

Waldstein, Michael. Introduction to John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. Boston: Pauline Books, 2006.

Wojtyła, Karol. *Person and Community*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Wojtyła, Karol. *The Acting Person: A Contribution to Phenomenological Anthropology*. Springer, Netherlands, 1979.

#### FUNDAMENTALNE ZNACZENIE PRZEŻYCIA W KAROLA WOJTYŁY UJĘCIU OSOBY

##### Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu przybliżenie kluczowej roli przeżycia w Karola Wojtyły koncepcji osoby, a także określenie jego znaczenia dla filozofii oraz ludzkiej *praxis* w perspektywie współczesności. W sposób szczególnie autorka precyzuje przekonanie Wojtyły, że „kategoria przeżycia musi odnaleźć swe miejsce w antropologii i w etyce, co więcej – musi do pewnego stopnia stanąć w centrum uwagi odnośnych interpretacji”. Artykuł dąży do przywrócenia właściwej wizji zadań filozofii; według Karola Wojtyły, jeśli fundamentalną rolą filozofii jest uzdrowienie naszej kultury, nie mamy innego wyboru, jak podkreślić znaczenie podmiotowości ludzkiej osoby, czego wymogiem jest jednak wyzwanie do podjęcia analizy rzeczywistości ludzkiego przeżycia. Artykuł analizuje argumentację Wojtyły, że problem ludzkiej podmiotowości stanowi sedno debaty dotyczącej osoby ludzkiej. Wyraża przekonanie, że jego rozwiązanie pozwala przetrwać napięcie, jakie ujawniło się w dziejach antropologii i epistemologii, między „obiektywistyczną” lub ontologiczną wizją ludzkiego bytu oraz „subiektywizmem”, często łączonym z filozofią świadomości, a także ich następstwami, czyli realizmem i idealizmem.

#### THE CENTRALITY OF LIVED EXPERIENCE IN WOJTYŁA’S ACCOUNT OF THE PERSON

##### Summary

The aim of this paper is to illuminate the centrality of lived experience in Karol Wojtyła’s account of the person and identify its significance for philosophy and praxis in the contemporary period. Specifically the author intends to pursue the meaning of Wojtyła’s claim that “the category of lived experience must have a place in anthropology and ethics—and somehow be at the center of their respective interpretations.” The paper seeks to recover an important insight into the task of philosophy: according to Karol Wojtyła, if philosophy is to perform its essential function in the recovery of our culture, we have no choice but to turn our attention to the subjectivity of human persons—and this can only be done by taking up the somewhat risky challenge of studying the reality of lived human experience. The paper will analyze Wojtyła’s argument that the problem of human subjectivity is at the epicenter of debates about the human person and will argue that his solution reconciles the dilemma posed by the historical antinomies that have characterized anthropology and epistemology, viz., the “objective” or ontological view of the human being and the “subjectivism” often associated with the philosophy of consciousness, and their corollaries, realism and idealism.

At least in the English speaking context, where the validity of individual experience has risen to the level of almost dogmatic significance for social and political life, Father Wojtyła’s claim appears either to have gone unnoticed or to have been rejected. And perhaps, at least on the surface, this is not without reason. The modern interest in human subjectivity is blamed for many contemporary

maladies, including subjectivism, relativism and the pride of place now given to any individual point of view, no matter how ill informed. Claims about the existence of truth or an objective moral order often cannot find a foothold when confronted with the argument that such realities do not resonate with a particular individual's personal "experience." The priority given to subjective personal experience in determining what constitutes right thinking and moral human behavior, assuming that question is even asked, is now a commonplace assumption; it is something alternately deplored or celebrated both by intellectuals and the "man on the street."

Given this situation, that a philosopher of Father Wojtyla's stature and obvious moral authority should make such an argument is a matter of critical importance, especially for those who seek to ground human action in objective moral norms in an era where an arguably flawed account of human subjectivity clearly has taken center stage. The paper shows that Wojtyla is not adverting to experience as an adjunct to moral relativism or personal preference as an approach to questions of the true and the good. On the contrary, the author shows that the philosopher Karol Wojtyla provides a way to remain grounded in the metaphysical and ontological categories that not only comprise our intellectual heritage, but refer to real and profound truths, while simultaneously accounting for the subjectivity and dynamism of the person. The paper concludes with an argument that this account provides a key hermeneutical device for understanding the enormous importance of the work of Pope John Paul II.

*Summarized by Deborah Savage*

**Key words:** lived experience, anthropology, subjectivity, objectivism vs. subjectivism, *suppositum humanum*, person, metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, phenomenology, consciousness, morality.

**Słowa kluczowe:** przeżycie, antropologia, subiektywność, obiektywizm vs subiektywizm, *suppositum humanum*, osoba, metafizyka, ontologia, epistemologia, fenomenologia, świadomość, moralność.

**Information about Author:** DEBORAH SAVAGE, Ph.D.—St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity, University of St. Thomas; address for correspondence: 2115 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105 USA, e-mail: pdsavage@stthomas.edu