

The person in dialogue, the person through dialogue

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In this article we consider a thesis that is quite typical of the philosophy of dialogue: namely, that it is in dialogue that the person comes to be. We present the thesis drawing upon the ideas of Martin Buber, John Macmurray and Calvin Schrag. (The last of these is not himself a fully-fledged philosopher of dialogue, but he does shed some light on the ideas of the others.) We also analyze the ideas developed by Karol Wojtyła, who – although he cannot be classified as a member of this philosophical school – offered his own interpretation of the thesis. The paper shows that philosophers from various schools can find themselves considering much the same thesis, and that this can lead to positive and constructive outcomes. Moreover, the person occupies the center of attention for personalists as well as philosophers of dialogue, so a mutual exchange of insights between them regarding the structure of personhood may well prove vital to a better understanding of the person as an existing reality.

Key words: dialogue, person, philosophy of dialogue, personalism

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of dialogue is a well-developed branch of continental philosophy: it has its own terminology, method and set of fundamental theses, and as a philosophical approach has also accumulated a very substantial body of literature. In this article, we aim to explore one specific thesis advocated by this philosophy: namely, that the person is constituted by, and exists in, dialogue. Although this thesis was originally formulated by philosophers of dialogue, it has subsequently been taken up by other thinkers, too – thinkers who cannot, strictly speaking, be classified as belonging to this school. Firstly, we will seek to establish how this belief is understood by philosophers of dialogue themselves, or by those sympathetic to this philosophy, taking into account the main threads in their thinking, and in this part, we will only be drawing on some selected proposals set out by Martin Buber, John Macmurray and Calvin Schrag. Secondly, we shall investigate similar ideas developed by a philosopher who did not formally subscribe to this philosophical stance: namely, Karol Wojtyła¹. Wojtyła was

¹ In this paper, we shall limit our inquiry concerning the person to the philosophical side of Karol Wojtyła's activities; we will not concern ourselves with his theological works. Of course, it is reasonable to claim that his philosophy of the human person is completed by his theological investigations. Nevertheless, for methodological reasons we will be limiting ourselves to his philosophical accomplishments.

a thinker who was interested in the theory of personhood², and tried to describe the person by analyzing his or her actions. We can already point to some preliminary similarities between this Polish philosopher and the philosophers of dialogue: firstly, all of these acknowledged that the person is a dynamic reality, and secondly, for all of them it is the case that personhood cannot be properly grasped from within the position of solipsism – the person should be understood as an entity belonging to a community of persons, or as someone who remains in a vital relation with another person³. Towards the end of this paper, we will concentrate on how Karol Wojtyła can help us to solve the dilemma embodied in this, our principal question: How should we understand the thesis that a person is constituted and exists in dialogue? Moreover, we will try to make a short comparison between Wojtyła, on the one hand, and Buber, Macmurray and Schrag, on the other.

PERSONS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIALOGUE

In using the term “person” in connection with analyses of the philosophy of dialogue, we are not going to define, at least at the beginning of this paper, the character of personhood assumed by philosophers subscribing to this stance. We are aware that it has its own specificity and may differ from Wojtyła’s understanding of this term. Later in the paper, though, it will certainly have to be clarified. For now, then, let us assume that both sides, when talking about the person, mean the human being, who is a special entity endowed with higher spiritual powers and who cannot be reduced to any crudely material or otherwise reductively one-dimensional reality. This entity is, moreover, a highly dynamic creature, albeit with various aspects of this dynamism brought to the fore. These presuppositions are signalled by the terminology pertaining to persons appearing both in the philosophy of dialogue and in Wojtyła’s investigations: namely, the ‘self’ or ‘I’, and ‘you’ (or ‘thou’).

Our overview of ideas about the person-in-relation is limited to two renowned dialogue-oriented thinkers, Martin Buber and John Macmurray, and one philosopher who seems sympathetic to this approach, Calvin Schrag. This, of course, does not exhaust a wide range of important thinkers addressing this topic, but it does shed sufficient light for our purposes on the dialogical approach to persons and relations. At least, pursuing the thoughts of these figures will allow us to in some sense grasp a pattern of thinking typical for the philosophy of dialogue more generally.

