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## The Problem of Autonomy of the Philosophy of Culture

The term “culture” is currently used in every inflection and put at the forefront in debates on social issues, which seems to be a consequence of the so-called *cultural turn* in humanities and social sciences.<sup>1</sup> Thus, there are statements like: “culture is a matter of life and death” (M. Mamdani),<sup>2</sup> “culture is everywhere” (U. Hannerz),<sup>3</sup> culture “makes all the difference” (D. Landes),<sup>4</sup> culture “is on everyone’s lips”

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. George Steinmetz, *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999); Victoria E. Bonnell, Lynn Hunt, *Beyond the Cultural Turn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. New Orientations in the Study of Culture*, transl. by A. Blauhut (Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Beyond Rights Talk and Culture Talk: Comparative Essays on the Politics of Rights and Culture* (New York: Cape Town, Philip, 2000), 54.

<sup>3</sup> Ulf Hannerz, “When Culture is Everywhere: Reflections on a Favourite Concept,” in: *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 30–43.

<sup>4</sup> David Landes, “Culture Makes Almost All the Difference,” in: *Culture Matters. How Values Shape Human Progress*, ed. L. Harrison, S. Ph. Huntington (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 2–13.



(M. Sahlins),<sup>5</sup> culture “has to be taken into account” (S. Huntington), culture “cannot be overestimated” (L. Harrison).<sup>6</sup>

The issue of culture should be viewed from the philosophical perspective. Of course, this does not mean that sociological or anthropological-cultural concepts do not contain explicit philosophical assumptions in themselves. Taking into account the meta-subject, it may be observed that the contemporary debate concerning the philosophical understanding of culture is verbalized in, among other things, questions about the methodological status of the philosophy of culture. The ongoing discussion reveals a problem with determining the relationship between the philosophy of culture and culture itself (philosophy is also treated as a part of culture), the relationship between the philosophy of culture and specific sciences involving culture (e.g., cultural anthropology, the sociology of culture, and cultural studies), and the relationship between the philosophy of culture and other philosophical disciplines (e.g., metaphysics, ontology, and aesthetics).

In the present text, I propose the thesis that the philosophy of culture of the Lublin Philosophical School is autonomous with respect to specific studies of culture, but at the same time has only partial autonomy in relation to general metaphysics and philosophical anthropology, with this being revealed in separate data at the starting point. In terms of its formal subject and method of explanation, the philosophy of culture is a type of metaphysical study of reality, which is why it may be called the metaphysics of culture.

The structure of this paper is determined by the following issues: 1) I will determine the specifics of metaphysics as a fundamen-

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<sup>5</sup> Marshall Sahlins, “Goodbye to Tristes Tropes: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History”, *Journal of Modern History* 65 (1993), 19; this article may be found in the selection of essays by Sahlins. *Culture in Practice. Selected Essays* (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 471–500.

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence E. Harrison, “Why Culture Matters? Introduction,” in: *Culture Matters. How Values Shape Human Progress*. XVII–XXXIV.

tal philosophical discipline; 2) I will indicate the reason for distinguishing particular metaphysics; 3) I will describe the specificity of the philosophy of culture as particular metaphysics. In this way, I will answer the question of whether the philosophy of culture is autonomous to other philosophical disciplines?

### **Metaphysics as the foundational philosophical discipline**

The Lublin Philosophical School<sup>7</sup> is related to the tradition of realism, where the issue of culture was addressed by M. A. Krąpiec<sup>8</sup> and S. Kamiński,<sup>9</sup> and where the manner of explaining the phenomenon of culture is set in a perspective that can be described as classical philosophy.

The identification of philosophical disciplines, including the philosophy of culture, depends on one's understanding of philosophy itself. The subject, method, and purpose of philosophical research is adopted as part of a given concept.<sup>10</sup> In the program of the Lublin Philosophical School, the unity of the cultivated philosophy was noted.

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<sup>7</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, Andrzej Maryniarczyk, *The Lublin Philosophical School* (Lublin: PTTA, 2010); Paweł Gondek, *Projekt autonomicznej filozofii realistycznej. Mieczysława A. Krąpca i Stanisława Kamińskiego teoria bytu* [A Project of an Autonomous Realistic Philosophy. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec and Stanisław Kamiński's Theory of Being] (Lublin: PTTA, 2015), 23–75.

<sup>8</sup> See: e.g.: Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Człowiek w kulturze* [Human in Culture] (Warszawa: Gutenberg-Print, 1996); Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Człowiek i kultura* [Human and Culture] (Lublin: PTTA, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> See: e.g.: Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin–Roma: PTTA, 2018); Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Metaphysical Cognition*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin–Roma: PTTA, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> See: Stanisław Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” in: Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin–Roma: PTTA, 2018), 49–67.

This unity is made by general metaphysics and various particular metaphysics. The unity of philosophy follows from the fact that philosophy has one analogical object (everything that exists) which is apprehended generally (transcendentally and analogically) and is explained in metaphysics.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, metaphysics constitutes the foundational philosophical discipline, covers the properties that belong to all beings (the transcendental properties), reads out the laws that govern everything that exists, and cognizes the internal structure of every being and its cause.<sup>12</sup> The ultimate explanation of beings requires the affirmation of the existence of the Absolute Being as the singular reason which ultimately explains the existence of composite, changing, and finite beings.<sup>13</sup>

In the program of the Lublin philosophical school, general metaphysics is the chief and fundamental philosophical discipline, playing a central role in the cultivation of philosophy as a whole. S. Kamiński explains that this central place of metaphysics follows from the fact that the theory of being so conceived takes in all the disciplines of realistically conceived metaphysics and constitutes uniform philosophical

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<sup>11</sup> See: Krąpiec, Maryniarczyk, "Metaphysics in the Lublin Philosophical School," *Studia Gilsoniana* 5:2 (2016), 422.

