

## **Integral Concepts of Love (Sternberg, Solovyov, Wojtyla)**

### **Abstract:**

The article explores the differences in the understanding of the integral, comprehensive perception of a human being, particularly the condition described as love and the forms thereof. In doing so, it considers the two major philosophical concepts aspiring to integrity, albeit formulated in differing cultural contexts: the concept of love proposed by Vladimir Solovyov, rooted in the tradition of the Orthodox Church, and the contemporary, personalistic concept of Karol Wojtyla (Jon Paul II), formulated in the context of Catholic culture in his works *Love and Responsibility* (1960), *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (1984). In order to facilitate a comprehensive dialogue between the same, a third idea is also discussed, i.e. the most contemporary depiction of love, also aspiring to be a complete description thereof, rooted in the tradition of the empirical science of social psychology (Sternberg, Wojciszke). The conducted analysis leads to the conclusion that the psychological concept of love proposed by Sternberg and Wojciszke is merely quasi-integral, while the truly integral, personalistic concepts of the human being (and love) offered by Vladimir Solovyov and Karol Wojtyla reveal certain methodological and doctrinal differences that prove impossible to overcome. What they do share is the attempt to provide a positive depiction of human corporeality and sex drive, which constitute the primary foundations for the relative condition of a human person understood as a meeting between two people.

### **Key words:**

Integral human being, Integral anthropology, Human person, Love, Human corporeality, Sex drive

## **Introduction**

We live in a time of the ubiquitous influence of the consumerist market economy accompanied by a consumerist culture permeated by new customs.<sup>1</sup> Said new customs may be globally described, after the philosophizing sociologist Benjamin R. Barber, as the “ethos of infantilism” (enforced childishness)<sup>2</sup>. Consumer capitalism – as the sociologist and political philosopher describes the era of postmodernism – replaced the traditional Protestant virtues of

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter will appear in *Vladimir Soloviev: The Metaphysics of Love*, ed. Teresa Obolevitch and Randall A. Poole (Pickwick/Wipf & Stock, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Barber B., *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 2007.

rational prudence, conscientiousness, postponement of personal gratification, and responsibility, with the reverence for all things public, thus enforcing the attitude of infantility. The ethos of infantilism therefore stands in blatant contradiction to maturity, all that the Protestant and Christian ethics so strictly instilled in people. What it does is emphasize the impulse, emotion, dogmatic certainty, focus on imagery, immediate gratification, egoism, entitlement (over duty), the perpetual contemporaneity. The ethos of infantilism also emerges in other forms: the primacy of the simple over the complex (a simplified, dualist perception of the world, marginalization of difficult issues, etc.); the easy over the difficult (easy virtual sex, easy shopping, easy divorce, easy marriage devoid of engagement, easy relationships); the fast over the slow (fast credit, fast assessment, fast internet, fast career). In this postmodernist spectrum, not merely sociological but also philosophical, serious questions about love seem redundant, even harmful, as they force one to abandon the dualist perspective in which it is either a heroic Christian virtue, attainable only by few, or a temporary fascination in yet another object, enhanced by a range of elaborate, yet easy to learn, sexual techniques.

The present article aims to demonstrate, or remind the reader, that contrary to said binary approach, there is also a third possible way of perceiving love. One that, on the one hand, does not shy away from the problems inherent in associating love with morality, and on the other, does not belittle the significance of human corporeality and sexuality in the realization of true love. Quite the contrary in fact, it aims to rehabilitate human sexuality. I am referring to the personalistic, integral understanding of love complemented by the empirical research perspective in the form of contemporary studies in social psychology where love is treated as an important carrier of social bonds. This contemporary perspective, despite certain deficiencies, will hopefully provide a viable contribution to the philosophical discourse on the concept of love.

