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Christian Tradition and (Post) Modernity in the Context of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's Personalist Concept of Culture (2)

1. Towards the “Autonomy of Earthly Realities” – 2. A Praxeological–Personalistic Perspective – 3. “In the World, but not of the World”: In Search of Synthesis – 4. Dynamics of Christian Culture: Participating in the Creative–Salvific Mission of Jesus from Nazareth

Addressing the subject of “the autonomy of earthly realities”, *Vaticanum II* recalls: *Res profanae et res fidei ab eodem Deo originem ducunt*. In other words, “matters of secularity and matters of faith derive from the same God”¹, who is the most profound source of the autonomy of faith and reason concerning the supernatural. In this context, the human being’s complex structure – embracing and fusing two ontic dimensions: matter and spirit – determines both the type of human immersion in the “cosmos” and the kind of transcendence of the human person with the entire world around him. Since man is a potentialized person – subject to the constant law of development and updating of his personality – he enters into vari-

¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, no 36. As *Gaudium et Spes* states: “If by the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men, then it is entirely right to demand that autonomy”.

ous relationships with the world of matter and spirit. It is also reflected in a culture that encompasses all dimensions of human life².

In this context, it is worth paying attention, especially to those ideas of a philosophical and theological nature that inspired the Council Fathers, including Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. They had a significant impact on the development of fundamental determinants of contemporary dialogue with culture. Obviously, an analysis of this legacy must consider a broader historical and doctrinal context. The Christian vision of involvement in culture is also part of the philosophical and theological discourse's realities shaping the specificity and meaning of culture, especially concerning the moral formation of modern man and the autonomy of earthly reality³.

The influence of contemporary philosophical currents means that there is a fairly common tendency to treat culture as merely a utilitarian value. It often applies to media culture and the so-called "Cultural industry". In this context, it is possible to notice the efforts to depersonalize culture, which is often associated with its desacralization. Classical ancient and Christian culture has consistently pointed to the eschatological dimension of human life and the presence of Transcendence. Especially (post) modernists ostentatiously broke with this tradition, which in culture is often manifested in profaning Christian symbols and values (the sacred symbols of Judaism and Islam are not desecrated for fear of consequences on the part of their followers). The desacralization of post-modern culture is also manifested in the departure from Christian ethics, including the traditional norms of the Decalogue⁴. Such treatment and perception of culture deprive it of what constitutes its essence, dispossessing it of the human spirit.

² Stefan Wyszyński. 1966. "Konstytucja Pastoralna o obecności Kościoła w świecie współczesnym". Warszawa – bazylika św. Jana 20. 03. 1966. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*. Vol. 12, 119–120. Warszawa: Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego.

³ Stefan Wyszyński. 1993. *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, Poznań: Pallottinum, 50.

⁴ Writing about postmodern culture, Zygmunt Bauman rightly pointed out the influence of structuralism in understanding the nature and function of culture. In the traditional sense, culture confirmed man's transition from the state of savagery and barbarism to a moral and social order. Postmodern culture is no longer a uniform and permanent system of values, as it is realized in various ways. It is no longer a spontaneous acceptance of existing norms and values but becomes a free choice. Culture is no longer an all-encompassing order, and it is treated instrumentally. It is no longer a privilege of the elite, as it serves a mass and unrefined recipient. Postmodern culture is similar to a "consumer cooperative" in which everyone can choose and purchase the corresponding goods. Culture has lost its contemplative profile in favor of a consumerist-pragmatic character. Bauman, referring to Jean-François Lyotard, describes culture as self-construction and self-affirmation of man. However, the question arises: what is this self-construction of man if truth and objective good are questioned? Zygmunt Bauman. 1996. *Etyka ponowoczesna*. Translated by J. Bauman, J. Tokarzewska-Bakir. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 18–23, 26,44–49, 63, 82, 84, 85, 87, 91–96,114.

1. Towards the “Autonomy of Earthly Realities”

Many critics of the Christian vision of culture believe that the regression and the lack of an unequivocal attitude towards the cultural tradition of liberal, collectivist, or the so-called contemporary “post-modern culture” is not a new phenomenon. However, the above negative phenomena did not arise as a “side-effect” of the Second Vatican Council’s reforms or their implementation into the post-conciliar Church’s contemporary reality. Nevertheless, *Vaticanum II* is widely regarded as an epochal event that set the direction and priorities for modern Christian involvement in the entire sphere of culture.

Virtually all the official statements of that time expressed opposition to the basic assumption of the Enlightenment’s philosophy, which emphasized that faith is only a matter of submitting to the experience of reason. In this way – rooted in the concept of Enlightenment philosophical empiricism, skepticism, and naturalism (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Home, Friedrich Nietzsche), or materialist Marxist philosophy (Karl Marx, William Morris, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukács, Ernst Fischer, Louis Althusser, Jacques Rancière, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Raymond Williams) – ideas emphasizing that the causes of all social injustice are institutions, not original sin and the vices resulting from it, an essential determinant of contemporary culture. It is also connected with the liberal concept of individual freedom’s primacy as a determinant of the modern – too anthropological and theological – vision of the human person.

In this context, the Holy See’s official statements show an awareness of the cultural situation in which contemporary theology and political philosophy operate. Nevertheless, it did not lead to the development of a systematic critique of “contemporary culture,” especially in the face of the challenges posed by various intellectual traditions such as extreme liberalism, Hegelism, Marxism (especially representatives of the Frankfurt School), as well as concepts drawing from the tradition – mentioned already – Enlightenment rationalism, or Nietzsche’s philosophy⁵.

Nevertheless, the identification of rationality with modernist scientific methodology and the dissonance between science, culture, morality, and religion are fundamental features of modern times⁶. The above situation is, therefore, a significant

⁵ Wszyński. 1993. *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, 46.

