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The Relevance of the Lublin Philosophical School to the Contemporary Intellectual Milieu

A Bit of History

In literature one finds various names for the mode of philosophizing devised at the Catholic University of Lublin¹ in the 1950s: The Lublin Philosophical School, The Lublin School of Classical Philosophy, The Polish School of Realist Philosophy, and even Lublin Thomism. The name “The Lublin School” was used by Jerzy Kalinowski in 1966.² It then appeared in the title of an interview conducted by Władysław Stróżewski with Mieczysław A. Krąpiec in 1968: “O filozoficznej ‘szkole lubelskiej’” (On the philosophical “Lublin school”).³ Many sources indicate also that Kalinowski used the term “*école*

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¹ The Catholic University of Lublin is known in Polish as *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski*, in this paper regularly referred to by its acronym, “KUL.”

² Jerzy Kalinowski, “W związku z tzw. metafizyką egzystencjalną,” [In relation to so-called existential metaphysics] *Znak* 142 no. 4 (1966): 452.

³ Mieczysław A. Krąpiec “O filozoficznej ‘szkole lubelskiej’,” [On the philosophical ‘Lublin school’] *Tygodnik Powszechny* 22 no. 42: 1, 6.



philosophique lublinoise” in the journal *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* in a discussion of KUL’s philosophical legacy. As its founding fathers one usually lists: Mieczysław A. Krąpiec OP, Stefan Swieżawski, Jerzy (George) Kalinowski, Rev. Karol Wojtyła, Rev. Stanisław Kamiński. Later one adds: Antoni B. Stępień, Stanisław Majdański, Rev. Andrzej Maryniarczyk, Sister Zofia J. Zdybicka, Rev. Marian Kurdziałek, Tadeusz Styczeń SDS, and many others. There is no reason to present here the history of the School, as there are many publications devoted to this topic.⁴ However, it is worthwhile to mention the motives behind the creation of the School, as it is important for the School’s relevance to the contemporary cultural milieu. The chief founder of the School, Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, and his disciple Andrzej Maryniarczyk, indicate three main reasons. The first is the pressure of Marxism that was administratively imposed on all state universities. “This ideologization of the teaching of philosophy,” Krąpiec and Maryniarczyk claim, “threatened to shatter the foundations of humanistic culture by breaking the truth about man and the world, by enslaving free philosophical thought by ideology.”⁵ In the above idea, we already have a glimpse of two features of Lublin philosophy: truth-directedness and the recognition of the culture-creative role of philosophy. We will come back to these issues in the next section. The second reason was the need to respond to other propositions of how to philosophize, such as phenomenology, neo-positivism, and various schools of analytic philosophy. So, philosophy is taken seri-

⁴ See for example: Mieczysław A. Krąpiec and Andrzej Maryniarczyk, *The Lublin Philosophical School* (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2010); Mieczysław A. Krąpiec and Andrzej Maryniarczyk, “The Lublin Philosophical School: Founders, Motives, Characteristics,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 4:4 (October–December 2015): 405–422; Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik and Paweł Gonddek, eds, *The Lublin Philosophical School: History—Conceptions—Disputes* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2020; e-book).

⁵ Mieczysław A. Krąpiec and Andrzej Maryniarczyk, “The Lublin Philosophical School: Founders, Motives, Characteristics,” 407.

ously as a search for answers to fundamental questions. The existence of many methodological proposals of practicing philosophy, inconsistent with one another, is a problem to be faced. This explains the third reason: the need “to develop an updated conception of classical realistic philosophy (which was deformed by Suárezian neo-scholasticism and the essentialism of Christian Wolff and Joseph Kleutgen).”⁶ Behind that reason there lies a conviction that classical thinkers have the most to say in philosophy (we, therefore, should return to their original texts). Starting from their ideas, we should be able to deepen their answers to fundamental problems and to take up new problems that arise in therapidly evolving reality.

Before I show the contemporary relevance of the Lublin School’s mode of philosophizing, let us recall its basic methodological approach.

Methodological Characteristics of the Lublin Mode of Philosophizing

There are two assumptions of the Lublin mode of philosophizing: the intelligibility of the world and the possibility of cognitive access to it, which enables the objective apprehension of at least some of the world’s aspects. Thus, the School’s philosophy is not radically assumption-less. It is, however, not an objection, for the possibility of building a philosophy without any assumptions is itself a meta-philosophical assumption.