### **Integral anthropology**

An integral, and therefore multi-dimensional, comprehensive depiction of human love ought to constitute a part of philosophical anthropology, as it is through love that human existence can open up to another existence and thus assume a new form of being (open being). Such integral anthropology, as suggested by the name itself, cannot be limited to merely one or two dimensions of human existence (natural or social), it should also aim to avoid reductionisms (transcendental idealism, physiological and naturalistic realism, subjectivism of psychological processes). Its adequate form would therefore entail perceiving the human being not only in the

context of facts (who a person is) but also duties (who a person ought to become), and this not only in the sphere of the external but also internal experience. For it is that internal experience, human self-knowledge, that allows one to “witness oneself”<sup>3</sup>, as well as to transcend oneself as a personal being. “A person is what organizes and merges the respective dimensions of the human condition but is not itself overwhelmed or subjected to that condition (...). The nature of a person cannot be fully understood or explained within the limitations of a single individual, as being a person is, above all, being a meeting”<sup>4</sup>. Integral anthropology must also strongly accentuate the moral dimension, as morality (unlike tradition) is what looks to a person’s future. It is on the basis of morality that we say the world ought to be good, just, or humanitarian; and since it is not, it is on the same basis that we aim to develop its hidden potential. As such, morality is therefore creative. It demands human freedom - that other facet of human responsibility, one strongly related to action and change.

The call for the development of integral anthropology, acknowledging also the existence of a person, has only been voiced in the context of religious philosophy, in this particular case Christian philosophy, which is not so strictly bound by the neopositivist model of scientificity. It is therefore able to relate not only to philosophical tradition but also the knowledge about the human condition conveyed in the Bible as well as the resulting theology. Only through the perspective of Christian revelation can one truly meld the human psyche and body, not as simple concepts but rather as a certain entity defined by its spiritual dimension, one evoking Transcendence, and thus to refer to a human being as the embodied soul or the spiritual body. Hence, integral anthropology places a significant emphasis on the role of human corporality and sexuality in the overall human existence rather than, as was the case previously, on intellectual traits such as the mind, will, or conscience that characterize the human soul. As a consequence, the body, as perceived by integral anthropology, is no longer treated as something secondary, inherently akin to animal flesh, and becomes instead the medium through which a human being is expressed. In turn, human sexuality strongly influences various aspects of human existence. The same does not, however, lead to the overestimation and deification of the body and its sexuality in thus understood anthropology. An important part of integral personalistic anthropology is teaching about human love, including its sexual and not

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<sup>3</sup> K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person* (Analecta Husserliana 10), transl. by Andrzej Potocki, Dordrecht, Holland; Boston, USA; London, England: D. Reidel Pub. 1979; Jan Paweł II, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, TN KUL, Lublin 1994, s.385.

<sup>4</sup> Dziewiecki M., *Antropologiczne podstawy poradnictwa psychologiczno-religijnego*, oraz P. Trawczyński, *Integralna koncepcja człowieka*, <http://cpp-metanoia.com/aktualnosci/artykuly/integralna-wizja-czlowieka/> [dostęp: 16.05.2019].

exclusively emotional aspect, as the very meaning of human existence as a person, in a relative way, is to transcend oneself and the limitations of one's egoism, to meet another being-person in unconditional love.

In the context of Catholic philosophy, the call for the development of integral anthropology is clearly present in the personalistic thought of the philosopher and theologian Karol Wojtyła (1920-2005). In the broader realm of Christian philosophy also encompassing Orthodox theology, the same was present, albeit in a less pronounced form, in the works of the actual originator of such thinking in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia, i.e. Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900)<sup>5</sup>. However, before we can more closely discuss the works of the two authors, it would be prudent to first consider the empirical-descriptive, scientific concept of love which, to a certain extent and alongside the impact of temporary cultural and ideological trends, also influences the way contemporary people think. Maybe we will discover that scientific conclusions and propositions of personalistic philosophy are not that far removed from each other after all?

