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Self-fulfillment and work in the light of "the acting person" of Karol Wojtyla

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

This study focused on the philosophy of Karol Wojtyla in his book entitled "The Acting Person" in relation to one of the activities of a human person, i.e., work itself. Although he did not dedicate any topic to human work, his very explanation of the action of the person as both subjective and personal is what human work is. Work, as lived experience, is, in fact, one of the many actions a human person can do. On one side, despite the toilsome or burdensome character of human work, there exists a uniqueness in the person apart from other beings. On the other hand, despite that uniqueness and value of work, there still exists dehumanization from work, such as being replaced by faster and seemingly more reliable machinery or technology. However, work, as one of the many voluntary human actions, reveals the person and goes beyond his cosmological situatedness as simply a man. It is in the transcendence in action that changes these negative connotations of work, putting the person as the subject and never the object of work.

Work is a true manifestation of, first and foremost, our consciousness. In fact, the human person is not only conscious of his actions but also conscious of his conscious acting. Since the person is conscious of what he is doing, he is the efficient cause, that is, the active agent that brings about a series of effects. This conscious and efficacious acting brings about what Wojtyla would call self- determination, self-possession, and self-governance. Lastly, work, as one of the conscious and efficacious actions of a human person, brings about self-fulfillment or, in other words, "felicity," knowing that it is the same person who creates and contributes, in and through his work, to understanding how and what it is to be human.

Introduction

Work is a common experience of man. In the everyday life of a society, work is a crucial activity for its progress and development, not only for individuals but also for the community. However, common and helpful as it sounds, some tend to hold diverse and often negative views regarding work. Some, especially those who do manual labor, often complain or even want to avoid it. The main reason is that work has an undeniable character—it is burdensome and toilsome. Some even understand work or labor as being exclusively performed

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by slaves, servants, and the poor, e.g., carpenters, maids, farmers, fishermen, and the like. In addition, and much worse, the rights of laborers are being curtailed and violated to the extent of losing one's dignity as a human person due to rampant injustices. Man, indeed, has been tossed about in both extremes, wherein capitalism continues to dehumanize work at one end and reduces man to his work, as Karl Marx proposes.

People nowadays generally dislike the idea of working in comparison to playing or resting. They seem to imply that man and work have no real connection. In some cases, parents themselves present the idea of work to their children as a punishment for wrongdoing. Additionally, even if people accept work as part of their daily existence, it is often seen solely as a means of remuneration. To sum up, these negative notions about work, although they do not apply to everybody, have in fact influenced and distorted man's perception and attitude toward work. Most people would prefer to live off the work of others while they wallow in leisure and laziness. This, indeed, is an impoverishment of human work, which is very much contrary to what it truly is. There is, therefore, a need to raise a fundamental question that will enlighten man's view and reveal the true value of human work.

In the quest to answer a seemingly simple question, what underlies it expresses the contrary. Indeed, searching for the answer to this query is not merely a matter of defining it, but of looking more closely into the foundation of such a question. In line with this, there is no better way to elucidate the concept of human work than with the aid of the philosophical views of Karol Wojtyla, marked by his personalism. This personalism is evident in his many works and essays on the human person, including his famous book entitled "The Acting Person," which examines the details of the human person and his actions. With this, Wojtyla's view of the human person and his actions would enlighten man's understanding of human work and himself—the human person.

The nature of man

Man as a rational being

Wojtyla claims that there is a time of great controversy about the human being, about the very meaning of human existence, and thus about the nature and significance of the human being (Wojtyla 1993). He asserts this is true primarily because of the varied anthropocentric schools. Indeed, the nature of man is so unique and rich that controversies arise, viewing and understanding man from different and sometimes contradictory perspectives. Thus, the concept of man must be taken seriously to gain a better and clearer understanding of the question "Who is man?" in a world full of conflicting ideas and propositions, some of which reduce man to some aspect or, worse, objectify him. To elucidate further the danger of reducing or dehumanizing man, a perennial example would be René Descartes' view, i.e., the splitting of the human being into an extended substance (the body) and a thinking substance (the soul), which are related to one another in a parallel way and do not form an undivided whole, a substantial compositum humanum (Wojtyla 1993). Descartes' dualistic view of man threatens the very nature of man and thus threatens our treatment and understanding of who man is, who is supposed to be the composite as Aquinas would approve.

In "The Acting Person," Wojtyla presents a rather intensive treatment of nature by defining what nature is, starting from its etymological significance. The term "nature" is derived from the Latin verb nascor (to be born); thus, it denotes literally everything that is going to be born or is contained in the fact itself of birth as its possible consequence (Wojtyla 1979). Moreover, he points out that the term nature seems to refer to some property of a specific subject, to something we may also call its essence (Wojtyla 1979).

Notably, essence is that which makes a thing what it is, and so it is by its essence or nature that man is man—for

which Wojtyla uses the term humanness. However, before claiming that man is man by virtue of his essence, it is fundamental to make a principal claim that "man is." From this metaphysical standpoint, it should be clear that the nature or essence of something is derived from the very notion of being. We may also consider that the starting point of metaphysics is being itself as "that which is." In sum, being (ens) signifies principally the thing which is: being designates it insofar as it has the act of being (esse). Consequently, being signifies concomitantly the esse of that thing because a thing can only be if it possesses the act of being. Therefore, being refers to something that exists (Alvira, Clavell & Melendo 1991). Thus, the principal element of being is its act: "to be"—an actual being which is the first act (entitative act) prior to its actions (operative act). According to Aquinas, this "esse" is innermost in each thing and most fundamentally inherent in all things since it is formal, which informs or actualizes everything found in a thing (Aquinas 1274/1964, 1.8.1).

Starting from this metaphysical background of being and nature, the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy of man, which goes against the dualism of Descartes, proposes that man's nature is a substantial unity of body and soul—a composite being wherein the rational soul is the substantial form of the body (Aquinas 1274/1964, 1.76.4). Being the substantial form of the body, we must consider the nature of man in relation to the rational soul but not the body, except insofar as it relates to the soul (Aquinas 1274/1964, 1.75.P). In understanding the nature of man and the importance of the rational soul in the composite, St. Thomas further says that the nature of a thing is chiefly the form from which that thing derives its species. Now man derives his species from his rational soul; consequently, whatever is contrary to the order of reason is, properly speaking, contrary to the nature of man as man, while whatever is in accord with reason is in accord with the nature of man as man (Aquinas 1274/1964, 1-2.71.2). The person would be an individual whose nature is rational—according to Boethius' full definition, persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia (Wojtyla 1979).

