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## MAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD WOJTYŁA—RORTY

*Rorty limits his considerations to the pragmatic dimension and—referring to a liberal vision of man—aims to maintain the status quo of American democracy. Wojtyła, whose proposal is based on transcendence and personalistic assumptions, wants to develop an axiological model aimed at forming a responsible human being who, in the process of self-perfection, transcends both his internal and external limitations (the latter being conditioned by a community). The confrontation of both thinkers' reflection reveals the limitations of all attempts at creating a synthesising and one-dimensional approach to communal reality.*

The philosophical thought of Richard Rorty and Karol Wojtyła represent two diametrically different approaches to the world and man. Although they are based on opposite ontological and anthropological assumptions, they do share certain points, which justifies their comparison and facilitates demonstrating their theoretical and practical strengths and weaknesses. The elements they share include the assumptions in the axiological sphere regarding the communal “nature” of man, both philosophers' sensitivity to suffering as well as their proposals how to reduce its scale.

Wojtyła tries to save Thomism, which seems to be a theory which is resistant to the changing reality and prone to dogmatic solutions, by developing and dynamizing it. It is worth emphasizing that his new approach to the dynamic condition of man in the world led to, among others, the creation of the Solidarity movement.

Rorty is more radical in his opposition to dogmatism. His aim is to eliminate a dogmatic—in his opinion—definition of truth as correspondence to reality. He believes that the only criterion of truth is the criterion of utility. It is worth noting, however, that his pragmatism is not instrumental and egoistic, because, if it were such, it would not be able to justify how sensitivity to the suffering of others can be useful to man.

In this article, we attempt to argue that Rorty limits his considerations to the pragmatic dimension and – referring to a liberal vision of man—aims to maintain the *status quo* of American democracy. Whereas Wojtyła, whose proposal is based on transcendence and personalistic assumptions, wants to develop an axiological model aimed at forming a responsible human being who, in the process of self-perfection, transcends both his internal and external limitations (the latter being conditioned by a community).

The confrontation of both thinkers' reflection reveals the limitations of all attempts at creating a synthesising and one-dimensional approach to communal reality. The category of "participation" (Latin: *participatio*) has a rich history. This term was popularised by the Stoics, and within Christian philosophy it was analysed by, among others, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Karol Wojtyła addressed this problem and developed his own theory of participation. For both of them, the notion of participation is related to the issue of solidarity.

#### RORTY A COMMUNITY OF THE ADMITTED

The sources of contemporary disintegration of the axiological order include the processes which detach man from his environment, technological advancements, industrialisation, marketization processes, as well as an increasing impact of the media which nowadays mediate man's experience of reality. These factors have led to a situation in which man has lost his natural support in reality. Participating in various spheres of social life, fulfilling various functions connected with them, man does not become attached to these functions, nor does he form bonds with people with whom he has to interact. As a result, he both alienates himself from others and disintegrates himself.

At the same time, the process of disenchantment, i.e. desacralisation of the world, as Max Weber called it, continues and deepens. For some people, this process is a sign of progress and man's liberation from metaphysical and religious superstitions, while for others it is an opportunity to reflect on the emergence of new superstitions. Richard Rorty, a very interesting postmodernist thinker, not only criticises previous "superstitions" but also tries to show new moral perspectives and possibilities of integration in the world devoid of all certainties.

The postmodern fear of the Enlightened deification of Reason and its extreme outcomes, fascism, and communism, directs Rorty towards rejecting all previous metanarratives, which, in his opinion, were created in the past by religion, science, and poetry to equal extents.

Each of these areas adopts some initial assumptions, some values, and some criteria that distinguish them from the others, but it is difficult to find a metacriterion that would allow deciding which of them has the primacy over other cultural proposals. As Rorty observes: "Defenders of the idea that there is a methodological difference between artistic, political, and scientific revolutions typically adopt a strong, criterial notion of rationality, one in which rationality is a matter of abiding by explicit principles. They thus find them-

selves, willy-nilly, questioning the ‘rationality’ of the rest of culture.”<sup>1</sup> Each culture produces narratives through which it is more or less successful, but nothing more.<sup>2</sup>

In the absence of a conclusive criterion, Rorty claims that there is no basis which can give us definitive answers to the questions what truth is, what goodness is, or what constitutes the true nature of the world. Any attempt at finding an answer leads to sterile discussions, since “there is no natural order of justification of beliefs, no predestined outline for argument to trace”<sup>3</sup>. Nor are we able to decide whether our fate is determined by historical necessity or purposefulness or a series of coincidences.

