

A New Personalistic Philosophy Based on Hans Eduard Hengstenberg's Interpretation of Max Scheler's System

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Abstract: The article discusses the possibility of a new personalistic anthropology rooted in *philosophia perennis* and modern phenomenology, based on the thoughts of German anthropologist Hans Eduard Hengstenberg. Unlike Wojtyła and Stein, who did not create a new synthesis based on Husserl's or Scheler's phenomenology and the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas, Hengstenberg was able to create an original concept of the human person involving metaphysical and phenomenological inspirations. It is personalism, based on the phenomenological theory of a *spiritual act* (Scheler) and the metaphysical theory of *constitution* (Plato, St. Augustine). According to Hengstenberg, the possibility of a new personalistic philosophy starts with a phenomenological analysis of three basic attitudes of human behavior: consensual to the object of cognition and emotion, contrary to the object of cognition and emotion, and utilitarian. The metaphysical heart of Hengstenberg's personalism forms the theory of the metaphysical constitution of the spirit, body and personalistic principle.

Keywords: person, phenomenology, metaphysics, constitution, body, spirit

The 20th century was the time for creating new philosophical systems, such as Husserl's and Scheler's phenomenology, Heidegger's fundamental ontology or Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, but it was also a time for new interpretations of the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics. Among the well-known and successful developments, such as Étienne Gilson's existential Thomism, we have also less known interpretations of Thomistic metaphysics in light of Max Scheler's phenomenology rooted in the environment of German and Polish Catholicism after World War II. Although in his work, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Gilson shows an optimistic view about the possibility of inner unity between different metaphysical doctrines, his main intention is not to argue for real unity between philosophical traditions, but to explain the failure in the history of metaphysicians.¹ In the case of phenomenology and Thomistic metaphysics, we are dealing with two different philosophical traditions; a detailed analysis of their main assumptions shows fewer convergences and more discrepancies. The possibility of a phenomenological

¹ Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 312.

interpretation of Thomism was researched and rejected by Edith Stein and Karol Wojtyła in the first part of the 20th century, but it was approved of in the second part of the 20th century by German thinker Hans Eduard Hengstenberg.

This paper will review the personalistic metaphysics based on phenomenological inspiration in the thoughts of Hans Eduard Hengstenberg. His important assumption is understanding phenomenology not as a philosophical system competing with the metaphysical theory of being, but as a tool for a new metaphysical interpretation of the human person. The main point of Hengstenberg's interpretation mirrors his term "matter-of-factness" (*Sachlichkeit*),² in which the phenomenological analysis of human attitudes toward the world – such as love, hatred and utilitarianism – is connected to metaphysical demand for objectivity. Beginning with such an accurate analysis of a connection between the world and a human being, Hengstenberg can create a new understanding of the human person as a constitution of the spirit, body and existential (personalistic) principle.

1. The Unity of Phenomenological and Metaphysical Experience in Philosophical Research

Karol Wojtyła contributed to the development of Christian personalism, proof of which is his publications from the sixties and seventies of the last century, such as *Thomistic Personalism*,³ *The Human Person and Natural Law*,⁴ *The Person: Subject and Community*,⁵ *The Acting Person, Love and Responsibility (Personalizm tomistyczny, Osoba ludzka a prawo naturalne, Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota, Osoba i czyn, Miłość i odpowiedzialność)* and a paper entitled *The Personalist Structure of Self-Determination (Osobowa struktura samostanowienia)* delivered during Philosophy Week at the Catholic University of Lublin in 1974. A less-known point of Wojtyła's search for new aspects in personalistic philosophy is his habilitation from 1959 entitled *An Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the System of Max Scheler (Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera)*,⁶ in which Wojtyła attempts to adapt Scheler's phenomenology to the personalistic understanding of human action. Wojtyła's habilitation is written from an ethical and theological perspective, and it, first of all, poses the question of using Scheler's phenomenology to interpret Christian ethics, but *nolens volens* also raises the question of the phenomenological understanding of a human being

2 Weibl – Herdina, *Dictionary of Philosophical Terms*, 367.

3 Wojtyła, "Personalizm tomistyczny," 664–675

4 Wojtyła, „Osoba ludzka a prawo naturalne,” 53–59

5 Wojtyła, „Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota,” 5–39.

6 Hołub *et al.*, *Karol Wojtyła*, 17.

that may be an inspiration for the development of personalistic anthropology. Finally, Wojtyła gives a verdict denying the possibility of creatively linking Scheler's phenomenology with *philosophia perennis*.⁷ He closes his critical analysis of Scheler's system using a theological criterion of evaluation:

Research [on Max Scheler's ethical system] convinces us that a Christian thinker, and especially a theologian, using phenomenological experience in his research, cannot be a phenomenologist. Consistent phenomenology will present him the ethical values that appear in personal experience "when they are able to act," whereas the task of an ethical theologian will always be to examine the ethical value of a human action itself in the light of objective principles.⁸

This verdict resembles the point that Edith Stein made in her article published in 1929 entitled *Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des heiligen Thomas von Aquino. Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung*. From the perspective of Husserl's phenomenology, she evaluated the main trends in Thomas Aquinas' thinking.⁹ By analyzing the relationship between metaphysics and phenomenology, Edith Stein is also inclined to hold that it is impossible to combine these two points of view and writes:

The course that transcendental phenomenology followed has led it to posit the subject as the start and center of philosophical inquiry; all else is subject-related. A world constructed by the acts of the subject remains forever the world for the subject [...]. Thus, here we may well have the sharpest contrast between transcendental phenomenology and Catholic philosophy: the latter has a *theocentric* and the former an *egocentric* orientation [...] On this issue, then, the course of phenomenology has diverged more and more from that of medieval philosophy [...] The unifying starting point whence all philosophical problems arise and whether they return, is for Husserl transcendentially purified consciousness and Thomas God and his relation to creatures.¹⁰

It seems that Stein's motivation for resigning from the possibility of combining phenomenology and metaphysics is not only the internally contradictory logic of these two philosophical systems that assume, on the one hand, the position of metaphysical realism and on the other transcendental idealism. An equally important factor of the discrepancies in this comparison is also one's ideological worldview that, for such religiously involved people as Wojtyła and Stein, is as essentially significant as the theoretical assumptions. That is why Edith Stein speaks of the inability

⁷ The concept of *philosophia perennis* understood in its metaphysical meaning rooted in aristotelian thomistic philosophy. Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 318.

⁸ Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, 125. Trans. J. Kobylecki.

⁹ Stein, "Husserls Phänomenologie," 315–338.

¹⁰ Stein, *Knowledge and Faith*, 31–33, 62.

to bring together these viewpoints, where one of them begins with the anthropocentric assumption of transcendental consciousness, and the other assumes the theocentric thesis of the essence of God and its meaning for a human being. Wojtyła notices the lack of convergence in the description and assessment of Scheler's human actions and Thomism: on the one hand, he assumes the appearance of ethical value as if by chance in an action, and on the other hand, he also assumes the objective existence of ethical values that assess human actions every time. We see that, just as in the case of Edith Stein, Wojtyła also takes the theological point of view that ultimately decides on stating the inability to unite the perspectives of metaphysics and phenomenology.¹¹

In his later writing, *Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man*, he goes one step further and recognizes the specific character of a human being as different from cosmological objects. He states *expressis verbis*: "We can no longer treat man only as an objective being."¹² What he calls "the irreducible nature of the human being as a subject" challenges the metaphysical basis of his thought referring to the transcendental understanding of a subject in the thoughts of Kant, Husserl and Scheler. Yet, at the same time, he seems to accept the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition as an important element of his philosophical legacy. In the introduction to his most important philosophical work, *The Acting Person*, Wojtyła suggests that "on the one hand, he owes everything to the systems of metaphysics, anthropology, and Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics, and on the other hand to phenomenology, above all in Scheler's interpretation and through Scheler's critique also to Kant."¹³ How can we understand the relationship between Thomism and phenomenology in Wojtyła's thought? According to George McLean, Wojtyła "enriches his understanding of being as *esse* in Thomas through a philosophy of consciousness focused on an interior reading of a person's life or *esse*, thereby enriching his scholastic examination of the conscious acts of intellect and will."¹⁴ The term "enrichment" suggests the co-existence of two different philosophical approaches (two exclusive notions of humanity) in Wojtyła's thinking, without their synthesis according to new terms or theories.¹⁵

Clearly refuting the possibility of a deep philosophical correspondence between personalistic metaphysics and phenomenology, her version based on Husserl and Scheler contrasts the position developed by the German thinker Hans Eduard Hengstenberg, who in the mid-twentieth century succeeded in making a synthesis of Scheler's phenomenology and philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Similar to Edith

11 A separate issue that will not be further discussed in the above presentation is the issue of the legitimacy of the distinction between realism and idealism. However, it is worth mentioning that what representatives of philosophical realism usually call idealism is simply an assumption from a different point of view.

12 Wojtyła, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man," 108.

13 Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, XIV.

14 McLean, "Karol Wojtyła's Mutual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness," 26.

15 Köhler, "Karol Wojtyła's Notion of the Irreducible in Man," 171.

Stein, Hengstenberg comes from the phenomenological environment, which he studied under Max Scheler in Cologne, and thanks to his conversion to Catholicism, he began to be interested in Aquinas' metaphysics. This interest bore fruit in a critical discussion of metaphysical theories, primarily on Aristotle's hylomorphic theory in the light of a being's composition from act and possibility,¹⁶ which in the 1950s led to the formulation of an anthropological concept that resulted in publishing *Philosophische Anthropologie* in 1957. In the second half of the twentieth century, this book was in huge demand due to its creative approach to *philosophia perennis* cultivated in the light of various philosophical traditions such as analytical philosophy (Geach, Anscombe, Kenny), Kantian transcendentalism (Lonergan), fundamental ontology (Lotz, Caputo), or phenomenology (Stein, Wojtyła, Hengstenberg). The phenomenological interpretation made by Hengstenberg seems to be one of the most successful attempts to interpret metaphysics in the light of contemporary philosophical reflection, which is proven by the huge interest in his philosophical anthropology in the circle of Catholic universities and the publication of its four editions in 1957, 1960, 1966 and 1984.¹⁷

The essence of Hengstenberg's synthesis is a personalistic understanding of man based on a phenomenological starting point, which is partly based on adopting the terminology already used by hermeneutical phenomenologists (*Eigentlichkeit – Uneigentlichkeit*)¹⁸ and on the original approach to the phenomenon of the human being, whose author is Hengstenberg himself. Like Wojtyła, Hengstenberg is an ethicist to a great extent, and his interest in anthropology has its outlet in questions about the principle of human action and the understanding of moral good and evil. At this point, the attempt to combine a phenomenological analysis with metaphysics turns out to be most creative in Hengstenberg.

