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Review of the doctoral thesis

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**THE CONCEPTION OF REALISTIC METAPHYSICS ACCORDING TO
MIECZYSLAW ALBERT KRĄPIEC**

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A Doctoral Thesis written under the supervision of:
Prof. dr. hab. Andrzej Maryniarczyk, SDB and Ks. Dr. Hab. Tomasz Duma
Seminar: Metaphysics and Philosophical Anthropology

General remarks

The main part of the doctoral dissertation is a cognitively valuable presentation and philosophical analysis of the metaphysics of Father Professor Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec. The author of the dissertation aims to defend the thesis that the paradigm of metaphysics proposed by Krąpiec is not only cognitively valuable, but also important and original, and culturally significant. It allows for the construction of a coherent cognitive philosophical system that covers the entire existing reality with its scope of cognition.

This system, starting from the fact of the existence of a reality given to be known and explained, allows a person to obtain understanding knowledge, thanks to which it is possible to create a culture that genuinely improves human.

The dissertation clearly shows that the type of discourse practiced by Krapiec has the value of scientific, realistic cognition and is an original way of philosophizing, which refers to the classical way of philosophizing developed on the basis of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition.

According to the author of the dissertation, Krapiec's metaphysics perfectly allows not only to reach the main goal of philosophy, which is to learn the truth about the world, but also can help in overcoming numerous errors caused by philosophizing within Cartesianism, Kant's reflections, linguistic analyzes of analytical philosophy or positivism. The main feature of Krapiec's metaphysics is, according to the author of the dissertation, fidelity to reality, realism and objectivity.

The work, in its essential part, is not only a historical and methodological study of a specific way of philosophizing, but it is a current and cognitively profound lecture on how to understand philosophy itself as a field of realistic cognition of the world, aimed at making human wise.

In all his deliberations, the author shows very good erudition, knowledge of the subject, great methodological culture, as well as independence of cognition and the ability to present his position.

Subject, structure of work, method and purpose

As indicated above, the author of the dissertation undertake the presentation and analysis of the metaphysics of father Mieczysław Albert Krapiec, a leading Polish philosopher, founder and main representative of The Lublin Philosophical School. The dissertation is based on source literature, available to the author mainly in English, and with the use of numerous and representative studies and continuations of Krapiec's metaphysics. The selection of source literature and studies is done properly and correctly, though not exhaustively.

The whole structure of the dissertation is clear, logically and objectively justified. As the author of the dissertation explain, the method used by him consisted mainly in the analysis of Krapiec's works and the continuators of his philosophical thought, made in terms of answers to the main question of the dissertation. In his analyzes, the author also tries to use the method of metaphysical explanation, which consists in pointing to real, factual reasons

which constitute non-contradiction of the facts given to be explained. The method used by the author of the dissertation was determined by the main purpose of the dissertation and its subject.

The main aim of the dissertation is to answer the question whether the form of metaphysics proposed by Krapiec meets the criteria of science (scientific cognition) and rational scientific discourse, using explanations and justifications appropriate for it.

The author showed that Krapiec's metaphysics is undoubtedly a science, but not in the sense of biology or chemistry. It has its own proper object of cognition (being as being), appropriate cognition methods (mainly the method of separation) and obtains intersubjectively verifiable and communicable knowledge about reality.

This knowledge has fundamental importance for human and is an authentic knowledge of the world of persons and things. It cannot be replaced by other types of knowledge and is not reduced to other forms of knowledge. This cognition retains its methodological autonomy in relation to natural sciences and cognition obtained through religious faith (theology).

Apart from the introduction, ending and bibliography, the dissertation contains a short summary in Polish. It is completely coherent and properly ordered, its reading is easy, the language and the author's thoughts is clear and logical.

Summary and presentation of the dissertation content

In the first chapter, entitled "The Realism of Metaphysics as base for the Realism of Philosophy", the author, following Krapiec, presents what should be understood by metaphysics. He shows that it is a philosophical science, a kind of realistic cognition, historically shaped and methodologically developed through history up to the present day.

