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The Human Person as a Social and Interpersonal Being According to the Most Significant Representatives of the Lublin Personalism

Abstract: The article constitutes an attempt to present the synthetic understanding of the person as a social and relational being based on the Lublin conception of personalism of late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The analyses of the social horizon of the person cannot be limited to one, however brilliant, perspective. Person needs to be illuminated using cognitive lights of various kinds to approach a broad range of information relevant to it. The personalism of the Lublin School, which is characterised by a multiplicity of methods and forms of the description of a person, while preserving a certain common axiomatic and axiological foundation, is perfectly suited for this. Moreover, in line with the hermeneutic method of a “medium ground,” to describe the personal being personalists from Lublin such as Wincenty Granat, Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II or Czesław Stanisław Bartnik have utilized both philosophical and theological data. Deriving methodological inspiration from the masters mentioned above, the whole inquiry featured in this article is divided into two parts. They include the analyses of philosophical and theological horizons of understanding the social and interpersonal dimension of the person.

Keywords: person, personalism, philosophical anthropology, theological anthropology, hermeneutics, Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II

Introduction¹

The central truths of the Christian faith indicate that a person (both divine and human) is an interpersonal being. Nevertheless, there has existed for many years a very strong tendency to define a human

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being only as an individual in an anthropological sense. This tendency did not come straight from Divine Revelation but, as Joseph Ratzinger noted, it came from the fundamental principles of Hellenistic philosophy in which a being's perfection is related to singularity and non-complexity, and in which plurality and relationality imply imperfection.² A tendency toward portraying a human being as an individual substance is clearly depicted in Boethius' definition of the person – *individua substantia rationalis naturae*. In this explanation no reference to the interpersonal dimension of the person was found. This unilateral view present in Hellenistic thought has had an impact on philosophical and theological anthropology for many centuries. Copernicus' breakthrough, which says that a human being is a personal being, was applied on a broad scale only by the personalism in the twentieth century. It reconciles the conception of a personal being as existing "in himself/herself" and "for himself/herself" (*per se et in se*) with the conception of his/her social dimension. Emanuel Mounier, who is thought to be a founder of modern personalism, considers personalism as a radical opposition to individualism and monism both in philosophy and practical life.³ The personalists reveal that a human being cannot achieve his/her self-fulfillment without complete involvement in social relationships. He is somehow "destined" to exist and act together with others. Therefore, an aim to identify the "social dimension" with the concept of the "person" has become present in contemporary personalism. Furthermore, the personalists emphasise that the concept of the person can be applied in a description of the mystery of the Triune God, as well as in created persons: people and angels. Therefore, this category refers in a natural way to the fundamental similarity between the world of God and the world of humans. Man as a person is *imago Trinitatis*. He/She is a being who finds fulfilment "by" and "in" interpersonal relationships. He/She also attains the fullness of his/her existence by participating in communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

² See J. Ratzinger, *Dogme et annonce*, 201–202.

³ See E. Mounier, *Écrits sur le personnalisme*, 30–37.

In light of this reality, it is necessary to delineate a synthetic understanding of the person as a social and interpersonal being. However, such a study cannot be restricted to the presentation of a single view of the social nature of the personal being, no matter how splendid the outlook; this could be a “betrayal” of the person who, after all, cannot be finally defined by any cognitive system.⁴ Hence, this article wishes to present the person as a social and interpersonal being based on the thought of the most significant, and the most influential representatives of the Lublin personalism from the turn of the twentieth century to the twenty-first century, which are Wincenty Granat, Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II and Czesław Stanisław Bartnik. Furthermore, this article seeks to examine the person through different cognitive perspectives in order to reveal a wide range of information about him. Lublin personalism can be greatly useful in this endeavor because it is characterized by a multiplicity of methods and forms of description, and at the same time it contains a common axiomatic and axiological background. Moreover, the most significant Lublin personalists, have used both philosophical and theological data to describe a personal being in light of the hermeneutical method of “between.” Deriving methodological inspiration from the authors mentioned above, the research featured in this article is divided into two parts: analysis of the philosophical and theological horizons of understanding the social dimension of the person.

