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PERSON AND CONSCIENCE: AUGUSTINIAN STRANDS IN JOHN-PAUL'S ETHICS

A b s t r a c t. The wide appeal of *Veritatis Splendor* lay in its Augustinianism. Two Augustinian themes predominate in Wojtyła's thought, one derived from Max Scheler, the other from Henri de Lubac and the nouvelle théologie. The unity of being and the good is the basis on which he can reassert the ontological integrity of the personal agent. The priority of divine grace in leading the human agent to moral fulfilment directs his thinking about the conscience as an inner dialogue with God. All moral self-awareness depends on that encounter, while the continuity of the person makes possible the accrual of moral experience.

Key words: Augustinianism; Karol Wojtyła (John-Paul II); Max Scheler; person; conscience; Henri de Lubac; *Gaudium et Spes*; self-transcendence.

1. THE AUGUSTIANISM OF *VERITATIS SPLENDOR*

The reception of *Veritatis Splendor* by the theological world was a moment of some importance in the maturation of the ecumenical understanding of the twentieth century, in which a great deal of intellectual growth that had

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been working separately in Catholic and Protestant circles over the previous half century came suddenly into view. The Encyclical found warm appreciation among a number of Protestant Ethicists, while it was often coolly received by Catholic moral theologians, especially in the English-speaking world. The response of the distinguished Redemptorist, Fr. Bernhard Häring, which blamed the text for inducing "long-lasting seizures of the brain" that threatened to remove him "from the Church on earth to the Church in Heaven" was, no doubt, idiosyncratic.[1] But a complicated crossing of paths was everywhere to be seen. It became clear, at least, that the popular assumption of a persisting gulf between an absolutist stance of a scholastic Catholic moral theology and a relativist Neo-Kantian stance of Protestant Ethics, no longer corresponded to the realities. And that was not the was not the only point on which the stereotypes were challenged. Protestant theologians who read the Encyclical from its opening pages recognised in its foundational use of Scripture and its preference for patristic over scholastic authorities a voice they felt reassuringly at home with. Was this very naive? Skilled Catholic interpreters, who had followed the extensive processes of consultation accompanying the composition of the text, knew better than to read the opening pages first. They went at once to what they took to be the heart of the matter: key passages in the third section about the teaching authority of the church, and the discussions in the second section of those trends in moral theory which caused the Pope unhappiness. No one who had pressing business with the Vatican on moral theology, it seemed, could afford to linger very long over the genially homiletic exposition of Jesus and the rich young ruler. Yet Protestant readers were not mistaken, I think, to assign a peculiar importance to the framing of the text by the opening section. Here was an approach to moral theology primarily concerned to situate it within the framework of the Gospel narrative of salvation, avoiding the positing of moral law as autonomous, and seeing it rather as an instrument in the hand of a saving God.

When the Second Vatican Council had called for a renewal of moral theology, it had stipulated that this needed to be carried out in the light of Scripture studies. To this demand John Paul conformed, as he constantly did, by his treatment of Matthew 19 in the light of Gospel parallels. But he also expounded the Council's request more broadly, in an evangelical and Christological sense, as a need "to display the lofty vocation which the faithful have

[1] Understanding *Veritatis Splendor*, ed. John Wilkins (London: SPCK, 1994).

received in Christ, the only response fully capable of satisfying the desire of the human heart."[2] To characterise the manner of the opening section more precisely, one word will suffice: Augustinianism. What we meet in *Veritatis Splendor* is the longing and thirsty heart, the moral subject seeking fulfilment in God's ordering of his world. It is not precisely the type of Augustinianism that had prevailed in mid-twentieth-century Protestantism, which drew primarily on the anti-Pelagian writings to focus upon questions of sin and social imperfectibility, but an Augustinianism that went back to the mystical and personal focus of the *Confessions.* In the rich young ruler of the Gospel story John-Paul traced the familiar outline of the questing heart, restless until it would find its rest in God. In this Scriptural figure "we can recognise every person who approaches Christ…and questions him - not so much about rules to be followed, but about the full meaning of life."[3]

