

Thomas Aquinas' Theory of Knowledge through Connaturality in a Dispute on the Anthropological Principles of Liberalism by John Rawls

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I. Anthropological Principles of Liberalism

For the majority of scholars John Rawls' theory constitutes an important interpretation of the ideological principles of modern liberalism, especially liberal anthropology¹ Therefore the thought of Rawls will be – to a large extent but not only – the basis of this reflection.

Generally, it might be said that liberalism views a person as an autonomous and autotelic individual focused on themselves, as a self-contained “centre of energy.”² The good of the individual is described as the main and basic value to which a community and society are subordinated.³ The individual is responsible for every choice they make only to themselves.

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¹ See. P. PRZYBYSZ, “Modele teoretyczne we współczesnej filozofii politycznej liberalizmu”, 47.

² Cf. S. KOWALCZYK, “Liberalizm i jego filozofia”, 109. Both MacIntyre and Maritain sought the sources of modern individualism as early as the 16th century in the views of Luther or later in the theories of Machiavelli, Hobbes or Hume. In his book “Three Reformers” J. Maritain, analyzing the thought of Luther, Descartes and Rousseau, states that modern individualism originates from a “wrongly understood immanence,” namely in the view that everything that is not the “I” or transcendent towards the “I” is not only alien but, most of all, hostile towards the “I.” This thesis was clearly expressed by J. P. Sartre in the quote “Hell is other people,” see J. MARITAIN, “Trzej reformatorzy: Luter, Kartezjusz, Rousseau” (*Three Reformers – Luther, Descartes, Rousseau*).

³ K. WOJTYŁA, “Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne”, 313.

Individuals are a self-contained “universe” and the characteristics they possess and transformations they undergo have their source in themselves. Moreover, liberalism assumes that all individuals, regardless of their origin, cultural context or historical determinants are characterized by rationality, autonomy and possession (i.e. internal possession, namely possessing themselves and their own talents and external possession, that is the possession of goods and their free disposal).⁴ The most fundamental possession is freedom understood most frequently as the absence of external compulsion in the instance of undertaking specific actions by the individual. Thus it is a negative freedom as defined by Isaiah Berlin.⁵ These freedoms which characterize the individual require respect and appreciation and are of greater importance than any other attribute.⁶

If we wish to reconstruct the hidden *implicite* anthropological principles of liberalism, we have to explore the issue much further. The analysis of texts by the advocates of liberalism and polemic commentaries of its opponents indicates three dimensions of the liberal model of human beings: (1) the basic methodological dimension (this dimension regulates the principles of the construction of the model of an individual and thus at the beginning decides the result); (2) the anthropological dimension proper and (3) the metaethical dimension.⁷ In all the aforementioned dimensions of the liberal model of human beings the principal problem is the relation of possession and characteristics possessed or acquired by an individual in their constitutive nature. Also virtues and perfections (and analogically faults) can be understood as characteristics acquired by the individual.

Thus from the methodological perspective the model of an individual constructed by liberalism has an idealizing character. When constructing this model the advocates of liberalism authoritatively choose the main characteristics of an individual and disregard others seeing them as secondary

⁴ This last thesis – the right of possession – is associated with Robert Nozick’s libertarianism and his concept of “minimal state” which is an argument against the welfare state, the advocate of which was John Rawls. Without analyzing the dispute on the principles of the distribution of goods, I believe that the right of possession can be included as the basic feature of individuals accepted by liberalism.

⁵ See I. BERLIN, “Dwie koncepcje wolności i inne eseje”.

⁶ P. PRZYBYSZ, “Modele teoretyczne we współczesnej filozofii politycznej liberalizmu”, 126.

⁷ See P. PRZYBYSZ, “Dwa modele człowieka. O sporze komunitaryzm-liberalizm” *Arka* (51) 3, 22-39, 1994; see more on idealization in Przybysz, “Modele teoretyczne we współczesnej filozofii politycznej liberalizmu”.

or accidental thus creating the “idealization” of the reality instead of its faithful image.

Liberal individualism, including the liberalism of Rawls, breaks with the vision of a person as primarily conditioned by nationality, race, gender, age, belief or cultural tradition. Rawls treats these characteristics as individual and accidental, thus unreliable in describing the essence of a person. The mechanism which helps Rawls reject the influence of these characteristics on the constitutive nature of an individual is “the veil of ignorance.”