The phenomenological concept of "matter-of-factness" (*Sachlichkeit*) that he elaborated is a key concept pointing to the ontological foundation of the phenomenon of moral good and evil. However, the concept of a spiritual act borrowed from Scheler leads Hengstenberg to formulate an interesting concept of the human person based on the idea of constitution, which can be defined as the personal constitution of man as a carnal and spiritual whole. The following discussion of Hans Eduard Hengstenberg's personalism will consist of an analysis of the phenomenological concept of the spiritual act and the assessment of understanding the person as constituted from a spirit, body and the personalist principle.

¹⁶ Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 87–99.

¹⁷ Unfortunately, the interest brought on by Hengstenberg's *Philosophische Anthropologie* was limited to the Catholic communities in German speaking countries. Except for some fragments, we do not have any complete English translations of this work and other writings by Hengstenberg.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 322.

2. Phenomenology of the Human Person

Max Scheler explicitly refers to personalism in his most important work, *The Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values (Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik)*. In formulating the title of his discussion on Kantian ethical formalism, Scheler adds a subheading: *A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism (Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus)*. Both Wojtyła and Hengstenberg, starting from personalistic positions, had to be very impressed with Scheler's attempt, because his elaboration of the phenomenological ethical concept includes, at least verbally, an attempt to develop a new personalist interpretation. What's more, in the sixth point of the second part of *Formalism in Ethics*, Scheler criticizes the theoretical position of formalism that identifies the person with rational activity (*Vernunftbetätigung*)¹⁹ and defines the human person, which is a possible starting point for a creative interpretation of Thomistic personalism: "The person is, rather, the immediately co-experienced unity of experiencing; the person is not merely thought thing behind and outside what is immediately experienced."²⁰

Assuming the purely intellectual character of a person, we deny, according to Scheler, its most fundamental characteristic, which is individuality. Therefore, Kantian formalism, something that Scheler does not directly write about, including Boethius' definition of a person as *individua substantia rationalis naturae*,²¹ are not able to accurately explain the principle of one's individualization. Significantly, Scheler does not directly point to the classical formula of Aristotelian hylomorphism and its Thomistic interpretation, according to which individualization is a consequence of the materialization of form. This principle, based on the Aristotelian theory of act and potency, not only explains the natural phenomenon of movement, but also the fact of the genesis of material being consisting in the unification of the general form through matter.

The principle of the material individualization of form is adequate for all beings of inanimate nature, and even for some living beings (animals and plants), yet with man, from a phenomenological point of view, it seems to be insufficient. Such a doubt appears first of all in the context of the theory of act and potency, but as we can see, the Schelerian interpretation of values also implies a material element, in which the German phenomenologist somehow approaches the classical belief about the relationship between materiality and individuality. When discussing the issue of the rationalistic opinion concerning reason as the only force that identifies and individualizes man as a person, Scheler points out that this is not possible, because

¹⁹ Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik*, 385.

²⁰ Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 371.

²¹ Boethius, *Liber Contra Eutychem et Nestorium* III (PL 64, 1343).

the acts of reason are beyond the individual and, just like form in the hylomorphic system, they cannot be the source of the individualization of the human person.²²

Individuality is acquired only thanks to the “material moment” in which Scheler includes acts of mental experience (*Erlebnis*) containing both intellectual contents as well as emotional and volitional contents (*Denken, Fühlen, Wollen*), including those literally placing the person in the body’s matter.²³ Referring to German (Kant, Schelling, Hegel) and partly also to medieval (Averroes) and modern (Spinoza) philosophical traditions, here Scheler does not present the issue according to topics in the metaphysical understanding of a person in relation to the ancient concept of the soul. However, we can see that by emphasizing the problems in identifying the person with reason, he somewhat touches the issue of ancient intellectualism, whose most well-known representatives are Socrates and the Stoics who believed that the human soul is pure reason and does not contain any of the passionate elements, such as the Platonic and Aristotelian understanding of anger, lust and rational desire.

Unlike Heidegger, who assumes the destruction of the ancient and medieval metaphysical traditions,²⁴ Scheler refers to the problem of intellectualism not to abolish the understanding of man as a soul or as a person, but to complete it according to the most modern phenomenological tendency. The following four suggestions can be included in this completion. First, a person is constituted from the three elements of thinking (*Denken*), feeling (*Fühlen*) and willing (*Wollen*), which coincide exactly with the metaphysical assumptions made by both Augustine and Thomas, for whom the human soul is understood in light of the Platonic model as a constitution of a rational element and irrational elements. Second, the establishment of the phenomenological concept of experiencing (*Erlebnis*) can be creatively integrated with the understanding of man as a person. Thus, the human person is nothing more than the unity of experiencing thinking, feeling and wanting in a threefold way. Third, the most important manifestations of human life (*Denken, Fühlen, Wollen*) are interpreted by Scheler as spiritual acts revealing what the modern philosophical traditions of Descartes and Kant call a subject, which results in the fact that a subject is not just an *a priori* assumption, but an assumption explaining the phenomena available to us. Fourth, paying attention to the fact of mental experiences (*Erlebnis*), including irrational acts among the fundamental manifestations of the human person, such as feeling or perception, leads Scheler to see the importance and value of the human body. The body is not a source of individualization for Scheler, as in Aristotle’s model, but it is the moment constituting the human person as a whole.