That statement identifies two poles: the human person approaching Christ and questioning, and the full meaning of life, coinciding with the person of Christ himself. These poles are absolutely characteristic of this author, but cannot, of course, be taken for granted. It does not go without saying that the ordering of moral agency is sought *in approach and question*, and that it is aimed at *fulfilment of life.* Morality may be presented as a system of rules, and Ethics may be presented as a set of confessional declarations. The goal of the first section of the Encyclical, then, is precisely to put first things first, and to ensure that the treatment of the good, the commands, the counsels, discipleship, the gift of grace and even the authority of tradition, are seen as constituting an ordered and consequential development of the divine answer to the human question. The dynamic and exploratory character of morality, conducted as a train of enquiry by a human agent in the act of existence, must be allowed to shape the whole. Twelve years earlier, in addressing the persistent disagreements about contraception, John-Paul had treated of the concept of "gradualism," which he defined as "a continuous, permanent conversion which, while requiring... adherence to good in its fullness, is brought about concretely in steps...advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God and the demands of his definitive and absolute love…"[4] The pilgrimage-motif, claimed for the church as a whole in the famous passage of *Gaudium et Spes* based on Augustine's *City of God*, is here taken

[2] *Optatam Totius*, 16; *Veritatis Splendor*, 7.
[3] *Veritatis Splendor*, 7.
[4] *Familiaris Consortio*, 9.

back to its earlier sources in the *Confessions* as the pilgrimage of the individual human heart.

The Augustinian revival, in challenging the so-called "ontotheology" of Neo-Scholasticism with a new awareness of time and the future, vocation and discovery, had also challenged the Kantian abstraction of moral norms from being. On this point the younger Karol Wojtyła had learned deeply from Max Scheler, a thinker steeped in the nineteenth-century recovery of Augustine, who adopted and redeployed the doctrine of the hierarchy of the goods and the *ordo amoris* as a key to overcoming Kant's "formalist" legacy. At the heart of Augustine's Ethics lay the ontological equivalence of being and the good, in part a Platonic idea but acquiring a new focus in the struggle with Manichaeism. In contradiction to the "two first principles" of good and evil in Manichaeism, each with its ontological foundation, good was asserted as unitary with the God named "I am who I am." Like being, absolute good is unitary, created good is multiple, so that *Omnis natura, inquantum natura est, bonum est*, "Every nature is a good, insofar as it is a nature."[5] "A" nature is a particular concretisation of being, whether specific or individual. "Every nature" is "every spirit susceptible to change, and every body." The being of things, disposed in measure, form and order, made all things beautiful, and beauty was the earliest category, and always a dominant one, with which Augustine clarified the idea of the good. As expressions of beauty, beings exercised attraction on agents which, of their own nature, seek to attain, and in some way participate in, that which alone is supremely good. From this equation of being and the good that John-Paul takes his first step in expounding Jesus' answer to the rich young ruler: "The 'Good Teacher' points out that that the answer to the question 'What good must I do…?' can only be found by turning one's mind and heart to the 'One' who is good. 'No one is good, but God alone.'"

With minor exceptions derived from the negative theology of late Neo-Platonism, the identity of being and the good was the common foundation of the moral thought of Western Christendom. Kant, not only the first great voice of modern morality but also the last great voice of the medieval *via negativa,* sought to overthrow it. The scholastic *nihil appetimus nisi ratione boni* is subjected to a critique that dissects the *ratio boni* into quite distinct notions of the good as object of natural appetite and the right as the determi-

[5] AUGUSTINE, *De natura boni*, 1.

nant of good action.[6] The good in nature, Kant held, was certainly associated with being; but since nature was a system of necessity, to follow the good was to renounce rational freedom. An ethics of the good could only be "heteronomous," enslaved to the impulse of nature and the "pleasure-principle." Freedom is the central unifying pillar holding Kant's system of theoretical and practical reason together, and freedom depends on a practical reason that found its direction wholly within its own rational necessity, in pursuit of what ought-to-be, what is right, irrespective of what is or is not the case in the real world. The faculty of will was a factitive faculty of "producing objects," or "determining itself to effect objects." Where a will let itself be empirically conditioned, it could pursue only what lay within its power; but a *free* will was concerned with whether "we *could* will a given action, if the object *were* in our power."[7] The good of human action, then, the good-as-right, has no reality, other than as a projection of will, an ought-to-be; it lacks a place in the universe until our action gives it a place, whereupon it becomes a natural good, and so ceases to be determinative for the rational will.

