

Methods of Practising Christian Philosophy

Stanisław Kamiński's Approach

Kingsley Mbamara Sabastine

ABSTRACT The concept of Christian Philosophy is not new in the history of philosophy. However, since the mid-twentieth century the idea of Christian Philosophy gained momentum and has become an object of explicit discussion among philosophers. The historical circumstances leading to its emergence as a distinct type of philosophy are not here discussed, and the existence of Christian Philosophy with a distinct content and purpose that sets it apart from other philosophies is here presupposed. Instead, the paper focuses on the concept and methods of practising Christian Philosophy with specific reference to the methodology developed by Stanisław Kamiński (1919–1986). The paper argues for the suitability of his method of philosophising within the context of Christian Philosophy. Kamiński proposes a unique style that is strictly philosophical but also Christian. This methodology was based on the classical theory of being which fulfils the demand for the autonomy of philosophy but in relationship to faith. Kamiński's doctrinal standpoints in philosophy are rational, objective, and universal. But is also most friendly and compatible with the Christian faith. In this sense, one can speak of his Christian philosophy and the suitability of his methodology for the practice of Christian philosophy.

KEYWORDS Kamiński, Stanisław; Metaphysics; Method; Thomism; Wisdom.

✉ Kingsley Mbamara Sabastine, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Aleje Raclawickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Poland ✉ kinsley.mbamara@gmail.com 📞 0000-0002-4046-7858

© ⓘ FORUM PHILOSOPHICUM 27 (2022) no. 1, 51–67
ISSN 1426-1898 E-ISSN 2353-7043

SUBM. 16 April 2021 Acc. 11 May 2022
DOI:10.35765/forphil.2022.2701.03

INTRODUCTION

Stanisław Kamiński described the philosophy of the Catholic University of Lublin environment as “classical.” It is a philosophy that refers to the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition but developed and improved following logical and methodological rigour (Kamiński 2019c, 39). The development of Kamiński’s ideas is divided into three stages: “non-metaphysical, pro-metaphysical and wisdom-oriented” (Wolsza 2019, 122). The last two divisions gesture towards what is considered here as the Christian philosophy in Kamiński’s philosophy. Without getting entangled in the debate whether there is such a thing as Christian philosophy and not just philosophers who are Christian (Kamiński 2019a, 180–94), what follows from here is a survey of Kamiński’s concept of philosophy (which he equated with the theory of being or general metaphysics) and his methodology of that theory in order to show in what sense it may be argued to be a Christian philosophy and why it is methodologically suitable for the practice of Christian philosophy. I do not pretend to present all that constitutes Kamiński’s concept of philosophy. I will focus only on those aspects that have immediate relevance to the thesis defended in this paper.

STANISŁAW KAMIŃSKI’S CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY

Kamiński’s concept of philosophy as metaphysics is built on several philosophical antecedents. Kamiński accepts a certain view of the history of metaphysics initiated by Aristotle (Kamiński 2019c, 38–9). Aristotle is said to be the first person to formally separate metaphysics from other sciences (Kamiński 2018a, 16. 51) as having its specific object and purpose of inquiry identified as the ultimate cause and principle respectively. This differentiates metaphysics from other disciplines that investigate aspects of reality (Kamiński 2018a, 5–6). The understanding of the object and purpose of inquiry determines in turn the method of inquiry. Metaphysics was a special science equipped with its own methodological and logical tools. But metaphysics also provided necessary principles for the operations of other philosophical disciplines. Metaphysics enjoyed that status until the seventeenth century when metaphysical thinking was rejected. This came first from empiricism as represented by Hume, Locke and Mill, and then from Kant who denied metaphysics (especially being and substance) of possessing any object of cognition. Metaphysics for Kant was pure logic of the intellect (Kamiński 2018c, 58).

The positivists in turn claimed that metaphysics does not have a scholarly character. Metaphysical propositions are neither analytic propositions nor empirically verifiable. They are nonsensical. Kamiński sees this move as

a shift from a metaphysical style of philosophising to an epistemological style. A further shift to linguistic and semiotic analysis occurred in philosophy towards the end of the nineteenth century and became popular in the twentieth century. This constitutes the philosophical ambience within which discussion began on the methodological status of classical metaphysics that gave birth to the Lublin Philosophical School (Krapiec and Maryniarczyk 2010, 16, 58). In the philosophy cultivated within The Lublin Philosophical School, metaphysics serves both as the foundation and the hub which binds all branches of philosophical investigation and from which they flow and are directed.