“The veil of ignorance” is a thought experiment put forward by Rawls to indicate the main ideas of fairness as impartiality. To ensure this impartiality Rawls refers to the hypothetical original position in which people hidden behind “the veil of ignorance” from this perspective choose the principles to govern a just society.⁸ According to Rawls, people hidden behind “the veil of ignorance” suspend their own particular subjective knowledge about themselves and the world – the relations with others and cultural determinants of the society in which they live. Thus a person somehow dispenses their historical and cultural determinacy as unimportant in their identity and acquires a position which should ensure impartiality in choosing general and unbiased principles of justice. At the same time, however, Rawls accepts implicitly that possessed characteristics and attributes such as race, nationality, belief, cultural tradition, individual faculties and talents are of no importance in constituting the nature of the subject and are merely secondary and accidental.

The anthropological dimension of the liberal model of humans reveals more clearly the fact of understanding the relation between the constitutive nature of an individual and their possessed or acquired attributes and characteristics, including moral dispositions. It might be repeated after Michael Sandel that in the anthropological dimension the liberal model of humans has a possessive quality.⁹ The individual is characterized and described by some attributes and goods, preferred and chosen values as well as lifestyles. These attributes and choices made by the individual, however, do not constitute the nature of the individual but remain somehow external. The individual only possesses these attributes and can dispose of them. In liberal theory the essence of who a person is remains independent, sepa-

⁸ See J. RAWLS, “Teoria sprawiedliwości”, 208-285.

⁹ See M. SANDEL, “Liberalism and the Limits of Justice”, 50-59.

rated from the attributes of the individual and their specific choices: “the individual is honest and God-fearing, but it does not mean that honesty and the fear of God are parts of their nature.”¹⁰ Each individual is, in a sense, “a moral atom,” the Leibnizian monad, and ultimately “the ability to make choices.” All other characteristics are only external, accidental and thus unconstitutive of the nature of the individual. The internal identity of a person is constituted regardless of any relation with the objects possessed by them, such as material goods, everyday items, etc. and the created relations and links with other people such as family, nation or religious group. They are also independent of the goals they strive for and goods chosen by the individual. “Rawls has serious reservations whether the attributes of the individual create their identity. The *I*, in a sense, is beyond the reach of the goods and talents they possess. What is constitutive for the *I* is not the *endowment* but the rationality of choice.”¹¹

Thus it is possible to isolate the core of what constitutes the *I* of the individual from all “external circumstances” and to place this *I* in completely different circumstances (different culture, nationality, religious belief, preferred aims and goods) so that without the loss of identity the individual can still remain themselves. Applying a certain metaphor it might be said that in the anthropological dimension the relation between constitutive nature and attributes possessed by the individual resembles the relation between an advertising pillar and advertisements placed on it; regardless of the content of these advertisements and posters the identity of the pillar does not change.

The third – metaethical – dimension of the liberal model of human beings has a deontological character. Liberal philosophers grant the individual inalienable rights, such as the right to decide about themselves and the right of choice before specifying and defining the good which it is supposed to serve. According to Rawls, the entitlement to autonomous choice has a fundamental character. He believes that the removal of this entitlement would be a violation of a fundamental element of human personality.¹² Thus the autonomy of choice plays a significant role in Rawls’ concept of the individual – it is less important what we specifically choose. If the

¹⁰ P. PRZYBYSZ, “Dwa modele człowieka”, 28.

¹¹ A. GAWKOWSKA, “Biorąc wspólnotę poważnie. Komunitariańskie krytyki liberalizmu”, 88.

¹² J. RAWLS, “Prawo ludów”, 196.

rationality of choice is preserved, the content of this choice is unimportant. According to Rawls, moral arguments and the order of justification can be regarded as the grounds for the superiority of entitlements in relation to goods. "In a moral sense, only through giving priority to the rights towards good are we able to ensure particular people the freedom of choice of aims and values and can we protect them against imposing the duty to respect unwanted values."¹³ As far as the order of justification is concerned, Rawls claims that giving priority to the right to choose good allows us to avoid the error based on an arbitrary definition of a specific type of good and subsequently to formulate the rights which consider to be proper those actions aiming to achieve the previously defined good.

Apart from extreme relativism this implies a certain anthropological assumption. "Rawls seems to presuppose that moral aims chosen by people do not represent a constitutive element of their existence ... they can choose or reject them depending on their will without losing their status as moral subjects. It is indicated by the concept of human person conceived as the autonomous moral subject independent of their choices."¹⁴ What is more, a rational discourse between different concepts of a good life is not possible as they refer to different initial preferences the rationale for which is the autonomy of the individual.

