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THE MAIN IDEAS OF MIECZYŚLAW WALLIS' PROGRAM OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

Abstract

The article presents the results of several years of analytical and reconstruction efforts carried out by the author who focused on archival writings by Mieczysław Wallis, a representative of the second generation of the Lvov-Warsaw School, which were to a large extent unknown to readers. Wallis' intellectual profile has been associated so far mostly with his writings on art criticism, aesthetics, theory, and history of art. In the light of painstaking, multistage research of the large collection of his unpublished archival works, it turned out that the current perception of his intellectual preferences and academic achievements is too narrow and simplified. What is especially little known and insufficiently edited are his notes on philosophical anthropology, discussing the question of human existence and human activity in the world. They contain a unique philosophical program based on the axiological concept called psychological relationism. Its main category is the "homo creativus" approach. Wallis' intellectual program is a valuable contribution to the achievements of the Lvov-Warsaw School and, in general, to the Polish philosophy of the 20th century.

Keywords: Lvov-Warsaw School, Mieczysław Wallis, philosophical anthropology, psychological relationism, homo creativus, values

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1. MIECZYŚLAW WALLIS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LVOV-WARSAW SCHOOL IN THE LIGHT OF HIS REFLECTIONS ON AXIOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Undoubtedly, the Lvov-Warsaw School is among the greatest and the most influential Polish intellectual formations of the 20th century with an international reach (Brożek, Chybińska 2016: 7-9, Brożek et al. 2020: 21-26, Zegzuła-Nowak 2017b: 299-308). Its impact on the contemporary Polish philosophy is visible in almost all the philosophical fields: formal logic, ontology, epistemology, praxeology, methodology, philosophy of science, axiology, aesthetics, as well as axiomatization and formalization of various fields of knowledge (Jadacki 2007: 137-148). However, it should be emphasized that its scientific heritage still has not been fully explored and reconstructed. As numerous and large archival collections in domestic libraries and scientific centers indicate, there is still a lot of undiscovered content there. Hence, scientific works of Kazimierz Twardowski's School are a subject of intense efforts aiming at reconstructing and researching them, the efforts focused mostly on looking for new or insufficiently examined areas of creative inquiry. Finally, these initiatives also aim at establishing what was the actual contribution of individual representatives of the Lvov-Warsaw School to its scientific oeuvre.

Notably, in the light of these efforts, it turns out that the scope of analytical and research work should include archival heritage of many scholars who — in the context of Twardowski's School — were considered to be of minor importance, with a less significant contribution to the School's scientific achievements.

One of the scholars whose intellectual status was not immediately obvious is Mieczysław Wallis, a representative of the second generation of Twardowski's School (Woleński 1985: 22, 339; 2011: 12, 353) and one of the students who were the closest to its Warsaw Masters — Tadeusz Kotarbiński and Jan Łukasiewicz (Nowakowska 2001: 7). Importantly, his intellectual profile and its significance for the Lvov-Warsaw School's heritage were defined mostly on the basis of his writings that were published so far. Therefore, his work is mostly associated with his publications on art criticism, aesthetics as well as theory and history of art (Pękala 1997, Dziemidok 1980: 240-248). Yet it is only a narrow and simplified view of his intellectual interests and scientific achievements.

The content of Wallis' archives indicates that his work is more multifaceted and much richer than can be deemed on the basis of existing interpretations, which have shown only fragments of his creative profile. A vast

majority of his archives remain unedited and unknown to the academic milieu. Hence, the knowledge about Wallis' academic interests and achievements and his actual intellectual contribution to the work of the Lvov-Warsaw School is still incomplete. And Wallis, despite his extremely rich and original scientific work, as a representative of Kazimierz Twardowski's School, is still considered to be a person of little influence. It is quite surprising as his writings have many features that are important for the pioneering oeuvre of the School (Horecka 2010: 307, 327-338, Najder 1990: 110-111, Pękała 2004: XIV-XXIX, Pękała 2013: 173-191).¹

Especially his strictly philosophical reflections remain rather little known and insufficiently edited, despite the fact that they are highly inspiring and substantively valuable. What comes to the fore in his reflections are issues of philosophical anthropology, related to the question of the nature of human existence and the manifestations of human activity in the world, which were not typically discussed more thoroughly by the Lvov-Warsaw School. Significantly, these reflections are based on their axiological conditions.