The classic ambition of the school was to construe “a new version of classical metaphysics that could withstand and address modern and contemporary philosophical currents that negated metaphysics and its scientific character (Krapiec and Maryniarczyk 2010, 9). The specific details of this mission meant first, going back into the historical bases and to important philosophers such as Aristotle and Aquinas to ensure that past errors were not repeated, thereby, highlighting the value of historical experience. Second, it was an effort to combine metaphysical thinking and methodological reflection in a further attempt to incorporate current developments or achievements from the field of logic and theory of science (Krapiec and Maryniarczyk 2010, 9).

This was not merely a renaissance of the past but a conscious effort to stand on the established philosophical tradition to solve the contemporary problem by tapping into the experiences of past and current thinkers. This had the advantage of comprehending and explaining reality in a manner that is both original and profound (Krapiec and Maryniarczyk 2010, 405–22). Therefore, “a proposal was made to create a separate methodological program for philosophy, free from links with natural sciences that would be: theoretically interesting, valuable in life, and deserving of its place in epistemology” (Kamiński and Krapiec 1961, 602–37). The methodological autonomy and epistemological unity and approach fitting to this philosophical system and school were carefully delineated by Kamiński in the light of the theory of being and in connection to the theory of science (Kamiński 2018c, 49).

Kamiński’s conception of philosophy therefore is located within a particular tradition called realistic metaphysics. This is a philosophical tradition founded on the existential conception of being. Thus, the methodological investigations undertaken by Kamiński emphasised the development of research methods for realistic philosophy particular for metaphysics, which were maximalist in terms of content and equated with classical philosophy.

The maximalist and unified character of realistic metaphysics is perceptible from what constitutes the object of philosophical inquiry, namely being. Analogically it means that all philosophical disciplines have a unified object which is being. Hence, metaphysics and philosophy are understood to have the same scope (Kamiński 2018c, 68).

Thus, classical philosophy in its restricted sense refers to metaphysical reflection or philosophy in general which is realistic, “epistemologically autonomous and rational philosophy of being as being.” (Kamiński 2018c, 29).

In other words, the theory of being is a philosophy that has real and existing being as its object. And it is in this sense that it is called classical philosophy or metaphysics. According to Kamiński, it is a philosophy that meets the requirements of being not only autonomous and rational but the foundation of all branches of philosophy and disciplines. “If we assume that classical philosophy,” Kamiński asserts, “explains any object given in experience of its ultimate and necessary ontic aspect, each particular type of reality is ultimately explained also in the same way as being in general, that is, by the structure of being” (Kamiński 2018a, 39).

This means classical philosophy exhausts the content of philosophy and gives rise to methodological unity that is appropriate to cultivating and practising philosophy. To ground classical philosophy on these terms, “one has to restore the greatest possible faithfulness to the conceptions that were historically first and were not deformed by later modifications and additions” (Kamiński 2018a, 32).

The determination of the disciplines that constitute the content of classical philosophy and their methodological and epistemological unity is of particular importance to Kamiński. The unity of disciplines is determined by the formal unity, the basis of which is one analogically understood object considered under a general existential aspect. That object is explained by indicating the ultimate reasons for its existence, and this is accomplished by referring to its ontic structure (Kamiński 2018d, 215–221). Thus, the unity of philosophy in the theory of being is constituted by two crucial factors: the philosophical reference to the object and how it is explained.

Kamiński understood philosophy as a unified, rational, maximal, methodologically rigorous, and autonomous science. For that reason, he noted and objected to the attempt to simply import methodological tools of particular sciences to cultivating metaphysics. But the crucial question is: how to build such a system that will ensure the autonomy of metaphysics, its maximalist cognitive character and realism. To achieve these set objectives Kamiński’s proposal was to invent such methodological tools (Krapiec and Maryniarczyk 2010, 37).

Kamiński's conception followed that of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, but with subtle differences that set it apart as marks of originality and continuity in the history of metaphysics linked to Thomism (Kamiński 2018, 205–6; Rembierz 2019a, 24). The explication of this philosophy demonstrates a strict scholarly methodological and heterogeneous approach to analyses of objects that is philosophical. This shows both the influence and the consequence of Kamiński's in-depth and thorough knowledge and interest in history, logic and science. As a result, this philosophical system is devoid of hasty generalisation but concisely and systematically synthesises themes from tradition and contemporary philosophy, inspired and guided by metaphilosophical-axiological beliefs and methodological-anthropological motivation to perfectly construe his philosophy. This gave rise to his original and unique contribution to the methodology of metaphysics beyond the borders of Polish philosophy.