⁶ The author primarily means the so-called “Hume’s Law” (i.e., the inability to infer what “should be” from what “is”), which turns out to be an axiom of modern thinking. Thus, it contributes to severe

challenge for contemporary Christianity and requires answers to the fundamental questions: how should a Christian respond to the above problems? What should he do in this case? Is he allowed to hope for an authentic and fruitful dialogue between the Church – the depositary of Christ’s message – and contemporary culture? Undoubtedly, if the integrity and coherence of – broadly understood – science, culture, morality, and religion are disrupted, there will be no possibility of a constructive answer to the above questions. Of course, many philosophical systems have tried to find the right solutions.

If, therefore, the statement that Christianity acquired the most refined and unique cultural form in the Western world is correct – the thesis that the Western world has developed a culture that stands in the most radical contradiction not only to Christianity but also to all religions and religious, moral traditions of humankind. This, in turn, shows us that Western culture is undergoing – a sort of – complicated and painful “surgical intervention” that requires an equally problematic recovery. The above analogy also draws attention to the deeply entrenched tensions, conflicts, and contradictions of the modern world’s interests⁷.

In this context, the Christian vision of commitment to culture is linked here above all with a responsibility that Christians, as well as all people of goodwill, are obliged to take up, especially at this point in history. In the debate about the shape of modern civilization, it is not about another sentimental and pathos-filled battle in defense of Christianity. The matter seems much more severe. In this case, it is not only the cultural future of the Western world at stake but also the yet to come humanity⁸.

The modern Western world’s attitude to Christian culture best describes the discourse on the role of the Church in public space. Admittedly, its institutional rights are guaranteed but only based on generally accepted political compromises. Nevertheless, efforts are made to ensure that the Church’s message of the Gospel does not have a tangible impact on the fundamental spheres on which Western civilization is based (law, culture, the media world, etc.)⁹.

perturbations characterizing today’s cultural and political reality, which seems to be a particular legacy of the Enlightenment period.

⁷ Stefan Wyszyński. 1996. Zło dobrem zwyciężaj. Do „Solidarności“ z Gdyni. Warszawa, Kaplica Domu Prymasowskiego, 22 II 1981. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Do „Solidarności“. Rady i wskazania*, 66–67. Warszawa: Soli Deo.

⁸ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Moc żywej wiary w ciężkiej sytuacji Kościoła. Do duchowieństwa w Gdańsku 23. 11. 1960. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 166. Warszawa: ODISS.

⁹ Thomas E. Woods. 2005. *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*. Washington, DC: Regnery.

The main reasons for discrediting the Christian vision of socio-cultural life recall the idea that only a radical culture based on the concepts of the Enlightenment era – and which has now fully developed – can, and even should, constitute the civilizational identity of the Western world. Indeed, various other religious cultures – including Christianity, with its evangelical principles – can coexist side by side as long as (and to the extent of) that they respect the criteria of the Enlightenment culture and conform to its principles.

The basic paradigm on which the Enlightenment culture is based is the idea of freedom, defined as the primary identifier and criterion for all other values: freedom of choice in matters of religion, which also includes the religious neutrality of the state; freedom to express one's opinion (as long as it does not precisely undermine any question of political correctness); the democratic order of the state, that is, parliamentary control of the organs of the state; freedom to form political parties; the independence of those involved in the functioning of the judicial system; and finally the protection of human rights and the prohibition of discrimination. In this context, the scope of the concept of discrimination is continuously being expanded. It means that prohibiting discrimination may restrict freedom of expression and religious freedom¹⁰.

Even today, it is difficult to criticize homosexuality, LGBT ideology, or even the issue of ordaining women following the official teaching of the Church. Of course, the canon of ideas and values approved by contemporary culture also includes tremendous importance to Christianity. But considering, for example, the fundamental issue of freedom, the problem is that the above value is wrong or not even defined at all. It inevitably leads to many over-interpretations and even contradictions. Consequently, applying this concept in practice entails restrictions on freedoms that we could not even imagine in the past. Moreover, the confusing ideology of pseudo-freedom leads to uncritical dogmatism that becomes increasingly hostile to the personalistic vision of freedom rooted in the Christian concept of the human person¹¹.

¹⁰ Wyszynski. 1993. *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 46.

¹¹ Stefan Wyszynski. 1990. Problem pracy górników w Polsce. List do księdza biskupa Herberta Bednorza 2. 02. 1978. In Stefan Wyszynski. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946-1981*, 810–811. Warszawa: ODISS. However, in his 1954 article entitled *Theological Position of Christians in the Modern World*, Karl Rahner argued that Christians must accept a sort of modern “end of Christianity”. As he claimed, Christianity never created a model-ideal cultural order. Hence, Christians must accept that they are now merely a diaspora in a decidedly anti-Christian world. Moreover, the above sociological fact should be interpreted in theological terms as “predetermined” and inscribed in salvation history. Karl Rahner. 1963. *Mission and Grace*. London: Sheed & Ward, 390. Admittedly, Rahner acknowledges that modern culture is generally hostile to Christianity. Thus, in the space of such a culture, the Christian truth will no longer appear in full splendor to ordinary Christians as “obvious”. Nevertheless, any Christian counter-cultural offensive misses the point because – according to Rahner – the

“Confirming” the thesis emphasizing the “autonomy of culture” understood in a Christian way seems to mean approval of both de Lubac’s and Rahner’s concepts. However, this raises an important question: what is this autonomy governed by God’s laws? Moreover, do God’s laws remain “outside” of the action of Providence? Besides, what is the influence of the Mystery of the Incarnation on such laws? Undoubtedly, Paul VI understood the essential role expressed in the relationship between theology and culture – and hence, nature and grace. Nevertheless, his *modus operandi* on these issues avoided discussing to arrive at a definite opinion regarding either de Lubac’s or Rahner’s concepts. In practice, this meant that there was no suitable solution to the “crisis” associated with the existence of different and – to no small extent – contradictory concepts about nature and grace on the part of the Church’s Magisterium.