Therefore, we can present “both intellectual and moral progress not as a matter of getting closer to the True or the Good or the Right, but as an increase in imaginative power. [...] Imagination is the source both of new scientific pictures of the physical universe and of new conceptions of possible communities.”<sup>4</sup> Imagination in intellectual and moral development is, in Rorty’s opinion, supposed to be a defence against overbearing attempts of specialists in the only truth and the only right choices. Such a defence is to be provided by “philosophical superficiality and light-mindedness” that will make people “more pragmatic, more tolerant, more liberal, more receptive to the appeal of instrumental rationality.”<sup>5</sup> Another tool used in defence against dogmatism is irony,<sup>6</sup> which offers a possibility of experiencing community in multiplicity and diversity.

Rorty emphasizes that the objectivist tradition of seeking truth for its own sake prevents man from becoming attached to community. Consequently, man

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<sup>1</sup> See Richard R o r t y, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 48. A similar view on rationality in science is expressed by Józef Tischner: “The model of rationality proposed by the scientific reason and elevated by it to the rank of the only obligatory model creates the illusion that all other models of rationality are irrational. The scientific reason does not want to allow for the pluralism of rationalities, which corresponds to the pluralism of reality” (Józef T i s c h n e r, *Myślenie według wartości* (Kraków: Znak, 1982), 446). Unless indicated otherwise, the translations are ours.

<sup>2</sup> “There is no synoptic view of culture which is more than a narrative account of how various cultures managed to get to where they now are” (R o r t y, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 92).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, 193.

<sup>4</sup> Richard R o r t y, “Ethics without Universal Obligations,” in: *Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism* (Harvard: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2021, 142). “From an ethico-political angle, however, one can say that what is characteristic, not of the human species but merely of its most advanced, sophisticated subspecies – the well-read, tolerant, conversable inhabitant of a free society—is the desire to dream up as many new contexts as possible” (R o r t y, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 110).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, 193.

<sup>6</sup> See Andrzej S z a h a j, *Ironia i miłość* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2012), 92.

is convinced that what is contingent must be suspended in order to reach the ultimate truth, which lies outside the world in which we live. Rorty disagrees with this view and argues that we should seek answers to the questions regarding truth and rationality with reference to a particular community in which these values will be for us “a compliment paid to the beliefs which we think so well justified that, for the moment, further justification is not needed.”<sup>7</sup> Here we could mention Kuhn’s concept of paradigm, in which a community, thanks to shared practices and the assumptions underlying their implementation, participates in its own development and in achieving goals stemming from a particular paradigm.

By rejecting all hypotheses which explain human desires and even the legitimacy of the existence of such desires, Rorty’s pragmatism would, as he himself believes, protect the existing structure of liberalism and justify the value of “good old” American democracy. An important assumption of this idea is that “it is no more evident that democratic institutions are to be measured by the sort of person they create than that they are to be measured by anything more specific than the moral intuitions of the particular historical community that has created those institutions.”<sup>8</sup> In this approach, man is the product of a historical community, and so, in Rorty’s view, the dignity of man can be legitimately reduced to “the dignity of a group with which a person identifies herself.”<sup>9</sup> In his opinion, “words like ‘kindness’ or ‘dignity’ do not form a vocabulary which all human beings can reach by reflection on their nature.”<sup>10</sup> This approach, as Marek Czachorowski aptly observed, is linked to the assumption that truth should not be required in understanding man, as each individual can develop such a model of “I” that would suit him and be adapted to his individual worldview, political preferences, or religion.<sup>11</sup> In this view, “the only ‘we’ we need is a local and temporary one: ‘we’ means something like ‘us 20th-century Western social democrats.’”<sup>12</sup> However, adopting this understanding of the notions of “I” and “we” will not allow us to explain any of the changes that have taken place in human history and have led to the formation of the “20th-century social democrats.” Here Rorty reduces the layers of the human being to those that are useful in a particular historical moment. The human person is but a point in the mass, a chain of molecules.

<sup>7</sup> R o r t y, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 24.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, 190.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, 200.

<sup>10</sup> Richard R o r t y, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 93.

