

The Foundations of Mieczysław Albert Krapiec's Metaphysical Personalism

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses the cardinal points of Krapiec's metaphysical personalism, in the context of a synthetic reading of his most important works in philosophical anthropology. A new vision of Krapiec's thought is proposed, via a discussion of the metaphysical foundations of his anthropology and by emphasizing his notion of the three stages or phases in which personhood reveals itself. Each of these emerges as an integral element when outlining a conception of persons and when demonstrating the overriding importance of the issue of personhood for philosophical anthropology. Firstly, personhood manifests itself in the inner experience of one's own subjectivity as something universally shared by human beings. Next, this fact is itself shown to be grounded metaphysically in the soul as an immaterial principle organizing the body. As a result, persons emerge as substantial rational beings. An examination of the potentialities of such beings then reveals the transcendence of persons in respect of nature and society, together with their self-fulfillment in intellectual and moral acts, in interpersonal relations, and—ultimately—in their relatedness to the Person of the Absolute. Krapiec's personalism relies upon classical Thomistic metaphysics, and presents a person's life in universal terms as a process culminating in the actively experienced moment of death.

KEYWORDS inner experience; Krapiec, Mieczysław Albert; metaphysics of human being; person; philosophical anthropology; Thomism; transcendence

This paper was translated from Polish by Hugh McDonald, the translator of most of the works of Mieczysław A. Krapiec so far published in English. His are also translations of several passages of works of Krapiec, quoted in this paper, but never published in English, as well as some translator's notes in the text of the paper. Hugh McDonald passed away on January 31, 2015. Final edits to the paper were reviewed by the Language Editor.

During the times of the communist government, two philosophical conceptions of the person were developed in the “Lublin Philosophical School,” which was active at the Catholic University of Lublin. One conception of the person was Karol Wojtyła’s theory based on an ethical analysis of the act. The other was Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec’s conception presented in the framework of a metaphysical vision of man.¹ While the first conception became somewhat better known, especially when the author won international recognition as the Bishop of Rome, Krąpiec’s conception did not have such good fortune, but certainly would have deserved to be more widely known. This work, while only to a small degree, is trying to do justice to an important but insufficiently known idea of the eminent philosopher from Lublin who over the course of his life did powerful intellectual work, and if only for this reason deserves greater interest.

Krąpiec was outstanding for his broad humanistic look at man and culture. He defended the wisdom-oriented attitude and showed concern for authentic scientific research on the nature of the world and man, and he showed concern for free and responsible university formation in his ef-

1. Professor Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec OP (1921–2008) was an outstanding figure in Polish philosophy and the principal initiator of the Lublin School of Philosophy. He joined the Dominican Order in 1939, and worked between 1951 and 1996 as a lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin. He also served as Rector of that university during the most difficult period of the communist regime in Poland, contributing a great deal to the revival and development of that institute, which remained the only university in the communist-controlled part of Europe to not be administered by the State during those times. He succeeded in making the Catholic University of Lublin into a centre for humanistically oriented free-thinking in Poland. His literary output consists of over 30 books and around 500 studies and articles. See Agata Szymaniak, “Publications by and about prof. Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec,” at the website of Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, accessed March 2015, <http://www.ptta.pl/krapiec/bibliografiaen.pdf>. Of these, his books published in English are as follows: *I-Man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, transl. Marie Lescoe, Andrew Woznicki, Theresa Sandok et al. (New Britain, CT: Mariel Publications, 1983), hereafter cited in text as *IM*; *Metaphysics: An Outline of the Theory of Being*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Lang, 1991), hereafter cited in text as *Met*; *Person and Natural Law*, trans. Maria Szymańska (New York: Lang, 1993); *On Man: The Reverend Professor Albert Mieczysław Krąpiec OP in Conversation with Romuald Jacob Weksler-Waszkineł*, trans. Weronika Hansen (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2012). There is also a website (available in English), containing extensive and detailed information about the life and scholarly activity of M. A. Krąpiec: “Strona Ojca Profesora Mieczysława Alberta Krąpca” [The website of Father Professor Mieczysław A. Krąpiec], accessed March 2015, <http://www.ptta.pl/krapiec/index.php?id=glowna&lang=en>. On the topic of the Lublin School of Philosophy, see Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec and Andrzej Maryniarczyk, “The Lublin Philosophical School,” trans. Hugh McDonald (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2010), pages 8–75 at <http://www.ptta.pl/lsf/history.pdf>.

fort to form an intellectual elite as the heaven for ages and generations to come. In the field of philosophy, he firmly supported realism, and he constructed a metaphysics of the world and of man on the basis of the tradition of classical philosophy. According to Krąpiec, the person is not an intellectual construct but is a fact that is first given in the direct experience of subjectivity. Krąpiec's personalism forms an organic whole with the conception of being and the whole of metaphysical knowledge about the world.

In my desire to show the foundations of Krąpiec's metaphysical personalism, I will present only the most essential lines of thought and will rely on a few important positions from his legacy of work. By necessity, many particular problems will be left aside, while the most important problems will have references to other publications. In an effort to preserve the originality of Krąpiec's thought, I am quoting a series of statements directly from his monographs and works on particular topics, giving them only a fitting interpretation and presenting the thoughts in the order this work calls for. This article is intended as a proposal for a new look at Krąpiec's thought in this area, since the article presents not only a discussion of the metaphysical foundations of his anthropology, but above all it presents how in Krąpiec's thought three phases of the revelation of the person emerge distinctly; those phases are presented in separate parts of this work. Those phases, although with the metaphysical base that precedes them, form an integral whole and show the conception of the person and the most essential anthropological question.

THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE THEORY OF MAN

We find the fundamental classical version of metaphysical personalism in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. He emphasized that the soul is not only the first act of a body that has life in potency, and so the soul is not only the act of man as a living being, an *animal* (as Aristotle held), but it is the individual act of man's existence as man. The independently existing soul, as it is the form of the body, is the ultimate source and reason for the unity of the human being.² However, the person is the existence that is

2. Aquinas explained this as follows: "The soul communicates that existence in which it subsists to the corporeal matter, out of which and the intellectual soul there results unity of existence; so that the existence of the whole composite is also the existence of the soul. This is not the case with other non-subsistent forms. For this reason the human soul retains its own existence after the dissolution of the body; whereas it is not so with other forms." In original: "Anima illud esse in quo ipsa subsistit, communicat materiae corporali, ex qua

proper and proportional to the particular nature (in this case, human nature): "Hence being belongs to the subsisting person, inasmuch as it has a relation to such a nature."³ The person is therefore a being that transcends nature and adapts the matter of the human body to rational action. Another typical feature of Thomas' anthropology is that it shows man not in a static dimension, but rather in the aspect of what man does and should do to realize himself as a man. Hence we see the essential role of the ethics of the virtues, which shows man in his moral action. The perfecting of human moral action, including cognitive action, most fully reveals the nature of the personal being since it shows the proper personal good as the end and the motive of that action.

Krąpiec looks to Aquinas' work and expands Aquinas' thought with many new lines of thought while remaining in harmony with Aquinas' original metaphysical conclusions. Thereby Krąpiec is regarded as a continuator of that line of philosophical reflection, i.e., the line of the "realistic" or "classical" philosophy of being.⁴ In this type of philosophical thought, philosophy is typically understood as a way to explain reality—

est anima intellectiva fit unum, ita quod illud esse, quod est totius compositi, est etiam ipsius animae. Quod non accidit in aliis formis, quae non sunt subsistentes. Et propter hoc anima humana remanet in suo esse, destructo corpore, non autem aliae formae." *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 76, a. 1, ad 5. All texts of Aquinas quoted in this paper are taken from the online edition of his works: *Corpus Thomisticum*, ed. Enrique Alarcón (Pamplona: University of Navarra, 2000), <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/>. The translation used for this and subsequent quotations from the *Summa theologiae* is the online version, *The "Summa theologia" of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns, Oates & Washburne, 1920–42), accessed March 2015, <http://newadvent.org/summa/>.

3. "[I]psum esse est personae subsistentis, secundum quod habet habitudinem ad talem naturam." Ibid. III, q. 17, a. 2, ad 4. This is expressed in similar manner somewhat later, in q. 19, a. 1, ad 4: "Being and operation belong to the person by reason of the nature; yet in a different manner. For being belongs to the very constitution of the person, and in this respect it as the nature of a term; consequently, unity of person requires unity of the complete and personal being." In original: "Nam esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae, et sic quantum ad hoc se habet in ratione termini. Et ideo unitas personae requirit unitatem ipsius esse completi et personalis." Cf. also Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, II, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1: "While it belongs to the meaning of the human species that it is composed of soul and body, the determination of the body and soul is outside the meaning of the species, and insofar as a man is a man, it is the case that he is from this soul and this body; but it belongs *per se* to this man that if he were defined, his definition would include that he is from this soul and from this body" (translation of Hugh McDondald). In original: "Cum enim de ratione speciei humanae sit quod componatur ex anima et corpore, determinatio corporis et animae est praeter rationem speciei, et accidit homini in quantum est homo, quod sit ex hac anima et ex hoc corpore; sed convenit *per se* huic homini, de cuius ratione esset, si definiretur, quod esset ex hac anima et ex hoc corpore."

since really existing reality is knowable, philosophers on the basis of the previous achievements of their predecessors develop the philosophical conception of reality on the basis of the knowledge of being. Aristotle for the first time presented such a line of philosophical thought, as a way of knowing the world of persons and things developed by one generation after another of thinkers. Thomas Aquinas later explicitly referred to that line, and finally, so did Krąpiec and others. Philosophy here is not understood as one of many intellectual descriptions of the world, because philosophy is not based on speculative analyses, but starting from the fact of the existence of the world, persons, and things, it builds knowledge based on reality given in common sense.⁵

Krąpiec also states that only in the framework of the philosophy of being is it possible to develop a synthesis of various philosophical conceptions that often contradict each other, although more than once they significantly enrich the human cognitive spectrum.⁶ The reason for this is that philosophical realism, as it starts from the fact of being and the fact of knowledge, is in a position to reconcile any sort of cognitive interpretation with being that is given in common sense.⁷ Krąpiec really

4. The terms "realistic philosophy" and "classical philosophy of being" in the Lublin Philosophical School are regarded as synonymous, and the conception of philosophy that they denote is based on classical metaphysics, i.e., Aristotelian metaphysics as it was understood and developed by Thomas Aquinas (the term "metaphysics" is also used in this sense in this article).