Nevertheless, honesty demands an answer to a fundamental question: what is this kind of independence so profoundly dependent on? As for the autonomy of culture, science, and other human creativity areas, what type of self-sufficiency, if taken relatively seriously, causes so much misunderstanding and divergence? Moreover, a critical analysis of these issues reveals that today’s vision of faith largely cherishes the modern world and its concept of culture, often at the cost of conformism tolerating controversial disharmony and even contradiction¹². Each confirmation of “the autonomy of the world” or “the autonomy of culture” has a very multifaceted nature associated with the complexity of philosophical and theological problems, particularly with the question of interpreting the relationship between nature and grace¹³. The tendency to treat Christianity by emphasizing its “significance” to the world, rather than focusing on its role in saving the soul, ultimately is counterproductive. The Church’s prophetic mission, which includes responsibility for evangelizing entire societies, is becoming increasingly marginalized. However,

culture of modernity fits into the dimension of the cross. Rahner. 1963. *Mission and Grace*. Yet, Karl Rahner did not present any criteria that would assess the current state of affairs from the theological perspective. In this context, the view of “survival” in the sense of *kénōsis* seems more important to him than – treated in terms of creation and salvation – a challenge that must be faced. In Rahner’s opinion, the matter-of-factness of a particular aspect of the secularization process can be evaluated by Christians with the help of a global moral “instinct” understood in terms of the will functioning beyond or even beyond the sphere of reason. Karl Rahner. 1974. *Theological Investigations*. New York: Crossroads, 238–240.

¹² Tracey Rowland. 2003. *Culture and the Thomist Tradition After Vatican II*, London – New York: Routledge, 36.

¹³ However, ignoring the above points and not judging the conceptual tools that could be used in the theological study of culture, Paul VI nevertheless concluded that: “The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore, every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed”. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no 20.

no promotional campaign, conducted even by the best spin-doctors, can replace the testimony of saints.

2. A Praxeological-Personalistic Perspective

Referring to the conciliar thought, Primate Wyszyński shows culture as the entirety of human life, a lifestyle, and a set of primary values accepted in personal and social life. Culture is thus a complex reality with a static and dynamic dimension. It is a set of human products, but at the same time, it is a continuous process of creating new values and transforming old ones. It makes the culture of the Nation dynamic. However, this does not exclude the existence of permanent elements in the national culture that shape the specificity of the Polish national culture¹⁴.

Therefore, the praxeological-personalist view of Christian culture presented by Primate Wyszyński reflects the essential nature of the concept of culture. It is understood as a comprehensive humanization of man's activity and the created world's entire reality. Related to all socio-cultural life structures, therefore, it cannot be reduced only to the category of progress, a purely material-temporal reality, or a scientific and technical civilization guided by the principles of utilitarianism and economic profit and loss account. In this sense, a reductionist vision of culture, rooted in a distorted conception of man and the world, seems to be not only unable to meet man's needs and aspirations, but – by showing a tendency to dominate his person – may lead to the degradation of essential dimensions of human life¹⁵.

However, in the personalistic sense, Christian culture enables the realization of man's personal fullness, both temporal and supernatural. Hence, Primate Wyszyński's Christian vision of culture places the human person at the center of his interests. In this sense, man becomes its principal subject, purpose, and meaning. Although a human person cannot live and function in isolation from culture, neither can one speak of an authentic culture separated from the background of the whole truth about man and the world in which he lives¹⁶.

¹⁴ Wyszyński, 1966. *Konstytucja Pastoralna o obecności Kościoła w świecie współczesnym*, 9–10.

¹⁵ Czesław S. Bartnik. 1981. „Zarys myśli teologicznej Kardynała Wyszyńskiego”. *Ateneum Kapańskie* 73 (97) : 224–228.

¹⁶ Czesław S. Bartnik. 1988. *Chrześcijańska pedagogia narodowa według Stefana Wyszyńskiego*. In *Polska teologia narodu*. Ed. Czesław S. Bartnik, 188–197. Lublin: TN KUL.

The anthropological and theological analysis of cultural reality carried out from a personalistic perspective places the human person at the center of his considerations, who – as the most crucial link in the entire process of involvement in earthly life – is its subject and creator. Simultaneously, a specific man – being the center and goal of the whole economic life – makes individual choices and makes certain decisions, which must always be related to criteria beyond the very pragmatics of action. Therefore, disclosing the theological and anthropological foundations of cultural involvement becomes an essential way of humanizing this area of human activity and overcoming it only through the prism of earthly life's rationality¹⁷.

Thus, Revelation, which enables a deeper penetration into God and man's reality, allows for the Creator to be revealed, who in his deepest essence is *caritas*. The image of creating the world emphasizes the constant activity of God, thanks to which worlds emerge, and the enormous dynamism of development of all forms and structures of reality is initiated. The truth about creation reveals a versatile activity – divine and human – in terms of theocentric dynamics of the world, where God is the origin of all action and all activity.

God's creative activity is most fully revealed in the Eternal Word. What is fulfilled through the "Word" is continuously sustained by the Father "who is always at work" (John 5:17) and is to be developed by a man assigned tasks, "to fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). Thus, the mystery of God's love, which for Primate Wyszyński is a consequence of the Trinitarian mystery, becomes mainly concrete in man. In the context of a personal Creator God, a man appears as an unnecessary emanation of God's nature¹⁸.

