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THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS IN RYSZARD OTOWICZ'S BIOETHICS

Bioethics can be regarded as a field where mankind fights to preserve civilization from the dangers created by an unlimited expansion of technology. More and more individuals are conscious of oncoming jeopardy and the price to be paid for progress. People need to rethink the rules which are fundamental to both inter-human relationships and to humanity's relationship with nature. With the rapid development of modern technologies and new discoveries in biology and medicine, a new era begins for the natural sciences and humanities, which usually operate from different perspectives and apply different methodologies. They have to cooperate closely to solve dilemmas brought on by progress and which concern almost every nation on the Earth.

This new phenomenon was observed and studied by Ryszard Otowicz (1953-2003), a Jesuit priest, who was Professor of the Department of Moral Theology at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology *Bobolanum* in Warsaw, Poland, a secretary of the Polish Division of Moral Theologians in the years 1985-1989 and a member of the editorial board of „Przegląd Powszechny”¹.

This study attempts to reconstruct the main philosophical ideas developed by the above-mentioned author in the field of bioethics. As a theologian, his analyses were mainly undertaken from a theological perspective, but in his bioethical works he tended to focus on the philosophical questions, which he found inevitable in discussions about matters of life and death.

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¹ L. GRZEBIEN (ed.), *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy, 1564-1995*, Kraków 1996, p. 484.

A selective overview of bioethical publications by Ryszard Otowicz

An important part of Ryszard Otowicz's scientific work was devoted to bioethics and, in particular, to the moral issues behind medical ethics. A number of articles and especially the book *Etyka życia. Bioetyczny i teologiczny kontekst problematyki życia poczętego* [*The Ethics of Life. The Bioethical and Theological Context of the Problem of Conceived Life*]² reveal the intellectual achievements of this, prematurely-deceased, thinker. Here are some of the titles of his bioethical articles:

Capital Punishment – A Current Issue, „The Review of Comparative Law” (1989) 3, pp. 109-125;

Etyczne aspekty technicznych ingerencji w proces przekazywania życia [*The ethical aspects of technical interventions in the process of procreation*], „Przegląd Powszechny” (1990) 11, pp. 224-238;

Etyczna ocena heterologicznych technik prokreacyjnych [*An ethical evaluation of heterogenic procreative techniques*], „Przegląd Powszechny” (1991) 11, pp. 279-291;

Macierzyństwo zastępcze – wyzwolenie czy zniewolenie? [*Surrogate motherhood – liberation or bondage?*], „Przegląd Powszechny” (1993) 2, pp. 202-214;

Ideologiczne zagrożenia daru życia w centrum uwagi współczesnej kwestii społecznej, [*The gift of life under ideological assault in the centre of contemporary social debate*] in: A. MŁOTKA i T. RERONIA (ed.), *Wokół encykliki Evangelium vitae*, Wrocław 1995, pp. 193-204;

Osiągnięcia techniki medycznej wyzwaniem dla etyki i prawa, [*Achievements of medical technologies as a challenge to the ethics and to the law*], „Przegląd Powszechny” (1996) 7-8, pp. 39-47;

Czy terapeutyczny cel usprawiedliwia wszystkie środki? Etyczne problemy diagnozy i terapii genetycznej [*Does therapeutic aim justify all means? Ethical problems and genetic diagnosis and therapy*], in M. MACHINEK (ed.), *Ósmy dzień stworzenia? Etyka wobec możliwości inżynierii genetycznej*, Olsztyn 2001, s. 183-204;

Serce do wymiany. Etyczne aspekty transplatacji organów [*A heart for exchange. The ethical aspects of transplantation*], in P. ASZYK (ed.), *Bioetyka – naglące pytania*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 135-151;

Podstawowe problemy społeczne i etyczne związane z HIV/AIDS [*The basic social and ethical problems related to HIV/AIDS*], „Bobolanum” 9 (1998) 2, pp. 413-429;

The Bioethical and Theological Context of the Problem of Conceived Life, „Studia Bobolanum” 4 (2003) pp. 141-146.

² R. Otowicz, *Etyka życia. Bioetyczny i teologiczny kontekst problematyki życia poczętego*, Kraków 1998.