To conclude, it must be said that both the qualitative features of the individuals, such as their gifts, talents, abilities, limitations as well as acquired dispositions or the content of choices made by them and their own vision of a good life are not constitutive for the "I" and do not influence the *moral quality* of the "I". All these attributes cannot form and shape the "I" but exist "alongside" as elements of the "object" conceived as a substrate + attributes.

What/who is this "I" which constitutes the center of the individual fully independent from choices, aims and possessed or acquired attributes? Ultimately, the individual is "the ability to make choices," whereas all other characteristics are solely external, accidental and thus unconstitutive of the nature of the individual. What matters is the act of choice and its rationality. Such an understanding of the individual can be included as the subtractive theory of the subject, that is the so-called *theory of the bare*

¹³ P. PRZYBYSZ, "Dwa modele człowieka", 29.

¹⁴ A. CHMIELEWSKI, "Społeczeństwo otwarte czy wspólnota", 195.

subject.¹⁵ Among several variants of this theory the extreme version of it is the concept of the absolute independence of the substrate from attributes. Such a substrate/ground can survive any change and can exist without any attributes. This substrate does not possess its own content. The liberal concept of the individual claims that the substrate is ultimately only a formal ability to make choices.

Such an understanding of the individual, its subjectivity seems to be extremely counter-intuitive. The basic experience seems to indicate that the cultural-historical context and, most of all, the attributes, virtues or the content of choices acquired by the subject significantly constitute and form the identity of the "I".

II. The Structure of Knowledge through Connaturality as a Source of Disclosure of Individuals' Nature

In Thomas Aquinas' works there are some references to a specific manner of cognition which is at man's disposal. Thomas calls it the *cognitio per connaturalitatem*.¹⁶ The analysis of the structure of this kind of knowledge makes it possible to grasp how Thomas understands the relation of attributes, characteristics (in this case the specific attributes are dispositions, virtues acquired by the subject) to the constitutive nature of the subject. The attributes of the individual and the content of choices they make do not remain external on account of who a man is but constitute the nature of the individual and shape its moral quality.¹⁷

In knowledge through connaturality intellect judges the subject relying on a certain similarity, compatibility (*connaturalitas*) with the judged sub-

¹⁵ See M. PIWOWARCZYK, "Podmiot i własności. Analiza podstawowej struktury przedmiotu", 22-30.

¹⁶ See more in T. HUZAREK, "Tomasza z Akwinu teoria afektywnego poznania Boga oraz jej filozoficzne i teologiczne założenia", 142-170.

¹⁷ In the contemporary philosophical discussion, Marek Piwowarczyk makes an interesting proposal concerning the relation of the subject and its characteristics in the context of identity and the change of subject. He suggests the understanding of the relation of the subject and its characteristics in accordance with two complementary models: material and nomological. The advantages of the material model are particularly visible in the context of the change and preservation of identity. If the change is really based on the modification of the subject, the understanding of the subject-characteristics structure as the material-shape model is most adequate; see M. PIWOWARCZYK, "Podmiot i własności".

ject or to be more precise relying on a certain tendency or inclination (*per modum inclinationis*), which is the result of a "refinement" in a virtue (or in a fault).

According to Thomas, inclination is a consequence of the form and is actually an appetite proportional to the form of perfection.¹⁸ However, the manner and perfection of the appetite results from the manner and perfection of the existence of a given form.¹⁹ The variety of forms determines the variety of tendencies and inclinations. According to Thomas, inclination can originate from nature, habit or grace.²⁰ (In this reflection the inclination originating from habit is essential. That is why, for the sake of explanation in this text, I will only mention the inclination originating from nature but I will not refer to the inclination coming from grace.)

The inclination proceeding from nature can determine: (1) the granted form, which is a principle called the *inclinatio naturalis* and every being belonging to the surrounding world is entitled to it: (2) the sensual form of cognition, which is the principle of sensitive appetite (*inclinatio quae est appetitus sensibilis*) or (3) the intellectual form of cognition, whose consequence is the inclination of the act of the will (*inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam*).²¹

The natural inclination (*inclinatio naturalis*) is the most universal inclination, which encompasses the whole of reality and is the consequence of the inner connaturality of a thing with what is naturally proper for it. This is the least perfect type of love, which is "an inclination proceeding from an interior principle without knowledge"²² and evidently without the participation of the will, for "the inclination of nature in things devoid of reason is without choice."²³

Two other inclinations proceeding from nature are always preceded by knowledge. The consequence of sensual knowledge is a sensitive appetite (*inclinatio consequens apprehensionem sensitivam*),²⁴ whereas intellectual

¹⁸ See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Contra Gentile* 1, 72.