Man is endowed with the faculties of intellect and will. By virtue of his intellect, man has the capacity to know; and by virtue of his will, man can direct himself toward the good. However, this does not imply that, although the soul is the form of the body and is subsistent, the soul by itself is complete without the body in terms of its other powers. The nature of man leads us to the understanding, as explained by St. Thomas Aquinas, that man is a unity of body and soul. The body, as matter, is generated and is also subject to corruption, while the soul, as the substantial form, is not, since it is not corporeal. Properly so, the soul, being the act of the body, not generated nor corrupted by virtue of its subsistence, is therefore, in fact, created (Aquinas 1274/1964, 1.75.5-6).

Man as a social being

Since man has his dignity as uniquely created by God, it is therefore crucial not to miss this point—that man was not created to be by himself; rather, man is a man together with others—a social being. As Wojtyla says, this is, of course, a direct and natural consequence of the fact that man lives "together with other men," and indeed we may even go so far as to say that he exists together with other men. The mark of the communal—or social—trait is essentially imprinted on human existence itself (Wojtyla 1979). Such a relation exists by virtue of his own nature and existence. In fact, the expression "social nature" seems to signify primarily that reality of existing and acting "together with others," which is attributed to every human being in a consequential way; obviously, this attribute is the consequence of human reality itself and not inversely (Wojtyla 1979). Therefore, it is not something apart from man but is actually rooted in human nature itself. In addition, he relates himself to other men with the same naturalness as a fish takes to water (Wuellner 1957).

Being inevitably a social being, we need each other, whether the "other" means the cosmos or other human beings. However, these differences should be treated in a way that respects the dignity of the human person. First, man

is not only an individual subject but also communal, contrary to individualism, which sees the individual as the supreme and fundamental good to which all interests of the community or society must be subordinate, and to objective totalism, which relies on the opposite principle and unconditionally subordinates the individual to the community or society (Wojtyla 1979). With this communal nature of being human, as acting and existing together with others, comes the ethical implications in everything that a person does for himself and for the community to which he belongs, aiming ceaselessly for the common good. This removes the notions of individualism and totalism altogether and moves towards intersubjectivity by participation.

Intersubjectivity by participation is expressed in two dimensions—the I-thou or interpersonal dimension and the We or social dimension. On the one hand, this I-thou relationship forms an essential constituent of a real community marked by the relation of the I with the thou, in which the thou is actually another I. As human beings, we are capable of participating in the very humanity of other people, and because of this, every human being can be our neighbor (Wojtyla 1979). This is why we can note that the I and the thou relationship proceeds from the self and yet at the same time returns to the self. On the other hand, the We dimension refers directly to multiplicity and indirectly to the persons belonging to this multiplicity. However, this does not lead to the diminution of the personal subject but maintains the personalistic value of the person. For Wojtyla, if a We consists of many human I's, or selves, then—like the I or self—it may be conceived and understood through activity. A We is many human beings, many subjects, who in some way exist and act together. These activities, along with the existence of those many I's, are related to a single value, which, therefore, deserves to be called the common good. The relation of many I's to a common good seems to be the very core of the social community. By virtue of this relation, the people involved in it, while experiencing their personal subjectivity—the factual multiplicity of human I's—are aware that they form a specific We, and they experience themselves in this new dimension (Wojtyla 1993). Indeed, the common relation of many I's to a common good, by virtue of which this multiplicity of subjects appears to itself (and to others as well) as a specific We, is a particular expression of the transcendence proper to the human being as a person (Wojtyla 1993). And indeed, we can note that intersubjectivity by participation is a quality of the human being who is constantly in relation with others, for such is his nature.

Second, in our consideration of the other, is that man, as a social being, cannot do away with his relation to nature. By his labor, man cultivates the earth and its resources, transforming and adapting them for his use and the satisfaction of his needs (Montalbo 1988). Man transforms nature, cares for it, and develops it through his creative work. Because of the great help nature has provided us, man, in turn, works to perfect nature, making its conditions better. Therefore, it is just right that man should try to make the world a better place to live in and use his powers to create a better world for his descendants (Wuellner 1957). In spite of the many abuses to nature, it is important to re-establish the relationship between man and nature by improving nature and having nature provide man's necessary needs. As there are still many things yet to be known, through work, the agent must cause both man and nature to grow at the same time. The agent must humanize man more while respecting and perfecting nature (Wojtyla 1981). And this can only be realized if man works together with others.

The notion of a person

The definition of person

Etymologically, the term "person" (Edwards 1972) comes from the Latin word "persona," meaning mask and/or actor. It came to refer to a role and to man's dignity in relation to other men. The term has two main meanings in both Latin and Greek. The first meaning is that of "a mask" used by actors in Greek and Roman drama. The second meaning is that of a face, visage, role, character, or part presented by an actor in drama. From this

etymological meaning of the person, we can see that the person is an actor, that is, one who is acting. This acting no longer means that a person is taking part in a drama but that the act of acting (of doing something) is a special characteristic of the person.

The term person is used to designate the most perfect beings that exist, namely God, the angels, and humans (Alvira, Clavell & Melendo 1991). And rightly so, the person's dignity can be recovered, especially as St. Thomas presents the matter in the following way: whatever is a true perfection in the created world must be found in the highest degree in God, and so the person, too, which signifies the highest perfection in the world of creatures, must be realized in an incomparably more perfect degree in God (Wojtyla 1993). In fact, the word "person" was coined to stress that man cannot be reduced wholly to what is contained in the concept of a "specimen of the species." Instead, man has something more, some fullness and perfection of being (Wojtyla 2013). As a matter of fact, Wojtyla expresses a distinction between the concepts of man and person, being essentially different and yet at the same time complementary to one another. There are two types of understanding these concepts to have a clearer view of both: the cosmological type and the personalistic type.

According to Wojtyla, we should pause in the process of reduction, which leads us in the direction of understanding the human being in the world (a cosmological type of understanding), to understand the human being inwardly (Wojtyla 1993). The former is understanding the human being in the world, and the latter is understanding the human being inwardly. Unlike the cosmological type, which holds the Aristotelian definition of man as a rational animal that leads to the reducibility of the human being as a mere creature in the world, the personalistic type understands man in his interiority, his unique and irreducible character as a person, which rests on a belief in the primordial uniqueness of the human being and thus in the basic irreducibility of the human being to the natural world (Wojtyla 1993). The human being is not only a man belonging to the cosmos, which is reducible to the world, but a person, a subject that transcends his cosmological condition. It should be noted, though, that the personalistic type of understanding the human being is not the antinomy of the cosmological type but its complement (Wojtyla 1993).