Martin Buber has a special place in dialogical thinking due to his seminal work *I and Thou*, but also thanks to *What Is Man?* Basically, he was convinced that the human being is not an isolated reality but a part of the social fabric. Special emphasis was given to the encounter that takes place between human individuals. Such an encounter is brought to light in his fundamental expressions, “I-Thou” and “I-It”. Although they must be considered together, we are going to put special emphasis on the former. The *I-Thou* relationship is not connected with experience, but has the character of a pure encounter: it happens by itself and cannot be planned beforehand. This stands in contrast to the *I-It* relation, where experience plays a vital role. What is important in Buber’s remark is that the “I” of the fundamental “I-Thou” term is a person. As he

² Wojtyła introduced a distinction between the person and the human being in the following way: “The term ‘person’ has been coined to signify that a man cannot be wholly contained within the concept ‘individual member of the species’, but that there is something more to him, a particular richness and perfection in the manner of his being, which can only be brought out by the use of the word ‘person’” (Wojtyła 1981: 22).

³ These similarities are accompanied by many dissimilarities and even contradictions between these thinkers. Thus we can compare their ideas concerning the person only in a limited way.

stresses, “the stronger the I of the primary word I-Thou is in the twofold I, the more personal is the man” (Buber 1937: 65). As far as their being a person is concerned, these two I’s depend on each other.

In Buber’s main work (*I and Thou*), we can find important declarations concerning the encounter between human beings, such as the following: “in the beginning is relation” (Buber 1937: 18); “all real living is meeting. The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou” (Buber 1937: 11); “Through the Thou a man becomes I” (Buber 1937: 28). If meeting and relation are absolutely fundamental rules of reality, then the human being cannot come into existence and fulfill himself apart from them. The very essence of the person seems to be constituted not from inside, but from outside. This latter is a kind of “between-reality”, which has the power to establish and sustain a personal being. In his work *What is Man?*, Buber puts it very straightforwardly: “the sphere of ‘between’ <...> is a primal category of human reality” (Buber 2002: 241). This, of course, is a problematic and controversial thesis, but we are not going to question it here. For the sake of the present analysis, we shall accept it as true, at least for some aspects of personal life.

An *I-Thou* relationship is a meeting of two subjects wherein they constitute each other. But in such a setting they do not lose their identity: they do not fuse into a person-less *We*. They keep their distinctness and sameness because a constituting dialogue takes place in the sphere of “between”. Buber stresses that what unfolds between them is, above all, love. “Love – as this philosopher claims – does not cling to the I in such a way as to have the Thou only for its ‘content’, its object; but love is *between* I and Thou” (Buber 1937: 14–15). Thus dialogue between persons leads to a kind of the personal bond, wherein the *I* and the *Thou* neither remain as isolated individuals nor as elements of collective reality. Hence, we can say that love contributes to becoming persons.

John Macmurray is known in the English-speaking world as a philosopher who promoted a version of the philosophy of dialogue. Engaging in polemics with René Descartes, he was convinced that the human being must be primarily characterized not as a thinker but as an active agent, or a doer. Human action, moreover, is not itself understandable in isolation. As he put it: “the Self must be conceived, not theoretically as subject, but practically, as agent. Secondly, human behavior is comprehensible only in terms of a dynamic social reference; the isolated, purely individual self is a fiction. In philosophy this means <...> that the unity of the personal cannot be thought as the form of an individual self, but only through the mutuality of personal relationship” (Macmurray 1991: 38). He rejects a Cartesian identification of the person with *res cogitans* – that is, with an extra-worldly reality whose basic characteristic is thinking. The human being manifests himself through action, which means that he or she is neither an isolated reality nor a semi-passive subject.

