

Axiological Pieces

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Translation of “Impresje aksjologiczne” [Axiological Pieces], in *Świat ludzkiej nadziei* [The World of Human Hope], Znak, Kraków 2000, pp. 148-166.
Translated by Anna Fraś.

*Everywhere I await me, towards me I go,
Here I singingly hum, there – I wait hushing slow,
And survive, like a prayer, beyond this my grieving,
Which would not be fulfilled, to itself rather cleaving.*

B. Leśmian, “I Am Here,”
trans. by Marcel Weyland

Iwould like to introduce the Reader to a circle of problems which are not easy to grasp and to order terminologically. That’s why, right from the beginning, I would like to ask for the reader’s patience in following the ensuing descriptions. The problems I tackle here have few precedents in Polish philosophical literature. Novelty sometimes impresses us as alien. Therefore, I would like to make the point by way of introduction that a possible impression of strangeness—if produced in the reader—would in fact be an illusion. I intend here to tackle a problem that is of key value to the understanding of man. This problem lies at the intersection of at least three disciplines of philosophy: the general theory of consciousness, the philosophy of values (axiology) and the theory of the human I, that is, philosophical egology. I propose to reflect on the question whose meaning might be worded as follows: *What is the human I?*

To begin with, let us make a few introductory statements that will be of use later on. Even

34 the most superficial glance at the problems of egology leaves one struck by the fact that the little word “I” is exceptionally intricate. “I” might denote the psycho-physical whole of the human personality (e.g. in the expression “I’m going for a walk”). It may denote a specific content which constitutes my depth (“I was touched deeply in my innermost self”). It might indicate the subject of a social role that I fulfill with more or less dedication (“I am a doctor,” “I am a teacher,” etc.). The above examples clearly do not exhaust all possibilities. One may find many more if only in philosophical literature. This is not the point though. For if there are many meanings of a word, there can also be found some basic meaning that all others derive from. By the same token, if there are many experiences of one and the same object, there has to be at least one originary experience of it. Searching for key meanings of concepts and looking for fundamental experiences of a given object are the first tasks of phenomenology.

Which of the many notions of “I” is the most fundamental? Which of its many experiences is the most originary? Here is my answer. Among many possible and really lived experiences of one’s own I, the experience of I as some particular value (*axios*) is the most fundamental experience. The notion based accordingly on this experience is the axiological-I, out of which all other notions of “I” can be inferred. In the present “Axiological Pieces” I would like to guide the reader’s attention to this particular answer. I would like to proceed in stages: first, using the phenomenological method, I would like to uncover for the reader their own axiological-I, then subject it to a slightly more specific and precise description. Of course, this will all be in brief.

I need to make one more introductory statement. The essence of the human I, regardless of how it is understood, embraces a particular self-consciousness. There is no I without the consciousness of I. What is this type of consciousness? Let us consider it using a similar example of pain, which I am presently experiencing: a headache. There is no pain without the consciousness of pain. We know that the basic source of knowledge about what is happening in our consciousness is reflection. Reflection is a particular cognitive act, thanks to which we obtain knowledge of what is going on in our consciousness. Would this mean that without a reflection directed towards pain there is no consciousness of the pain and, thus, no pain at all? By the same token, is there no I without a reflection directed towards I? And yet, a supposition of this kind would be absurd. We know undoubtedly that both the pain and I had existed in us even before we directed our reflection towards them and that they will still exist, or at least are able to exist, even if we direct the act of reflection toward something else. The consciousness of pain, much like the consciousness of I and all other conscious content (experiences of joy, sorrow, acts of decision, processes of striving towards something, etc.) can be of two kinds: reflective or pre-reflective. Some sort of consciousness of an experience belongs to its essence. It is not, however, consciousness of the reflective character. Quite the contrary, it conditions all reflection. This areflective or prereflective self-consciousness which be-

longs to the essence of the whole stream of consciousness in all its contents 35
I will here call *conscientivity*. Conscientivity is the opposite of 'scientivity.'
We attain scientive consciousness on the stream of consciousness and what
is happening there through various forms of reflection. But reflection is
possible only over what has been primordially presented by conscientivity.