However, Kamiński's attempt to submerge the whole of philosophy in metaphysics and to build a philosophy on the foundation of metaphysics is not completely new but presents special difficulties (Maritain 1959, 215). Kamiński's concept of philosophy, whether one calls it Classical philosophy, the theory of being or metaphysics is rather "reductionistic" in its attempt to reconstruct a firm foundation for philosophy. It reduces every philosophical discipline into metaphysics. Thus every philosophy becomes metaphysics and every metaphysics is in turn philosophy. The determination of the object and scope of such a philosophical system becomes rather vague and idealistic. The project of constructing a foundation for the whole of philosophy on metaphysics is theoretically unconvincing and practically impossible. Kamiński assumes that philosophy and in particular metaphysics dictates the object, principles, scope and conclusions of other philosophical disciplines and necessarily influences and predetermines the outcome of their investigations. There is a sense in which other philosophical disciplines in Kamiński's construction or invention lose a bit of their autonomy or independence because it presupposes and may even predetermine their conclusions which must conform to the foundation of metaphysics.

It is true that metaphysics figures crucially in philosophy that values the search of questions seeking to comprehend ultimate reality. Nevertheless, to equate metaphysics with philosophy in general (in its scope and content) exaggerates its limits and importance in the pursuit of philosophical knowledge. The correct consideration is that metaphysics is an integral part of philosophy understood as the pursuit of questions seeking understanding of ultimate reality. In particular, metaphysics is important

to other branches of philosophy in relation to the determination of their object and scope of inquiry.

THE RELATION OF PHILOSOPHY TO THEOLOGY

Theology understood as the scientific study of revelation, is a peculiar field of human knowledge consisting of several disciplines among which is Dogmatic Theology. Kamiński's consideration of theology is limited to analysis of Dogmatic Theology which he singled out as a representative science to all theological knowledge (Sienkowski 2012, 92). In Kamiński's analysis, Christian life constitutes the subject matter of theological research. Józef Herbut maintains the Christian life to consist of the entire historical period of existence (i.e., the past, present and future) in all its dimensions (i.e., social, political, cultural, spiritual, and religious aspects) within the organisational unit of the Church (Herbut 1987, 294–5). According to Herbut, "Due to the use of scientific and philosophical knowledge and the theological knowledge to date, one can (after K. Rahner) speak of theology as an interdisciplinary science" (Herbut 1987, 296–7) that demands a special methodological tool. Thus, Kamiński developed a methodological concept of interpretation in theology called revelationalization. The term revelationalization examines and interprets the Christian life from the point of view of natural and supernatural factors that make it happen. The practice of theologizing involves the interpretation of the natural sources of the Christian life through supernatural sources. Theologising as such produces theological knowledge, scientific and philosophical knowledge of Christian life. Kamiński called this revelationalization of the natural knowledge about the Christian life. The relation of philosophy to theology in Kamiński's thought is based on this concept and project of revelationalization. Further exposition of the concept is beyond the scope of this article. But Herbut makes the important analysis that philosophy merges and interacts with theology at least at the elementary level of thought. Besides, there are elements of philosophy in the Bible (the primary source of theology) and in the constituent parts of the Christian life (the subject of theological research) so that Herbut further states:

This means that one grows philosophy, and does so under the influence of today's philosophical questions or ideas—even when it is not known or assumed that philosophy has been excluded. It is a mistake to suppose ... that it was only Greek philosophy that introduced its ideas into Christian knowledge. The Scripture itself already contains general concepts derived from philosophical deliberation. Anyone who would like to deny these concepts'

philosophical content on the grounds that they are not related to some philosophical school, would not appreciate the role of natural thinking in accepting revealed truths. They did not come to people in a completely new form, but through human thinking, the general structures of which we must call philosophical. (1987, 305)

The conclusion we may draw from here is that philosophy at least understood as “natural (common sense) philosophy of general mankind.” permeates life. And as such, it necessarily interacts with theology to play various roles which include interpretation, explanation, and conceptualization of reality as part of its relevance to life. Thus, we may safely conclude that the Christian life so understood has elements of philosophy that blend with it and that such a philosophy may be called Christian philosophy.

THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF KAMIŃSKI

Christian philosophy has been described as a philosophy shaped or formed within the scope of doctrinal influence of Christianity or a philosophy that takes into account in some way revealed truth. The expression, “Christian philosophy” among those who reject the idea, expresses a contradiction in terms. It is argued that revealed truths are accepted on the authority of Revelation in contrast with natural or philosophical truths which can be reached only through human reason unaided by any external power or supernatural influence. The term Christian, is associated with faith or belief in something on the basis of divine authority, while philosophy is akin to reason and entails that something is comprehended purely through human reason. When philosophy and Christianity are understood as such, the expression Christian philosophy is an impossibility. That opposition was based on the sharp distinction between a philosophy rooted on naturally evident truths on the one hand and a theology based on divinely revealed truths. The epistemological and methodological autonomy and differences in content between philosophy and theology developed in connection with the problem of the relations between faith and reason, and also grace and nature. Consequently, Kamiński acknowledged the influence of Christianity on philosophy. Like faith and reason, grace and nature, philosophy and Christian faith/Christianity are rooted in the unity of the subject. That may be as far as Kamiński would accept. He states that:

Ultimately, therefore, despite the aforementioned influence of Christianity, philosophy is not Christian by nature, for it is meant to justify and explain its statements based on natural cognitive powers only, and it cannot take any

apologetic task with regard to those statements. Otherwise, e.g., in the case of taking recourse to the Revelation, it would become merely a rationalisation of the truths of faith: some kind of speculative theology. (2018a, 193)

Thus, Kamiński defended the view that philosophy is neither Christian nor non-Christian. Kamiński's concept of philosophy and indeed philosophy, in general, is irreducible to Christian thought. He attributed the controversy on the possibility and existence of Christian philosophy to the ambiguity associated with the terms that form this expression. (Kamiński 2018a, 193). Kamiński did not see the possibility of Christian philosophy, if philosophy is understood as pure rational knowledge. Besides, there is a certain conception of human nature which is associated with Protestantism that excludes the possibility of Christian philosophy and any relationship between philosophy and Christianity. It is that corrupt human nature and consequently, human intellect cannot learn and know the Absolute. "Christian philosophy as a rational knowledge goes far beyond comprehension" (Kamiński 2018a, 193).

Nevertheless, Kamiński admitted the possibility of Christian philosophy only on the basis that philosophy is broadly understood as the search for wisdom that is both rational and trans-rational. However, this notion of Christian philosophy leaves its viability and possibility to hinge on the broad definition of philosophy with the impression that Christian philosophy is not different with what is considered as general philosophy of life. Thus, philosophy in the strict sense, as a rational cognition, excludes Christian philosophy.

Furthermore, Christian philosophy is relegated to the borderline of being not important or is ignorable in the search for rational knowledge. Besides, Christianity and philosophy are set apart as rivals and non-harmonious wisdom that negates the possibility of unity of knowledge between the natural order and supernatural order as rooted in the unity of the concrete subject. This notion of Christian philosophy may ignore the historical emergence and continuous development of Christian philosophy from existing philosophies such as Platonism and Aristotelianism.

Besides these weaknesses or disadvantages of Kamiński's notion of Christian philosophy it has the important advantage of distinguishing Christianity, and in particular theology, from philosophy considered as rational knowledge and based on its object, premises, conceptual apparatus, end-purpose and formal structure/content. This entails the cultivation of philosophy that is epistemologically and methodologically autonomous but generally in harmony with Christian faith rather than creating a separate

philosophy with a distinct content called Christian philosophy. It saves theology and Christianity in general against the criticism and accusation associated with appropriating a particular philosophy as its own. Therefore, the Christian philosophy of Kamiński may be sought within the causes, origin and objectives or the overall aims of his philosophy, that is, its functional aspects which are presented and argued here as fitting the idea of Christian philosophy.

The first point to note is that he accepts a certain view of philosophy that is subservient to theology. Kamiński's realistic metaphysics as philosophy in this narrow sense meets this criterion of being designated as a Christian philosophy. According to Kamiński, the aspirations of theology to be a true scholarly domain can be aided and fulfilled more perfectly through the help of philosophy which is the natural cognition of reality. The knowledge acquired by realistic metaphysics expressed in general and abstract terms provides theology and supernatural knowledge with tools for explaining the truth of religious faith and the human being in relation to God. Kamiński's metaphysics and methodology in particular possess the necessary tools to organise and harmonise natural and supernatural knowledge and demonstrate that faith is not irrational but a complement of human reason. The relationship between philosophy and theology is characterised by the dependence of the latter upon the former (Kamiński 2019e, 214). Such assistance and function by philosophy concerning theology are not found in every philosophical system that tries to explain reality (Kamiński 2019e, 209–18). Attempts to deploy some philosophical trends, their tools, and methods in theology have produced disastrous consequences. "This happens when the philosophical tools and means used in this understanding are not adjusted to the primary purpose which, the understanding of the deposit of faith accompanied by its integral preservation" (Kamiński 2019e, 215). Therefore, the instrumental use of philosophy in theology is conditioned on the particular philosophical system and the content of its philosophical doctrine which Kamiński's realistic metaphysics fulfils in relation to Christianity and may be referred to as Christian philosophy.