For the phenomenological interpretation of personalism, Scheler’s indication of a spiritual act as a fundamental manifestation of human action and a critical ap-

²² Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 371.

²³ Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 371–372.

²⁴ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 21–27.

proach to the establishment of a purely intellectual soul or some pure “I” as the subject of the act seems to be essential. The above criticism does not reject the assumption of the existence of some center in the human person responsible for spiritual acts, but points out that such a center cannot be assumed *a priori*, since its description must be connected with phenomena accompanying such acts as judging, love, hatred, perception, will, etc. Based on the phenomenological approach, the human person originally appears not in the question of who its carrier is, but in the question of who or what stands behind the extraordinary variety of acts in their forms and directions. According to Scheler, a correct analysis of the human act first recognizes the fact that it is realized by the individual as man’s whole being and essence (*Sein und Sosein*).²⁵

However, the consequence of the phenomenological analysis of acts is the emergence of the question about personality as the source of the phenomenon of their diversity. As noted above, Scheler’s diversity of act is reduced to three basic elements of human behavior, which are thinking, wanting and feeling. Thus, the Schelerian definition of a person assumes, on the one hand, the postulate of mental experience (*Erlebnis*) and the diversity of human acts in relation to a personal subject not as an intellectual construct, but as a living process. On the other hand, he assumes an ontological postulate indicating the presence of some significant source of phenomena appearing in the form of acts. Thanks to the concept of mental experience (*Erlebnis*) as the unity of all experiences, Scheler frees us from the blind alley of understanding the person as a completely transcendental reality understood only in relation to experiences, and not to experience as such. In other words, every human act of experiencing reveals the essence of a person as a source of their mental experiences. For Scheler, a consistent summary of this approach is the following definition of a person: “For the person is precisely that unity which exists for acts of all possible *essential differences* insofar these acts are thought to be executed.”²⁶

Thus, a person is nothing more than the unity of various acts as long as they are thought to be realized, but it is important in this description to emphasize not only the unity of acts, but their diversity. Scheler explains this diversity more deeply by suggesting that a person is not, for example, an Aristotelian god as a being consisting in thinking of thinking, nor self-consciousness, unless it is simultaneously a consciousness that unites in itself all its possible rational and irrational undertones (intellectual, emotional, volitional, loving or hating self-consciousness).²⁷ Furthermore, a person understood in this way is not an empty starting point for the mentioned acts, or simply a unity of acts, but it is a concrete being that can be compared to some-

²⁵ Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 395.

²⁶ Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 382–383.

²⁷ Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 382–383.

thing like a substance.²⁸ In a certain analogy to Franz Brentano's phenomenological approach, Scheler does not exclude a relationship between the phenomenological analysis and its ontological consequence, and this seems to be crucial for the phenomenological interpretation of personalism as opposed to Husserl's later transcendental starting point criticized by Edith Stein. Let us now try to look at the possibility of building a personalistic understanding of the person based on Scheler's phenomenology, whose creator is Hans Eduard Hengstenberg.

3. The Person Constituted of a Spirit and Body as Real Elements According to Hengstenberg

Both Wojtyła and Hengstenberg refer to Scheler's phenomenology primarily in the context of a new interpretation of ethical phenomena.²⁹ Although Wojtyła remains under the influence of phenomenology after his critical conclusion in *Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the System of Max Scheler*, in the following chapter, we will no longer refer to his later works but the attempt made by Hengstenberg. Hengstenberg's interpretation found success both in the case of the new interpretation of ethical issues and, above all, in the new interpretation of personalistic anthropology. Understanding such issues as the moral good or values, however, assumes a certain understanding of man by Scheler himself, which is partly reflected in Hengstenberg's personalist concept. It seems that one can identify three fundamental aspects of Scheler's phenomenology, which became the inspirations for Hengstenberg's anthropology. First of all, it is a study of the spiritual act, second, it is paying attention to the phenomenon of a human person's constitution of rational and irrational elements, and third, it draws attention to human corporeality as a real element constituting the entire human person.

Scheler's phenomenology is not, of course, the only source of inspiration for Hengstenberg, because he also drew deeply from his contemporary anthropological debate that focused on attempts to scientifically approach the understanding of the human phenomenon (*Gehlen*) and was constantly inspired by the Christian

²⁸ Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 384.

²⁹ Focusing on the ethical problems of Wojtyła and Hengstenberg is naturally generated by their personal philosophical interests and by Scheler's profile of phenomenology, which, unlike Husserl's theoretical phenomenology and Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, primarily focused on phenomena related to morality. Hengstenberg was greatly interested not only in anthropology and metaphysics, but also ethics, proof being his work *Grundlegung der Ethik* published in 1969. The title of the work indicates not so much the intention of presenting ethical issues, but rather an attempt to found a new approach to moral philosophy. Just like *Philosophische Anthropologie*, this approach is based on the phenomenological development of concepts such as the notion of matter-of-factness, which are later used to establish a metaphysical position.

worldview and Catholic theology. Looking at the very structure of his lecture on anthropology, we see that phenomenology had the greatest influence on him, which on the one hand appears in developing a new approach to man not in the light of dogmatic assumptions, but in the light of phenomena, and on the other hand, in inspirations for a new interpretation of traditional metaphysics of the person based on Aristotelian hylomorphism and its reception by Thomas Aquinas.

