, or a group of friends.

A complex community exists, on the other hand, when a certain community includes some smaller communities within its boundaries. Integrating them within itself, it may, but does not need to, and in some cases no longer does, form part of a community superior to itself. A complex community is formed in result of a social process which develops on two planes: the horizontal and the vertical one. In the former, it leads to a quantitative growth of the same community type, which is less interesting to us. In the latter, however, new structural types of society are formed. They develop under the pressure of the basic

[2] J. Szczepański, *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii* (Warszawa: PWN, 1970), p. 248.

developmental tendency in man which postulates the formation of ever improving living conditions and perfecting of the human person. In result of this process, aside from communities existing side by side without including one another, there are forms whose scope is so broad that they encompass a whole number of other communities within them, smaller than themselves. Individual persons become members of such communities indirectly, as though on their own, but through the mediation of indirect social cells in the form of these small social groups. A typical example of a complex community is a state or nation.

(b) Looking at a complex community, we may say that the smaller communities of which it consists do not dissolve in it completely, but maintain their partial distinctness. The external manifestations of this distinctness are many. First, it can be seen in that these smaller communities have different tasks, proper to them, that they engage in corresponding activities, and that they also act as separate social and moral subjects. Consequently, they have legal rights and obligations; moreover, based on these rights they represent, within their scope, a subject contrasted to and independent from the superior community which integrates them. A complex community thus represents a "whole,"[3] but a heterogeneous, or internally diversified one. Within this general whole, there are a number of components, united with the whole, but retaining their specific, limited independence, or autonomy.

(c) Emphasis placed on the autonomy of the components of this community does not undo its inner unity, however. Its proper cohesiveness is manifest in that the whole and the components both stand on the same plane. The members remain in a vital, inner dependence on the whole, and this dependence is one of the principles shaping their life. The members of a complex community remain in a relationship of subordination with respect to it, which in turn

[3] As this term might be associated with the philosophy of O. Spann, it should be noted that it has a long tradition in the terminology of Christian philosophy. It was often used by Thomas Aquinas and was borrowed from him by O. Spann, although he gave it a different, universalist and totalistic meaning. The way this term is used here has nothing to do with such interpretation. The meaning given to it in result of our reflections fits within the context of the personalist perspective of the philosophy of community.

corresponds to the relationship of the whole's supremacy over its members.

On this basis, we may establish the following essential features of the internal structure of a community: 1º diversification of its parts; 2º their combination into a functional unity; 3º the relationship of the members' subordination to the whole, and supremacy of the whole over its members, whose autonomy is maintained. In other words, the structure of a community (in the light of philosophical analyses) is based on the vital unity of a functionally diversified plurality of its components, which may be briefly described as the "unity of plurality." This concise summary includes the two most essential features of the Christian concept of community, usually referred to as the "organic concept." It is clear, however, that other than the name and the purely external analogy, this concept has nothing to do with the organic sociological theory of 19th century evolutionists (Spencer, Lilienfeld, Schäffle). In the Christian concept—with all the overlays and various types of interdependence occurring in the structure of a community—the basic constitutive principle laying at the foundations of all social life still remains valid. It is the principle of subordinating all forms and components of a community, combined into "the unity of plurality," to the good and development of the human person. It is in the human person that the community finds the reason for its existence, and it is towards the human person that it always turns to as the ultimate end of its existential reference.

3. The essence of community

Another stage in reflections on the nature of community is the question about what community is. We need to extract and capture in a single formula those features which define the most inherent meaning of a community, or its essence.

We know now that in structural terms a community is manifest as a vital unity of a functionally diversified plurality of its components, or the unity of plurality. Consequently, the question about the essence of a community must focus on the philosophical explanation of its unity. ...

An attempt at a solution

The traditional concept thus represents a step forward in the search for factors contributing to the essential bonding and unity of a social being, but does not reach the end. We should certainly embrace the orientation by which it is guided, namely that in explaining the essence of a community, an acceptable solution must avoid the extreme of totalitarian hypostasizing, but also that of individualist atomization of this society. We should also admit that the structure of unity which characterizes a community includes the collective unity of its external goal and the internal spiritual attitudes of its members. They represent, however, the surface layer of the principle of unity defining the essence of a society, with the factor capable of fully constituting this unity hidden beneath.

The issue is a very complex one, so we must proceed with caution. Our starting point is the statement from which the discussion presented in this chapter started: the problem of the essence of a community is the logical derivative of the problem of man as a social being. The solution of this latter problem must therefore be found on the same plane as the social determination of the human person. And it has been demonstrated that the social essence of man stems from his moral nature. It is ultimately based on the moral imperative which commands the realization of the fullness of personal excellence by way of association and cooperation between human persons. Thus, at the foundations of community created this way, we must find the same elements providing essential strength to their social bonding.

This means that the essence of a community in the last instance also includes the unity of the moral imperative conditioning the unity of rights and obligations for the fulfilment of these goals by its members. So it is not the goal that is the inner basis of the essential bond of the social community, but the moral necessity of communal existence and activity whose specific bond encompasses, on the inside, all of the members associated in this community, bringing them together as a single, collective, but internally uniform moral body. Its internal constitution is therefore something else than the unity of a simple collection, it may not be said to be minimal or weak. It is also a strong unity, but developed on an entirely different plane, based on its own, specific constitutive elements. For this reason, it

is not comparable to the unity of physical collections, even if it were dynamic, but only external.

The assertion about distinctness of the essential social bond cannot substitute for an explanation, however, as to what existential category this bond belongs to. An answer to this question has been provided in general ethics,[4] and we may now limit ourselves to simply recapitulating it. The moral imperative of perfecting the human person belongs to the category of relationships. It is an essential relationship, a transcendental one, and not predicamental like in the traditional concept. Its proper unity is derived from the fact that the ultimate end (terminus) of its reference is the single ideal model cause, namely the full excellence of the human person, defining the very core of the human moral nature. Directed towards this fullness, the necessity of the moral imperative (or its *esse ad*) encompasses the entire man both in the personal and the social dimension of his reality, thus creating the internal relational unity of persons bound by its power. We may thus say about unity constituted this way that it is

> an objective and real unity, based on the essential structures of the human nature, while being internal as well, stemming from this nature and drawing on it for the power of interpersonal bonds.