What is peculiar to the human person is that this person has a rational nature only because of a spiritual soul, which is the substantial form of the body (Wojtyla 1993). The person, in St. Thomas's view, is always a concrete being, one in which the potentiality proper to a rational nature is realized. This potentiality is realized, first of all, by means of thought (Wojtyla 1993). However, it should be noted that despite the fact that the human being is an individual of a rational nature, this rational nature does not possess its own subsistence as a nature but subsists in a person. The person is a subsistent subject of existence and action because humanness or human nature is equipped with the properties that enable a concrete human being to be a person: to be and to act as a person. Moreover, it prevents him from being and acting otherwise (Wojtyla 1979). The person, therefore, is always a rational and free concrete being, capable of all those activities that reason and freedom alone make possible (Wojtyla 1993). As well, being an individual substance, the proper name of any person signifies that the person is distinguished from all other persons. For as body and soul belong to the nature of man, so too does the concept of this particular body; and by this, this particular man is distinguished from all other men (Aquinas 1274/1964, 1.33.2).

As a final note, the Boethian definition mainly marks out the metaphysical terrain—the dimension of being—in which personal human subjectivity is realized (Wojtyla 1993). However, according to K. Schmitz in his footnote, Wojtyla finds the Boethian definition correct but insufficient because it stresses the individuality of the human person and reduces or compares him with other things in nature, whereas the consideration of a human being as a person highlights the irreducibility and uniqueness of each person (Schmitz 1993). Thus, we note that

man, the person, is a subject first and foremost by virtue of which he is not just a particular human being—an individual of a certain species—but a personal subject (Wojtyla 1993).

The person and subjectivity

The subjectivity of the person remains a problem of philosophical importance mainly because of certain contentions. In the philosophical and scientific tradition that grew out of the definition homo est animal rationale (Aristotelian anthropology), the human being was mainly an object, one of the objects in the world to which the human being visibly and physically belongs. Objectivity in this sense related to the general assumption of the reducibility of the human being. Subjectivity, on the other hand, is a term proclaiming that the human being's proper essence cannot be totally reduced to and explained by the proximate genus and specific difference (Wojtyla 1993). In addition, the philosophy of consciousness would have us believe that it first discovered the human subject. The philosophy of being is prepared to demonstrate that quite the opposite is true, that in fact an analysis of pure consciousness leads inevitably to an annihilation of the subject (Wojtyla 1993).

In terms of the advocacy of consciousness, Descartes proposes that the person is primarily—if not exclusively—consciousness, a consciousness that is in some way subsistent, existing against the background of the organism, which he regarded as a special kind of mechanism. In fact, Wojtyla states that this view lacks a sufficient basis for including the body, the organism, within the structural whole of the person's life and activity; it lacks the notion of a spiritual soul as the substantial form of that body and as the principle of the whole life and activity of the human being (Wojtyla 1993). Wojtyla's personalism desires to examine the depths of the person's subjectivity yet remains cautious not to fall into subjectivism as that of Descartes. Subjectivism is the complete separation of experience from action and conceives consciousness itself as a total and exclusive subject (Wojtyla 1979). Rightly so, consciousness is not subsistent, yet it has a great role in the understanding of the personal subjectivity of the person. Wojtyla maintains that consciousness is merely an aspect of man in that, if consciousness is maintained merely as an aspect, it serves only to gain a better understanding of the subjectivity of man, particularly in his inner relation to his action (Wojtyla 1979).

On account of a phenomenological stance regarding this matter, this "pure subjectivity" can be abandoned. Although it might be premature to state now, experience does have a great role in the subjectivity of the person. Wojtyla writes that, in the field of experience, the human being appears both as a particular suppositum and as a concrete self, in every instance unique and unrepeatable (Wojtyla 1993). It is true that the Boethian definition explains that the person is first and foremost a suppositum, as an individual, concrete subject, yet for Wojtyla this concept stresses more the individuality rather than the personal subjectivity of the person. This needs to be clarified in understanding the term by adding a phenomenological stance.

What basically draws out the subjectivity of the person is that he has the experience of his own self. In fact, the human being is given in experience as a suppositum, which entails that the whole experience of the human being, which reveals the human being to us as someone who exists and acts, both allows and legitimately requires us to conceive the human being as the subject of that existence and activity (Wojtyla 1993). By saying that the suppositum is the fundamental expression of the whole experience of the human being, this expression is in some sense an inviolable one: experience cannot be detached from it, and at the same time, it is open to everything that the experience of the human being, especially the experience of one's own self, can bring to the understanding of the subjectivity of the person (Wojtyla 1993).

Thus, for Wojtyla, the human person is the subject of existence and acting. Man's existence and action are

personal to the extent that the person is manifested not only as an ontological structure of "somebody" differentiated from all others but also differentiated from the ontological structure of "something" (Wojtyla 1979). It then holds true for Wojtyla that the human being is a person "by nature." The subjectivity proper to a person also belongs to the human being "by nature" (Wojtyla 1993).

The person and action

From the etymological significance of the term "person," we can discern that a person is understood not merely as an actor in the sense of a drama but as an agent within the entirety of his existence. Wojtyła asserts that the kind of acting that constitutes action can be attributed only to a person (Wojtyła, 1979). When speaking of action, it is of two kinds, both of which belong to the person: "human actions" and "acts of man." Human actions are conscious actions performed by the person, whereas acts of man are those occurrences that happen to a person without conscious involvement. These two objective structures—"man-acts" and "something-happens-in-man"—define the two fundamental aspects of human dynamism: activeness and passiveness. In both cases, man stands as the dynamic subject, and both originate from man (Wojtyła, 1979). Furthermore, Wojtyła identifies two forms of passiveness: "something happens in man" and "something happens to man" (referring to what the person undergoes from external sources) (Wojtyła, 1979).

In his introduction to the study of his work The Acting Person, Wojtyła uses the old adage "operari sequitur esse." By examining human operari, we uncover not only that the human being is its "subject" but also who the human being is as the subject of his activity (Wojtyła, 1993). Thus, we can assert that within his subjectivity as a person, he himself acts. Wojtyła strongly emphasizes that the person is not presupposed in action but rather that action reveals the person. This raises the question of the appropriate relation between person and action. Action is not a single event but a process-like sequence of acting. The kind of acting that constitutes action can be assigned to no other agent than a person. In other words, an action presupposes a person; however, the goal is to reverse this relationship, where action reveals the person and we understand the person through his actions. Action provides the most profound insight into the inherent essence of the person and allows us to understand the person most fully. We perceive man as a person because he performs actions (Wojtyła, 1979).

Therefore, Wojtyła believes that the form of human operari with the most fundamental and essential significance for understanding human subjectivity is action. It is in conscious human activity that the freedom intrinsic to the human person is both expressed and actualized (Wojtyła, 1993). We must thus more precisely define personal subjectivity, focusing on the entirety of human dynamism (operari), especially the dynamism associated with the activity of the human being as a person: the dynamism of action. However, this does not negate the significance of what simply happens in man. The self also constitutes itself through its entire psychosomatic dynamism, including the sphere of operari that happens to the subject, which in turn shapes the subjectivity of the individual (Wojtyła, 1993). Thus, alongside personal subjectivity, the individual's personal action and what simply happens in him reveal who he is, reflecting the very core of Wojtyła's philosophy.