3.1. The Spiritual Act

In the metaphysical part of his anthropology, Hengstenberg takes up the issue of a spiritual act as the fundamental manifestation of the human person and formulates the following thesis: There is no other way to approach the metaphysics of the human spirit as approaching it through a spiritual act.³⁰ This means its unequivocal recognition for phenomenological observation as a source of metaphysical knowledge about man, which especially manifests itself in the concept of the soul paved by Plato and developed by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Hengstenberg does not apply this concept in principle, but according to German philosophical tradition, he uses the term “spirit” (*Geist*), which, in his understanding, means the reality understood by *philosophia perennis* as the idea of the soul. Therefore, it is definitely not a Hegelian term, but a metaphysical term which means, as we shall later see, the constitution of the elements that make up all the sources of human action.

In the phenomenological context, however, Hengstenberg spoke of a spiritual act as a phenomenon that concealed in itself a spirit as an invisible source of all spiritual acts. A spiritual act is not only a phenomenon, but also an original phenomenon (*Urphänomen*), meaning a phenomenon that can no longer be reduced to any other phenomenon. Hengstenberg takes this belief from Scheler, which he clearly writes about in his anthropology.³¹ This means that the spiritual act is timeless (*überzeitlich*) and it is not a consequence of any material or psychophysical transformation (*Werdelosigkeit*). Timelessness means keeping acts beyond time in the sense of natural duration, beginning and end. These concepts primarily refer to physical and natural processes, which were metaphysically interpreted by Aristotle in the framework of the theory of act and potency.

Although Hengstenberg is for the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas, yet he violently opposes the theory of act and potency adopted by Thomas from the Stagirite, because he believes that it was created to explain above all physical processes such as motion, and so it is inherently inadequate to explain the phenomenon of the human spirit. This is because, according to Hengstenberg, the human spirit is not subject to

³⁰ “Es gibt keinem anderen Zugang zur Metaphysik des Geistes als über den Akt.” Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 138.

³¹ Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 150.

the causal principle, meaning it is not the result of any action being a consequence of a physical or metaphysical cause and effect principle. Hengstenberg calls such understanding autonomism, where man and the world are a consequence of causality, which characterizes the Aristotelian understanding of the cosmos as an eternal and uncreated reality. At the same time, it does not ask about the source of something like a human soul or an unmoved mover, or a transcendental understanding of the world in the sense of something in itself and man in the sense of Kant's transcendental self.³²

The human spiritual act is an original phenomenon because its source is not material reality subject to the law of cause and effect, but it is a spiritual reality that transcends the dynamics of physical transformation. At the same time, a spiritual act is also beyond time, which means that it stands beyond the phenomenon of duration and action, which we can measure with any measure based on motion. This does not mean eternity and some presumed divine act because it is not absolutely devoid of a "genesis" in the sense of a beginning.³³ Acts have a beginning, according to Hengstenberg, but they do not have an end adequate to the reality of the soul as analyzed by Plato in *Phaedo*, in which Plato's Socrates puts forward a number of arguments for the immortality of the soul that accurately reflect the above opinion. To quote Scheler, we can describe this opinion following Hengstenberg as a situation in which acts have their place in time, but they do not take place in a timely manner, meaning that they do not take a temporal course.³⁴

The originality of human acts that are the sources of all human phenomena is essential for Hengstenberg's personalism, because the principle of non-reduction of an act to any other phenomenon corresponds to the personal character of a human being.³⁵ This means that both the act and the human person, being the ultimate sources of human acts, are a *sui generis* reality, and knowledge about them cannot be derived by analogy to the physical world. Man's essence has the characteristic of an original phenomenon in the sense that it is the essence of every man.³⁶

This term had a phenomenological character as long as Hengstenberg was convinced of the theoretical and not the existential nature of Aristotle's metaphysics and its Thomistic reception. A being (*Wesenheit*) in this light is not something similar to a Platonic form possessing the unique character of singularity, but rather it is a general notion that is a consequence of logical abstraction. The phenomenal originality of man's being certainly does not correspond with the general idea, but suggests the originality of the human person in every case of a personal being. Recognizing the unique-

³² Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 88–89.

³³ Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 149.

³⁴ "Die Person lebt wohl in der Zeit hinein [...] nicht aber lebt sie in der phänomenalen Zeit, die im Abfluss der innerlich wahrgenommenen, seelischen Prozesse unmittelbar gegeben ist oder gar in der objektiven Zeit der Physik." Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik*, 400.

³⁵ Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 151.

³⁶ Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 156.

ness of the human person is at the same time a condition for recognizing one's special dignity, which is incomparable to the dignity or significance of any other being.

3.2. The Human Spirit in the Light of the Constitution of Elements

The phenomenological theory of an act or a spiritual act finds a very special application in the interpretation of the human person as a constitution of elements,³⁷ which in the metaphysical tradition were usually referred to as faculties (Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Augustine of Hippo) or elements of the human soul (Plato).³⁸ Due to his critique of the theory of act and potency, Hengstenberg does not share Thomas' view that interprets individual elements of the soul in the sense of faculties understood as potencies of the soul, but like Augustine, he uses a certain term that very much reflects the reality of the soul's faculties. This term is the concept of "Vermögen," which in a very broad context in German describes potential or possibility. In describing the connection between an act and potency, Hengstenberg formulates its implementation in the following thesis: The spirit is totally present in every act. In the same way, volitional, intellectual and emotional elements are undivided and present in the act and build unity. The center of act-realization is the whole person acting with the entire spirit.³⁹

The entire human person is a unity of three potencies, the will, intellect and emotions, which are realized simultaneously in each act. In this simple definition, Hengstenberg combines the traditional science of a person with the phenomenological approach, whose central concept is the concept of the act. The three potencies of the human person (the human soul) are included in it not only as three elements and potencies of the soul/spirit, but primarily constitute the co-pervading elements of an act. This means that every act of an intellectual nature also contains a volitional

³⁷ Constitution not in the transcendental understanding of subject constituting its objects. Scherer, "Aktuelle Perspektiven," 380; *idem*, "Ontologische Konstitution," 167–184.

