

## The influence of Antoni Kępiński's ideas on Józef Tischner's philosophy and its psychiatric implications

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### Summary

*Some issues of the philosophy of Józef Tischner, who died in 2000, were inspired by psychiatric works of Antoni Kępiński. They are presented and discussed in this paper and include: recognition of experience of other men, phenomenon of hideout, phenomenon of the mask, relation of power, society of dialogue, salvation dialogue. The opinions of Tischner on psychotherapy according to Kępiński are reviewed. The phenomenological description of value experience by Tischner was an inspiration for the concept of corrective experience of values, which is discussed.*

*Key words:* experience of values, psychotherapeutic factors

*In memory of Rev. Professor Józef Tischner*

### Preface

On 28<sup>th</sup> June 2000, after a long illness, Reverend Professor Józef Tischner, an outstanding philosopher, theologian, charismatic thinker and moral authority died. It is difficult to express how great the loss was and it is also difficult to pass over this painful event in silence. Recollecting his interests in psychiatry and discussing those trains of his philosophy, which may be important in this branch of medicine, seems to be a good way of paying a tribute to his memory.

### Introduction

Reverend Professor Józef Tischner was interested in concepts of Professor Antoni Kępiński, with whom he became acquainted during scientific encounters [1]. There was a period of time in which he became so deeply fascinated with Kępiński's ideas that in the preface to "Myślenie według wartości" (Thinking in Compliance with Values) [2, page 12] he said: "Antoni Kępiński, medical doctor in psychiatry. One who knows about man more than Freud, Heidegger, Levinas. I am convinced that we have to do

with the first Polish-sensed and Polish-written, issuing from the Polish kindness and at the same time characterized by universal wisdom, Polish philosophy of man. It is at the same time an unusual way of saving man both from the world and from himself". This statement made me conduct a deep analysis of the works by Kępiński at an angle of their importance for the philosophy of dialogue. The long-term analyses have not confirmed, however, the aforementioned intuitions of Tischner's [3]. Moreover, some time later, Tischner himself arrived at the same conclusions. With the charm and accuracy characteristic of him he expressed them in a conversation with me: "In Kępiński's books we find lots of excellent philosophical intuitions, but if we take a close look at each of them separately, they appear to have been expressed earlier by somebody else and in a way better than Kępiński's". He also added that in his opinion Kępiński's genuine concepts were those of informative metabolism and axiological psychiatry. (This opinion of Tischner's was further acknowledged by publications regarding informative metabolism [cf. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8] and experiences of values [cf. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10] as well as axiological psychiatry [11]. In the last years of his life Tischner wrote primarily on subjects concerning theology, philosophy, ethics and social problems, yet his short texts on Kępiński's work [12, 13] prove that he was still interested in it.

The principal objective of this paper is to show the relationships between Tischner's philosophy and psychiatry, which comprise two issues:

- Kępiński's influence on Tischner's philosophy
- the possibility of using certain implications of Tischner's philosophy in psychiatry.

This paper will discuss the most important texts written by Tischner in which he referred to Kępiński's concepts and the elements of his philosophy that may be important in psychiatry. It is a characteristic feature of his writing to include specific dialogues with the authors of works that inspired him. On the groundwork of the presentation of their ideas he presented his own creative conceptions. In a similar way he made use of several works by Kępiński. Those elements of Tischner's philosophy that were formulated by him with reference to Kępiński's works will be discussed in the order in which they were written and published so that it is shown that Kępiński's works had inspired Tischner for a considerable period of his life. However, while quoting from his works, only the ultimate, subsequent versions of his texts contained in published books were used.

### **Psychiatric inspirations found in Tischner's philosophy**

#### **The cognitive contact with an Other**

In "The Philosophy of Tried Out Hope" (originally a paper read in 1973 at a session of the Cracow Division of The Polish Philosophic Society) Tischner [1], while referring to Kępiński's "Philosophy and Schizophrenia" [4], focused on seeking an answer to the question of how the author attained his knowledge of man. In this process he distinguished the following factors:

1. The starting position: to let somebody be. The position of mutual opening. The therapist gets rid of the tendency to assess an Other and focuses on his humanity – “recognizing the other person's freedom” [qf 2, page 400]. He does not mean an “amoral” attitude towards an Other but the creation of such conditions that the Other would be able to assess himself. Due to the fact that normative ethics was given up, a more essential ethical experience could be allowed. “The awareness of an ethical situation arises in man when he discovers that another man is standing in front of him” [qf 2, page 401].