5. Krąpiec strongly emphasizes the original priority of the realistic starting point, and the cognitive importance of common sense: "A critical analysis of knowledge completely justifies and grounds the realism of common sense. This is because man in all his cognitive acts reaches the crux of reality, being." Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, *Realizm ludzkiego poznania* [The Realism of Human Cognition] (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1995), 83–84. Hereafter cited in text as *RLP*. This and subsequent translations from this work by Hugh McDonald for the purpose of this paper.

6. Cf. Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, *Odzyskać świat realny* [To Regain the Real World] (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1993), 590. Hereafter cited in text as *OSR*.

7. A critical analysis of knowledge leads Krąpiec to the following conclusion: "Thought therefore is not a factor that divides man and being, but thought is what joins and discovers the meaning of reality, what put reality at our service, and at the same time brings us into agreement with reality" (*RLP*, 84). Somewhat further on he remarks: "In the philosophy (theory) of knowledge, we are forced to recognize the real state and the real process of our knowledge. This is because we cannot remain at unreal Cartesian-phenomenological positions or cultivate a 'critique of knowledge' from that *a priori* position, since that is labor without an object. . . . The analysis of the 'starting point' of the cultivation of philosophy that Descartes established is, from the point of view of the real knowledge of man, basically 'empty' because it refers to specific systems of the philos-

tries to construct such a synthesis since he resorts to the reflections of many philosophers who tackled the right problems and introduced lines of thought, in his opinion essential lines of thought, in how those problems were understood. Such a procedure is dictated not only by a desire for intellectual discussion, which is an indispensable condition for any sound theory, but it results from the method called “historical,” which is accepted in classical philosophy; this method aims to make cognitive progress in a systematic exposition, in various ways, including by the treatment of the questions and answers presented in the history of philosophical thought, on the model of Aristotelian aporias and euporias.⁸

To justify the position of epistemological realism, it is necessary to appeal to the experience of the cognitive contact with being. In that experience, the fundamental role of knowledge of existence is indicated; the knowledge of existence is supposed to provide contact with real being by releasing human knowledge from the inclination to essentialization (i.e., the absolutization of the essential aspects of being), and to protect human knowledge from falling into apriorism, which results in many cognitive errors. Since the experience of existence, unlike the knowledge of essence, is without content, and thus cannot be conceptualized, it is not subject to the aspective character of cognitive apprehensions, and thereby it provides the foundation for philosophy understood as the explanation of really existing reality.⁹ Such a conception of philosophy is in agreement with Aristotle’s original intuitions, which Thomas completed with the conception of existence (*esse*), which Aristotle lacked. “Existential Thomism” (especially Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson), which emphasizes the role of *esse* in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, has been the contemporary continuation of such a conception. This particular current of neo-Thomism became an es-

ophy of knowledge, but not to real human knowledge, which is real knowledge of the world of really existing being” (*RLP*, 76–77).

8. Cf. Andrzej Maryniarczyk and Arkadiusz Gudaniec, “Mieczysław A. Krąpca koncepcja antropologii filozoficznej” [Mieczysław A. Krąpiec’s Conception of Philosophical Anthropology], in *Antropologia* [Anthropology], vol. 1 of *Dydaktyka filozofii* [The Didactics of Philosophy], ed. Stanisław Janeczka (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2010), 77. Hereafter cited in text as *MAK*.

9. “If philosophy is supposed to explain reality in the light of the ultimate and most profound rational justifications, then it must begin its inquiries from that reality. However, the real object of those explanations must first be shown (being—as really existing)” (*RLP*, 58–59). Further on he writes: “If philosophy is supposed to defend the first principles by defending their necessity, its chief obligation is to justify and provide the grounds for cognitive realism, which indisputably underlies both pre-scientific and scientific thinking (that of the particular sciences)” (*RLP*, 65). Cf. also *RLP*, 72–77.

sential inspiration for Krapiec. The originality of Krapiec's thought is that in the Lublin Philosophical School he developed more extensively a maximalist vision of reality, i.e., a vision that really considered all the fundamental philosophical disciplines, in dialogue with contemporary thought and with strong reliance on methodological tools.¹⁰ The methodological tools allow the development of a rather essential feature of philosophical reflections, namely the autonomy of philosophical inquiries in relation to the particular sciences and philosophy; that autonomy has often been emphasized by the philosophers of the Lublin school of philosophy.¹¹

Since everything is known as existing (*esse*, being), metaphysics, which explains the original and primary states of being becomes by necessity the leading discipline, the fundamental discipline for all philosophical knowledge. Moreover, all the other philosophical disciplines, including anthropology, acquire the status of particular sciences as opposed to general metaphysics, which concerns being as being. The systemic reason for this relation of dependence is the metaphysical method of explanation that is applied in each of those disciplines, since the object of each of them is a being of a certain kind. However, it is in the specific character of disciplines such as anthropology that they have a particular and irreducible starting point that is a certain fundamental fact apprehended in the elementary experience of the world and oneself. In this way, general metaphysics along with rest of philosophical knowledge forms a homogeneous system

10. Cf. Mieczysław Albert Krapiec and Stanisław Kamiński, *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki* [On the Theory and Methodology of Metaphysics] (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1994). In the part of the book written by S. Kamiński (beginning on p. 81), logical-methodological questions are presented concerning classical metaphysics. In the other part, Krapiec wrote the following: "Being aware of the great number of philosophical trends and the variety of ways it [philosophy] is cultivated, we put special emphasis on methodological matters in philosophy. This is because, as it turns out, philosophy, although it is one of the oldest fields of knowledge, has does not have its own sufficiently developed methodology." Mieczysław Albert Krapiec, *Człowiek—Kultura—Uniwersytet* [Man—Culture—University] (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1998), 249. This and subsequent translations from this work for the purposes of this paper by H. M.

11. This is a rather essential aspect of the philosophy of Krapiec and the Lublin Philosophical School. There is more on this topic in other works, including: Stanisław Kamiński, "Z metafizologii człowieka" [On Metaphilosophy of Man], in *Jak filozofować? Studia z metodologii filozofii klasycznej* [How to Philosophize? Studies in Methodology of Classical Philosophy], ed. Tadeusz Szubka (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1989), 249–62 (and in *IM*, 1–27); Stanisław Kamiński, "Naukowa, filozoficzna i teologiczna wizja człowieka" [The Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Vision of Man], in *Jak filozofować?*, 279–91.

of wisdom-oriented knowledge (i.e., knowledge that strives to show the ultimate reasons of being in a particular order), a system that provides each philosophically known and explained fact with ultimate, objective, and realistic foundations in being.¹²

PHASE 1: THE INTERNAL EXPERIENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE “I”—THE SUBJECT, AS THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING A PERSON

According to Krapiec, the experience of some existing fact always stands at the beginning of our knowledge of the world. The “existential judgement,” that is, a judgement concerning the existence of a thing, which is foundation for apprehending the thing’s content in essential knowledge, is the fundamental cognitive act. Such a judgement is a condition for all human knowledge, and the object of the judgement is the very existence of the thing; that existence in turn is the first act of the being as such. The existential judgement is man’s first cognitive act, since whatever is known, is known as existing.¹³ The knowledge of the existence of my own

12. Stanisław Kamiński explains these relations of dependence: “This unity of knowledge in the theory of being is achieved by the acceptance of objective philosophical thought, and an ultimate explanation based exclusively on the internal structure of being. . . . Meanwhile, metaphysical knowledge in the theory of being is broken apart into particular disciplines only with respect to the separate starting point (the separate type of object of the data of experience), and not with respect to the manner of ultimate explanation (or the formal object of the most theoretical theses). . . . The disciplines of particular metaphysics, although they are autonomous in the starting point, depend structurally on general metaphysics, because in ultimate explanation they also appeal to its theses. . . . Such a position allows the unity of explanation in the entire theory of being to be preserved without falling into philosophical naturalism.” Stanisław Kamiński, “Osobliwość metodologiczna teorii bytu” [The Methodological Peculiarity of the Theory of Being], in *Jak filozofować?*, 76–77.