The crucial feature of Lublin philosophy is realism: everything that exists – in the language of the School’s metaphysics called “being” – may become an object of research. The proper object should be neutral, i.e., it should enable our constant contact with the investigated

⁶ *Ibid.*

object. So, reality is the final arbiter for our cognition. This explains why truth is the goal of philosophical cognition. In a metaphysical sense, the truth is the agreement of a being with the plan of its creator. In an epistemic sense, the truth is the *adaequatio intellectus et rei*, for when we wish to cognize a being, we must “adjust” our intellect to that being – what distinguishes cognition from imagination or projection. So, the being is a proper object of our intellect. When we formulate a result of our cognition – a proposition – we say how things are. This allows us to distinguish cognition from errors or lying.

The second feature – empiricism – follows from the acceptance of reality as an object and arbiter of cognition. Stanisław Kamiński claims: “the theory of being is to be an objective and purely realistic philosophy, and therefore, in its starting point it has to get in contact with the existing, concrete reality.”⁷ This contact is called “experience.” Human experiences are of various kinds, and there are no reasons to limit *a priori* the scope of that term to that which the empirical sciences called “experience.” The empirical starting point of philosophizing and a broad understanding of experience guarantees the openness of philosophy to ever-changing reality. Anything existing may become an object of investigation, even if no classical thinker thought of it; a classical understanding of an object might be deepened or modified, and new categories might be introduced. Technology serves here as an example. The Aristotelian understanding of *techne* is not sufficient to grasp, for example, artificial intelligence or virtual realities. Empiricism and openness are accompanied by the radicalized concept of cognition: the only direct cognition is captured in the existential

⁷ Stanisław Kamiński, “The Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics,” in Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin and Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu and Società Internazionale Tommaso d’Aquino, 2019), 290.

judgments “something exists,” but what it is and how it exists requires research.⁸

According to the School, the goal of philosophy is the ultimate explanation of being. Some clarification is needed here. When one claims that the truth is the goal of philosophy, one refers to the relationship between statements and reality. When one claims that the goal of philosophy is to provide an ultimate explanation of being, one refers to the relationship between statements and the cognitive subject. The explanation is an answer to the question of “why” and this is the cognitive subject that asks questions. More precisely: the explanation should indicate the ultimate and irrefutable causes of the cognized ontic order. That is, it should indicate such factors the negation of which leads to absurdity or an aporia. Thus, according to the School, philosophy is satisfied neither with a critical analysis of knowledge, nor with a reflection on the content of consciousness, nor with any interpretation of signs. It is an object-oriented type of cognition. Such philosophizing is subjected to logico-methodological rigor and criticism, its assertions must be intersubjectively communicable and justifiable. How very seriously the founding fathers took this basic requirement of rational scholarly activity is testified by their articles on the methodology of metaphysics.⁹

⁸ Not all representatives of the School agree with such an understanding of direct cognition. See Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, “Amicus Plato, sed Magis Amica Veritas... On Philosophical Disputes within the Lublin School of Classical Philosophy,” in Lekka-Kowalik and Gondek (eds), *The Lublin Philosophical School: History–Conceptions–Disputes*, 217-258.

⁹ See for example: Stanisław Kamiński, Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki* [On the theory and methodology of metaphysics] (Lublin: TN KUL 1962; wyd. 2, Lublin: RW KUL 1994); Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin and Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu and Società Internazionale Tommaso d’Aquino, 2018); Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methods of Contemporary Metaphysics*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień

The features described above explain two other features: autonomy and unity. In relation to natural and social sciences, the humanities, and theology, philosophy is autonomous, for it has its own empirical starting point. That starting point cannot be data provided by any scholarly discipline, for such data are already grasped in the language of theories of a concrete discipline. Such data may of course become an object of philosophical research, as any other existing being. Contact with reality allows us to develop various disciplines: general metaphysics, epistemology, anthropology, ethics, the philosophy of science, etc. Each has its own empirical data as a starting point, and in this sense, they are methodologically independent of each other. If a new kind of being occurs, philosophy may develop a new discipline. Thus, philosophy exhibits openness in a double sense: taking new beings as research objects and developing new disciplines in response to new experience. The methodological autonomy of philosophy's disciplines does not exclude the unity of philosophy: each domain has the same goal, i.e., to provide an ultimate explanation of the investigated kind of being, and in searching for such an explanation, one refers ultimately to the ontic structure of that being. This is the reason why metaphysics is at the center of the School's philosophy.