Macmurray actually goes further. He claims that a social sphere is not just a “home base” for the person, but a place where the person comes to be. He reasons in the following way, that “any ‘self’ – that is to say, any agent – is an existing being, a person. <...> Any agent is necessarily in relation to the Other. Apart from this essential relation he does not exist” (Macmurray 1998: 24). The philosopher is aware that any relation presupposes two sides, i. e. two agents. And they must represent the same kind of entities, namely persons. Macmurray points out that “the Other in this constitutive relation must itself be personal. Persons, therefore, are constituted by their mutual relations to one another. ‘I’ exists only as one element in the complex ‘You and I’” (Macmurray 1998: 24). The latter thesis seems amply to explicate the dialogical conviction that

interpersonal dialogue is a sphere where persons, as partners participating in dialogue, start out on their very existence. In a sense, the dialogue itself creates them⁴.

A third thinker who sheds some light on persons-in-relation is Calvin Schrag. Although we cannot consider him a fully-fledged philosopher of dialogue, he nevertheless does help us to better understand the dynamic character of interpersonal meeting. Schrag is known as a philosopher who discusses postmodernity (Schrag 1992) and the postmodern onslaught on the philosophy of the human subject in critical terms. Formulating his proposals, he started from the phenomenon of speech and verbal communication between human individuals. He claims that it is “within <...> [the] economy of discourse that the self is called into being, and it is called into being as the who that is speaking and listening, writing and reading, discoursing in a variety of situations and modalities of discourse” (Schrag 1997: 17). Because these forms of language use are manifold, the self has a fertile ground on the basis of which it can arise and grow. Schrag points to “a self as emergent, a self emerging from the panoply of communicative practices in which it always already finds itself implicated, an accomplice in the utterances of speech acts and in the significations of language” (Schrag 1997: 26–27).

Schrag also engages in an attempt to demonstrate precisely how the meeting of people and their linguistic communication lead to the creation of the human subject. The philosopher points out that “the otherness of the other needs be granted its intrinsic integrity, so that in seeing the face of the other and hearing the voice of the other I am responding to an exterior gaze and an exterior voice rather than carrying on a conversation with my alter ego. I do not create the discourse and the action of others. I encounter the entwined discourse and action of the other and respond to it, and in this encountering and responding I effect a self-constitution, a constitution of myself, in the dynamic economy of being-with-others” (Schrag 1997: 84). Schrag is aware that a conversation with another person is a meeting with otherness, so that I cannot reduce that other person to myself. The otherness must be acknowledged in its inner “physiognomy”, and must be respected. Responding to it, I build myself up as a person. Always, the sphere in which I exert an effect upon myself is “the dynamic economy of being-with-others” – that is, the sphere of “dynamic between”.

We can hear, in the voices of philosophers of dialogue, some important ideas about human beings. Firstly, a human being is not an isolated reality creating itself on its own initiative and with its own powers. Secondly, the sphere of “between” is constitutive for the person, because only a meeting of two such personal entities leads to something that is in itself new. Thirdly, mutual interaction through language and communication are examples of spheres where the personal self comes to be constituted and to exist. Thus, it is always a coming-to-be-in-meeting-with-others and in-existence-with-others.

THE SOCIAL FACE OF THE PERSON IN WOJTYLA'S THOUGHT

Wojtyła's interest initially focused on the person as a moral subject, and only later on the person as an agent – that is, as a subject engaged in carrying out all sorts of actions⁵. As a personalist, he

⁴ In the thought of Macmurray, there seems to be an unclear moment: at the starting point of meeting there must be two persons and, at the same time, persons come to be in such a meeting. Hence, this necessary being-in-relation, at the very outset, must be considered in some terms other than those of one's becoming the person in relation. Otherwise, we face a contradiction.

⁵ From the personalistic standpoint these two characterizations of the person – namely, that he or she is both an acting and a moral subject – are strictly connected. We cannot radically isolate one from the other, although we may well do so for the sake of philosophical analysis.

was also interested in the community of persons, acknowledging that the person is not a kind of monad, enclosed in itself and totally incomprehensible. He does exist as an independent entity, but at the same time is a member of the community-family that includes other entities of the same sort. That is why, in his main anthropological work *Person and Act*, Wojtyła embarked upon a project focused on participation, aimed at determining the mutual correlations within such a community.

