

**LECTURE ON THE OCCASION  
OF RENEWING DOCTORATE  
AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN (KUL)**

The renewing of a doctorate is a *sui generis* recognition by the awarding Institution that the person upon which it was conferred has been faithful to the oath he took when he received it. It is in this spirit that I accept this distinction, grateful though aware that I could have done more. The fact that my *curriculum vitae* has abounded in various duties not directly connected with academic and didactic work may hopefully be considered as a slight excuse. The fact that the difficult past during which one experienced persecutions such as a refusal to recognize one's academic titles was not insignificant, either. I am grateful to God's Providence for all it let me complete and I pray to God's Mercy to forgive my all shortcomings.

As a proof that I try to be faithful to the doctor's oath, let me just very briefly speak about the issue of classical philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin and the philosophy of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła.

It seems to me that this issue has not been broadly considered yet. It was taken up at a symposium in Lublin devoted to Karol Wojtyła's book *The Acting Person* (1979). Two different approaches could clearly be observed then. Professor Jerzy Kalinowski claimed that the book *The Acting Person* is not philosophical in character except maybe in the metonymic meaning<sup>1</sup> Professor Stanisław Kamiński, on the other hand, believed that the project of consolidating two philosophical trends (the philosophy of existence and the philosophy of consciousness) is impossible to achieve<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Wojtyła in his answer stated that his book *The Acting Person* was not aimed at consolidating these two philosophies. To the contrary, reflecting on particular facts of consciousness he points at the transcendent reality, that is to say the transcendence of a real subject – the person, who is the existential source of consciousness<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Osoba i czyn (The Acting Person)*, Lublin 1994, p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 355

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356

Analyzing the experience of what is going on in Man and how he acts, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła comes to a conclusion that in the philosophy that follows the principles of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas this subjectivity of Man – common to both aspects – found its expression in the *suppositum* conception. Etymologically, the word points to something that lies under (*sub-ponere*). And so “under” all activity and under everything that is going on in it “lies” Man. *Suppositum* points at being the subject or else points at the subject as a being. This subject as a being lies at the basis of every dynamic structure, every activity and the progress of every initiating action and subjectivity. This is a real being, a being – “Man” who really exists, and, as a consequence, really acts. The sheer *esse* is at the beginning of dynamism characteristic of Man<sup>4</sup>

Reading this conclusion that at the basis of all that goes on in Man and his every activity is a real being, a being – “Man” – that really exists, one can’t help thinking that one is at the basis of metaphysics, the philosophy of existence, the philosophy of existence of Man. In order to accept it, however, one must acknowledge the duality of experience in the cognizance of Man, the inner and outer experience and accept the experimental basis of anthropology (the encyclical *Fides at ratio* is also worth analyzing in this aspect as well.).

This is also a direction which I follow in my work on the philosophy of religion. I take the experience of the religious phenomenon as a starting point and I try to point to its Ontic basis.

Let me include one more remark at the end. The book *The Acting Person* is a *par excellence* philosophical work. It speaks of the philosophy of existence, the philosophy of Man’s existence. At the same time it is a critique of the philosophy of consciousness as reducing the whole reality to the consciousness of the subject and content.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 122