The mentioned Polish personalists present in their works broad analyses of a person’s social character. Therefore, this article should be considered an attempt to synthesise their views and to bring issues that are of key importance to modern philosophical and theological anthropology to light in a spirit of complementarity. Given the fact that except for Karol Wojtyła’s writings, the works of other personalists have not been translated into English, it is necessary that references to the Polish texts of those authors are made.

It should be mentioned that while Granat and Bartnik were associated with Lublin throughout their scientific career, Wojtyła also built his personalism on the basis of inspirations coming from

⁴ See E. Mounier, *Qu’est-ce que le personalisme?*, 17–18.

the Cracow philosophical community.⁵ Therefore, in Wojtyła's personalism, there are more references to phenomenology and the philosophy of dialogue.⁶

As an introduction, it is worth mentioning that Lublin personalism was born in different socio-political realities than, for example, French personalism of Mounier. The Polish land struggled with terrible totalitarianisms, which were connected with the depreciation of the value of a human being as a person. Therefore, Lublin personalism resulted from something more than just a certain philosophical or theological idea. It was also rooted in the need for real struggle against the cruel totalitarian regimes that destroyed Poland from Second World War until the 1990s. It is worth recalling in this context that Poles experienced enormous harm both from German nationalism and from Soviet communism. It cost the lives of many Poles, including intellectuals who were repressed and murdered by both the Nazis and communists. Lublin personalism arose as a protest against anti-personalistic ideologies.⁷ It can also be said that, in some sense, personalism contributed to the revival of pluralist democracy in Poland.⁸

Philosophical Horizon of the Social Dimension of the Human Person

The hermeneutical starting point requires finding an answer to the question about the social horizon of the person. It consists of many dimensions in which the person can be revealed as a social being. With regard to the Lublin personalism, there are four horizons to explore: metaphysics (ontology), personhood, consciousness, actualization

⁵ See T.D. Williams, J.O. Bengtsson, "Personalism."

⁶ See P. Tarasiewicz, "The Common Sense Personalism," 627: "Nevertheless, it is an undeniable fact that all over the world Karol Wojtyła passes for a phenomenologist rather than a Thomist. Very few scholars are willing to admit that phenomenology was not essential, but rather a supplemental means of doing philosophy for Wojtyła, that he was a metaphysician who reached for phenomenology to gain not a full, but merely fuller grasp of man and that of his reality."

⁷ See T. Duma, "Personalism in the Lublin School," 396.

⁸ See S. Szlek Miller, "Catholic Personalism," 425–439.

(action) and experience. All should be taken into account without giving privilege to any one dimension.

In accordance with the cardinal principle of the realistic philosophy, the investigation on the social horizon of the person should be started from studying his/her ontological status. According to Bartnik, in order to describe the person, it is better to use the conception of “interpersonal approach” which presents the ego and the substance as a “relationship” (a relation to). It is a reference to St. Augustine and his brilliant notion of the person (in the Holy Trinity) who is a relationship towards other persons. The person perceived in this way can achieve fulfilment and is able to exist due to the fact that he/she is a relationship towards others. Then he/she gains his identity, dynamic of existence and history. The person becomes himself/herself by the complete relation to other persons and, to some degree, to the entire non-personal reality. With reference to the interpersonal conception of the person it should also not be forgotten that the personal being can be comprehended within the individual dimension, too. As such, he/she possesses all features of an individual being. According to Bartnik, the dialectic point of view seems to be principal here as the person is both a substance and a relationship, that is a “substantial relationship” or an “interpersonal substance.” He/She becomes himself/herself and fulfils himself/herself by the fact that, as the whole, he/she is a relation to other persons and also to the whole reality. By the real and developed relation to others, the person “returns to himself/herself” (*reditio ad seipsam*). It is a dialectic mystery: that relation makes him the subsistence (*subsistentia*). Thereby, the individualism becomes overcome.⁹

The person is therefore a being who fulfils himself/herself in an individual as well as a socio-relational dimension. He/She preserves his/her individual features such as substantiality, uniqueness, incommunicability (*incommunicabilitas*), subsistence, self-being existence, consciousness, self-governance and subjectivity and, at the same time, he/she fulfils himself/herself as a personal being *par excellence* by the relationship towards other beings and also by participation in the broad sense of “social context.” This