Scheler quarrelled with Kant precisely about this breaking of the link beween being and the good of action. With the help of Husserlian phenomenology he reasserted the ontological status of the good in insisting that values were truly "given," just as all reality is "given." "Values" were his preferred way of speaking of "goods" for a variety of reasons, some good, some bad – one of the good ones being that it was free of the "natural" overtones that the term good had for Kant. But if we are to understand Scheler, it is essential to hear the word correctly, as he meant it, as a bulwark against the "psychologism" which he thought of as the major temptation of the age. For Kant was not his only opponent; be battled against the pretensions of the early psychologists to account purely mechanically for the ideas of the mind and the exercise of human freedom. Values are not conferred, then, but recognised as a reality in the universe. But if not recognised as the empirical data of time and space are recognised, how? The answer was: by intuition, which grasped the empirical objects of time and space as value-bearing. I cannot see two people kiss without knowing that they are fond of one another and that this is, as such, a good. If I do not know that, I do not "see" the kiss in any real sense at all. I simply miss observing what is the case. Essentially Scheler

[6] *Critique of Practical Reason*, AK 5:59.
[7] *Critique of Practical Reason*, AK 5:15, 57f.

had just one point to make both against Kant and against the psychologists: there was a *genuine knowledge of reality* to be had *within practical reason*. To this robust moral realism Karol Wojtyła turned, in his early philosophical work, for guidance.

2. THE PERSON

But in the course of defending the reality of values, Scheler found himself needing to defend one bearer of values in particular, the *moral agent.* Kant had not attacked the value of the moral agent; he believed, in fact, that his theory conferred on him a dignity that no other philosophy could. Those rare flowery patches that give unexpected colour to the sandy wastes of Kant's prose are more often than not in praise of the respect owed to moral "personality." But in a criticism that proved quite decisive, Scheler argued that Kant failed to understand his own thought at this point. The respect for persons Kant extolled was not directed to any *real* person; it was directed to an impersonal principle of rational conduct.[8] The moral philosophy of German idealism was exclusively a philosophy of acts, with no room for personal agents. Scheler made it his ambition to argue back from acts to real persons: if we are to talk about a practical rationality and purpose, we must be able to talk about a being that is responsible for the ordering and purposing of a multiplicity of various acts. The argument unfolds in two stages: – (i) action, inevitably complex, plural and synthetic, depends upon a unitary agent to give it coherence; (ii) the agent is "known," not by introspection or theory, but by a reflexive cognition that accompanies action itself. The conclusion is a definition of the person restricted in its scope, but, Scheler confidently believed, ontologically secure: *the person is the concrete, essential and real unity of acts of differentiated kinds.*[9] "Person" in Scheler, then, means more or less what is meant by the English word "agent," *i.e.* the continuous subject of action through many acts. The claim that the person stands at the highest rank in the hierarchy of values is a claim for the value of agency.

The traditional starting point for the Western category of "person" was Boethius' definition, devised to expound the achievements of the Christological formulae of the Council of Chalcedon: *naturae rationabilis individua*

[8] *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1913), 38-46.

[9] *Formalismus*, 397-8.

substantia.[10] Robert Spaemann distinguishes two lines of interpretation that emerged from this definition: on the one side, a line that sought precision on what it means for a nature to be "rational," on the other a line focussed on what it means for a "nature" to be individuated, concerned with "persons" in the plural and their *mutual recognition.*[11] The first question is whether and how the two aspects of the term may be held together; the second is how recognition of persons relates to recognition of human beings. These questions were evaded by Kant. Scheler had an answer to the first, but none for the second. Since there could be no "objectifying" of persons in a theoretical act, no questions could be asked or answered about their natural species.