<sup>11</sup> See Marek C z a c h o r o w s k i, “Personalistyczna etyka Karola Wojtyły wobec zarzutów współczesnego antypersonalizmu,” *Logos i Ethos* 53, no. 1 (2020): 103.

<sup>12</sup> R o r t y, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 214.

The philosopher opposes absolutizing and granting a universal status to what is merely local. His vision of the person is a vision of a concrete individual who is firmly embedded in the social reality that shapes her.<sup>13</sup>

Rorty does not seem satisfied with the outcome of this reduction, as he acknowledges that “even if the typical character types of liberal democracies are bland, calculating, petty, and unheroic, the prevalence of such people may be a reasonable price to pay for political freedom.”<sup>14</sup> The question is whether we would want to live in a society of bland, calculating and petty people and whether living among such people would provide us with a sense of security. Could participating in the life of such a society provide an impulse for development, for respect for others, for self-respect?

While reducing human dignity to the “dignity of the group” and, at the same time, moving beyond narrow pragmatism, Rorty views the issue of participation in moral social development in an interesting way.

In his opinion, morality “consists of those beliefs and desires and emotions which overlap with those of most other members of some community with which for purposes of deliberation, she identifies herself, and which contrast with those of most members of other communities with which hers contrasts itself”.<sup>15</sup> Thus, participation in a community would be accomplished through identification with a group or nation that is confronted with a different community. Similar distinctions were made in ancient Greece, where communities of Hellenic city-states were distinguished from “the barbarians” surrounding Greece.

Such identification may justify the existence of the social status quo, however, in the contemporary, dynamic, multicultural world it does not allow neither understanding of social relations nor expanding a community based on some historical-axiological basis by admitting other participants into its social life. Thus, Rorty accepts that “the idea of human beings striving for something supra-human should be replaced by the idea of welcoming more and more people into our community—taking into account the needs, interests and views of as many different people as possible.”<sup>16</sup> However, expanding a community simply for the sake of its expansion would be problematic for a historical community if there were no criterion for such expansion.

Lacking the possibility to decide what is good and true, Rorty presents a programme of moral development based on a specific criterion: “The problem with the pursuit of truth is that it is impossible to know when one has reached it,

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<sup>13</sup> See Zbigniew Ambrożewicz, “Holizm, indywidualizm, personalizm: Od dualizmu platońskiego do sporu o źródło i status ludzkiej jednostkowości (N. Elias, I. Berlin, R. Rorty),” *Analiza i Egzystencja* 30 (2015): 103n.

<sup>14</sup> Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 190.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, 200.

<sup>16</sup> Rorty, *Ethics without Universal Obligations*, 135.

even if one has actually succeeded.... We can, however, strive for ever greater sensitivity to suffering and ever fuller satisfaction of ever more diverse needs".<sup>17</sup> Here we see a break in Rorty's pragmatism, which stems from his assumption that subjectivity is primarily defined by vulnerability to pain and humiliation and the satisfaction of needs. Thus, "it is best to think of moral progress as a matter of increasing sensitivity, an increasing responsiveness to the needs of a larger and larger variety of people and things."<sup>18</sup> Participation in a community would thus be a process associated with the ability to widen the circle of people with whom we spontaneously feel connected. Rorty assumes that each of us has the capacity to empathise with the other, or at least to be able to imagine the other's feelings in analogy with our own feelings.<sup>19</sup> This assumption, and the assumption of universal empathy, directs him towards idealised social constructs. As Szahaj, a prominent postmodern philosopher observes, Rorty sees man as someone who seeks love and—in its name—is capable of building a utopia of harmonious coexistence, devoid of injustice and domination.<sup>20</sup>

Summing up, the moral progress that is supposed to unite a dynamic society is a matter of ever-growing empathy, not rationality.<sup>21</sup> The morality that makes it possible to participate in a community consists in the ability to empathise with a person who is suffering. The attitude which makes it possible to identify with the sufferer is not a universal one, since we usually identify with a particular sufferer (possibly with a group) rather than with all sufferers, but it is possible, by stimulating sensitivity, to extend the group which we consider to be "our" group so as to extend our understanding of "we" to persons whom we previously considered to be "them". The basis for such inclusion is not abstract recognition of all people as members of humanity but direct interpersonal relationships that allow people to include themselves in their community.