Therefore, the anthropological-theological vision of involvement in culture sees every intended and purposeful form of human activity – despite the infinite distance between the divine and human act – as a continuation and participation in God's creative action. Simultaneously, participation in the work of creation triggers an attitude of adoration in man, that is, recognition for the work that God has accomplished through his creative "work". Creative involvement in culture, according to Wyszyński, "(...) for every human being it is a tool of salvation, and the toil of work is combined with the joy of victory over matter and oneself"¹⁹. Thus, the

¹⁷ Stefan Wyszyński. 1973. *Bóg-Człowiekiem, aby człowiek był... Bogiem. Do inteligencji katolickiej*. Warszawa-Miodowa 14. 01. 1970. In Stefan Wyszyński. „*Idzie nowych ludzi plemię...*”. *Wybór przemówień i rozważań*, 48–50. Poznań – Warszawa: Pallotinum.

¹⁸ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. «*Homo Dei*». I kazanie świętokrzyskie 13.01.1974. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 576. Warszawa: ODISS; Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. «*Crux – spes nostra*». Do pisarzy i literatów Warszawy 28 III 1981. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 1024. Warszawa: ODISS.

¹⁹ Wyszyński. 1993. *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, 366.

meeting of man with nature through culture becomes an encounter with the Creator. Wyszyński emphasizes in his considerations: “Man is obliged to cooperate in God’s government, to cooperate in God’s creative activity. (...) It is the right way to heaven for all who have because you go to heaven through earthly goods: not by loving them, but by using them correctly”²⁰.

Personalistic anthropology based on the Christian philosophical and theological system, defining the human person’s goals both in the natural and supernatural order, allows us to present man as the center and crown all earthly beings’ entire hierarchy.

Equipped by the best Creator with the riches of reason, will and heart, elevated above the plant and animal world with beauty, dignity, and virtues of body and soul – man in all his nature, attitude, aspirations, and destiny is the king of creatures and a blessing on earth. (...) Created in God’s image and likeness – almost smaller than angels, crowned with glory and reverence by the Creator – man stands between earth and heaven as the king and ruler of the earth and as the heir of heaven²¹.

In this approach, the human person’s value is determined not only by his origin from God and his likeness to him but also in the context of the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ.

Thus, God, who is the activity Himself – it belongs to His essence and reveals himself in creative and salvific activities – by creating man in His “image and likeness”, at the same time calls him to cooperate with himself. Man involved in this creative dynamism – he writes – derives a perfect shape from the creation formed by the *Logos*. The world’s embryonic nature induces a man to bring the real being (*esse reale*) closer to the perfect being (*esse perfectum*). Thus, the dynamics of history and all moral connections are fused in the tension between the actual reality and the shape of perfection defined for it. The belief in the creation of the world by the Word justifies a dynamic understanding of matter. There is simply nothing in the world that does not live or work; everything is ordered to development and completion²². Collaboration with God is expressed primarily through the broadly understood commitment to public life. At the socio-economic and cultural level, one should strive to achieve full humanity in both temporal and eternal dimensions.

²⁰ Wyszyński. 1993. *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, 404–405.

²¹ Wyszyński Stefan. 1990. O katolickiej woli życia. List pasterski na Wielkanoc 1947. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 34. Warszawa: ODISS.

²² Seweryn Rosik. 1992. *Wezwania i wybory moralne. Refleksje teologicznomoralne*. Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 362.

The personalistic concept of the human person in the teaching of the Primate of the Millennium, on the one hand, promotes man as a being endowed with unique dignity and value. On the other hand, it emphasizes the need for self-realization of his life goals and tasks. These two aspects presuppose the existence of subjective rights and obligations of the human person, regulating social and cultural life's complex reality. In this context, the Christian interpretation of the human person's rights and obligations presented by Cardinal Wyszyński emphasizes, above all, their organic connection with natural law, in which they find their foundation. Thus, the Primate opposes the concepts of legal positivism, treating human rights as certain conventions or determinations of political power. The conviction accompanied this approach to the issues of rights and obligations that it was necessary to focus on issues directly related to Poland's socio-political situation. In the opinion of the Primate, the interest in matters of respect for human rights on an international scale should be preceded by a commitment aimed at making the society in Poland aware of their human rights with full knowledge of their content and enabling them to be fully and freely exercised, which, of course, required state authority in a certain way²³.

Thus, the entire rich reality of the world was given to man to complete the work of creation. By engaging in culture, he creates a new civilization which, as a result of human activity, links a complicated – and at the same time hierarchical – structure of needs, desires, and obligations with the continuation of creative work. Therefore, all socially beneficial human activity has a deep ethical meaning not only because man's spiritual faculties determine it – reason and will – but also because it wants to achieve goals that enrich man in the individual and social dimensions. Involvement in culture realized through creative activity, according to Cardinal Wyszyński – a form of continuation of God's action and cooperation with the Creator in His work becomes a universal vocation to cooperate in God's plan for creating the world. Therefore, it is a kind of trust placed in man for himself and satisfies the need for self-creation, which is ingrained in human nature.

A personalistic vision of culture, expressed in recognition of the primacy of the human person created in the "image and likeness of God" and called to participate in the creation of the world, encourages us to value and secure the order of the material world, which is an essential element of cultural life that is subject to dynamic processes of development and progress.

²³ Hanna Wańkiewicz. 1982. "Prawa człowieka w nauczaniu kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego". *Chrześcijaństwo w świecie* 104: 3–4.

Therefore, not only man is to be changed, but the entire created material world. He is distorted by human sin's misfortune but awaits renewal, change, sanctification, and some form of salvation peculiar to him²⁴.

For this reason (...) it is necessary to renew the world, so that the earth may become more subject by man to God so that the social relations of life and coexistence would be closer to the program that the heavenly Father set for Christ. By sending his Son around the earth, God wanted him to renew the face of the earth in the spirit of evangelical peace, charity, and social justice²⁵.

Consequently, culture understood in this way becomes a special gift for a person to realize and fulfill himself. Simultaneously, it is a fundamental task to create a space of authentically humanistic culture, capable of shaping the human person according to his vocation. It is possible thanks to the sphere of personal values that, while all structures of social life condition the transformation of the world's entire reality from the new perspective²⁶.