³⁸ When specifying individual elements of the soul, such as the intellect and will, Thomas uses the Latin term *potestas*, which can be described in English as "power." Aquinas' *potestas*, however, is not a colloquial term, but refers to the Aristotelian theory of act and potency, in the light of which the soul's authorities are identified with the potencies of thinking or acting. The Stagirite's theory is also used by Thomas in explaining the phenomenon of sensual perception, in which the author of the *Summa Theologica* exactly follows the example of the author of *De anima*. Augustine can be attributed the understanding of individual elements of the soul in the sense of the soul's authorities, but this time not in the context of the theory of act and potency. In *De Libero arbitrio*, the Bishop of Hippo describes elements of the soul such as reason, lust and will, referring to them by the Latin term *facultas*. This is a term not related to the metaphysical theory of act and potency, and we can say that in this case, the notion of potency is used as a colloquial notion, because Augustine neither develops his anthropological language nor accepts it as strictly as Thomas takes it from Aristotle. However, elements of the soul belong to the description of the Platonic soul in the fourth part of the *Republic* only as elemental parts of the whole.

³⁹ "In jedem Akt ist der ganze Geist mit seiner Fülle und Seinsmacht gegenwärtig und wirksam. In einem Akt sind Volitives, Intellektives und Emotionales ungeschieden und eins. Die ganze Person ist es, die im ganzen Geiste den Akt vollzieht." Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 161.

and an emotional element, and the same applies to a volitional act and an emotional act. This is so because the source of the acts is the unity of the human spirit that is the ultimate foundation of the unity of the human person. Thus, in addition to the individual reality of the individual authorities and their related effects (*Eigenwirklichkeit*), there is also the reality of the whole (*Gemeinwirklichkeit*) of the human spirit and human person that Hengstenberg describes as that person's being (*esse, Sein*). According to the phenomenological tradition, the above description assumes the intentionality of each act at this point as well, which correspond to various objects of an act. For an intellectual type of act, the object will be the essence of an object (*Wesenheit*), for a volitional act, it will be its being (*esse*), while for an act of an emotional nature, it will be its ontological sense or value (*Wert*). Particularly in the latter case, we see Hengstenberg's deep connection with Scheler's phenomenological tradition, which emphasized not only the importance of the emotional factor in a human being, but also related it to the concept of values and thus incorporated it into the ethical and anthropological interpretation of the human person.

Like Scheler, Hengstenberg also rejects metaphysical and Kantian intellectualism, stressing not only the role of the volitional factor, but also the role of the affective factor in the structure of the human person and a spiritual act. It seems that through the acquisition of the phenomenological theory of an act, Hengstenberg manages to describe not only the unity of being a human, but also action. The authorities of the soul are not its authorities in the metaphysical sense of a part and the whole, nor in the metaphysical sense of potency are they changing into an act, but in the phenomenological sense of the act contain three elements constituting the human spirit.

3.3. The Significance of the Body as a Real Element Constituting the Human Person

The boldest ontological element of Hengstenberg's personalism is probably his concept of the human body, which refers to the phenomenological intuition meaning something like mental experience (*Erlebnis*) and also Scheler's element of affection in a human being. Unlike Scheler, however, Hengstenberg approaches the problem of the human body from the ontological point of view by formulating a principle that overturns the classical interpretation of matter that applies Thomas Aquinas' personalism. As has already been pointed out, Hengstenberg criticizes the Aristotelian theory of act and potency, noting its manifestation of autonomy that explains the reality of both man and the entire cosmos without assuming a transcendent reason sufficient for their sensible existence.

What's more, this criticism reflects a completely new approach to the human body that is rooted in the concept of the body as a reality as equally real as the human spirit itself. This reality corresponds first of all to the Christian concept of the body, which Wojtyła in *Love and Responsibility* does not perceive as a threat

to the human spirit, but as its complement and source of a human being's dignity. At this point, Hengstenberg and Wojtyła are completely in agreement, the first proposing an ontological and anthropological explanation of why the human body as a partner of the spirit can be the source of a person's dignity. Hengstenberg's critique is also followed by a criticism built on the theory of act and potency in Aristotelian hylomorphism, which identifies matter with the ability to perceive reality only at a formal moment.⁴⁰