As a kind of parallel to reflective consciousness and simple conscientivity we could point to objective consciousness of something: for example, this piece of paper and the nonobjective consciousness of the background that the piece of paper stands against. The consciousness of the piece of paper is act-consciousness—I have directed an act of perception onto the paper. The consciousness of background is different. It is found on the margins of the act of perception of the paper; it is vague, imprecise, as in fact I am little interested now in what is next to the paper. The case of reflection directed towards pain is analogical. This reflection is also act-consciousness; I direct an act of reflective perception, I follow its throbbing, I try to define its area. Conscientivity of pain is nonactive and, what follows, nonobjective consciousness. I know t h a t it hurts. However, I am unable to say w h a t hurts. For an answer to the question of 'what' presupposes an advanced cognitive elaboration of the experienced state. Conscientivity of an experience is, thanks to its nonobjective quality, analogical to the consciousness of background. There is, however, a fundamental difference between them. Background is in fact realized nonobjectively but in itself is not self-conscious, it is not conscientive. At the same time, conscientivity of pain is part of the essence of pain, without which pain simply does not exist.

The essence of I is its conscientivity. There is not and cannot be an I without the conscientive consciousness of I. It is perhaps perfectly acceptable and not contradictory to allow for the existence of non-egotic consciousness, that is, totally devoid of I (such is God's consciousness according to Max Scheler). But a thesis that there exists nonconscientive ego (I) seems absurd.

If egoticity is possible only as conscientivity, then it follows that posing the question 'what is I' we have found ourselves in a special area of reality where we cannot avail ourselves of any already existing cognitive models which have been tried and trusted somewhere else, specifically in the exterior world. Consciousness of things is not a thing in itself. Structural models that allow us to comprehend things cannot be shifted onto consciousness. In our inquiries we need to work out new cognitive models which could be inferred from consciousness and applicable to consciousness. Doubtless, it does not make our cognitive endeavor easier.

I

As the point of departure for our search to define the axiological-I in our consciousness, I take a phenomenon which may be called the *solidarization* of I with something which primordially presents itself as mine. I

36 should add that there might be more such points of departure and I will return to some of them.

Let us consider the following case: this is my hand. A moment ago I grabbed a pen and I am writing these words on a piece of paper. The hand obeys my intention. Between myself and my hand there is a sort of deep communion. I do not have to think about each of its movements, I do not strain myself to force it to make its precise movements, my hand “on its own” has entered into a deep harmony with me, faithfully sketching the desired signs on paper. I can assume that my hand is now in some particular sense part of myself. When I let it rest, I myself rest. When it is tired, I say I am tired. There is a bond of deep solidarity between me and it. This bond has made me feel as if my hand were simply a part of me.

Let us now imagine that my hand has been touched with some incurable disease, which, moreover, threatens my whole life. In this tragic situation the amputation of the limb is inevitable. Undoubtedly, this option would feel particularly dramatic. And yet, I imagine that if it were to save my life, I would agree to have my hand amputated just as other people agree to similar operations. But before such a resignation, something particular would take place: I would gradually, spontaneously or perhaps thoughtfully, withdraw from all of the inner bonds of solidarity with my hand. The hand would cease to be part of my I and would become more and more alien and even inimical to me. The process of the withdrawal of acts of solidarity on the level of consciousness would precede what a surgeon would then do on the level of corporeality.

The experience of solidarity with something which is primordially found near me and is—in some sense of the word—mine, is among those experiences through which my I increases or diminishes its scope of reality, its particularly understood being. Such is, at least, the first impression I get when I follow its movement. At times my I seems to spread over everything which is externally delineated by the contours of my body. In a sports competition, when struggling against physical, external obstacles, my hands, eyes, and legs are me, myself, in the same manner as the deep hidden intention to win the fight. At some other point all that becomes alien to us. We watch processes taking place in the body as if they were another person’s processes, we as impartial observers do not involve ourselves, do not affect their course. Our I takes the form of an ‘impartial observer.’