The starting point for the concept of participation is the person, who subsists and acts. In many cases this acting is carried out with other persons, in a society and in various communities. The person, when acting, “goes beyond himself”, because the effects of one’s actions affect others. In this sense, the person transcends himself or herself. We might call this the “transitive” aspect of participation. But there is also another, “intransitive” aspect. Wojtyła points out that in acting with others, and often for the sake of others, the person undergoes a kind of inner integration (Wojtyła 1994: 309–310). The act, on the objective side, demands from the person his or her engagement – i. e. that one employs one’s higher powers and abilities (e. g. reason, consciousness, will, language). As a result of this, on the subjective side, one is oneself affected as a person, undergoing a kind of inner transformation – something that “remains in oneself” and leads to one’s flourishing. Wojtyła puts it this way: “in acting together with others, persons carry out actions and in doing so fulfil themselves” (Wojtyła 1994: 310).

Wojtyła takes up and develops the issue of dialogue in subsequent works. However, his approach to the topic is original and complex. He distinguishes between a personal subject and its relations. In the spirit of classical philosophy (in line with Thomas Aquinas, for example), the latter are considered accidents, which should not be confounded with the former – namely, with a substance⁶. The person enters into an encounter with others as a substance, and as such continues as one and the same structure: no dialogue whatsoever will bring about changes to the person. In other words, dialogue does not bring with it any substantial change to one’s personal life. During and after dialogue, the person remains the same kind of entity, even though something important happens to him or her. In the analyses of Wojtyła’s thought that follow below, I hope to bring out precisely this dimension of newness.

Wojtyła attempts, in his philosophy, to join together the methods typical of pre-modern and modern philosophy. This is especially evident in his approach to the philosophy of the human person. Thus the person is, for him, a separate *suppositum*, a metaphysical subject of existence and action. This is the manner in which medieval philosophy understood the person, and this is conveyed in, among other places, the Boethian definition (*rationalis naturae individua substantia*). Although to think in terms of substance is to hold that the person exists independently and is not an appendage of something else, and that he has a rational nature, it does not tell us much about this specific character. It is therefore only a preliminary treatment of this important realm. More specifically, Wojtyła observes that the definition is mute as far as the uniqueness of the subjectivity of the person is concerned. We must approach the person from the other side using different methods. He thus points out that we must take into account the lived experience if we are to say something more

⁶ Thomas Aquinas, in *On the Power of God*, states very clearly that “If <...> *person* signifies substance which is a self-existent being, it cannot signify a relation” (Thomas Aquinas, IX, A. IV). Although it is not applied to God (“in God relation is really the same as the essence”), it is indeed applied to human persons.

about the person. Of course, the latter needs not replace the former – i. e. the supporting role granted to the concept of *suppositum* – but rather can complement it. Wojtyła presents his idea in the following way: “the Boethian definition mainly marked out the ‘metaphysical terrain’ – the dimension of being – in which personal human subjectivity is realized, creating, in a sense, a condition for ‘building upon’ this terrain on the basis of experience.” (Wojtyła 1993: 212).

The metaphysical terrain of the person, as a constitutive sphere of this existence, is not a result of dialogue. He finds himself involved in dialogue, but cannot be changed and modified by it. From a realist perspective⁷, moreover, without such a *suppositum* dialogue would be altogether impossible. The former constitutes the very basis of human subjectivity – making it possible for there to be someone, in fact, who can enter into dialogue⁸. Nevertheless, outside of the realm of metaphysical subjectivity, the person is constituted by personal subjectivity, and it remains the case that the latter is formed, to some extent, by the lived experience. This category opens up a space for encounter⁹ and dialogue because even though persons can be granted some experience in the private sphere, lived experience still seems associated in a quite special way with interpersonal meeting¹⁰.

As a relationship between two persons, the *I-Thou* relation assumes that these persons are equal partners. As Wojtyła claims, “the *thou* is some other *I*”, but adds “one different from my own *I*” (Wojtyła 1993a: 241). This initial declaration is meant to underline the fact that persons enter relationship and dialogue as entities of the same kind – in other words, as equal subjects. Despite their structural similarities, though, they exist independently and differ one from the other. Thus we cannot treat the *Thou* as a projection of the *I*, or vice versa. Wojtyła, thinking about the relationship, points to its dual function: namely, to a separation and a connection that it introduces. This leads him to the assertion that “in thinking or speaking of a *thou*, I express a relation that somehow proceeds from me, but also returns to me” (241). This bi-directional move plays an important role in Wojtyła’s thinking about encounter and dialogue between persons.