And it appears that, equipped with these attributes, it satisfies both the requirements of experience and the logic of our standpoint.

4. The goal of community

Having established the essence of what constitutes a community, we may now consider the goal, or the good towards which the community is aimed by its very nature. It is a separate problem, a very important one which deserves our attention.

This is confirmed by contemporary discussions around this topic. Authors who come forward with new proposals admit that the category of goal has an important role in the traditional theory, particularly in

[4] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 259–263.

one of its versions called social solidarity. At the same time, they also point out that in the understanding proposed by this version, the goal of a community is external and instrumental, restricted to material institutions, assistance and other means of a solidary harmonization of social life.[5] The category of goal as an instrumental and ancillary value should be replaced by the category of "common good" whose content is oriented towards the human person and his spiritual and moral values.[6] The common good also represents the formal principle (reason) of the collective existence of a society.[7] This does not mean, however, that the notion of goal should be entirely eliminated from the sphere of a philosophical theory of society. A community must be guided by an appropriate goal in its external activities, determined by competent social authorities.[8]

It would be difficult now to go into in-depth reflections on the notion of goal and common good. We should only generally point out that irrespective of the value which the notion of common good has in the discussion as the formal reason of a society, the idea of the goal of a community itself does not differ in the above-mentioned concept from its common understanding. Restrictions apply only to the limits of its theoretical applicability, but in this regard, in fact, this proposal is consistent with the standpoint presented in this paper. Therefore, the ethical and social issues involved in the problem of goal will be discussed from this point of view and in accordance with this logic.

First, we need to establish the theoretical basis to which the issue of goal can ultimately be reduced, or from which this issue stems and in which it finds the ultimate elements of its solution. In our case, this kind of supreme principle is found in the ontic reason which lies at the foundations of the existence of a community and which determines the essential features of its structure. We need to draw on the findings established in result of the analysis of man as a social being.

It is clear that if the process of man's social development is the result of the social constitution of his nature, then it must reflect in itself the essential laws of this constitution. It has been determined

[5] J. Krucina, *Dobro wspólne. Teoria i jej zastosowanie* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej, 1972), pp. 41–45.

[6] Ibidem, p. 68; J. Kondziela, *Filozofia społeczna: zagadnienia wybrane* (Lublin: KUL, 1972), pp. 7–31.

[7] J. Krucina, *Dobro wspólne*, pp. 135–140.

[8] Ibidem, pp. 140–145.

that at the foundations of the human nature's orientation towards social life lies the l i m i t e d n a t u r e of individual persons, their inability to ensure conditions for their own life and development, and at the same time the a b i l i t y to support others, from which results the need and possibility for individuals to mutually supplement one another in the performance of these tasks. This statement applies to all communities, both non-complex and complex ones. Ultimately, they develop in order to supplement lower communities, just like lower communities do, supplementing individual persons. All of this happens by the power of the general principle, one that results directly from the nature of a community, as has been clearly stated in our discussion of the genesis of a community. We have said that a community exists in order to supplement the human person in his shortcomings, or, in other words, that it plays an auxiliary, ancillary role with respect to the person.

Consequently, the proper goal of a community is the set of goods and values with the help of which the community may fulfil its social purpose. In the traditional language, these values are also called the general, common, or universal good. They belong to every community, both as a whole and as a social component.

Furthermore, these goals remain mutually interdependent. The goal of higher communities is to create conditions for the life and development of their components, but based on their proper autonomy, which includes implementation of their own goals. Thus, if one of the tasks of the higher community is to ensure the autonomy of its components, then the goal of its activities is to promote the goals of these components. At the same time, however, from the fact that lower communities become its components as they enter the structure of the higher community, it results that to the same extent to which they are subordinated to this community, one of their vital tasks is to pursue to goal of the community as a whole. The goals of a community thus arrange into a hierarchy of goals which uphold and supplement one another as they strive to create an optimum fullness of conditions supporting the life and development of the person as the central reality of all social life.

The goal of a community is always the goods which it realizes. Nevertheless, the scope of these goods is universal. For they are not solely material goods, but spiritual ones as well. In the category of the spirit, they encompass goods in the intellectual, aesthetic, and

moral order, anything that the human spirit may create and objectivize, so that within specified limits they may become accessible to all members of the society. The realization of these goods fits within the framework of man's general pursuit of excellence and happiness, whose ultimate fulfilment is God. The science of community goals is therefore but one chapter in the Christian philosophical science of the goal and happiness of man, or eudemonology.[9]

Finally, the good of a community is qualitatively different from the private good of individuals. This view, held in Christian philosophy since Thomas Aquinas, has its substantiation in the community's supremacy over its components, which ensures the independence of its existence and activities. Therefore, common good is not the sum of individual goods, but a separate ethical value.

5. Classification of communities

Having defined the goal of community, we now face the issue of its classification. Ethicists usually distinguish between the following types of communities.

1° General and special community. The first one encompasses the whole of humankind, and is founded on the moral nature common to all people. Any other communities are formed within it on the grounds of specific conditions, e.g. a contract, the birth of a child, the development of a collection of cultural values.

2° Natural (elemental) and necessary communities vs. contractual, and thus facultative communities. Natural communities are characterized by the fact that their inner constitution is defined by the laws of nature (e.g. family, nation, state), while contractual ones are based on positive human enactment and derive from it their organizational principles, goals and means (private or public associations).

3° Perfect and imperfect communities. Perfect communities provide the fullness of conditions for man's development (state, Church); imperfect ones do this only partially and need external supplementation (family, profession, nation, etc.).

[9] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 97–151.

4º Complex and non-complex communities, depending on whether their internal structure consists only of human individuals (marriage, scientific association), or includes also smaller communities (nation, state, Church).

