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THE ORIGINS OF THE HUMAN BEING

A Theory of Animation according to Tadeusz Ślipko

One of the characteristic features of Ślipko's Thomistic anthropology is its experiential orientation, or else, its application and reference to particular sciences that comprise within their discourse a dimension of material, physical and biological reality. The Philosopher is entirely aware of the sciences range and application, their eventual contribution and assistance in solving theological and philosophical issues.¹ In a word, being a refine expert of many modern schools of thought Ślipko remains moderate and prudent when it comes to the application of the natural sciences to philosophical questions, here specifically to problems of the Aquinas anthropology. In *Granice życia* [Borders of Life] the author enters into the complicated field of life, death, eugenics and genetic engineering issues, in sum, bioethics which in his clear awareness embraces a being consisted of matter and spirit, human substance as a *suppositum* and faculties co-operation. Invariably, it means that Ślipko holds consistently, even develops the position of Aquinas (*resp.* Christian philosophy) considering it to be authorized in solving the difficult and apparently unsolvable problems of personhood such as life, existence and death. The orders of both science (genetics) and philosophy (anthropology) contain different aspects of the human being. In an introduction to a sub-chapter in *Granice życia* [Borders of Life] he is absolutely clear in his thinking that in the era of „the growing ethical problems of the present time”², e.g. covering the essential issues such as conception and individual's growth it is necessary to assume a firm

¹ See Ślipko, Tadeusz, *Życie i płeć człowieka* [Life and Sex of Man], WAM, Kraków, 1978, p. 555.

² See Ślipko, Tadeusz, *Granice życia* [Borders of Life], II edit., WAM, Krakow, 1994, p.107.

stand of support which is man's objective ethical nature based on a theory of moral order. Hence the concept of man as a being composed of substantial form and material substratum is taken to be his starting point. In accordance with this orientation he focuses his investigation around the idea of man comprehended as a 'personal being and morality subject constituted generally in what accounts for their proper human nature.'³

That is why when Ślipko asks about the beginning, so to say, the initial moment of the human substance he considers it in the context of a philosophical presuppositions on God as the Universe Creator and of man viewed as a self-known and autonomously operating being, the cause of a series of consequences. As a philosopher he draws on the genesis of man-person-self-conscious and a free being defined as a field of different faculties and abilities of co-operating in the process of various objectives' realization. In other words, the Author undertakes a difficult problem of animation which (even on the basis of the Christian explanation) was interpreted differently, sometimes in opposition to some essential canons of the Catholic philosophy of man.⁴ Taking into account the most recent data of biological sciences (genetics) Ślipko highlights that a very biological, material aspect of the human being is going to be formulated in the proper proportion, that is man related (meant to be a complex being treated as a human being whose immaterial element – soul constitutes their humanity) when as 'psychobiological being forms his/herself in the course of a biological nine-month- process before he/she finally appears in the world as an independent being without any more demanding protective and vital assistance of his/her mother's womb.'⁵

Ślipko aims at tracing the earliest stages (in terms of time and space) of that psycho-physical being coming into existence, i.e. the fetus subsequent stages characteristic exclusively of man (and not of an animal, for example). In such a spirit the Author takes into consideration genetics findings treated as a science that give insight into the very origins of BIOLOGICAL (my emphasis) process resulting in the shaping of a human organism.⁶ An enormous amount of knowledge, facts accumulation, as the Author of *Granice życia* [Borders of Life] states, has paradoxically caused contradictory expressions on occurrence and emergence. Or even has led to peculiar ignorance about an issue – which has been discussed since Aristotle and the

³ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 108.

⁶ Ibid.

Middle Ages– viz. a moment of animation when it comes to joining a spirit (some immaterial element) with an organic basis.

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of this temporary aspect, it is impossible to deprive it of its substantiality but simultaneously one has to face difficulties that result from defining that moment of a human being's creation and its precise indication.