<sup>12</sup> Stanisław Kamiński, "The Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics," in: Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin–Roma: PTTA, 2019), 286: "Metaphysics should be a knowledge that is one of a kind: not an a priori, rational buildup of tautologies, not a hypothetical universalization or explanation of observational data (or a network of logically linked experiential data, for that matter), not an irrational contemplation (a valuating experience) of essential human affairs. It does not replace all types of cognition nor does it intend to subjugate them. For it is concerned neither with the qualitative-quantitative nor formal aspect of reality but unlike any science with its general, existential aspect. And this is the aspect in which the rational, analogical and transcendental cognition of reality is possible, making it also possible to explain reality in an ultimate and necessary manner (although only in this chosen aspect)."

<sup>13</sup> See: Krąpiec, Maryniarczyk, *The Lublin Philosophical School*, 36–37.

cognition under the proper epistemological-methodological order. This means that the theory of being covers the entire fundamental problem of so-called classical philosophy and develops this problem the same way in all disciplines concerning the theory of being.<sup>14</sup>

In explaining reality, metaphysics emphasizes above all the holistic and general, existential approach which is characterized by a realistic attitude (philosophy explains what exists) and a maximalist attitude (it seeks the ultimate reasons in the order of being). This form of philosophy is characterized by autonomy (at the starting point it is independent of other types of cognition); in this sense, it is radically different from those approaches in which philosophical cognition is either a generalization of specific sciences or the logical analysis of language.<sup>15</sup> General metaphysics is a fundamental philosophical discipline that determines the understanding of the subject, method, and purpose of philosophy.<sup>16</sup> It serves as the basis for particular metaphysics and meta-philosophical disciplines as auxiliary tools, such as logic or the

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<sup>14</sup> Stanisław Kamiński, “The Methodological Peculiarity of the Theory of Being,” in: Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin–Roma: PTTA, 2018), 217–218: “[...] the theory of being understood in this way encompasses all disciplines of the realistically conceived metaphysics and constitutes a uniform philosophical cognition in terms of both epistemology and methodology. It means that the theory of being exhausts the entire fundamental problematique of the so-called classical philosophy, and solves it principally in the same way in all of its disciplines.”

<sup>15</sup> See: Stanisław Kamiński, “The Specificity of Metaphysical Cognition,” in: Stanisław Kamiński. *On the Metaphysical Cognition*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin–Roma: PTTA 2020), 9–94.

<sup>16</sup> Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” 68–69: “We therefore regard the theory of being as equal in its scope to metaphysics, and we identify it with the entire classical philosophy, which constitutes a science that is one and indivisible with regard to its formal (proper) object and its method of explanation, but in which it is possible to distinguish partially autonomous disciplines due to their particular starting points. The order of those disciplines is established in accordance with their progressive buildup.

history of philosophy. There is one type of philosophical knowledge that, in its most general basis, is created by metaphysics; philosophical cognition is identified with metaphysical cognition, while metaphysics is the primary philosophy.<sup>17</sup> Metaphysical cognition is concerned with the reality that exists directly, in the general, existential aspect (why [dia ti] something exists?), and which is treated as transcendently universal and analogically necessary. In this context, metaphysics deals with the transcendental (most general) properties of beings, their structure, and relationships (intrinsic and external). As part of this explanatory procedure, metaphysics indicates the ultimate and necessary (within the ontic order) reasons that explain the existence of entities (these reasons being themselves uncontradictory).

In philosophical cognition,—as Maryniarczyk explains—and especially in metaphysical cognition, which we describe as wisdom-oriented, the purpose is to reach the ultimate reason or cause of existence (in a certain aspect). This cognition is expressed in the art of separating being from non-being, that is, in the art of the decontradictification of a fact that is given to us to explain by indicating the objective reasons for the fact's existence.<sup>18</sup>

To characterize general metaphysics is, at the same time, to determine (in terms of its formal subject, objective, and method) the whole theory of being and even the whole of classical philosophy. Taking into account the (formal) subject and method of metaphysics, Kamiński perceives particular metaphysics (with a specific material subject at

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And thus, based on both general metaphysics and a suitably rich group of proper data, cosmology is developed, next anthropology, and, finally, the disciplines regarding human actions and their results and products.”

<sup>17</sup> See: Kamiński, “The Methodological Peculiarity of the Theory of Being,” 217.