2. A dialogue: understanding. Understanding that is generated in a dialogue, consisting in empathy for an Other. Its structure comprises pre-understanding (in order to understand a psychical state it is necessary to have experienced at least a trace quantity of it) and the horizon of understanding (the common plane of communication).

3. The sense of reality. It allows maintaining borders between one's own ego and the outer world and other people. This basic disposition seems to be obvious in everyday experience but in a psychosis it comes to be disturbed. In philosophy the problem comes up with reference to the so-calledthetic moment of an intentional act, responsible for the realization of the existence of an object.

4. The sense of value. It comprises hope and the characteristic sensation of one's heroism.

#### The phenomenon of hideout

“People from Hideouts” [15, 2] is a text which was included by Tischner in his important works [cf. 16, page 198]. The ideas he presented in it were formulated on the principle of analyses regarding the value system and its pathology in personality disturbances described by Kępiński in “Psychopathies” [17].

Tischner there accounted for important ties between the experience of hope and the space of life. He opposed “the righteous hope” that is the foundation for a person to be able to openly communicate in the world to the loss of such hope that leads a human being to closing himself up in “a hideout” in which he finds refuge from the world and other people. The hideout refers to such space of intercourse with an Other which is dominated by the structure of opposition. The Other is experienced a priori as an enemy the hideout gives refuge from. When threatened by danger, each human may conceal oneself in a hideout and leave it when the cause for his fear is no longer there. The space of hope “is shaped by the experience of value by means of the man's space of freedom with people and among people” [qf 2, page 417]. The alterations in the space of freedom and the space of hope are closely bound together. “A hideout is a place of frightened freedom, freedom that is anxious about the need of protecting itself. The open space of hope is the freedom space anxious about the need to realize values” [qf 2, page 417].

Tischner also discusses in detail the concept of Kępiński's system of values and his hierarchy of values [17] as well as instances of space organization of intercourses in hysteria, psychasthenia and anancastic neurosis. At the same time he ascribes the principal role in their existence to fear, recognizing “a deep revolt in the way of ex-

periencing values” as a way of freeing oneself from personality disorders [qf 2, page 425]. “The walls of the hideout should melt away in the open space of hope. The hope, whose only concern was to defend, should grow ripe for the hope whose concern is to create” [qf 2, page 430].

Such transformations are conditioned by a contact with an Other and by opening oneself to truth. In his opinion, in the therapy of those disorders the joint participation of psychotherapy and ethics is indispensable: “the first one removes obstacles while the latter uncovers the space and the road” [qf 2, page 430]. Tischner affirmed that in psychotherapy the knowledge of pathology is more developed than the knowledge of healing processes and in ethics the knowledge of the sense of culpability is greater than that of reformation, hence the crossing “of the hideout threshold is still full of secrets” [qf 2, page 433]. As far as the therapy of disorders is concerned, he drew attention to the importance of admitting the truth. He pointed out that the courage which is necessary to “take the first step” towards the transformations stems from the experience of “the protecting function of the truth” and from the experience of “the indestructibility of human dignity”. Besides, he proved that Kępiński did not specify the meaning of the notion of value that he used in his writings and that he primarily applied when describing the experience of values by man. “Kępiński does not intend to develop the philosophy of values. Therefore he does not mean to examine the objective hierarchy of values, or to establish the sense of objectivity in the world of values or necessary relationships between values and the awareness of values. He mentions values when the word seems necessary, i.e. when he takes into account the way in which man experiences himself” [qf 2, page 425].