13. The theory of the existential judgment, which has been proposed in the framework of existential Thomism, was systematically developed for the first time in Krapiec’s monographs. It is worth adding that this theory is closely connected with the theory of metaphysical separation, and only upon the background of metaphysical separation can it be fully understood. Cf. *RLP*, 563–68; *Met*, 86–100; Mieczysław Albert Krapiec and Andrzej Maryniarczyk, “Metafizyka” [Metaphysics], in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii* [Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy], ed. Andrzej Maryniarczyk, 10 vols (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2000–2009), vol. 7, 102–116, esp. 107–12. Among other works, the publications of Wojciech Chudy deserve attention: “Zagadnienie tomistycznej teorii sądów egzystencjalnych. Artykuł polemiczno-wyjaśniający” [The Question of the Thomistic Theory of Existential Judgments: A Polemical-Explanatory Article], *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 17, no. 1 (1981): 185–200; “Poznanie istnienia (bytu) w ujęciu tomistów egzystencjalnych” [The Knowledge of the Existence (of Being) in the Conception of Existential Thomists], pts 1 and 2, *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 17, no. 2 (1981): 19–40; 18, no. 2

"I" as the subject who first asserts the existence of things around him is a cognitive act similar to that one, asserted, as it were, secondarily.

Man's knowledge of the existence of things opens before him his real presence in the real world, a conscious presence that is manifested in the distinction of subject and object, and which ultimately leads to self-consciousness, to the manifestation of his own subjectivity, upon the canvas of objective, ontical knowledge of the real world. This is because if really existing being (the world of existing concrete things) is the object of our spontaneous knowledge, then man's becoming aware of his own subjectivity can occur only through the reflective objectification of acts of spontaneous knowledge concerning the existing real world. . . . This is because we possess, independently of knowledge of the world, a prior knowledge of ourselves, as an *a priori* knowledge of man. This is because we do not possess any 'pure consciousness,' but we always possess consciousness that is knowledge of something. (*RLP*, 76)

The process of becoming aware of oneself occurs due to acts of reflection that are concomitant to the spontaneous knowledge of the existence of being, and those acts record "the emanation of the knowledge of ourselves as the source in relation to spontaneous knowledge" (*RLP*, 76). Thus the "internal experience of being man" appears, which Krąpiec called the matrix situation of being man.¹⁴ This experience, which is regarded as a direct and primary fact, becomes the starting point for reflection on man. The question seems to be rather important: the beginning of anthropological reflection is not some sort of basic concept of man, but the "bare" fact of existence that man affirms. This concept stands in agreement with the principles of Krąpiec's metaphysical system and with the basic rule of realism: real facts, first apprehended as existing, are the source of any thought whatsoever (*RLP*, 72–77).

(1982): 41–70; the chapter I 2.2.2. with the title "Nierefleksyjna pierwotność poznawcza sądu egzystencjalnego (Krąpiec)" [The Non-reflective Cognitive Priority of the Existential Judgment (Krąpiec)] in *Rozwój filozofowania a „pułapka refleksji”: filozofia refleksji i próby jej przezwyciężenia* [The Development of Philosophical Thought and the "Trap of Reflection": The Philosophy of Reflection and the Attempts to Overcome It] (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1995), 70–77.

14. "In philosophical anthropology, this 'matrix situation' of being man, which we record in each of our human actions, is an affirmation of the incessantly experienced 'I' that provides a subject in an actual way for 'my' acts." Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, "Ciało ludzkie" [Human Body], in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, 2:177 (this translation, by Hugh McDonald, is from the English version, which is in preparation).

That fact of his own existence, which man directly experiences, is basically empty of content (just as the existence as such of things apprehended in the existential judgement). This fact is given in actual reflection (*in actu exercito*), and therefore it displays properly the same phenomenon of the subjectification of actions, since the “I” is experienced in the acts of which it is the subject. The experience as such of subjectivity does not yet say anything about the subject except that it is the subject, and therefore it cannot be separated from concrete action. Knowledge of the existence of the “I” turns out to be rather essential, just as does the apprehension of a thing’s existence, which is a condition for the content-oriented “reading-out” of the thing. In order to “read out” analogically the essence of the directly experienced “I,” it is necessary to know the acts of which it is the subject. Therefore in the case of man, in another way as in the case of knowledge of external existing things, the primary experience of existence is given from the inside, showing right away the fundamental structure of the “I” that is apprehended in this way. The “I” is always capable of being grasped along with “my” acts, in which it is expressed.¹⁵ The internal dynamics of the experience of one’s own existence, as the result of the cognitive analysis of acts, leads to knowledge of the essence of the “I.”¹⁶

In this conception, the strongly emphasized assertion that man is not known in the way of a thing, the existence of which he affirms in primary existential judgements, seems to be essential. Rather, man is known right away from the inside as the “I”—according to a different dynamic, and with the application of another method.¹⁷ In further analyses, this knowledge

15. Here it is essential that this splitting of man’s experiences into the subject, “I,” and what is “mine,” although experienced in an evident and indubitable way, acquires its system rank because of the application of a “strictly philosophical method of the decontradiction of data in direct or indirect knowledge of facts or contents” (cf. *OSR*, 607). This method is precisely described in: Krapiec and Kamiński, *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki*, 205–59.

16. Here, the requirement of an analogical understanding of the “I” is rather essential: “the ‘I’ taken analogically, that is, insofar as the ‘I’ in each individual being is the performer and subject of acts, should not be confused with the ‘I’ given only to me as the center of only my consciousness, and so, with the individual ‘I,’ because the ‘I’ thus understood would lead thought to positions of idealism” (*OSR*, 590, note 21).

17. The distinction that Krapiec introduced, on the basis of the analysis of various types of conscious human experiences, between two types of “I” is noteworthy: (1) the “I” of which we are speaking here is the ontological “I,” the “I” of the human being, which reveals the being of the person (we will take up this line of thought somewhat later), which encompasses the whole of human experiences; (2) the “phenomenological I” as a dispositional center constituted in the course of life, and which serves the purpose of effective mastery over things and the environment: it grows and decreases over the course of man’s

become more explicit and more profound, but the original and content-free apprehension of the "I" is also confirmed, just as in the first act of the existential judgement, the foundation of being is revealed—existence—and further transcendental apprehensions of existence deepen and confirm this original knowledge.¹⁸

In connection with the fundamental role of experience in the original apprehension of the "I," it will be necessary to turn our attention to several lines of thought connected with this that Krapiec takes up in his analyses. Experience here is understood in accordance with the meaning that Aristotle gave to it. Aristotle in this way put value on spontaneous cognitive apprehension (*empiria*). Experience concerns something individual and authenticated in sensory knowledge, since it is precisely sensory knowledge that provides the basic content for understanding things. Aristotle developed and justified the theory of experience as the foundation of intellectual knowledge. Thomas Aquinas made a special expansion of the conception of experience as thus understood. Aquinas called man's intellectual knowledge of his own existence and his own identity an experience, saying that it is "each one is conscious that it is himself who understands. . . . [I]t is one and the same man who is conscious both that he understands, and that he senses."¹⁹ The knowledge of oneself as existing is the original experience of the knowing subject.²⁰

Aquinas' observation, which many have treated as trivial, becomes for Krapiec a very important base element in the construction of anthropology as a philosophical system. As Krapiec says, experience concerns *esse* and *seipsum esse*: internal experience is the experience of the existence of "myself" as existing, and at the same time as the subject of the actions that I regard as "mine." This experience simultaneously shows the "I" as know-

life along with the growth or weakening of the human powers that allow the control of the world of external objects (cf. *OSR*, 606–7).

18. This relation of dependence is explained by the metaphysical procedure called the clarification of the concept of being, and later also by the theory of transcendentals, which Krapiec developed in detail (cf. *Met*, 101–215).

19. "[E]xperitur enim unusquisque seipsum esse qui intelligit. . . . [I]pse idem homo est qui percipit se et intelligere et sentire." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 76, a. 1.

20. Cf. Mieczysław Albert Krapiec, "Doświadczenie" [Experience], in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 2, 674–75. "Something common to the traditional concept of experience and intellectual (spiritual, internal) experience is the assertion of the existence of the subject; in this case this subject is one being—as the one who experiences and as experienced." Mieczysław Albert Krapiec, "Człowiek" [Man], in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, 2:371. Hereafter cited in text as Cz. Translation of Hugh McDonald from the version being prepared for publication in English.

ing both intellectually and sensibly: *intelligere* and *sentire* are actions that show the subject as identical in both types of action. In internal experience, man therefore records his own subjectivity as identical in his intellectual and sensory action, and in his spiritual and material action (cf. Cz, 372).