<sup>18</sup> Andrzej Maryniarczyk, “The Discovery of the Existence of the Absolute in: Existential Metaphysics,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 5:4 (October–December 2016): 659–660.

the starting point) as those disciplines that reduce themselves to the theory of being,<sup>19</sup> with general metaphysics preceding all particular metaphysics.<sup>20</sup> Naturally, the theses of general metaphysics are the internal cognitive basis for individual particular metaphysics because the process of the explanation of individual categories of entities (including culture) requires reference to the internal structure of entities (the ontic argument).<sup>21</sup> The general, existential aspect is the research basis of all philosophical disciplines<sup>22</sup> even while differences emerge from the research areas identified within the categorical order, although even in these areas the basic goal is to show the fact of existence, with the content of various approaches varying.<sup>23</sup> Particular metaphysics have separate starting points that create “separate types of the object of experiential data.”<sup>24</sup> These starting points are distin-

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<sup>19</sup> Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” 67–68: “We therefore regard the theory of being as equal in its scope to metaphysics, and we identify it with the entire classical philosophy, which constitutes a science that is one and indivisible with regard to its formal (proper) object and its method of explanation, but in which it is possible to distinguish partially autonomous disciplines due to their particular starting points. The order of those disciplines is established in accordance with their progressive buildup. And thus, based on both general metaphysics and a suitably rich group of proper data, cosmology is developed, next anthropology, and, finally, the disciplines regarding human actions and their results and products.”

<sup>20</sup> See: *ibid.*, 82.

<sup>21</sup> See: Stanisław Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Other Philosophical Disciplines,” in: Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stepień (Lublin–Roma: PTTA, 2018), 46–47; Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” 84; Cf. Gondek, *Projekt autonomicznej filozofii realistycznej* [A Design of an Autonomous Realistic Philosophy], 218.

<sup>22</sup> S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In Duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*. ed. M.-R. Cathala, Raymundi Spiazzi. 2nd ed. (Taurini: Marietti, 1971) proemium: “[...] sine [principiis metaphysicae] completa cognitio de his, quae sunt propria alicui generi vel speciei, haberi non possit.”

<sup>23</sup> See: Kamiński, “The Methodological Peculiarity of the Theory of Being,” 219.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

guished not in terms of their formal subject or method of explanation, but in the terms of their material subject, which is determined by their own data to be explained.<sup>25</sup> However, as Kamiński explains,

The theses of general metaphysics (but not only them) constitute the inner base of particular metaphysics. They are the ones, among others, to be referred to, when the clarification of particular types of beings enters the most highly theoretical phase. For it is the inner reason for being that is sought for, and the theses concerning the inner structure of being belong to general metaphysics. Without the principles of general metaphysics, the full metaphysical cognition of what exactly is attributed to a being of a certain type would not be possible.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Domains of the Theory of Being**

The first level of particularization of the general subject of metaphysics is nature and the human being, including his action, decisions, and the cultural products of this action. There is a gradual transition from inquiries about a being in general to increasingly complex beings, who are richer in content due to their qualitative endowment.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, by particularizing the subject of the theory of being, one can distinguish the metaphysics of nature, the human being and society, ethics, aesthetics, the philosophy of culture (including history), and the

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<sup>25</sup> S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, cura et studio Ceslao Pera (Taurini: Marietti, 1961). lib II. cap. 4: “[...] secundum diversa rerum genera diversae partes philosophiae inveniuntur.”

<sup>26</sup> Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” 87–88.

<sup>27</sup> See: S. Thomae de Aquino, *Opera Omnia Iussu Edita Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, vol. 50: *Super Boethium De Trinitate* (Roma–Parsi. Commissio Leonina, 1992) – Éditions Du Cerf. VI. 1.



theory of cognition.<sup>28</sup> Particular metaphysics have “particularized” scopes due to their making new content more visible in the structure of the being of nature (with a corresponding metaphysics of nature), in the area of inanimate beings (with a corresponding metaphysics of inanimate beings), in animate beings (metaphysics of animate beings) and in human beings (human metaphysics). As such, all the aforementioned particular metaphysics can be distinguished. On the basis of various forms of human existence, one can distinguish those forms which are: general—as a person (metaphysics of culture, metaphysics of religion), and detailed—based on personal characteristics such as human cognition (metaphysics of cognition), human moral action (metaphysics of morality), human moral action conditioned by relationships (metaphysics of society, metaphysics of economy, metaphysics of law), and human creative activity (metaphysics of art, metaphysics of technology). By making the scope of the subject matter clearer, one may perform further particularization. As Kamiński explains,

General metaphysics and the philosophy of nature (philosophical cosmology) constitute as it were an indispensable introduction to the philosophy of human being (philosophical anthropology), which, in turn, should be necessarily completed by the philosophy of conduct, which is ethics, social philosophy (with its extensions: the philosophy of politics, the philosophy of law and state, the philosophy of economics), the philosophy of culture (religion, art, science, language, technology), and the philosophy of history. The unity of philosophical cognition is ultimately reassured by the ontic structure of the human being and its existential position within the universum of [really existing] beings.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See: Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” 89.

<sup>29</sup> Kamiński, “On the Nature of Philosophy,” 199.