The shape of bioethics

During the last few decades our planet has changed very rapidly. People have witnessed many spectacular events in the field of biology and medicine, but also a huge degradation of the natural environment. Ryszard Otowicz points out the *paradoxical phenomenon of inconsistency in the human approach to biological life*³. Public debates and various enterprises manifest attitudes which idolize, or deify, the biological aspects of life and place great emphasis and effort in preserving the environment, while at the same time protagonists of the revealed ideas have a malevolent approach to human life. Concern grows in situations where people apply multiple moral standards or, where human life becomes a target of violence, drug addictions, and legislations which favour euthanasia and abortion. People working in the field of bioethics are trying to explain what is currently happening in such situations and are attempting to change old ways of thinking to fit the new reality.

Bioethics is a vague and very pluralistic field. On the one hand, bioethics is recognized as a scientific discipline, on the other hand, as a purely social and cultural phenomenon which does not fit into any scholarly profile⁴. Ryszard Otowicz offers several possible ways to describe bioethics. The first one can be described as a „methodological one” because it tries to define the academic status of bioethics. Some thinkers, for example V. R. Potter, support the thesis that bioethics is a new discipline. To be precise, it is a kind of bridge between the natural sciences and humanities. Others, mostly philosophers and theologians, treat bioethics as a special kind of practical ethics which applies to the new problems created by modern technologies.

The Polish Jesuit represents the opinion that there is no well-developed methodological pattern which can properly define bioethics. We have to choose between solutions which are only partially satisfactory. Presumably, the best solution is to approach bioethics according to V. R. Potter's understanding of „global bioethics”, which combines both environmental ethics and medical ethics into one ethical theory. Another option is to use the term „medical bioethics” in the strict sense of medical ethics (as we can see in T. L. Beauchamp's and J. F. Childress' theory) or, more strictly, as a part of practical philosophical ethics (as it is in T. Ślipko's theory). However, these proposals do not include a theological or legal approach to bioethics, which are also strongly present in contemporary debates⁵. Thus the

³ R. Otowicz, *Etyka życia*, p. 8.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 7.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 35.

problem of the scientific status of bioethics does not seem to be properly resolved. There is a far greater complexity and diversity masked by a simple combination of the words *bios* and *ethos*⁶.

Ethical theories in bioethics

Another way to better understand the new phenomenon comes from an evident link between bioethics and ethics. There are elements of ethical theories in a bioethicist's work, which determine the outline of particular solutions. Some concepts of bioethics are very close to the natural sciences, especially biology. They deal with ethical issues using the law of nature and the theory of evolution. According to this concept a human being is recognized only as an element of nature and therefore biological perfection is the supreme good for humanity. In this paradigm, only biology explains the full complexity of existence, and biological principles fashion the moral standards approved by these bioethicists. There is no evidence for transcendence or higher values in human life in this kind of approach. Thus ethics has to aim to keep the evolution of *homo sapiens* on an optimal level, while maintaining a proper balance with the environment.

Ryszard Otowicz does not agree with such a simplistic ethical pattern. Explanations used by protagonists of this kind of naturalistic ethics minimise the deep meaning of humanity. In fact, such thinkers, like P. Singer, V. R. Potter, or H. Skolimowski, reduce anthropology to zoology. Biological egalitarianism loses sight of the uniqueness of the human person and the obvious hierarchy, which exists among all living creatures. Ecocentric ethics is a radical type of ideology and utopia⁷. It offers easy answers to problems which bioethics deals with, but since it is based on an erroneous type of anthropology, it cannot solve the broad spectrum of mankind's problems. Biology cannot, for instance, sufficiently explain human freedom, or spiritual life, as these cannot be characterized in terms of genetics, instincts, or environmental conditions, as can various types of behaviour⁸.

Another group of bioethicists, meanwhile, emphasizes the idea of relativism and subjectivism in ethics. In their opinion there are no common rules, or objective values, only an autonomous choice is to be taken seriously in ethics. Every individual decides about moral good or evil. Ryszard

⁶ T. ŚLIPKO, *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki*, Kraków 1994, pp. 13-15.

⁷ R. OTOWICZ, *Ideologiczne zagrożenia daru życia w centrum uwagi współczesnej kwestii społecznej*, w: A. MŁOTKA i T. RERONIA (ed.), *Wokół encykliki „Evangelium vitae”*, Wrocław 1995, p. 197.

⁸ R. OTOWICZ, *Etyka życia*, pp. 38-40.