Man as the acting person

The experience of man

The philosophy of Karol Wojtyla takes experience as the point of departure for his study of man as a person. It is through experience that we are able to know and understand the person better. However, in understanding the nature of experience, many philosophers have redefined it, reducing it to one of its components or conditions and thereby impoverishing it (Acosta & Reimers 2016). This is not the path that Karol Wojtyla would like to take, as it would not be centered on the human being. He argues that if we start only with the data of sensation (as

proposed by David Hume and the empiricist tradition, wherein all experience reduces to sense impressions and inner feelings, most of which derive from sense impressions) or with the mechanisms of the organism, following modern scientism, then we inevitably fall into reductionism. If the starting point is sensation, then everything is to be explained in terms of sensation (Acosta & Reimers 2016).

Such reductionism indeed only addresses aspects of the whole being, as though the parts are more important than the whole. Worse, in the understanding of the person, the person is simply reduced to only one aspect. This is why, at the very start of Karol Wojtyla's treatment of experience, the inspiration to embark upon this study came from the need to objectivize that great cognitive process which, at its origin, may be defined as the experience of man; this experience, which man has of himself, is the richest and apparently the most complex of all experiences accessible to him. Man's experience of anything outside of himself is always associated with the experience of himself, and he never experiences anything external without simultaneously experiencing himself (Wojtyla 1979).

In fact, the basis for understanding the human being must be sought in experience—in the complete and comprehensive experience of man. Therefore, apart from mere sense impressions, sense data, sensation, or mechanisms, which take their respective parts in the person as mere reductionism, Wojtyla asserts that we start with this experience of man of himself. Thus, man's experience of himself is crucial for the knowledge of himself, even more so because, in this experience, man must face himself; that is, he comes to a cognitive relation with himself (Wojtyla 1979). Thus, we can say that Wojtyla grounds his philosophical analysis of the human person on the experience of man, which is the privileged and evident basis for the knowledge of the person.

Experience is always the first and foremost basic stage of human cognition, and this experience, in keeping with the dual structure of the cognizing subject, contains not only a sensory but also an intellectual element. For this reason, one could say that human experience is already always a kind of understanding (Wojtyla 1993). Unlike sense perception, wherein the object is something external, the object of experience is the man emerging from all the moments and simultaneously present in every one of them. Therefore, in the cognitive relation wherein the one who experiences is man and the one who is experienced is also man, man is simultaneously both the subject and the object (Wojtyla 1979). Everyone is the object of his own unique experience, and no external relation to any other human being can take the place of the experiential relation that the subject has to himself. This knowledge of man springing from his experience of himself is actually not exclusive, which would border on "pure subjectivity" as characterized by the philosophy of consciousness. Objectivity belongs to the essence of experience, for experience is always an experience of "something" or "somebody." And so, the human being, who is the subject, is also given in experience in an objective way. In fact, Wojtyla adds that when I construct an image of the person as subject based on the experience of the human being, I draw especially upon the experience of my own self, but never in isolation from or in opposition to others (Wojtyla 1993).

Other men are also objects of experience in that the experience of man is composed of his experience of himself and of all other men, whose position relative to the subject is that of the object of experience who are in a direct cognitive relation to the subject (Wojtyla 1979). Indeed, the knowledge of man that people share in mutual communications appeals in one way or another to everyone's own experience. Having its source in experience, knowledge serves as a means of multiplying and supplementing experience. Moreover, Wojtyla's specific project is to investigate the content of this experience, "A human being acts," an experience that a person has of himself and of others, which therefore has a twofold aspect, the interior and the exterior (Acosta & Reimers 2016). It should be clear that for Wojtyla, other men as objects of experience are so in a different manner than I

am for myself or than every man is for himself… we would have the experience only of man and in the other only of the ego… The two experiences differ but are not separable; for all the difference between the subject and the object of experience, in either case, there is a fundamental unity of the experienced object (Wojtyla 1979).

Human dynamism and the suppositum

Springing from the experience of man of himself and of others, we now come to a further development of our study of experience, especially as we reconsider the relationship between the person and action in light of one of the main philosophical insights of Wojtyla: human dynamism, which points to the personal suppositum. In the traditional Aristotelian approach, the person and action represent a dynamism proper to man, which is interpreted by analogy to the dynamism of all beings. This dynamism is not limited to the concept of "act" alone but includes the conjugate conceptual whole formed by the pair, potency and act (Wojtyla 1979). For this reason, act cannot be understood apart from potency, and vice versa. This conjugate conceptual whole, wherein the transition from potency to act, termed actualization, represents a transition in the order of existence, indicates some sort of becoming—not in the absolute sense (which is possible only when something comes into being out of nonexistence) but in the relative sense, that is, becoming based on an already existing being and from within its inner structure (Wojtyla 1979). In experience, the human being is given to us as someone who exists and acts.

In the experience of man, action plays a crucial role, as it is through action that experience is possible. Among the manifold data given to us in the experience of man, one is the dynamic totality of "man-acts," which we have already specified earlier. Thus, the key he uses to access this experience is the experience of human act, a common experience that each of us has in everyday life. It is therefore appropriate to say that action serves as a particular moment of apprehending—the experiencing—of the person. This consists in an intellectual apprehension grounded on the fact that man acts in its innumerable recurrences. The datum "man-acts" is the person's action with characteristic "manifestness" (Wojtyla 1979).

In the traditional understanding of action, especially for Aristotle, there are actually two types of acts found in man: human action and acts of man. On the one hand, there is a form of human dynamism in which man himself is the agent, that is to say, he is the conscious cause of his own causation; this form is grasped by the expression "man acts." On the other hand, there is a form of human dynamism in which man is not aware of his efficacy and does not experience it; this is expressed by "something happens in man" (Wojtyla 1979).

By way of comparison, human acts are voluntary acts, while acts of man are those that merely happen in man (e.g., heartbeat). They are distinct yet belong to the same person of action. Indeed, it is first necessary to demonstrate why and when the act of man is not human acting; only then will it be possible to understand why human acting alone is the acting proper to man, and that it alone corresponds to what is actually contained in the structure of "man-acts" (Wojtyla 1979). In the Thomistic tradition, Aquinas states that of actions done by man, those alone are properly called "human" which are proper to man as man. Man is the master of his action through his reason and will. Therefore, those actions are properly called human which proceed from a deliberate will. If any other actions are found in man, they can be called actions "of a man," but not properly "human" actions, since they are not proper to man as man (Aquinas 1274/1964, 1-2.1.1).