¹⁹ See A. M. KRĄPIEC, "Struktura aktu miłości u św. Tomasza z Akwinu," *Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne* 6 (1959) 1-2, 136.

²⁰ THOMAS AQUINAS, *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 4B.

²¹ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 87, a. 4.

²² THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 6, a. 4.

²³ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 1; see also T. BARTOŚ, "Tomasza z Akwinu teoria miłości. Studium nad Komentarzem do księgi "O Imionach Bożych" Pseudo-Dionizego Areopagity", 123-152.

²⁴ See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 87, a. 2 and a. 4.

knowledge leads to an intellectual inclination, which is the act of the will (*inclinatio consequens formam intellectam*).²⁵ *Apetitus intelligibilis* which comes after intellectual knowledge is characterized by freedom.²⁶

The inclination may come from nature but also, as Thomas says, from habit. The source of the origin of this habitual inclination (*ex consuetudinae*) is disposition, virtue: *habitus*. *Habitus* perfects nature as a constant disposition which Thomas defines as the *interior inclinatio*.²⁷ The disposition/inclination resulting from the *habitus* is characterized by the freedom of choice (*inclinatio virtutis est cum electione*),²⁸ and the cause of its creation is the repeatability of acts by a subject: *acts cause dispositions and habits inclining to like acts*.²⁹ It may be said that the disposition/inclination resulting from practicing a virtue *inclines to the act in the manner of nature*.³⁰

Every nature *has some inclination and this is its natural appetite or love*.³¹ The structure of the act of love – *appetitus*, understood in a strict sense, as

²⁵ See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 87, a. 4.

²⁶ The will as the act of the intellectual appetitive power is determinate to a good according to the order of nature, but is nevertheless indeterminate in respect to particular goods, see *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 13, a. 2. In *De Veritate* Thomas indicates that the relation between the will and nature is such that the will itself is a certain form of nature as everything that exists in the reality is a certain form of nature. Thus what belongs to the will and what belongs to nature should be accepted in the will. What the will desires being out of necessity limited by the natural inclination (*id quod voluntas de necessitate vult, quasi naturali inclinatione in ipsum determinata*) is the ultimate end (for example, eternal happiness and what is included in it, namely existence and the knowledge of truth). The will is limited to other things not out of necessity but due to its own disposition deprived of any necessity, see *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 5.

²⁷ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Sententia libri ethicorum*, Lib. III, lect. 17, no 9.

²⁸ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 1.

²⁹ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 75, a. 4; *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 52, a. 3. At the same time, Thomas emphasizes the relation which occurs between habit and nature. A disposition towards a virtue proceeds from a person's nature in a twofold manner: regarding the nature of a species (it includes what a person is entitled to due to having a rational soul) and regarding the nature, individual features of a person (what a person is entitled to due to the structure of the body). A virtue at its beginning (*inchoatio*) proceeds from human nature due to the nature of the species, but an individual nature "determines" virtue due to the individual inclination of the body: the acts of appetitive powers are associated with certain body parts whose adaptation either helps or disturbs these powers and rational powers which appetitive powers serve in performing their actions. Thus, some have a natural capability for knowledge while others for bravery, and others for moderation.

³⁰ THOMAS AQUINAS, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 3, a. 2; see also *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2.

³¹ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 60, a. 1.

well as the act of the will in a broader and more general sense³² – consists of two elements: from the intentional transformation of the appetitive power and from the consequence of this transformation which is the inclination to the appetible object seen as proper and good. Thomas explains that *in the same way the appetible object gives the appetite, first, a certain adaptation (coaptationem) to itself, which consists in the complacency (complacentia) in that object.*³³

Thus the basic element of the act of love is a passive movement based on adaptation (*coaptatio*) of the appetite to the known object. As the object known as good has in a way the power of attraction, it causes a certain inclination in the appetitive power that is an adjustment or natural appropriateness.³⁴ The secondary element of the act of love is complacency (*complacentia*) which is a certain movement, direction towards the object (understood as the goal) and it is a sort of an end of the loving action towards the good. Therefore in the act of love or appetite there is some form of completion of the elements: the first one is the influence of the object, namely a sensation from the part of the subject – the *passio*. This influence of the object is a certain adaptation of mental power to itself, granting some connaturality. The subjective reaction which is complementary towards the influence of the object is somehow the answer of the subject in the form *complacentia* – complacency.

