

Roman Darowski. *Philosophical Anthropology: Outline of Fundamental Problems*. Translated from Polish by Łukasz Darowski SDS. Wydawnictwo Ignatianum [Editions of Ignatianum, The Jesuit University of Cracow]; Wydawnictwo WAM: Cracow, 2014.—Author's summary

The translation of this book into English we are dealing with here is a somewhat changed and revised version of the 4th edition of *Filozofia człowieka* in Polish. The last section (“Human Being—an Absolute?”) has been expanded, while the “History of Philosophical Anthropology” chapter and the *Anthology of Texts* section have both been omitted.

Our times are characterized by a heightened awareness that every person has a right to be the creator of their own destiny in the present, as well as in the distant future. Although this truth has not yet been universally realized, a resignation from implementing this truth would be tantamount to a betrayal of human beings—of the values and dignity which surely belong to them as human persons.

At the same time, there exists a great deal of uncertainty and divergence of views as regards the question of *who it is that is a human being*. Therefore, there is an urgent need for reflection on human beings as such, in order to accurately get to know these beings in all of their dimensions and aspects. There is a need to seek out the truth about human beings. In this respect, almost all of us agree: the human being should be at the very center of our interest. The current book partakes of this process of reflection. It is written to serve people who are looking for the truth about human beings.

Philosophical anthropology occupies a central position within later modern philosophical thought. Who is a human being? What are its origins and future, and the goals and purpose of its life? These questions continually absorb the attention of all thinking human beings. Anthropological problems have also been, and still are, frequently discussed in the philosophical literature, albeit from different angles, and according to different methodological constructs, ideological worldviews and branches of philosophy.

The book consists of three main parts. The first part, entitled “Introductory Questions,” discusses, among other things, the specific character of philosophical anthropology, the definition of this discipline, existential questions, the method of philosophical anthropology, and the problem of what it means “to be and to have.”

The part of the book that lays the foundations for further explorations bears the title “The Main Problems in Philosophical Anthropology.” It consists of fifteen chapters, whose titles are worth listing here, as they give an indication of the content and structure of the book. 1. “Humanity

and the Animal Kingdom.” 2. “The Human Corporeality.” 3. “The Spiritual Constituent of a Human Being.” 4. “The Relationship Between the Spiritual Constituent and the Material Constituent.” 5. “Death and Immortality.” 6. “The Structure of the Human Mind and the Process of Intellectual Cognition.” 7. “Human Freedom.” 8. “The Human Person and His/Her Rights and Duties.” 9. “The Origin of Human Being.” 10. “Human Being and Values.” 11. “Human Being as a Creator of Culture.” 12. “Human Being as a Historical Being.” 13. “Human Being as a Dialogical Being.” 14. “Human Being as a Social Being.” 15. “Human Being as a Religious Being.”

The third part of the book explores the claim implicit in its title: “Human Being—An Absolute?” The following are invoked as reasons in support of this: (1) our limitless cognitive horizon, (2) openness in the sphere of freedom, (3) our limitless possibilities of choice, (4) the spiritual element, (5) human beings and beauty, (6) immortality, (7) existential community, (8) metaphysical insufficiency, (9) “God’s involvement” in human affairs, and (10) our unique dignity.

The presentation of issues in philosophical anthropology is organized so as to link the fundamental elements of classical anthropology to aspects of later and contemporary thought.

This multi-faceted subject matter is worked through in sequence. Firstly, the difference between the human and the animal worlds is highlighted. The following two chapters are devoted to an analysis of the constituent elements of the human being: its corporeality and its spiritual dimension. The question of death and immortality appears as a logical continuation of the analysis of the spiritual element in humans. The next two chapters of the book then discuss those factors responsible for regulating human beings intellectually: the intellect itself, and the will. Chapter Eight completes the investigations undertaken in the work up to this point. The chapter looks at the human person and the rights he/she is entitled to. The issue of human rights quite rightly highlights those questions—so energetically discussed nowadays—pertaining to the basis for, and content of, the rights taken to accrue to human beings construed as subjects.

The last few chapters of this part of the work discuss the fundamental attributes of the human person. One of these corresponds to the fact that human beings are the creators of their culture, but are themselves also historical, dialogical, social, and religious beings. It is worth pointing out that some of the considerations contained therein take account of more recent modern thought—specifically, such currents within the latter as have emerged in the fields of axiology and the philosophy of dialogue.

Thanks to this, *Philosophical Anthropology*, being based on classical prin-

ciples, both enriches and modernizes them. However, as things stand today, one is surely right to stress the fact that humans are beings that develop in and through history. In this regard, I subject two attributes of human beings to individual analysis: namely, their character as dialogical beings on the one hand, and as social beings on the other. This division has been postulated in more recent trends within modern philosophies of dialogue, while traditional sociological and philosophical thought has differentiated between two areas of human social life: the micro-social and macro-social dimensions. The final chapter of the first part of the work then proceeds to discuss and justify the thesis that the human being is a religious being.

A presentation of views regarding philosophical anthropology can be made in various ways. The most common is the descriptive method: introducing, in turn, different fields of human existence and drawing conclusions, usually at the end, of a more general and philosophical nature. Our deliberations, though, are intended to exhibit a more classical kind of structure.

The central part of the book is entitled "Main Problems in Philosophical Anthropology," and uses a method that essentially consists of setting forth theoretical proposals of one sort or another. It involves formulating the basic issues of the philosophy of human being in the form of statements, which are then subsequently developed in more or less detail. The detailed study of such a thesis usually contains the following elements: an overview of the current state of the issue, an explanation of philosophical terms, views or opinions on the given subject, as well as the argumentation (proofs) which demonstrate individual parts (propositions) included in the previously formulated theoretical proposal. "Proof" or "demonstration" is construed here rather broadly; sometimes they may be just arguments or reasons that speak in favor of a given proposition.

Such an approach to the presentation of the problems in the book enables us—in my opinion—to grasp them with greater clarity and precision. It also makes the personal views and solutions of the author more immediately accessible.

Thus the book is an attempt—and hopefully an interesting one at that—to join together the most important elements of classical anthropology with the accumulated wealth of later modern philosophy, and especially with phenomenology and the philosophy of dialogue.

In accordance with its subtitle, *Philosophical Anthropology* gives an outline of the fundamental problems of this discipline. I consciously refrain from any excessive use of specialized terminology, in favor of focusing

on giving answers to the basic questions facing and troubling contemporary humanity. This book is written for all those who seek a guide that will help them uncover the truth about human beings as persons. I believe that *Philosophical Anthropology* offers a creative contribution to the field of philosophy dealing with thoughts about the nature of human beings.

To conclude, my philosophy takes its inspiration in a quite explicit way from the Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions. I make many conscious references to both their essentialist and existentialist tendencies. I also try to take into consideration newer philosophical thought, especially the personalistic and axiological tendencies, and—in some way—also the dialogical tendency (see, for example, the chapter “Human Being as a Dialogical Being”). I do not avoid the more recent achievements of life-science; I attempt to integrate them with philosophy (see, for instance, the chapters “The Human Corporeality” and “The Origin of Human Being”). In the application of this method, especially in its initial stages, there are many elements that resemble a phenomenological description. An Index of Names and Subjects is included to facilitate reading and study of the book.

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