Karol Wojtyła's interest in Scheler was engaged both by what his work had achieved for the idea of the person and by what remained unachieved. He subscribed to the thesis of "the basic value of the person as…the agent of actions."[12] In his revised Preface to *The Acting Person* he declares that the legacy of Scheler is "the major influence," and within that legacy "the unity of the human being" is what seems imperative to investigate. The force of the term "unity", not quite transparent in English, is explained on the first page: "the phenomenalistic standpoint seems to overlook the essential unity of the distinct experiences, and to attribute the unitary nature of experience to its allegedly being composed of a set of sensations or emotions, which are subsequently ordered by the mind."[13] The problem posed by "phenomenalism" is the same as that posed by Scheler's "psychologism." It attempted to understand reality in terms of sequential experiences and processes of the mind, without any ground of *moral identity* in relation to the successive acts, experiences, biographical conditions etc. that constitute a given life. It must be possible to say, "I who speak now, am one and the same with the I who acted then," without such a claim collapsing into the mere expression of a *feeling* of identity with some past that my memory retains.

This conviction of self-continuity may be momentarily suspended in a self-interrogation – harmlessly, because the suspension is resolved in a more nuanced recovery of personal continuity through development and change. But it may also be ignored by moral theory. And moral theory is potent, for good or ill, in shaping a given sense of agency and undermining confidence

[10] *Contra Eutychen*, 3.

[11] *Personen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996).

[12] *The Acting Person*, tr. Andrzej Potocki, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka from Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i Czyn* (1969) (Dordrecht & Boston: Reidel, 1979), 161.

[13] *Acting Person*, 3.

in intuitive certainties. An intellectual doubt as to whether one is responsible for what one has done may, in real life, numb the exercise of pratical intuition. In renewing Scheler's question, then, Karol Wojtyła had a pastoral, not only a theoretical aim. That aim is evident throughout *Veritatis Splendor*, and is, perhaps, determinative of later disagreements between Pope John-Paul and his critics – some of whom seem to have thought practical reason immune from the effects of reflective moral theory.

Scheler's defence of moral realism had come at a price. He had maintained, in a Kantian way, the sharpest of distinctions between practical and theoretical reason. The whole theoretical reflection on what he called "inner experience" – including the category of the self – was given over to the theoretical science of psychology. Personality was kept out of the psychological reduction by being treated as a datum of practical reason, inaccessible as such to theoretical analysis. Indeed, Scheler even says, "It belongs to the essence of the person that it exists and lives only in the performance of intentional acts."[14] Scheler's agent-person, then, could be experienced in action, but not identified with "my self" in psychologial reflection; his "self" could be an object of psychological reflection, but could never take responsibility for acting.

But Wojtyła's intellectual ambitions were broader. He aimed to achieve an integrated practical-and-theoretical anthropology, and that required that the deep ditch between practical and theoretical knowledge needed to be crossed. The first draft of Wojtyła's Preface, also included in the English edition, indicated his reserve about where Scheler left him. Scheler's theory was, he wrote, radically innovative in its phenomenological purism, but needed to be integrated with the legacy of the Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding. Scheler had no general anthropological ambitions. His "persons" were neither necessarily human, nor necessarily singular, for he was quite happy to refer to the personality of nations, racial groups, communities etc. on precisely the same terms as of individuals. Wojtyła, on the other hand, posits at the outset a foundational intuition which he calls an "experience of man," the object of which is "man emerging from all the moments and at the same time present in every one of them" – a bold move phenomenologically.[15] To cross the ditch that Scheler had left in place between practical and theoretical knowledge, he has to widen the purely cognitive and scientific conception of reflec-

[14] *Formalismus*, 405.
[15] *Acting Person,* 4.

tive transcendence to include a *moral* self-transcendence, which would allow for a continuous self-knowledge still effectively rooted in moral experience. We find him, then, positing a diference between a "horizontal" transcendence and a "vertical" transcendence, the one corresponding to a general power to *be active,* the other to the power to *be an agent*.[16] And it was out of that distinction that conscience came to have an important role in his understanding of the person.