As we said earlier, Wojtyła assumes that the metaphysical subject constituting the person enters into a relationship with another person, but is not constituted in or by this event. Nevertheless, such a personal relationship has some bearing on this basic dimension of the person. Wojtyła gives us an account of this influence: “the *thou* assists me in more fully discovering and even

⁷ The realist perspective means here that Wojtyła adheres to the Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophical tradition, especially as far as the concept of substance is concerned.

⁸ At the very starting point of dialogue there must be creatures who count ontologically as persons. Otherwise, a relation between them would not have a dialogical character. W. Norris Clarke explains this necessity in the following way: “we cannot literally bring into being another person that was not there before simply by relating to the thing that is there with attentive love. Try doing this with a rock, a tree, or a rattlesnake! The being to which we relate must already be of the type that can respond to such an invitation by intrinsic powers already within it” (Clarke 1993: 58–59).

⁹ In classical philosophy, which Wojtyła draws upon, there is a concept of transcendental relations, which occur between beings, including persons. They are primordial, and come ahead of any intentionally initiated encounters. Thus the relations we are discussing in this paper should be considered categorical.

¹⁰ The concept of lived experience is highly important for Wojtyła. Basically lived experience concerns the person’s subjectivity and Wojtyła calls it “the irreducible”, i. e. something that is “not directly apprehended by <...> a metaphysical interpretation and reduction” (Wojtyła 1993: 212). In this paper, we are going to limit our analyses to one aspect of the concept, which is considered in the context of encounters and dialogue. For a fuller exposition of this topic, see, for example, the analyses of Deborah Savage (Savage 2013).

confirming my own *I*: the *thou* contributes to my self-affirming” (Wojtyła 1993a: 242–243). A dialogical partner brings with him or her some help in discovering who I am and, in a sense, helps to ground me in the conviction that issues from this. That is why the first effect of an encounter is something within and not without. He underlines this thesis in the following way: “in its basic form, the *I-thou* relationship, far from leading me away from my subjectivity, in some sense more firmly grounds me in it. The structure of the relation is to some degree a confirmation of the structure of the subject and of the subject’s priority with respect to the relation” (Wojtyła 1993a: 243).

Nevertheless, a personal relationship leads to new effects, and Wojtyła is fully aware of this. He points in this direction when he claims that “through this activity directed objectively toward the *thou*, the subject *I* not only experiences itself in relation to the *thou*, but also experiences itself in a new way in its own subjectivity” (Wojtyła 1993a: 244). Now, we should certainly investigate what this newness is all about. Preliminarily, we may say that the person who enters into encounters and dialogue must activate his or her mental and psychological abilities and powers in order to cross the threshold of personal communication, be it verbal or extra-verbal. An effort to meet this condition receives (or does not receive) confirmation from the other. It is in this way that we should understand Wojtyła’s words (quoted above) that “a relation <...> proceeds from me but also returns to me.” Nonetheless, the Polish thinker also goes somewhat further in his analysis: he brings to light this dimension of newness while talking about the community that results from the *I-Thou* relationship.

Wojtyła claims that the relationship between persons takes on reality by virtue of the fact that they tend to reveal themselves to one another. This mutual disclosure concerns “their personal human subjectivity and <...> all that goes to make up this subjectivity” (Wojtyła 1993a: 245). He elaborates on this further, saying that “the *thou* stands before my self as a true and complete “other self,” which, like my own self, is characterized not only by self-determination, but also and above all by self-possession and self-governance” (Wojtyła 1993a: 245). Although these elements of subjectivity are common to all persons, this is the case only in a formal sense. In fact, every person, every participant of encounters and dialogue, has his or her own manner of realization. Hence, their disclosure – i. e. the revelation of their material side – is possible only in the context of a mutual meeting of one another and of interpersonal dialogue. According to Wojtyła, the community that provides the locus for such an exchange “has a normative meaning as well” (Wojtyła 1993a: 245). Members of the community must reveal themselves to one another in order to make this community genuine and real. As he puts it, “there *ought* to be a mutual self-revelation of persons: the partners *ought* to disclose themselves to each other in their personal subjectivity and in all that makes up this subjectivity” (Wojtyła 1993a: 245). Wojtyła adds that this revelation must be done in truth and it should also lead to acceptance and affirmation of the other in truth (Wojtyła 1993a: 245).