### **Robert Sternberg and Bogdan Wojciszke's multidimensional concept of love**

To classify the concept of love formulated by Robert Sternberg, a contemporary American psychologist and author of *A triangular theory of love* (1986), later complemented in *The Psychology of Love* (2010) by a Polish social psychologist, Bogdan Wojciszke, as integral thought would be rather risky, even should we assume that the notion of integrity can be associated with many meanings and synonyms. The reason is that representatives of science cannot operate beyond the limits of empiricism and study something that is axiological, obligational, and above all transcendental. We would be better served by considering their approach as quasi-integral, multidimensional in its depiction of love, in the sense that it acknowledges the variety of its forms and developmental stages. However, it is difficult to ignore the fact that both psychologists do eventually venture beyond simple descriptiveness, the focus on a synthesis of established facts, and proceed to formulate certain obligations with regard to what one ultimately ought to do with one's love. Love itself is defined as the foundation on which social relationships are built, although it can take a variety of forms (as many as seven), some of which prove labile in terms of their bond-forming capacity. The ideal and most desirable form of love, as suggested in their deliberations, comprises three most

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<sup>5</sup> A monographic study on Russian personalism is being prepared for publication in Russia, in which Solovyov is portrayed as the precursor of the same. However, the author of this paper had no opportunity to consult the text's manuscript.

commonly observed<sup>6</sup> stages: intimacy, passion, and commitment, which vary in terms of both their inherent character and dynamics<sup>7</sup>. *Intimacy* entails a positive sentiment towards the partner, accompanied by actions facilitating the development of attachment, closeness, and mutual dependence. In turn, the phase *passion* is a constellation of “strong emotions, both positive (admiration, affection, desire, joy) and negative (pain, anxiety, jealousy, longing), often enhanced by physiological arousal. The emotions are accompanied by a very strong motivation to connect with the partner”<sup>8</sup>. Finally, the third developmental stage of love is *commitment*. It consists in “decisions, thoughts and actions aimed at turning a love connection into a durable relationship and maintaining it despite various obstacles. The essence of commitment is in acting for the relationship, even against one’s personal interest”<sup>9</sup>. The other important aspect of human love, apart from its particular forms and developmental stages is its evolution, stemming not only from external or internal factors (such as weakness of character) but also from the core nature of love itself. As observed by the psychologists, once we step beyond the required descriptiveness, only some changes can and should be prevented, in other cases one should abandon such efforts as they can only lead to frustration rooted in a sense of one’s own helplessness<sup>10</sup>.

### **Integral concepts of love as proposed by Vladimir Solovyov and Karol Wojtyła**

The concept of love formulated by the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov in his *The Meaning of Love* (1894), *The Drama of Plato’s Life* (1898), and *The Justification of the Good: An Essay on Moral Philosophy* (1894, transl. into English: 1918), is not a completed thought project in terms of the integral depiction of this human state or process. It is clear that in developing this original philosophical system, the eminent Russian philosopher aimed to provide a comprehensive description of love, particularly in terms of its significance in human history. This is why he described its various forms observed to date while categorizing them moralistically into ones that are negative or “*hellish*” (only excessive), *animalistic* (reduced to the satisfaction of the sex drive), *admissible out of necessity* [(in marriage, overcoming the

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<sup>6</sup> In the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, western culture underwent a certain change whereby love starts with passion, only later to be followed by the development of intimacy (closeness).

<sup>7</sup> Wojciszke B., *Psychologia społeczna*, Wyd. Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2018, p. 336

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Wojciszke B., *Psychologia miłości*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 1993, p. 9-10.

animal character of human love and serving mankind), ascetic and spiritual], and finally *angelic* or divine-human love, transforming a person's sensuality and spirituality, providing them with the power to create<sup>11</sup>. The author also analyzed the phases of its development by considering its true form, i.e. divine-human love. However, in doing so, he did not positively elaborate on the complete depiction of human love and sexuality culminating in the form of marital love. He only focused, to follow Sternberg's contemporary nomenclature, on the stage which, in the model description, precedes the establishment of a full relationship engaging both the mind and will, i.e. a marriage. Nonetheless, even despite these limitations, it is clear that up to a certain point, he attributed a special role to the corporeal factor, which is very much in line with the modern, personalistic concept of a human being wherein human corporeality constitutes a particular modus of our existence and action, for it is in this corporeality that one's personal calling, the very meaning of one's life, the human spirit is manifested. As observed by a contemporary Polish researcher, Antoni Gos, that corporeality may render the invisible (spiritual and divine) visible<sup>12</sup>, may be the manifestation of the eternal mystery. One could therefore be fairly confident in concluding that Solovyov's concept of love constituted an innovative, in the context of Christian philosophy, attempt to establish a relationship between Eros and Agape, without becoming entangled in the error of biologism<sup>13</sup> which would equate the laws of biology with morality, or perceive sexuality as an utterly impersonal, strictly biological phenomenon.