The area of possible egotic solidarization is defined by the feature of ‘mine.’ Only what is mine, in some sense of the word, can be embraced by the ray of inner solidarization. Mine is sometimes placed beyond the limit of my body in the world surrounding me; it is sometimes a thing, sometimes a dear person, at times an animal. Losing something of this kind, we feel the loss as a partial death of ourselves. The sense of solidarity lends itself to differentiation in grade: something can be myself in a more or less deep manner. I can be involved in something absolutely, in some other matter—only relatively. The moment of dying is great ordeal

of solidarity. Death appears to man as the prospect of a violent breaking 37 of solidarity bonds with the whole body and also as the possibility of a breaking with everything that so far has seemed to be oneself, and ultimately as a chance for the end of all solidarizations on account of their source's destruction.

What is the phenomenon of solidarization at its phenomenological core? What are its fundamental conditions for being possible?

The sense of solidarity has a clearly axiological character. The justifying reason for "mine" becoming a part of me, I say, its only reason is the value that "mine" has for me. I am in what constitutes a value for me. The ontological area of my I is defined by the area of values with which I have been able to enter into bonds of absolute solidarization. When a value ceases to be a value for me or when a value becomes a disvalue, the sense of solidarity undergoes a deep disorder. As changes take place there, so does the conscientive area of my I change.

The condition for egological solidarization being possible is something like the sensing of objective values. I can only experience the unity of myself with something which has been primordially mine and make the value of "mine" part of myself, because I experience myself as a particular value (*axios*). The sensing of my own I as a value is the condition for the possible emergence of a solidarization bond with such or other elements of "mine." Something is dear *to me* because I am, in some way, dear to myself. Without this there would be no objective value for me, no obligation, no axiological realization.

I have already said that a particularly essential feature of the egotic sphere is conscientivity. There is no I without the conscientivity of I. Now I add another feature to this description: the egological sphere turns out to be an *axiological* sphere in a particular sense of the term. In other words, it is a sphere where the sense of egotic value is the foundation of conscientivity and conscientivity is the foundation of egotic reality. The core of this sphere, its central point, the source of radiation which prepares possible solidarization is the *axiological-I*.

Now, with all due respect to logic, I should like to go on to describe the axiological-I positively. And yet, with the reader's permission, I will stay at the moment of bringing it to light, and in a sketchy but perhaps helpful manner I will reveal to the reader the same I, taking two other consciousness phenomena as a point of departure: the phenomenon of intentionality and the moment of *jouissance*, which is treated by both Ricoeur and Lévinas as an essential moment of each experience.

In all descriptions of intentionality, which are profuse in phenomenological texts, it is underscored that the essence of the phenomenon of intentionality is the directing of consciousness towards some object. Consciousness is always an awareness of something, to be more precise, an awareness of some object: heard in the case of hearing, seen in the case of seeing, touched in the case of touching. Husserl slightly narrows the thesis: only act-consciousness is intentional. Still, this does not alter our starting

38 point in any respect. According to Husserl and other phenomenologists, the essence of intentionality is exhausted in the radical guiding of the act of consciousness toward something. But such a depiction of the matter can be accused of a glaring one-sidedness. It passes over another aspect of intentionality, that is, for whom the intentional guiding of consciousness toward something is the intentional steering of consciousness toward something. Seeing is not only seeing something but seeing something by someone, to be more precise, for someone; the same goes for hearing, touching, deciding, thinking. In other words, the seeing, hearing, feeling I, through its own seeing, presents itself as something for whom there are the results of seeing, hearing, feeling. Taken in all its fullness, the phenomenon of intentionality consists in guiding consciousness toward something for someone (for me). Thanks to the moment “for someone,” consciousness exists not as a being in itself but—as Hegel pointed out—as a being for itself. “For someone” belonging to intention is very particular. The difference between intentions “for” and intentions “toward” does not consist only in the difference of guiding: here an inward guiding (for me), there an objective guiding (toward an object). The thing is that something shows through the former, and something else through the latter. An object shows through the objective intentions: here is the shiny green color of a leaf. The inward intentions show something which is neither the object of the act nor its subject, something which lies on a plane wholly different from the subject-object correlation. It is the one for whom the awareness of the leaf and its greenness is, the one who sees, hears, knows, who decides on the directions of the acts and on their sheer existence, who desires to internalize something through this or that act, to reach something, who cares for something, who does not then abide in the depths of acts, with the existence of a pure point of reference, but who lives in them, who derives something from them. The inward intentions, binding each act with this [core] and *vice versa*, are also distinguished by a feature of a particular emotion, which objective intentions often lack. We do justice to objects by knowing them for what they are, but one does justice to the one “for whom” those acts are in a different manner. One does it as if one was nurturing, as if by nurturing one let it last through time, reach beyond the present into the immediate future. The “subject” who gets involved in the act of seeing in such a manner that he lives in the act, and who, on the other hand, appears to remain at a subtle distance beyond the intentions of the act, who is perceptible only through the inward quality of the intentions that carry this little bit of awareness of the leaf’s greenness somewhere into the depth of consciousness, this “subject” can never become an object. Being a condition of the possibility of objectivization, how could it be a matter for objectivization? It is precisely this “subject” that presents itself to us as a value. Its worth is testified to by the remarkable emotional feature of the inward intentions of an act. It is also testified to by the inward quality of these intentions. To describe this value I can find no other name than the one used before: I, to be more