Thus interpersonal meeting and dialogue amount to something more than a cognitive revelation. Persons go beyond the level of objective relations: they meet each other at a deeper level – as subjects. This leads to a kind of personal bond, where new qualities can appear, like trust and a giving of oneself, depending on the strength of the mutual acceptance and affirmation (Wojtyła 1993a: 245). In other words, interpersonal meeting and dialogue find their fulfillment in love. Wojtyła paid close attention to love in his earlier work *Love and Responsibility*, claiming that “man’s capacity for love depends on his willingness consciously to seek a good together with others, and to subordinate himself to that good for the sake of others, or

to others for the sake of that good. *Love is exclusively the portion of human persons*" (Wojtyła 1981: 29). What is important to note here is that love does not come about spontaneously, but is a result of mutual striving to find a good and subordinate oneself to that good. Although we cannot exclude a spontaneous surge of love, basically – as Wojtyła claims – “love in human relationships is not something ready-made. It begins as a principle or idea which people must somehow live up to in their behavior” (Wojtyła 1981: 29).

The community, which is constituted by an interpersonal bond as a result of love, bears responsibility. Wojtyła puts it like this: “within the context of the *I-thou* relationship, by the very nature of interpersonal community, the persons also become mutually responsible for one another” (Wojtyła 1993a: 246). Responsibility, which is primarily a measure of the quality of community life, is also a path that leads members of that community to personal self-fulfillment (Wojtyła 1993a: 246). Such an understanding of meeting and dialogue can thus help us to integrate both the personal and social dimensions of the human person into a single coherent project.

Summing up, we may observe that in Wojtyła’s approach to interpersonal encounters and dialogue two essential spheres of action can be distinguished: namely, those which are internal and external. The former consists in the discovery of the subject corresponding to the participant (the *I*), which is essentially dependent on being aided by a partner in dialogue – that is, by the *thou*. It also includes confirmation of that subjectivity – and, once again, this is strengthened by the presence and activity of the other *I*. These actions lead to an “awakening” of the subject, and its building up of itself, as if “towards his or her interior”. In the external sphere of action, the subject reveals himself or herself and forms a bond with the other human subject. These two essential moves (stages) make the subject into a being-toward-others. Only then can a sphere of “between” be developed and a community of persons constituted. Consequently this sphere develops the person as if “toward his or her exterior”¹¹. Wojtyła stresses that this is not a causally determined realm, and that its proper shape is characterized by a mutual commitment finding its highest point in an attitude of love and responsibility. Thus, the real community of persons is not just a subject of interest for philosophical anthropology, but for ethics as well.

DIALOGUE CREATING THE PERSON

Wojtyła’s solution to the problem of the person in dialogue is far from simple. Reading his ideas and trying to understand them, we cannot simply assert that the person, as a whole, is created in dialogue, or vice versa. We can give two answers, which seem to contradict each other: namely, that the person is not created in dialogue, and that he or she is indeed the fruit of that dialogue. However obvious the contradiction may seem, it is not real. On the one hand, we have many premises that claim that in some respect or other the person enters into dialogue as a person, and so exists before the dialogue and should be considered prior to it. On the other hand, many other premises lead us to conclude that the person is created and fulfilled only through staying in dialogue. From what has been said above, we know firstly that as a metaphysical subject – a *suppositum* – the person is not created in

¹¹ Thus, we can point to the two “faces” of the person, namely an internal and an external one. While the former is basically guaranteed by the *suppositum*, the latter can be achieved via experience, through encounter and dialogue with others. In this sense the external face represents a greater task to be carried out than the internal one. However, encounters and dialogue benefit both of them.

dialogue, and, moreover, that being such a subject is a vital condition of dialogue. Secondly, we should also be aware by now that the personal subject finds fertile ground to develop on the basis of experience, and this is greatly aided by encounters and dialogue with other persons. Thus the person is to some extent created in dialogue and without it cannot become who he or she really is¹².