In his works, passion is referred to as erotic love, as it reveals the power of the erotic drive, Eros, which although strongly related to human corporeality, also exerts a powerful influence on one's spirituality. In doing so, Solovyov negates the forms of love most highly revered in Europe at the time, including both mystical love and love towards all mankind, both deprived of Eros's influence. It was because the essence of the same, as he perceived them, stemmed only from wishful and fruitless emotionality that would separate the spirit from the flesh, which deprives such forms of any real force in establishing and realizing important life goals<sup>14</sup>. The first attempt to merge the spirit with the senses, as found in the concepts of Plato, was already a very significant nod to human corporeality but ultimately, the thinker nonetheless classified the same as false spiritual love, one in which Eros failed to exercise his full power and "indifferently soared away, emptyhanded, into the world of an ideal vision"<sup>15</sup>. The full

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<sup>11</sup> Solovyov V., *The Drama of Platons' Life*, transl. by W.Schneider, Helios Fountain, Edinburgh 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Gos A. *Wymiary płciowości- analiza wieloaspektowa*, „Kwartalnik Naukowy” 49/2014, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> Mroczkowski I., *Osoba i cielesność. Moralne aspekty teologii ciała*, Płock 1994, p. 197.

<sup>14</sup> Solovyov V., *The Meaning of Love*, transl. Thomas R.Beyer Jr, The Lindisfarne Press, New York 1985, p. 85.

<sup>15</sup> Solovyov V., *The Drama of Platons' Life...*, part 24.

extent of Solovyov's focus on human corporeality can be appreciated only when considering his positive, indeed rehabilitative depiction of the human sex drive. He first observes that in humans, as compared to the entire animal kingdom, the same is clearly the strongest, even though a person may live out their life without procreation, as opposed to the lowest levels of animate nature where procreation takes place without any sexual attraction whatsoever. The second characteristic trait of the human sex drive is the fact that „assumes that individual character by power of which just this person of the other sex possesses for the lover absolute significance, as unique and irreplaceable, as a very end in itself”<sup>16</sup>. Erotic love, particularly love at first sight, undoubtedly begins in the corporeal, in perceiving the other person's different gender and physical beauty, only then can the emotional affirmation follow. Nobody falls in love with an asexual person.

Love, as has these days been painstakingly demonstrated by the psychologists of love, has its inherent stages [and objects] but Solovyov, similarly to any other poet or writer in late 19<sup>th</sup> century (or even early 20<sup>th</sup> c.), was fascinated above all by the sheer force of the sexual drive that emerges in a man's relationship with a woman, and it was this very power that prompted the philosopher to seek its genesis in either the natural world or a divine gift. It is noteworthy that the author did not conclusively solve this dilemma, what mattered to him was only the fact that it is a process independent of the person, a force of almost cosmic proportions that instils a certain order in the universe. This force – mentioned also by the psychologists Sternberg and Wojciszke – is revealed already at the first stage of love, namely infatuation, which is fueled solely by the sex drive, i.e. the state of intensive emotions directed at the selected object of the opposite sex, and culminates in the second stage described as the romantic beginnings. While at the stage of infatuation, one is still somewhat more strongly focused on oneself, rather than the fact of being loved<sup>17</sup>, by the stage of the romantic beginnings, when the sex drive starts to combine with intimacy, trust in the other person begins to emerge, the belief that the partner is indeed a good person. Solovyov was not sufficiently precise, compared to modern-day psychologists, to be able to differentiate between such stages as infatuation or romantic beginnings. Instead, he described the stage of feelings, or more specifically the affective and spiritual dimension of human sexuality, and in his depiction it was at that stage that the person in love would abandon their natural egoism in favor of the emotional affirmation of the other person's absolute significance in their corporeal and personal aspect. As he observed in *The Meaning of Love*, “in the feeling of love, according to its basic meaning, we