According to Ślipko, antagonistic positions (even on the ground of spiritual formulations) eliminate unambiguous expressions 'bringing about the mist of mystery thickening.' 'There wouldn't be any problem – Ślipko writes at some moment – if all advocates of man's spiritual comprehension agreed that a moment of this entity's conception is the moment at which an integrated human being comes into existence, that is man constituted of soul and body⁷. Similarly, a moment of death would put an end to the existence of a personal being as the whole.

This has not happened so on the ground of animation. The author of *Granice życia* [Borders of Life] presents both a historical and critical survey of stands, understandably focusing mainly on the way in which Aristotle and Saint Thomas approached the problem. Its characteristic feature is explained in terms of the animation moment postponement for a later time when it goes juxtaposed with the moment of conception. According to Ślipko, a principal reason for such an epistemological option is a thesis shared with other philosophers holding that man's coming into being, in a sense, implies and points out a gradual transformation of substantial forms. It marks a certain process of a passage, e.g. a peculiar transformation series ranging from a vegetative form through sensual to a spiritual (rational) one. Nowadays this position has been rejected and lacks any followers. Therefore the very problem of animation has remained and 'biological facts verified by genetics'⁸ trigger discussions or, more often than never, fierce disputes. Ślipko claims that data provided by the modern science are divided into two strata or planes by a grade of their theoretical significance. That one of the minor grade of substantiveness is a fact proved by statistical investigation indicating that fifty per cent formed zygotes formed are annihilated. 'In the case of animation it would mean mass extermination of humans.'⁹ However, Ślipko concludes that such data are not scientifically verifiable and a statistic approach to the problem itself is inappropriate or impossible. It is rather a kind of pretentious expression of claims „to deter-

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 108.

⁹ Ibid.

mine nature processes and eventually the twists of Divine Providence."¹⁰ The second datum presented on the ground of empirical science is of essential importance, namely out of one fertilized zygote, which is the origin of individual life, can come into being two or even more individual organisms. Our philosopher finds it to be a problem *sensu stricto* anthropological, for in the first place he is interested in the substantially significant moment 'when the immaterial soul unifies with corporeal substratum'¹¹. Obviously, it is a philosopher, not a scientist who is aware of the fact that none spiritual element can be embraced by empirical experiment as neither every day experience nor scientific one are able to state anything about that element. Secondly, Ślipko holds that some philosophical experience like reflection or introspective acts etc. fail to grasp epistemologically a spiritual being in a direct way. According to Thomistic realism the spiritual-material principle of life reveals itself indirectly¹². He commences with epistemological processes analysis then through a subsequent procedural step by the application of the reductive metaphysical thought method (founded on a principle of causality and sufficient reason) reaches some irrefutable conclusion that 'at the base of man's unique cognitive-volitive psychism some essential spiritual element must function'¹³. After all, the Father Professor adds, consciousness and its acts are out of the question in zygote formations, therefore this type of explication cannot be accepted. On the other hand, a proposal which is accepted by the Christian philosophy defines the conditions under which a spirit incarnates into matter. One of them (very likely the most vital) is a fact of material state appropriate to the constitution of substance enabling it to receive an immaterial principle of life, precisely a personal one. In sum, Ślipko is of the opinion that all view divergences concern the way of interpretation, grasping and understanding the preparation (potentialities) of that material substratum to enable human being generation (a complex subject)¹⁴.

As a matter of fact, data presented by science are endowed with the power of a cogent argument. Ślipko does not call this into question, or more to the point, interprets them as a necessary component of his consideration over animation. Zygote acceptance (an organism made of gametes), a biological formation to be both a theoretical and ontological starting point in analysis focused on all controversies about animation issues is one of the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See *ibid.*, p. 109.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