To understand the essence of this internal and direct experience, we should look to Aquinas' classical distinction, upon which Krapiec bases his reflections. In one of the questions from *De veritate* (q. 10, a. 8), we read of intellectual reflection concerning the knowing subject himself. Such knowledge (knowledge of oneself) may be habitual or actual. The first kind is knowledge of one's self as the subject of mental acts. It requires an analysis of judgments and acts of reasoning: by knowing the nature of our own mental acts, we arrive at a "dark" understanding of our own self, i.e., an understanding in which the self remains constantly "in the shadows" (although this allows for the reflective apprehension of the proportionality of the nature of the acts to the nature of their source). Actual knowledge of oneself, however, is a spontaneous and elementary act direct to oneself as the subject of conscious acts that are being performed in the actual present. In this sense, the term "experience" is applied to it, since it is actually experienced knowledge of the "I" as existing and as performing specific acts.²¹ Here we are dealing with direct knowledge of the "I" apprehended in "my acts," which emerge from the "I" as a subject.²²

The direct experience of the subject, in which I distinguish between what is "mine" and what constitutes me, that is, the "I", is originally the human situation of apprehending oneself in the act of self-knowledge, and at the same time it is the starting point in the analysis of man's nature in realistic philosophy. It should be emphasized that the experience of subjective of which we are speaking here is not the same the feeling of a mental center from which acts and actions emerge:

If the consciousness of being the center of all one's mental experiences can be still regarded as a psychological category, and so as a sign of normally and healthily active psyche, . . . then "to be a subject" is already in the strictest sense a metaphysical category. This is because to be a subject means the

21. Cf. Cz, 372; RLP, 534, 536–38.

22. The categories of "I" and "mine" are analyzed in detail by Krapiec. cf. *IM*, 89–99. This original and primary experience of the "I" cannot be denied in any way since it is a preliminary condition for (normal) mental and conscious life, and it is the "fundamental human situation." Also, according to Krapiec, there is no difference between consciousness of oneself and the affirmation of the actual existence of the "I" as the subject. Cf. *IM*, 126–27.

same as to be a being, because there is no being that does not exist subjectively. (*OSR*, 607)

The experience of one's own subjectivity is therefore the fundamental experience of one's being. Moreover, it is an indubitable experience, since it is given immediately and does not require any proof. This experience as such (also called awareness) constitutes the foundation and starting point of all proof (cf. *OSR*, 607–8).

On the basis of these conclusions, Krapiec goes on to say:

The immediate data of consciousness in this place are the legitimate point of departure, since they refer precisely to that which in consciousness and through consciousness manifests itself and attains human expression. (*IM*, 336, note to p. 89)

Here, the qualifying statement that he makes on the margins of his analyses is essential:

This does not mean, however, that a strictly phenomenological description and point of departure would be accepted here, or that consciousness would be something primordial in the philosophical analysis. . . . It means merely that the self-cognition that each of us has of himself is, in the sphere of philosophical anthropology, something that is primordially given. (*ibid.*)

Internal experience, treated as the basic situation of being a mean, thereby becomes that criterion for the appraisal of all the theses gained as the result of the interpretation of human nature from the side of philosophy or the particular sciences:

[I]nterpretations of whatever sort are secondary to immediate data, because they are something that is given indirectly, something acquired precisely by some sort of process of thinking; meanwhile, immediate data are primordial. (*OSR*, 592)

In this type of experience, the "I" is thus given as an existing subject (in a metaphysical and entitative sense), and at the same time as the source from which what is "mine" comes forth, i.e., any acts of the subject that are recorded by the "I" in the same cognitive act in which I affirm their exis-

tence.²³ The same “I” is experienced as present in “my” acts and, at the same time, as transcending all “my” acts (i.e., the “I” is not exhausted in “my” particular acts). The presence or immanence of the “I” in all “my” actions is evident since it is constantly experienced. The primordial experience of transcendence, which is present in the germinal knowledge of the relation of the “I” to what is “mine,” on the other hand, consists in the feeling of a certain type of boundlessness and inexhaustibility—the “I” is experienced as not identical to the sum of all “my” acts (actual and possible acts), it is experienced as surpassing those acts, since at every moment of my life the “I” can pass to realizing itself in other acts, and can bring forth from itself other new acts. Thus, apart from the immanence of the indubitably experienced “I” in all my acts, the transcendence of the “I” in relation to “my” particular acts also exists, even acts that are extraordinarily intense, and in relation to all my acts taken together (cf. *Cz*, 372).

The conclusions of the above analyses lead to the point where the human “I” given in the primordial experience of consciousness is shown as the subject that is constantly present in its own acts, and at the same time transcending those acts. The “I” also turns out to be the autonomous subject (“my” actions) that immediately experiences its own existence. The emphasis on the metaphysical rank of the experience of subjectivity as the experience of one’s own being is also typical. Thus we have grounds to say, already in the first phase of thought on man, that the immediately and infallibly experienced “I” reveals the person. Krąpiec explains this as follows:

The conception of the person therefore is not deduced from some philosophical system (as takes place in philosophical or theological types of explanation), but the ‘person’ is given to us in the internal experience of being a man. (*Cz*, 376)

This extraordinarily important observation allows us, from the moment of the most primordial human experience, to speak of man as a person. In other words, what man immediately experiences is a personal being, not some sort of intellectual construct to which he should be compared. Continuing this line of thought, we are forced to acknowledge that the person is the

23. The very existence of human acts, affirmed in immediate experience, is a fact that also requires philosophical explanation. Those acts cannot be regarded as subsistent, independent, and autonomous beings (since that would be contrary to experience and would lead to the denial of a series of evident matters, e.g., the individual’s responsibility for his acts), and thus they require the subject as the reason for their existence. Cf. *IM*, 94–95.

peculiar starting point in the general understanding of man (i.e., in anthropology—both philosophical and theological anthropology), and is not the ending point in the explanation of the fact of being a man. (Cz, 376)

Thus man at the very sources of the experience of himself discovers himself as a person, i.e., as an “I,” an independently existing and autonomous subject that emanates from himself his own actions, actions that express his personal nature.

For this reason, the explanation of man as a being should begin precisely from this primordial experience, in which the person is manifested as an autonomous “I.” This is because the experience to which we are appealing here constitutes a privileged type of knowledge, since it is essentially marked by immediacy, that is, it does not have any of the mediations that are necessary in knowing the essences of things. This means, among other things, that when we appeal at the starting point of our inquiries on man to precisely this experience, we are free from the interpretations that various apprehensions of essential aspects impose on us. This is because man's cognitive (and existential) situation is special, and this fact should be considered in rational reflection that strives to apprehend the essential factors of man's nature.²⁴

Thus at the starting point, we should not only consider this primordial and immediate experience of the self as the “I,” in which the person is revealed, but we should even let it speak for itself. To conclude this part of our analyses, let us repeat that the experience of one's own personal being, which shows itself in the experience of our “I,” is immediately given in the process of spontaneous knowledge. The next task of philosophical reflection is thus to provide an accurate exposition and proper explanation of what is immediately given so that we may show man's personal nature (cf. Cz, 376).

24. “This is an important fact, since it puts man in a unique position as that which is the object of cognition and experience, both at the everyday external level (sensory-intellectual empirical data), and at the internal level. In the first and second type of experience, the essential matter is the (variously) perceived fact of the object's existence. The fact of existence, that is, the real being (seen from outside and from inside), constitutes the object of cognitive experience, which in large measure is the basis for the cognitive process” (Cz, 376).

PHASE 2: SHOWING THE PERSON'S RATIONAL NATURE AND SUBSTANTIAL BEING

The statement cited above, that the "I," or the subject that experiences "my" acts in the process of their emergence, is given to himself in immediate experience (ad thus without the mediation of any sign-concept), leads to the only metaphysically permissible conclusion, namely, that the "I" is given from the side of existence. Thus man directly and indubitably experiences that he is. He experiences his own existence immediately, yet he does not know his own essence, his own nature, that is the source of action. To understand himself as a definite acting nature, i.e., to know rationally who he is, that is, to know that essence of the 'I' that is experienced, he should look to an analysis of 'my' acts that emerge from the same immediately experience subject:

I experience that I live, but I do not experience my own nature, and therefore I do not know what my essence is. I think of myself, but to go deeper into my essence, I must perform another cognitive process (no longer an immediate experience of the existence of my own subjectivity)—I must thoroughly analyze 'my' acts, which flow from the same source—from the 'I', experienced as existing by me. (Cz, 372)

The analysis of "my" acts makes possible ratiocinative, rationally justified, organized, and intersubjectively meaningful knowledge of human nature, which reveals its various aspects (the vegetative, sensitive, and spiritual aspect), and these, by the primordial experience of the unity and indivisibility of the "I," turn out to be identical in the same act of being, i.e., they belong to a single autonomous subject.²⁵

Krapiec continues:

The cognition of the nature (essence) of the experienced "I," however, cannot be performed directly, but only by the mediation of signs—images obtained from my action. I must subject to analysis the structure and functioning of "my" cognitive . . . acts, to infer on this foundation (by virtue of the principle of the proportionality of act to potency) and appraise the nature of the subject from whom these acts come forth. This is circuitous, but it is the only available way to know the nature of the human being. (Cz, 372)²⁶

25. Cf. Krapiec, *Doświadczenie*, 675.

26. "It is necessary first, however, to obtain information and create for oneself an image-sign that will mediate my cognition of man's nature. The explanation of man's nature is

It should be added that philosophical explanation in Krapiec's inquiries typically uses a specific method, the method of decontradictification, which because it is the only method capable of leading knowledge away from the bounds of absurdity, constitutes the foundation of rational knowledge (cf. *Cz*, 376).