#### WOJTYŁA

#### A COMMUNITY OF PERSONS

Arguably, Rorty would agree with Karol Wojtyła's view that participation in a community comes down to this feature of the human person thanks to which—by existing and acting "together with others" in a wide range of interpersonal and social relations—he is able to be himself and to fulfil himself.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> See Colin Koopman, "Rorty's Moral Philosophy for Liberal Democratic Culture," *Contemporary Pragmatism* 4, no. 2 (2007): 48–51.

<sup>20</sup> See Szahaj, *Ironia i miłość*, 95.

<sup>21</sup> See Rorty, *Ethics without Universal Obligations*, 135.

However, in Wojtyła's opinion, human social life takes the form of a community which realises the common good not only in the objective dimension but primarily in the subjective dimension. Man as a person is a specific subject of social life, and his spiritual development requires a communal form of this life. Rorty would probably argue with this point, claiming that a community itself is a fundamental value and that we are unable to decide whether any spiritual basis for an individual's development exists at all.

In Rorty's opinion, an individual's development takes place in the dimension of the relation between "We" and "I." The "I" identifies itself with the "We" and shapes its ideas regarding the aims of its existence on the basis of the models of survival developed within a historical community.

Wojtyła, however, notices two basic meanings of participation in society based on interpersonal relations: "I"—"you" and "I"—"we."<sup>22</sup> The first meaning is related to "participation in the humanity of other people."<sup>23</sup> Humanity is not an abstract idea of man but a unique personal "I," which most closely corresponds to the idea of a "neighbour." It is "humanity itself which is possessed by every 'other' man just as 'I' myself possess it."<sup>24</sup> Participation in "the humanity of every man" determines "the personalistic value in the community of being and acting."<sup>25</sup> Participation here means essential personalisation of man's relation to the other. When someone experiences the other as a person, he comes as close as possible to what constitutes his personal "I" as a unique and unrepeatable reality.<sup>26</sup>

Such participation reveals man's capacity for spontaneous and positive opening towards others. However, the existence and action of a particular man together with others is a task which, as Wojtyła observes, needs a certain impulse. This impulse can arise from the evangelical commandment of love, from which directly follows that "participation in the very humanity of every man is the core of all participation."<sup>27</sup> According to Wojtyła, the commandment of love allows a community to be fully human, moreover, "if any human community impairs this system of reference, it dooms itself to a disappearance of the fullness of participation, to an abyss between person and community."<sup>28</sup> It can be noticed that both Wojtyła and Rorty emphasize the essential value

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<sup>22</sup> Karol Wojtyła, "Participation or Alienation," in Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 514–31.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, 520.

<sup>24</sup> Karol Wojtyła, "An Outline of the Theory of Participation," in Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 409.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> Wojtyła, "Participation or Alienation," 521.

<sup>27</sup> Wojtyła, "An Outline of the Theory of Participation," 410.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, 414.

of sensitivity to the other in the process of participation in a community and in its development, however, Wojtyła's considerations in this area seem more profound than Rorty's.

Participation, according to Wojtyła, is a disposition that makes a human being a person. However, man can renounce this disposition. He can act "together with others" without necessarily co-participating. As Wojtyła points out, by participating, man "co-acts" while performing some acts and realising himself in them. There are two dimensions of participation: an interpersonal one and a social one. Rorty's thought misses the former, although participation in the humanity of one's neighbour ("I"—"you") seems close to the notion of empathy and to the building of a community through emotional bonds. Yet, even though community is a fundamental category for Rorty, the idea of the participation in the common good ("we") is absent from his considerations.

Wojtyła emphasizes that participation is a specific constitutum, an essential property of community, thanks to which a person and a community "adhere" to one another.<sup>29</sup> Although man is a member of various communities within which he lives and acts with others, membership in these communities is not the same as participation. From the point of view of a person and his act, it is not only an "objective community of acting" that is important (he acts with others although he remains outside this community, he does not identify with its aims, he does not fulfil himself in common action), but also a "subjective community of acting" which is linked to the choice taken.<sup>30</sup>

Wojtyła, with whom Rorty would certainly agree, states: "Man chooses what others choose or even when he chooses because others choose, seeing in this object of choice the value that is in some way homogeneous and his own. Self-determination is linked to this—and in the case of acting 'together with others,' self-determination includes and expresses participation."<sup>31</sup> Here we can see the pragmatic sources of communal thinking shared by both philosophers.