## **Philosophical Anthropology as an Internal Base For the Philosophy of Culture**

Let's look at philosophical anthropology as a base discipline for the philosophy of culture. Philosophical anthropology is practiced differently than the fields of specific sciences such as natural, social, and cultural anthropology, and ethnology.<sup>30</sup> However, due to the specific research subject of philosophical anthropology (polyphony, the hybridism of culture is always seen in the context of the functioning of human groups), the methods applied in cultural research (survey methods, participant observation, field studies) and theories built on the basis of specific cultural sciences do not answer the question of why human beings create culture. What are culture's ultimate (ontic) reasons? This is why philosophical anthropology cannot be replaced by natural or socio-cultural anthropology. The latter differ from philosophy on the epistemological side, while human sciences within the humanities, if they become more general (fundamental) inquiries, are closer to philosophical cognition than natural anthropology. In addition, *homo socialis*, *homo faber*, and *homo consumens* are both the subject and object of the investigation of socio-cultural anthropology. They are entitled to specific knowledge (understanding, assessment), choosing of goals (not only choosing of means), and to creative shaping of their own environment in the context of a cultural niche. "To adequately study man with relation to this human nature,"—S. Kamiński explains—"one must know his nature precisely from philosophy. Thus, the full grounding of objective foundations for man's

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<sup>30</sup> See: Stanisław Kamiński, "Antropologia filozoficzna a inne działy poznania [Philosophical Anthropology and Other Areas of Cognition]," in: *O Bogu i o człowieku* [Of God and Human], vol. 1, edited by Bohdan Bejze (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SS. Loretanek-Bernardynek, 1968), 162–163.

social activities exceeds the boundaries of strictly scientific cognition. This is probably the source of the interpenetration of philosophy and cultural anthropology [...].”<sup>31</sup>

The autonomy of philosophical anthropology in relation to particular sciences is determined by subject-related conditions. The human being is recognized in his general, existential aspect as a formal subject<sup>32</sup>. The starting point of philosophical anthropology is a human fact analyzed from the outside (as an animate being) and from the inside (as a direct experience of the “I” as the subject of “my” activities).<sup>33</sup> The specificity of philosophical anthropology in philosophy lies in the distinctness of the research field, especially in its starting point. The uniqueness of the human being compared to other beings is striking. His peculiarity is manifested in his cognitive activity (transcendent and reflexive), aspirational attitude, creative talents in various fields of culture, personal uniqueness, and complexity of fixed and variable elements. Thus, in terms of research, the human being is distinguished as one type of entity, and philosophical anthropology explains human facts and human action through the ultimate ontic reasons that explain man’s ways of self-realization. Philosophical anthropology “explains human phenomena, their ontic structure and, consequently, their existential position among beings. For this, one needs metaphysical theses on the composition of being, the properties of beings and the hierarchy of their types.”<sup>34</sup> In this

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>32</sup> S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 29, a. 3, resp.: “Persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet subsistens in rationali naturae.”

<sup>33</sup> S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 76, a. 1, resp.: “Experitur enim unusquisque seipsum esse, qui intelligit [...] ipse idem homo est, qui percipit se et intelligere et sentire, sentire autem non est sine corpore [...]”

<sup>34</sup> Stanisław Kamiński, “Z metafizologii człowieka [From Human Meta-Philosophy],” in: Stanisław Kamiński, *Jak filozofować? Studia z metodologii filozofii klasycznej* [How to Philosophize? Studies in the Methodology of Classical Philosophy], prepared for print by Tadeusz Szubka (Lublin: RW KUL, 1989), 261.

sense, philosophical anthropology is human metaphysics, which is a vast field of research where cognitive operations are performed regarding both the very fact of human existence, which is the basis for distinguishing human metaphysics, and the content which conditions human existence, which is the reason for the distinguishing of specific anthropological disciplines.<sup>35</sup> The philosophical interpretation of a human fact reveals the sense of human existence as being a human being and the relationships (especially interpersonal) in which a human being participates. Human transcendence towards the natural world is what especially reveals the specificity of the action (among others, cultural) of the human being (cognition, freedom, love) and enables the involvement of the philosophy of the human being in fields which use the philosophy of the human being as the basis for acquiring the subject (ontic) foundations for distinguishing their own research scope (e.g., the philosophy of art or the philosophy of culture as relevant to this text). Philosophical anthropology presumes the conceptual apparatus of general metaphysics and the metaphysics of nature, but clarifies and reveals new analogies regarding the content conditioning human existence, with this being the basis for distinguishing specific anthropological disciplines, including the philosophy of culture.<sup>36</sup>

While human metaphysics deals with the existence of the human being in relation to his existential status and ontic structure, the disciplines that are a substantive extension of human metaphysics focus on the subjects of action and the individual relationships in which the human being participates. In this sense, the philosophy of cognition, ethics, social philosophy, axiology,<sup>37</sup> philosophy of history, and the

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<sup>35</sup> See: Gondek, *Projekt autonomicznej teorii bytu* [A Design of an Autonomous Realistic Philosophy], 236.

<sup>36</sup> See: Kamiński, “Antropologia filozoficzna a inne działy poznania [Philosophical Anthropology and Other Areas of Cognition],” 162–164.

<sup>37</sup> See: Kamiński, “Theory of Being and Other Philosophical Disciplines,” 35–36.

philosophy of culture are relevant here in justifying various manifestations of human action, but at the same time human metaphysics plays the role of the “internal basis” for these disciplines.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, according to Kamiński:

There is no need to distinguish the philosophy of culture as a science of a separate type, independent from the philosophy of action, for cultural products cannot be explained in the existential aspect ultimately and transcendently otherwise than through recourse to the ontic character of human actions, and then by pointing out the nature of the acting subject.<sup>39</sup>

Also, in terms of the method of explanation, the philosophy of action will be included in the theory of being. The ontic structure of the human being and his transcendental attributes constitute the ontic justification for action and creation.<sup>40</sup> Even if the philosophy of action is understood as axiology, the theory of being will be superior to axiology, because value, if it exists, is some kind of being, a modus, aspect, relative, or transcendental property of being. Similarly, if value is understood only in terms of the subject of assessment, it appears that these assessments contain an element of personal attitude and an incentive. But above all, these assessments contain an informative element about a certain state of affairs, hence such value is explained by indicating the natural ontic dynamics of the subject whose action or creation is the subject of assessment. Therefore, in terms of the aspect and method of explanation, ethics, aesthetics, and the philosophy of culture are the theory of being.