What is more, in the light of reconstruction work carried out on Wallis' archival writings so far, it seems that Wallis' concept of axiological conditions of humanity is an extremely original contribution to the Lvov-Warsaw School's oeuvre. It may also be an inspiring opinion in the contemporary scientific discourse, for instance in the context of art therapy (Wojciechowski 2001: 404) or in fighting against mechanisms of dehumanization (Winclaw 2016: 93-114; Leyens et al. 2001: 395-411).²

How did it happen that, while exploring the world of aesthetic and artistic creations and categories, Wallis focused his research on this subject? Or in other words, what made him depart from the field of research on aesthetics and theory of art toward the sphere of reflections on the human being? Or perhaps one can assume it was the other way round. Perhaps it was the desire to examine human nature that was the driving force of his work (even if it was not sufficiently acknowledged by the researchers of his academic profile)? What is cognitively intriguing is the fact that in his reflections about man, axiological issues that he had studied for years were still present, they actually became essential, central to his creative concept.

¹ This situation has been slowly changing, with the progress of reconstruction work carried out on Wallis' archives by the author, thanks to systematic publications that present the results of the work.

² This topic is discussed more broadly in my article "The Ethical problem of Dehumanization in the Light of Mieczysław Wallis' Intellectual Biography," submitted to *Analiza i Egzystencja*, currently under review.

Following the trail of Wallis' writings, one should try to reconstruct the path of his intellectual development and evolution of his academic interests that eventually led him to drawing up an original program of philosophical anthropology. Importantly, this project will enable to present various peculiarities of his academic biography more fully than before. From a broader scientific perspective, it will constitute a valuable complement to the knowledge possessed so far, both on the achievements of Wallis himself and of the Lvov-Warsaw School.

2. TOWARD THE REFLECTION ON PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: MIECZYŚLAW WALLIS' INTELLECTUAL EVOLUTION

Wallis never systematized his notes on man as the central category in his reflections in a consistent, well-ordered academic form. They are more like dispersed intellectual digressions, a kind of "philosophical miniatures." However, their content and clear conceptual links between individual notes definitely show that Wallis had a well-defined creative idea with a great significance for his intellectual inquiries, which should become a subject of reconstruction and an in-depth analysis.³

The core of these reflections can be found mostly in Wallis' hand-written manuscripts from the 1940s, which are part of his archives (Wallis, Rps 19, I, I-III) in a collection of writings *Rozmyślenia filozoficzne. Skróty* [Philosophical Reflections: Abstracts]. These writings include a philosophical concept, unique in the context of the Lvov-Warsaw School, presenting a certain vision of the human being that, importantly, is shown in the categories (mostly axiological and aesthetic ones) typical of Wallis' works. It is a kind of synthesis of his achievements in the field that was most important, most engaging for him in many years of his academic work. That is why it should be emphasized that they are significantly linked with his well-known writings (Wallis 1968, 1983, 2004). Yet they add a new, broader dimension of meaning to them. It is necessary to mention that the context of Wallis' biography — the time and place of writing these archival notes — is crucial for their ade-

³ It should be emphasized that reconstruction of Wallis' program of philosophical anthropology required extensive analytical and research efforts focused on selected fragments of his intellectual heritage. The project was carried out on the basis of source materials gathered during numerous archival searches. As a result, the author conducted research that enabled her to discover and then systematize and edit the most important substantive assumptions of the concept.

quate interpretation. They were drawn up during Wallis' time in a prisoner-of-war camp in Woldenberg, where he spent over four years. This fact had a big impact on the content of the topics he explored then, defining the main outlines of his academic interests and determining the final shape of his creative concept. Moreover, the echo of these reflections can also be found in the post-war writings of the philosopher.