The experience of human action leads us to the conclusion that man is a being possessing dynamism. As a matter of fact, the objectivation of the fact of "man-acts" requires an equally objective presentation of integral human dynamism—the total dynamism that is present in the complete experience of man (Wojtyla 1979).

In the quest to unite and integrate acting and happening, although they are very distinct, we return to the fact that both belong to the same person. According to Wojtyla, it is impossible to deny that he who acts is simultaneously the one in whom something or other happens (Wojtyla 1979). However, no matter how we analyze the structure, conditions, and source of action, we cannot bypass its ultimate ontological foundation. The subjectiveness present both in man's acting and in what happens in him implies or refers to an ontologically subsequent factor as its necessary condition. It is in the subject as a being that every dynamic structure is rooted, every acting and happening (Wojtyla 1979).

Aside from the reality that we have in understanding the person and action, the fact is given to us first in the experience of "I act." It tells us all the more that the object and subject of experience is the person who is a suppositum that underlies the dynamism of man and is the ontological foundation of such dynamism. Indeed, Wojtyla asserts that every ego is a human being, and every human being is this, that, or any other ego. Hence, when it is "you," "he," or "anybody else" who acts, their acting can be understood on the ground of experiencing our own acting in "I act." The experience of acting is subjective in the sense that it keeps us within the limits of the concrete subjectivity of the acting human ego, without, however, obscuring the intersubjectivity needed for the understanding and interpretation of human acting (Wojtyla 1979). Indeed, Wojtyla claims that as the need increases to understand the personal subjectivity of the human being, the category of lived experience takes on greater significance, and in fact, key significance. For then the issue is not just the metaphysical objectification of the human being as an acting subject, as the agent of acts, but the revelation of the person as a subject experiencing its acts and inner happenings, and with them, its own subjectivity (Wojtyla 1993).

According to Wojtyla, the concept of subjectivity takes on a distinctive inwardness of activity and existence—an inwardness, but also an "in-selfness." Human beings exist "in themselves," and so their activities likewise have an "in-self" or "non-transitive" dimension. This in-selfness and inwardness of human activity and existence is simply a more precise—and no less philosophical—definition of what is contained virtually in the notion of suppositum humanum (Wojtyla 1993). We thus note the importance of experience, which is the experience of man in his subjectivity as a personal suppositum—an individual, concrete, existing being—a person who acts both actively and passively.

Consciousness and efficacy

To interpret the human being in the context of lived experience, the aspect of consciousness must be introduced into the analysis of human existence (Wojtyla 1993). Before delving into the details of consciousness itself, it is necessary first to recognize the difference between conscious acting and the consciousness of acting. Essentially, "human act" or action can be understood as conscious acting. In fact, both action and conscious acting tell us about the dynamism proper to man as a person. "Conscious acting" refers to the kind of acting that is related to and characteristic of the will (Wojtyla 1979).

However, man not only acts consciously but also has the consciousness that he is acting and even that he is acting consciously. This is apparent in the fact that 'conscious' and 'consciousness' have two different applications: one is used attributively when reference is made to conscious acting; the other is employed as a noun, which may be the subject, when referring to the consciousness of acting. Our discussion will henceforth concentrate on the consciousness of acting and consequently on the consciousness of the acting person (Wojtyla 1979).

Indeed, man not only acts consciously but is also aware of the fact that he is acting and the fact that it is he who is acting. In other words, Wojtyla emphasizes not the action as conscious acting but rather the consciousness of acting, which points to the subject as the source of conscious acting and which makes possible the formation of that experience of subjectivity proper to the personal subject of acting. Consciousness as a noun discloses the subject as the source of acting, which enables us to recognize our actions as our own. Hence, man has an awareness of the action and, at the same time, the person in their dynamic interrelation (Wojtyla 1979). In fact, consciousness interiorizes all that the human being cognizes, including everything that the individual cognizes from within in acts of self-knowledge, and makes it all a content of the subject's lived experience (Wojtyla 1993).

Having clarified the terms, the difference does not disrupt the unity, since we are speaking of the same person, which is of much more interest. The personal suppositum, then, who is an individual subject possessing human dynamism, is the very core from which we draw the concept of "I Act." It is quite significant that this phrase speaks of a person, a subject who acts and knows that he acts. This knowing we ascribe now to consciousness as having the experience of the two objectively different structures—the 'man-acts' and the 'something-happens-in-him'—together with their differentiation in the field of experience, provides evidence, on the one hand, of the essential contiguity of man's consciousness with his being, and on the other, of the differentiation of experience that gives each of these structures the innerness and subjectiveness which, in general, we owe to consciousness (Wojtyla 1979).

Wojtyla holds that consciousness plays a significant role in the relationship that arises between the person and his action. It should be clear that this consciousness alone is not yet the "I," but it conditions the full manifestation of the "I" through action (Wojtyla 1993). This statement is crucial for understanding the place of consciousness; otherwise, it would fall into subjectivism, which we have already presented as a conception of consciousness as a total and exclusive subject. The issue with the philosophy of consciousness of Descartes comes to mind again, and indeed, the aspect of consciousness eventually assumed a kind of absolutization, which in the contemporary era entered phenomenology through Husserl. The gnosiological attitude in philosophy has replaced the metaphysical attitude: being is constituted in and somehow through consciousness. The reality of the person, however, demands the restoration of the notion of conscious being, a being that is not constituted in and through consciousness but that instead somehow constitutes consciousness (Wojtyla 1993).

Thus, as Wojtyla claims, consciousness is but an aspect of the total dynamism of man and his subjectivity, and not in the way that Descartes claims, where consciousness becomes an independent subject of activity and indirectly of existence, occurring somehow alongside the body (Wojtyla 1993). Wojtyla further claims that the proper subject of consciousness is not itself but the human person to whom consciousness belongs, as a proper and distinguishing accident (Wojtyla 1979).

In our further investigation of the dynamism proper to the human person, we can better understand the specific function performed by consciousness in the formation of the characteristic subjectivity of the person—the subjectivity from which, because of its virtual efficacy, the action issues (Wojtyla 1979). In fact, in the relationship between action and personal subjectivity, it can be noted that action, which in traditional terminology was called actus humanus, should really be called actus personae. The latter is a better name for action because of the element of efficacy that lies at the basis of action, which is conscious acting; for this is the efficacy of the person (Wojtyla 1993). This explanation of the causal dependence of an action on the self brings us back again to what is given in experience—"I Act." Wojtyla states that in acting, I have the experience of myself as the agent responsible for this particular form of the dynamization of myself as the subject. When there is

something happening in me, then the dynamism is imparted without the efficacious participation of my ego. This is precisely the reason why we speak of the facts of the latter kind as something that happens in man, indicating thereby that the dynamism is not accompanied by efficacy, by the efficacious participation of man (Wojtyla 1979).