The explanation of man's nature is made in the field of metaphysics, i.e., with the use of the methods of metaphysics and its tools, such as the theory of substance and the conception of the soul. Moreover, this explanation is twofold: first, the subject is interpreted, and then in the next phase its acts, since they come from the subject and in an essential sense express the subject. The experience of the unity of the subject's action and identity indicate one and the same source. In living beings, that source of action is the soul, understood as the principle of life, and at the same, as the source of the being's identity and its indivisibility or unity.²⁷ Since man experiences the unity of the action and identity of the acting "I," then the soul as the factor that explains this experiences encompasses the whole of the being and all its parts. Thus it performs the function of the organizer of the body, but it also transcends the body by its own spiritual operations, which are based on intellectual knowledge, connected with consciousness and selfconsciousness. The observation of immediate experiences thus presents the problem of the existence of the soul of such a nature that it is at the same time material and immaterial. Krapiec accepts the solution of Thomas Aquinas, which is regarded as crucial in this question, and reminds us that such a soul must be subsistent, i.e., it must possess its own existence whereby it is "capable of becoming the form-organizer of the human body" (*OSR*, 597).²⁸ The mode of man's existence is thus the existence of the soul as the form of the body, i.e., as the principle

already mediated, and so it requires an honest description of the analysis of what is called the structure of 'my' acts and the way they function, and these constitute the foundation for inferences concerning human nature" (*Cz*, 372).

27. The question of whether the soul can be known, with respect to the method used here, is compared by Krapiec to the problem of whether God can be known. He describes this method as follows: "Starting from the affirmation of the existence of real beings, we seek reasons, also real reasons, for the justification of what is not explained through itself. And that specific method of philosophical reductive thought leads to the existence of God and soul." He also writes: "Reductive thinking is understood here in a special way, so that it proper to philosophy and different from the reductive thought that is applied in the particular natural sciences" (*OSR*, 242–53). Moreover, somewhat earlier Krapiec remarks that the problem of understanding the soul exists, properly speaking, only in the philosophy of being, since, since this question cannot be properly posed or resolved in the philosophy of the subject (the self), or the philosophy of signs (i.e., analytic philosophy), or again in the philosophy of ideas. Cf. *OSR*, 249–52.

that organizes matter to be a human body. Krapiec further states that the soul's function of organizing for itself the body is not something added to the soul, something secondary, but this constitutes its nature:

Thus man is not a real being as the result of the organization of matter, but on the contrary, the organization of matter occurs as the result of the fact that the self-existent soul is at the same time . . . the organizer of the body, that is, the form of the body. (OSR, 595)

Thus the body only participates in the soul's existence, to the existence that the body is organized by the soul. Thereby the soul, as the subsistent source of all human operations, manifests its immaterial nature (cf. OSR, 595).²⁹

28. With a certain amount of hesitation, probably because philosophical theses are incompatible with the inquiries of the particular sciences, Krapiec says that human conception is this moment, since it is precisely from this moment that the human being (by inheritance) is given the genetic code that forms the foundation of a uniform system of action over the entire course of human life. Cf. OSR, 597n29.

29. The question of immateriality is a separate problem that would require the appropriate analyses. Krapiec summarizes this question as follows: "The human spirit (the human soul), as Aquinas notes, is the spirit 'lowest in hierarchy', for the human soul can act only through matter. However, existing independently of the body, for existing in itself as an adequate subject, the soul is a spiritual being; and hence specifically human operations (rational acts of cognition and rational appetite) are in their ontological structure non-composite and immaterial—although they function (that is, they really act) through matter. Although the structure of matter is not completely known, it is not at all necessary to divide matter from spirit, which knows structural relations in a general and non-accidental way, and thereby rises above the individual, non-necessary, potential cognitive structures in sensory cognition. It is noteworthy that the natural sciences, including natural anthropology, basically use the Cartesian conception of matter as *res extensa* ('extended thing'—spatial-temporal), in connection with which they restrict the knowledge of matter to its integrating parts, apprehended together with quantitative relations. Although quantitative fragments basically organize matter (by the corresponding arrangement of those parts among themselves, as Aristotle states), yet material being has yet other conditions: qualities, relations within being, conditions of time and location (space), action, and the passive reception of action. The immateriality of the structures produced from the subject of acts (from the material soul) is evidence of the nature of the soul itself, while the functional connection of the acts with sensory-material processes is evidence that man's soul, although it exists in itself as in an object, is at the same time the organizer (form) of matter, organizing it to be a human body. The soul thus understood cannot function independently of matter, which is an essential component of the soul. Hence in human acts of intellectual cognition and volitional love, the material aspect is constantly apparent, in which the human spirit or human intellect work. This confirms man's ontological structure, which is the only case in nature of a synthesis of matter and spirit. The spirit is seen in the structure of acts of intellectual cognition and volitional love, for in these

At the same time, the self-aware "I," as it is a being capable of bringing forth from itself (of being a subject, of "subjectifying") autonomous actions, can and should be interpreted metaphysically as a certain concrete type of being. The only type of being that comes into play here is substance, which is understood in metaphysics as an independently existing individual subject.³⁰ It seems essential here to call to mind certain refinements concerning the classical conception of substance. In keeping with the spirit of the Aristotelian-Thomistic conception, we should emphasize that not every being is a substance, although every substance is a being. For something to be a substance, it must be an independently existing subject, i.e., a being that exists in itself and organizes itself from within, and is capable of autonomous action.³¹ As mentioned earlier, the experience of subjectivity, along with the immediate knowledge of one's own existence, reveals precisely this type of existence: man knows himself as an independently (autonomously) existing subject who performs acts that he experiences, and at the same time knows himself as continually the same being, identical with himself—man is therefore a substantial being.

Now it should be emphasized that both the elements of interpretation acquired above, i.e., the rational soul as the principle of action, and substance as the individual subject, form the content of the classical definition of the person formulated by Boethius: *rationabilis naturae individua substantia*. A person is a rational and individual subject-substance, and individual means internally undivided.³² The classical definition of the person laid the foundations for the subsequent development of metaphysical personalism, as it makes tangible at the same time the continuity of realistic philosophical thought in the current started by Aristotle. Krąpiec comments on the definition of the person, but remarks that Boethius' for-

there are no essential features of matter: a essential potentiality and accidental unity as the opposites of necessity and generality" (Cz, 374).

30. We should call to mind the classical discussions that Aristotle started on how substance should be understood, when he mentioned the various conceptions of substance in his *Metaphysics*. In classical metaphysics, the concrete, individual, independently and really existing being was regarded as the chief way to understand substance. Cf. *Met*, 274–83.

31. It is also emphasized that in light of such refined criteria for being a substance, in an essential sense only living beings can be substances, among which man occupies a special place. Cf. *MAK*, 65.

32. The internal non-division (indivisibility) of a substance means that the composition within a being that forms the substance cannot be interpreted in a Platonic spirit, i.e., as the division of a being into two separate and independent parts (such as the soul and body). Cf. Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, *Struktura bytu* [Structure of being] (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1995), 263–75.

mulation was dependent on the neo-Platonic conception of the person as a copy or specimen of a particular species, because the species is “imparted” to individuals—in this context, a person means a full and unimparted being.³³ However, Boethius’ definition just barely suggests ontical autonomy and subjective completeness within a species of a rational nature. Rather, the point was to show the ontical moment that is the foundation of this subjective completeness. Krapiec reminds us, following Thomas Aquinas, that in the order of rational substances, the factor that determines the being, at the same determines the person. The existence of a being is the factor that constitutively determines each being.³⁴ This is because the soul is not only the first act of the body, as Aristotle said, but it is man’s first act of existence and substantial form. For this reason, not only does the soul organize matter, but the soul forms matter for itself and gives matter a definite existence.³⁵

Here we arrive at the above mentioned problem of the unity and indivisibility of the human being, a problem that is especially important for philosophical anthropology. The essence of Thomas’ completion of Boethius’ definition is the statement that the source of the unity and indivisibility of the human being is the soul as the first act of existence, as the subject-substance that as such becomes the sufficient reason for man’s ontical unity. The fact of this unity is immediately apprehended in the internal experience the “I”-subject:

33. According to Krapiec, that solution was illusory to the extent that it allowed for many various interpretations that most often referred to neo-Platonic conceptions, where the person was connected with a definite ontical content, and any form whatsoever of unity resulted from the emanation of hypostases. Even in the Thomistic school, such an interpretation, started by Cajetan, gained almost universal recognition. Cf. *IM*, 316.

34. “Something is a real being not because it is a man, an animal, a plant, or a mineral, for example, but because it actually exists. Existence is the act whereby something is a real being, a reality. Therefore a concrete being in the order of rational natures (human or angelic), if it actually exists, is a personal being. It is not a modality or property of a being (positive or negative, as is the case according to Duns Scotus—*negatio dependentiae actualis et aptitudinalis*) that determines that a particular being is a person, but it is the actual existence of a being of a rational nature” (Cz, 375).

35. “The soul thus understood, as man’s act of existence, cannot be from matter or form, nor can it be the result of the mere composition of being from matter and form. Since therefore we do not find the source of the soul’s existence in the world of nature, we must seek it outside of that world. In this way, St. Thomas arrived at the conception of the soul directly created by the Creator. The soul is first of all the act of existence of man as man. Precisely in this point Thomas Aquinas differs fundamentally from Aristotle, who saw the essence of the soul’s action in the motion and organization of matter. However, motion, as Thomas remarked, must have a subject in something that already exists. Therefore the soul as the principle of motion is not the first act of being, but at most the second” (MAK, 66).

