

Doctoral studies

Philosophy Department

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Summary of A Doctoral Dissertation

Axiological Foundations of An Understanding of the Human Person in the Philosophy of

Max Scheler and Józef Tischner,

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The aim of this dissertation was to present the philosophical assumptions of an understanding of a human being in his/her personal texture in the philosophy of Max Scheler and Józef Tischner. I put forward a thesis that only by taking into account the axiological specificity and personal identity of the human subject, we are able to reach out for the foundations of an understanding of a human being by means of an engagement with the human subject's prime source. I prove this by comparing and contrasting the positions of the cited philosophers.

This thesis uses an analytical-comparative methodology. With its help, I notice that, taking into account the discrepancies in the detailed elements of Scheler's and Tischner's theories, the fundamental intuitions of the two approaches are basically convergent. They can be discerned in the fact that the German and the Polish philosopher share the view in the light of which it is impossible to render the axiological foundations of an understanding of the human person while disregarding the phenomenon of consciousness, and within it: love and the spiritual dimension of a human being, as well as the ethical nature of interpersonal relations. In my opinion, the originality of the subject matter I took up is manifested in noting a close connection between the aforementioned phenomena and the personal character of the presentation of a human being in his/her axiological self-awareness.

This work consists of an introduction, three chapters, concluding remarks and a list of the cited works. In the first chapter, I focus on presenting the problematic of the human person in the light of Max Scheler's theory of values. I show the sources of the personal character of human subjectivity in the context of values, and then, I present the axiological conceptualization of the human person in the light of Scheler's philosophy. In his view, a human person presents him/herself as founding various acts, "unity of acts," and in such presentation, the human person reveals his/her primordial, axiological specificity. To capture this specificity, one needs to understand a human person through the prism of the

primal, and, at the same time, the most supreme human act – that is love. Thanks to love, we notice that a human person has a spiritual character. According to Scheler, the phenomenological rendition of the spirit is the only adequate way to reach the source of a human being's intimate personality, that is, to understand him/her as *ens amans*. In the philosopher's view, the primary and the fully adequate, axiological experiencing of oneself as a human person and the experiencing of the Other are only made possible in a religious act.

The second chapter of this dissertation is concerned with the characteristics of the axiological sources of the subjectivity of the human person in the philosophy of Józef Tischner. The subjective determinants of the human life in the world of values and the axiological conceptualization of the human person in Tischner's approach are presented here. Like Scheler, the Polish philosopher looks for the sources of personal identity of a human being in an axiological horizon. By analyzing the levels of the awareness of the "I" and ego-oriented solidarity, Tischner comes to a conviction that only in the area of the primordial, axiological "I," the human subject expresses him/herself most properly, that is, presents him/herself as a value. At this level, the human subject is accompanied by a primary awareness of being him/herself. On the basis of these analyzes, we come to understand the human person in his/her "selfhood." In a deeply axiological dimension of existence, the philosopher seeks also a possibility to recuperate a human person in the value of his/her existence.

The guiding thread of the third chapter is the confrontation of the positions of Scheler and Tischner regarding the analyzes carried out in the two previous chapters. Right from the beginning I pay attention to the specific character of phenomenology as the research methodology adopted by the two thinkers, that is, I see it as a means to describe the emotional experience of the value of being a human person, and, at the same time, to characterize the experience that reaches the internal truth of the human person. Next, I emphasize that in the description of love and the spiritual nature of the human person both philosophers are of the opinion that these phenomena can only be understood properly if placed in the area of ethical issues. Another problem that I consider is the creative character of the human person. Basing my response on the reading of Tischner's works, I come to a conclusion that his views are in this respect a reinterpretation of Scheler's thoughts on ethos. In my opinion, in comparison with the position of Scheler, Tischner emphasizes more clearly in this context the dialogical nature of the understanding of the human person.

To sum up, it should be accentuated that Max Scheler and Józef Tischner share the view that a human being is distinguished by an innate nature of his/her personal specificity, however, according to the two philosophers, this nature is fully visible in the most primary area of human consciousness with its deeply axiological character.