⁹ See C.S. Bartnik, *Szkice do systemu personalizmu*, 59.

basic assumption is fully sustained in the descriptions of Bartnik, according to which the human person is an individual subsistence consisting of body and spirit who interiorizes himself/herself into his/her consciousness and, at the same time, transcends himself/herself in order to seek fulfillment in other persons and beings. In a more analytical sense, he/she is the subsistence which is objective and subjective, somatic and spiritual, immanent and transcendent, individual and social, essential and existential, developing thematically into infinity.¹⁰ Thus, in his/her very existence, the person appears to be a being “profoundly” interpersonal, endowed with a prosocial nature who seeks self-fulfillment in the dialectic of going “beyond himself/herself” and returning “to himself/herself” enriched by the world of “the other.”

For Bartnik, everything that is related to a person is bipolar, since this person himself/herself exists both as an individual and a social being. A man does not exhaust his/her personal nature of his/her individual existence, because the essence of being a person also involves co-existence with others. And it is precisely because of such a great importance of relationships in the existence of a person that Bartnik introduces the concept of a “social person” or “collective person,” which in the first place is to express the great importance of the social dimension of human existence¹¹. A social person constitutes the first relation derivative in structural sense; he/she is as if the optimum reflection of the structure of a human’s relationality and, at the same time enabling and realizing it. Naturally, the Polish personalist’s reflection is at all times accompanied by the awareness of the analogy of the term he uses. Bartnik is well aware of the fact that a collective person has the value of “prosopoidality” solely in the analogous sense. A Person in his/her complexity is also an activity and causal relation that is fulfilled in building of interpersonal references and, as Bartnik notes himself, in creating a broad “personal

¹⁰ See C.S. Bartnik, *Personalizm*, 178.

¹¹ A very similar understanding of the community as “persons of persons” can also be found in the works of Mounier. This thinker also saw a strong, even organic bond between the members of highly socially developed communities. See K.P. Doran, *Solidary*, 60–62.

environment,” which is a social person herself. Given the above, it should be stressed once again that there is a strictly dyadic relation between an “individual person” and a “social person.” Both these realities complement each other. An individual person is the basis for a social person, while a social person allows for a full development of an individual person who is a prosocial and communal subject. Therefore, a social person is a result, a consequence, and a direct outcome of individuals in their essential, existential and activity aspects. It is their environment, a celestial dome, a complement without enslaving or confusing them; without creating a third party. It is a necessary social correlate of a person as such that is, after all, both a substance and a relation, that is, a substance-relation.¹²

If the person is a social being by his/her very nature, then according to the philosophical principle *agere sequitur esse*, he/she should be known as such in his/her action *ad extra*. The person as a structural being finds his/her expression initially by his/her psychical life and personhood. Personhood appears to be the interior aspect of self-consciousness but is also that which allows the subject to self-reveal towards other beings, especially personal beings. Granat presented an interesting hermeneutical concept of the person through a notion of personhood, explaining that the notion of personhood is different from an integral person because it points not to the entirety of an individual’s nature but to the specific scope of his/her activities.¹³ Granat identifies three types of personhood which refer to a human person’s basic scope of activities: psychical, ethical and social personhood. In light of current studies, social personhood seems to be the most interesting type. Social personhood refers to an integral person who can be understood through his/her numerous relationships which develop between himself/herself and the communities he/she lives among.¹⁴

¹² See C.S. Bartnik, *Personalizm*, 207.

¹³ See W. Granat, *Personalizm chrześcijański*, 70–71.

¹⁴ See W. Granat, *Fenomen człowieka*, 390–404.

In this approach to social personhood both communication and human co-existence are manifested.¹⁵ The social sphere is neither overlooked nor absolutized in relation to the integral understanding of a man. A human being in his/her social interactions comes across not as a separate individual subject in relation to his/her inner world, which would require adoption of spiritualism. The subject here is a human person who interiorises all kinds of activities (personhood) in his/her personal “I.” A man is responsible for his/her actions in the social arena as a person (and not solely as an individual or an isolated social subjectivity). What is more, the environment of social interactions also affects by means of a social personhood an entire man, his/her word of values, ethics, as well as his/her worldview or an outlook on religion – in general, on the sense of a meaning of one’s own existence. On the other hand, as Granat notes after Nedoncelle, this effect, deep as it is, cannot reach the deepest layers of a human subjectivity directly.¹⁶ This protects the ontological foundation of a human as a person. For no external impact has a greater effect on a person than herself, given that a human person’s dignity and freedom are to remain intact.