Otowicz insists that in this moral model, with unlimited autonomy and freedom, human nature is also misinterpreted⁹. He defends the objectivity of moral norms, which could be applied to similar situations. *An ethical norm is universal, otherwise it is not an ethical norm*¹⁰. There is simply no other option. Ethical relativism always undermines human respect for values and diminishes the clear distinction between good and evil¹¹.

Utilitarianism is the most popular moral concept in bioethics. It is the ethical theory which evaluates a human act according to the balance of its good and bad consequences. There are various utilitarian strategies according to which one can measure particular activities, and every strategy raises a number of serious doubts. It is too extensive a philosophical problem for this short discussion. The Polish scholar joined the critics of utilitarianism. His main remarks refer to the inaccurate anthropology used by utilitarian authors, who, he argues, have not developed the idea of an intrinsically evil act. Otowicz states that some actions have moral evil in their structure and they are always wrong, no matter what kind of circumstances or intention was the reason for it. Hence utilitarianism cannot rightly deal with the most serious bioethical problems¹².

There is also another intellectual stream in bioethics, which places emphasis on diversity and pluralism in societies. It is a kind of social ethics sometimes called contractarianism. Advocates of this type of philosophy built moral hierarchy on social agreement. What is morally good depends on the contract accepted by a particular group. Therefore, settlement built on a compromise, but not truth, is at the centre of evaluation. Ethics, here, is limited only to what it is possible to accomplish. This, finally, leads to moral relativism and confusion in societies. Ryszard Otowicz concludes that the current crisis observed in the democratic structures exists as a result of offering the phenomenology of human behavior and moral sociology instead of metaphysics and objective moral order¹³.

We can certainly assume that personalism satisfied the intellectual expectations of Ryszard Otowicz. Among them models based on virtue ethics (E. D. Pellegrino and D. C. Thomas), with stress put on moral and personal attributes of doctors and patients, or models based on human metaphysics (E. Sgreccia, M. L. Di Pietro), with a human person at the centre of

⁹ R. Otowicz, *Macierzyństwo zastępcze – wyzwolenie czy zniewolenie?* in P. Aszyk (ed.), *Bioetyka – naglące pytania*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 118-119.

¹⁰ R. Otowicz, *Etyka życia*, p. 44.

¹¹ R. Otowicz, *W poszukiwaniu Absolutu w etyce*, „Bobolanum” 4 (1994), p. 209.

¹² R. Otowicz, *Etyka życia*, pp. 50-53.

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 60-62.

a moral system¹⁴. However, according to the author of *Ethics of life*, bioethics is not just an independent discipline, and sometimes this atypical situation can be confusing. In order to prevent this, it is necessary to find and elaborate a metaphysical foundation which will be built on an integral model of humankind. For the Polish thinker, the discussion about methodological and epistemological foundations of bioethics has a deeper sense, and is, in fact, a debate about humanity. He points out a clash of two opposite approaches to the issues of human life: secular and Christian. It is not easy to distinguish between them, because in both versions similar moral rules are sometimes used, however, their interpretation and justification is very different and their practical application leads to opposite conclusions¹⁵.

The basis of bioethics

Obviously, theoretical problems with the status of bioethics do not prevent scientists from trying to find solutions to moral problems referred to as the „life and death” issues¹⁶. There is a need to generate a realistic model of man. Primarily, one of the most important tasks for bioethics is to properly define the human being as a person and to determine his, or her position within nature. It is easy to lose sight of the significance of being human. Many popular ecological movements proclaim the idea of biological egalitarianism, where mankind is only one of a number of equal species. In truth anthropology has to recognize not only the natural human basis, which is in many ways similar to the rest of creatures, but a human being has to be understood as a moral agent, a being which transcends nature. *Ethics without metaphysics and metaphysics without God inevitably lead to a depreciation of human life and to the deification of technologies*¹⁷.

Bioethics has primarily to be built on philosophical and theological anthropology. Before a particular moral problem is solved, we have to answer the questions: what is a human being and what does he, or she have to do? To answer these questions, Ryszard Otowicz moves to theology, and he builds his thesis mainly on the theology of creation. This is the way in which he shows the horizontal and vertical dimensions of humankind¹⁸. He begins from a biblical vision of a human being, but at some point, he turns to

¹⁴ R. OTOWICZ, *Etyka życia*, pp. 63-78.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 270.