In the prisoner-of-war captivity, Wallis was confronted with the camp's machinery of dehumanization — he described its influence on an individual with an impressive insight later on, in his *Psychika jeńca wojennego* [The Psyche of a Prisoner of War], published in 1946 in the *Życie Literackie* magazine. Not only did he observe but also directly experienced some extremely intense phenomena. These were mostly various forms of discrimination and deprivation of social, emotional, psychological, and economic nature, such as terror and violence from the camp's personnel, captivity, enforced isolation, acute longing for freedom, lack of sense of safety, lack of intimacy and privacy, inability to satisfy a deeply human need for seclusion, or existence in degrading living conditions: he suffered from hunger, cold, lack of proper sanitary conditions, and sufficient health care (Wallis 1946: 17-19).

Importantly, Wallis, both as a persecuted citizen and as a man of science, realized then that these phenomena not only impair the existence of an individual but also undermine the very foundations of humanity, which he understood as the supreme value of the modern world. That is why he did not want to remain passive and helpless in the face of adversity, nor did he intend to yield to its destructive influence. He continued his search for a remedy that would enable him to oppose them efficiently and permanently.

As a result, he created a certain intellectual “remedial program” focused on axiological reality and implemented it with great devotion in the life of the camp community in order to defend the human psyche against the fatal destructive influence of captivity. The program's foundation was a specific vision of man, based on Wallis' concept of values and aesthetic sensations.

That is how Wallis, who typically started from reflections on aesthetics and the theory of art, entered the realm of philosophical anthropology.⁴ His notes from the camp in Woldenberg, with analyses and reflections on the nature of creative activity of human beings, the world of human experiences, sensations, and creations oriented on the sphere of cognition, sensations, and aesthetic values, show very clearly that at that time he pondered on many

⁴ Importantly, Wallis' intellectual reorientation, noticed during the analysis of his archives, has not been a subject of a separate scientific analysis so far, therefore it may seem less than obvious or insufficiently significant in the interpretation of his entire oeuvre. It also requires further analytical work.

crucial questions (not only as an aestheticist and theoretician of art but also a philosopher), questions that set the future intellectual course of his creative biography. It was then that the question whether and to what extent the creative activity of human beings is attributive to them gained significance in his thought.⁵ This issue in turn led him to the question of fundamental philosophical significance, pertaining to the nature of the very human existence or the question of the essence of humanity. What was also quite conspicuous in his creative biography since then (especially in the light of the analysis of his archives) was a leading intellectual impulse, a search for foundations or sources of momentousness and uniqueness of man against the background of the surrounding world.

Hence, a conclusion may be drawn that a certain intellectual evolution took place then in Wallis' creative biography, as he transformed himself from an aestheticist into a fully-fledged philosopher.⁶ Importantly, he made this observation himself, stating in one of his hand-written notes:

Parmenides says: "Wherever I start, I return to the same thing." *Si parva magnis comparare licet* [if I may compare great things with small ones], every topic in the history of art, psychology, or aesthetics brings me finally to philosophical questions. (Wallis Rps 18: 157)

⁵ In this approach, the axis of Wallis' research significantly corresponds to the intellectual inquiry of Johann Wolfgang Goethe. In the considerations of the German poet and philosopher, the search for the truth about man also appeared as one of the leading intellectual issues. What is more, his work also emphasizes the power of human striving to grasp the meaning of one's existence through the attitude of action and life activity. His considerations are an affirmation of the active attitude of the human being in the process of self-determination and making sense of one's life through one's own acts. As Marian Szyrocki puts it, "At the basis of Goethe's beliefs, . . . was the idea of the maximum activation of human creative forces" (Szyrocki 1987: 164). In the context of intellectual relations with Wallis, it is also worth noting that Goethe emphasized the autonomy of man in shaping his own living environment, especially in the process of fighting for the highest values. Importantly, art and human orientation towards beauty occupied a special place in this process (Goethe 1996: 12, Szturc 1995: 33-43, Sowiński 1953: 13-14, 19-20).