As Thomas teaches, adaptation (*coaptatio*) as the granting of some connaturality can be “given” by the object known as good, which results in complacency (*complacentia*) as a movement towards the object. But this adaptation (*coaptatio*) as connaturality with the object can proceed from a habit – *habitus*. A habit influences the nature of the being always in relation to an act:

But there are some habits, which even on the part of the subject in which they are, imply primarily and principally relation to an act. For, as we have said, habit primarily and of itself implies a relation to the thing's nature. If therefore the nature of a thing, in which the habit is, consists in this very relation to an act, it follows that the habit principally implies relation to an act. Now it is clear that the nature and the notion of power is

³² THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 26, a. 2.

³³ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 26, a. 2.

³⁴ See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 23, a. 4.

that it should be a principle of act. Wherefore every habit is subjected in a power, implies principally relation to an act.³⁵

The disposition of nature of a being which is the result of the acquired habit (*habitus*) becomes the foundation of preference as movement “towards” inclination.³⁶ Every disposition corresponds with an act and inclination towards its formal object, and the more perfect the habit, the stronger and more permanent is its relation with the inclination. Thus the disposition similarly to the acquired form in accordance with the act of nature inclines the subject to action in its own manner and as Thomas says: “custom becomes a second nature, and produces an inclination similar to a natural one.”³⁷

Constant practicing of the disposition, namely virtue, creates a type of a *second nature* and in this way the interiorized virtue becomes part of the nature of a person practicing this virtue; it constitutes the unity between a person and their moral activity similar to the unity resulting from love. Connaturality characteristic of a disposition is acquired gradually as a result of the repetition of simple acts which gradually adapt power to the form of the object towards which the disposition subjected to this power moves. It adjusts power in such a way that it starts – directed by this disposition – to act as nature. From this power, inclination proceeds in a permanent and unchangeable way, similarly to the acts of nature.³⁸

Practiced disposition perfects and stabilizes the inclinations of nature transforming internally the subject so deeply that it enables it to judge rightly about practicing this virtue/disposition. In this way, the object of judgment somehow harmonizes with the subject, it becomes interiorized in the subject and it is connatural with it to the point where a virtue becomes the cause of the right judgment. That is why, Thomas, invoking Aristotle,

³⁵ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 49, a. 3.

³⁶ J. MARITAIN, “On Knowledge through Connaturality,” *The Review of Metaphysics*, June 1951, Volume IV, 4, Number 16, 473-474; see also B. MCGINN, “Fundamentum mistyki”, 440; see also M. F. DALY, “Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain: a Critical Study”, 93-94.

³⁷ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 58, a. 1.

³⁸ See A. MORENO, “The Nature of St. Thomas’ Knowledge ‘Per Connaturalitatem’” *Angelicum* 1970, vol. XLVII, 50-51; see also B. MILLER, “Knowledge through Affective Connaturality”, 182; see also M. MRÓZ, “Człowiek w dynamizmie cnoty: aktualność aretologii św. Tomasza z Akwinu w świetle pytania o podstawy moralności chrześcijańskiej”, 173-399.

says that a judge is supposed to be the *personification of justice*, he is permeated with justice so much that he personifies it in himself in his concreteness which becomes a basis for judgment.³⁹ The Angelic Doctor assigns this judgment the characteristics of *rectitudo* (*recte iudicat*) which denotes the judgment that is objective, right and adequate to the judged reality.⁴⁰

The property of disposition inclines the subjected power to act in the way which corresponds with this disposition.

It is proper to a habit to incline a power to act, and this belongs to a habit, in so far as it makes whatever is suitable to it, to seem good, and whatever is unsuitable, to seem evil. For as the taste judges of savors according to its disposition, even so does the human mind judge of things to be done, according to its habitual disposition (*secundum suam habitualem dispositionem*).⁴¹

Thomas demonstrates a close relation which exists between *iudicium*, *aestimatio*, *visio* and *habitus*, *dispositio* as well as a certain "homogeneity" between judgment and quality, namely a moral disposition of a judged subject.⁴² *Habitus* and *dispositio* are conditions of judgment as they stimulate and determine it. It is so because the constitutive nature of the subject is somehow modified and internally shaped by the acquired characteristics and dispositions.

³⁹ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 60, a. 1; *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 3B, ad 2.

⁴⁰ See S. GAWOREK, "Filosofia della conoscenza mistica secondo la dottrina di s. Tommaso d'Akvino", 180.