3. CONSCIENCE

To find resources for a fuller concept of self-transcendence he drew on another strand of the Augustinian retrieval, the so-called *nouvelle théologie.* This name is commonly given to the attempt to frame a theological anthropology outside the straightjacket of the neoscholastic natural-supernatural distinction. If modernity is the history of the problem of self-enclosed nature and the need to find a position *above* nature in order to *talk about* nature, the new departure was born of dissatisfaction with the principal alternative approaches to modernity: idealism, placing reason above nature in theory, and pragmatism, asserting control over nature through action upon it. Where both these strategies sought to super-impose transcendence on the natural system, Henri de Lubac's new initiative evoked the *grace* of creation at the foundation of nature, and so turned the question of the relation on its head. A different element of Augustine's legacy is here in play, a strand that places nature within the logic of prevenient grace, destined towards the City of God. Lubac's paradoxical, and very Augustinian, formula, "the natural desire for the supernatural" turns the problem of how nature may be transcended into a claim for nature's *self-transcendence*. Nature itself, in its human manifestation, is an openness, rather than a self-enclosed sufficiency. Wojtyła's interest in the programme is apparent in his constant determination to keep self-transcendence to the fore in his account of the human person: "the evidence of experience tells us that the spiritual life of man essentially refers to, and in its strivings vibrates with… the experientially innermost attempts to reach truth, goodness and beauty."[17]

[16] *Acting Person,* 119.
[17] *Acting Person,* 155-6.

While there are obvious affinities between this programme and the phenomenological programme of epistemic realism, the aim of which was to establish that the knowing consciousness was of itself "ecstatic," receptive of reality and not merely constructive of it, the focus of the theological initiative is not epistemic. The self-enclosure of nature is troubled by *desire,* not by knowledge. Here is an account of the human consciousness as deracinated within its world, attempting from a new angle to recover what an older generation of Augustinians had achieved with the concept of original sin, but more on guard against the risk of confusing nature with fault. Humanity was characterised from the outset by a conscious *deficit* in relation to God's purposes, exposed to a transcendence of which nature cannot take the measure.

Is "conscience" the location of that conscious deficit? Here we come up against a famous *crux interpretum*: how to render the Latin *conscientia* in a modern language. There are two ways of understanding it, both authentic. The one conceives it as a general capacity to register experience and take notice of the world, the other as reflexive moral judgment of the self and its actions. In some languages the distinction between the two is made simply by adding an epithet: *la conscience morale* in French has precise equivalents in the other Romance languages. English uses two distinct adaptations of the Latin word: "consciousness" and "conscience." But German *Bewußtsein* and *Gewissen* are so distinct as to conceal the relation between the two, and it may possibly be significant that Karol Wojtyła's native language follows the same pattern in distinguishing *świadomość,* "attesting" or "showing," from *sumienie,* "accounting."[18] From early in John Paul II's pontificate conscience was a major concern, as we see from his self-quotations in *Veritatis Splendor*. One reason, of course, was the Second Vatican Council, which had spoken of the dignity of conscience both in the Declaration on Religious Freedom and in that "stupendous document," *Gaudium et Spes.* In the early Encyclicals of 1978 and 1979, *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*, we learn of his resolution to devote his papacy to exposition of the teaching of the Council. But his reasons for taking the matter up again in 1993 were more complicated.

Twentieth-century treatments of conscience, philosophical, theological and psychological, are dominated by a number of primary tensions. There is the tension between the *given* and *the occurrent*: conscience is a permanent endowment, on the one hand, but it is exercised in a moment of crisis and

[18] My thanks are due to Fr. Sławomir Nowosad for guidance on this point.

resolution. We recall that St Thomas saw fit to use *two* terms: *synderesis*, the faculty of knowing first principles of morality, and *conscientia*, the act of reaching a concrete judgment. The second tension is that between *certainty* and *doubt*. Though the German word *Gewissen* means "certainty," such certainties as conscience provides are likely to be disturbing ones, of what one has not known, done or been, and to evoke corresponding uncertainties. Saint Paul writes of "conflicting thoughts accusing or excusing." Thirdly, there is the tension of the self and the other. Early modernity liked to portray conscience in Hellenic terms as the voice of God within man, the ultimate divine invader depicted in Greek mythology as the Furies that pursued bloodguilt. Yet conscience is a voice *within man*, the human voice that echoes the divine word, not the original *ipsa vox*. Woytiła's manner of discussing conscience changes after he becomes Pope, but there is a constant emphasis throughout: the impossibility of eliminating the dramatic (or "dynamic") character of an experience in which one finds oneself confronted with authority and judged by it. The dialectical oppositions have to be kept in play, not allowed to collapse in a one-sided resolution. The danger, as he observes, is that "the very identity of the conscience may founder in the face of human liberty and divine law."[19]