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<sup>16</sup> Solovyov V., *The Meaning of Love...*, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> Wojciszke B., *Psychologia miłości...*, p.10.

assert the absolute significance of another individuality, and by so doing we assert also the absolute significance of our own”<sup>18</sup>. When analyzing the meaning of the corporeal and spiritual idealization of the other, as observed at this stage, the author discovered that it triggers a certain distanced and idealized image of the person, reveals that person’s (as well as one’s own) infinite nature, the image of God himself manifesting in the other and in oneself, the sense of the positive unity in everything, rooted in the living human awareness<sup>19</sup>. In his later *The Justification of the Good: An Essay on Moral Philosophy* the same would become – in the very much Platonic sense - the image of the perfect human being<sup>20</sup>. This loving idealization also serves to remind one of the duality of one’s own nature: one that is both realistic and idealistic (obligational).

Hence, this sex drive which grants one that definite, very powerful energetic resource, while remaining for a fairly long time outside one’s capacity for intellectual control, will eventually cross the threshold of conscious thought and enter the realm of mind and will. It is the mind that now prompts one’s second mental power, the will not to be content with mere passive delight with the other’s absolute significance, but rather to creatively facilitate it through personal unification, to embody this ideal image in real phenomena, to allow that image of the loved other to become the source of heroic actions and creative inspirations (and not only accompany the desire to possess it). One must make an effort to ensure that the absolute significance of the other does not become something fleeting. This is the essence of Solovyov’s understanding of authentic spiritual love, as the reference to mind, will, and moral conscience as well as reverence for God in realizing the ideal image of another person constitutes the manifestation of one’s true spiritual dimension. It is also accompanied by a very real and important goal, one that was lacking in previous spiritualistic systems rooted in the “false spiritual life”: the union with God, unity of the male and female element in God, the restoration of Androgyne. This is not a negation of the flesh but its transformation, spiritualization (and consequently salvation, immortalization). The mind and will also prompt one that the person in love – and therefore strong in spirit – having found their complement in another, should seek to restore the integrity of that human being but also care for others<sup>21</sup>, as similar integration is indeed necessary in various spheres of social life<sup>22</sup>, to work towards brotherhood and social

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<sup>18</sup> Solovyov V., *The Meaning of Love...*p.65.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> Solovyov V., *The Justification of the Good: An Essay on Moral Philosophy*, transl. by N.A. Duddington, Constavble and Company, London 1918.

<sup>21</sup> That perfect integrity will assume, in Karol Wojtyla’s works, the significance of perfect intersubjectivity attainable only in Heaven (in: *Man and Woman He Created Them : A Theology of the Body*, Chapter III).

<sup>22</sup> Solovyov V., *The Meaning of Love...*, p.103.



unity, to combat evil; what is necessary is the process of recreating the ideal human in mankind as a whole. It should be pointed out that the specificity of the Russian philosopher's thought stemmed from the desire to reintegrate all existence threatened by collapse. This desire was also clearly evidenced in the theoretical sphere, where it took the form of a theosophical system of integral knowledge, unifying science, philosophy and religion.

Evidently, up until this point, Solovyov correctly followed the path of rehabilitating the significance of the sex drive in Christian thought: it is the natural source of dynamism of the human body, it fosters a specific approach towards the corporeality of other people as well as oneself through the desire for affirmation which, sadly, is highly susceptible to the deformation and perversion of instrumentalisation in one's attitude towards the other (as well as oneself, if one is to maintain that attitude on the outside). Other, also positive aspects of the sex drive, such as the capacity to pair up, organize the shared intimacy by providing each other with support, affection and procreation – were perceived as significantly less valuable by the Russian philosopher. As presented by the author of *The Meaning of Love*, the realization of the process of love was, in his times at least – despite the universal desire to prolong the stage of idealization for basically the rest of one's life – divided into three stages and characterized by mostly regressive tendencies (something that in the thinker's opinion could only change in the distant future). The first stage entails the emotive unity of two representatives of the opposite sexes in God, i.e. such persons that the other “So then this other force, which is to emancipate our individuality from the fetter of egoism, must possess a correlation with the whole of that individuality, must be equally real and concrete, a completely objectified subject like ourselves. Moreover, in order to really be another it must in everything be distinguished from us; i.e., possessing all that essential content which we also possess, it must possess it in another means or mode, in another form. In this way every manifestation of our being, every vital act would encounter in this other a corresponding, but not identical manifestation, in such a way that the relations of the one to the other would be a complete and continual exchange, a complete and continual affirmation of oneself in the other, with perfect reciprocity and communion (...) Only under the action of this, so to speak, chemical union of two beings, of the same nature and equal significance (...) is the creation possible (in the natural order and in the spiritual order) the real realization of true human individuality”<sup>23</sup>. The next stage entails unity in law, i.e. the relationship of two people within the order of social and moral norms. The final stage entails physiological unity. The regressive character of the love process is due to the fact that said