Rightly so, the moment of efficacy is to be understood as having the experience of "being the actor," which reflects the very essence of the term "I act." As such, this experience discriminates man's acting from everything that merely happens in him. Indeed, man experiences acting and doing as something essentially different from that which merely happens in him. From this point, we can draw that the moment of efficacy is what distinguishes "man-acts" and "something-happens-in-man," wherein the former is what efficacy speaks about. It is at the moment of efficacy that man becomes aware of his action, which comes from him. Therefore, efficient causality is intrinsic to the human act, as is human subjectivity (Acosta & Reimers 2016).

Transcendence and integration of the person in action

Self-determination

As is obvious, efficacy by itself, though grounded in the experience of the human being, is imprecise in that it does not tell the whole story about personal subjectivity. The experience of human action refers to the lived experience of the fact "I act." This fact is, in each instance, completely original, unique, and unrepeatable. The clear difference between something that "happens" in the subject and an "activity" or action of the subject allows, in turn, the identification of an element in the comprehensive experience of the human being that decisively distinguishes the activity or action of a person from all that merely happens in the person. I define this element as self-determination (Wojtyla 1993).

This first definition of self-determination, Wojtyla adds, in the experience of human action involves a sense of efficacy on the part of the personal self: "I act" means "I am the efficient cause" of my action and of my self-actualization as a subject, which is not the case when something merely "happens" in me, for then I do not experience the efficacy of my personal self (Wojtyla 1993). Self-determination, then, is a deeper and more basic dimension of efficacy of the human self through which the acting of the human being is revealed as a personal subject (Wojtyla 1993). Wojtyla states in his preface that he has tried to face the major issues concerning life, nature, and the existence of man directly as they present themselves to man in his struggles to survive while maintaining the dignity of a human being, who is torn apart between his all-too-limited condition and his highest aspirations to set himself free (Wojtyla 1979). It is crucially important that man realizes his self-determination because this is the key to transcendence— being able to state the fact that "I act" speaks of efficacy, whereas "I will" and "I do" represent the crucial moment of self-determination. In fact, self-determination as a property of human action that comes to light in experience directs the attention of one who analyzes such action to the will. The will is the person's power of self-determination (Wojtyla 1993). The will manifests itself as an essential aspect of the person, whose ability to perform actions derives directly from the possession of this essential rather than from some inherent feature of the action performed by the person. Every action confirms and at the same time makes more concrete the relation in which the will manifests itself as a feature of the person and the person manifests himself as a reality with regard to his dynamism that is properly constituted by the will. It is this relation that we call 'self-determination' (Wojtyla 1979).

In self-determination, the person's action is constituted by the will, taking note that the will is present first of all as that which is essential to the person and only afterward as a power. It is the person who chooses and decides for himself and makes himself the agent, actor, or author of his own actions. What appears to stand out as most essential in this element is the will as a property of the person and of the person's potentiality. I am the author of the act, and my agency in this act, that is, my will (I will), turns out to be self-determination (Wojtyla 1993). However, we should take note that the will, despite being a power, is only a property of the person. The will is subordinate in relation to the person and does not determine or govern the person; much so that the expression "free will" does not mean independence of the will from the person but, in fact, the will is under the exclusive control of the person (Wojtyla 1979).

In gaining a better understanding of self-determination, Wojtyla offers two more aspects that interrelate with self-determination in that they mutually complement each other. He brings to the fore the aspect of self-possession and self-governance. Self-governance that is found in the person is possible only when there is self-possession that is proper to the person. Self-determination is conditioned by both aspects. Both are realized in an act of self-determination, which is constituted by every real human 'I will.' Because of self-determination, every man actually governs himself; he actually exercises that specific power over himself which nobody else can exercise or execute (Wojtyla 1979). In fact, self-possession is prior to self- determination because only the things that are man's actual possessions can be determined by him; they can be determined only by the one who actually possesses them (Wojtyla 1979). It is worth noting that self-governance is a consequence of self-possession and is, in fact, presupposed in it. It is man's power to govern himself, which is related to the inner personal structure of man, who differs from all other structures and all other existents in that he is capable of governing himself and not only controlling himself, which applies only to one of the functions of dynamism appropriate to man, to one of his powers or virtues, or to a set of these (Wojtyla 1979). The dynamic structure of self-determination reveals to me that I am given to myself and assigned to myself. This is precisely how I appear to myself in my acts and in my inner decisions of conscience: as permanently assigned to myself, as having continually to affirm and monitor myself, and thus, in a sense, as having continually to 'achieve' this dynamic structure of myself, a structure that is given to me as self-possession and self-governance… In my lived experience of self-possession and self-governance, I experience that I am a person and that I am a subject (Wojtyla 1993).

With these aspects and their relation to self-determination in the personal subject, we can now look further into the experience of morality. In man's self-determination, he possesses and governs himself, and through his action or activity, he is made responsible; thus, it has an axiological or ethical implication. For Wojtyla, the point of departure for an analysis of the personal structure of self-determination is the kind of experience of human action that includes the lived experience of moral good and evil as an essential and especially important element; this experience can be separately defined as the experience of morality (Wojtyla 1993). In fact, the concept of self-determination involves more than just the concept of efficacy: I am not only the efficient cause of my acts, but through them I am also, in some sense, the "creator of myself." Self-determination, therefore, and not just the efficacy of the personal self, explains the reality of moral values: it explains the reality that by my actions I become "good" or "bad," and that then I am also "good" or "bad" as a human being—as St. Thomas so eminently perceived (Wojtyla 1993). Moreover, through self-determination, the human being becomes increasingly more of a "someone" in the ethical sense, although in the ontological sense, the human being is a "someone" from the very beginning (Wojtyla 1993).

Self-fulfillment

In action, through the element of self-determination, the human self is revealed to itself not only as self-possession and self-governance but also as a tendency toward self-fulfillment (Wojtyla 1993). The person, therefore, does not only determine himself but also fulfills himself in and through action. For being the performer of an action, according to Wojtyla, man also fulfills himself. To fulfill oneself means to actualize, and in a way to bring to the proper fullness, that structure in man which is characteristic of him because of his personality and also because of his being somebody and not merely something; it is the structure of self-governance and self-possession (Wojtyla 1979). This only goes to show that although the person is an actual being in the metaphysical sense, he is still a being in potency towards the fuller realization of himself through action. He must, therefore, act in order to fulfill himself. Thus, we say that man is causa sui, cause of himself, not in an ontological sense because the finite individual cannot create himself from nothing but in a dynamic-existential sense, i.e., in operational terms (Lombo & Russo 2017).