precise, the axiological-I, I-*axios*. In this manner the deepened description of intentionality has led us to the same end that we reached before through the description of the phenomenon of solidarization. 39

Let us now direct our attention to the moment of *jouissance* of experiences, processes and acts of consciousness. The meaning of the word *jouissance* appearing in the descriptions of consciousness by Ricoeur and Lévinas is impossible to render in the Polish language. The word “enjoying” or “enjoyment” has a sensual and even ethically negative coloring (e.g. enjoy the world).¹ And yet, let us try to conceptually eliminate both of these semantic elements. Then it will turn out that the remaining meaning is more or less adequate to the way both of the above-mentioned writers use it. Lévinas writes:

One does not only exist one's pain or one's joy; one exists from pains and joys. Enjoyment [*jouissance*] is precisely this way the act nourishes itself with its own activity... Bread and labor do not, in the Pascalian sense, divert me from the bare fact of existence or occupy the emptiness of my time: enjoyment is the ultimate consciousness of all the contents that fill my life—it embraces them.²

Conceived in this way, enjoyment is a correlative to the whole sphere of conscientivity. Experiencing a sense of dread, we enjoy it, it is as if a nourishment of the moment, it damages itself and—permeating us—it damages us. So does joy. At times one says one cherishes one's joy. Joy is enjoyed [being used up] when it becomes myself, when it fills me, inundates my being to the brim. There is a subtle difference between living in a joyful mood and being joy (radiating with joy). The difference is that one lacks what occurs in the other: the phenomenon of *jouissance*. When I am in a joyful mood, the situation looks as if I satiate and nourish myself with something which in itself exists in some distance from my depth which is nourishing itself. When I am all joy, the distance vanishes, and so does satiating, so does the phenomenon of *jouissance*. So the phenomenon of enjoyment presupposes the existence of some distance between me and my mood, my act, my experience. My I is somewhere in the depths. A mood embraces it from without, it is something for me. The intention of enjoyment is an inward intention. Through this intention the same content we managed to observe in the previous case is discernible. It is the axiological-I. Only a value can enjoy, experience, and use up something. What value? A conscientive value. Again the only adequate name for this value is the word “I”.

I have been trying to capture the axiological-I as a particular conscientive value which is at the bottom of the phenomena of solidarization with something and which lies on the horizon of inward intentions of all *jouissance*. The above descriptions have presented us with two kinds of the

¹ Tischner read Lévinas in French translating passages for his own needs; he translates *jouissance* as “używanie,” which is a Polish counterpart of “using,” and has connotations of excessive pleasure and prodigality [trans.].

² Emanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Springer 1979, p. 111.

40 axiological-I's "behavior." The first is active, even aggressive: the axiological-I strives toward solidarization with something which is particularly dear and, for this reason, emerges from its depths, takes on a meaningful form, lends itself to names that the human thought derives through communion with the external world. In this manner it substantializes or even reifies itself. In the other case, it behaves like a being receiving nourishment. It does not lose itself in the world, but the world gets lost in it, while it solicitously watches over its own distance and distinction from the world, where its bread grows.