It is expressed primarily through cooperation with the Creator in the work of improving creation. In this context, complementing the perspective of Creation with the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ seems to be the crowning achievement of the saving history of man's relationship with God. Therefore, culture inscribed in the creative-salvation perspective is an essential dimension of the relationship of the human person to God; it emphasizes the unique dignity of man and his vocation understood as the full realization of the person in the individual and social dimension – and thus the humanization of all earthly reality in the spirit of Christ's Gospel.

3. "In the World, but not of the World": In Search of Synthesis

Striving to synthesize the liberal concept and the Christian tradition, especially the Thomistic province, can already be found in the works of nineteenth-century

²⁴ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Uświęcenie doczesności. Do duchowieństwa Warszawy 3 VIII 1962. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 189. Warszawa: ODISS.

²⁵ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Niech miłość idzie przez Polskę. Na zakończenie jubileuszu świętego Franciszka w Warszawie 6 XIII 1976. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 753. Warszawa: ODISS.

²⁶ Andrzej Dziuba. 2013. *Humanizująca funkcja kultury. Z nauczania kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego Prymasa Polski*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW, 42–48.

“liberal Catholics”, such as Lord Acton in England²⁷ or Charles Forbes René de Montalembert in France²⁸. Jacques Maritain’s efforts to reconcile the Thomistic concept of natural law with the liberal doctrine of human rights applied, among others, were a continuation of these efforts, e.g., in the *UN Human Rights Declaration* of 1948. Such a strategy of reconciling natural law with universally understood human rights was already announced in Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* and applied in the encyclicals of John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. Nevertheless, in principle, John Paul II accepted only the rhetoric of the liberal tradition, not its philosophical content and interpretation.

It is not surprising since the modern human rights concept is mainly based on legal positivism’s philosophical assumptions²⁹. For if the concept of human rights had a philosophical justification – in the opinion of the representatives of this concept – it would certainly always be controversial, as all philosophical theories concerning rights have been recognized as such. If, on the other hand, the idea of human rights had no philosophical justification, its claims to have moral power remain unfounded. *The Human Rights Declaration* itself avoids this topic, implying that the concept of human rights is somehow above the philosophical dilemmas. Some lawyers have decided to solve this dilemma through legal positivism, arguing that human rights law is part of statutory requirements³⁰.

The idea emphasizing the need to synthesize the Christian (mainly Thomistic) tradition with elements of the liberal concept (e.g., the “New Natural Law” project)³¹ reached its apogee when the intellectual elite of the West began to feel disil-

²⁷ Roland Hill. 2000. *Lord Acton*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

²⁸ Together with the ultramontist Hugues Félicité de Lamennais and the Dominican Jean-Baptiste Lacordaire, Charles Forbes René de Montalembert was one of the pioneers of “Catholic liberalism” in 19th century France at the time. Thomas Bokenkotter. 1997. *Church and Revolution: Catholics in the Struggle for Democracy and Social Justice*. New York: Doubleday, 39–80.

²⁹ Michael Freeman. 2007. *Prawa człowieka*. Translated by Marcin Fronia. Warszawa: Sic, 17.

³⁰ Freeman. 2007. *Prawa człowieka*, 53–54.

³¹ The “New Natural Law” theory draws on the Thomistic doctrine of natural law, which was reinterpreted in the 1960s. Its initiator was Germain Grisez, who questioned the then-dominant Aquinas interpretation of natural law. Germain Grisez. 1965. “The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the Summa Theologiae, 1–2, Question 94, Article 2”. *Natural Law Forum* 10: 168–201. According to the supporters of this concept, the primary moral criterion is human nature itself. In other words, human actions are morally permissible if they follow teleological (goal-directed) premises inherent in human nature. Since the condition of what is morally right is what satisfies human nature, it must first be determined by theoretical analysis, which goals please human nature. In the decades that followed, both Germain Grisez and John Finnis, Joseph Boyle, and others developed the above theory and applied it to many – often very controversial – moral issues (free choice, ethical dilemmas, abortion, euthanasia, marriage, “gender” ideology, etc.). Garth L. Hallett. 1995. *Greater Good: The Case for Proportionalism*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 52–63.

lusioned with the liberal tradition. In other words, it was then that the liberal tradition and proponents of “theological neutrality” began to question earlier ideas and, as a consequence, lean towards the concepts of Nietzsche and Heidegger, Locke and Kant, or contemporary thinkers such as Milbank and MacIntyre, who preferred the Augustinian “narrative traditions“ from Kant’s idea of “pure reason“. In this context, the project of synthesizing Aquinas and Kant and various other elements of the liberal tradition became fashionable among both Thomists and members of the Church hierarchy.

Many contemporary scholars conclude that the required response to the modernist crisis – in the context of the Church’s Magisterium position on the liberal tradition – was associated with much more profound philosophical and theological problems than the cultural theology developed at that time. The thorny issue of human rights and obligations, especially in the context of a specific socio-political and cultural situation threatened by a totalitarian ideology, also becomes a significant challenge for Cardinal Wyszyński, requiring a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the issues raised but also taking into account their practical conditions³². In the opinion of the Primate, the normative basis of human rights, their source, and the most in-depth justification are norms in their existence and content independent of establishing social authority³³.