facts interpreted this way. There are some interpretations in this field – as our Philosopher notices accurately – that exclude themselves reciprocally in this field but nevertheless can be grouped into three fundamental positions. The first one embraces the theory of simultaneous animation which identifies ‘a final moment when gametes fuse to form a zygote’ with a moment of immaterial soul appearance within it.¹⁵ As the zygote possesses some determined genetic code (it is in fact a shaped cell) it is able ‘to digest individually’¹⁶ Ślipko – an anthropologist finds it neither more nor less as particularly valuable (at almost every stage of personal life) developmental ability and task undertaking, in a word, of some strictly individualized existence constituting a complex subject (a person). At this instant of Ślipko’s theoretical investigation modern genetics seems to function as a kind of peculiar support to his considerations on simultaneous animation. Since it confirms some general presuppositions that are included in one universal premise. However, one cannot omit an important issue when out of monozygote individual twins emerge or two zygotes re-combine into one individual. This point challenges the theory being *punctum saliens* as for its veracity and verifiability.¹⁷ Even the philosophical option (accurately grasped by Ślipko) disregarding descriptive data, viz. *terminus ad quem* of the shaping process affects and determines subject’s essence, nature and character till the moment of conception, does not resolve the question univocally and plausibly. Furthermore, our Philosopher claims that „one cannot postpone arbitrarily that *terminus a quo* for a later time without falling into contradiction with a principle of non-contradiction and a principle of sufficient cause”¹⁸ Therefore this position is to be examined critically, as Ślipko does in the case of Teresa Iglesias’s conception. An anthropologist-researcher she holds that a zygote is a biological structure of a strictly human nature (essence) from the very beginning of its existence, however, it is a being constantly structuring and differentiating. Those changes or transformations are understood by Iglesias in operating categories of intercell actions and are expressed by the term **totipotentiality**, that is a cell’s ability to transplant, graft and regenerate. Let us leave out some details concerning things that require considerable biological-genetic competence. What matters is, according to Ślipko, that Teresa Iglesias’s stand is the most reasonable if it comes to a theory of direct animation. Moreover, she thinks

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See. *ibid.*, p. 110 & Ślipko, T., *Sprawozdanie ze zjazdu moralistów w Wiedniu* [Account of Moralists’ Reunion in Vienna], in: *Coll. Theol.*, 40, 1970.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

that if Saint Thomas had known the findings of recent genetics he would most probably have accepted it.¹⁹ Nevertheless, our Philosopher claims that there is one erroneous approach to the animation problem, as if its weakest link in the solutions proposed, consisting of the forceful application of the non-contradiction principle. It results in some dangerous consequences. Let the author of *Życie i płeć człowieka* [Life and Sex of Man] talk himself. He is going to use counter-points against direct animation in the way understood by followers of delayed animation who in defending their own position claim that 'designation of a term *a quo* and (...) the assumption that the origin of human existence occurs after the moment of fertilization is not (...) an arbitrary manipulation of depriving some people's rights to exist.'²⁰ To put it differently, this kind of the theory supporters cannot be accused of applying arbitrariness in 'a term *a quo* demarcation'²¹. The problem consists in the animation of the human embryo precise investigation and analysis, distinguished from 'the emergence of an animal being'²² though, as it is a spiritual element and material biological substratum fusion. Ślipko firmly supports this position both criticizing others and presenting his own interpretation. He holds changelessly that this very issue is to be considered in terms of philosophical and anthropological arguments as they every so often reconcile apparent contradictions pointing to the research direction and emphasizing the relevance of empirical studies. Let us put it differently, along with followers of direct (simultaneous) animation theory Ślipko has accepted the unquestionable fact that a zygote is a uniform being of a totipotential character (feature).²³ It is a matter of open issue whether totipotentiality eliminates somehow or crosses out 'the necessity of the disposition arising in a corporeal substratum'²⁴ to receive immaterial element, therefore the real beginning of personal being.

It is not surprising that in this research field specific difficulties emerge. There is conclusive datum that still before implantation we are dealing with a cell specialization process, so it is highly probably that a cell might not be 'capable for animation' at some moments. Ślipko elucidates it thus 'some different biological directions occur in a cell'²⁵ To make the animation process happen a zygote being still an unanimated cell must undergo a 'disassembly' stage, functional determinations, 'make a developmental

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 112.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 112.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ See Ślipko, Tadeusz, *Życie i płeć* [Life and Sex], op. cit., p. 120.

²⁴ See Ślipko, Tadeusz, *Granice życia* [Borders of Life], op. cit., p. 113.