⁶ It should be stressed that Wallis never completely severed his links with the Lvov-Warsaw School, he was always inspired by its scientific program and methodology. For years he cooperated and stayed in personal touch with many representatives of the School. I write in more detail about these issues in the following publications: Zegzuła-Nowak 2020: 149-179; 2018: 69-90; 2015a: 209-230; 2015b: 125-148.

3. THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN WALLIS' WORK

Wallis' philosophical interests are also visible in the project of philosophical anthropology that he initiated in the Woldenberg camp. Notably, the project became an essential part of the concept with far-reaching intellectual momentum. As it turns out, Wallis, in his philosophical reflections, aimed at a systemic approach. The anthropological concept was probably to be its constitutive part. This attempt is clearly noticeable in his post-war hand-written notes, where he stated the following:

It was my dream for many years to build a great philosophical system. I wished to capture the entire reality with the human world as its part. The reality as a series of layers emerging from one another. (Wallis Rps 10, T. IX: 6)

As his archival notes show, he devoted a few dozen years of his academic inquiries to attain this goal, analyzing the world of human experiences, creations, and creative achievements.

3.1. THE "HOMO CREATIVUS" ATTITUDE AS THE FOUNDATION OF WALLIS' PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The main assumption of Wallis' theory developed in Woldenberg was the following anthropological thesis: the feature marking out human beings in the world is the fact that only people can adopt a creative and interpretative attitude toward the surrounding reality, which contains the key to finding its charm and the ability to reach the world of categories and creations with an axiological hue (Zegzula-Nowak 2017a: 67-72).

This attitude may be called "homo creativus," which is in line with the original idea of its author, treating it as analogous to the "homo ethicus" attitude, described by Wallis' close friend, Henryk Elzenberg. In his fight against camp dehumanization, Wallis, like Elzenberg, struggling with a pessimistic vision of man, turned toward his inner world and found relief, power of survival, and sustainable motivation for, as Elzenberg called it, "courageous behavior in the face of existence."⁷ Unlike Elzenberg, however, Wallis did not aim at achieving moral good, but he turned to the sphere of values and aesthetic experiences, with a special emphasis on typically human creative activity. He considered it a refuge for humanity. His inquiries were accompanied by the conviction that man, as a being of a unique nature, has a tremendously

⁷ This phrase is derived from Elzenberg's philosophical journal where he defined ethics as the discipline telling man how to courageously behave in the face of existence (Elzenberg 2002: 155).

strong power of self-affirmation, which enriches his existence while simultaneously constituting the kind of weapon in his relations with the world, helping him tackle the hardships of life.

3.2. MAN IN THE WORLD OF VALUES AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES:
PSYCHOLOGICAL RELATIONISM AS THE AXIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION
FOR WALLIS' PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The conviction that only human beings can be sensitive to aesthetic values incorporated in their environment was an important starting point for Wallis' philosophical reflections on man. And this fact determines man's essence to a large extent. Because what is attributive to man are his extraordinary adaptive powers, thanks to which he can always find something to enchant him in the surrounding world if he adopts the right approach, even if the world seems totally hostile and devoid of aesthetic aspects. Then, in such a channeled act of perception, he has the opportunity to experience the axiological reality, which in turn allows him to efficiently abstract himself from his own unfavorable situation.⁸ As Wallis wrote, it is the domain of human beings that they can see in such a way that:

⁸ Interestingly, Wallis' views in philosophical anthropology also significantly correspond to the concept of logotherapy formulated by the Viennese psychiatrist and psychotherapist Victor E. Frankl. Its genesis is similar to the circumstances of the creation of Wallis' concept. It stemmed not only from the author's clinical practice but also from his experiences in a concentration camp during World War II. Frankl also started from the issue of human existence, seeing its specificity in the process of self-creation. As he pointed out, "The human being is not something like many; things determine each other, while man has an infinite capacity for self-determination" (Frankl 2016: 156). In his view, logotherapy is a form of treating mental disorders through the search for meaning in life. As the author himself wrote, "The main task of logotherapy is to help the patient find the meaning of life. . . . when it comes to the will to survive even in the most difficult conditions, nothing in the world can compare with the awareness that our life makes sense" (Frankl 2016: 156-157). So, it is no coincidence that the name of this concept comes from the following Greek words: "logos" — meaning "meaning (sense)" and "therapeo" — "I care," "I heal," "I take care." This method is based on the philosophical concept of man according to which the existence of man is realized on three levels: biological, psychological, and spiritual. It was in the spiritual sphere that Frankl saw the possibility of realizing the full essence of humanity. He believed that what distinguishes man in the world is the need to search for the meaning of his existence. As he emphasized, "this pursuit constitutes the basic motivation in human life. . . . This sense is unique and exceptional, because man alone can and must fulfill it" (Frankl 2016: 151). Moreover, like Wallis, Frankl was convinced that this process was closely related to the creative activity of a human being and communing with the axiological sphere. He assumed that the meaning of life can be discovered just "through crea-

The most common wall of red and brown brick, interspersed with grey grout, twinkles in the sunlight like a magnificent Persian carpet. (Wallis Rps 19, T. III: 174)

This approach was a consequence of Wallis' axiological views in which he attributed a special ontic status to values. The philosopher opposed the objectivist-absolutist approaches in axiology. He argued that both objective and subjective factors constitute an aesthetic value. He claimed that, on the one hand, an aesthetic value is a property of the object, hence it does not exist independently of aesthetic objects; on the other hand, however, it is connected with experiences of a subject evoked by a valuable object. That is how Wallis adopted a position called psychological relationism in axiology,⁹ claiming that value is always determined by a relation between a subject and an object, which is about evoking certain mental states — positive aesthetic experiences

tive work or action" and "the experience of . . . goodness, truth, and beauty — through direct contact with nature or culture, as well as . . . direct contact with another human being whose uniqueness can be experienced through love" (Frankl 2016: 167). Like Wallis, Frankl proposed the concept of a special existential attitude, which he called *homo patiens* (suffering man) (Frankl 1984). What is most characteristic of it is the specific attitude of a person to a situation of suffering. This attitude was the full realization of the human freedom of the individual as the possibility of an internal attitude to one's own existence, by taking responsibility for one's life and seeing the experienced suffering as an axiological dimension. Accepting unavoidable suffering with courage allows man to realize the values. As a result, it leads to a situation in which: "man is able to see the meaning in his life . . . until the last moment" (Frankl 2016: 171). As one of the commentators writes, according to Frankl: "Suffering with dignity gives human life the highest value available to him" (Wójtowicz 2005: 87). Like Wallis, Frankl saw in the proposed attitude the way to self-transcendence and full spiritual self-realization (Frankl 2016: 93). See also Szczukiewicz, Szczukiewicz 2018: 196-198.

⁹ The position of relationism in the theory of aesthetic values is explained in more detail by Bohdan Dziemidok (1975), who proposes a typology of axiological positions in Polish aesthetics of the interwar period. Apart from objectivism and subjectivism, relationism is one of the approaches to the issue of the way of existence of aesthetic values. Representatives of this position reject the reductionist understanding of value, "believing that beauty is not only an objective property, nor is it merely a product of the subject's experiences, but that it is born in the relation between the object and the subject" (Dziemidok 1975: 8). The position represented by Wallis is therefore in line with this assumption, as it includes both aspects constituting aesthetic value (both objective and subjective). Wallis' relationism is psychological because, as the philosopher pointed out, it evokes certain mental states (aesthetically positive experiences). Hence, as he explained, there is no difference between the sentence "S is aesthetic" and the sentence "S is such that it gives an aesthetically positive experience to the appropriate recipient and under appropriate conditions." As he argued, "Both propositions are . . . equally propositions about the subject S, for they ascribe a certain property to it and affirm that it is such and such; both are propositions about human mental states in the sense that the property in question consists in inducing mental states of a certain type . . ." (Wallis 1968: 34). See also Zegzula-Nowak 2016: 64-72.