As is obvious, the foundation of this self-fulfillment of the person is in the action. Indeed, we are concerned with the person and the action not as two separate and self-sufficient entities but as a single, deeply cohesive reality. This existential and essential cohesion of the person and the action is best and most adequately expressed by the fulfillment resulting from the performance of an action (Wojtyla 1979). In performing an action, Wojtyla explains further that we understand the person as the subject and the agent while the action itself appears as a consequence of the efficacy of the agent. This consequence is external with regard to the person, but it is also internal to, or immanent in, the person. At this point, and on the level of analyzing the whole dynamism of the fulfillment which comes from the performance of an action, we are primarily concerned with action as the inner and transitive consequence of the person's efficacy in that it reaches and penetrates into the subject, into the ego, which is its primary and principal object (Wojtyla 1979). Self-fulfillment in action then is bordered in the intransitive or inner aspect.

In this way, we begin to glimpse the proper meaning of the assertion that performing the action brings fulfillment. Indeed, springing from action, especially in the person's interiority, self-fulfillment makes him responsible for his actions and thus brings the person into direct contact with morality. Implied in the intentionality of willing and acting, in man's reacting outside of himself toward objects that he is presented with as different goods—and thus values—there is his simultaneous moving back into his ego, the closest and most essential object of self-determination. This structure serves as the basis of morality—or of moral value as an existential reality—and it is owing to it that morality as a modality of conduct participates in the innerness of man and achieves a measure of durability in him. Human actions, once performed, do not vanish without trace: they leave their moral value, which constitutes an objective reality intrinsically cohesive with the person, and thus a reality also profoundly subjective. Being a person, man is 'somebody,' and being somebody, he may be either good or bad (Wojtyla 1979).

Thus, actions have moral or axiological significance in that a person, through his action, could either be good or bad. In fact, each free action configures the person either positively or negatively. Each person, then, is a task unto himself; we are necessarily free, and, therefore, whether we like it or not, the fulfillment of our lives depends upon us (Lombo & Russo 2017). However, to fully understand the value of self- fulfillment axiologically, this fulfillment is reached only through the good, while moral evil leads or amounts to, so to speak, non-fulfillment. The true fulfillment of the person is accomplished by the positive moral virtuality of the action and not by the mere performance of the action itself (Wojtyla 1979). In other words, self-fulfillment is not merely the accomplishment of a free act but rather depends upon the moral value of the act wherein he makes himself good in and through the morally good action.

Orienting oneself to what is morally upright and good in itself already speaks of the transcendence of the person, for man orients himself towards "truth." The transcendence of the person in action does not consist solely either in ontological autonomy or in self-centered dependence on the ego. It includes also the indispensable and essential moment of reference to 'truth,' and it is this moment that ultimately determines freedom. For human freedom is not accomplished nor exercised in bypassing truth but, on the contrary, by the person's realization and surrender to truth (Wojtyla 1979). Truth, which is the unique type of truthfulness of the good of which man has experience in his conscience, is, in fact, the dividing line, the line of separation and contraposition between good as a positive moral value and evil as a negative moral 'counter value' (Wojtyla 1979).

Having explained self-fulfillment in and through the action of the person, more specifically in his interiority or immanence, we have yet to consider the more basic integration of the person defined by Aquinas in terms of the unity of the person as a composite—body and soul. Indeed, we say that in terms of the psychosomatic integration of the person, human existence does not only go through various phases of physical-biological development but also alludes to the entire physiognomy of the person—spiritual and corporeal—which is called self-fulfillment (Lombo & Russo 2017). In achieving self-fulfillment, man must take account of the dispositions of his own body, which, thanks to his freedom and creativity, he can use to reach the goals he has set for himself. If we are to possess ourselves and to govern ourselves through our liberty, then we are faced with the task of integration—not only of coordinating the various strands of our consciousness but of integrating into our actions our whole human being, body and soul (Schmitz 1993). Thus, self-fulfillment does not concern only the strictly spiritual aspect of man but also involves his body (Lombo & Russo 2017).

In the final analysis, we cannot close the discussion on self-fulfillment without at least mentioning its relation to "felicity" or happiness. The analysis of fulfillment as the reality that in the dynamic whole of the person-action relation unrolls parallel to self-determination cannot be continued without at least touching upon happiness. In the notion of 'felicity,' there is something akin to fulfillment, to the fulfillment of the self through action. To fulfill oneself is almost synonymous with felicity, with being happy (Wojtyla 1979). Being happy is not found in the action, although it contributes to felicity. It does not mean that the act would be the source of felicity, nor that it would lead automatically to it (Acosta & Reimers 2016). Rather, when a person realizes himself, he has felicity in the case when the person himself becomes good by performing a morally good act. This is due to the fact that the sphere of felicity is to be sought in what is internal and intransitive in the action, in what is identifiable with the fulfillment of the ego as the person (Wojtyla 1979).

Self fulfillment and work

The concept of work

In the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla) entitled Laborem Exercens, he holds that work is a fundamental dimension of human existence on earth (John Paul II, 1981). Thus, our very efficacious act brings about our creativity. Yet, we have been deprived of our own creativity, especially

in terms of work—the so-called dehumanization of work. In fact, not only have some dehumanized work, but they have also gone to the other extreme, reducing man to his work. The central conflict, for example, which causes oppression, alienation, wars, and dehumanization today is the conflict between labor and capital; that is to say, the small but highly influential group of entrepreneurs, owners, or holders of the means of production and the broader multitude of people who lack these means and share in the process of production solely through their labor (John Paul II, 1981).

On the part of the workers or laborers, there is an urgent need for work to support their families and themselves. With this necessity, laborers place their rights at the disposal of the entrepreneurs, who, unfortunately, often abuse them through acts of injustice, for it is an obvious fact that capitalists are more concerned with production. In general, we see that man is reduced to a mere instrument of production. Kant recognized this reality and expressed it in his famous second categorical imperative: act in such a way that the person is always an end and never a means of your action. Human beings, as willed by the Creator for themselves, may not be deprived of their autoteleology; they may not be regarded as means or tools in their own praxis but must preserve their own proper superiority in relation to it, their priority in the praxiological sense (Wojtyla, 1993).

Thus, this makes man unique from the rest of creation, which does not work. Labor is the efficient cause in the sense that it is through man's experience, intellect, and work that things advance, progress, or develop. It calls out once again to the creativity of man in everything he does, especially in transforming nature. Man, in fact, is the only being who works—a subject. Therefore, we can include here the principle of the primacy of the human person over things. According to Wojtyla, we must emphasize and give prominence to the primacy of man in the production process, the primacy of man over things (John Paul II, 1981). It is because man is inevitably the true subject of work. And if it is so, labor then undoubtedly has priority over capital.