However, Wojtyła observes that without authentic participation human action can turn into *passio*—"the happening"—which takes place under the influence of others, of which the best example is the mechanism of a "lemming-like rush." Acting together with others without participating deprives a person's act of its personalistic value since it restricts the possibility of his self-determination.<sup>32</sup> The condition necessary for participation is personal ful-

<sup>29</sup> See *ibidem*, 393.

<sup>30</sup> See *ibidem*, 398.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, 387.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibidem*, 388n.



filment, while its opposite is alienation, which deprives man as a person of the opportunity to realise himself in communal action.

Both individualism and collectivism can be sources of alienation. Individualism advocates the good of an individual as the primary good and demands subordination of all communities and societies to it. In individualism acting together with others is assumed to be a necessity, but this form of co-acting does not develop an individual and is a source of constraints on his development.

Collectivism, the opposite of individualism, subordinates an individual and his wellbeing to society. It is built on the assumption that as an individual pursues his particular interests, it is necessary to secure the possibility of creating the common good and of harmonious cooperation with others by limiting individuals' rights. Alienation, which originates in individualism and collectivism, is an opposite of those structures within which an individual, through participation, can develop and shape himself by referring to common good.

Wojtyła finds a way of overcoming these forms of alienation in solidarity, which is a "natural" form of cooperation with others and, at the same time, the foundation of a community. For him, "a man who lives in solidarity performs what belongs to him not only on account of his membership in a community but also 'for the good of the whole.'"<sup>33</sup> Moreover, "in virtue of this attitude, man finds his own fulfilment in complementing others."<sup>34</sup> References to the common good, to others and to self-fulfilment are necessary elements of a person's authentic development and of his participation in a community.

However, such authentic participation does not rule out opposition when an individual finds the way in which the common good is defined and realised inappropriately. In this case, an attitude of opposition is constructive and even constitutes a condition for the proper functioning of a community.<sup>35</sup>

What links an attitude of solidarity to an attitude of opposition to a particular realisation of the common good is dialogue. Dialogue allows opposition to contribute to the formation and deepening of human solidarity, since it helps to bring out what is true and right, what can be a source of the good for people by overcoming subjective attitudes and prejudices.<sup>36</sup>

Wojtyła contrasts the attitudes of authentic solidarity and genuine opposition with the attitudes of conformism and avoidance. A conformist may support those in power if he sees in it his own advantage, or he may avoid doing anything if he decides that supporting them is disadvantageous for him. In conformism, authentic participation is replaced by "a pretense of participation,

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, 401.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, 402.

<sup>35</sup> See *ibidem*, 401f.

<sup>36</sup> See *ibidem*, 402f.

a superficial adjustment to others, without conviction and without authentic commitment.<sup>37</sup> Conformism is a specific form of individualism, an escape from community which, by replacing authentic participation with a world of appearances, prevents an individual from fulfilling himself.

The same is true of avoidance, which is now often termed “internal emigration.” This attitude excludes any participation, even in its superficial form, as in the case of conformism. Avoidance is often justified by the belief that participation is impossible and opposition ineffective, but such an attitude leads to an individual’s abandoning his fulfilment in acting “together with others.”<sup>38</sup>

As a personalist, Karol Wojtyła emphasizes that the human person possesses natural dignity and unique individuality. Although—following Boethius—he understands the person as a *suppositum*, he also points out that man is not a being-for-itself,<sup>39</sup> because he is called to action and self-fulfilment, which can take place “together with others,” through co-existence and co-action.<sup>40</sup>

Wojtyła treats the human person as a contingent, potential, and not self-sufficient being, and hence, by his very nature, a being open to another person and a community of persons. A community, or rather the communion of persons, means living in a shared “for,” i.e., in a relationship of a mutual gift which replaces man’s original loneliness. Man fulfils himself through others and realises himself through other persons. In order to become oneself, man must participate in the life of a community and work for the common good, which is the axiological foundation of a community. Participation is realised only “when the person enters into a particular relationship with other persons and the common good.”<sup>41</sup>

Let us emphasize that what is meant here is authentic participation, in which the other person(s) is the target of action. The other person is a being endowed with interiority, a personal subject – a *neighbour*. The idea of a “neighbour” is related to the value of the person as such, independently of social references, and appears to us as the real good. Authentic attitudes, such as solidarity and opposition, are formed in this context. But if the person’s aim is self-interest, the other person becomes more of a competitor than a neighbour and, instead of working together for the common good, the members of a community begin to fight with one another. By separating his own good from the common good, such an individual “in a sense agrees to the fact that the community

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, 405.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, 405f.