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<sup>23</sup> Solovyov V., *The Meaning of Love...*, p.46.

physiological union, strictly sexual in nature, usually leads – in Solovyov’s opinion – to the loss of the image of God in the other person and oneself alike, and therefore fails to authentically restore the integrity of the human person<sup>24</sup>. This is because the same is accompanied by the moral shame intrinsically associated with the sexual act itself, which due to the element of pure lust involved is far removed from the ideal existence of a human being as a person and invariably reduces one to behavior not unlike that displayed by animals<sup>25</sup>. Consequently, it actually serves to drive the two lovers apart<sup>26</sup>. One is ashamed of the corporeal path also for purely intellectual reasons: it is the path of fragmentation, dissipation of the life force that emerged when one fell in love and is destined for far greater things. It could be critically observed at this point that the sexual act, an inherent element of corporeality as understood by Solovyov, remains unshifted – despite the philosopher’s earlier claims of the spirituality of flesh. One should therefore ultimately conclude that the sex drive (erotic love) integrates – in the author’s opinion - the male and female elements, whereas the sexual act itself – even in the context of marriage – disintegrates it all over again. For this reason, the family relationship which other thinkers or contemporary psychologists tend to perceive as the crowning accomplishment of love, in the Russian philosopher’s depiction would not uncover the path towards immortality but rather lead one astray in the search of it.

In his low assessment of the value of sexual unity, Solovyov still clearly demonstrated a certain monastic and patristic mistrust of sexual pleasure, even in the context of marriage, as it failed to liberate the spouses from shame, while in his understanding of human purity he remained vested solely in the perspective of living in Spirit. Human shame in the face of one’s own materiality would, in Solovyov’s later work - *The Justification of the Good* – attain the status of something downright necessary, a beacon clearly revealing the existence of the supermaterial human nature, and thus the proof evidencing the existence of a spiritual reality<sup>27</sup>.

The concept of love proposed by **Karol Wojtyla**, later **Pope John Paul II**, first in his exceptional *Love and Responsibility*, published in 1960, and complemented in his collection of religious instructions *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body* (1984, transl. into English: 2006), bears the characteristics of a fully consistent and truly integral concept. As a philosopher, Wojtyla could take advantage of a far more solid cognitive method than

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p.73.

<sup>25</sup> Far later, Karol Wojtyla deliberations will touch upon shame, which in his understanding emerges only after sin and is, in essence, “fear of another person, anxiety about being treated as an object”. See : *Man and Woman He Created Them : A Theology of the Body*).

<sup>26</sup> Solovyov V., *The Meaning of Love...*,p.79.

<sup>27</sup> Solovyov V., *The Justification of the Good: An Essay on Moral Philosophy...*,p.31-32