#### The phenomenon of the mask

In the article entitled “The Phenomenology of Encounter” [18] which was later used in “The Philosophy of Drama” [19] one chapter is dedicated to the mask, in the analysis of which Kępiński’s views were used [20]. The mask is discussed by Tischner in the context of the face phenomenon in which the face contains in it something ideal that is defined as truth. In some cases it may expose certain true characteristics while omitting others. Tischner defines a similar phenomenon with the name “face profile” [19, page 64]. He points out the following relevant characteristics of a mask:

- its main source is fear (after Kępiński),
- the mask effect is opposite to the intention – it is used in order to reassure oneself and the surrounding environment, but it intensifies one’s own and others’ anxiety instead,
- the mask is lying; it is not merely a cover that is concealing something,
- the mask is trying to create illusion,
- it is evidence of somebody’s decreased responsibility for himself,
- the mask may conceal the lack of a face (“facelessness”), and thus it may constitute a way of recovering the face,
- the mask thrusts one into the space of intercourse with somebody else, in which a human being hides in his “hideout” – “A mask is what a human being looks like when looking out of the window of his hideout” [19, page 66].

In the discussed article Tischner described in more detail some selected, exemplified masks: that of the sense of dissatisfaction, auto irony, and a sufferer's mask.

### The relationship of authority

In his pronouncement made during the symposium entitled: "Antoni Kępiński as Teacher and Clinician" Tischner reflected on the relationship of authority. He used the text as a chapter entitled "The Society of Dialogue" in the book "Poland is Fatherland" [22]. In his analyses he made use of the concept of Kępiński's "informative metabolism" [23, 24, 25], indicating that the relationship of authority is not imposed on one from the outside but it results from his own intrinsic structure which reveals triple metabolism: energetic, biological (species preservation) and informative. The informative metabolism is of utmost importance for a human being since it enables the exchange of information with another man and thus creates conditions for a dialogue to be initiated. The messages that are thus received are "received indirectly" by other people who "are offering us the world" [22, page 141]. Before something becomes "my own" it is "not my own" and in order to make it my own it is necessary to communicate with others. "The act of individual becoming-the-owner is the consequence of a general appropriation through understanding" [22, page 141].

A correct relationship of authority underlies the structures of dialogue, while pathological authority consists in destroying the structures of dialogue, substituting it by violence, changing the horizontal relation of a subject to another subject into an oblique relation of a subject to an object. The paradox of the pathology of authority consists in the fact that it leads one into taking the role of a master and a slave at the same time. One is the master of one's subordinates and the slave of one's superiors. The discomfort ensuing from this contradiction may be eased by the maintenance of continuous sense of power. It is in this way that Tischner interpreted the mechanism of cruelty in SS-men towards their victims in concentration camps since the alternative of their sense of power was the sense of void.

### Society viewed through the prospect of dialogue

The cogitation over informative metabolism led Tischner [21] to distinguish three types of society:

1. "A society of dialogue", one that talks – speaks and listens, asks questions and finds the answer, answers itself, when asked.

2. "A society of monologue", one that is doomed to monologue or numerous monologues, one that actually asks no questions but only repeats the same answers many times. Yet the monologues are intelligible and, to some extent, communication is maintained.

3. "A society of silence" characterized by a decline of all communication. It may take the form of:

- silence or
- information noise, chaotic, illegible statements.

### Salvation dialogue

This problem was touched on in a paper delivered at the symposium called “Humanistic Values of Antoni Kępiński’s Work” [26]. The ultimate target of the dialogue of salvation is always the transformation of man. It not only unveils the truth but it also “engrafts” it. Tischner described several forms of such dialogue:

- philosophical dialogue aims at “engrafting wisdom that will permeate all people’s manners” [26, page 328],
- religious dialogue leads to conversion/reformation,
- therapeutic dialogue is aimed at healing.

The salvation dialogue requires the skill of substitution, i.e. the skill of putting oneself in somebody else’s position. It is concerned with responsibility for oneself and others. The realisation of this responsibility entails the necessity of hurting and healing at the same time. “Some hurting is necessary so that healing can take place. Sometimes it is necessary to hurt in order to be able to heal and heal in order to hurt” [26 page 329].