It is worth making a comparison at this point with a fascinating text by a thinker John-Paul admired, the paper by Hans Urs von Balthasar, standard-bearer of the Lubac tradition, written for the International Theological Commission in 1974 and subsequently published as "Nine Propositions on Christian Ethics." Balthasar's programme was to sketch the shape of a Christian Ethics based on faith in Christ. It is framed by salvation-history, through which it moves backwards from Christ to Israel and from Israel to paganism. The treatment of conscience, together with Natural Law, was located among what he calls the "fragments" of pagan morality, antecedent to Israel's revelation. More a predisposition to practical reason than an exercise of it, conscience is consciousness in readiness for the emergence of real human agency, which occurs only with revelation, in Abraham's believing response to the call of God. Conscience thus involved what Wojtiła called "horizontal" transcendence, the transcendence at the heart of anthropology itself, not yet called forth into full agency. Only to this extent, for Balthasar, is there a natural moral light within the human creature. It is aware of its potential for free-

[19] *Veritatis Splendor*, 56: '…identitatem ipsam subverti moralis conscientiae prae hominis libertate et Dei lege'. The official English translation weakens the force of this considerably.

dom, and conscious of being attracted to the unconditioned good. It may experience events of recollection, recalling a primitive sense of openness to truth. But it has neither the knowledge of true moral propositions, on the one hand, nor the power to enact its freedom effectively on the other. It is striking how freely, even wilfully, Balthasar handles St. Thomas' doctrine of Natural Law, minimising the claims for apriori moral principles. We devise moral principles, but are not born with them; they derive their shape from prior conscious experience, and are as true or as false as that experience may have been.[20]

If we lay this description alongside Wojtyła's earlier discussion of conscience in *Osoba i Czyn*, the contrast appears very striking.[21] Chief among them is Wojtyła's insistence on a difference between consciousness and conscience. "The person, the action and their dynamic union are more than…an enactment of consciousness." It belongs to one mode of transcendence in particular, that of moral freedom, which "constitutes the spiritual dynamism of the person" in action. Conscience, at the moment of vertical transcendence, is an awareness of the dependence of its freedom upon truth. It is known (as Scheler's "person" is known) by a reflexive intuition accompanying action. And as a category of *practical* reason it has a "creative" role in embedding moral norms within experience. (This term would prove to give a hostage to fortune.[22]) One thing, however, his discussion does have in common with Balthasar's: a distrust of a rationalist account of conscience as the knowledge of moral propositions. Here, too, there is no allusion to *synderesis* or the apriori grasp of moral first principles. Conscience does not deal in propositions such as "X is good..Y is evil," Wojtyła declares, but seeks to relate *some action* to the moral truth, to the extent that that is known.[23] Certainly, there is a task for "the mind" in formulating ethical norms, and this in turn contributes to self-fulfilment by "crystallising moral value." But prior to this theoretical work conscience is already active in the "very specific effort of the person aimed at grasping the truth in the sphere of …moral values."[24] It is a search and an enquiry, "before certitude is reached and becomes ju-

[20] "Neun Sätze zur christlichen Ethik," in J. RATZINGER et al., *Prinzipien christlicher Moral* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1975), 7.

[21] The contrast was first drawn to my attention by Professor Lewis Ayres, to whom i am indebted.

[22] *Acting Person,* 165-6.

[23] *Acting Person*, 156.

[24] *Acting Person,* 160.

dgment." And Wojtyła gives another hostage to fortune in expressing a reservation about the traditional description of conscience as a "judgment," though what is meant by the term is not a *predicative* judgment ("…that X is the case"), but simply a binary judgment of condemnation or approval.

In *Veritatis Splendor* the treatment is much broader. Three factors determined this, the most important being that the Pope was no longer bound by the constraints of a purely philosophical account. We hear now of conscience as a dialogue not only with oneself but *with God*.