– in the recipient (Rosner 1975: 160-161, Skoczyński, Woleński 2010: 440). That is what he wrote about it:

value: is not . . . any independent entity – real, ideal or intentional, nor something that exists in a colloquial sense, has validity, is binding, but it is also a capacity of certain objects to evoke certain experiences in the recipient, the experiences that we call “aesthetic.” It is a property of these objects and does not exist outside of them. (Wallis 1968: 9)

What is important, the relation described by Wallis takes place only in the human world. Therefore, the presence of values depends strictly on involvement and activity of man (Horecka 2011: 198). That is why the ability to adopt an approach of aesthetization of the world was for the philosopher the fullest expression of human exceptionality and power to survive in the world. The essence of Wallis’ “homo creativus” attitude is to adopt a certain creative approach towards the surrounding reality, focused on capturing all the possible manifestations of beauty in the world and aesthetic categories close to him (e.g., sublimity, piety, charm, allure, preference).

Wallis was convinced that the ability and need for creative activity evoke special mental states in people, allowing them to experience feelings and sensations not occurring in any other sphere of human existence. The ability to experience them is also one of the most significant attributes of human existence. Importantly, these sensations are a special source of human contentment, joy, and intellectual intoxication. Aesthetic experiences may transform a normal moment, a mundane experience, imbue it with a touch of grandeur, transporting a person into a world of transcendent ecstasy, elation, oblivion. As Wallis wrote, aesthetic experiences are unique, available to human beings only, and:

their main value ensues from them giving us something utterly positive – a peculiar, pure, and noble joy. This joy, just as other joys resulting from knowledge, friendship, love, or service to a great idea, makes our ephemeral, fragile, permanently threatened life worth living. Hence, an aesthetic experience . . . is unique, extremely rich and complex, and requires a strong focus of attention – full concentration on the experienced object. . . . an aesthetic experience appears when we “drown,” “lose ourselves” in the object of experience, “this object fills the entire field of our consciousness,” to such an extent that “we forget the world.” (Wallis 1968: 238)

Focusing on aesthetic categories, man enters a new dimension of reality, a sphere that allows him not only to suspend “drives, lusts, desires, aspirations that overcome us in everyday life” for a while but also leave his current troubles in the shadows. In such a way human life gains a new, deeper meaning with a permanent axiological hue (Wallis 1968: 238).

So it is not without reason that Wallis perceived aesthetic experiences as a remedy that not only allows one to detach oneself from the difficulties of hu-

man existence but also provides the opportunity to shed fears and frustrations infesting the human psyche. As he wrote:

An aesthetic experience . . . releases us not only from the concerns and hardships of our everyday existence but also from doubts and intellectual anxieties. (Wallis Rps 19, T. II: 175)

So the “homo creativus” approach not only enriches the experiential sphere of human life but may also fulfill a therapeutic function, constituting a method of countering or minimizing the negative effects of traumatic experiences on the human psyche, personality, the sphere of sensations and emotions. Through entering the realm of aesthetic experiences and categories, a human being may limit the impact of inharmonious surroundings on his inner life. Wallis was convinced that a certain intellectual and emotional elation, being enchanted with the world of axiological entities, so different from typical human fate, allows man to regain, even temporarily, the disturbed or lost sense of internal harmony, peace, and relief:

The extraordinary, festive, almost mystical nature of an aesthetic experience is a fact as definite as the immensity of the universe or the vastness of human suffering. Any deep aesthetic experience is an act of admiration, of leaving yourself behind “ecstasy.” (Wallis Rps 19, T. II: 174)

Focusing the thoughts, feelings, and experiences on the immanent world of aesthetic creations most likely allowed Wallis to detach himself mentally from numerous oppressions in his life, including the most difficult one, connected with his long-term captivity in the prisoner-of-war camp. He observed the following in one of his notes written in Woldenberg:

You need, my friend, to find beauty everywhere: Not only in silvers and roses of Velazquez's *infantas*, in the panache of Gothic cathedrals, Bach's powerful fugas, old Goethe's poems, full of superhuman wisdom: one needs to know how to look for it and how to find it. Also in the apparently mundane and sad existence of a prisoner of war: in the rainbow-colored wings of a fly sitting on the latrine's wall, in the drawn-out song of a fan after lighting the stove. In a twinkle of blue eyes, the noble shape of a knee, in a colorful mosaic of your fellow captive's patched trousers. At night — in the slow, rhythmic breathing of your neighbor, even in the subtle shades of pain, caused by a dentist's needle. (Wallis Rps 19, T. I: 45)

Undoubtedly, the philosopher considered the “homo creativus” attitude to be extremely affirmative for a human being, so he valued, promoted, and developed it continuously throughout the decades of his creative activity. Wallis' strategy for camp survival was not accidental in its essence, it did not occur by any coincidence in his intellectual biography. It was rather a consequence of his intellectual path, an expression of his internal preferences, the fruit of many years of his creative efforts. He was a scholar whose whole life and

creative work were permeated with his love for beauty and his attempts to find manifestations of beauty, even the most subtle or delicate, in the world. Therefore, his scientific activity was centered on the search for the greatest possible number of sources and forms of aesthetic experiences and aesthetic values. As Jerzy Pelc wrote about him:

Love for beautiful objects was the essence of Mieczysław Wallis' life; their analysis, description, and interpretation filled fifty years of his research. (Pelc 1977: 5)

What is significant, he was deeply convinced that the “homo creativus” attitude, due to its beneficial effect on people’s inner life and general well-being, should be enhanced and promoted in the society. Hence his belief that scientific work is not his only academic mission, that first and foremost he should make people more sensitive to products of human creative activity and teach them to perceive the surrounding world through the perspective of aesthetic sensations. As one of his students, Jan Białostocki, wrote about him, Wallis “was convinced that values that he cherished so deeply may and should be available to everyone” (Białostocki 1983: 337). As an empirically oriented thinker, he believed that an aesthetic sense can be inspired and shaped in people. At the same time, he noticed and lamented that many people shut themselves off from such feelings, they do not appreciate the uniqueness of their being and do not fulfill its potential, living in a moment without inner aspirations, abandoning metaphysical anxieties, so essential for humanity. He wrote:

Man as an *animal methaphysicum*? A vast majority of people live from day to day, preoccupied with their mundane existence, devoid of any metaphysical anxieties. (Wallis Rps 19, T. I: 161)

He was aware that people may be indifferent to the world of values, yet he believed that they should be shown the way to the beauty offered by the world so that they could notice, experience, and appreciate it. As he emphatically stated:

If . . . we want to have more joy in the world we live in, the world with its immense suffering and pain, we should try to promote and enhance an aesthetic culture — shape the ability to look at buildings, statues, or paintings, the artistry of listening to music, the art of listening to or reading poems, inspire sensitivity to the beauty of nature. We should aspire to have the biggest number of people capable of noticing beauty, character, or expression both in the works of art available to them and in the most common objects in their immediate surroundings . . . (Wallis 1968: 25)

CONCLUSIONS

Wallis' reflections, which are an attempt to define the ontic status of man by presenting his activity within the axiological framework, are a unique concept in the contemporary Polish humanities. They significantly and substantively enrich the intellectual landscape of the Lvov-Warsaw School, adding new and extremely valuable philosophical topics, categories, and reflections.

Looking for the essence of man, Wallis showed human existence from a multi-aspect perspective, as self-constituting and aiming at its ontic optimum in the field of intersecting activities, such as art, aesthetics, axiology.

The substantive value and – in many ways – pioneering nature of Wallis' hand-written notes that have been edited so far give a significant stimulus to further research on his unpublished writings. Exploring the unedited archival materials of this representative of the Lvov-Warsaw School may lead to discovering new, inspiring concepts in his intellectual work. It would be a valuable complement to the panorama of the 20th-century Polish philosophy.

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