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<sup>38</sup> See: Kamiński, “Antropologia filozoficzna a inne działy poznania [Philosophical Anthropology and Other Areas of Cognition],” 163–164.

<sup>39</sup> Kamiński, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” 81.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 82: “*Operari* not only *sequitur esse*, but as far as the deepest explanation is concerned is somebody’s *esse*.”

## **The Philosophy of Culture as a Discipline in the Field of the Metaphysics of the Human Being**

The metaphysical approach to culture takes place from the line present reality-human (as human, therefore source-rational) action and products of that action. All phenomena referred to as “culture” should be associated with the understanding of the human being and human creativity, perceived as a process of discovering the sense of being a human being through a reasonable actualization of human potentiality, through education. This actualization occurs in connection with the specific structure of the human being and manifests itself in the dominant role of reason. Only the human being creates culture which, coming from him, is also assigned to him. Therefore, culture is understood as the result of the actualization of the human potentiality specific to the human being as a person, which is revealed in the connection between culture and the main manifestation of human nature, i.e., cognition:

For everything that man does as a person—he does essentially through reason. Thomas said: *homo est proprie id quod est per rationem*—man is what reason makes him, therefore all human action is originally derived from reason. This does not mean that this “derivative” from reason should be direct, because man, while living and acting “humanly,” uses his various organs and faculties, not just reason. Nevertheless, all human activities are ultimately guided by reason, because they are—as it is said—conscious activities that man consciously performs.<sup>41</sup>

In response to the question “‘Thanks to what?’ (‘Why?’) is culture the fruit of man’s personal life?” one must reach the sources of culture,

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<sup>41</sup> Krąpiec, *Człowiek w kulturze* [Man in Culture], 149.]

which is part of the procedure of “decontradictifying”<sup>42</sup> the fact of culture and thus the indication of the reasons of existence, the negation of which would necessarily cause the negation of the very fact to be clarified, which in this case would lead to the negation of culture itself.<sup>43</sup> This source of understanding culture is the starting point for more detailed approaches that take place within the framework of specific sciences concerning culture.<sup>44</sup> In its essential (basic) sense, culture is a “rationalization (intellectualization) of nature in the scope possible for man.”<sup>45</sup> The personal moment of conscious and free creation is an important moment for all cultural activities. It is the philosophy of culture that is the detailed anthropological field<sup>46</sup> that explores the way of man’s personal existence in the world.

The human reason, open to existing reality, impregnated by this reality, must first come into agreement with reality so that a human being (who declares himself through the reason) can stand in truth, and subsequently summon rationally from himself free and responsible

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<sup>42</sup> Andrzej Maryniarczyk, “Introduction,” in: Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*, 12.

<sup>43</sup> See: Krąpiec, *Metafizyka. Zarys teorii bytu* [Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being], 237.

<sup>44</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, “Intencjonalny charakter kultury [The Intentional Nature of Culture],” in: Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Odzyskać świat realny* [To Regain the Real World] (Lublin: RW KUL, 1999), 389: “[...] we are witnessing how much the general understanding of culture has been fragmented, precisely because of various aspects that fall within its generally analogous understanding. It seems, however, that the more one tightens it today and distinguishes or discerns the various meanings of the expression “culture,” the more one must bear in mind its primary, analogous, common (one) understanding, because it allows a holistic approach to culture, an analysis of the character of its existence, and thus fundamental assessment of the role of culture in individual areas of life and its role in what is called the meaning of human life in general.” Cf. Krąpiec, *U podstaw rozumienia kultury* [The Basis for Understanding Culture], 6.

<sup>45</sup> Krąpiec, “Intencjonalny charakter kultury [The Intentional Nature of Culture],” 384.

<sup>46</sup> See: Kamiński, “On the Nature of Philosophy,” 199.

action, i.e., so that he can rationally and well—that is, beautifully—produce new states of being. The three fields of human rational activity that Aristotle distinguished<sup>47</sup> took root in the Latin Aristotelian tradition as the following: (a) *ratio recta speculabilium*—the reason directed by what is “rational” (b) *ratio recta agibilium*—the reason directed by what and how a human being acts; (c) *ratio recta factibilium*—the reason directed by what is producible.

A philosophical analysis of cultural artefacts from a genetic perspective requires us to refer to the findings of Aristotle regarding the triple order of intellectual cognition: theoretical, moral and creative. Cognition is the fundamental human activity, and it leaves its mark on all experiences of a person as a person, on human moral behavior, religious acts and acts of creative effort. There can be no human (as human) activities or their artefacts without cognition guiding the acting, and therefore there can be no culture. In his intellectual life, man can get to know reality, absorb it intellectually, and enrich himself by it. If by nature we understand the surrounding world, then we can distinguish the moment in which, as a consequence of the actualization of cognitive powers, we can “intellectually” accept this world, that is, internalize it. Then this world, in a way, is inside us in the Aristotelian meaning, i.e., in the act of cognition the soul becomes everything it recognizes (*anima est quoddammodo omnia*).<sup>48</sup>

The first moment of contact with the world is a moment that belongs to purely theoretical cognition. This stage is of a clearly informative (receptive) character since consciousness only informs us about things going on in the world around us. Truth is the criterion for this kind of cognitive agreement with reality. “At the level of purely theo-

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<sup>47</sup> See: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross (Kitchener: Batoche Books 1999), 1140 a 3.