¹⁶ R. OTOWICZ, *The Bioethical and Theological Context of the Problem of Conceived Life*, „Studia Bobolanum” 4 (2003) p. 142.

¹⁷ R. OTOWICZ, *Etyka życia*, p. 271.

¹⁸ R. OTOWICZ, *The Bioethical and Theological Context of the Problem of Conceived Life*, p. 142.

philosophy. His mainstream notions are focused on ethical dimensions of humanity. Although an idea of the dignity of human life is usually a purely theistic concept, where God is the source and the Creator of every life, this idea may also be built on the fundamentals of biology (i.e. Skolimowski)¹⁹. Biological potential is certainly a condition for human moral life, but does not justify it. For the Jesuit scholar, human dignity has two aspects, the first – ontological and the second – moral. On the first level a human being is recognized as a subject which is transcendental to nature. Being a person is independent from extra-human factors. Every human person is unique, and this uniqueness is exclusively a consequence of being human. The historical, or any other external context, is insignificant to the ontological structure of man.

A human being must, first of all, be regarded as a rational and free creature. Spiritual dimensions cannot be ignored in philosophical assumptions of bioethics. Human dignity is not defined in terms of a university graduate's characteristics; it does not depend on intellectual skills or maturity. Moral aspects of human dignity indicate precedence and primacy of man over various aspects of individual and social life. A human being should be treated as an aim, not as a means. A person can never be used as an instrument to achieve an end²⁰. The current world situation, where there is violation of elementary human rights, shows that there is a need for constant repetition of personalistic principles. The bioethicist considers that it could be done in two ways: through criticism of anthropological reductionism and by building better relationships in societies.

The dimensions of human life

The field of ethics, especially bioethics, has to develop a philosophy and theology of the human body. The human body participates in the dignity of the human person, because it is an essential part of being human. The natural sciences have to cooperate with theology and philosophy in order to build a truthful and holistic picture of man. According to Ryszard Otowicz, the history of philosophy shows three ways to understand the problem of the human body: dualistic, monistic and personalistic²¹. Dualism was especially very influential and popular among Christian thinkers and

¹⁹ R. OTOWICZ, *Etyka życia*, p. 144.

²⁰ R. OTOWICZ, *Serce do wymiany. Etyczne aspekty transplantacji organów*, in P. ASZYK (ed.), *Bioetyka – naglące pytania*, Warszawa 2005, p. 148.

²¹ R. OTOWICZ, *Ideologia a moralnospołeczne nauczanie Kościoła*, Warszawa 1991, p. 199.

ascetic movements in the past. This opinion which depreciates the physical categories of being human has now been replaced by the personalistic point of view.

Discussions about the human body and its condition raise questions about the quality of life. Utilitarian thinkers primarily used this concept. Quality of life is understood as a specific number of biological attributes²². Based on empirical research, it describes the particular features life ought to have. Ethicists use this description to assess the value of a life and whether it is worth living, or not²³. For instance, severely sick or handicapped newborns are treated as worthless lives, in contrast to the meaningful lives of healthy infants. According to Ryszard Otowicz, this approach to life is relative and incorrect because there is no proper moral basis and understanding of human dignity. Life belongs to a person and is inviolable. The mere promotion of a better quality of life could be permitted only as a positive imperative, but never as a norm, which would allow the destruction of an innocent human being – regardless of the circumstances. Personalistic anthropology, without exceptions, demands respect for every human life; from the moment of conception until death. Life, and primarily its continuity, cannot be subordinate to, or compared to individual, or social reason²⁴.

Conclusions

It is difficult to summarize the works of Ryszard Otowicz, which seem to remain unfinished. His early death put a premature end to the research of this promising and enquiring scholar. He frequently crossed the boundaries of different scientific disciplines in order to find the truth, or a more objective vision, of the particular issue he was analyzing. As a theologian, he clearly pointed out philosophically-based issues, and showed understanding for the philosophical answers which needed to be given. Thus, he did not treat theology as the supreme and principal discipline, which, alone, is able to fulfill the human desire for knowledge.

The majority of his philosophically-oriented works has a critical character. After serious deliberation, Ryszard Otowicz rejected a number of ethical theories within bioethics as incredible. As regards the most popular

²² R. OTOWICZ, *Osiągnięcia techniki medycznej wyzwaniem dla etyki i prawa*, „Przegląd Powszechny” (1996) 7-8, p. 40.