Thus, the rationale and justification of a person’s rights is a norm independent of any legislative authority. According to the Primate, human rights are not – a kind of – ideals, values, or models to be implemented in social life. Nor are they some vague tendencies or undefined needs of the human person’s nature, but specific and strictly defined rights due to man’s natural law living in social life³⁴. These powers are closely related to responsibilities that are correlated to each of them. As subjec-

³² Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. O chrześcijańskim wyzwoleniu człowieka. List pasterski na adwent 1946. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 24–28. Warszawa: ODISS; Wyszyński. 1990. O katolickiej woli życia, 29–40; Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. «Res sacra homo». Podczas jubileuszu świętego Wincentego á Paulo w Krakowie 27. 09. 1960. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 151–155. Warszawa: ODISS; Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Nauczycielu prawdomówny!¹⁴. Do nauczycieli Warszawy 6. 11. 1960. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 168–173. Warszawa: ODISS; Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. O moralną odnowę narodu. Po ogłoszeniu encykliki «Pacem in terris». Białystok 2. 06. 1963. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 212–215. Warszawa: ODISS; Stefan Wyszyński. 2001. Zmaganie się sprawiedliwości i miłości. Zwycięstwo miłości. Warszawa – kościół oo. Bazylianów 6. 04. 1968. In Stefan Wyszyński. „*Idzie nowych ludzi plemię...*“, 232–237. Poznań: Pallotinum.

³³ Stefan Wyszyński. 1957. Prawa osoby ludzkiej w społeczeństwie. Warszawa – kościół św. Anny 18.03.1957. In Stefan Wyszyński. 1957. *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956–1981*. Vol. I, 5. Warszawa: Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego.

³⁴ Christian Davenport. 1996 “Constitutional Promises” and Repressive Reality: A Cross National Time-Series Investigation of Why Political and Civil Liberties are Suppressed”. *Journal of Politics*

tive rights, they have a normative basis in natural law³⁵. Thus, laws stand above all legal norms established by the authority and are superior to them. Therefore, they should be fully respected in social life both by representatives of state authority and by all community members in which a person lives³⁶.

The normative basis of human rights, rooted in the most resonant structures of human existence, serves the fulfillment of man's natural needs and belongs to all people, regardless of conditions, time, and place³⁷. "And thanks to this that these laws are not given by anyone, at most by the Creator, (...) whoever violates them will be a usurper"³⁸. The supernatural dignity of the human person and its primacy in the entire multifaceted social life requires such a shape that, as part of collective activities, would allow the creation of a system of values and appropriate conditions enabling the integral development of the human person, also in the dimension of culture. It means that every human person – regardless of any differences – has certain rights that impose themselves with the force of axiological and normative obviousness, as inviolable and inalienable rights.

4. Dynamics of Christian Culture: Participating in the Creative-Salvific Mission of Jesus from Nazareth

Despite original sin and the resulting disharmony of matter, man can discover God's intentions contained in the work of creation due to his rational nature. It enables them to take responsibility for the vocation they have been endowed with. The cooperation with God initiated in this way introduces the entire sphere of human activity – threatened with desecralization – into the original orbit of God's economy of salvation, making it a humanization factor of the complex reality of social and economic life. The specificity of the Christian life – based on faith as a holistic moral attitude – requires a concrete response to God's call, which is expressed primarily in fundamental moral obligations and especially in all-embracing love. Only in this context can

58: (3): 627–654; Beth A. Simmons. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 112–157.

³⁵ Wańkiewicz. 1982. "Prawa człowieka w nauczaniu kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego", 4.

³⁶ "No community – in the opinion of Cardinal Wyszyński – even the most powerful, can violate these rights without risking conflicts with citizens, people and their personality". Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. «*Homo Dei*», 577–578.

³⁷ Hanna Wańkiewicz. 1978. „Prawa człowieka. Pojęcie, historia”. *Chrześcijańskie w świecie* 10: 3: 28–29.

³⁸ Stefan Wyszyński. 1957. *Prawa osoby ludzkiej w społeczeństwie*, 5.

we speak of individual moral attitudes or norms – including Christian involvement in social and economic life, as concretizing the moral life flowing from faith³⁹.

The vocation of man to participate in the work of creation is therefore carried out within the framework of the orders established by God's creative power, who makes him his co-worker by giving the world under man's management. Thus, the rich reality of the created world becomes an opportunity for development and progress, thanks to which man responds to the challenge of living and creating God, especially in social and economic life. Creative involvement in social and economic life becomes a response to God's will expressed in a proposal addressed to every person – regardless of their position, professional status, or position in the hierarchy of social life – that they cooperate with His plan. By introducing a human person to a specific order of life and action, God, in a sense, excludes him from the general nature of his creative plan, thus emphasizing his individuality. Thanks to this – by engaging in a specific order of action – man is to provide his particular contribution to the development of God's creation.

The pastoral and teaching service of Cardinal Wyszyński, including a comprehensive program of religious and educational activities, also indicated many specific solutions to complex socio-cultural and economic problems. It was principal, especially in the context of the Polish political situation. Marxist-atheist indoctrination, combined with the socialist model of the economy based on centrally controlled structures, posed a real threat to the country's economic structures and undermined the foundations of the national existence built on the Christian system of values. The distorted vision of the world and the human person not only deprived man of an essential spiritual sphere but also reduced him to the product level of the material world. It distorts human life's fundamental dimensions, preventing man from fully realizing his needs and goals⁴⁰.

Thus, concern for the humanization of all dimensions of social life in the teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński is of paramount importance. It is crucial in the context of responsibility for the integral development of human life in all its dimensions. The Christian model of education is the only constructive alternative to the atheist concepts of Marxist ideology⁴¹. Thus, the person of Jesus Christ, who is the cornerstone

³⁹ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Jakiej chcecie Polski? Do młodzieży akademickiej w Warszawie 22 III 1972. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 490. Warszawa: ODISS.

⁴⁰ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Duch Boży w wolnym człowieku. Podczas bierzmowania młodzieży akademickiej w Warszawie 19 V 1977. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 779–780. Warszawa: ODISS.

⁴¹ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Dobrzy bracia, Podczas uroczystości 250 rocznicy przybycia bonifratrów do Warszawy 26.09.1976. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946–1981*, 748. Warszawa: ODISS.

of a building, becomes Christian pedagogy's principal and final criterion⁴². Thanks to the Eternal Word, God's creative act is not only the realization of action in the sense of a fulfilled and ultimately completed accomplishment. Jesus Christ, the *Logos*, being the beginning of the history of the world, gives it its starting shape. Therefore, everything that is to mature to fullness, which includes certain regularities and orders, value systems, and meaningfulness of existence – along with man and the history assigned to him – is a kind of predisposition to learn, use, experience, and direct these values and meanings towards higher fullness and synthesis⁴³.