It is in such a manner that the axiological-I appears to us: the axiological-I endures in something and this form of duration brings it closer to knowledge of itself, and at the same time something lasts for it [the axiological-I] and the form of duration beyond this something "for it" carries it away from knowledge of itself, which ultimately builds through communion with the external world. Distance and closeness at the same "now" are equally characteristic of the axiological-I. Once again, one is struck by the axiological content of this I. For closeness and distance are modes of appearing to the consciousness of this, as any other value.

II

The axiological-I... Felt in the shadow of all objectively directed feelings, co-experienced in each experience as just experiencing something, co-lived in living through joy, sadness, acts of decision directed onto the world. The I whose manner of existence is conscientivity, that is, a sphere where the existence of something means the consciousness of something, and where the feeling of values existing in the world evokes the co-feeling of the value of oneself, while what is evoked turns out to be the condition of possibility for any evoking feeling of an object, a sphere where there is no use for any models of interpretation which have been tried and trusted elsewhere...

What does the particular axiology of this I consist in? How does it distinguish itself from other values, especially values of objects?

While interpreting my conception of the nature of the axiological-I, the author of "Reflections in Suspension" wrote, "the axiological-I is the result of the realized possibility of receiving this and no other perspective of a value (even one which has not been fully realized)."³ I think I understand the thought expressed here. Of course, one can speak of the axiological-I in this sense, as well. For instance, someone was going to become a doctor. Being a doctor constituted a value for him. Now this person is a doctor by vocation, as we say. As a doctor he represents a value for himself and others, especially for the sick. This person realized a possibility which had been in him, and did it in the perspective of particular values. "I" in this case is nothing other than a particular center of attitudes and acts from which

³ Sigma, "Refleksje w zawieszeniu" [Reflections in Suspension], monthly *Znak*, issue 188-189 (1970).

all actions of this person as a doctor derive. However, when I speak of the axiological-I, I have in mind a different and more fundamental situation. Between I and the author of “Reflections” appeared a misunderstanding coming from the fact that at the time he was writing his reflections I had not published anything which would present my views on the matter in a more comprehensive way. The axiological-I—in the conception proposed by myself—is not a more or less provisional center related to a given situation in the world, a center of acts realizing a type of values, but something that is the basis for and the subjective condition of the type of I that was presented in “Reflections” being possible. The axiological quality of this I does not derive from the fact of realizing (or at least a decision to realize) some types of values, or from some qualifications received from already realized values, but it consists in axiology being its immanent and whole reality.

Let us return to describing this axiological quality. There is a profound difference between the value of the axiological-I and objective, ethical, aesthetic, religious or any other values. Each objective value has as its counterpart a disvalue. Justice is opposed by injustice, the fair is opposed by the foul, the holy—by the demonic. In contrast, the axiological-I does not enter in a relationship of this type with egotic disvalues. In other words, *alter-ego*, that is, the I of the Other, is not a disvalue but a value similar to the value of one’s own I, a value commanding a range of particular behavior toward it. Values which—in some sense of the word—oppose the value of I are all objective disvalues, in particular ethical disvalues. However, they are not egotic values. The axiological-I is endangered by injustice, hatred toward what is worthy of love, unfaithfulness, dishonesty, etc. But the crucial condition for feeling endangered by disvalues is the attempt to realize them, or the realization of them by that same I that they, as disvalues, put in danger. It means that a realization of disvalues by another man, even when directed against me (e.g. injustice done to me), does not constitute danger to my axiological-I. Injustice may endanger my life, my good reputation, my work, but my axiological-I is transcendent in regard to all of these attacks. The axiological-I feels endangered (one would like to say “ill-used”) only when, being a positive value, it is forced to take on responsibility for the realization of disvalues. This situation is experienced as a kind of axiological suicide.