Two other features of the School's philosophy should also be stressed. The first is historicism: in research, one takes into account the history of problems which allows one to discover within particular philosophical systems, despite conceptual differentiation, the permanent aspects of problems, as well as the influence which accepted assumptions, research methods, modes of explanation and justification executed on the interpretation of those problems. This in turn makes it

(Lublin and Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu and Società Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino, 2019); Stanisław Kamiński. *On the Metaphysical Cognition*, trans. Maciej B. Stępień (Lublin and Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu and Società Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino, 2020).

possible to grasp the nature of a problem and discover ways of finding a satisfactory answer to it. One needs to emphasize that the term “historicism” has a methodological sense here, and it does not open a path to relativism. Historicism explains why dialogue is a proper way of developing philosophy. The second feature is wisdom-directedness: understanding the foundation of reality, the place of the human being in reality and the meaning of human life, finding the truth about the good and taking the side of the good (theoretical and practical wisdom).

Having accepted such a nature of philosophy, the School ascribes an important role to philosophy. Kamiński explains: “The most profound and substantively accurate cognition of the world, and the hierarchy of values, is indispensable for a proper human, culture-formative activity. Philosophy should serve as a guide in this endeavor, as it indicates and ultimately justifies in the ontic order, why one should prefer certain value-forming behaviors, uniformly solves issues outside the scope of particular domains of culture (religion, morality, science, and art). Finally, it also provides the means of understanding the transformations of culture, together with the criteria of evaluation of cultural achievements. Philosophy is therefore self-consciousness, as it were, of culture. It permeates culture, but it is not reduced to any of its domains, merging them – through theory – in ways which enable human beings to perfect themselves in a harmonious and complete manner. Human beings are creators of culture, but they themselves are also being formed by it. And for this reason, philosophy should contribute to the personalistic character of culture, that is demonstrate in which way culture can be worthy of human beings and serve their development the best.”¹⁰ This role makes an argument for the return to classical thinkers and historicism: “If philosophy has an enormous

¹⁰ Stanisław Kamiński, “On the Nature of Philosophy,” in Kamiński, *On the Metaphysical Cognition*, 206.

influence on human thinking and acting, and the human being is forced to philosophize, then he/she should do it in a responsible manner, making use of the accomplishments of the greatest thinkers.”¹¹

Is this paradigm of philosophizing still relevant in the contemporary intellectual world? In two remaining points, I will argue for a positive answer to this question.

The School’s Response to the Post-truth Conditions

According to the Lublin School, philosophy should be a “self-awareness of culture” and therefore – with its empiricism and openness – it should be able to respond to cultural phenomena. One of them is a phenomenon called “post-truth.” In 1967, Hannah Arendt noticed that the real antagonist of factual truth is an opinion, rather than a simple lie. For a liar accepts the difference between truth and falsity and conceals a falsehood under the name “my opinion.”¹² Fifty years later, Daniel Dennet claims that the real danger facing us is that we have lost respect for the truth and facts.¹³ We may say that the opinion is now established as the truth and this is called the “post-truth condition.” The term “post-truth” was first used by Steve Tesich in a 1992 article “A Government of Lies.”¹⁴ The word then became popular. In the year

¹¹ Stanisław Kamiński, “Wstęp,” [Introduction] 11.

¹² Hannah Arendt, “Truth and Politics,” in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), 227-264. It is a revised text that was originally published in *The New Yorker*, February 25, 1967.

¹³ Carole Cadwalladr, “Interview with Daniel Dennett,” *The Guardian*, February 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/feb/12/daniel-dennett-politics-bacteria-bach-back-dawkins-trump-interview>.

¹⁴ Steve Tesich, “A Government of Lies,” *The Nation*, January 6, 1992, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+government+of+lies.-a011665982>.

2016, “post-truth” was declared by the Oxford Dictionaries to be the “Word of the Year.” According to *The Guardian*, post-truth is “defined by the dictionary as an adjective ‘relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.’”¹⁵ Thus, I confront a statement not with reality but with my beliefs and emotions/feelings – if it agrees with my belief and I like it, it is true. It would be a new definition of truth: *adaequatio intellectus et affectuum meorum*. Emotions become a new criterion of truth. The term “my” is crucial here. Since my emotions are not less important than the emotions of other people, there is no reason why I should take the “truth-recognizing emotions” of other people as my criterion. In consequence, there is “my truth” and “your truth.” Claiming that a certain statement is true per se is seen as imposing that statement on me. How can the School’s philosophy respond to this phenomenon?