<sup>48</sup> See: Aristotle, *Tractatus De anima*, Graece et latine, ed., versione latina auxit, comm., illustr. P. Siwek (Roma 1965), 429 b–430 a.



retical cognition—explains Krąpiec—‘getting to know’ means to agree oneself with encountered reality and the principal goal of theoretical cognition is to inform oneself as accurately as possible about what is.”<sup>49</sup> Theoretical cognition in its essence is a selective, aspectual internalization of the content of an analogical being which has different stages. Already in medieval times (St. Thomas Aquinas), it was emphasized that the beginning of the cognitive movement of man was the ability to “read” (*intus-legere, intelligere*) the first principles of reality (*intellectus primorum principiorum*).<sup>50</sup> Then the next stage includes reasoning based on the acquired cognitive contact with reality in various forms characteristic of different sciences.<sup>51</sup> Theoretical cognition is the basis for all further variations of human activity. In addition to informative cognitive order, we can also distinguish the realm of intellectual cognition in which man as a person reacts to the theoretically learned reality and in which man is the author of his acts. If the first stage was of a purely cognitive, informative character, it was about cognitive agreement with reality; the stage in question consists in conscious reactions to cognitively absorbed reality and in consciously and voluntarily releasing from ourselves acts of which we are the authors. In the process of releasing the acts from ourselves, an important role is played by the reason which shows us which acts we should produce from ourselves in order to achieve a given goal or get closer to it. Previously recognized good constitutes the criterion for the order of intellectual-practical acts. In this stage, we learn not in order to agree with reality, but in order to release from ourselves the acts which

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<sup>49</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, “O filozofię kultury [For a Philosophy of Culture],” in: Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Odzyskać świat realny* [To Regain the Real World], (Lublin: RW KUL, 1999), 381.

<sup>50</sup> See: S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, resp.; Idem, *De ver.*, q. 16, a. 1, resp.

<sup>51</sup> See: S. Thomae Aquinatis, *De ver.*, q. 15, a. 1, resp.

enable us to achieve the chosen goal of life. This plane sets the area of morality which in principle falls into appropriateness or inappropriateness of chosen acts-means, which enable us to achieve a chosen goal, the choice of a goal and the means being dependent on recognizing the objective structure of being (ourselves and the surrounding reality).

The third order of cognition and human action is the so-called crafting or creation of new works in extrapsychic material as a result of *poietical* cognition. Creation is facilitated by a special construction skill called art (Greek *techne*, Roman *ars*). Creative order is different both from purely theoretical cognition and the sphere of practical-moral cognition. Its otherness demonstrates itself in the fact that I can behave actively and creatively towards the instilled cognitive images. I can divide them and from their elements construct something that was not there, something completely new. In the order of creative cognition, cognitive sensations and images constitute the material from which I can create a new construction existing solely in my thoughts and embody it in extrapsychic material. A significant moment of the work of intellect is the construction itself (creation) of new ideas. The criteria for this construction may be beauty, harmony, strangeness, humor, etc. It ought to be underlined that the orders of cognition specified above do not occur in a pure state, completely isolated. In life these three realms of cognition intertwine and condition each other. If we separate them, it is only in order to understand what culture is. The starting point is, however, always the theoretical-informative cognition, providing cognitive content which may become a factor controlling our behavior and customs or a material transformed in the process of creative cognition.

These three orders of rational human behavior are permeated by religion, constituting a bond between the human person and the person of the Absolute, which is the focal point of culture. A relation constituting religion is both the beginning and synthesis of personal acts of human being (cognition and wanting-love, changing into action); as

much as he becomes aware of his and the world's existential contingency, he addresses in his personal acts the Transcendent person as the ultimate reason of his entire being. Hence religion, whose object is a personal God, lifts the entire human life to a personal level and not "material."

Personal acts, as a special type of human ability (potentiality), are explained from the point of view of how they are implemented (as creations, not only material) and obtained in the context of the various possibilities of the improvement of the human being as a person. The realization thereof is interpersonal. In metaphysics, science (*theoriá*), morality (*praksis*), art (*poiesis*), and religion (*religio*) are mentioned as branches of culture. These areas of culture determine the specificity of a person, they are areas of personal improvement and are the subject of analyses within the philosophy of culture.<sup>52</sup> The reason for identifying these areas of culture is for the sake of an analysis of the human being's activity as a person in the context of theoretical, practical, and creative cognition. Therefore, the philosophy of culture will determine a human being's personal existence from the point of view of his self-actualizing in the order of science, morality, art, and religion:

The whole of actions and their results, that constitute and at the same time express social life, compose culture. Man, as he realizes the common good and is turned toward the truth, the good, the beautiful, and the holy, is the author of culture. The subject of culture, i.e., man who directs himself in his action by the truth and the good, is the guarantor of culture in terms of culture's being authentically humanist. In connection with its intentional mode of being, culture constitutes a system of signs that are of human origin and are given to man to read. Hence, language is an essential and constitutive element of culture; the fundamen-