The axiological-I is a positive value in the absolute sense of the word. First of all, this means that it is not opposed in the field of its egotic experience by any egotic disvalue (a personified demoniacness can be at most an object of faith, possible experiences of personified demoniacness have an exceptionally ambiguous character). This also means that in the sphere of its *sui generis* mode of being it is not possible to negate radically its value. Inward intentions of all kinds constitute its permanent affirmation. The axiological-I affirms itself in its axiological positiveness at the back of every intention directed objectively, each experience, each broadening or narrowing of solidarization bonds, each *jouissance*... Even a radical nega-

4² tion of oneself, whose expression is a suicidal attack, conceals in itself a moment of affirmation of I as a value greater than life.⁴

It does not mean, however, that everything that constitutes the value of the axiological-I is strictly positive in character. The essential moment of the axiological-I is its privativeness of the axiological type. Privativeness is not axiological negativeness. The privativeness of the axiological-I is a condition for the intentional directing of the egotic consciousness toward objects (including objective values) being possible. This was particularly expressed in Heidegger and Satre's conceptions of consciousness. Both described it groundlessly, using the notion of nothingness, which showed that the interpretative model used in the description derived from the theory of being-in-itself. This can be partly justified, for it is almost impossible at the moment to capture and describe privativeness of an axiological kind using unambiguous notions: the endeavor is impossible to realize, as such notions simply do not exist. At times we must resort to analogies, figurative speech, metaphors and allusions. In order to capture the essence of the privativeness which is of interest here, I believe it is not the metaphor of nothingness, but the metaphor of hunger that is most proper. Yet in order to avoid committing the fallacy of shifting interpretative models again, the metaphor must undergo some necessary tweaks.

There is no hunger without the consciousness of hunger. The consciousness of hunger conceals in itself a negative impression element and a positive impression element. The negative one carries a feeling of lack of nourishment. The positive one is the affirmation of life that the nourishment is to serve. The axiological-I in its fundamental inclination toward objects and especially toward objective values—the inclination which manifests itself in the states of forgetting oneself in moments of fascination by values, which makes man live in his everydayness on the verge of knowledge and ignorance of his own interests, which gives this life an aspect of striving toward something—reveals an unfilled axiological depth and a torturing axiological hunger. The axiological hunger becomes satiated through the realization of objective values in the surrounding world. It is therefore a hunger different from the hungers and desires known to us through the experience of our corporeality. In the case of physical hunger consciousness focuses on itself above all: we say: "I am hungry." Whereas in the case of axiological hunger we enter the state of forgetting oneself: we say "justice needs to be served." We cannot, however, forget ourselves completely. The maximum border of forgetting, we cannot go beyond, is conscientivity. Therefore, conscientivity is the natural manner of being for the axiological-I. What the axiological-I directs its attention toward is an objective value and... some axiologically uncharted territory in the surrounding world which should be saturated with some value: here we need to realize justice. While the biological hunger vanishes at the mo-

⁴ Cf. J. Tischner, "Prolegomena chrześcijańskiej filozofii śmierci" [Prolegomena to the Christian Philosophy of Death], monthly *Znak*, issue 166 (1968), cf. *Świat ludzkiej nadziei* [The World of Human Hope], *Znak*, Kraków 2000, p. 269.

ment of satiation, the axiological-I does not know the feeling of satiation, 43 the feeling of fullness, the feeling of the flourishing of I. This is not what the axiological-I ultimately cares for while realizing values.⁵

I would like to draw attention to two other properties of the axiological-I, which, besides the moment of positiveness and axiological privativeness, constitute its intrinsic features: irreality and individuality.

The axiological-I is unreal, much like the most precisely objective values. The concept of irreality opposes the concept of reality, which I understand according to the Kantian tradition as existence in time. The axiological-I does not exist in time—thus its radical irreality. This does not mean, however, that it is an ideal being, like a number. It is something in-between. On the one hand, as an axiological positiveness, it is similar to pure ideal values—like them, it calls for realization in time and space. On the other hand, as something living, conscientive, and, above all, privative, staying inclined toward the world where the axiologically unchartered territories are and where it can assume the robes of the social-I (being a doctor, teacher, clerk, etc.), it impresses us as something real. Yet because it exists neither in time nor space, and due to its axiological positiveness I can say that while being unreal, it is also *t r a n s c e n d e n t* in regard to the world.⁶

The second property of I is individuality. The objective values are usually more or less general values. The situations in which they may be realized are concrete. The axiological-I is radically individual. This individuality is underscored by the word “my,” which we use at times to make it even more precise. My I is singular, unique, different from another man’s axiological-I. Not more or less precious, simply other, just like the beauty of two pictures of the same object painted by two masters. Only the idea of I can be general. I as such is not an idea. It is an individual. Therefore, if individuality and otherness, which are linked to it, are its value, they cannot be its tragedy.