5º Subordinate and sovereign communities. The former ones include all communities forming part of some social whole as "components" functioning within them. The social whole, on the other hand, to the extent it is a sovereign one, is an example of a superior community (state, Church).

This classification has been performed from the philosophical point of view and with reference to the issues discussed by social ethics. In addition, modern sociology also distinguishes between many other forms of communities (social groups). Social ethics sometimes makes use of these classifications, but does not make them into an object of particular studies.

General structural principles of a complex community

T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki szczegółowej*, vol. 2: *Etyka społeczna* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM), 2005, pp. 114–118.

1. Recapitulation of Findings

In our considerations thus far, we have often encountered one very symptomatic motif: an emphasis on the specific nature of social components. This is expressed in such a way of subordinating and including particular components into the structure of the whole as does not cancel their proper autonomy or vital distinction based on the fact they each have their own goals, tasks, and means. Components are thus dependent on the whole to the extent this serves to empower their own subjectivity. Consequently, the analysis of a social structure cannot be limited only to considering a social whole, but the other element of this structure must be distinguished as well; one which is, to an extent, antithetic to the whole, namely the social component. In this way, we arrive at two basic elements of the social structure: a component, or social unit, and the social whole.

For the avoidance of doubt, it must be noted that a component, or social unit, should be understood to mean both the human person, as long as he is a social being and part of some community (that is, solely in his social aspect), and any subordinate community. With respect to the whole, they stand on the same level and share the features of an autonomous component.

It should also be remembered that we have only been considering the internal structure of a community and the principles on which

this structure is based thus far. In order to understand the most typical arrangements of elements which make up this structure, we must realize the results of analyses we have performed so far. We will look at them once again in a brief overview in order to emphasize the basic ideas. We have just said that such function is performed first of all by the notions of the whole and a component. Therefore, the recapitulation of our analyses will also follow along these lines. First, we will look at the findings on the whole side, then on the component side, providing that the relationship of components to the whole will be considered first, and their mutual interrelationships will follow.

1º The superior community is an objective, real social being, endowed with a distinct ontic unity and its own, inner vital principle, its own goals, its own means, and its own rules of development.

2º The basis of this unity is the moral bond linking all components and directing them towards one goal shared by them all.

3º The superior community as a whole is superior to its components, and on this basis it subordinates and makes use of the vital resources and energy of its components.

4º The superior community is supposed by its very nature to supplement and assist social components in the performance of their vital functions, ultimately referring to the good and perfection of the human person; consequently, it is an inherently auxiliary institution. Its superiority is neither total nor absolute; it is limited by the auxiliary function of the social whole.

We will now move to discussing the basic features of a component—the unit with respect to the whole.

5º The unit as such, or as a component of the whole, is its integral part—and serves its purposes.

6º No unit becoming a component of the whole ceases to be an autonomous subject within its own vital scope.

7º The social component as a subject independent from the superior community develops its own vital activity in pursuit of its own social good.

Now we need to discuss the mutual relationships between social components.

8º The place of a component within the whole is determined by the function which the component performs on behalf of the whole.

9º Components within the whole are mutually interdependent and develop a common activity, regulated on the one hand by their common subordination to the good of the whole, and on the other—by their mutual independence.

2. Basic Structural Principles of a Community

We began with the assertion that there are two elementary ingredients to the structure of a community: the social component and the social whole. On the basis of our findings it is now clear that the essential relationship between a social component and the social whole takes upon itself a trifold form in view of the autonomous character of the social component, due to which it is partially opposed to the whole within its social structure. They are interrelated in a number of ways:

1º the relationships between the whole and its components;
2º the relationships between the components and the whole; and finally
3º the relationships between components.

Considering the above, we may finally say that the social whole and its components remain in a relationship of mutual interdependence, and are therefore mutually assigned to one another. This assignment is not the same in each individual case, however. As for the relationship of a component to the whole, it is based on the component's being included in the structure of the whole as its integral part, and is therefore expressed in the strict subordination of the component to the whole and of its vital activities to the same. The assignment of the whole to its components is of a different kind. In this case, the basis for assignment is the auxiliary nature of the whole with respect to its components, established, after all, to

support and supplement them in their vital tasks. Consequently, we are only dealing here with an a n c i l l a r y a s s i g n m e n t, which does not transform the whole into a part of its components, but makes it dependent on them only to the extent that its natural activity is to supplement and uphold their vital autonomy. Finally, it is clear that the mutual assignment of particular components is of an entirely different nature. The decisive factor here is that components are equal to one another in principle, and differ only in the type of contribution they make to the good of the whole, or in their social function. Therefore, the quality of their assignment to one another is, in principle, only that of various spheres of activity, which is why we will call it a "f u n c t i o n a l" a s s i g n m e n t.

The types of relationships listed above may be outlined as follows: I component—community; II—components between themselves.

Relationships in the first arrangement are twofold:

(a) components are dependent on the whole;
(b) the whole is dependent on the components.

In the other arrangement:

(c) components are dependent on one another.

In each of these arrangements, there is:

(a) strict dependence,
(b) ancillary dependence,
(c) functional dependence.

Taking into account the various types of mutual interdependencies (assignments) occurring between the social whole and its components, between social components and the whole, and between the components themselves, we must conclude that the ultimate basis of social life consists in the following three principles:

1° the principle of supremacy (superiority) of the whole over components within the life of the whole;

2° the principle of the autonomy of the component with respect to the whole within the autonomous vital activity of the component;

3º the principle of equality and functional interdependency between units.

3. Basic social and moral principles

The basic principle in the methodology of philosophy and ethics established within the framework of general ethics[1] is the assertion that the objective order of the essential structures of human nature corresponds to the objective order of moral values. Having thus come to the conclusion that at the foundations of social order there are the three principles mentioned above, namely those of concurrent, but seen in its different aspects, and thus really distinct supremacy of the whole over its components, the autonomy of members with respect to the whole, and their mutual interdependence, it results that also at the basis of the social ethical order there must be some similar, corresponding moral principles. These principles are: the principle of solidarity, subsidiarity, and "social coordination." The principle of solidarity is based on the ontic supremacy (superiority) of the whole over components; the principle of subsidiarity is an expression of the ontic autonomy of components; while the principle of "social coordination" corresponds to the ontic interdependence of components.