[T]he fact that I exist, that I receive sense impressions, and that I know intellectually, that I express judgments, and that I make free decisions—is the work of one and the same subject-substance, an independently existing human soul. (*MAK*, 66–67)

Krapiec completes the statement obtained in the previous phase of his reflections and remarks:

This experience of the human and independently existing subject from the side of the fact that it exists—if a person is constituted . . . by existence proportional to a concrete rational nature—is nothing other than the experience of man's personal being. (*OSR*, 656)

Next, Krapiec starts from Boethius' definition, at the same time referring to his earlier analyses, and he proposes a new version of the definition of the person:

In light of these facts therefore we can describe the person as an "I" of a rational nature. In this description there is an explanation of the nature of the person, for the "I" is manifested as an existing subject identical in its actions. (*Cz*, 376)

Thus completing the immediate experience of our own subjectivity (as the basis for all knowledge about man) with a metaphysical interpretation of man's substantial being and man's rational nature, the rational nature which is animated by the soul, we obtain a simple definition of the persona; that definition, properly speaking is an updated version of Boethius' definition—just as the description of internal experience in Krapiec's version "revives" and develops Thomas' classical approach to the same question. In Krapiec's definition, the "I" means the individual human substances, and this primarily makes tangible the fact that this substance is not simply a theoretical concept, but it is a directly experienced reality: the person is not a construct but is an immediately given fact, even though this fact is given in a signless experience (cf. *Cz*, 376).³⁶

Returning to the question of the subsistent human soul, Krapiec remarks on the essential opposition of the person to nature:

36. However, we should add that "the experience of one's own 'I' is not in a strict sense the experience of one's own soul, which while it is the form of the body is indeed the ontical reason for action, but it is not the human being" (*OSR*, 657).

Man is a personal being, not simply a specimen of a particular species, *homo sapiens*. To be a specimen of a particular species means to receive one's being or existence by virtue of the nature to which one belongs. . . . Man, however, receives existence as a soul that organizes matter and constitutes the species through the organization of matter. (OSR, 597)

This means that the person being is something superior to nature.³⁷ This also means that the individual existence of the person precedes man's existence on the level of the species:

To be a person means to receive existence-life without the mediation of nature, because personal existence (in this case, man's existence) is not a consequence of nature, but on the contrary, nature is the result of the soul's subsistent existence, which is at the same time the form of the organism. (OSR, 597)

Krapiec continues:

This is because man, unlike the entire cosmos, exists not as the result of the organization of matter, not as the result of the action of nature, but self-existing as a spirit, he makes himself, and he organizes or forms the body. (OSR, 611–12)

The existence of the person is a unique type of existence, which in man's case organizes a nature to itself, thereby expressing not only the power to master nature, but also a need for matter, without which the human person cannot express himself in his personal action. Man's unity of being as a subsistent soul that organizes matter to be a human body is thus very deep and singular in its kind. Man as a person, i.e., a being-for-himself, is thus at the same a spiritual-bodily unity and a being that transcends nature (cf. OSR, 597–98).

In the question of the unity of the soul and the body we should make a couple more remarks. In keeping with the analysis presented earlier in outline, man is a whole and indivisible unity of body and soul. In metaphysical terms, the connection of the soul with the body is a necessary and essential connection, and substance is precisely the category that allows us to understand this type of unity. The soul forms, with the body,

37. "And so 'human nature' is not so much given to me as much as I create this nature from the elements of matter that are at hand" (OSR, 611).

the human substance as a monolith. First, this means that the soul alone or the body alone cannot be a man. Second, it is not true that in the case of the immaterial soul the connection of form and matter is transformed into a certain kind of patchwork of spirit and body, opposing and ontically separable substances, forming a certain kind of combination or hybrid of angel and animal. The soul, which in its action is the source of material and immaterial acts, while it reveals its exceptional nature and indicates a specific immaterial origin, yet as the human soul manifests its own existence and manifests its action always through the body, it brings into the body flashes of spiritual life.³⁸ In this way, there is a synthesis of matter and spirit in man: man, acting as an autonomous subject, manifests in his action transcendence over the matter, ordering matter to the transcendent purpose inscribed in that nature (cf. MAK, 68).³⁹

PHASE 3: SHOWING THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE PERSON IN RELATION TO THE WORLD OF NATURE

Finally, the next line of thought concerning how the person is understood is essential. Upon the background of the structure that has already been

38. "[W]e do not experience any human action that would not be performed without the mediation of the human body. All human cognitive, appetitive, and motor actions are performed through the human body and in connection with the human body, which is constantly being organized by the soul. . . . However, this does not mean that the structure of certain human operations is not immaterial. This takes place in the action of man's spiritual faculties, which are the reason and the will. These faculties immediately emerge from the soul as so-called active potencies, the acts of which—intellectual knowledge in the form of concepts, judgments, acts of reasoning, and acts of the will in the form of love in its various expressions—are precisely immaterial. Those faculties, reason and will, do not possess any organ. This is because the brain constitutes the system of organs for sensory knowledge, while acts of intellectual knowledge and acts of the will do not flow out of any organ, although they are not performed without a connection with the action of sensory acts of knowledge and appetite (emotions). The functioning of spiritual acts possesses its storehouse in the action of the senses." Mieczysław Albert Krapiec, *Arystotelesowska koncepcja substancji* [The Aristotelian Conception of Substance], (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2000), 134.

39. This purpose, however, as it is constantly present in human personal action, i.e., rational and free action, indicates the essential ordering of man to the Absolute, and the desire for happiness (which shows only man's orientation to the good as such) is the sign of this ordering. "Precisely the end manifested in human action—and this is the good as such—indicates that man is ordered to Absolute alone, to the desire to attain the Absolute—this is indicated by the desire for happiness (the ordering to the good as good) that is inscribed in human nature, which is read out as the 'desire, ineffective of itself, to see God' (*desiderium naturale, inefficax, videndi Deum*)."

Krapiec, *Arystotelesowska koncepcja substancji*, 139.

discovered of the human being, who is a whole and rather specific unity of the subsistent soul with the body, and the body is the object of the soul's organization of life—it becomes clear that the person is not a prepared being. This is because the soul exists in such a way that for itself it constantly makes matter to be the human body through which it expresses itself in action. The person (we should add here: in the case of human nature, which precisely is composed in this way) is thus a potential being that needs to be perfected and fulfilled, i.e., it needs to come to the fullness of the actualization of its nature. The way the person is realized is by action that is specific to the person, which in a way conveys the very nature of the person: that action is rooted in materiality, but its ends go beyond matter. This is because personal action is directed to the “enrichment of knowledge, the enrichment of love, the attainment of a higher degree of freedom in relation to all determinants” (*OSR*, 598). The next step in discovering the person is thus to investigate particular specifically human activity, i.e., to analyze the contents of “my” acts, so-called, which manifest themselves in internal experience. The philosophical analysis of those acts is needed to establish who man is, i.e., we do not possess any other way to show man's essence but the analysis of man's personal actions.

To show the nature and specific character of the existence of the personal being, we should bring out all the elements that determine the character of the personal being. According to Krapiec, we can do this in two ways. First, we have the method of the exclusion of accidental properties that do not indicate the specific character of the personal being, in order to reach those that determine the being of the substance in the mode of the person. The second way is the positive method. It consists in the analysis of the action of man as man, and in singling out the actions that determine man's perfection and distinctiveness. Among the features discovered as most fundamental, we discern the following: the capability of knowledge, the capability of freedom, the capability of love, as well as dignity, subjectivity before the law, and completeness. These properties indicate the transcendence of the person in relation to nature and society, and at the same time they reveal the specific character of the human being (cf. *MAK*, 71–72).

Krapiec's analyses concentrate first of all on showing the spiritual nature of personal action.⁴⁰ Krapiec engages in polemics with approaches

40. Classical metaphysics accepts (and indicates) the existence not only of the immaterial human soul, but also of other immaterial beings and the immaterial faculties of knowing and volition: the reason and the will. On the knowability of the soul, cf. *OSR*, 244–53.

to this problem that in his opinion are erroneous; these include positions that preclude spirituality, and positions that absolutize spirituality. Krąpiec describes two manifestations of personal life that reveal the spiritual character of man's action, namely holistic-conscious action, and the mode of action to an end (to-a-thing) (cf. *OSR*, 602–7). In the domain of knowledge, which constitutes the special basis for personal action, because it is typical that whatever man knows he situates in the perspective of the whole, as a part of a greater whole, and that whole is coterminous with the horizon of our consciousness (which, according to Krąpiec, is constituted by an analogical apprehension of being). Moreover, in all his rational acts, man reaches for the essential structures of things, and for the thing itself (to-thingness). The human structure takes into account the internal structure of things, and he goes beyond the ends contained in the specific nature itself, and thus he transcends his natural environment “toward being.” The purposefulness (to-thing-ness) of man's action is most clearly manifested in acts of love in which the subject dedicates himself to another person, and in social life, which is constituted by the mode of being “for the other” (cf. *OSR*, 603–5). Krąpiec explains:

Both “purposefulness” [to-thing-ness] and “wholeness” mark the mode of human action that points to being, to analogical reality, and not merely at the objects that satisfy man's natural biological or mental needs. (*OSR*, 605)

The spiritual site of personal action that manifests itself in this way is a clear sign of the person's transcendence over nature, since through acts, especially spiritual acts, the person shapes for himself an individual “nature” as a constant source of action (cf. *OSR*, 611).⁴¹ Krąpiec says that the