In comparing the connection between a social being and an integral person, it is evident that the social dimension has significant meaning for the life and development of the human person, who is never able to achieve a harmonious personhood if he/she does not participate actively in social life. However, if personhood manifests the social dimension of a human being, perhaps it should be developed and shaped in the same way as all types of personhood. The implications of this conclusion are as follows. First, a human being is innately a social being, and this homogeneous feature must be lived out through practical actions. Paraphrasing the words of John Paul II, the social existence of a human being is both a gift and a task which he/she should undertake in order to achieve his/her

¹⁵ The ability to communicate is also of axiological nature that consists in directing this ability towards serving others. In general, the very nature of communication promotes “being for others” due to its inner dynamism.

¹⁶ See W. Granat, *Osoba ludzka*, 222; M. Nédoncelle, *Vers une philosophie*, 245–247.

fulfilment as a personal being. Secondly, a question arises about how to shape and develop the social personhood, to which Granat offers some important observations. He explains that the social dimension implies the existence of the psychical and ethical dimensions and, together, all three dimensions are expressed in the activity of an integral person.¹⁷ Therefore, the psychical and ethical dimensions have a direct impact on the social dimension and, consequently, also influence the development of the integral person. Promoting proper attitudes and ethical codes of behavior, as well as caring for mental health, lead to the proper development of a human being's social personhood. On the other hand, social personhood, which is created as a result of social interactions, has an influence on the psychical¹⁸ and ethical¹⁹ dimensions. In conclusion, Grant's notion of personalism signifies that a social dimension is an essential, but not unique, part of human life. In order to evolve harmoniously, a human being needs to integrate the individual and social dimensions, as well as the psychical and ethical personhood with the social personhood. Granat's personalism avoids two extremes in his/her approach to describing a person: individualism, which states that a person is an entity virtually bereft of any significant links and relations with others; and collectivism, which declares that a community is the source and the master of an individual.

When analyzing the dimensions which reveal the person as a social being, the element of action must be considered.²⁰ According to

¹⁷ See W. Granat, *Osoba ludzka*, 305.

¹⁸ It is necessary to mention that, according to Granat, the social personhood would be pointless if it was not based on the real subject. On the other hand, it can be assumed that there is a thematic influence that has an impact on psyche. It is necessary to form the human personhood properly. There is a difference between the community influence on the center of the subjective "I" and the possibility to create such a center through social interaction. See W. Granat, *Osoba ludzka*, 226.

¹⁹ According to Granat, the existence of the ideal world of values and transferring it to the real dimension of life is a duty of the human being; this is why he is an ethical personhood; to some extent, the ethical personhood depends on the social personhood and combines with it, however they are not identical notions. See W. Granat, *Osoba ludzka*, 226.

²⁰ See T. Duma, "Personalism in the Lublin School," 376: "The original contribution of Wojtyła to the concept of person is that he sees the specificity of man

Wojtyła: “action constitutes the specific moment whereby the person is revealed. Action gives us the best insight into the inherent essence of the person and allows us to understand the person most fully.”²¹ At the same time, according to the personalism presented by Wojtyła, action is integrally associated with the person’s experience.²² In this way, Wojtyła reconciles two fundamental areas of contemporary personalism: personal action (understood together with volitional and intelligible nature) and experience.

The action which reveals the interpersonal nature of a human being is participation, which can be studied in two different frames of reference: the “I” – “you” relationship and the “we” relationship.²³ According to Wojtyła: “the ability to share in the humanness itself of every man is the very core of all participation and the condition of the personalistic value of all acting and existing ‘together with others’.”²⁴ Therefore, participation means a deep experience of another human being as the personal “I.”²⁵ It is the “experience” of the presence of another person in which such a transfer takes place: “what is given to me as my own ‘I’ [goes] beyond myself to ‘one of the others’, who, as a result, appears primarily as a ‘different I’, ‘another I’, my ‘neighbor’.”²⁶ Wojtyła goes even further in his/her analyses as he

as a personal being in ‘performing action’ (actus humanus), which reveals the whole ontic content of personal human being. Exclusively through the analysis of performing action, it is possible to reach ontic structures conditioning the efficacy of action.”