The first thing to notice is that in the case of post-truth, the mind is enclosed within itself. In the School’s philosophy, the proper object of intellect is being, so the intellect should accept what it recognizes as beings organized in what is called “a fact.” It is an ontic relation. When facts are rejected, the intellect is deprived of its proper object, and one cannot distinguish between cognition, imagination, and wishful thinking. The situation is even more complicated. Emotions are a kind of being, so they may become an object of cognition. If we use “my liking” as a criterion of the truth of the statement on my emotions, a *regressus at infinitum* occurs. My liking indicates what is true concerning my emotions; but my liking may be an object of research, so now my liking is a criterion of the truth of the statement on my liking... The process may be repeated. To stop that process, one needs to arbi-

¹⁵ Alison Flood, “‘Post-truth’ named word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries,” *The Guardian*, November 15, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/nov/15/post-truth-named-word-of-the-year-by-oxford-dictionaries>.

trarily decide which emotion is an ultimate arbiter of the truth. The will and the intellect are separated. This opens a road to manipulation. Of course, one may manipulate you by selecting facts or presenting them in a distorted way to get your acceptance of a thesis. Yet, facts are a part of reality, so in many cases you may consult facts and decide whether or not a given thesis should be accepted. It is much more difficult when one influences emotions, for you cannot consult whether your emotions concerning facts are proper or not with regard to those facts, unless you turn your intellect to facts themselves.

Here another complication arises. As noticed above, the truth has a binding power, expressed by Tadeusz Styczeń in the claim: What I myself stated as true, I must not deny.¹⁶ According to Karol Wojtyła, Styczeń, and Kamiński, this statement captures the original human experience. In that experience, one is self-informed both about facts and about being the author of a claim. And the self-imperative of affirming the truth for its own sake occurs – “Verité oblige.” If I deny what I myself recognize as a truth, I introduce an ontic fracture into myself: as a cognitive subject, I recognize that this cat is black, but as a willing subject, I reject that claim. This binding power follows from the fact that I adjust my intellect to reality, and reality is independent of my cognition, will, and emotions. If a cat in front of me is black, it is black, regardless of my liking or not of that fact. I might wish that the cat was white, I might have expected the cat would be white, I might imagine the cat is white – but the cat is at it is. Once I take emotions as the factor establishing the truth of a statement, the binding

¹⁶ See Tadeusz Styczeń, “Etyka jako antropologia normatywna,” [Ethics as a normative anthropology] in *Wolność w prawdzie* [Freedom in truth], Tadeusz Styczeń, ed. Kazimierz Krajewski (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL–Instytut Jana Pawła II KUL, 2013), 313-349. Also Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, “Metodologicznie zasadny punkt wyjścia etyki jako nauki,” [The methodologically founded starting point of ethics as a science] *Ethos* 122 (2018): 346-363.

power of truth disappears. This fact has further consequences. When the reality makes the truth of a statement, I and everybody else is bound by that truth. Here we are equals: neither social status, nor gender, nor religion, nor political stance prevents us from the cognition of the truth; and none of these factors guarantees that we cognize the truth. So, as a cognitive subject I need to enter into a dialog with my equals and take their cognitive results seriously. If there is a dispute between us, there exists an external arbiter: reality. And it might even turn out that we were all mistaken. If emotions are taken as a criterion of truth, they make us equal in a certain sense – my emotion is as important as yours. Yet, for me, my emotion is decisive in what statement I should accept, for you – yours. And there is no external arbiter to decide between us. “My truth” has a status of my opinion. So, what remains to decide which statement should be accepted is power. Arendt is therefore right when she claims that opinion is a prerequisite of all power.¹⁷ Thus, the analysis of the phenomenon of post-truth in the Lublin School’s paradigm allows us to evaluate this development of culture: despite hopes, it does not liberate the human person from power, but subjects her to power. Only the recognition of the existence of the truth and its binding power is liberating.

The School’s Philosophy as a Framework for Doing Science

After centuries of claiming that science is value-neutral, nowadays there seems to be a general agreement that science is value-laden. The value-ladenness means that a researcher has to make value judgments in order to complete a research and draw its consequences. Those

¹⁷ Arendt, “Truth and Politics”, 233.

value-judgments do not occur in papers and textbooks, but they are a part of scientific argumentation. The need for value-judgments shows itself when we realize that the research is a series of decisions: what should be investigated and under what aspects, what methods should be used (including for example, experimental design), how to interpret the collected data, and which theory is suitable for interpretation, and to whom results should be presented and in what way.¹⁸ And since research is a collective rational activity, such decisions must be justified.