²⁵ Ibid.

regress to achieve a mother-zygote state'²⁶ This means that only when an irrefutable evidence of one-cell cyeses arising exclusively at the lowest developmental levels is presented can a theory of simultaneous animation be simply acknowledged. Furthermore, according to Ślipko, a Christian ethicist, in the case of the recombination of 'two anonymous zygotes accretion would imply putting one of them to death'²⁷ and this solution appears to be a definite challenge posed to human dignity. And further he argues comprehensively that 'such dignity is due to an anonymous zygote by virtue of its psycho-physical structure resulting in its appearance as an individualized being, or else substantial and undividable subject endowed with the moral right to live.'²⁸ The problem has not been solved too by a hypothesis of one-cell accretions propounding two souls existence in one zygote while the Author holds that the core problem consists in the fact that 'two souls present in one zygote would have to annihilate its unity and transform it into two zygotes, what would be carried out without previous organic conditioning'²⁹

Ślipko takes particularly care of moral concern, meditation over the ethical dimension of these problems that are of tremendous importance when it comes to the dignity, sanctity and inviolability of a person – individual's life. In other words, Ślipko does not polemize with the discussed positions to present at all costs his own views having only regard to fundamental issues, which – as it were – have to manifest themselves against the background of each Christian (*resp.* Thomistic) anthropology. Let us ask along with our Author in that case whether the two remaining concepts of animation, at least partly, conform to the requirements imposed on the assumptions of the Christian philosophy of man?

The theory of post-implantation animation (embodied by an Austrian Jesuit A. Ruff and an Australian Salesian N. Ford) considers an individual as belonging to the *homo sapiens* species, an individual of definite 'psycho-physical constitution' that includes the ability to 'rational and free acts' and broadly understood vegetative functions. According to Ślipko, those authors refer *explicite* to the Aristotelian-Thomistic hylemorphic conception commonly known as endowing man (a person) with human nature, intelligent dynamics. Advocates of post-implantation animation theory have to cope with a problem of 'the moment in which personal being formation

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See ibidem, and also Ślipko, T., *Etyka a transplantacja serca* [Ethics and Heart Transplantation], *Studia Philosophiae Christianae*, 11, 1975, nr 1, pp. 143-188.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 114.

is identified³⁰, the vehicle of those features mentioned above. Ślipko accepts their moral issues orientation which by necessity accompany some trials of 'agreeing on early-fetus human life stage animation evidence'³¹. This is a decisive factor in the human life development and, consequently, human nature, a fully articulated one. However, there are two tendencies easily noticed in Ford's position (aiming to elucidate 'animation at early-fetus human life stage'³²) which Ślipko disapproves of. Let us discuss them briefly. The first one covers questions about the time frame of genetically proved monozygotal twins formation due to a zygote fission. The second, the time frame (length) needed to maintain zygote totipotentiality.

Ślipko claims that Ford swerves from the truth just because of the fact that cells constituting a zygote (at each developmental stage) are not accepted by that researcher to be 'an ontologically integrated and animated person'³³ but a cluster of homogenous cells of a potential and not real personal being instead. Such a position results in denying personality denomination pre-implantation developmental forms of the human life, e.g. a zygote, a morula, a blastula. Those are – obviously criticized by Ślipko – implications of Ford's considerations; only zygotic formation after implanation (a gastrulation period), that is in approximate time from 14 to 19 days from moment of fertilization, can be recognized as a person. Consequently, it would appear that developmental transformations alone can prove being a man, an individual at these developmental stages. Certainly, Ślipko emphasizes, Ford's assumption itself based on Aristotelian hylemorphism can be maintained (it is worth accepting as it expounds the most adequately the mechanism of changes) in its claim that man is in essence an entity comprised of matter and form. And a person stands for a psychophysical identity if it is embraced by accidental and no substantial changes. Hence Ford's conception reveals some contradiction, namely that 'a zygote as an initial form of the human life, even if it is not a person, must be really a substantial existing entity.'³⁴ In this light Ford's proposal suggesting that two-cell zygote fission leads to two zygotic formations emergence causing identity annihilation of the initial zygote and further structures arising out of its growth (morula and blastula) are only bunches of cells³⁵ is not acceptable. Ślipko holds that we are exposed to two contradic-