Second, theology as the quest for knowledge of faith comes into contact with minds who have been philosophised at different levels. Consequently, studying theology in an entirely aphilosophical manner is practically difficult (Kamiński 2019e, 214). But not every philosophy is congenial to theology as shown by Kamiński in his survey of the historical relationship between philosophy and theology (Kamiński 2019e, 215). The difficult but possible harmonious relationship between philosophy and theology which Kamiński charts indirectly points out the kind of philosophy that is

compatible with theology (Kamiński 2019e, 214). I argue that such a philosophy can be understood in a sense as a Christian philosophy. Kamiński identified and equated such philosophy with realistic metaphysics that embodies and employs a metaphysical (and realist) theory of reality. Besides, the metaphysical philosophy in question must be compatible with the heritage of faith so that philosophy and theology can create a doctrinally unified system and become complementary in their content but at the same time remain separated methodologically and epistemologically. This fulfils the criterion of being a Christian philosophy because as Kamiński maintains, the fundamental truths about man, his place in the universe in relation to God are comprehended by the theologian only through the metaphysical theory of existence. The consideration of man from a purely epistemological, analytical, reflexive standpoint and the study of man by the natural sciences do not provide adequate answers because they are lacking in transcendental and wisdom-oriented cognition (Kamiński 2019e, 216). Kamiński's proposal is significant because it points out the goals and possibly the content of Christian philosophy as endorsed and elaborated by Pope John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio*, as will be shown shortly.

The third sense in which we may speak about the Christian philosophy of Kamiński can be sought in the tradition to which Kamiński adheres. Andrzej Bronk (as cited in Rembierz 2019, 85) described the double heritage that Kamiński enjoyed as follows:

S. Kamiński was a genius autodidact, associated with two traditions: the scholastic one and the tradition of the Lvov-Warsaw School. Through philosophical-theological studies, he placed himself within the framework of existential Thomism. At the same time, he confirmed his spiritual affinity with the ideas of K. Ajdukiewicz, T. Czeżowski, I. Dąbska, and partially with T. Kotarbinski and J. Śłupecki, with whom he had personal contacts. This dual heritage had influenced his analytical-synthetic approach and the direction of his interest.

Thus, what may be identified as a Christian influence in his philosophy comes from his association with scholastic philosophy. Consequently, he conceived metaphysics or the theory of being to be "indispensable and sufficient for the full establishment of the rational basis of a worldview (and as a platform for debating worldviews), and for validating strictly philosophical implications of scientific cognition" (Kamiński 2018a, 34). There is no doubt that this worldview for Kamiński was shaped by Christianity which at the time was under attack and rejection. This is evident from the philosophical currents such as Marxism and Positivists who rejected

metaphysics and the worldview it supports. Kamiński's philosophy and in particular his theory of being was partly a reaction to this attack. Though it is far from being a philosophical polemic for Christianity, it is most friendly and reconcilable to the Christian faith or doctrine. This is consequent to the fact that his philosophy was developed within a Christian environment and can be regarded as Christian philosophy on the basis that some of his philosophical or doctrinal standpoints would not have risen outside the influence of Christianity (see: *Fides et Ratio*, no. 76).

Furthermore, Kamiński accepts and endorses the long-standing tradition in Classical philosophy of associating philosophical knowledge with wisdom, and this might be treated as a fourth mark of Christian philosophy. Philosophy constitutes and generates a special kind of knowledge, that is, wisdom. Wisdom here is understood to mean more than the accumulation of information. It is about knowing the significance, ultimate principles, and purpose of all things in relation to themselves and above all in relation to life and existence (Kamiński 2019, 164). Rembierz further states that:

From the metaphilosophical perspective of classical philosophy, Kamiński claims that “complete metaphysical cognition constitutes the fundamental element of the house of wisdom and the wisdom, taken ideally, is the necessary model, the beginning and the aim of philosophising.” If such metaphilosophical, as well as metaphysical and anthropological, assumptions are accepted, the category (value) of wisdom becomes indispensable in philosophy. (2019b, 102)

Such emphases captured from the foregoing, which reference philosophy with wisdom resonate with Christian theology. The understanding of philosophy and in particular metaphysics as wisdom-oriented knowledge was expressed by Karol Wojtyła (1994)¹ in his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* as well as in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*, where he expressed the need for a philosophy that has a true metaphysical range and wisdom-oriented character. Such a philosophy does not shy away from asking radical questions “of truth about personal existence, about being and about God” (*Fides et Ratio*, no. 5). Current philosophy cannot ask such questions because of the distrust in the great capacity for knowledge that the human person possesses. There is a need for philosophy to be genuinely metaphysical, for when it shuns metaphysics it is radically unsuited for the human-project because it is metaphysics that helps the human person to move from phenomenon to

1. Known now as St. Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) is counted among the founders of the Lublin Philosophical School.

foundation in the consideration of reality. In this, reason transcends empirical data to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for the truth as its principal task (*Fides et Ratio*, no. 5).