²¹ K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 11.

²² See K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 10: “Action serves as a particular moment of apprehending – that is, of experiencing – the person.”

²³ See K. Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 253: “In each of these dimensions, participation is connected with transcendence, and so it is grounded in the person as a subject and in the person’s innate tendency toward self-actualization, toward self-fulfillment. We fulfill ourselves as persons through interpersonal ‘I-thou’ relationships, as well as through a relation to the common good, which allows us to exist and act together with others as ‘we’. These two different relations and their corresponding communal dimensions also entail two different profiles of participation.”

²⁴ K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 295.

²⁵ See G. Beigel, *Faith and Social Justice*, 22–25.

²⁶ K. Wojtyła, “Participation or Alienation?,” 200–201.

reveals that participation in the humanity of another “I” is necessarily connected with the self-affirmation of his/her own subjectivity and his/her own “I.”²⁷ In summary, it can be stated that participation – as an action and an interpersonal experience – leads to the fulfilment of a human being as a person. For when the human being affirms the humanity of a “neighbor,” he/she makes the self-affirmation simultaneously. In other words, when the person experiences another human being as an equal “I” in the act of affirming his/her humanity, dignity and subjectivity, he/she experiences his/her own humanity, dignity and subjectivity. This is how Wojtyła reconciles two seemingly contradictory aims of the person: his/her pursuit towards himself/herself and towards achieving self-fulfillment as well as his/her quest towards others and for finding fulfilment in interpersonal relationships.

The personalistic concept of participation briefly presented above brings many important implications. First of all, it shows that each and every personal being is social by his/her very nature since participation is a homogeneous feature of the person. Second, although participation is a common feature of the person, it requires its actualization through action. The ability to participate, which is understood as a feature of the person (potentiality of human nature), is different than an action of participation (an act) that constitutes the actualization of some personal potential. It means that the person can participate in the humanity of “another I” but he/she can also deny the natural need to go into a relationship with the other “I.” A refusal to actualize the homogeneous feature of participation leads to alienation.²⁸ For Wojtyła, alienation, in its basic form, hinders or even thwarts the possibility to experience the other human being as “another I.” Hence, it is a kind of destruction of the relationship between “I” and “another.” Alienation means that a person is not able

²⁷ See K. Wojtyła, “Participation or Alienation?,” 202: “In order for me to regard the ‘other’ or a ‘neighbor’ as ‘another I’ (and only this qualifies as participation in another’s concrete humanity), I must become aware of and experience, among the overall properties of that other ‘human being’, the same kind of property that determines my own ‘I’, for this will determine my relationship to the ‘other’ as an ‘I.’”

²⁸ See K.P. Doran, *Solidary*, 147–148.

to experience another person as “another I.”²⁹ As a result, alienation leads to the degradation of one’s own capability to experience another “I” and has a direct impact on the ability to experience one’s own humanity.³⁰ Third, participation as a homogeneous feature of the person implies responsibilities which are relevant to the personal structure. The authentic recognition (experience) of another “I” in a “neighbor,” engenders the feelings of responsibility, solidarity and necessity to affirm another “I.” This experience, which is determined by participation, possesses a twofold nature. On one hand, it results from recognizing the value of another “I” as a person. On the other hand, it emerges from the indispensable actualization of participation as a homogeneous and potential feature of a human being’s personal nature. This is the fourth implication of Wojtyła’s analyses – the ethical dimension of participation which incorporates both subjective and normative references to the “value of the person.” If the person actualizes and fully accepts his/her participation, he/she is able to find self-fulfillment (subjective dimension). At the same time, he/she performs a duty towards another “I” that comes from the objective order of his/her existence as a supreme good. Through these observations, the sheer philosophical genius of Wojtyła is revealed. His reasoning indicates that transcendence, understood as the participation in the humanity of another “I,” leads to the self-fulfillment of the person. Furthermore, such deep self-fulfillment of a human being as a person through participation cannot be achieved in any other action or experience. In conclusion, and also as a summary of this section, a human being as a person fulfils himself/herself most fully through relationships with other personal beings. As a result, it should be emphatically stated that a human being is a social being.