Already in *Autonomismus und Transzendenz-Philosophie*, his ontologically most important work criticizing hylomorphism and the theory of act and potency, Hengstenberg assumes a completely different from Aristotelian and Thomistic understanding of matter. On the one hand, matter is not or should not be an ontological notion in the sense in which it is used by the Stagirite, and on the other hand, based on the great development of science from modernity to contemporary times, we can assume the necessity of such a philosophical approach to matter that takes into account scientific achievements.⁴¹ Let us now try to delve into the understanding of the human body based on the scientific interpretation of matter, which takes into account its specific character constituting a human person. The original theory of the body is based on Hengstenberg's anthropology according to the concept of chthonicity. The chthonic principle applies to the sphere of reality on the borderline with the human spirit, which it touches by organizing matter in the form of atoms, molecules and other building elements of the body, and these can even reach subatomic levels. It is from these that the spirit forms a human body as cells, organs, apparatus and the corporeal whole of the human person. A very similar logic of understanding the chthonic element refers to the psychic sphere, in which the human spirit always finds a certain reality that does not come from it and which it must face. Ultimately, Hengstenberg defines chthonicity as something that the spirit initially finds in the process of form-realization.⁴² The element of chthonicity is what the human spirit finds in the process of forming its body and life, and what it must at the same time put into the acts of its expression. Examples of this reality are not only the physical and biological elements of matter, but also elements of the human psyche, such as the human sex drive. The spirit meets it and collides with it as against something originally alien to it, which it must integrate and transform when building a human person. We can more broadly refer to this observation by Hengstenberg as the Platonic drives such as lust and anger. Though it is true that in the understanding of the Platonic Socrates in the *Republic* they are located in the soul, but being phe-

⁴⁰ Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 134–161.

⁴¹ "Die Materie ist dagegen primär gar kein *metaphysischer*, sondern ein *physischer* Begriff." Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 140–141.

⁴² "Dieses nun, was der Geist bei seinem Formungsgeschehen, vorfindet und woran er bei seinem Ausdrucksgeschehen unmittelbar ansetzen muss, nennen wir das Chthonische." Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 220.

nomena primarily referring to the body, they are found on the outskirts of the soul in the sense of its contact with the body, which Plato basically does not pay attention to. They are noticed, however, by later Stoic thinkers and doctors such as Galen or Hippocrates, who place the Platonic drive in specific places of the human body, such as the breast or heart (*thumos*) and the abdomen (*epithumia*).

3.4. Personalism According to Metaphysical Constitution

The issue of the unity of an act and its simultaneous diversity manifested in the difference between the intellectual, volitional and emotional elements included in the previous section finds its full explanation in the overall view of the human person within the framework of the metaphysics of constitution. For Hengstenberg, the notion of constitution belongs to the key concepts of his metaphysical interpretation of the human person, whose foundation is the ancient theory of the multi-part soul. Therefore, according to Hengstenberg, a particular concrete person (*esse, Sein*) is constituted from three elements of a spiritual act. Hengstenberg's repeated rule of the constitutional principle reads: constitutive elements are not without a constituted being.⁴³ This means that the elements constituting some reality (e.g. a human person) always accompany what is constituted and vice versa. The reality of being a human person not only refers to the reality of one's ontological whole, but also to the reality of its individual elements or the moments of one's spiritual acts. The concept of constitution finds its application in Hengstenberg's anthropology in both its phenomenological and ontological parts. The phenomenological part deals with the concept of identity (*Selbst*), which can be defined as the constitution of all acts of the human person shaping the personal center of the human spirit. The bundle of all potential acts creates a kind of spiritual unity within the person that can be described as one's spiritual identity. It is the result of the fact that every act is not an act isolated from other acts in a person's life, but quite the contrary, it is related to all other acts. The phenomenon that reveals this relationship is the specific hierarchy of acts that regulates the importance and meaning of a given act for a human person. This bond or bundle of acts creates the reality of human identity, which is visible on the intellectual, volitional and emotional levels.⁴⁴

However, both the constitution of the spirit and the constitution of human identity in the above three aspects do not yet constitute a human person or human personality in the full sense. This is because a human person, according to Hengstenberg, is the expression of human existence in the overall sense, which contains all of its possible constituent elements, and even the human spirit is subordinated to

⁴³ "Das Konstituens ist nicht ohne das Konstituierte." Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 161.

⁴⁴ Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 177.

the whole.⁴⁵ In the previous section, the interpretation of the human body was explained not as matter in the context of the metaphysics of act and potency, but in the context of the establishment of the reality of the body that Hengstenberg associated with the disclosure of the so-called chthonic moment.

The reality of the body determines that a human person is not simply and above all a soul or a spirit, but a constitution of a spirit and body on an equal basis of ontological partnership. In abandoning the theory of act and potency, Hengstenberg is not able to point to any other logical way to combine the body and spirit into a coherent unity of the whole, but at least signals the very fact of the existence of such a whole.⁴⁶ It seems that at this point, we touch upon both the most original solution for Hengstenberg's personalism and also one of the greatest aporias of philosophical anthropology in general. It is connected with the gap between the spiritual element and the corporeal element in man, which in philosophical tradition were usually identified as belonging to two different ontological orders.⁴⁷

Assuming that two real elements constitute every human person shaping the human spirit's identity (*Geist, Selbst*) and the body as integrated into the concept of "I" life (*Leben, Ich*), Hengstenberg sees the necessity of establishing yet another constituent element whose task would be to connect the spirit and the body as two irreducible aspects of the human person. This is because both the spirit and the body have in themselves a clear ontological profile of their independent existence, which never appear independently in the sense of reality in itself. The human spirit always needs the human body and vice versa.