Now let us examine the positions regarding persons in dialogue presented above with a view to revealing their similarities and dissimilarities. Martin Buber, John Macmurray, Calvin Schrag and Karol Wojtyła all talk about the person in the context of dialogue. Thus, it seems as though we might easily be able to compare their proposals and establish how they complement each other. But this is not in fact so easy, because each of them has in mind a different understanding of the nature of personhood. Wojtyła, as we have seen, combines insights that are typical of the Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions with a phenomenological approach. Schrag draws on a variety of thinkers, but he intentionally rejects the idea that the person can be understood through the prism of metaphysical categories¹³. Macmurray was an original philosopher who did not subscribe to any established philosophical schools, and was roughly classified by his commentators as adhering to the ideas of Plato and Aristotle (Duncan 1990: 2). However, in his approach to the person he does not employ a metaphysical method. Buber's understanding of the person is rooted in Neoplatonic notions (especially in the thought of Nicolas of Cusa) (Scott 2014: 5–25), which is far from an Aristotelian approach to human beings. Despite these differences, we may assume that a philosophical dialogue between them is still possible, and although we cannot grasp their proposals as a unified project, they can suggest some ideas and even possibly furnish solutions for each other.

Buber, Macmurray and Schrag present a kind of personhood which – from Wojtyła's point of view – must be identified with personal subjectivity. Buber and Macmurray emphasize that the person exists in dialogue, and that dialogue is a real necessity for the person. While Wojtyła stresses the role of experience in becoming a person, he also has to acknowledge that the mature form of that experience can only be acquired in the context of an interpersonal meeting. Some consequences stem from this. Discovering and affirming one's metaphysical subjectivity is not only associated with cognition, but also with an experience of oneself. Thus, this “inner face” of the person needs a mature form of experience. The “external face”, in turn, needs it even more. Interacting with others, the person does not merely exchange bare information, but also communicates values. The latter, to a great extent, are given through emotional experience. Both reason and emotion come into play here¹⁴.

Interacting with others and communicating values find their proper sphere in the attitude of love. Buber and Wojtyła stress love as a mature form of dialogue. Of course, there are differences between them as to the understanding of love. For Buber, it is a happening, which cannot be foreseen or prepared for, whereas for Wojtyła it is the result of conscious

¹² Thus persons who do not engage in dialogue like Robinson Crusoe on a desert island still remain personal beings because looking metaphysically they are such entities (personal *supposita*). But a lack of dialogue puts them in a less advantageous position as far as the fulfillment of their personal potential is concerned.

¹³ He asserts clearly that “the who of discourse is not a “thing”, a pre-given entity, a ghost in a machine, or whatever” (Schrag 1997: 33).

¹⁴ Of course, there may well be a divergence between Wojtyła and Buber as to what power has priority. In Wojtyła's thinking reason plays such a role, which is clearly emphasized when he considers the relation between reason and emotions, and the topic of the emotionalization of consciousness (Wojtyła 1994: 99–105).

attempts on the part of persons. Nevertheless, both thinkers acknowledge that the person can be fully constituted and unfolded in the ethical sphere¹⁵. Thus to be the person is not only to be a special kind of being (entity) but also to be a special good or value.

Language is also an important tool in forming the interpersonal encounter. Through communication it makes us into agents, whose actions go beyond the sphere of inner reality, *res cogitans*. This dimension of linguistic activity is stressed by Macmurray. For Wojtyła, meanwhile, language understood as a tool for communicating facts and values plays an important role where personal agency is concerned. For both thinkers, language engages not merely the mental side of the person, but rather the whole person. Although coming to this from different directions, Macmurray and Wojtyła maintain that the human being is the acting person, and that his or her actions contribute not only to a personal sphere but also to an interpersonal and communal one.