²³ R. OTOWICZ, *Etyka życia*, p. 135.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 139.

ethical ideas present in bioethical debates, he constructed his own concepts, based on polemics. Different levels of theories were verified during his analyses. The most fundamental for the Polish author seemed to be opinions on the human being and the objectivity of moral order. He regarded as incorrect the overly simplistic approach to man, be it monistic, or dualistic, and also various types of moral relativity.

The Polish Jesuit did not offer an explicit definition of bioethics. Moreover, he did not develop a concept which covers all aspects of this new phenomenon. In his works there is a significant link between anthropology and bioethics, but other important aspects of the latter, for example, the scope of bioethics, have to be a subject for speculation. There are a lot of questions which are left unanswered. We can assume that Ryszard Otowicz's ideas, as described in his publications, lay the groundwork for further essential study.

The Ethics of life definitely has Christian roots and is inspired by Christian thinkers. The concept which appears in this book and Otowicz's articles, is that of anthropocentric ethics, or person-centered bioethics: a human being is recognized as a biological structure with an underlying spiritual dimension. Both spheres are important and both are under the protection of a moral order, because they participate in the dignity of the human creature. There is a need to nurture and promote attitudes of respect for each individual person, as well as for mankind as a whole.

For Ryszard Otowicz, bioethics was not only an ethical theory and a code of practice for human activities in the field of biomedicine. He felt it should be the knowledge, and even more, the wisdom of the human being, who acts according to the objective rules of biological and moral life. Thus he felt that the cultural and scientific elements of bioethics have to work together.

Piotr ASZYK

ZAGADNIENIA FILOZOFICZNE W BIOETYCE RYSZARDA OTOWICZA

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia w ogólnym zarysie zagadnienia filozoficzne podejmowane w pracach Ryszarda Otowicza (1953-2003), naukowca zajmującego się przez szereg lat kwestiami etycznymi. Uczony ów był jezuitą i profesorem teologii moralnej na Papieskim Wydziale Teologicznym w Warszawie. W jego dorobku obok wielu artykułów, które poświęcone były tematyce bioetycznej, na szczególną uwagę zasługuje wydana w 1998 roku monografia zatytułowana *Etyka życia. Bioetyczny i teologiczny kontekst problematyki życia ludzkiego*. Niewątpliwie teologiczna perspektywa jest pierwszoplanową w poglądach wypracowanych przez prezentowanego myśliciela. Wielokrotnie jednak przywołuje on zagadnienia filozoficzne, od których jego zdaniem nie można uciec, rozstrzygając o kwestiach ludzkiego życia.

Bioetyka jest opisywana przez polskiego jezuitę jako zjawisko wykraczające poza ramy tradycyjnie pojmowanej dyscypliny naukowej. Postrzega on bioetykę w licznych działaniach związanych z kulturą lub oddziaływaniem społecznym. Zatem pojawia się trudność precyzyjnego określenia, co stanowi przedmiot i zakres owego fenomenu. Za najbardziej konsekwentne uznaje on podejście sformułowane przez V. P. Pottera, który bioetykę traktował jako osobną dyscyplinę naukową, będącą połączeniem etyki środowiska naturalnego i etyki medycznej. Obok tego rozwiązania na uwagę – w opinii naszego analityka – zasługuje potraktowanie bioetyki jako etyki medycznej w znaczeniu nadanym jej przez T. L. Beauchampa i J. F. Childressa lub jako filozoficznej etyki szczegółowej w znaczeniu wypracowanym przez Tadeusza Ślipkę. Autor *Etyki życia* zauważa jednak, że wymienione rozstrzygnięcia nie obejmują choćby teologii lub prawa, dyscyplin zajmujących w dyskursie bioetycznym poczesne miejsce.

Zwraca uwagę hipoteza wysunięta przez Ryszarda Otowicza, że bioetyka jest rodzajem samoobronnego odruchu ludzkości, która w ten sposób usiłuje intelektualnie ogarnąć zagadnienia związane z nieograniczoną ekspansją

technologii. Rozwój i zmiany obserwowane w świecie zmuszają ludzkość do przemyślenia bardzo fundamentalnych zagadnień, jak międzyludzkie relacje lub relacje człowieka do przyrody. Autor zwraca także uwagę na paradoksalny fenomen niekonsekwencji: radykalni zwolennicy ochrony różnych form życia i przeciwnicy niszczenia środowiska naturalnego aprobują jednak niszczenie życia ludzkiego w różnych jego stadiach.