The impossibility of their independent existence leads, according to Hengstenberg, to the need to establish a third principle as a reason sufficient for the existence of a human person in the sense of a spiritual and bodily constitution.⁴⁸ Without assuming any other theory to replace Aristotle's hylomorphism that he criticized, Hengstenberg suggests taking into account the logical axiom that talks about the dependence of the two terms based on a third term. This axiom was originally formulated in *Autonomismus und Transzendenz-Philosophie*,⁴⁹ while its most important application is found in *Philosophische Anthropologie*. In a situation where two

⁴⁵ Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 177.

⁴⁶ Hüntelmann, "Zur strukturalen Einheit von Sein und Sinn," 234. The term "expression" (*Ausdruck*) is used by Hengstenberg for description of sense but it can be used also for relationship between spirit and body, the spirit as a source of expression and the body as its milieu. Hengstenberg, *Freiheit und Seinsordnung*, 34.

⁴⁷ The concept that eliminates the hiatus between the body and the spirit is epiphenomenalism, which assumes that the spirit and all "spiritual" human activities are only an emanation of the body. This view does not only belong to modern biological sciences about man, but was already mentioned by Plato in the Pythagorean position, whose representatives in the dialogue *Phaedo* are Simmias and Kebes. The author of the dialogue is, of course, in the position of separating the two realities connected with the thesis about the immortality of the human soul.

⁴⁸ Scherer, "Aktuelle Perspektiven," 382–383.

⁴⁹ Hengstenberg, *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*, 161.

elements constituting some being dependent on one another due to belonging to a common description of this being, they can only describe this term by a third element, which is just as original in relation to the other two.⁵⁰ This third element is the *personalistic principle* (*Personalitätsprinzip*) constituting the human person along with the spirit and the body.⁵¹ In his late work *Seinsüberschreitung und Kreativität* he shows the personalistic principle as the particular expression of the principle of existence (*Existenzprinzip*).⁵² The ontological derivation of the necessity to establish a *personalistic principle* that co-shapes and co-forms a human person in connection with the body and the spirit is accompanied by the ascertainment of the existence of such a principle on the phenomenal level. This observation is finalized by Hengstenberg in the statement that the essence of a particular man is seen not only in separate corporeal and spiritual phenomena, but also in the phenomena that connect the body and spirit.⁵³

This psychophysical connection can be distinguished in such human phenomena as gestures, facial expressions, handwriting, or a characteristic way of moving about. These are not exclusively spiritual things, because they can be observed at the level of a phenomenon, and are also not simply corporeal because their source cannot be found in a human body.⁵⁴ They are the bearers of human individuality, which does not simply arise in the pure space of the spirit, nor in the body, but precisely in their fusion, for which the personalistic principle is responsible. What seems most important in this approach to personalism is the fact that Hengstenberg leveled out the gap between the spirit and the body, which is the consequence of an ontological assumption verifying itself in phenomenal reality.

Conclusion

Edith Stein's and Karol Wojtyła's answer to the question of possible unity between phenomenological and metaphysical (Thomistic) experience is negative. From their perspective, we can hardly unite metaphysical realism and transcendental idealism as discrepant philosophical approaches (Stein) producing clear differences in the ideo-

⁵⁰ "Wenn zwei Termini in bezug auf eine gemeinsame Seinsbestimmung voneinander abhängig sind, dann kann nicht eines von beiden diese gemeinsame Seinsbestimmung hervorbringen und dem anderen Teil beilegen, sie können vielmehr diese Bestimmung nur haben in einem dritten, das ihnen gleichursprünglich ist." Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 296.

⁵¹ Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 297.

⁵² Hengstenberg, *Seinsüberschreitung und Kreativität*, 90–92.

⁵³ "Geist und Leben sind beide ununterschiedlich durchwirkt von der einen Wesenheit des konkreten Menschen." Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 297.

⁵⁴ Hengstenberg, *Philosophische Anthropologie*, 299.

logical worldviews (Wojtyła). That is why Edith Stein speaks of the inability of bringing together these viewpoints, where one of them begins with the anthropocentric assumption of transcendental consciousness, and the other assumes the theocentric thesis of the essence of God and its meaning for a human being. Hans Eduard Hengstenberg has a different opinion. On the one hand, he develops a successful phenomenological introduction to the metaphysical description of a human person based on the concept of *Sachlichkeit*. On the other hand, he proposes the new metaphysical understanding of a human person focused on the concept of constitution. Understanding a soul as the constitution of elements was traditionally known since Plato's theory of the soul in *Republic*, but Hengstenberg can use it in bringing together the Schelerian postulate of the spirit as the crucial element of a human being and the Christian demand of the body as the instrument for a practical and moral life. Finally, he identifies the third element of a person's constitution, the personalistic principle, as the bridge between the spirit and the body. This proposition confronts the old anthropological aporia of the ontological breach between two contradictory elements in a human being in the Cartesian tradition.

Why is Hengstenberg more successful in searching for unity between the phenomenological and metaphysical perspectives in understanding man as a human person? One can see three possible reasons for his success. First of all, Hengstenberg does not excessively focus on the purity of the philosophical system used as a tool for theological, ethical or theological analysis. This attitude is missing in Stein's and particularly Wojtyła's thoughts. Second, Hengstenberg's accurate philosophical decision is to use phenomenology as an introductory analysis instrument for metaphysical ideas. Third, in contrast to Husserl's student and assistant, Edith Stein, and similar to Wojtyła, Hengstenberg was situated in the Schelerian tradition of phenomenology, which seems to be much closer to metaphysical philosophy as transcendental thinking of the late Husserl.

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