Consequently, the principle of solidarity says that the whole has the right to govern the components, and thus to the cooperation of and sacrifice on its behalf of its components; in other words, all components of a social whole are required, to the extent they are components, to subordinate to the whole and to cooperate for the sake of the whole. And they must not take any actions detrimental to the whole.

The principle of subsidiarity says that social components have the right to protection and assistance by the whole, i.e. that the social whole has the duty to uphold and enhance the autonomous independence of its components, which, worded as a prohibition, does not allow it to deprive components of those attributes and functions for the performance of which their vital resources are entirely sufficient.

[1] T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 173–176.

Finally, the principle of "social coordination" expresses the moral imperative of mutual cooperation between components within their functional relationships in the social whole; which is equivalent to saying that components are required to deliver such mutual activities and performances as are the necessary condition for maintaining inner balance and vitality of their cooperation for the sake of the whole. Thus, they must not do harm to one another, or take advantage of their social position by tampering with their fundamental balance and vital freedom. These principles, laying at the foundations of moral social order, qualify the general system of moral norms and imperatives which together create the social moral order, the ultimate basis of social life and activity, and one of the main bonds ensuring its internal cohesion.

Bioethics: The notion and its issues

T. Ślipko, *Bioetyka. Najważniejsze problemy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Petrus, 2009), pp. 11–21.

1. The need for a definition

It was already Cicero who held that "every systematic development of any subject ought to begin with a definition, so that everyone may understand what the discussion is about."[1] While Cicero's directive has not been entirely forgotten in contemporary science, it is often ignored. This applies particularly to bioethics. A reader, even familiar with a number of publications on the subject, may experience what a student once complained about: he participated in a two-day long symposium on bioethics and listened to all of the lectures, but none of the speakers introduced him to the meaning of the word "bioethics." The complaint was not a justified one, perhaps, as he could have exercised the right of every participant in the symposium and asked for the explanation of a term he did not understand. In order to prevent such misunderstandings, however, we should pay heed to Cicero's advice and make an attempt at providing the necessary explanations to readers who are interested in the matter.

[1] M.T. Cicero, *De officiis*, I, 2, 7.

2. History of the term and an attempt at a more precise definition

The term "bioethics" emerged in the United States several decades ago, so quite recently,[2] but spread rapidly and penetrated other languages, including Polish. It owes its popularity to several factors: the relationship between bioethics and recent achievements in biological and medical sciences, literature expanding overnight, including even new journals dedicated to this subject, and the establishment in the United States of research and development institutes associating not only ethicists or theologians, but lawyers, biologists and physicians as well, all involved in comprehensive studies on bioethical issues. The best known of them is Hastings Center in New York State, and the Center for Bioethics at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University in Washington. In Europe, no such institutions have emerged so far. Their makeshift substitute, or initial form of organization, are bioethical research groups functioning within the International Federation of Catholic Universities (FIUC) in Washington, Brussels, Barcelona and Rome.[3]

Intensified research in the field of bioethics has not resulted, however, in the emergence of a single, universally accepted understanding of "bioethics" as a science. Its common understanding is focused around two components of the term: *bios* and *ethos*, which expresses the "ethics of human life" updated to account for developments in modern biological and medical sciences. Such generally outlined notion of bioethics is even used by the authors of major publications on the subject.[4]

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[2] Cf. J.-M. Thévoz, "Place de la théologie dans le débat bioéthique," *Revue d'Éthique et Théologie Morale*. Supplément No. 178 (1991), p. 128.

[3] Cf. J. Fuchs, "Verfügen über menschliches Leben? Fragen heutiger Bioethik," *Stimmen der Zeit* 203 (1985) 2, p. 76. The journal *Après–demain* (No. 266, July–September 1984) on page 59 lists *Principaux organismes intervenant dans le champ de la bioéthique*, in France, Canada, USA, Great Britain and Holland. There are, or, in fact, there were twelve of them then. In Poland, the first Department of Ecological Philosophy in the world was opened at Lodz Technical University on March 13, 1992.

[4] A.C. Varga, *The Main Issues in Bioethics* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1984), p. 1: "Bioethics includes medical ethics but it goes beyond the customary ethical problems of medicine, because it also examines the various ethical problems of the life sciences which are not primarily medical." Cf. J. Fuchs, quoted article, p. 75.

Nevertheless, some attempts are being witnessed at providing a more precise definition of bioethics. We will look at two examples taken from Polish literature. One consists in a simple procedure in which bioethics is explained by enumerating the major groups of issues which bioethical research is concerned with. The well-known Polish criminologist, Professor Brunon Hołyst, says in the context of considerations on the scientific criteria of death: "New issues appear in particular in the case of the explanation of an organ of a person who has been declared dead while their life is being artificially sustained. This has led to the emergence of a new scientific science called b i o e t h i c s. Aside from the issues which have already been mentioned, it is concerned with the extent of genetic intervention, euthanasia, therapy of mentally ill persons, suicide, experiments on people, etc."[5] An attempt at a shorter definition, one based on internal content, is made by the author of the "Bioethics" entry in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*. He believes bioethics to be: "normative knowledge, encompassing moral issues resulting from structures related to the development of biomedical sciences."[6]

As can be easily seen, in the formulas cited above—leaving the diversity of their structural principles aside—a clear tendency appears to understand the scope of bioethical problems differently: from a narrower one, coinciding with the field of research in biomedical sciences, to a broader, indeed a very broad one, covering all areas of human conduct which stand out in some unique approach to human life or corporal integrity. It may thus be concluded that contemporary bioethics is a field of research which has not been definitively parceled out and claimed yet, which affords its users some freedom in demarcating the area which they want to scientifically cultivate.