Existential judgments, being a specific cognitive link with the object of cognition, i.e. with being, play a fundamental role in it. They ensure that metaphysics is realistic cognition, constantly taking place in contact with the existing world. Cognition understood in this way cannot be reduced to the analysis of the content created in the human intellect, but is the recognition of a being in its reality, universal laws and principles. It allows for an understanding explanation of what exists, because in cognition real and at the same time necessary reasons (causes) for what something is and why something is are grasped. The

author of the dissertation points out that Krapiec's metaphysics grows out of a specific science-creating question *dia ti*.

In the second chapter, entitled “The Transcendental Properties and the Analogical Character of Being”, the author presents and analyzes Krapiec's metaphysics as a science showing the transcendental properties of being. It presents not only the history and the ways of forming the science of the seven transcendentals, but also the metaphysical way of discovering these properties, which simultaneously outline the structure of being and its laws, and ultimately lead to the observation of the analogy of being, cognition, prediction and explanation.

In this part of the work, the author discusses an extremely important aspect of Krapiec's metaphysics related to the so-called theory of analogy, putting the emphasis on the intra-ontic analogy and the inter-ontic analogy. This chapter, like the previous one, ends with a synthetic summary of analyzes in which the author justifies the thesis that both the problem of the transcendental properties of being and the theory of analogy itself show that Krapiec's metaphysics is the opposite of all essential philosophies. The author proves that Krapiec's metaphysics, thanks to the fact that it is based on spontaneous cognition, but not on naive cognition, thanks to the use of the method of separation cognition, is able to obtain knowledge about being really existing, which ultimately makes metaphysics methodologically rightly called realistic, objective and cognitively neutral.

In this cognition, being with its existence and ontic content directs the acts of cognition and justifies them. All cognitive activities performed in metaphysics ultimately lead to the thesis that the Absolute must exist and appears as the first and necessary reason for the existence of everything that exists and is cognizable.

In the third chapter, entitled “The Discovery of the Nature of Being”, the author analyzes the understanding of the metaphysical way of knowing being, which led Krapiec to adopt the existential theory of being, where the non-identity of the act of existence and essence of the being is clearly visible. This chapter, together with the second chapter, is the core of the work. Its main goal is to show how the metaphysical cognition represented by Krapiec and the whole current of realistic philosophy proves the complex structure of being. The author explains that the method of philosophical cognition, the so-called separation, not only corresponds well with the natural and spontaneous cognition of the world, but also clearly shows existential substructures.

In this chapter we can read about ontic compositions explaining both ontic dynamism and the fact of the identity of being despite the changes. The author presents also an analysis of how Krapiec understands the ontic unity of being, with its complexes of act and potentiality, substance and accidents, form and matter.

Ultimately, he associates his analyzes showing the ontic complexity with the problem of the causes of being, indicating that Krapiec's metaphysics, referring to Aquinas's conclusions, allows us to understand both being itself in its complexities and its contingency, and to obtain an analogous understanding of the entire existing reality.

The fourth and last chapter of the dissertation, entitled "Metaphysical and Methodological Considerations of Mieczysław Albert Krapiec's Metaphysics", is a presentation of the specificity of Krapiec's metaphysics. In this chapter, the author tries to analyze and explain what ultimately is the specificity of Krapiec's metaphysics. He concludes that, apart from cognitive realism connected with cognition and explaining only what exists, this metaphysics is characterized primarily by cognitive maximalism, aiming at knowing all that is and obtaining the ultimate truth about reality.

As the author of the dissertation proves, an important element of this metaphysics is also historicism, as a methodological element related to the approach to the analyzed issue with the use of knowledge previously developed by others.

Krapiec's metaphysics is, according to the author, also characterized by "Reductive Thinking", a certain method of cognition and explanation in which ontic, real and first factors in being are sought, which do not contradict a given fact to be explained. Importantly, according to the author, Krapiec's metaphysics is a type of cognition of reality, standing in radical opposition to all types of cognition contaminated with ideologies and aimed at limiting metaphysical cognition by *a priori* reasons.