Among many works concerning attempts to restore the conception of the soul and spirituality, among others, Stanisław Kamiński's interesting study is noteworthy. Cf. Stanisław Kamiński, “Metodologiczna problematyka poznania duszy ludzkiej” [The Methodological Problematic of the Knowledge of the Human Soul], in *Jak filozofować*, 263–77. The negation (or reduction) of the spiritual sphere of man's life that is typical of today's culture indicates, on the one hand, the materialistic tendencies dominant in that culture, and a reductive and anti-personalist understanding of man. On the other hand, it allows us to see the enormous impoverishment of human experience, which is indeed closed within that brings benefit or pleasure. Since human spirituality, as the result of the acceptance of one-sided and unified models of scientific knowledge, has been in principle eliminated from science and philosophy, human experiences connected with that sphere of life have been almost completely subordinated to the bodily-sensory sphere (this is what various versions of anthropological rationalism, such as evolutionism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and structuralism, have been trying to prove). Cf. *IM*, 39–71.

priority of nature, even though it can be confirmed throughout the entire cosmos, does not apply to man's action, since man, unlike other beings, is not a nature that is particularized in relation to a general specific idea, but is a "self-existing personal being that organizes the individual nature for itself" (*OSR*, 611). One piece of evidence that the human person is not derived from the organization of matter is the character of certain actions of man, especially acts of intellectual knowledge, love, creativity, and decision—these are immaterial, non-temporal, non-special, non-quantifiable, etc. (cf. *OSR*, 612).⁴²

Next, in a desire to make a more detailed analysis of the discerned personal acts, i.e., those in which the person most greatly shapes his own personal profile, Krapiec refers to classical conceptions of the transcendence of the person. In comparison with phenomenological descriptions that concern acts of knowledge, love, and free, according to Krapiec, the tradition of classical philosophy present a more coherent resolution of the problems of personal actions.⁴³ Also, in this field as well, a new approach or conception is necessary, one that considers that elements obtained up to this point in understanding the person. The way of looking at man as a biological specimen of the human species typical of scholastic conceptions, where man is immersed in the world of nature, above which he rises in his rational actions, in the specific description of these actions put the accent on their ontical structure, which allows one to understand man's exceptional character upon the background of nature. As Krapiec remarks:

Hence it is not proper to separate from each other the moments of cognition, love and freedom. Even though they are different structures of being, nevertheless in inner personal life, they are very closely linked and they mutually condition each other.⁴⁴

For this reason we should look at man as a personal subject who in his acts, especially his spiritual acts, shapes himself from within, acting at

41. Physiological acts and other acts connected with matter (e.g., mental acts), as involved in the laws of matter, give the mark of determination to personal actions. Cf. *OSR*, 611.

42. For somewhat more on the immateriality of personal acts, cf. *IM*, 108–116.

43. "More coherent"—this concerns analyses ordered to understanding person, while phenomenological analyses refer to selected problems that are treated rather autonomously. Cf. *OSR*, 613.

44. Ibid. Cf. *IM*, 326–27.

the same time cognitively, through love, and with consciously experienced freedom.⁴⁵

Man's cognitive activity is a process of constant modification and selection of stimuli from the world, under the direction of free decision and individual liking. Free choice and engagement, i.e., love, determine not only cognitive openness or closure to certain contents, but can also lead to a particular intensification of selected domains of knowledge (so-called cognitive passion), which to a large degree determine man's personal action. Dedication to another person in a free act that constitutes in man a new way of "being-for-others" is the highest act of personal love (cf. *IM*, 327; also *OSR*, 615). An act such as this can only occur as the result of the recognition of the other person as a good in himself who can become the end-purpose of man's action as the subject of love.⁴⁶

Human freedom most deeply describes and expresses personal life as a whole, since it is precisely in the acts of free decision that man constantly makes that personal knowledge and love are most closely united, determining the subject to concrete action. Freedom is the moment of personal life in which man constitutes himself as the source of action, choosing by an act of free will a practical judgement of the reason. As he lives in the world, which is determined by the laws of nature, man through his freedom has, in a certain way, the task of transforming the materially determined states of his existence into actions and free decisions that are fully personal.⁴⁷ In conclusion, Krapiec says:

These three actions—knowledge, love, and freedom—completing each other, like the angles of a triangle, give the typical outline to how the person transcends nature and the 'nature of the world' that man has in himself through his body.⁴⁸

45. Cf. *ibid.*; also *OSR*, 613.

46. Krapiec remarks that the fulfillment of man in love and through love constitutes the reason for which the human mode of social existence was called by Paul VI and John Paul II the "civilization of love." This is because love thus understood is the foundation of the social order and is the ultimate model for social relations. Cf. *OSR*, 549–76.

47. Cf. *IM*, 328; also, *OSR*, 616.

48. *Ibid.* If we go somewhat deeper into Krapiec's philosophical analyses, we can see yet other moments of transcendence in acts of knowledge, love, and freedom, as well as the transcendence that appears in man's ability for religiosity: "We discover and discern man's cognitive activity upon the background of his ability for abstract thought, making judgments, performing acts of reasoning, and upon the background of the entire domain of culture, which is the a sign of man's cognitive activity. It is precisely in cognitive activity that man fulfills himself as a rational being, and also shows his transcendence to the world

The three next features of personal life, i.e., legal subjectivity, completeness, and dignity, indicate man's transcendence over society, and moreover they bring in a very essential moment in Krapiec's reflections on the person: the human person's strict connection with the Absolute, who is the ultimate and objective reference for the common good that is realized in a community of persons. This is because the common good of such a community is the intellectual-moral development of each human person, based on the perfection of the highest personal potentialities, i.e., the reason and the will. The purpose of the development of the person, i.e., the highest and ultimate actualization of the person's potentialities, is the Absolute.⁴⁹

Subjectivity before the law means a reference or relation to the other man with respect to action (or inaction) that is due to him that is necessary for the proportional realization of the common good. The foundation of law and right is the objective ordering of each person to the ultimate good. Society, as a form of personal life that is necessary for the development of each man, however, cannot enslave or dominate individual intellectual-moral development. This is because man as a person transcends society,

of matter and all nature. In products of art and culture, this shows how man can make matter subject to the laws of mind and spirit, giving matter various forms and functions. The ability for love that we see in man's life is something more than merely a discovered desire and constant inclination to the good. Man is concerned not only for his own good (which would be expression of a natural inclination), but can also devote and sacrifice himself for the good of another human being. Hence a woman's love for a man, a mother's love for a child, that of one human being for another, is the ability to sacrifice one's own life for the sake of others, and to make acts of solidarity with others. The act of freedom is expressed in a practical judgment that we make for the realization of a good. Moreover, the act of freedom is expressed in the fact that we must determine ourselves to act. We can direct this action against the inclinations of nature, against ourselves, and we can also when selecting the goods proper to our nature set proper ends for ourselves. [Moreover] only man as a rational being reads out the existence of God as the ultimate reason for his life and existence. Only man through acts of prayer, worship, and rituals turns to God and in this way expresses the affirmation of Him, at the same time showing his own transcendence. These four properties of the personal being reveal the transcendence of the human being in relation to the world of nature. And although man is a part of nature and lives in the world of nature, at the same time he exceeds that world and in this way shows that he is a person, that is, a conscious and undivided subject capable of autonomous life and action, and not an 'individual specimen.' Moreover, in these acts and through them, man shapes his own personality." Andrzej Maryniarczyk and Arkadiusz Gudaniec, "Metafizyka człowieka w ujęciu Krapca" [The Metaphysics of Man in Krapiec's Conception], in *Encyklopedia filozofii polskiej* [Encyclopedia of Polish Philosophy], ed. Andrzej Maryniarczyk, 2 vols (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2011), 2:112.

49. Cf. *OSR*, 616–19; cf. *IM*, 329–33.

since man is an ontical plenitude who nevertheless requires participation in social for his own realization (cf. *OSR*, 616–17).⁵⁰

The dignity of the person indicates the proper context of personal life; personal life is not determined by relations of things, i.e., natural relations, but by personal relations, that is, by the other “thou,” and ultimately the “Thou” of the person of the Absolute. The context of personal life determines the proper horizon of human life, in which “man as a person makes for himself a nature and raises it to the dignity of a person as the way of ‘being-for-the-other-person’” (*OSR*, 618, cf. also *IM*, 328–29). This horizon, the expression of which is personal dignity, right away indicates the religious dimension of the life of the person. Krapiec remarks:

So we can say that man as a person is fundamentally a religious being since he is a being such that his reason of being and of development is another person, ultimately the person of the Absolute. (*OSR*, 618)

This ultimate reference is essentially inscribed into every personal relation, and also in general, into the personal dimension of man's life as a person:

[T]he context of the person's life is ultimately the transcendent Person, of whom the persons who have human existence and who form the vertical horizon of man's personal life, are a participation. (*OSR*, 618)

This ultimate dimension of personal life in large measure sets the specific character of Krapiec's personalism. His conception (or hypothesis) of personal death understood actively, in which the person is fulfilled in all the aspects set by his previous acts, i.e., in knowledge, love, and freedom, in accordance with the proper nature of those acts, is a significant achievement in this field.⁵¹ Over the course of human life, the person, who is “entangled” in the natural-material context of his own being, does not