Solovyov's reference to subjective experience and artistic descriptions derived from various literary and poetic works (which tend to focus solely on the stage of infatuation while ignoring complete love combining the spheres of passion, intimacy and commitment of the will to the lifelong care for the other person's wellbeing). The Polish philosopher, with his experience of priesthood and ability to draw upon the life vicissitudes of both young and mature people, not least of which pertained to the sphere of sexuality, could rely on a far broader and more objective perspective. On this basis, he aimed to attain a phenomenological understanding of said experience and eventually interpret the same through the prism of Aristotelean and Thomistic philosophy. His second source of knowledge on human love, far superior relative to the first, was the Scripture and its extension in the teachings of the Catholic Church. The core content of Wojtyla's work pertained to the philosophical and ethical consideration of the problems of sexuality as related to a human being as a person, which ultimately yielded an intellectually demanding textbook on personalistic sexual ethics. His initial description of a human being as a person appeared already in his *Love and Responsibility* and was further developed and enhanced in *Person and Act* (1969). In Wojtyla's understanding, the personal being of man has three distinct dimensions: bottom-up, which indicates that the human person constitutes an embodied being strongly associated with the material world; horizontal, which means that one can meet other people in ways that are not only animalistic but also social; and vertical, which allows the human person to rise above oneself, towards the ultimate reality, the meeting with the God-Person from whom all reality is derived. The human person is the supreme value, in Wojtyla's personalistic anthropology its dignity becomes the actual personalistic norm – one to which all other spheres of human life, love included, must be subjected: “a person's rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use”<sup>28</sup>.

However, love between a man and a woman is susceptible to various perversions occurring when human personal dignity is forgotten: when one is guided solely by the desires of the flesh or egoism, be it emotional egoism (toying with the emotions of others) or sensual egoism. For this reason, Wojtyla proceeds, similarly to Solovyov and the aforementioned psychologists, to classify the forms of love and stages of love proper: sensual love emerging from the sexual drive (which is but the first step in the development of true love), emotive love (second stage), and spiritual love – the ultimate result of the preceding stages, love that consists in free and objective affirmation of the other as a person (third stage). Wojtyla boldly

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<sup>28</sup> Wojtyla K., *Love and Responsibility*, transl. by H.T. Villetts, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1993, p. 42.

approached the analysis of the bottom-up dimension of human existence as a person, thus developing a theology of the body rooted in Catholicism. He described the human sex drive, the relationship between the two genders, as something positive, steering clear from its age-long depreciation in Christian thought. For a long time, the sex drive had been invariably associated with negative connotations, as the blind power of nature, the source of temptation and sinfulness. In Wojtyła's depiction, however, the sex drive would become something momentous, related to far more than simply the human physiology or psychophysiology studied by natural sciences. He saw in it a truly existential significance as a quality of human life as such, rather than merely a sphere thereof or power thereover, something very much worthy of philosophical scrutiny: "the proper end of the sexual urge is the existence of the species *Homo*, its continuation (procreatio), and love between persons, between man and woman, is shaped, channelled one might say, by that purpose and formed from the material it provides"<sup>29</sup>.

It is given and natural, something that people are simply born into, its activation is autonomous, independent of human initiative or will, it exists in the body, senses and emotions, and clearly can be a source of strength. The direct contact between a man and a woman always entails some sensual experience, one that is accompanied by emotion when the two represent some sort of value to each other, be it personal or sexual. The sensation associated with the meeting between a man and a woman, apart from its sensual level focused on the experience of the body as an object of use, may also be experienced at the level of feelings and emotionality. The object of emotionality (as the capacity to react to particular values perceived in a "person of the opposite gender") can be the "male" versus "female", "grace" versus "strength"<sup>30</sup>. The sex drive is always, by its very nature, directed towards another, which means that on this basis, of this material, a new human quality can emerge, love<sup>31</sup>. Importantly, the sex drive can evolve into love only in human beings, in animals it is and will always remain only an instinct. Admittedly, where human will is not properly formed at the level of a person, this direction may be subject to distortion (if, for instance, the drive is directed solely towards the sexual qualities of the other), hence, it is important to develop sexual ethics rooted in philosophy, a sexual education of sorts.