### Tischner on psychotherapy according to Kępiński

Tischner expressed his views on psychotherapy according to Kępiński in two texts: “Antoni Kępiński after a Lapse of Years” [12] and “Asking about the Method” [13]. In the first one, representing a preface to his book “To Understand in Order to Heal and ‘Cheer Up’: Psychotherapy According to Antoni Kępiński” [12] he asserted that from Kępiński’s works he drew a conclusion that numerous disorders of psychical balance result from the pathology of “encounters” with an Other. In this connection a therapist may fulfil an important role in the process of “denying mendacious statements” in the outer and inner world of a patient and thus to help him regain the possibility of encountering an Other. Tischner also pointed out that Kępiński indicated that “while thinking about a patient and with a patient it is impossible to escape values”, and science cannot set aside axiological issues if it intends to heal psychic disturbances which constitute, in considerable measure, disturbances in the manner of experiencing values. He expressed once again a positive opinion about the conception of informative metabolism and estimated it as being at least equal “if not better” [12, page 12] from Freud’s conception because it is comprised in it and takes into account the dimension of consciousness on a larger scale. “Psychotherapy must start from the recognition of a really human thing in a human being – consciousness, self-awareness, ability to think and self-criticism. The idea of informative metabolism assumes such recognition” [12, page 12].

In his last text on Kępiński’s works – “Asking about the Method” Tischner [13] returned to their philosophical aspects again. “Still, Kępiński’s thought has also a philosophical dimension. Personally, I am convinced that the philosophy entangled in Kępiński’s thought constitutes its enrichment. Each direction in psychiatry has some philosophy in its background” [13, page 6]. At the same time he shared the opinion [9] that it has its own references in the philosophy of dialogue and axiology. In this

text Tischner expressed his ideas concerning Kępiński's method. "So, the juxtaposition of 'objectivism and charisma' proposed by Andrzej Kokoszka made me aware of the existence of still another 'key'. This 'key' is called 'understanding' [...], to get into a cognitive contact with an Other means 'to understand an Other'. An Other is like a text [13, page 6], and understanding it requires interpretation. In conclusion he said, "I do not know if I am right but I think that Kępiński's target was to reach, through understanding, the interior of an Other's conscience and rebuild its intentional dimension, thus liberating it from the vicious circle in which it had fallen" [13, page 7].

#### Psychiatric implications of the philosophy of value: the experience of values and the concept of corrective experience of values as a psychotherapeutic factor

Tischner did not deal with psychology or psychiatry and hence a question may arise of how useful his philosophy is in the practice of psychiatry. Ajdukiewicz accurately formulated the differences between psychology and philosophy [27, page 16]: "Psychology is concerned with a factual course of cognitive processes. It tries to describe them, classify and find principles governing their course. [...] the cognition theory is not interested in the factual course of cognitive processes which are tackled by psychology; instead, the cognition theory focuses on factors in accordance with which cognition is estimated, namely: truth, falsehood, justification and non-justification of cognition". It is not a psychological problem to ask a question about the essence but it is the way of experiencing the essence and the lack of such a reference point that both constitute such problems. In their nature, psychology and psychiatry do not give ground for the determination of the essence of phenomena yet they constitute a certain reference point in the assessment of the manner of experiencing values by both the patient and therapist. The philosophy of Tischner comprises descriptions of experiencing values and encounters with an Other which are not only a presentation of some original philosophy, but which, at the same time, show certain aspects of these phenomena which were relatively little recognized in their psychological dimension and due to this they are an inspiration to conduct psychological research. Up till now Tischner's philosophy of values was the only one that was applied in psychiatry. It inspired the formulation of the conception of the corrective experience of values as a specific psychotherapeutic factor.

#### The philosophy of the experience of values

The departure point in Tischner's phenomenological philosophy is the experience of an Other defined as the phenomenon of encounter. To this end, he is employing a phenomenological description method. Consequently, its object is the phenomenon as it is perceived [19]. Tischner points out [28, 19] that "the space of cognitive intercourse with an Other" has an a priori organization which results from the experience of values in the phenomenon of encounter. The encounter is a fundamental phenomenon that uncovers the axiological dimension of human existence. In Tischner's opinion this fundamental phenomenon is described by the formula: "I know that you understand

me, so we exist” [28, page 70]. Ultimately, though, the awareness (knowledge) that I have been understood remains inside myself, yet the “understanding proposal” comes from an Other who confirms my own reason and my own truth and “recognizes in such a way that what was my intrinsic value has at the same time a universal character and has a share in a more general sensibleness. An effect of such intercourse with an Other is not only a definite ‘cognitive result’ but ‘an existential event’ creating a particular inter-human bond, one that is a durable acquisition of man’s self-consciousness” [28, pages 69–71].