⁵ For this reason, in my opinion, there is no positive meaning in statements which claim that man strives in life to achieve his own fullness, to develop his abilities, talents, etc. For man there is no satiation with some fullness, because the emptiness that man is does not have an ontological character, but is axiological. So long as there exists the dilemma of unrealized values and the world receptive to their realization, the human drama of privativeness will last. Christianity draws one of the possible endings of this drama in the picture of the Last Judgment. The world will be damned and destroyed because, in the final analysis, it has turned out to be barren ground for the complete realization of values. For this, judgment awaits it. But because of partial receptiveness—against all odds—it deserves transformation, that is, a partial protection. A Christian hopes for a world without axiologically unchartered territories, a world of more axiological plasticity.

⁶ In the article “Czym jest ja transcendentalne?” [What Is the Transcendental Ego?] (*Szkice filozoficzne. Romanowi Ingardenowi w darze*, Warsaw-Kraków 1964), I wrote that the transcendental ego is the constitutive nature of consciousness. Here I identify this ego with the axiological-I. The difference in the solutions comes from the difference in the language I use. There it was the language of Ingarden’s ontology, here a slightly more independent language of axiology. The word “transcendent” I basically use in the same sense in which Husserl used the term “transcendental” (the transcendental ego). A closer explanation of both notions and their relationship would take too much space and would have no bearing on my principal conclusions.

Axiological egotic individuality is a condition for love existing between people being possible. Love between people commences from a discovery of the axiological-Individuality of another I. Love at that stage revels in a fundamental discovery: you are different and precious in your otherness. The axiological-I of a loving person following the individuality and value of the axiological-Thou enters the phase of fascination and even losing oneself in Another. It is only Another's answer, whose essence is a similar discovery and a similar revelation, that restores the loving one to oneself. Love is communication, or better, communion which develops on the plane of axiological individuality. It is a feedback process of losing one's own value in the value of Another and restoring it in the acts of love through which Another returns love. For this reason, any generalizing scheme is the enemy of love, above all a scheme which derives from a simplified vision of man. Love—in much the same manner as the axiological-I that is its source—carries the mark of transcendence with respect to the world, in which it finds its expression and realization. Here, in contact with space and time, it experiences the same resistance which is associated with each realization of values. The possibilities of realizing love allowed by the concrete world of human environment are poorer than love. The first of its enemies is time—for it strives towards the eternal 'now.' The other enemy is space—for love strives towards ceaseless 'with.' On the other hand, the world of time and space is the only area where love can realize itself. The dilemma consisting in rebellion against time and against space, together with the necessity of accepting them at the same time, is the source of suffering that permeates each love. The authentic manner of existence for the loving axiological-I is the acceptance of suffering which constitutes an intricate element of its living love.

III

The axiological-I is transcendent and unreal, that is, "out-of-the-world" and extratemporal. In the real world, where situations of concrete obligation appear, it can—thanks to the processes of solidarization and a *sui generis* realization—take on the form (sense) of "I, a doctor," "I, a priest," "I, a father," "I, a mother," "I, a worker," in a word, one of the kinds of the Schelerian social-I. The correlate of each of these realizations is a definite world of objective values, which the axiological-I believes to be, if not fundamental, then at least most obligatory at the moment; and a definite world of axiologically uncharted territories, that is, a world of those situations where objective values should find their embodiment (for a doctor this would be the world of human illness, for a man of state: the world of politics, for a mother: the world of her child, etc.). The world of existential pretence is quite different. It is the world other people usually get involved in that for a given person may not, however, present value to such an extent that they regard it as a pseudo-reality. For a poet such could be the world of a motorcyclist, for a motorcyclist: the world of a doctor, for a doctor: the world

of an astronomer, etc. The recognition of reality is the outcome of stirring 45
axiological feelings. When some sphere of the world loses all its worth for
a person, it becomes immediately embraced by the horizon of existential
pretence, in which it remains on the border of being and non-being.