²⁹ See K. Wojtyła, “Participation or Alienation?,” 205–206.

³⁰ See K. Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 257: “Alienation as the antithesis of participation, and thus its opposite or negation, does not so much ‘dehumanize’ the human being as an individual of the species as it threatens the person as a subject. On the other hand, participation as the antithesis of alienation confirms and emphasizes the person as a subject.”

Theological Horizon of the Social Dimension of the Human Person

There are many theological perspectives about the person which offer new and significant insights for the issues addressed in this article. Already at the starting point, the fundamental difference between philosophical optics is revealed, because a person in the theological perspective cannot be identified only with man. What is more, the personal being *par excellence* is God Himself in the Trinity. Angels also have the status of a person. In this sense, following the hermeneutical method applied earlier, which encourages seeing the person through many cognitive perspectives, this section will begin by elucidating the interpersonal character of God as the Communion of the Divine Persons. Thereafter, it will examine how the human being can be understood as *imago Trinitatis*. The Church, which is in its essence the “social Christ” – the personal and redemptive communion between God human beings, between human beings and angels, and between people helps illuminate the social nature of the person.

Many theologians-personalists pay particular attention to the personal form of existence of God. They claim that if God was not personal, He *de facto* could not be God; for the person is the highest form of existence. According to this notion, the category of “person” possesses apriority over the category of “nature” in the explanation of *Mysterium Trinitatis*. Three “I’s” subsist in the Holy Trinity. The personal existence of these “I’s” are a synthesis of the “subjective consciousness” and existence. As Bartnik says, the Trinity cannot be perceived as a “trio of individuals,” in which any one member can be seen as someone “separate” and radically independent.³¹ According to this Lublin dogmatist, the personal subsistence (*subsistentia personalis*) of the Trinity is associated with its “relation to” (*relatio*). In the Trinity, a person is a person because he/she is in absolute relation. The subsistence of “being for” refers to “being in self.” In other words, subsistence and relationship are identical in God. Each one of the Divine Persons corresponds to the Two Others in Their otherness. As a result, the Trinity is social in the personological aspect.

³¹ See C.S. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, vol. 1, 242–243.

The union of the Divine Persons is essentially the unity of essence and nature, however in this case there is no merging of persons into one entity and the Divine Persons do not get absorbed by Nature. Bartnik explains that every Person in God is an “I” and a structure of “Absolutely for You.” All “I’s” constitute – mainly due to the Social Spirit – the “Trinitarian We” (Gen 1:26, 11:7) as the substructure towards “Absolute Thou.” “We” is not clearly subjective, and it is not a kind of “common ego” which can be particularized on the basis of the communion claimed by “mono-subjective Trinity notion representatives” (e.g. Karl Rahner). The reduction of the Trinity to a common “We” would be a subordination of the Trinity and would affect the community by depriving it of “others,” that is “You” and “Thou.” The Trinitarian dialectic is mysterious: the person turns into the community (*subsistentia prima in subsistentiam secundam*), and the community “returns” to the separateness of Persons, to the real individuality of three “I’s.”³²

From the analyses of Bartnik, it can be concluded that the Divine Person is “spread” between the individual and communal dimensions. Furthermore, despite the clear difference between those two dimensions, the person eventually becomes paradoxical: singularity – plurality. Moreover, the “principle of socialization of the personal being” is revealed, which means that the person has to go beyond himself/herself towards the other person and then return to himself/herself in order to truly be himself/herself. Emphasising the social and interpersonal dimension of the person it is necessary to remember that the person is not only a “relationship” but also “subsistence.” Therefore, when using the terminology suggested by Bartnik, the person should be referred to as a “subsisting relationship” or an “interpersonal subsistence.”³³

If God is “essentially relational,” then a human being, as His image and likeness, should also be “essentially relational.” Taking into account the interpersonal character of God’s existence, the created person should also have an interpersonal character. From the personalistic point of view it should be emphasized that the person

³² See C.S. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, vol. 1, 231.