Karl Marx bases his conviction on a critique of modern man as someone who is alienated from work and thus alienated from his humanity. According to his philosophy, human beings are alienated by their products: their economic and political systems, their property, and their work (Wojtyla, 1993). In Karl Marx's philosophy, man is viewed as homo faber (Man the Maker) (Edwards, 1972), a being who actualizes himself in work. For Marx, it is through work that man naturalizes himself; he becomes himself when he works. Through work, he relates to nature and fellow men. He humanizes nature through his work, transforming it into artifacts, which are the by-products of human labor. In terms of labor, Marx conceives of it as a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material interactions between himself and nature (Marx, 1887). The by- product of work is almost like art for Marx—an expression of man's self. It is also through his product that he relates to others; the carpenter, for example, relies on others to provide him with tools and nails. Thus, in work, the other becomes a fellow worker, creating a network of men who actualize themselves in their work. When man is alienated from his work, for example in a factory line where the owner of the product is not the worker but the capitalist, man is alienated from his self-expression—he is alienated from his humanity. He becomes a dispensable commodity, a cog in a machine. Marx lays down a positive outlook on man as a worker, but what he refuses to see is the vertical dimension of work.

In much the same line of thought, Wojtyla is not simply engaging in a direct critique of the Marxist thesis that work produces or is somehow the origin of the human being. Indeed, work, or human praxis, is possible to the extent that the human being as the subject already exists: operari sequitur esse (Wojtyla, 1993). Returning to the discussion on the vertical dimension, which Karl Marx fails to consider, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is through work that man (created in God's image) participates in the creative work of God, making him a co-creator. Without this vertical dimension, Marx's entire idea would collapse, imprisoned in materialism and unable to transcend. Man would be reduced to his work. And when man is reduced to work, what happens to those who cannot work due to disability, old age, or incapacity? In many communist countries, the unproductive, i.e., those who cannot work, lose their humanity and become an unnecessary burden to society that must be dispensed with. But man is not only a worker. Man also actualizes himself in rest, recreation, and leisure. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the most important days are not the six days of creation/work but the seventh day of rest with God. In addition to our understanding of rest, Aquinas points out that rest is taken in two senses: in one sense meaning a cessation from work, and in the other, the satisfying of desire (Aquinas 1.73.2). In both senses, rest is

as important and natural as work. More than work, there are other activities that are properly human, like loving or thinking. Man knows, and his knowledge need not be related to work. Man may know for knowledge's sake. Work, then, is not the be-all and end-all of man. It is an aspect of man that must serve a higher end. As Wojtyla would put it, all human works and products crystallized in civilizations and cultures are only a world of means employed by people in the pursuit of their own proper end (Wojtyla, 1993).

Self-fulfillment in and through work

One of the best reasons why man and work should not be separated is that work, as a voluntary action, involves the self-fulfillment of man. Wojtyla claims that in the very fact that man acts in a manner appropriate to him, self-determination authentically inheres in the nature of his acting, and the transcendence of the person is realized through his acting (Wojtyla, 1979). Every man in this world works or engages in activities to attain or fulfill something. Indeed, work contributes to the enhancement of the person who performs it. This means that, for work to be a specifically human activity that accords with the dignity of the human person, it must not only seek to achieve some external objective but must also contribute to the self-fulfillment of the individual (Lombo & Russo, 2017). Moreover, the fulfillment man gains through work is a true manifestation of his self-fulfillment because man becomes more fully himself through work freely undertaken and performed. However, this self-fulfillment does not only mean the mere performance of an act but implicitly includes moral values. In this sense, performing an act is one thing, and performing an act in pursuit of fulfillment is another. In the latter, the aim is to attain what is morally good, and what is morally good is definitely more fulfilling.

Wojtyla pointed out in The Acting Person that through an action that is either morally good or morally bad, man, as a person, becomes either morally good or morally evil (Wojtyla, 1979). This means that whatever act man performs becomes part of him. If man acts in accordance with what is morally good, he is also morally good; if he acts in accordance with what is morally bad, he is morally bad. Axiologically, however, this fulfillment is reached only through the good, while moral evil leads to or amounts to, so to speak, non-fulfillment (Wojtyla, 1979). Man can only be said to have attained self-fulfillment when he performs an act that is morally good. In the case of non-fulfillment, the act is still performed but does not bring about self-fulfillment in man. Similarly, in our work, we must adhere to moral principles to achieve true self-fulfillment. Therefore, it is convincing to say that in order to be fulfilled in life, man must work.

Even if toil accompanies work, no one can escape the fact that man must continue searching for his or her fuller realization, and one way to fulfill this vision is to exert significant effort—to work in attaining the ultimate self-fulfillment of man, patterned after what is morally good. In other words, one's action should be rooted in what is morally good for oneself and for others.

The dignity of the human person is, in fact, the core intention of why Karol Wojtyla wrote his famous work, The Acting Person. It was meant to eliminate all sorts of dualism, utilitarianism, subjectivism, reductionism, and similar views to present a more integrated view of man. The fundamental truth about man is contained in the fact that he has been created in the image and likeness of God, the Creator. From this fundamental truth, man by nature bears a certain dignity that no other lower creature possesses. To acknowledge the dignity of the human being means to place people higher than anything derived from them in the visible world (Wojtyla, 1993). Wojtyla specifically notes that the human being holds a position superior to the whole of nature and stands above everything else in the visible world. This conviction is rooted in experience. It finds its way into both the human individual and the human community, conceived in the broadest possible sense. Our distinctiveness and superiority as human beings in relation to other creatures are continually verified by each of us, regardless of

how inferior we might feel due to our physical or spiritual deficiencies. This distinctiveness is confirmed by the whole of humanity in its ongoing experience: in the experience of history, culture, technology, creativity, and production. Man is a being that continually transforms nature, raising it, in some sense, to his own level, and must therefore feel higher than nature—and must be higher than it (Wojtyla, 1993).

Conclusion

Work remains characterized by toil and burden; however, in light of Karol Wojtyla's philosophy in The Acting Person, the true significance of work outweighs these negative characteristics. Work, as an activity of the human person, reveals the individual as a subject with dignity that is irreducible to a mere object. Wojtyla's philosophical insight indicates that it is indeed through work that a person reflects and participates in the creative action of God, as he brings into effect that which he acts upon in the name of the common good. The person understands his belonging to a community through intersubjectivity and participation, practicing his nature as a worker (though not exclusively, as even resting is considered an action) and transforming nature to meet his basic needs, being a steward of the rest of created reality, in collaboration with others. More importantly, it is through work that the person transcends himself, exists, and actualizes his subjectivity and self-determination, thereby underscoring his dignity as a human person in pursuit of immediate and ultimate ends, including self-fulfillment.

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