<sup>39</sup> See Karol Wojtyła, “Osoba – podmiot i wspólnota,” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 24, no. 2 (1976): 13.

<sup>40</sup> See idem, “An Outline of the Theory of Participation,” 377n.

<sup>41</sup> Jan Gałarowicz, *Człowiek jest osobą: Podstawy antropologii filozoficznej Karola Wojtyły* (Kęty: Antyk, 2000), 275.

deprives him of himself,”<sup>42</sup> and, at the same time, “he deprives the community of himself.”<sup>43</sup> He becomes alienated from it and, at the same time, from the sources of his humanity. He deprives himself of the possibility of experiencing his own humanity in its fullness and of establishing a relationship of solidarity and communion with other people, for which he was created by God.

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Both thinkers, to a large extent, share communitarian views. They observe that the development of any social theory must begin with the protection of the sphere of human moral judgements. They also point out that there are better and more reliable fulcrums for this sphere than human will or a subjective belief that one is right. At the same time, they are against perceiving individuals as idealised, abstract entities, and argue that people should be treated as concrete entities, who exist in concrete political, cultural and social reality. They also emphasize the role played by a community in shaping man and the fact that particular individuals are rooted in tradition, religion and culture. They share the convictions that a community, in a way, precedes our projects and that sensitivity to the suffering of others is an impulse for the moral development of people and societies. And at this point it does not matter whether this empathy is innate to us or whether we create it.

However, unlike Rorty, Wojtyła emphasizes the relationship between the existence and functioning of communities and the existence in these communities of the specific common good against which an individual defines himself. Only when we acknowledge what the common good is, can we hope that, based on this good, a community will create the foundations of the axiological order in society.

Rorty is undoubtedly right when he argues that—to a great extent—we are the image of the existing social order. Society significantly “determines our consciousness”, including moral consciousness. It is a fact that man has no way of recognising his more deeply internalised spheres of the ‘I’ without having contact with others and being able to confront them. Without the belief that these spheres exist, man is condemned to deal with the most external sphere of the “I” and may even consider it to be his only reality.

What awaits us, citizens of the postmodern, democratic world, in the disenchanting world, devoid of transcendence and faith in human dignity?

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<sup>42</sup> Wojtyła, “Person and Act,” 405.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

Rorty's intellectual idealism offers us possible answers to this question. The defender of liberal democracy fails to see that democracy must be fought for, that the democratic status quo is under threat even in the United States and other fully-fledged democratic countries worldwide. Democracy cannot survive without people who voice their opposition in the name of the common good. Neither good-hearted, "bland, calculating, petty, and unheroic" people nor ironic intellectuals will make it possible. Contrary to what Rorty claims, man is more important for the development of societies than "moral institutions." Institutions are always vulnerable to manipulation and instrumentalisation of their message. At the end of the day, what really matters is the individual conscience of a person who is aware of his own dignity and of the importance of the values he is willing to defend. Decisions taken by many Ukrainians employed in Poland, who leave their secure jobs and return to their homeland to defend it against the aggressor, are indicative of this form of participation in the common good. Referring to the notion of "group dignity," especially within pragmatism, does not provide adequate explanation of a situation in which a person sacrifices his interests and decides to risk losing his life.

There is no room here for avoidance or compromise. Karol Wojtyła was an advocate of such an uncompromising form of participation. While Richard Rorty developed his projects in a somewhat illusory perspective of security, based on the belief in the power of the United States, Wojtyła based his thoughts on the experience of human confrontation with totalitarian regimes. We can see the validity of his conclusions in today's world in which democracy is at risk.

Rorty's thought allows including the people suffering in Ukraine in our social consciousness-sensitivity and treating them as "us," but it does not explain why Ukrainians give their lives for their country, which is the common good for them, regardless of the language they speak.

Rorty's social theory, on the one hand, deprives us of faith in truth, and on the other, appeals to hope.<sup>44</sup> However, without faith in bonds stronger than those pointed to by Rorty, without heroic, selfless people aware of their dignity, such hope seems to have no foundations. It is the vision of a perceptive but resigned man. Karol Wojtyła's idea of participation offers greater hopes for the survival of our world, based on the values to which we are attached.