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<sup>52</sup> See: Gondek, *Projekt autonomicznej filozofii realistycznej* [A Design of an Autonomous Realistic Philosophy], 247.

tal connection of language with reality ensures the permanence of culture and defends culture from being separated from culture's real ends, i.e., man's good.<sup>53</sup>

Analyzing the possibilities of the occurrence of culture, we should point to appropriate states of being enabling its occurrence. The acceptance of the thesis that the being is internally complex and plural (pluralism) ensures the conditions necessary to explain the occurrence and development of culture. Acceptance of the complexity of being allows us to notice the dynamism of being and the possibility of the actualization of various elements of being. Also, the human being as a person has the possibility to develop internally through "intentional absorption" of the world. Development of the human being and his creativity is the actualization of the potentiality of both the human being and the reality surrounding him. And culture manifests itself wherever actualization directed by reason takes place. Against the background of various potentialities of nature and of the human person appears the possibility of a variety of cultures because we can actualize potentialities in various ways and with the use of various ideas controlling the culture-forming human activity. The actualization of human potentialities usually takes place along three cognitive paths, however; hence in different times and places cultures with a predominance of science, morality, religion or technology appear. The three orders of intellectual cognition include the possibility of various realizations of culture. This results from the potentiality of human nature and unlimited possibilities of constructing the idea-specimen that materializes in cultural artefacts.

One can only talk about the partial autonomy of the realistic philosophy of culture in relation to general metaphysics and philosophical

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<sup>53</sup> See: Wojciech Chudy, "Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec in: The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy," *Studia Gilsoniana* 7:4 (October–December 2018): 561.

anthropology. In this context, the philosophy of culture is not the primary philosophy. Regarding the formal subject (the general, existential aspect) and the method of explaining (decontradictifying), the philosophy of culture is a type of metaphysical explanation of the fact of culture that aims to indicate the reasons for culture's existence that are ultimate and within the ontic order. Therefore, calling philosophy of culture the "metaphysics of culture" is justified. The metaphysics of culture justifies various types of human activity. While the metaphysics of the human being deals with the human being because of his existential status and ontic structure, the metaphysics of culture is associated with the man being's action as a person. At the same time, the ontic structure of the human being and the transcendental properties of the human being allow one to explain human behavior and production. The philosophy of culture will therefore be "the result of a slight expansion of the system of philosophical anthropology."<sup>54</sup> It seems that the material subject of the philosophy of culture is wider in scope when compared to the subject of axiology. In the system of disciplines that particularize the theory of being, the philosophy of culture should be treated as a broader discipline in relation to axiology, which refers to the philosophy of action, and covers issues of ethics and aesthetics and formulates them on the grounds of their "metaphysical attributes that express values."<sup>55</sup> In this sense, it is the metaphysics of values (the metaphysical theory of truth, goodness, and beauty) which aims to achieve the final clarification of the assessments of human action and creations. Value is perceived in the context of the relational quality of being with reference to personal acts. Since being is relational without ontic autonomy, there are no grounds to treat axiology as a separate philosophical discipline. Reflection on values may be the

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<sup>54</sup> Kamiński, "Antropologia filozoficzna a inne działy poznania [Philosophical Anthropology and Other Areas of Cognition]," 163.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

subject of general considerations within the theory of being, or more detailed analyses in the field of the philosophy of culture.

Given the method of explanation and formal subject, one cannot speak about the dependence of the metaphysics of culture on socio-cultural anthropology, the sociology of culture, or culture studies. Philosophical anthropology developed mainly on the basis of abstract reflection, and not—like cultural anthropology—on the basis of empiricism. Their historical relationships were of little importance, and the approaches of both disciplines followed different paths. I am far from treating the philosophy of culture as a reconstruction of the critique of culture, because then the philosophy of culture takes the form of meta-philosophy. The philosophy (metaphysics) of culture explains the phenomenon of culture fundamentally, in its general, existential aspect, on the basis of understanding reality and the human being. Therefore, the explanation of the fact of culture is related to the context of understanding being and nature, subject and person, and presumes reference to key metaphysical categories. The purpose of the philosophy of culture is to indicate the final constitutive (existence) factors that explain and justify human action. The philosophy of culture is a type of subject cognition and aims not so much to identify and describe the various cultural forms occurring throughout history, but above all to explain the fact of culture as a phenomenon related to the way the man being—a being significantly different from the whole world of nature—acts. The philosophy (metaphysics) of culture understood in this way must be based on metaphysics and philosophical anthropology, while demonstrating a relative autonomy that manifests itself in the distinctiveness of the data constituting its material subject (the data of the starting point).<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Kamiński, “The Methodological Peculiarity of the Theory of Being,” 221: “The disciplines of particular metaphysics, although they are independent at their points of departure, are structurally dependent on general metaphysics, as they refer in their ulti-