50. It is interesting that the relation of dependence between the individual-person and society runs in two directions: “man, while he is a person, does not cease to be a corporeal and natural nature. Since he is a synthesis of person and nature, as a person he is required to subordinate himself to society, a relational product, but at the same time, since he is a corporeal and natural nature, he is subordinate to society. It is immensely difficult, if not indeed generally impossible, to set in a concrete way the boundaries of the subordination of man, as a natural nature, to society, and the subordination of society to the personal human being. The particular man through his conscience must constantly mark out those boundaries, while spiritually maturing to higher and higher personal life” (*OSR*, 617).

find full conditions to perform his most essential actions, which as actions that follow from human nature should be performed (if man is not supposed to turn out to be an absurd being).⁵² This is because man's body is, on the one hand, the factor that makes possible the development of the spiritual self, of which we have spoken earlier, and on the other hand, it connects the human spirit with "individual, individualizing, atomizing forms of activity" (*IM*, 358).⁵³ The moment of death experienced actively, in which

the human being is able for the first time to make use of the continually initiated, imperfect acts of his personal structure in relation to infinitely extended cosmos and, above all, in relation to the transcendent "Thou," (*IM*, 360–61)

thus gives ultimate meaning to human life.⁵⁴

51. A more extensive development of this question is found, among other places, for example, in *IM*, 335–62; *OSR*, 717–47; Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, "Śmierć" [Death], in *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, 9:334–39.

52. "If, then, at the moment of the completion of the changeable way of existence, i.e., in the moment of death, he would not bring to end, i.e., to a concrete solution, the existential questions involved in the whole of human cognition, then it would be necessary to accept the assertion that a human being is an unnatural being. ["unnatural being" translates the phrase "bytem bezsensu," a being without meaning, a being of absurdity—H. M.]. Without the perspective of the fulfillment of personal-human acts (cognition, the desire of love), i.e., without the real as well as concrete possibility for every human being of the eternal endurance of that which already now has appear in biological forms of duration as transcending matter, the very acts of cognition and love, if they were ultimately to succumb to change and time, would be yet another monster of nature, would be simply meaningless" (*IM*, 354, 358).

53. The more profound analysis of this question that Krąpiec makes leads to a contrast drawn between death understood passively, where we can speak of the separation of the soul from the body, and death understood actively, where this division does not occur in an ontical sense, since the soul by reason of its nature cannot lose its relation to a body, but only in the sense of soul's "separation from the 'here and now' quantified body" (*IM*, 361). This qualification certainly defends Krąpiec's hypothesis from the charge of Platonism. Concluding his argument, he adds: "Of course, this is a hypothesis, but an interesting and a fruitful one, revealing the ever wider entrance of spirit into the world of matter to which it first submits, which it cognizes, which it directs, and which it finally . . . is subject to its laws. For the spirit . . . at the moment of death, unites with the very heart of matter, which is rationally taking shape, in order to bestow upon it ultimately . . . its own personal, spiritual visage" (*IM*, 361).

54. The model of death as disintegration has no application to death understood actively, since we should accept the model of maturation and birth; just as the human embryo at the moment of birth "perishes," losing the entire "ecological niche" that surrounded it,

Death is thus understood by Krąpiec as an essential conclusion of personal life, and not as an interruption of it; moreover, at the moment that all personal human acts have been performed, death becomes the factor that enables man to make an ultimate decision with respect to his life as such, i.e., also with respect to his ultimate end. Krąpiec says that thereby the moment of death that ends human life brings in a new and more mature form of being a person:

This does not mean that a human being prior to the moment of the completion of his life [his biological life—A. G.] would not be a person. He is one, but he is one in a potentialized sense, because he can continually become more complete; he is one in an incomplete sense, because he can always become more perfect; he is one in an ontical sense, which means that he has [the ability to make acts of personal decisions according to the measure of—H. M.] the circumstances of his existence. (*IM*, 350)

Thus,

Death, being the completion of the actualization of the personality, presents thereby the culmination point in which all the changeable acts begun in the course of human life find their fulfillment. (*IM*, 350)

So also at the moment of death, the human person is ultimately fulfilled as a person, crowning all his acts that were started in his lifetime, i.e., the human person becomes fully free, one who knows directly and is capable of the highest life, capable of dedication to God (cf. *OSR*, 598).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the margins of these reflections on the transcendence of the person, Krąpiec formulates one more very essential thesis that describes his metaphysical personalism. That is, he recognizes the theory of the transcendence of the person as a very important accomplishment of human thought, especially with reference to the contemporary movements that present arguments against this theory. Under the influence of nineteenth-

i.e., it passes into a new state in which the previously started process of the formation of organs are continued in life outside the womb, i.e., in a new ontical ground, so the acts of the human psyche at the moment of death, rising about the changeability of the world to which up to that point there were subject, realize everything that during life in the womb of the world was only starting, existing, as it were, in an embryonic state. Cf. *IM*, 360–61.

century tendencies in science, the simplest, i.e., the least complex material being was taken as the standard kind of being. In this way, the simplest material instances of being became the model of rationality and self-intelligibility, and as a result, personal beings turned out to be rationally the most unintelligible, and the Absolute became the summit of unintelligibility. Now, according to Krapiec, the person is a being in the fundamental sense, and the person constitutes the model of a self-intelligible being (the being that exists through itself, that has no origin elsewhere, that is, the Absolute is self-intelligible in the highest way). When it is acknowledged that the person has such a status, which is the position typical of classical versions of personalism, this also manifests a model of rational knowledge that is fundamentally different than the model that was accepted not so long ago (cf. *OSR*, 612).⁵⁵

Krapiec's personalism, which was constructed within classical metaphysics, shows personal life in a holistic perspective, in the framework of dynamic development that is crowned in the moment of active death. The person is already manifested at the level of the internal experience of his own subjectivity, which is experience by all human beings. Further analyses of human nature show substantial and rational being, and also show the soul as the immaterial principle that organizes the body; the body thereby participates in the realization of the personal ends of human life. The person's transcendence in relation to nature and society reveals the potentiality of the human spirit, which is realized in intellectual-moral acts, in interpersonal (social) bonds, and which is ultimately ordered to the Person of the Absolute. Krapiec summarizes his vision of the person as follows:

Man, as he is a person because he is the unique existence of the subjective "I" (the "I" which is present essentially through the immanent function of the incessant formation for itself of the body as the co-factor, and at the same time, as its first expression) in the psycho-organic whole, develops himself through his personal acts to the plenitude of personal life, including in this

55. This model established standards of rationality in the period of Krapiec's activity and he formulated his own theses in relation precisely to this model, which was based on the postulates of positivism. Despite the noticeable changes that occurred in recent years in philosophy, the influence of positivism, in the structures of great scientific institutes, in the "neurosciences," and elsewhere, still seems to be rather strong. Without regard to the fact that positivism has been partially overcome, the thesis of the domination of the order of things in science and in culture in science can still be heard as current today as well.

current other persons in the ultimate context of the person of the Absolute as the highest Plenitude. (OSR, 618–19)

Upon the background of contemporary anthropological concepts that appeal to the classical tradition of European thought, Krapiec's metaphysical personalism seems to be a rather original proposal, although Krapiec never wanted to be an original thinker, but rather a seeker of the truth. Krapiec's reflection presents a holistic and coherent theory of the person that is independent of the other sciences; the theory possesses its own autonomous object (the experience of the human fact) and its own method of explanation (the indication of objective reasons—what is called “decontradictification”). The conception of the person emerges from a consistently constructed and integral vision of man, and also from a vision of reality as such; thereby Krapiec's personalism forms an almost organic whole with the conception of man and the conception of being, blending together with many other theoretical lines of thought into one great metaphysical system. The person is revealed as the autonomous and sovereign substance considered in realistic philosophy. Thereby Krapiec's personalism acquires strong ontical foundations, while classical philosophy as the ground for the theory of the person has in this case turned out to be very fertile.

Krapiec's conception of the person—a conception that is very coherent, interwoven with the whole of the metaphysical understanding of reality, and interwoven with a clearly and soundly systematized anthropological support, which appeals at the starting point to the elementary experience of man, significantly supplementing other proposals that are rooted in the classical tradition—can certainly constitute an important voice in the contemporary debate concerning man, including the proposals of Norris Clark, Eleonore Stump, John Haldane, and Peter Geach. Krapiec's personalism based on traditional metaphysics, in which existence as the act of being plays the fundamental role, is a conception that is not only exceptional upon the background of other personalistic proposals, but it also turns out to be a rather uncompromising conception that demands a radical change in how the person is understood, just as the metaphysical conception of *esse* requires a radical change in thinking concerning being. This is because the person is given in primordial experience, not later for the first time in a theory or concept, and the person is given from the side of existence (the metaphysical priority of existence over essence). This is also regarded as the paradigm of being, as a substance that exists in itself (the metaphysical priority of the person over the thing). In addition, the following postulates can be the message of metaphysics: in order to under-

stand the person, realism and metaphysical knowledge are necessary, and in order fully to provide a rational justification for the personal being, we must resort to the conception of substance and return to the conception of the soul. We should trust that Krapiec's voice in the discussion on the essence of man will be heard more and more strongly, and that personalist tendencies certainly will be able to acquire strong ontical foundations and coherent, original, and fertile aspects of the theory of the person.

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