Krapiec's metaphysics understood in this way is not meant to act, change the world, as postulated by, for example, Marxism, but it is a theoretical knowledge and is directed at the truth of the world. As the author of the dissertation proves, this metaphysics is free from errors of nominalism, so widespread in analytical philosophy, which focuses mainly on showing the meanings of terms and cognitive approaches.

What is important in the author's opinion, Krapiec's metaphysics is also a type of science that turns away from idealism, which is always the result of subjective and *a priori*

choices. It also does not share the positivist postulates reducing the activity of philosophy to making and describing certain cognitive syntheses based on the generalization of the results of natural sciences.

The author also asks the question of where should the ultimate reason for such metaphysics be sought? He proves that this metaphysics is, first of all, the effect of a scientific question that arises in human, resulting from being amazed with the world (being). Amazement with the world is expressed in human in the form of a question: *dia ti* - (why)?

Ultimately, according to the author, metaphysics turned out to be cognition that effectively aims at achieving by human the truth about the world and the kind of science that actually creates wisdom in human.

Critical remarks and the final assessment of the dissertation

The dissertation clearly shows that its author has a very good understanding of classical philosophy and that he read the works of Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec with due depth and care. He also made appropriate analyzes and drew correct, logical conclusions. He also showed significant philosophical erudition and mastery of the art of presenting complex philosophical issues, especially in the context of numerous disputes and philosophical discussions that have been going on for centuries. However, he did not avoid some repetitions in his work, especially in presenting the specificity and role of existential judgments and the method of separation itself as the correct way of metaphysical cognition in Krąpiec's theory.

In the opinion of the reviewer, the dissertation lacks an analysis of two important elements of Krąpiec's metaphysics. The first is the theory of relations and the relational being itself. This issue is only mentioned in the author's analyzes, although it is an important part of Krąpiec's philosophical theory.

The dissertation lacks also a clear presentation of what is the culmination of any metaphysics, i.e. natural theology and the theory of the Absolute. Every metaphysics, as a certain coherent and mature system of cognition of reality, should end precisely with natural theology (theodicy) and the theory of the Absolute. In the opinion of the reviewer, the work would benefit significantly if these two issues, so interesting in Krąpiec's metaphysics, were taken up to the extent they deserve.

Another objection is that in his analyzes the author sometimes does not clearly distinguish between the metaphysical position of Krapiec and those positions that arose within the Lublin Philosophical School and the continuators of Krapiec's metaphysics.

Nevertheless, it should ultimately be emphasized that the dissertation is a valuable and cognitively important study within realistic philosophy. Its main advantage is its clarity, precision in approaching difficult issues, especially those related to the methodology of metaphysical cognition.

The author made a valuable analysis of Krapiec's metaphysics, demonstrating, in some way, the validity and originality of Krapiec's research, mainly against the background of the philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The author's cognitively valuable contribution is to emphasize the aspects in which Krapiec's metaphysics can help in solving cognitive difficulties, whether related to human gender identity, or the threats posed by contemporary culture permeated with postulates of positivism, scientism, materialism or naturalistic and idealistic positions.

Conclusions

In the opinion of the reviewer, the main value of the dissertation should be considered not so much to show that Krapiec's metaphysics meets certain scientific conditions, but that it is a world-unique way of getting to know the real world, leading human to the perfection he/she deserves. Without this path, it is difficult to create an authentic human culture and defend the truth about all reality.

The work is an important and one of the first English-language studies of Krapiec's metaphysics, so insightfully presenting the role of existential judgments in the formation of a philosophical understanding of the world.

Each doctoral dissertation, prepared under the supervision, should constitute an original solution to a scientific problem and demonstrate the author's general theoretical knowledge in a given scientific discipline, as well as the ability to independently conduct scientific work.

It should be clearly stated that the dissertation submitted for review more than meets all the conditions of a doctoral dissertation and should constitute the basis for obtaining a

doctoral degree. It is assessed positively and should be published in the future in order to fill the gap in scientific knowledge and to show the history of the development of Polish realistic philosophy in the 20th century.

I am applying for admission of the reviewed work to further stages of the Ph.D. title conferment procedure.



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