³³ See C.S. Bartnik, *Szkice do systemu personalizmu*, 59.

is not just the image of God's Nature but he/she is the image of the Person of God, similarly to the Divine Persons, and is subject to the dialectic according to which the person turns into the community by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Holy Trinity represents the Divine "I" separately and the Divine "We" together. In the same way, a human being as an individual being becomes a "social person" in relationship with another "you" or "we."

This dialectic of turning from "I" into "we" does not arise in a vacuum. The "space" in which this occurs is the Church, understood as *communio personarum*. The Church's essence is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the embodiment of the love of the Father and the Son. In the exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* John Paul II writes:

"The communion of the Church is a gift of the Blessed Trinity, whose deep inner life is marvelously shared with humanity. Communion is the fruit of God's loving initiative, fulfilled in the Paschal Mystery of Christ by which the Church shares in the divine communion of love between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. „God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). On the day of Pentecost, Christ's Passover was brought to completion by the outpouring of the Spirit, which gave us the first fruits of our inheritance, a share in the life of the Triune God, which enables us to love 'as God loved us' (1Jn 4:11)."³⁴

The vertical dimension of the Church, which is its identity and ontological foundation, also has an influence on horizontal relationships. The space where these two dimensions meet is in the sacraments and through the Word of God. In *Christifideles laici* it is written that the fundamental sense of ecclesiastical communion

"speaks of the union with God brought about by Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. The opportunity for such communion is present in the Word of God and in the Sacraments. Baptism is the door and the foundation of communion in the Church.

³⁴ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Oceania*, no. 10.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 11). The Body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist sacramentalizes this communion, that is, it is a sign and actually brings about the intimate bonds of communion among all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the Church (1Cor 10:16).³⁵

This fully confirms the previous thesis, which state that a human being is a creature in the image and likeness of God and attains self-fulfillment in relationships with other beings. The ecclesiological perspective also reveals the truth that a human being is born not only to participate in the Community of Divine Persons but, on this foundation, enter into relationships with other people. A man's vocation is to live according to the principle of "spirituality of communion"³⁶. Its source is a look fixed on the mystery of the Holy Trinity; however,

"A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a 'gift for me.' A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to 'make room' for our brothers and sisters, bearing 'each other's burdens' (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, 'masks' of communion rather than its means of expression and growth."³⁷

In the heart of the Divine–Human communion there is the Person of Jesus Christ. By means of the event of Incarnation, a man is

³⁵ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, no. 19.

³⁶ See M. Polak, "Shaping the Spirituality of Communion," 285–296.

³⁷ John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 43.

referred to Christ as a personal ‘place’ of connection with God. The relational nature of the reference to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is realized not only through an individual relation to Christ, but also through voluntary co-participation with Christ in His works. Granat notes that the Master of Nazareth in His teachings, determines basic principles of social life that is to be based, above all, on social love that originates in Himself and His redemptive work. Social love is manifested in practice by promoting fraternity and equality of all people in Christ and striving to ensure that every man’s full rights are protected by virtue of being a person. Additionally, a man’s natural inclination to social love is strengthened by his/her awareness that the good he/she makes to another person is also the good towards Christ Himself, who has become one with every person in a mysterious way.³⁸

Further ecclesiological analysis of the social dimension of personal existence reveals another fundamental principle regarding the social horizon of the human person. Within the Trinity the relationship between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit who is the Person. Similarly, the “space” for relationship between God and human beings and between people is also the Spirit of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes the communal relation to the other being possible. He is also a giver of “interpersonal relationships,” understood both as the potential ability of human nature and particular actions in which the actualization of the homogeneous ability of the human being is performed. Interpersonal relationships – when they exist in a real and true way – are present only in the Spirit. Accordingly, if one wants to unite with Divine Persons and human beings, he/she should first enter into interpersonal relationship with the Holy Spirit. In this way, the Third Person does not appropriate the attention only on Himself. The unique feature of the Holy Spirit is to be a “bridge” between persons, a “bridge” which is also an important subject of relationships. If the person, according to philosophy, is incommunicable in his/her core, the Holy Spirit, who searches the “deep things of the person,” is the one who can make him/her a gift for others and, at the same time, not deprive him/her of his/her identity and subjectivity. Here we reach perhaps the most

³⁸ W. Granat, *Personalizm chrześcijański*, 500–509.

fundamental statement in this article, for here we discover that the Third Person of the Holy Trinity is in fact the “social horizon of the human person.” According to this insight, all attempts to build divine-human or interpersonal relationships should be based on this Personal foundation.