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[5] B. Hołyst, *Samobójstwo – przypadek czy konieczność* (Warszawa: PWN, 1983) p. 159. A similar approach to bioethics is found in the American Encyclopedia of Bioethics, vol. 1, ed. W.T. Reich (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1978), p. XIX: "It can be defined as the systematic study of human conduct in the area of the life sciences and healthcare, insofar as this conduct is examined in the light of moral values and principles." This definition is not a particularly acceptable one due to the excessively broad scope of the notion of conduct in the area of "life sciences" and "healthcare."

[6] L. Kostro, "Bioetyka," in *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 2, ed. F. Gryglewicz et al. (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1976, 19952), col. 568–570. Cf. I.S. Fiut, "Idea bioetyki," in *Ochrona środowiska w świetle filozofii wartości*, ed. P. Dutkiewicz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1992), pp. 55–59.

What is worse, both formulas—despite being useful—have some shortcomings due to which they can hardly be considered a sufficient explanation of the notion of bioethics. The enumerative definition is easily comprehensible, but is a working one only; it says what bioethics is concerned with, but does not explain what it is. In the next definition, there is a considerable understatement as regards the term "structures related to the development of biomedical sciences." For an average person, who must be taken into account as far as encyclopedic entries are concerned, it is unclear what is actually meant here. Does the author have in mind the states and processes of man's biological *physis*, or does he mean man's conduct, acts, behaviors conditioned by these states and processes. Some commentary on this ambiguity may be found in the thematic blocs which the author of the entry enumerates to add precision to the subject matter of bioethical research. With this assumption, however, the matter recedes once again into the grounds of enumeration, which cannot replace a subject-matter explanation of what "bioethics" in fact is.

3. A definition of bioethics

The fact we have stressed before that the scope of bioethics has not yet crystallized sufficiently, as well as the shortcomings of the explanations developed so far, encourage us to try and build a definition specifying what the author of this publication understands "bioethics" to mean, and within what framework he places the object of its studies.

An initial hint is provided by the etymology of the term itself. "Bioethics" is first of all some kind of "ethics." One can hardly provide any definitions, then, without reference to a proper understanding of the term "ethics." The next step, and the necessary complement to the term "ethics," is the proper interpretation of the concept of bios, or "life." These two topics require an in-depth reflection. …

It is not enough to say, however, that we understand "bioethics" to mean a "philosophical ethics." For it is commonly known that normative ethics, like all philosophy in general, is a distinctly pluralist science. The content of a particular normative doctrine depends decisively on the grounds of which philosophical system such doctrine has been developed. This indisputable fact forces us to make an

explicit declaration of our worldview. In our case, the theoretical basis for bioethical solutions will be provided by the assumptions of "Christian ethics"—or, strictly speaking, of "Thomist ethics," which is in turn methodologically related to "Christian philosophy." ...

Bios (Life)

We should now return to the main subject. We know now that aside from specification of what ethics is, the definition of bioethics we propose must include a specification of the term *bios*, or "life." From the explanations of bioethics quoted above, it can be seen that some authors have in mind a narrower, and others a broader perspective on the notion of life, depending on whether they limit their attention to its "biomedical" aspect alone, or whether they also include other areas, including suicide, euthanasia, and care of the mentally ill. In this situation, we must decide which of these two parting roads to take.

There are reasons to follow in the footsteps of those who demarcate a broader field of study for bioethics. While its beginnings are related to the achievements of biomedical sciences, the current tendency is more and more to go beyond this tiltyard and include other issues, not strictly biomedical ones, as well. We might, however, be concerned about exposing bioethics to the risk of having its field of study stretched without end. This can be prevented simply by extracting from the whole of life processes a certain specific category of situations and human activities which will be considered as the field of normative reflection specifically proper to bioethics. This way, the definition of bioethics will achieve the required degree of precision. The only thing is to define what the specific subject matter of bioethics consists in.

If we could now present the panorama of all problems considered by bioethics, we would most likely be able to say that they involve situations mainly characterized by two features. The first—and probably most important—differentiator of these situations is their exceptionality in that they are both c r i t i c a l and t e r m i n a l, with human life being pushed to the limits of existence (death, disability) either due to some kind of threat or in result of some exceptional conditions, different from typical biological arrangements. They are dramatic situations, sometimes even tragic, where the existential gravity and weight of the human fate is revealed with particular power.

Related to this state of affairs is the other feature characteristic of bioethical situations. Due to their very distinctness and dramatic tension, they involve some human intervention, drastic to a degree corresponding to the circumstances, in the process of one's own or—and usually—another person's life. The mutual interdependence of these factors may be twofold. In some cases, the existence of an extreme situation precedes human intervention, in other cases it is secondary; similarly, the impact of both of these factors on the existential form of these situations may greatly vary.

It is enough, however, for their presence to stand out to any noticeable degree in the dynamic reality of a situation in order for it to be considered the subject matter of bioethical studies. Common situations, even if in certain cases they could pose a threat to human life, such as appendectomy or chemotherapy, have not been included in this category of human activities so far. On the other hand, bioethical situations are not related to any specified period in life. They accompany man throughout its duration: from the very beginning until the ultimate end. On this basis, the three-phased rhythm of human life, encompassing its initiation, duration, and death, may provide the most general criterion in classifying bioethical issues into three large departments. As there are no generally accepted terms to refer to, we will take the liberty to use terms derived from elsewhere, namely "biogenesis," "biotherapy" and "thanatology," assigning to each of them the respective meaning we have just discussed.

Definition

By way of a summary of what has been said so far, we may now make an attempt at a final definition of bioethics as the basis for reflections presented in this paper. In this meaning, bioethics is a department of detailed philosophical ethics whose aim is to establish moral judgments and norms (rules) applicable to the area of human conduct (actions) consisting in any intervention in borderline situations related to the initiation of life, its duration and death.