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., see also Roubiczak, Paul, *Ethical Values in the Age of Science*, Cambridge, 1969. Ślipko often refers to this monograph.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 117.

tory epistemological truths, those of genetics and philosophy, resulting in some improbable final proposition.³⁶ It states, according to the author, that during post-implantation gastrulation on the basis of biologically differentiated formations a person appears (as it is understood by Christian philosophy and Thomistic anthropology). This, as Ślipko asserts, in Ford's grasp is improbable.³⁷ What is more, our Philosopher adds that from the Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophical perspective 'things look differently'.³⁸ What is called a substantial form (an immaterial soul) is, as we read, man's ontological reality, an ontological principle of existence and agency. Such an irrefutable and unquestionable fact 'makes for the fundamental and anterior driving force of zygotic and embryonic growth.'³⁹ Ślipko does not preclude developmental possibilities, taking on different forms, cells different states, homogenization and differentiation, along with anomaly appearance. What really matters here is a principle of genetic code identity conservation, material and other structural elements inclusive – all that constitutes the nature (essence) of *homo sapiens*. To sum it up, 'it is the very soul that determines the wholeness of zygote developmental processes aiming at the shaping of the nervous system and all other organic parts of the human body.'⁴⁰ Pre-implantation animation seems to be logical, Ślipko firmly affirms, both in the ontological and epistemological (scientific and philosophical distinctively) order, for, as our Philosopher claims, critical insight into scientific datum together with previous stands criticism allow to introduce a position defined best by a proposition 'that animation, at least in the case of monozygotic twins cyeses, occurs at a later time then fertilization, but before implantation.'⁴¹ Facts quoted by Ślipko, are convincing to the extent – as opposed to Ford or Ruff⁴² – of some reasonable acceptance that a zygote and its preliminary forms as morula and blastula are structures being constituted, animated by a substantial form. In that case, the Ślipko-philosopher states, there are already human structures, as 'the ones deriving from humans and heading for individual beings.'⁴³ Therefore, that material, biological substratum (a necessary element of an individual be-

³⁶ Ibid., p. 118.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 118.

³⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 119.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁴² See Ślipko, Tadeusz, *O ochronie dziecka poczętego* [On Legal Protection of the Conceived Child], in: Biblioteka Nurtu, 1989, pp. 58-62, and also *Granice życia* [Borders of Life], *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁴³ See *ibid.*, p. 120.

ing) has to be actualized in a solid entity (here: in a zygote), which, according to Ślipko, makes 'an ultimate principle of the zygote existence and agency.'⁴⁴ In such a shaping structure 'there are determinations coded' and the potentialities, mentioned just above. However, data prompt Ślipko to further considerations. Firstly, new entities can come into existence and emerge only through substantial change, never a substantial one. Ślipko deeply believes that Ford has not understood that completely. Here, in the discussed context of early stages of human existence that axiom of Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy permits one to state that 'in the case of a zygote such a change can happen only when the individualization process is carried out'⁴⁵, understood by Ślipko, of course, in categories of individually determined entity shaping. Leaving out vaguenesses – it is not yet known when the process occurs in zygotes – we are sure, Ślipko keeps considering, that 'individualization takes place on a later, though pre-implantation date'⁴⁶. Individualized, identity endowed humans emerge then, 'directed to actualize all their developmental potentialities'⁴⁷. Taking into account the whole body of the human reality, it is a route leading to psychophysical structural full development 'in its anatomical-physiological dimension and on an immaterial level, that is purely spiritual abilities and functions, as well.'⁴⁸ For Ślipko, the philosopher, a new stage arises, attracting anthropological philosophy, which consolidates its efforts to describe later development and agency stages of a rational human being, or else a person. It is possible, Ślipko writes, because all transformations are carried out through the substantial, immaterial 'element of existence and agency'⁴⁹, and a very individualization is an identity token of the animation being carried out.