The form of a man's personal relationship to God, as well as the place of the human person in social life, determines the personalistic character of the Primate's teaching. The essential feature of personalism understood in this way is its integral and universalistic character. As a result, it creates a comprehensive education model based on the total unity of spirit and matter, body and soul, nature, and grace. The harmonious unity of reason and the free striving for good in love is realized in the universal call to holiness, which is the fundamental goal of every human being. The Christian vision of education in Primate Wyszyński's teaching requires the consistent use of a whole set of measures that animate and stimulate a human being's development process.

The factor supporting the implementation of these assumptions is the actual doctrinal richness of the theology of earthly realities, especially such vital issues as the theology of the human person, theology of the family, theology of society, political theology, and theology of the Woman-Mother of God, theology of culture, theology of the nation and theology of human work. Valuation of the entire sphere of earthly reality while considering the human person's primacy enables man to fully realize the aspirations and desires following his vocation. From the perspective of cultural involvement, this helps prevent harmful forms of dehumanizing and degrading the human person in this vital dimension of social life⁴⁴.

This is particularly important in the context of the above considerations because the entire ministry of Cardinal Wyszyński is deeply rooted in the realities of the social and political existence of the Nation, which for centuries had to face various threats aimed not only at its sovereignty and independence, but – above all – its cultural identity. In this sense, as perceived by the Primate, personalism is characterized by sincere patriotism, understood as ardent love for the motherland, capable

⁴² Stefan Wyszyński. 1981. *Podwójne budowanie domu Bożego*. Warszawa. Parafia św. Franciszka, 22 IX 1980. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Kościół w służbie narodu*, 61. Poznań: Pallotinum.

⁴³ Stefan Wyszyński. 1981. *Sumienie prawe u podstaw odnowy życia narodowego*. Poznań – Warszawa: Pallotinum, 993.

⁴⁴ Stefan Wyszyński. 1993. *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, 320.

of the most significant sacrifices and sacrifice. In his teaching, the involvement of Christians in culture is thus integral to his patriotic character. The unique relations of the deeply patriotic bond with the homeland are revealed not only in man's consciousness and mentality. Still, they are organically connected with human nature, involving all spheres of the human personality⁴⁵.

In the Primate's understanding, the homeland appears as a dynamic axiological structure intended to realize the objective, primarily social, values. As such, it constitutes a spiritual community of persons imbued with the same ideals and recognizing the embodiment of these ideals as their chief task. Cardinal Wyszyński's personalism emphasizes that the relationships that arise due to the individual's reference to a set of common patriotic values have the character of moral ties. In this ethical space, the community's duty, whose name is the motherland, is revealed. Thus, the attitude to one's own identity, ties with the community, Nation, homeland, and the choice of a life model depending on them and the hierarchy of preferred virtues and values constitute an essential human experience⁴⁶.

In this context, patriotism means both a kind and caring attitude towards the mother country – its history and present reality – and reflects the “soul” of the Nation. Thus – as a value in itself – patriotism becomes a fundamental condition guaranteeing national independence and sovereignty, as well as cultural identity. Moreover, respect for the past and recognition of “native” values make it possible to effectively counter all internationalist and cosmopolitan tendencies that, apart from the Nation's historical achievements, intentionally weakened the bond between the present and the past as well as future⁴⁷.

Therefore, concerning “national culture,” Primate Wyszyński states:

We can afford to develop a model of modern life on our own, without looking either to the right or to the left. We have an enormous wealth of elements of our native national, moral, and social culture so that we can create a lifestyle that meets the needs of our Nation⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. Tajemnica więzi z ojczyzną. Do młodzieży polskiej z Londynu, 7 I 1972. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946-1981*, 485. Warszawa: ODISS.

⁴⁶ Andrzej F. Dziuba. 2002. Przesłanie społeczne kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Prymasa Polski. In *Wartości u podstaw demokracji*. Red. Janusz Nagórny, Andrzej Derdziuk. 112–124. Lublin – Sandomierz: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne.

⁴⁷ Stefan Wyszyński, 1990. Bezimienny bohater symbolem ofiarnego poświęcenia dla ojczyzny. W 50. rocznicę sprowadzenia zwłok Nieznanego Żołnierza do Warszawy 31 X 1975. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946-1981*, 660. Warszawa: ODISS.

⁴⁸ Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. «Homo oeconomicus». II kazanie świętokrzyskie, 20.01.1974. In: Stefan Wyszyński. 1990. *Nauczanie społeczne 1946-1981*, 587. Warszawa: ODISS.

However, a shared future requires rooting in the native historical, cultural, and moral tradition. “It is a pearl of great wisdom to learn from past experiences”⁴⁹.

Nevertheless, it requires vigilance, great sensitivity to the matters and the spirit of the nation, great reverence for the land that accumulates the ashes of ancestors, full readiness to serve this our “family of families” in the spirit of Christian love for the homeland⁵⁰.

The issue of cultural belonging to a society, Nation, fatherland, or state is not a simple matter, especially when describing this relationship in an acceptable way. It is not about reality “external” to man, but about grasping what is closest to him: a living and dynamic reality, which is part of his essence, which permeates him, and in which he continually participates. One of the most important categories of this kind in the teaching of Primate Wyszyński is patriotism, which – especially today – has become one of the most controversial and “politically incorrect” ideas. In other words, patriotism is one of those inherently controversial concepts that cannot be ordered in a generally acceptable manner. However, it can be interpreted honestly to the importance of this problem, trying to understand its essence⁵¹.