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<sup>44</sup> "Human solidarity is a matter of sharing a common selfish hope, the hope that one's world—the little things around which one has woven into one's final vocabulary—will not be destroyed." Richard R o r t y, "The Dangers of Over-Philosophication—Reply to Arcilla and Nicholson." *Educational Theory* 40, no. 1 (1990): 41.

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## ABSTRACT / ABSTRAKT

Władysław ZUZIAK, Barbara ŻMUDA-FRYDRYCHOWSKA, Man's Participation in the World: Wojtyła—Rorty

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The paper presents two diametrically different approaches to the world and man, based on opposite ontological and anthropological assumptions. However, these have some common points that allow them to be compared and show the strengths and weaknesses (theoretical and practical) of both proposals. Com-

mon assumptions in the axiological sphere include, among others, the communal “nature” of man, the sensitivity of both philosophers to suffering, and their proposals how to reduce the scale of this phenomenon. Wojtyła attempts to save the traditional Thomistic theory, which seems resistant to the changing reality, and criticizes the modernist designs of the world. He also emphasizes that the act is what reveals the essence of the human being as a person. New approaches to his dynamic thought on man in the world have resulted, among others, in the emergence of the solidarity movement. Rorty, who also criticizes modernist projects, is more radical. His aim is to eliminate thinking about truth as being in conformity with reality and to remove the oppositions between subject and object as well as objective and subjective. According to him, the only important criterion is the criterion of utility. However, it is worth noting that this is not an instrumental and egoistic pragmatism, because it would be difficult to justify in this trend how sensitivity to the suffering of others can be useful for a person. Moreover, we try to show that Rorty’s proposal is limited to the pragmatic dimension, aimed at maintaining the status quo of American democracy, while Wojtyła’s thought (referring to transcendence) is aimed at shaping human beings who are perfecting themselves, heroic, and going beyond their internal and external limitations.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła, Richard Rorty, participation, axiology, sensitivity

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Władysław ZUZIAK, Barbara ŻMUDA-FRYDRYCHOWSKA – Uczestnictwo człowieka w świecie: Karol Wojtyła – Richard Rorty

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Przedstawiamy dwa diametralnie różne ujęcia świata i człowieka, oparte na przeciwstawnych założeniach ontologicznych i antropologicznych. Mają one jednak pewne punkty wspólne, które pozwalają je porównywać i ukazywać silne i słabe strony teoretyczne i praktyczne obu koncepcji. Wśród wspólnych założeń, w sferze aksjologicznej są między innymi wspólnotowa „natura” człowieka czy wrażliwość obu filozofów na cierpienie i wskazywanie dróg do zmniejszenia skali tego zjawiska.

Wojtyła stara się ratować skostniałą i odporną na zmieniającą się rzeczywistość teorię tomistyczną oraz poddaje krytyce modernistyczne projekty świata. Podkreśla przy tym, że czyn jest tym, co odsłania istotę człowieka jako osoby. Nowe ujęcia jego dynamicznej koncepcji człowieka w świecie zaowocowały

między innymi powstaniem ruchu solidarności. Rorty, również krytykujący projekty modernistyczne, jest bardziej radykalny. Celem, jaki stawia sobie, jest wyeliminowanie myślenia o prawdzie jako zgodności z rzeczywistością a także usunięcie opozycji podmiot/przedmiot, obiektywne/subiektywne itp. Według niego, jedynym ważnym kryterium, jest kryterium użyteczności. Nie jest to jednak pragmatyzm instrumentalny i egoistyczny, gdyż trudno byłoby w takim nurcie uzasadnić w jaki sposób wrażliwość na cierpienie innych może być dla człowieka użyteczna? Staramy się wykazać, że pragmatyczna koncepcja Rorty'ego prowadzi do ugruntowania postaw konformistycznych, podczas gdy odwołująca się do transcendencji koncepcja Wojtyły ma na celu kształtowanie człowieka doskonalącego się, heroicznego, przekraczającego ograniczenia zarówno własne, jak i zewnętrzne.

Słowa kluczowe: Karol Wojtyła, Richard Rorty, uczestnictwo, wrażliwość, aksjologia

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