Man spends his concrete day of work and entertainment in a situ-
ational context whose axiological coloring is indisputable. This context is
constituted by a particular set of values to the realization of which man is
called *hic et nunc*. This set's correlative is the area of axiologically uncharted
territories, which should be filled with acts realizing objective values. The
whole relation between a value and an axiologically uncharted territory
is surrounded by the world of existential pretence. There are no values
there, no uncharted territories, at least such that would concern me. My
place is here and now. Here and now I undertake the exertion of realizing
objective values allotted to me. In this and no other way do I complete the
job of making myself real as this or that social-I. But during actual work
and entertainment I am not concerned with making myself real. I am
continuously preoccupied with objective values. The manner of being of
the axiological-I is being-toward-values. The realizing of the axiological-I
in the social-I is carried out at the back of realizing objective values. In the
same way, an intricate process plays itself out in my consciousness when
the axiological-I stretches its solidarity to the I that is already realized or
at the point of realization.

Despite and in defiance of all realizations, the axiological-I will
remain an unreal and transcendent I. No realization or solidarization that
the axiological-I undertakes spontaneously or deliberately can exhaust all
the possibilities of I. The process of making real takes place in the mood
which is characterized by some particular duality. On the one hand, it is
accompanied by a consciousness of enrichment with new perspectives of
axiological realizations. One who has received a doctor's diploma sees a
broad range of axiological acts open which will remain closed to others. On
the other hand, it is accompanied by the awareness of irrevocable closure
of other axiological horizons and irreversible impoverishment. A poet who
has become a doctor has lost something as a poet and has not achieved
something as a doctor. Standing in the middle of this dual existential mood,
the axiological-I does not know a complete victory, although it desires
such a victory. Through the whole duration of the realization process, the
axiological-I harbors an indefinite sense of bitterness whose core is the
memory of these irreversible impoverishments. As all enrichments have
ultimately been procured on different planes, there are no chances for full
recompense for the losses. By its essence, the axiological-I is not what
it is. The feeling of existential bitterness has deep roots. It reaches deep
into the conscientivity of axiological privateness, it interweaves with the
awareness of fundamental guilt of the partial realization of objective values,
and insufficient determination in the transubstantiation of axiologically
unchartered territories of the world. Its natural external manifestation is
something which might be called a person's private mythology.

4⁶ A person tells their different fate that would have been possible had they been placed in a different world and in other chance situations. Private mythologies usually start with words like, “if things had gone differently, I would now be...” Losers comfort themselves after defeats, winners conjure dreams of even greater triumphs. In their private mythologies people say, “give us a different world, and we’ll show you a different version of ourselves.” Private mythologies reveal the radically fundamental condition of the axiological-I—its irreality and transcendence.

A stanza from a Leśmian poem cited at the beginning as a motto is a poetic expression of a similar mythology. In this poem we can find more, however: not only a description of what I have called making the axiological-I real, but also some justification for the guilt of incomplete self-realization, which is not devoid of some sense of pride. “I ... survive, like a prayer,” a prayer is a request that something be fulfilled; however, the prayer that I am is a particular prayer, and I would even say a perverse one: it does not want to be fulfilled, for it prefers to be itself. Choosing and accepting oneself as an unfulfilled and provisional reality, accepting in spite of its temporariness, carries a mark of subtle heroism and is the source of a sense of pride. Besides, this is beautiful in Leśmian’s poetry. But despite what Leśmian says, the primordial condition of the axiological-I only partially corresponds to the nature of the perverse prayer. The core of the matter lies not in the fact that the axiological-I does not want to fulfill the self, preferring to be oneself, but in that it c a n n o t fulfill the self. Its irreality makes it eternally transcendent to the world of time and space. If it did not ruin the beautiful construction of the poem, I would happily correct Leśmian’s thought: man is a prayer that, in spite of himself, is unable to fulfill himself. Certainly, this does not contradict the possibility that man can be both unable and unwilling. Once realizing in this way the reason for accepting oneself as an unrealized axios—irreal and transcendent—one surely loses neither the sense of heroism nor the sense of the Leśmian pride.