Three notions, in Ślipko's mind, that is individualization, animation, and implantation, play a pivotal role in the pre-implantation animation concept. On the whole, the following scheme (individualization is a requisite of animation arising, the latter transforms a zygote into a 'morally valuable person', and implantation is, after all, an indicator of animation having been carried out) permits one solely to embrace a conception phenomena fully and appropriately and approach closer to the mystery of individual life. In a word, that human zygote created from parents generative material, 'of a size not exceeding a pin-head', hides in itself – as Ślipko states – 'potential active forces (...) which not a few of them were able to shake the founda-

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

tions of the human society.⁵⁰ So in accordance to research methodology accepted by Thomists, Ślipko borrows from genesis, the primaeval source of an essential human being: its origin as potentially (through actualization process) conscious and rational matter and substantial form manifold.

These considerations and adopting at the same time some disambiguated, definite position on the sacredness of barely conceived man, are used by our Philosopher to evolve a concept of man who is the subject of freedom: choices and deeds together with their consequences.

Translated from Polish by Wiesna Mond-Kozłowska

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POCZĄTKI BYTU LUDZKIEGO **Teoria animacji według Tadeusza Ślipki**

Streszczenie

Tematem powyższej refleksji filozoficznej jest kwestia związana z „początkiem bytu ludzkiego”, czyli z „teorią animacji według Tadeusza Ślipki”.

Jednym z charakterystycznych rysów tomistycznej antropologii Ślipki jest orientacja doświadczalna, tj. korzystanie i odwoływanie się do danych nauk szczegółowych, dotyczących rzeczywistości materialnej, fizycznej, biologicznej. Filozof nasz jest w pełni świadom zakresu i stosowalności nauk, ich ewentualnego wkładu i pomocy w rozstrzygnięciu kwestii teologicznych i filozoficznych. Jako wytrawny znawca wielu stanowisk we współczesnej myśli światowej, Ślipko zachowuje umiar i rozwagę, gdy idzie o aplikację nauk przyrodniczych do problemów filozoficznych, tu konkretnie do problematyki antropologii.

W pracy *Granice życia* autor wkracza w skomplikowany krąg zagadnień życia, śmierci, eugeniki, inżynierii genetycznej, a więc z bioetyki, która obejmuje byt złożony z materii i ducha, substancję ludzką jako owo *suppositum* i podstawa współfunkcjonowania władz. A to oznacza nieodmiennie, że Ślip-

⁵⁰ Ibid., see also Ślipko, Tadeusz, *Filozoficzno-etyczne aspekty rozwoju człowieka* [Philosophical and Ethical Aspects of the Man's Development], in: *Człowiek we wspólnocie Kościoła* [Man in the Community of Church], Warsaw, 1979.

ko konsekwentnie podtrzymuje, ale też rozwija stanowisko tomistyczne (resp. filozofii chrześcijańskiej), uznając je za władne rozstrzygnięcia tak trudnych i zdawałoby się nierozstrzygalnych problemów: życia, egzystencji i śmierci osoby ludzkiej.