The philosophy of culture as particular metaphysics is characterized by independence in terms of research (a peculiar starting point) on the one hand, and by a clear “structural” dependence on general metaphysics and philosophical anthropology on the other. This dependence manifests itself, above all, through the lack of a separate explanatory method and formal subject in relation to metaphysics. In the process of explaining and justifying culture as a way of the human being’s personal existence in the world of metaphysics of culture, the philosophy of culture uses the tools belonging to general metaphysics, particularly an analogously understood method of explaining, an analogous conceptual apparatus, and rules developed in the field of general metaphysics. In turn, dependence on philosophical anthropology is revealed in the context of the adoption of theses concerning the special structure of the human being as a person (specifically existing, a unique rational nature) who develops slowly and who has various, almost infinite possibilities of self-actualization, of course, depending on various conditions, which, on the one hand, are given to people and on which, on the other hand, people have a creative influence.<sup>57</sup>

The metaphysics of man, being the internal basis for the philosophy of culture,<sup>58</sup> provides a criterion for assessing cultural facts because the realistic concept of the human being has methodological value. Cultures are connected with people who differ in terms of race, age, and education, but every person, regardless of skin color or type of cultural activity, enjoys the status of a person and is determined by contingency, potentiality, and transcendence. Everyone’s personal life is defined by

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mate explanations also to its theses. [...] Both the human being and culture are apprehended in their full peculiarity, but only at the starting point (existential pluralism). The ultimate aspect of explaining is uniform, while beings remain differentiated according to their inner structure.”

<sup>57</sup> See. Krąpiec, “O filozofię kultury [For a Philosophy of Culture],” 377.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Kamiński, “Antropologia filozoficzna a inne działy poznania [Philosophical Anthropology and Other Areas of Cognition],” 163–164.

the same catalogue of features: cognition, freedom, love, legal subjectivity, sovereignty, and religious dignity. A human personality is shaped in accordance with these features from birth to death. Since the realistic concept of the human being is characterized by a universal attitude towards everyone, as it recognizes the equality of all people in terms of personal life, it can be taken into account as a methodological criterion. This demonstrates the necessary features of a neutral criterion for human action and its results; this is a subject criterion and is negative at the same time. This subject is expressed in the fact that the concept of the human-person is not entangled in any a priori ideology and does not imitate utopia in human design. The negative character thereof is revealed by the fact that this subject cannot be used to define who the human being as the creator of culture is to be, but only indicates what needs to be taken into account and respected so that every person can optimally actualize their potentiality. It is only against this background that any cultural fact can be assessed, which means that any concept of culture or civilization that enables integral personal development deserves to be called “human” (adequate). Any culture or civilization that does not take into account the deposit of personal life impacts its contingency, potentiality, and transcendence (cognition, freedom, love, legal subjectivity, sovereignty, religious dignity), and deserves a negative assessment. Such a culture or civilization is an anti-human concept.<sup>59</sup> Both angelizing humans and the everyday degradation manifested in the negation of all forms of spiritual transcendence are a threat to culture. Balanced participation and the presence of various fields of culture in human life are the basis for the human being’s full development.

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<sup>59</sup> See: Paweł Tarasiewicz, “Filozofie kultur czy filozofia kultury? [Philosophies of Cultures or The Philosophy of Culture?],” in: *Co to jest filozofia kultury? [What Is The Philosophy of Culture?]*, 58; Cf. Jaroszyński, “Filozofia kultury [The Philosophy of Culture],” in: *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii [The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy]*, vol. 3, ed. Andrzej Maryniarczyk (Lublin: PTTA, 2002), 480.



If people have the possibility of intellectual, moral, artistic, and religious development, it may be considered that these people represent a high level of culture. This is not about creating one unified and universal human culture, as it is impossible to assess all cultures in the same way. The measure of the value of a culture is found in the extent to which it enables the integral development of a human being as a person in accordance with the nature and purpose of human life.<sup>60</sup>

When trying to answer the question: “What is philosophy of culture?” it should be stated that the answer thereof depends on the specificity of philosophy itself. This is determined by the distinctness of the philosophy of culture from specific sciences concerning culture. The validity thereof is determined by the difference between philosophy and myth, utopia, and ideology, while this decisiveness is determined by the specificity of the philosophy of culture in relation to other philosophical disciplines. The philosophy (metaphysics) of culture has philosophical research criteria, thanks to which it can be decided whether one can stop at an assessment-free approach to the cultural forms of human life\*.



## The Problem of the Autonomy of the Philosophy of Culture

### SUMMARY

Philosophy of culture as a discipline exploring the way of human existence in the world is based on general metaphysics and philosophical anthropology. Taking into account the formal subject and the method, philosophy of culture

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<sup>60</sup> See: Jaroszyński, “Filozofia kultury [The Philosophy of Culture],” 480.

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is a type of metaphysical explanation that aims to indicate the final ontological reasons for the existence of culture, and therefore it is called the “metaphysics of culture.” The metaphysical perspective of explaining the phenomenon of culture is an original contribution to the contemporary discourse on culture. The understanding of culture requires solving the dispute about the understanding of the world, and above all about the understanding of human being. It is only in such a broad perspective that a fact of culture can be justified by pointing to its causative, exemplary and deliberate cause. In this context, the special attractiveness of the metaphysics of culture is revealed, which, paradoxically, manifests itself in the lack of autonomy in relation to general metaphysics and philosophical anthropology. Thanks to this, explanation of a fact of culture is placed in the field of cognitive realism, pluralism and in the context of understanding human being as a person. In this way, the metaphysics of culture provides a final justification (in the ontic order) of a fact of culture, while culture, as an intellectualization of nature, can form the basis for the particular aspects present in such rich forms in the area of the particular sciences.

**Keywords:** metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of culture, human being, personal acts

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