The ecclesiological perspective of the person as a social being is fulfilled in an eschatological sense. The classic notions of eschatology as “heaven,” “eternal life,” “fullness of happiness,” “seeing God” do not represent the very core of the redemption and eschatological fulfilment of the person as created in the image of the Holy Trinity. The essence of redemption is not the improvement of individual qualities of a human being but communion with the Triune God – with the Father through the Son, in the Holy Spirit – and communion with other beings created in the Spirit of the Father and the Son. As John Paul II explains, “for the Catholic Church, then, the communion of Christians is none other than the manifestation in them of the grace by which God makes them sharers in his own communion, which is his eternal life.”³⁹ The ultimate vocation of a human being is communion with other personal beings through participation in the communal life of the Three Divine Persons. In the same way that the communion of the Divine Persons does not reduce the subjectivity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, this communion does not constitute a kind of deprivation of one’s subjectivity or dilution of one’s identity. Moreover, it is through communion that a person finds their identity in the interpersonal relationship to other persons. In the same way that the Father is the Father due to His relationship towards His Son, the Son is the Son thanks to His relationship towards His Father; the Spirit is the Person in whom this relationship between The Father and the Son exists. Similarly, the identity of the created person is eschatologically constituted on the basis of his/her relationships towards both uncreated and created persons in the context of human history. Therefore, the eschatological nature of a human being is a reflection of how he/she put into practice this gift of communion and filled his/her life with love, or how he/she rejected this gift and oriented his life toward other goals.

³⁹ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, no. 9.

Conclusions

The analyses presented above have revealed the diverse approach of Lublin personalism in exploring the social and interpersonal dimensions of a personal being. The person cannot be explained by means of only one research method; rather, research should explore the realistic, ontological and conscious aspects of the person, and include an interpersonal and social outlook. Lublin personalistic thought possesses a complementariness that is able to see the person in a very broad horizon. This perspective reveals that the social and interpersonal dimensions are key to understand who a human is, what his/her identity is and how he/she should live his life in order to fulfil himself/herself as a personal being. The person is social by his/her very nature, but his relationality is both a task and a vocation that can be accomplished by his/her engagement in interpersonal and social relationships. A human being lives out his/her social character in multiple communities but most fully in the Church community which introduces him into the unique community with God who is the communion of the Three Divine Persons.

Osoba jako byt społeczny i relacyjny w ujęciu najważniejszych przedstawicieli lubelskiego personalizmu

Abstrakt: Artykuł stanowi próbę syntetycznego przedstawienia koncepcji osoby jako bytu społecznego i relacyjnego w oparciu o lubelską myśl personalistyczną przełomu XX i XXI wieku. Badanie społecznego horyzontu osoby nie może ograniczać się do przedstawienia pojedynczej, choćby najbardziej genialnej perspektywy. Osobę trzeba rozświetlić za pomocą różnego rodzaju światła poznawczych w taki sposób, aby dotrzeć do szerokiego wachlarza informacji na jej temat. Doskonale nadaje się do tego lubelski personalizm, który charakteryzuje się wielością metod i form deskrypcji osoby, zarazem zachowując pewien wspólny fundament aksjomatyczny i aksjologiczny. Ponadto, zgodnie z logiką hermeneutycznej metody „po-między,” przy opisie bytu osobowego lubelscy personaliści tacy jak Wincenty Granat, Karol Wojtyła/Jan Paweł II czy Czesław Stanisław Bartnik korzystali zarówno z danych filozoficznych, jak też teologicznych. Czerpiąc metodologiczne inspiracje od powyższych mistrzów, całość dociekań zwartych w tym artykule została podzielona na dwie części, zawierające w sobie analizy filozoficznego i teologicznego horyzontu społecznego rozumienia osoby.

Słowa kluczowe: osoba, personalizm, antropologia filozoficzna, antropologia teologiczna, hermeneutyka, Karol Wojtyła/Jan Paweł II

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