

Book Reviews

Jakub Gorczyca. *Zarys etyki fundamentalnej: Być dla drugiego*. [Fundamentals of Philosophical Ethics: Being for the Other]. Translated by the author. Cracow: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2014. Originally published in Italian as *Essere per l'altro: Fondamenti di etica filosofica*.

Father Jakub Gorczyca, a Polish Jesuit, is a professor of philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome. The subject of his particular concern is the set of problems encountered in philosophical anthropology, fundamental ethics, and the philosophy of religion. Gorczyca draws philosophical inspiration from the intellectual tradition of Christianity, from phenomenology, and from the philosophy of dialogue.

He has published, *inter alia*, the following works: "Il valore e la risposta dell'uomo: Capisaldi del pensiero filosofico di Dietrich von Hildebrand,"¹ *Chrystus i ethos: Szkic o etyce filozoficznej w kondycji chrześcijańskiej*,² *Edyta Stein*,³ *Essere per l'altro: Fondamenti di etica filosofica*.⁴ Of these, the last has been translated into Polish by the author himself, and it is to this that all of the brief considerations which follow here will be devoted.

The book arose in connection with the lectures in ethics that its author

1. Jakub Gorczyca, "Il valore e la risposta dell'uomo: Capisaldi del pensiero filosofico di Dietrich von Hildebrand" [Value and the Answer of the Human: Central Tenets of the Philosophical Thought of Dietrich von Hildebrand], PhD dissertation (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1984).

2. Jakub Gorczyca, *Chrystus i ethos: Szkic o etyce filozoficznej w kondycji chrześcijańskiej* [Christ and Ethos: Essay on Philosophical Ethics in the Context of the Christian Condition] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo WAM, 1999).

3. Jakub Gorczyca, *Edyta Stein* [Edith Stein] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2003). Reprinted in 2008.

4. Jakub Gorczyca, *Essere per l'altro: Fondamenti di etica filosofica* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2011).

conducted over the course of more than ten years at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Gregorian University. From one standpoint, it is therefore the fruit of precisely that didactic activity. That circumstance has to a certain extent influenced the approach taken to the issues covered, and may in some way also be taken as indicating the principal potential recipients of the book.

The author expresses a desire that this work be of assistance to those who would like to use it to acquaint themselves with the basic topics of philosophical ethics and, through having done so, also to reflect upon those problems that have emerged, not only in their own personal moral experience, but also, equally, from their encounters with diverse views and ethical theories, be they from the distant past or from our own times.

Professor Gorczyca addresses the issues traditionally dealt with in general ethics. However, it should be recognized he approaches these from a quite different point of view, and in a quite different way. Gorczyca affirms the ethical experience of responsibility that arises in the context of one's encounter with another human being as both the point of departure and an enduring touchstone for reflecting on morality. A broadly construed phenomenological description of this experience is aimed at a proper understanding of its data, deepened in turn by a metaphysical interpretation. In other words, by subjecting this experience, which is fundamental to the author's philosophical ethics, to phenomenological description, it is intended to bring into view both its anthropological and its metaphysical significance. In Gorczyca's opinion, adverting to what is given in our ethical experience should also serve to facilitate and bring about a more fruitful dialogue, both with philosophers of the past and with modern-day thinkers, concerning the essential nature of both moral goodness and authentic human living.

This entire body of systematic reflection is preceded by a comprehensive introduction—one that is itself meta-ethical in character. In it, the author presents, and seeks to justify, his own philosophical, anthropological, and ethical positions, which constitute the basis for his views. In this context, a great deal of attention is paid by him to the situation of philosophical ethics as practiced by some authors in the context of what he himself chooses to call "the Christian condition." Gorczyca's position in the field of ethics can be summed up in terms of the following thesis asserted by him: a phenomenological description of what is given in ethical experience, combined with the anthro-po-ontological explication and metaphysical interpretation of the latter, can itself engender rationally justified ethical guidelines (46).

In subsequent chapters, the author develops the following issues: the phenomenology of ethical experience, philosophical conceptions of the moral good, the constitution of moral values and norms, the truth of conscience, the goodness of action, and the beauty of the virtues.

Gorczyca conducts his arguments—e.g., about the personalistic foundations of moral values and norms—in critical dialogue with thinkers past and present, presenting us with many of their writings as he does so. The fact that the inspiring figure of the Good Samaritan shows up in these ethical investigations need not be taken to indicate that the book is addressed exclusively to Christians. On the contrary, as a piece of philosophical writing it aims to open up readers to textual study, reflection and dialogue, all at a putatively universal level.

At the same time, the intentions of the author in this treatise could also be construed and characterized in a slightly different manner: we might say that he seeks, by means of philosophical argumentation, both to investigate and to justify the rationality of love for one's neighbour. And it must be said that he largely succeeds in this aim.

The book certainly contains many new and original ideas and approaches. The conception of person as relational substance plays an essential role in the approach taken here to the fundamental problems of ethics. Starting from the analysis of what is given in ethical experience, the author shows that "relationality," in the sense of a reference to the person of another human being and to Infinite Absolute Goodness, belongs essentially to the substantial structure of the human person. Metaphysical reflection then allows him to define that person as a corporeo-spiritual subject, existing as an autonomous gift (122). Such a conception of the human person undoubtedly sheds a great deal of light on the phenomenon of moral goodness, and on the ontological constitution of ethical values and virtues. If the moral good requires that the person *qua* gift be actualized by means of freely undertaken decisions and deeds, then one may recognize in ethical values various forms of that good—or, to put it another way, diverse instances of how love figures in our lives in ethically significant ways (*agape*). Depending on the various relationships in which a person *qua* gift stands, these diversified forms of love (goodness) may properly have assigned to them the names of certain values—ideals pertaining to the conduct truly worthy of human beings. The virtues which correspond to the values, and define the moral character of the human person, can in turn be understood as constituted by good deeds, enduring ways of existing as a gift.

Professor Jakub Gorczyca's *Zarys etyki fundamentalnej: Być dla drugie-*

go, published both in Italian and Polish, represents in the field of ethical reflection on man a very creative contribution, not just in Polish philosophy, but also in a wider, at least Europe-wide context. In short, the book is a successful exposition of one of the variants of contemporary Christian personalism in ethics.

ROMAN DAROWSKI

Jason Stanley. *Know How*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Published as paperback in 2013.

Jason Stanley's *Know How* discusses the problem of the difference between "knowledge that" and "knowledge how," which was developed with particular care by Gilbert Ryle in the second chapter of *The Concept of Mind*. According to Ryle, there are two kinds of knowledge, which cannot be reduced one to another, because "we never speak of a person believing or opining how, and though it is proper to ask for the grounds or reasons for someone's acceptance of a proposition, this question cannot be asked of someone's skill at cards or prudence in investments."¹ Stanley's thesis, put forward already in the "Introduction" to his book, is the following: "knowing how to do something is the same as knowing a fact. It follows that learning how to do something is learning the fact" (vii).

The book contains eight chapters, and from the outset argues against Ryle's thesis that there is a difference between "knowing that" and "knowing how." In the first chapter, Stanley attempts to show that Ryle's own argumentation with respect to the aforementioned distinction fails to hold up. It presupposes a verificationist conception of meaning, according to which a term is assumed to have a meaning just when it is possible to verify whether there is something denoted by that term. In Stanley's opinion, this theory is broadly wrong, but even if we abstract from this fact, we would have to acknowledge that Ryle's line of argumentation is still not convincing.

Ryle argues that denying the special character of "knowing why" results

1. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinsons University Library, 1949), 28.