For Tischner [2], the source of all axiological experiences is the encounter with an Other, the encounter being perceived as an unusual occurrence, an instance of experiencing an Other’s transcendence and quality of being different. It is accompanied by the conviction that the Other is wearing no masks or veils in my presence and although it is impossible to describe what occurs during an encounter yet it confers a new meaning to our life and the surrounding world. “To encounter means to reach a direct perception of tragicalness permeating all manners of existence of the Other” [2, page 487], it means “to experience the source of some specific good and evil, some tragicalness, some freedom and the voice of the categorical imperative that reached him from the Other” [2, page 489]. The experience of encounter introduces one into the unique, intrinsic truth of the encountered person.

“The intrinsic space of one’s consciousness has an agathological sense and sets itself in an order of importance” [29, page 278]. The space is sensitive to potential evil, and the hope, being in conflict with it, is “a carrier of the good”. The space under discussion is hierarchical. Tischner distinguishes two experiences of values. The first one, an agathological experience, is an unveiling experience. It unveils the fact that the world in which we live is not one it may and should be like. ‘Agathos’ means ‘good’ in Greek. Such an agathological experience enables one to distinguish good from evil. It is at the same time “a radical metaphysical experience as it persuades us to put question marks about our existence, it teaches us to distinguish plenitude from non-plenitude, form from matter, cause from effect” [2, page 490]. It is accompanied by the sense of revolt. After this experience or, rather, “over it” as Tischner puts it, axiological experience arrives and its core is experience determined by the words: “If you wish, you can...”

It is a projecting experience. It assumes hope, the sense of strength, and the existence of a “sense of reality” which reveals the values that can be realized. It directs one onto the road of radical intrinsic change, conversion, reformation. “The agathological experience refers to the existence in the light of the good, the axiological experience refers to the existence in the light of what is valuable” [2, page 491].

According to Tischner [30], different rationality ideals should be accepted in the examination of the nature and the world of inter-human relations and particularly in the description of encounter and axiological experience. He distinguishes between “monological reason” for the examination of the scene from the position of “an ideal observer” and “dialogical reason” manifesting itself as judgement power, a judgement that establishes a man’s place in the human drama. The reason opens itself for an encounter of one man with another man. The power of judgement of the dialogical



reason consists in the wisdom that has a share in what is good in an absolute sense. The encounter cannot be contained in a discursive description of the monological reason. The encounter is a mystery and mystery is opposed to a riddle. A riddle can be solved and a mystery can only be experienced. Axiological experience points to what is valuable. But if it is to come into being, at an earlier stage – during the encounter, man's fully dialogical structure has to be revealed first.

### Corrective experience of values

Tischner's conception has a philosophical character whereas in psychotherapy it is psychological conceptions that apply. With reference to the description of the experience of values presented above and aforementioned axiological conceptions of Kępiński, the following definition of psychological experience of values has been proposed: "experiencing the reason of a definite mode of behaviour, thinking or feeling. The behavioural and observable aspect of experience of values is discussed as a motive. In other words, experience of values constitutes an instance of an intrinsic experience of motive" [9, page 122]. On the other hand, corrective experience of values was defined as an experience of value that allows one to achieve the conviction that it makes sense to realize particular values [4, 5, 7, 32]. Besides the insight and corrective experience of values, that conviction is believed to be the third most important psychotherapeutic factor which is responsible for the executive (motoric) aspect of functional schemes (besides the cognitive and emotional ones) [33]. This concept has found some clinical confirmation [5, 9, 10].

### Discussion and Conclusions

This survey of Józef Tischner's works shows that he made use of certain fragments of Kępiński's works in order to analyze such questions as the cognition of an Other, the phenomenon of hideout, the phenomenon of mask, the relationship of authority, the society of dialogue, the dialogue of salvation. In the works of the author in question there are also references to his original thoughts regarding specific characteristics of psychotherapy according to Antoni Kępiński. In addition to that, Tischner's description of the experience of values inspired the formulation of a conception of a therapeutic factor – the corrective experience of values.

This paper presents the relationship of Tischner's philosophy with psychiatry. It does not exhaust all the possibilities of using his concepts in psychiatry. It seems that, in addition to the experience of values, his analyses concerning dialogue and reflections on specific mechanisms in psychotherapy constitute a potential that could be used as well.

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