Jacques Maritain further asserts that: “wisdom is the highest knowledge, most fundamental and ultimately grounded. Its systematised version is to some extent constituted by philosophy, or more specifically classical metaphysics, which is located between science and wisdom” (as cited by Kamiński 2019d, 164). Wisdom as a result of metaphysical cognition along with wisdom acquired through science Kamiński designates as natural wisdom. In other words, philosophical knowledge is natural wisdom understood as “the basic knowledge of reality, justified in a definitive way” (Wolsza 2019, 127). Besides, “wisdom may also come from sources,” Kamiński maintains, “not typical to natural cognition, but from supernatural faith. Then the deepest understanding occurs in the light of the Revelation—*fides est initium sapientiae*. Its systematised form is usually theology” (Kamiński 2019d, 164). The two forms or orders of wisdom are not contrary or contradictory to each other. Neither does one supplant the other. And again, neither is the human subject pulled in different directions by the pursuit or desire of these two kinds of wisdom. Rather, one leads to the other. Supernatural wisdom and natural wisdom have as their sources faith and reason respectively which also represent two independent but complementary orders of knowledge. All sciences are united in what may be considered as their ultimate goal: the knowledge of the truth, the acquisition of wisdom (cf. *Fides et Ratio*, no. 50).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Kamiński’s classical philosophy tends naturally towards transcendence and consequently towards theology. Thus, Kamiński’s metaphysics as philosophy meets the criterion of being a Christian philosophy in the sense defined by John Paul II as,

a Christian way of philosophising, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith. It does not, therefore, refer simply to a philosophy developed by Christian philosophers who have striven in their research not to contradict the faith. The term Christian philosophy includes those important developments of philosophical thinking which would not have happened without the direct or indirect contribution of the Christian faith. (*Fides et Ratio*, no. 76)

The idea of the openness of philosophy towards the transcendent dimension and ultimately towards God was very well formulated by Stefan Swieżawski, another founding member of the Lublin Philosophical School. He

claimed that the function of philosophy is “to lay down firm foundations, give basic orientation, but at the same time to open up horizons, stimulate cognitive initiative and at the same time—I would dare say—demonstrate its insufficiency” (Swieżawski 1958, 619–21). The fifth mark of the Christian nature of classical philosophy can be seen in its concept of God. As mentioned earlier, classical philosophy starts from experience and examines real beings under the general aspect of existence, and searches for the ultimate reasons for a being outside a being itself. “The concept of the theory of being” Kamiński claims “provisionally assumes the rational character of the world and the possibility of its ultimate theoretical explanation” (Kamiński 2018d, 208–9). The idea of ultimate explanation and the discovery of the first principles of beings, especially the principle of sufficient reasons and that of inner causality raises the issue of the Absolute Being. Kamiński (2018c, 95–6) states that for “those principles do not yet confirm the existence of the Absolute. They constitute (among other things) the premise, and also in a sense a rule for proving the thesis “the Absolute exists.” For, in the process of the ultimate explanation of being, the Absolute Being is recognized as the reason for being in general, and so a system of theses “concerning the existence and essence of the Absolute should fit in general metaphysics as its culmination” (Kamiński 2018c, 96). The research into the essence of the Absolute shows in turn that the First Cause is a Person. Thus, the metaphysical concept of The Absolute-Person is compatible with the Christian understanding of God, even if “Neither concepts of God nor the thesis of God’s existence are capable of becoming the starting point of explanation in the theory of being. For it is not, by any standard, a rationalisation of religious faith” (Kamiński 2018c, 98). It was conceived to advance a realistic metaphysics or theory of being that would endeavour to have ultimate cognition of reality in its, necessary, and universal (transcendent) structures. It was to affirm the comprehension of these aspects of reality or being which the natural-mathematical disciplines and some of the philosophical trends of the contemporary time could not attain based on their peculiar approaches and methods. Therefore, Kamiński’s philosophy, to the extent that it is open to the transcendent reality, and helps to understand the rationality of faith, could be said to be a Christian philosophy.