To supplement the above definition, we may also specify how it satisfies the requirements of a correctly constructed philosophical definition. It includes the subject matter of bioethics (interventions in borderline situations of life), its formal subject in terms of content

(moral judgments and norms) and its formal subject in terms of methodology (to capture the formal subject in terms of content in the aspect of its ultimate defining conditions, which implies philosophical sources of knowledge and an appropriate method).[7] Thus, bioethics emerges as a separate ethical discipline only in its material subject, due to which it places itself within the framework of detailed ethics as a specifically selected complex of issues. In methodological terms, on the other hand, it remains in a strict relationship with the rules of philosophical enquiry generally applied in ethics. In its solutions, it will therefore refer to general ethical principles to the extent they can be applied to the situations being considered. Bioethics is thus simply an integral part of normative ethics as an application of general ethical principles to particular dramatic circumstances of human life.

4. Bioethics and empirical sciences

Bioethics—as has been emphasized—revolves around extreme situations of human life in which this life is pulled into the whirl of forces dangerous to its existence or integrity, or manipulating its processes. This corresponds to human interventions related to these situations, often involving advanced technology. Due to this fact, a major role in bioethical considerations is played by information on facts involved in the problem concerned, not provided by everyday experience available to people in general.

Competence in these areas is found in empirical sciences, not only biomedical, but psychological or sociological as well. Consequently, bioethics implies to a large extent at least a rudimentary knowledge of the state of the art in these sciences. Therefore, even though bioethics is always an essentially normative philosophical science, and in this respect it enjoys its own methodological identity and autonomy, it also remains in a permanent relationship of dependence on the non-ethical experience of empirical sciences, which entails an interdisciplinary cooperation between them.

This statement has important consequences. Depending on the direction in which these sciences develop, whether their earlier findings are confirmed, or whether new discoveries are made which reveal

[7] Cf. T. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, pp. 15–20.

worlds of objective reality which we have not known so far, also bioethical reflection must be characterized by a certain flexibility in the formulation of its own normative statements. And so, if with the development of empirical sciences or technology it becomes necessary to correct our knowledge of the actual state of affairs in some areas, this should be followed by appropriate modifications in ethical norms, corresponding to the changed optics of the matter being judged. On the other hand, bioethics can hardly be expected to change its standpoint if it is presented with unverified hypotheses, conjectures or scientific myths, most often being a projection of ideological tendencies of the scientific technocracy rather than verified, factual information.

In some cases, the formulation of a well-balanced moral judgment of a particular action is prevented by the esoteric exclusivism of certain research centers which do not publish detailed accounts of their studies. Sometimes, as we will learn in due time, they reach the broader community of ethicists, not to mention the society at large, with much delay. Incomplete knowledge of what is going on behind the dividing screen of research programs must result in perturbations in attempts at throwing light on these matters from the moral point of view.

Irrespective of all kinds of undesirable occurrences which, fortunately, are not the rule, the general principle of the interdisciplinary character of bioethics remains valid and is the necessary condition for taking an appropriate approach to the subject matter under consideration. We must now make the last step in our preliminary discussion of bioethics: outline the general range of issues discussed in this paper.

5. The range of issues

The general directive concerning the scope of bioethical studies is contained in its definition. It encompasses all issues related to man's interference in borderline situations of the beginning of life (biogenesis), its duration (biotherapy), and, finally, death (thanatology). This framework is large enough, however, to include a huge number of detailed issues, which must be selected in order to limit their scope to matters of primary importance for contemporary bioethics.

Let us begin our discussion from the ethics of the natural environment, on the condition of which the external living conditions of man as an individual and as a society depend.

The next topic to be considered is the broad complex of issues whose framework is provided by the ethical aspects of genetic engineering and eugenics in its two basic manifestations: so-called positive and negative ones.

The next area to be covered by our bioethical considerations will involve the moral side of extreme problems in medical therapy, as well as man's attitude to suffering and whose ultimate gauge is euthanasia.

Moral evaluation will also be applied to the specific form of sacrificing one's life, namely suicide by sacrifice, in relation to which we will discuss moral qualification of the unique form of "utility killing."

The scope of bioethical issues will also include a problem rarely discussed in this context, namely that of aggression against human life and means of its protection, and consequently the moral permissibility of the death penalty.

Selected issues in the ethics of dying will be the last stage of our strictly bioethical considerations.

Towards the end of this paper, the general philosophical, or, to be more exact, epistemological and anthropological premises of ethics will be discussed as the ultimate sources of the dispute held in this area between absolute Christian ethics and relativist utilitarian and scientist ethics.

The practice of "surrogate motherhood"

T. Ślipko, *Bioetyka. Najważniejsze problemy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Petrus), 2009, pp. 193–195.

A telling illustration of the immense possibilities of genetic manipulation is a specific combination in which the central place is taken by the so-called surrogate mother. It is a situation in which the egg cell of one woman (a wife in homologous insemination, a single in heterologous insemination) is inseminated with the sperm of the husband or another donor, and the resulting zygote is implanted in the womb of another woman who, after the time of pregnancy and giving birth to the baby, transfers it to the donor of the oocyte, i.e. his or her natural mother, based on a previously expressed (unpaid or gainful) consent.

To date, the practice of using the services of a surrogate mother has rarely been employed, nevertheless it poses yet another problem as far as its moral qualification is concerned. Admittedly, there is little to discuss in cases where this form of procreative intermediation is employed in order to perform heterologous insemination; they are morally wrong and reprehensible. Similarly, any practices of commercial surrogacy may be rejected in advance as inconsistent with the moral meaning of motherhood. An issue which remains to be considered, therefore, is only the moral side of surrogate motherhood restricted to homologous insemination. Our ethical reflection will focus on this practice itself, autonomously so to say, independently from general moral shadows cast upon homologous insemination by the act of masturbation involved in the collection of sperm, or dangers to which zygotes are exposed in the course of their laboratory production.

It appears that it is difficult to provide a straightforward yes or no answer to the question we are concerned with. There are reasons "for" and "against." In favor of the possibility of using a surrogate mother speaks the auxiliary nature of this service. Its role is instrumental, similar to the use of technical devices in the *in vitro* procedure, and seen in this light it does not stand in a stark contrast to the spiritual relationship between the embryo (fetus) and gamete donors.