A second was the need to address the false trails that prompted the Encyclical, including one that made embarrassing use of the term "creative," preferring to speak of "decisions" of conscience rather than "judgments," and another that found the certainties of moral knowledge so securely grounded in each human individual that there could be no significant role for the church in moral teaching. A third was the need to make detailed reference to *Gaudium et Spes*. Unfortunately, the relevant paragraph (16) of that document is short, just eight sentences in Latin, and is very conservative conceptually, governed mainly by the category of law. Three of the first four sentences, indeed, speak of conscience as knowledge of the law, and allude directly to Aquinas' first principles of morality, the object of knowledge by *synderesis*. The claim is even made that the evangelical law of love for God and neighbour is implicitly known to the human conscience. Confronted with difficulties on two fronts, then, from decisionist tendencies which found his own past expressions useful, and from rationalist tendencies that found the phrasing of the Council useful, John-Paul's use of *GS* 16 is very selective. In introducing the subject with a general statement about the encounter of human freedom and divine law, he respects the document's approach, but after that he allows the topic of law to lapse completely. The third sentence, which struck a more personalist note, provides him with the key to his interpretation, and provides a phrase which he uses as his first subheading: "man's sanctuary, where he is alone with God."

His positive exposition is constructed, under the sub-heading "Judgment," from Romans 2, out of which three points of special weight are drawn: (i) conscience is not a monological proposition, but a dialogue, with oneself and with God; (ii) conscience is a *witness* to the law of God, not determinative of it; (iii) the expression "conflicting thoughts" points to conscience as a *practical* judgment focused upon a *given moment* of self-discovery in action. And here he insists, significantly, on the difference between Natural Law and conscience. Natural law discloses objective and universal demands, conscience applies them to the particular case, formulating moral obligation

"in the light of" natural law. Clearly he is using Thomas's account of *conscientia*, but not his account of *synderesis*. This then introduces an echo of *Osoba i Czyn*, of special importance for the Augustinian theme: the conscience is always "seeking." In this connexion he returns to *GS* 16, treating the last two sentences on the errors of the conscience, invincible and negligent, and attempts to give intelligible sense to the carelessly composed final sentence, which appeared to deny human dignity to a neglected conscience. The dignity of the conscience, whether erroneous or truthful, whether neglected or attended to, lies in its insistent concern to find a foundation for action in truth.

Two Augustinian themes, then, one drawing on the unity of being and the good to reassert the ontological integrity of the personal agent, the other on the priority of divine grace to highlight the ongoing encounter with God that accompanies man to his moral fulfilment. The two themes reinforce each other in the thought of Karol Wojtyła, as they did in Augustine himself. The inner dialogue of the conscience gives the real and existing agent-person a self-awarness, while the continuity of the agent-person makes possible the accrual of moral experience through self-dialogue. John-Paul's treatment of these themes, in my view, is very much more than a simple exposition of the Conciliar document. That had been determined, no doubt inevitably, by a retrospective angle of vision, a need to correct what had gone amiss in past understandings. John-Paul is eager to offer a treatment that will equip the faithful for a world in which moral and personal fragmentation are newly oppressive threats. And even if it was only a secondary concern, in this context, to identify the common ground on which Christians could be united, it was a concern dear to his heart. His approach to moral teaching contains, in my view, a universal resource that the worldwide church has still to appropriate and explore.

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OSOBA I SUMIENIE. WĄTKI AUGUSTYŃSKIE W ETYCE JANA PAWŁA II

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Wielkie uznanie dla encykliki *Veritatis splendor* zrodziło się z jej augustynizmu. W myśli Wojtyły dominują dwa augustyńskie motywy, jeden zaczerpnięty z Maxa Schelera, drugi z Henri de Lubaca i *nouvelle théologie*. Jedność bytu i dobra to podstawa, na której potwierdza on integralność ontologiczną osobowego podmiotu działania. Pierwszeństwo łaski Bożej, prowadzącej człowieka jako podmiot działania do moralnego urzeczywistnienia, kieruje jego myśleniem o sumieniu jako wewnętrznym dialogu z Bogiem. Cała moralna samoświadomość zależy od tego spotkania, natomiast ciągłość osoby umożliwia rozwój moralnego doświadczenia.

Słowa kluczowe: augustynizm; Karol Wojtyła (Jan Paweł II); Max Scheler; osoba; sumienie; Henri de Lubac; *Gaudium et spes*; autotranscendencja.