Ryszard Otowicz poświęca dużo miejsca etycznym teoriom, jakimi posługują się myśliciele zajmujący się kwestiami bioetycznymi. Wśród nich krytykuje protagonistów etyki naturalistycznej, która podporządkowuje prawa moralne prawom natury, człowieka zaś postrzega jedynie w kategoriach biologicznego egalitaryzmu w stosunku do innych stworzeń. Inne podejście cechuje zwolenników subiektywizmu i relatywizmu moralnego. Zasadność ich poglądów zostaje jednak podana w wątpliwość z punktu widzenia absolutyzmu etycznego. Także poglądy popularnego w bioetyce utylitaryzmu i pokrewnego mu kontraktalizmu nie znajdują uznania polskiego jezuitę. W odróżnieniu od wymienionych nurtów jego aprobatę zyskuje personalizm, np. w wydaniu E. D. Pellegrino i D.C. Thomasa lub E. Sgreccia. Zauważyć jednak warto, że ciekawym analizom krytycznym polskiego teologa brak zwieńczenia w postaci propozycji własnej oryginalnej definicji bioetyki i doprecyzowania jej zakresu.

Metodologiczne i epistemologiczne dyskusje wokół bioetyki – zdaniem polskiego autora – posiadają głębszy kontekst dotyczący prawdy o człowieku. W opozycji do siebie stoją nurt chrześcijański i laicki. Często oba posługują się podobną terminologią i odwołują się do tych samych reguł moralnych, ale dochodzą do przeciwnych konkluzji. Według Ryszarda Otowicza bioetyka musi być zbudowana na podstawie metafizyki i antropologii, inaczej proponowane rozstrzygnięcia będą pomniejszały człowieka i deifikowały technologię. Przed przystąpieniem do rozważania kwestii etycznych trzeba odpowiedzieć na podstawowe pytania dotyczące istoty człowieczeństwa. Kwestia określenia godności osoby ludzkiej i związanych z nią zobowiązań posiada istotną wagę, szczególnie zaś jej wymiar ontyczny i moralny ma kluczowe znaczenie w opinii naszego myśliciela.

Bioetycy poświęcają dużo uwagi ludzkiej cielesności. Biologiczny potencjał warunkuje życie moralne człowieka, ale nie uzasadnia go. Autor w swych publikacjach domaga się, by nieustannie przypominać zasadę personalistyczną. Można to czynić dwojako: poprzez krytykę antropologicznych redukcjonizmów i poprzez budowanie lepszych relacji międzyludzkich w społeczeństwie. Poważnego potraktowania wymaga kwestia jakości ludzkiego życia. Jest ona pojmowana jako policzalna liczba biologicznych atrybutów, które powyżej określonej ilości stanowią wymierną rację na korzyść dalszej kontynuacji życia. Ryszard Otowicz podkreśla, że posługiwanie się kategorią jakości życia powinno zakładać właściwie pojmowaną ludzką godność.

W tym kontekście nie może być ona nigdy racją za odebraniem człowiekowi życia, ale instrumentem pozytywnej promocji życia.

Trudno jednoznacznie podsumować dorobek Ryszarda Otowicza, ponieważ jego intelektualny projekt sprawia wrażenie nieukończonego. Myśliciel ów często w swych wywodach przekraczał granice dyscyplin naukowych. Odchodził od teologicznych rozważań, gdy natura badanego zagadnienia wymagała filozoficznych rozstrzygnięć. Większość tych ostatnich ma charakter krytyczny. I to przede wszystkim na podstawie polemik z głównymi nurtami myślowymi obecnymi w bioetyce możemy wyrobić sobie zdanie na temat filozoficznych przekonań ich przedwcześnie zmarłego autora. *Etyka życia* proponowana przez polskiego jezuitę odwoływała się do chrześcijaństwa i oferowała etykę antropocentryczną lub precyzyjniej: bioetykę zorientowaną na osobę ludzką, jako punkt wyjścia dla praktycznych rozstrzygnięć. Teoria, której ogólne podwaliny zostały sformułowane, będąca jednocześnie interesującym studium interdyscyplinarnych poszukiwań, warta jest pogłębienia i rozbudowy o kolejne elementy.

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