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A significant dimension of Christian involvement in culture has a social character, resulting from the human person’s common character open to the temporary world’s reality. By engaging in socio-cultural activities, a man exerts a stigma on his work. However, this process is characterized by a feedback reaction. The products of human cultural activity also affect him – both in an individual and social dimension. Therefore, if a human person is fulfilled through his creative activity, he becomes himself more fully, realizing himself in the community dimension. However, this requires the coordination of individual actions with the “common good”, which is conditioned by subordinating cultural and culture-creating activities to moral principles. Therefore, only the renewal of all cultural

⁴⁹ Stefan Wyszyński. 1972. Jesteście pokoleniem przyszłości. Warszawa 5 X 1970. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Z gniazda orląt ...: Wybór przemówień, kazań i konferencji do młodzieży*, 120. Rzym: Papieski Instytut Studiów Kościelnych.

⁵⁰ Stefan Wyszyński. 1975. List o Społecznej Krucjacie Miłości. Warszawa, Wielki Post 1967. In Stefan Wyszyński. *Listy Pasterskie Prymasa Polski 1946–1974*, 317. Paris: Éditions du Dialogue.

⁵¹ Jerzy Szacki. 2012. Patriotyzm jako ‘błąd’ i jako ‘cnota’. In *Maski i twarze patriotyzmu*, Red. Maria Karolczak, 105. Kraków: Narodowe Centrum Kultury.

dimensions of human life and action will enable the full humanization of social structures, which is the fundamental goal of the Christian national pedagogy of Primate Wyszyński.

In this context, Christian personalism, displaying the priority of the human person, potentiality, and the dialogical character of his nature, simultaneously emphasizes the possibility of his continuous completion and development. However, a man is essentially an “open being” with a constant need for growth and development. Being open to the world’s reality, the human person cannot live and develop without continual exchange with the surrounding environment. Thus, culture becomes for him an appropriate means of realizing himself. Interpersonal communication – understood as the mutual exchange of personal values – becomes possible only because man is a rational and free being. As a rational being – with a rich interior of his personality and awareness of his dignity – he needs to share and offer to another person “himself”. As a free being, he is willing and able to do so. By offering himself as a gift of love, the human person himself can accept the gift of another, contributing to mutual enrichment. The ability to “take and give” belongs, therefore, to the fundamental values of social life and is rooted in an authentic attitude of love which has its source in God.

All forms of involvement in culture are aimed at transcendent itself. They used to be primarily in service to man, the satisfaction of his spiritual needs, and confirmation of his proper dignity. In this sense, human involvement in culture is understood mainly as an opening to others’ needs, serving love, creating individual benefit and the “common good”. Moreover, collaboration and consolidation of efforts mean the fulfillment of the call arising from the Gospel. It is the humanization of socially beneficial culture so that its quality is not the result of training or manipulation but the fruit of personal and social self-determination. Responsibility for the profile of culture requires not only an appropriate state policy, the aim of which is to restore the country’s economic health, restore the moral order and enable proper working and development conditions, but also to change the mentality of a specific citizen based on the criteria of Christian morality in the perspective of “a new heaven and a new earth” (cf. Isaiah 65: 17-19; John 4: 1-4; 2 Peter 3: 13; Rev 21: 1).

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Abstract: The subject of this article is to present the Christian cultural tradition in the context of (post) modernism from the perspective of the personalistic vision of culture presented by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. The author’s interpretation of source materials aims to show Christian culture as a “sphere of earthly reality” shaping the human person in its integral dimension, i.e., both in the individual and social dimensions and the temporal and supernatural. In the personalistic-praxeological sense, Christian culture is rooted in the biblical-traditional values, which – perceived as a gift and obligation – are developed primarily in the sphere of the daily Christian life, especially in the dimension of family and nation. The author of the article asks whether the aretology of Cardinal Wyszyński’s personalistic concept can be applied to the specific realities of the up-to-date fact of cultural life? The answer to such questions is essential, especially in the context of the currently proclaimed “ideological pluralism” characteristic of the contemporary post-modern culture that emphasizes the moral ambivalence of “liquid” postmodernity.

Keywords: Second Vatican Council, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, culture, modernism, evangelization.

Streszczenie: Chrześcijańska tradycja wiary i (post) nowoczesność w kontekście personalistycznej koncepcji kultury kard. Stefana Wyszyńskiego (2). Przedmiotem ar-

tykułu jest ukazanie chrześcijańskiej tradycji kulturowej w kontekście (post) modernizmu z perspektywy personalistycznej wizji kultury prezentowanej przez kard. Stefana Wyszyńskiego. Dokonana przez autora interpretacja materiałów źródłowych ma na celu przedstawienie kultury chrześcijańskiej jako „sfery rzeczywistości ziemskiej”, kształtującej osobę ludzką w jej integralnym rozumieniu, tzn. zarówno w wymiarze indywidualnym i społecznym, jak też doczesnym i nadprzyrodzonym. W rozumieniu personalistyczno-prakseologicznym kultura chrześcijańska ma swoje zakorzenienie w wartościach ewangelicznych, które – ujmowane jako dar i zobowiązanie – rozwijane są przede wszystkim w przestrzeni chrześcijańskiej aktywności życia codziennego, zwłaszcza w wymiarze rodziny i narodu. Autor artykułu stawia pytanie: Czy aretologia personalistycznej koncepcji kard. Wyszyńskiego może być aplikowana do konkretnych realiów współczesnej rzeczywistości życia kulturowego? Odpowiedź na tak postawione kwestie jest niezwykle istotna, zwłaszcza w kontekście głoszonego obecnie „pluralizmu ideowego”, charakterystycznego dla współczesnej kultury postmodernistycznej, podkreślającej moralną ambiwalentność „płynnej” ponowoczesności.

Słowa kluczowe: Sobór Watykański II, kard. Stefan Wyszyński, kultura, modernizm, ewangelizacja.