⁴¹ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 24, a. 11; There is a similar passage in *De Caritate*, a. 12 "It must be considered that the habit of virtue inclines man to act rightly according as through it man has the right estimation of the end. For, as it is said in Book III of the *Ethics*, according as a man is, such does the end seem to him. For example, just as taste judges flavor insofar as it is the affection for some good or bad disposition, so also that which is suitable to man according to a habitual disposition, inhering in him either as good or evil, is judged by him as a good; and what is not in accord with this is considered as evil and repugnant. Whence the Apostle says (1 Cor. ii. 14), The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God."

⁴² I. BIFFI, "Teologia, storia e contemplazione in Tommaso d'Aquino", 113-114.

Conclusion

The model of a person in John Rawls' liberalism is idealizational. The thought experiment Rawls refers to, namely "the original position," is an imaginary foundation on which Rawls constructs the real structure of liberal society. But this foundation is invented, not discovered and has nothing in it which would refer to the real experience of any person. Thus it is doubtful that this idea is sufficiently substantial to sustain the social structure.⁴³

The reconstruction of anthropological assumptions implicitly accepted in the liberal model of humans demonstrates the understanding of the individual as a "bare subject" undetermined by any contentual endowment. The core of the "I" is only freedom, a formal ability to make choices. However, both the content of choices and acquired and inherent attributes remain fully external in relation to the core of the "I." The individual only possesses these characteristics and somehow makes use of them, but without losing their own identity a person can take on other entirely different characteristics. Characteristics, dispositions, cultural and historical context are, in a sense, somehow "glued" to the subject. The subject is thus a form on which characteristics are stuck. Such a substrate is able to survive any change, can be transferred to a different cultural context, new characteristics or virtues can be stuck to it and the substrate itself still remains undefined and contentless. A subject/substrate understood thus is completely insensitive to any change, exchanges characteristics like a person changes clothes or an advertising pillar posters. Together with Allan Bloom we may ask *what is the "I" if we assume, like Rawls, that there is the "I" that establishes values but is not established by them?*⁴⁴ Further, Bloom adds that Rawls' "I" might be only a mysterious and ephemeral source, unfinished in its expression, this "I" is protean and is deprived of nature.⁴⁵

A different type of anthropology can be observed relying on the concept of knowledge through connaturality by Thomas Aquinas. Thomas distinguishes knowledge through connaturality from knowledge *per usum rationis* and describes the latter as purely rational.⁴⁶ The structure of judgment as the criterion which distinguishes these two forms of knowledge. In knowle-

⁴³ See A. BLOOM, "John Rawls", in: "Historia filozofii politycznej, Część druga", 887-888.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 895.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 906

⁴⁶ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

dge through connaturality (*per connaturalitatem* or as Thomas also says *per modum inclinationis*) the intellect “follows” the affective inclination. In other words, the intellect judges as good what is in accordance with a person’s inclination and as bad what is dissonant. It happens because a person can possess the virtue as the subject of the appetitive power and thus be in accordance with it, or co-natured with it, in their very being. Then, if asked a question about the subject of the virtue, they shall give the right answer, no longer through science, but through inclination, through the inner disposition of their own nature disposed by virtue.⁴⁷ Human nature and its inclination to the proper subject as regards that nature is the foundation of the right judgment about the subject.⁴⁸ Thus it is clear that virtues understood as acquired characteristics modify, form and “permeate” the constitutive nature of the subject so that the subject remains the self-same one yet not the same. The individual, a specific person, is not the subject with attributes but the subject modified by these attributes. Particularly such characteristics as dispositions and virtues understood as *accidentia propria* are the attributes included in the subject which should be interpreted as the attributes which are immanent and somehow “embedded” in it. These attributes do not belong to the subject by being placed “next to it” but they modify the subject, introduce certain notions, shape and actualize it to a certain form.⁴⁹ Thus the subject is not, as Rawls claimed, an isolated, contentually undefined “I” which possesses some or other dispositions without the possibility of the real modification of the moral quality of the “I”.

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⁴⁷ See J. MARITAIN, “On Knowledge through Connaturality,” *The Review of Metaphysics*, June 1951, Volume IV, 4, Number 16, 473.

⁴⁸ See T. HUZAREK, “Tomasza z Akwinu teoria afektywnego poznania Boga”, see also Th. RYAN, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas”, *Theological Studies* 66 (2005), 49-58.

⁴⁹ See M. PIWOWARCZYK, “Podmiot i własności”, 139-141.

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