THE SUITABILITY OF KAMIŃSKI’S METHODOLOGY FOR PRACTISING CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Kamiński states that “There is a specific answer to the ‘how to philosophise’ that the creators of the so-called theory of being attempt to give, and it is to link tradition with modernity” (Kamiński 2018d, 205). He had his sights

on contemporary issues and developments in science that affected philosophical discussion and development which were considered important to be included in philosophy. As a result, methodological developments in science and philosophy are the most important areas of his contributions to philosophy. The development of his methodology (see Krapiec and Maryniarczyk 2010, 26) and doctrinal standpoints in philosophy were drawn from his debates within the Lvov-Warsaw School, Krakow Circle, and the Lublin Philosophical School (Rembierz 2019b, 85). Consequently, Kamiński's methodology is a synthesis of the methods of these schools into a single method designated as existential Thomism and the analytical-logical method. The use of this dual method is evident in Kamiński's meta-philosophical and metaphysical pursuit in the process of explanation, demonstration, and rational justification when considering an issue. The simultaneous use of existential Thomism and analytical-logical methods enable him to carry out assuredly the multisided exploration of issues (Rembierz 2019b, 85). Kamiński's methodology is conciliatory, analytic and innovative in its approach to the well-established philosophical tradition. It is also critical and selective when adapting new developments and approaches in philosophy. Hence Kamiński (2018d, 211) writes that "the conception of being cares not for the faithfulness either to the Thomist tradition or to some likings of contemporary thinkers. Instead, it seeks to be faithful primarily to its natural object—the existing reality."

Thus, the suitability of this philosophy also arises from the fact that it makes use of the method of objective cognition, for the reason of which it examines and explains apprehended and objective reality so that truly transcendental knowledge is acquired and consequently avoiding the error of falling into idealism, subjectivism, and relativism. This is important because Kamiński rejects the substitution of really existing things and persons as the object of philosophical cognition and their replacement with different kinds of subjectivism which simply "reduce philosophy to an analysis of cognitive sign, concepts, language, or the data of consciousness" (Krapiec and Maryniarczyk 2010, 30). Kamiński quickly points out that he does not completely reject the meta-objective cognition approach to philosophy but that it cannot constitute the formal object of metaphysical cognition (Kamiński 2018d, 211). The reason being that "our knowledge is not primarily self-knowledge. We cognize ourselves simply by living in the world and having it under our close attention. Thus, the reflection regarding matters of the theory of cognition is essentially placed in metaphilosophy" (Kamiński 2018d, 211).

The fact of searching for the objective truth allows us to employ philosophy in building a world view. Kamiński stresses the social role of philosophy

very much (Kamiński 2018d, 205–6). If one takes into account that the concept of human dignity and truth are central to Christianity, the relevance, contributions, and suitability of Kamiński's concept of philosophy and method concerning practising Christian philosophy should be evident (Gałęcki 2016, 120–9).

Kamiński's approach has its origin in the desire to formalise and systematise philosophy for the reasons of understanding, meaning, clarity, precision in both thought and expression, but does all for the sake of explaining reality by reference to ultimate ontic reasons. As a logician, methodologist and analyst these goals were actualized through the conception and explanation of the theory of being by the theistic (existential Thomism) and the analytical-logical method. Kamiński understood clearly the strength and deficiency of each method and therefore combined or synthesised both methods to form one method that could overcome the weakness inherent in a single method taken alone. This is a very significant advantage. Kamiński's concept of philosophy and methodology, thus provide a constructive method and philosophical rigour for Christian philosophers that constitute an important advantage crucial to engagement in the contemporary philosophical discourse, debate and dialogue; and consequent to the emergence of a genuine theological, philosophical worldview that is also genuinely Christian in its outcome and nature. It is not then surprising that John Paul II stated that,

As a search for truth within the natural order, the enterprise of philosophy is always open—at least implicitly—to the supernatural.... The assent of faith, engaging the intellect and will, does not destroy but perfects the free will of each believer who deep within welcomes what has been revealed. (*Fides et Ratio*, no. 75)

Kamiński's philosophy and the Lublin Philosophical School in general shows the possibility to search for truth with independent methods and attain objective knowledge while remaining open to transcendence. This philosophy meets the requirement of being called Christian philosophy at least within the conception of John Paul II. "With its enduring appeal to the search for truth, philosophy has the great responsibility of forming thought and culture; and now it must strive resolutely to recover its original vocation" (*Fides et Ratio*, no. 6.)