Human corporeality may therefore prove to have an astounding potential in terms of shaping the human person understood as a meeting, as has also been mentioned by the contemporary German philosopher, Gerd Haefner, who would see the human sex drive as the

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<sup>29</sup> Wojtyła K., *Love and Responsibility...* , p. 52-53

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.110

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

most spiritual drive due to its capacity for sublimation, its amazing influence on one's spiritual life. Moreover, human corporeality – as Christian theology teaches us – has already been expiated by Christ. The human body is not solely and exclusively, as reductionists would have us believe, the somatic foundation for sexual relations, it is also the means of expression available to a human person. In consequence, a sexual intercourse taking place within wedlock – one which Solovyov would perceive as a “disagreeable” physiological unity – is not something that would depreciate one as a person. For it is not solely about procreation, nor exclusively about enhancing the emotional and bodily union created by matrimony, it is also about taking part in the life of God, in a variety of meanings thereof. Firstly, as perceived by John Paul II, it becomes the most primeval of sacraments<sup>32</sup> which brings God's eternal mystery into the visible realm<sup>33</sup>, as well as a continuation of His work of creation. In creating a new life and caring for its wellbeing, the spouses become collaborators of God Himself. But in order for a person to be able to function at the bottom-up level, love must be merged with morality, for not every love can liberate one—as claimed by both Solovyov and Wojtyła—from the shackles of egoism, this capacity is reserved to love encompassing all individuality<sup>34</sup>. What is needed, therefore, is the ethics of responsible love, of commanding the power of self-determination based on self-reflection and free will, mature control over one's own corporeality, which may allow “that love for a person must consist in affirmation that the person has a value higher than that of an object for consumption or use”<sup>35</sup>. For human corporeality is not for us to passively submit to, but to allow us to express love via the medium of our bodies, and through this opening love – to realize our being as a person.

### Conclusion

To recapitulate the above: the human person, the highest value in the human world, is not static but rather dynamic and open, as such it cannot exist without relationships with others, as much as it cannot survive without a relationship with God. The ultimate goal of the endeavors of a human person is, both in Solovyov's and Wojtyła's conception, to transcend the earthly dimension and attain spiritual immortality, which cannot come to pass without genuine love towards other people. For it is only through such love that the sensual can truly merge with the

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<sup>32</sup> Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est* of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, part I: *The Unity of Love in Creation and in Salvation*, pkt. 5.

<sup>33</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them : A Theology of the Body*, trans. M. Waldstein, P. Books & Media, Boston 2006// *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Odkupienie ciała a sakramentalność małżeństwa*, J. Kowalczyk (oprac.), Wydawnictwo Watykańskie, Watykan 1986; IV wyd.: Lublin 2011, p.77

<sup>34</sup> Solovyov V., *The Meaning of Love...*, p. 46.

<sup>35</sup> Wojtyła K., *Love and Responsibility...*, p. 42.

spiritual. And this relationship cannot exist without a prior, specific foundation provided by our given sexual drive and the conditions it creates in the psychophysiological lives of particular people. This foundation, traditionally so depreciated in Christian thought, also facilitates the relativity of human existence as it is, by its very nature, directed towards the other. However, the concept of love formulated by Solovyov was incomplete – in the integral sense – for a number of reasons: a) due to the insufficiency of material collected by the Russian philosopher as the basis for theoretical deliberations, as well as b) due to his specific understanding of God's image and its presence in the human person, which in his depiction was prone to disappear once the interpersonal relationships evolved to the stage of sexual unity. It is the Platonian view of the ideal being manifesting itself in impermanent material and sensual beings, whereas in the Aristotelean and Thomistic perspective present in the deliberations of Karol Wojtyła, the image of God in the human being is manifested in the considerably less transient rational thought, inclinations towards good, freedom and love<sup>36</sup>. The two conceptions also assumed a different understanding of one's collaboration with God in His creation and preservation of the world's existence, which may be exercised through the process of love: in Solovyov's panentheistic perspective, it consisted in theurgic and fairly conservative restoration of the world's and people's long lost unity in the pursuit of the Divine Omniunity, overcoming the darkness of non-existence; whereas in Wojtyła's creationist approach, it consisted in the progressive proliferation of existence, creating and caring for new life. However, despite said discrepancies, one has to positively evaluate the efforts of both philosophers in formulating a Christian description of human corporeality through which the existing teachings on the human body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, are further corroborated.

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<sup>36</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them : A Theology of the Body*, transl. M. Waldstein, P.Books & Media, Boston 2006, chapter II.

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