One cannot deny, however, that the significance of reasons arguing against such an approach to surrogate motherhood is greater than that of the argumentation presented above. The most evident difficulty here is concerned with interrupting the physical and spiritual relationship between the embryo and the organism and psychical experiences of the biological mother throughout surrogate pregnancy. It must certainly involve negative consequences whose nature and extent are yet to be seen, but the very fact they are actually possible makes it necessary to foresee and eliminate them ahead of time. Another factor to consider is the real threat of such practices becoming commercialized, as has already been witnessed in the United States. The final conclusion is therefore quite self-evident: the institution of surrogate motherhood abuses the moral constitution of motherhood at its very foundations and does not deserve to be approved. In case this conclusion does not appear fully convincing, any approval of this form of procreative surrogacy could only apply to extreme cases, where the wife is absolutely incapable of becoming pregnant, and if any payment for such service is ruled out as a matter of principle.

Euthanasia and the human right to "dignified life" and "dignified death"

T. Ślipko, *Bioetyka. Najważniejsze problemy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Petrus), 2009, pp. 322–329.

The arguments put forward by the advocates of euthanasia often include the phrases: "man's right to a dignified (human) life and a dignified (human) death."[1] Euthanasia is presented as a moral alternative for people who, not having the option of a "dignified" life, at least have the perspective of a "dignified" death before them. This postulate—as euthanasia supporters claim in their manifesto—flows from the desire to develop a "humanitarian approach to death and the dying." The manifesto goes on to say that their goal is to "replace a heartless morality" and open up the road to a "rational morality" in order to "improve the human lot."[2]

Pro-euthanasia appeals addressed to "enlightened public opinion"[3] provide a good opportunity also for the "unenlightened" to consider the criteria of what is "dignified" and what is "undignified" for man, what "humanitarianism" and "compassion" are all about, and what "rigorism" and "heartlessness" mean; in other words, what expresses "rational morality" and what is its contradiction.

Let us begin with "rational morality" and "enlightened public opinion." Abstracting from socially functioning systems of morality,

[1] S. Katafias, "Eutanazja," in *Wybrane pojęcia i problemy etyki*, ed. R. Wiśniewski (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 1984), p. 158.

[2] Ibidem, p. 161.

[3] Ibidem.

the attribute of rationality may be considered first of all with reference to philosophical and ethical views. What is their "rationality" or "irrationality" supposed to consist in, then? It appears that it may only consist in upholding the rigors of methodical philosophical thinking and the strength of argumentation proposed, and not in obtaining the signatures of Noble prize winners which the authors of various "declarations" or "manifestoes" try to use to support their position. In this light, the views proposed by the advocates of euthanasia are not characterized by any higher intellectual culture than the views of their opponents. Both sides are "rational" and "irrational" to the same degree. Quite possibly, however, the supporters of euthanasia find the "rational" and "enlightened" only in what corresponds to their intellectual tastes. Which is where any philosophical discussion comes to an end. *Stat pro ratione voluntas*, and the latter is usually indifferent to any reasons one may want to propose to it. A discussion of "pros" and "cons" is exchanged for mere demagogy.

More important, however, is the issue of a "humanitarian" or "unhumanitarian" approach to the problem of euthanasia, and of weighing what is "dignified" and "undignified" for man. One must decide, however, whether the matter should be left to ride on the fickle waves of sentiments, which the "rational" apology of euthanasia so readily appeals to,[4] or whether we should look for objective, matter-of-fact criteria based on an analysis of the subject we are studying—in our case the procedure of euthanasia and man himself. We know, after all, that "rational" (not to mention "enlightened") philosophy does not tend to appeal to sentiments as the motive of intellectual convictions. And if so, then the casting vote must be given to the philosophical validity of the science of man and his rational actions. True "humanism" and that which is "dignified" for man will therefore be found on the same side as true philosophy. This places us once again in the face of the fundamental alternative: the spiritualist and transcendental versus the materialist and naturalist concept of man. In conclusion of what has been said so far, there is no reason to doubt that taking the side of spiritualist personalism in fact means accepting the true image of man.

Worthy of man, and fully humane in this light, is therefore an absolute affirmation of human life in its proper boundaries, including

[4] Ibidem, pp. 157–158.

the situation of hopeless suffering and degradation. From this point of view, any approval of euthanasia must finally be judged not as an act of compassion and consideration for the suffering man, but rather as betrayal of moral truth, or loss of faith in the existence of such truth and the possibility of finding it. Such are the ultimate effects of an ethics restricted to the phenomenal side of reality, accessible through direct experience, and therefore unable to face the entire truth about man, not to mention being able to rise to the challenge of his moral destinations. Instead of mobilizing man to step up to the greatest effort of life, it disempowers him and pushes him to the path of moral palliatives, whose consequence is only actual moral degradation.

Subjective aspects of euthanasia

Absolute condemnation of euthanasia, both in the form of killing oneself or another person, applies to the moral qualification of this act with reference to the objective moral order. The point is to realize what moral norms apply in this area of human behavior, on what anthropological and axiological foundations they are based, and what binding force they have. Nevertheless, even taken in the entirety of their diversified applications, these norms only express one side of the morality of euthanasia, the side of objective principles which order these acts prior to and independently from any particular acts of particular individuals. No statistics, therefore, no practical behaviors, no social, common or "enlightened" opinions can abolish the moral order that is in force here. This order, whether realized or not, and whether violated or not, still remains morally valid, and due to its irrepressible moral vitality keeps raising a *veto* against euthanasia.

We may not, however, emphasize the objective side of the morality of euthanasia to the extent that we overlook its equally real and significant subjective side. It is expressed in the acts of conscience in which individual persons formulate moral judgments of their own behaviors and use them as guidelines in the moral practice of everyday life. They bear a moral responsibility for staying true to their conscience. Considered from this side, the morality of euthanasia displays several characteristic elements which may significantly affect its final form.