In conclusion, therefore, if it is true that the proper medium to comprehend the truths about man and his place in the world in relation to God is only through a realistic metaphysics which uses metaphysical (and realist) theory of reality (Kamiński 2019e, 217), the argument points to only

one fact, that is, such a philosophy has elements that are compatible with theology and Christian faith. Thus, we may refer to such a philosophy as Christian philosophy because it provides a rationally acceptable explanation of Christian faith differentiated methodologically and epistemologically from other branches of philosophy and importantly from theology itself. “Philosophy as a certain apparatus and style of thinking” Kamiński asserts, “serves theology if it does not cause the violation of the deposit of faith.” Again, such a philosophy may be regarded as Christian philosophy because its philosophical tools and approaches are not tied up in ideologies that negate the Christian faith or revelation (Kamiński 2019e, 217–8). Kamiński’s concept of philosophy and methodology meet all the above requirements to be considered Christian in nature without compromising its status as a pure, universal, objective, and autonomous philosophy.

Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind, philosophical reasoning does not demonstrate any supernatural truth nor is able to convince unbelieving minds to accept religious faith. However, the metaphysical concept of philosophy and the epistemological methodology of the theory of being developed by Kamiński is congenial to Christian faith. It is therefore equipped with objections that are philosophically based in regard to the truths of Christian faith. Consequently, it is capable of enhancing the appreciation, comprehension of Christian truth upon the human mind.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Gałecki, Sebastian. 2016. “O możliwości istnienia filozofii chrześcijańskiej.” *Ruch Filozoficzny* 72 (3): 117–32. <https://doi.org/10.12775/RF.2016.028>.
- Herbut, Józef. 1987. “Problematyka teologii pojętej jako rewelacjonizacja naturalnej wiedzy o życiu chrześcijańskim.” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 35 (1): 293–307.
- John Paul II. 1994. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. edited by Vittorio Messori. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- . 1998. “Fides et Ratio.” Vatican. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html.
- Kamiński, Stanisław. 1961. “Specyficzność Poznania Metafizycznego.” *Znak* 13, 5: 602–37.
- . 2018a. “Theory of Being and other Philosophical Disciplines.” In *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*. Translated by Maciej Stępień, 15–46. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- . 2018b. “The Specificity of Metaphysical Cognition.” In *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*. Translated by Maciej Stępień, 9–94. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- . 2018c. “Theory of Being and Its Domain.” In *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*. Translated by Maciej Stępień, 211–30. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- . 2018d. “The Methodological Peculiarity of the Theory of Being.” In *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*. Translated by Maciej Stępień, 205–47. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.

- . 2019a. "Contemporary Methods of Metaphysics." In *On the Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics*. Translated by Maciej Stępień, 15–46. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- . 2019b. "A Word from the Publisher." *On the Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics*. Translated by Maciej Stępień, 5–11. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- . 2019c. "Methods in Classical Philosophy." In *On the Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics*. Translated by Maciej Stępień, 39. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- . 2019d. "Types of Human Knowledge." In *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century*, edited by Kazimierz Marek Wolsza, 149–72. Krakow: Ignatianum University Press.
- . 2019e. "Does Philosophy Serve Theology?" In *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century*, edited by Kazimierz Marek Wolsza, 209–18. Krakow: Ignatianum University Press.
- Krapiec, A. Mieczysław, and Andrzej Maryniarczyk. 2010. *The Lublin Philosophical School*. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- Maritain, Jacques. 1959. *Existence and the Existent*. Translated by Lewis Galantieri and Gerald Phelan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Rembierz, Marek. 2019a. "How to Understand and Practice Philosophy: On the Concept of Philosophy Developed by Stanisław Kamiński." In *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century*, edited by Kazimierz Marek Wolsza, 21–40. Kraków: Ignatianum University Press.
- Rembierz, Marek. 2019b. "Metaphilosophical Issues and the Shaping of the Self-Awareness of Philosophy in the Search of Stanisław Kamiński." In *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century*, edited by Kazimierz Marek Wolsza, 83–102. Kraków: Ignatianum University Press.
- Sienkowski, Marcin. 2012. "Filozofia w teologii w ujęciu Stanisława Kamińskiego." *Studia Gilsoniana* 1: 91–101.
- Swieżawski, Stefan. 1958. "Rola filozofii w poglądzie na świat." *Znak*, 619–21.
- Wolsza, K. Marek. 2019a. "The Participation of Stanisław Kamiński in Philosophical Debates." In *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century*, edited by K. Marek Wolsza, 119–33. Kraków: Ignatianum University Press.
- Wolsza, K. Marek. 2019b. "Stanisław Kamiński's Influence on his Philosophical and Non-Philosophical Environment." In *The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century*, edited by K. Marek Wolsza, 103–17. Kraków: Ignatianum University Press.