Calvin Schrag has introduced the idea of “a self emerging from the panoply of communicative practices” (Schrag 1997: 26–27). From Wojtyła’s point of view, this assertion is ambiguous. On the one hand, it is not true, because as a *suppositum* the person is not constituted by communicative practices, but makes them possible. On the other hand, it seems to be true when we consider it from the side of the personal subject. Communication is a way in which encounters between persons occur, and through communication dialogue is carried out. Of course, we can imagine other ways through which dialogue can take place, but communicative practices seem to possess a privileged status. Schrag gives us examples of such practices, pointing to “speaking and listening, writing and reading, discoursing in a variety of situations and modalities of discourse” (Schrag 1997: 17). These activities are manifestations of the “external face” of the person, who – e. g. for Wojtyła – exists not only in-relation-with-others, but also in himself or herself. Thus, linguistic practices are themselves produced by persons, acquiring their mature form in their contact with others, but also returning to the persons and contributing to their perfection too.

CONCLUSIONS

Wojtyła observes that “it is sometimes said that the *I* is in a sense constituted by the *thou*. This superb intellectual synopsis needs to be unraveled and developed” (Wojtyła 1993a: 241). In the course of his analysis he gives us an original explanation of this phrase, which summarizes the main threads of his thinking about persons. Wojtyła’s attempt at clarifying this synopsis has many elements in common with philosophers of dialogue, but at the same time differs from them. Putting aside those differences which basically arise from their varied philosophical backgrounds, we may say that the reality of the person is open to being explored by a range of approaches to philosophizing¹⁶. At the same time, the person is a unifying principle for all of them. Thus, discovering a person in dialogue also allows us to explore his or her richness and complexity, and to find out that he or she is a communal creature: i. e. someone

¹⁵ One commentator on Buber points out that an *I-Thou* relation has two dimensions: an epistemological and an ethical one. The epistemological dimension is meant “to establish a parallel between relations with other people and relations with God”, while the ethical one is intended to reflect Buber’s convictions about how we should treat other people in the world (Charmé 1977: 161–173).

¹⁶ James Beauregard makes an interesting series of distinctions within the stance of personalism. He points to versions of this philosophical approach that may be said to be communitarian, dialogical, American, Hindu, British, Islamic, classical, and neo-personalistic. For instance, Buber represents dialogical personalism, Macmurray the British kind, and Wojtyła neo-personalistic (Beauregard 2015: 36–37). Wojtyła thus cannot be considered a philosopher of dialogue, whereas Buber and Macmurray can be classified as personalists.

called to relation, and consequently to love as the fulfillment of relation. But we are also led to discover that despite their differing philosophical sympathies and credentials, the philosophers engaged in this exploration are able to find their own way to a dialogue between themselves.

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GRZEGORZ HOLUB

Asmuo, dalyvaujantis dialoge, ir asmuo, esantis dialogu

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama tezė, dažnai aptinkama dialogo filosofijoje, – būtent dialoge asmuo tampa esantis. Ši tezė pristatoma remiantis Martino Buberio, Džono Makmurėjaus (John Macmurray) ir Kalvino Schrago išvalgomis (pastarasis nėra griežtai laikomas dialogo filosofu, tačiau jo teiginiai paaiškina kitų čia paminėtų filosofų idėjas). Taip pat analizuojama Karolio Voitylos (Karol Wojtyła) mintys, kuris, nors ir negali būti priskirtas šiai filosofijos mokyklai, pateikia savitą minėtos tezės interpretaciją. Straipsnyje aiškėja, kad skirtingų mokyklų filosofai mąsto labai panašiai ir tai gali padėti tyrimui pasiekti pozityvių ir konstruktyvių rezultatų. Be to, asmens idėja yra centrinė ir personalizmo, ir dialogo filosofams, todėl idėjų apie asmens struktūrą apykaita tarp šių mokyklų gali būti produktyvi siekiant geriau suprasti asmenį kaip egzistuojančią tikrovę.

Raktažodžiai: dialogas, asmuo, dialogo filosofija, personalizmas