Porządek nauki (genetyki) i porządek filozofii (antropologii) obejmują różne aspekty bytu ludzkiego. We wstępie do podrozdziału w pracy *Granice życia* Ślipko nie pozostawia najmniejszej wątpliwości, że w epoce „narastających problemów etycznych współczesności” (a więc obejmujących kwestie zasadnicze: poczęcia i rozwoju osoby ludzkiej) należy przyjąć mocny punkt oparcia: naturę moralną człowieka, stanowiącą obiektywną podstawę moralnego ładu. Za punkt wyjścia swego stanowiska przyjmuje zatem koncepcję człowieka: bytu złożonego z materialnego substratu, określonego w swym ludzkim kształcie przez duszę nieśmiertelną jako życiową zasadę jego istnienia. Zgodnie z tą orientacją koncentruje swe dociekania wokół idei człowieka rozumianego „jako byt osobowy i podmiot moralności całościowo ukonstytuowany w tym, co określa właściwe mu człowieczeństwo”. Stąd też, pytając o początek, moment – by tak powiedzieć – inicjalny owej substancji ludzkiej, Ślipko rozpatruje to zagadnienie w kontekście filozoficznych założeń światopoglądowych o Bogu jako Stwórcy wszechświata, o człowieku zaś jako bycie samowiednym i samodzielnym, działającym i będącym przyczyną serii skutków. Jako filozof sięga zatem do genezy powstania człowieka-osoby-bytu świadomego i wolnego, bytu w którym współdziałają (w procesie realizacji celów) różne władze i uzdolnienia. Innymi słowy, Autor podejmuje trudny problem animacji, którą – nawet na gruncie wykładni chrześcijańskiej – ujmowano różnorodnie, niekiedy w niezgodzie z podstawowymi kanonami filozofii człowieka. Uwzględniając najnowsze dane nauk biologicznych, zwłaszcza genetyki, Ślipko podkreśla, że ten – właśnie biologiczny, materialny aspekt bytu ludzkiego zostanie ujęty we właściwej sobie proporcji, tj. odnośnie do człowieka (bytu złożonego traktowanego jako osoba ludzka, w której pierwiastek niematerialny (dusza) stanowi o jego człowieczeństwie), gdy jako „byt psychofizyczny formuje się w toku biologicznego dziewięciomiesięcznego procesu, zanim w końcu pojawi się w świecie jako byt samodzielny, bo niewymagający ochrony i witalnej pomocy matczynej łona”.

Ślipko stawia sobie za cel prześledzenie najwcześniejszych – w sensie czasowym i ontycznym - etapów zaistnienia owego bytu psychofizycznego, tj. etapów embrionalnych, charakterystycznych dla człowieka (a nie np. zwierzęcia). W tym zamierzeniu Autor uwzględnia odkrycia genetyki traktowanej w kategoriach nauki dającej wgląd w same początki **biologicznego** procesu kształtowania się ludzkiego organizmu. Ogrom wiedzy, nagromadzenie faktów paradoksalnie – stwierdza autor *Granice życia* – doprowadził do wystąpienia i pojawienia się sprzecznych ujęć, do swoistej niewiedzy na temat – dyskutowanego już od czasów Arystotelesa i średniowiecza – momen-

tu, w którym dochodzi do zespolenia ducha (pierwiastka niematerialnego) z organicznym podłożem – czyli animacji. Trudno przeceniać ważkość tego punktu czasowego, nie sposób pozbawić go istotności, ale też nie sposób pominąć trudności związanych z konkretyzacją, precyzyjnym wskazaniem na ów moment powstania osoby ludzkiej. Zdaniem Ślipki skłócone ze sobą stanowiska, nawet w obrębie ujęć spirytualistycznych, eliminują jednoznaczne ujęcia, „powodują zgęstnienie owej mgły tajemnicy”.

Trzy pojęcia – zdaniem naszego filozofa – indywidualizacja, animacja i implantacja odgrywają naczelną rolę w koncepcji animacji przedimplantacyjnej. Ogólnie: to tylko taki schemat (indywidualizacja warunkuje zaistnienie animacji, ta przekształca zygotę w „moralnie wartościową osobę ludzką”, a implantacja jest wskaźnikiem dokonanej już animacji) pozwala w pełni i właściwie objąć fenomen poczęcia, zbliżyć się do tajemnicy życia osobowego. Słowem, owa zygota ludzka stworzona z materiału rozrodczego pochodzącego od rodziców, nie przekraczająca „wielkości końca szpilki” kryje w sobie – jak stwierdza Ślipko – „potencjalne siły czynne (...), z których niejedna potrafiła wstrząsnąć posadami ludzkiego społeczeństwa”. Tak więc zgodnie z przyjętą przez tomistów metodologią badawczą Ślipko sięga do genezy, prazródła substancjalnego bytu ludzkiego: jego początku jako potencjalnie (w procesie aktualizacji) świadomego i rozumnego złożenia materii i formy substancjalnej. Te rozważania, a zarazem zajęcie jednoznacznie określonego stanowiska w kwestii świętości zaledwie co poczętego człowieka, posłużą naszemu Filozofowi do rozwinięcia koncepcji człowieka jako podmiotu wolności: wyborów i czynów wraz z ich konsekwencjami.

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