First of all, we must take into account the possibility that both individuals and groups will readily accept the opinions, spread by the ethical directions we have named, about the permissibility of euthanasia in its manifold forms, and formulate the judgments of their conscience in good faith—without sensing the distortions of the actual state of affairs contained in these opinions—along their lines as the moral guidelines for their own or other people's conduct. In their subjective belief, the error has taken the form of moral good and permissibility. Thus, it also determines the moral side of their spiritual involvement in the procedures of euthanasia. These people do what they "see" as good. From the ethical point of view, the matter changes radically. Even if they have an "erring conscience," it still binds them—assuming, naturally, that they do not have any suspicion as to its being erroneous—to stay true to their beliefs and act accordingly. In s u b j e c t i v e terms, therefore, such behavior will be b l a m e l e s s.

In addition, it is clear that the psychophysical determinants accompanying situations of man's extreme degradations (intensity of suffering, inevitability of death, pointlessness of therapy, or organic limitations of intelligence) may and often do affect the voluntariness of decisions made in such conditions to a large extent. These factors are also of great importance in determining the subjective responsibility of the acting subjects: they r e d u c e their r e s p o n s i b i l i t y, or e l i m i n a t e it altogether. In this case, persons acting under the pressure of the stress situations they experience "do not know what they are doing."

We have thus listed two categories of situations in which the state of one's conscience either distorts moral judgment in particular cases, or is constrained by factors which limit free decision making. This—in short—"unreasonable nature" of acts taken by particular persons entails far-reaching consequences also with respect to bystanders who witness events of euthanasia. In the moral evaluation of the degree and subjective guilt and responsibility of those who have succumbed to the temptation of euthanasia, utmost caution and sensitivity must be displayed considering the broad range of diversifying factors involved.

It is in this context that the reasonability and need for great consideration and compassion with respect to those affected by the burden of excessive suffering, or whose organic handicap is extreme. Most certainly, in many cases subjective guilt is radically diminished,

and often—particularly in the case of suicide and on-demand euthanasia—is but a sad end of a morally innocent man who got lost in his own suffering. And ignoring such situations with indifference in view only of the objective evil of euthanasia would indeed mean a one-dimensional cult of principles and norms, but on the part of ethicists as people, and not on the part of ethics as a philosophical theory looking for moral truth and objective criteria of moral conduct.

Therefore—taking into account the complexity and drama of situations experienced by individual persons—the balance point of the problem of euthanasia clearly shifts towards ways in which they can be helped, their hardship relieved, and any moral crises they may experience overcome. The first condition here is that individuals must have a properly developed moral awareness, a deeply experienced conviction that the road towards euthanasia is closed for them. People who are aware of this find a strong anchor even in this conviction alone, helping them bear their painful cross. The engraining of such attitudes is therefore one of the necessary postulates of an ethically equitable prophylaxis. Other ways of assisting the terminally ill, particularly of alleviating pain with anesthetics, will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Irrespective of the above, those around a terminally ill person are also under the obligation to organize appropriate forms of assisting them. Initiatives developed in this direction, such as a properly functioning helpline, or attempts at specialized psychotherapeutic methods described by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross,[5] are most commendable from this point of view and one may only wish that they encourage more of such projects. "Those committed to their sick may help make the last days in the lives of many no longer a symbol of degradation that comes with dying, but a dignified *mysterium mortis*."[6] These beautiful words express not only the beliefs of their lay author, but also the guiding thought of Christian ethics on this matter.

[5] Cf. E. Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1969).

[6] S. Katafias, "Eutanazja," p. 164.

Conclusions

It is time now to summarize the results of our reflection on the philosophical and ethical aspects of euthanasia. The fact that the very concept of euthanasia is understood to mean different things by different authors has inspired us to provide an explicit explanation of the basic elements of its definition. The analysis of activities involved in euthanasia we have carried out to this end has led us to the conclusion that essential for the definition of the term is the dynamic structure of such activities, that is their inherent intentionality of causing death. The intentions, motives and other subjective components of these activities have been found to be elements which supplement but which do not constitute the reality proper to euthanasia. Euthanasia is thus in the first place an act aimed directly at causing one's own death or the death of another person, depending on who the acting subject is—whether the terminally ill person themselves, or the doctor or someone else attending them. From this point of view there is an essential difference between euthanasia and the use of anesthetics.

The exceptional context of euthanasia, full of dramatic tension, places the problem of its moral qualification on the agenda. As our starting point, we took the idea of the human person as a moral value. Being the subject of morality, a person retains his proper sovereignty with respect to other rational beings. Based on the principle that human life as the fundamental existential act of the human person represents the same moral value which is vested in the human person himself, we have formulated the supreme philosophical premise for the moral evaluation of euthanasia. In light of this principle, euthanasia in all of its forms (whether legal, voluntary, on demand euthanasia, or that performed by suicide) has been found to be an act that is morally wrong and forbidden "always and everywhere," or inherently evil, and thus excluding any exceptions within its proper boundaries.

If we compare the negation of euthanasia outlined above with the pro-euthanasia standpoint, it is most evident that despite the complexity of the problem of euthanasia, at the basis of declaring oneself "for" or "against" euthanasia there is always a certain anthropological concept of man. Very often, particularly if the matter is being considered from the medical, sociological or legal point of view,

solutions are sought in utilitarian, individual or social reasons. And yet, even with such approach to the problem, there is some image of man present in the background of the argumentation proposed. It is sometimes derived from philosophy, at other times from the moral tradition of a particular society or from religious beliefs, but it always defines the intellectual atmosphere and main rational motives which incline one to take one of the sides in this dispute.

Considering the matter from the point of view of Christian ethics, and aiming at its precise and explicit presentation, it was necessary to reveal these anthropological grounds of euthanasia together with their moral implications. We are thus faced with the world of unchangeable values and the place of human existence in it, its greatness and dignity, with the proper moral sense of man's freedom, but also of man's suffering and death against this background. In light of such a view of man, euthanasia ultimately appears to be a death that is below man's dignity. It poses a threat to individuals, and in each of them also to humankind as a whole. For when we lose sight of the ethical status of the human person, the symbol of progress becomes technology which puts people to death.

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