After Thomas Kuhn's analysis, the presence of value-judgments in science is accepted. Kuhn, in his paper "Objectivity, value-judgements and a theory-choice,"¹⁹ asks the question of what are features of a good theory. He mentions then consistency, generality, simplicity, and fruitfulness, and some more features. Yet – he claims – any attempt to use them encounters three kinds of problems: (a) scientists may understand them differently, as none of those features is precise; (b) they may see their hierarchy differently, and (3) there might be conflicts between them, for example a more general theory might be at the same time less simple. Kuhn concludes that various scientists, even those who share the relevant criteria, may make different decisions as to which theory should be accepted. There is no algorithm for making such judgments. Scientific criteria do not work as rules to be followed but rather as values influencing scientific judgments. Those "values" are called epistemic or cognitive and they are "indicators" that a given theory realizes the goal of science.²⁰

¹⁸ See Piotr Francuz and Robert Mackiewicz, *Liczby nie wiedzą, skąd pochodzą* [Numbers don't know where they come from] (Lublin: RW KUL, 2005), XXI-XXII.

¹⁹ Thomas Kuhn, "Objectivity, Value Judgements, and Theory-choice," in Thomas Kuhn, *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 320-329.

²⁰ Some authors, for example Larry Laudan, distinguish between epistemic and cognitive values, but this distinction is not relevant for the issue discussed here.

However, not only epistemic values are at stake in science. To show this fact, let us consider an example developed by Richard Rudner. Rudner claims that scientists qua scientists make moral value judgments. A researcher accepts or rejects a hypothesis. Since no scientific hypothesis is ever completely verified, a scientist must make a decision that the evidence is sufficiently strong to warrant the acceptance of a hypothesis. Rudner claims that deciding how strong evidence is “strong enough” is a function of the ethical importance that we ascribe to a mistake. That is, when a researcher is asked why she needs more evidence for that particular hypothesis and argumentation is pressed far enough, at a certain point a researcher says: because if I make an error and accept a false hypothesis, morally relevant consequences occur (for example, a human person’s life might be threatened). Thus, at least in some cases, in the process of justifying the acceptance of a hypothesis, a moral value judgment occurs. There are other steps in scientific research that also require value judgments.²¹ Science is then “nested” in philosophy that specifies the goal of science and moral (and other types of) values. Here the problem arises: if value judgments are subjective and they are necessary in scientific research, science is losing its objectivity (thereby intensifying the distrust of facts). We are then left either with an idea that there are various sciences (feminist science, aboriginal science) or that science has an instrumental value. This is a postmodern conclusion, expressed well by Stanley Aronowitz, that science is best seen as a socially constructed discourse that legitimates its power by presenting itself as truth.²² This statement must be well-understood. It is true that science is socially constructed, for scientific knowledge is a result of collaborative

²¹ See Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, *Odkrywanie aksjologicznego wymiaru nauki* [Discovering the axiological aspect of science] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2008).

²² Stanley Aronowitz, *Science as Power: Discourse and Ideology in Modern Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

action, and hypotheses gain a status of knowledge during debates. And it is true that science is power in a double sense. It makes it possible to construct technology that enhances human power, and it participates in the division of political and social power by providing relevant knowledge and instruments to those who paid for research. We should recognize these facts without necessarily presupposing that science only “legitimizes its power by presenting itself as truth,” for science possesses power because it is able to achieve truths about the workings of the world. However, in order to claim that, we need to show that value judgments – at least those that are necessary for doing science – have truth-values. The Lublin School is able to do this. As Stanisław Kamiński claims, value judgments already presuppose an understanding of what values are. In accordance with the School’s approach, values are seen as a kind of being, but not as members of a separate domain but as real relational beings, i.e. properties of an entity that is related to the personal being (her acts of cognition and volition). This is an ontic relation, and it grounds an objective understanding of values.²³ Thus, at least in certain cases, a value judgment grasps that relation and therefore can be true or false. Such judgments may be used in scientific argumentation without any fear that science loses objectivi-

²³ For a detailed discussion, see Stanisław Kamiński, “O wartości jako kategorii antropologicznej,” [On value as an anthropological category] *Roczniki Filozoficzne* [Annals of Philosophy] 31 no. 2 (1983): 105-115. The ontological relational understanding of values allows one also to solve the Humean problem of inferring “ought” from “is”, see Tadeusz Styczeń, *Etyka jako antropologia normatywna. W sprawie epistemologicznie zasadnego i metodologicznie poprawnego punktu wyjścia etyki, czyli od stwierdzenia: „jest tak” – „nie jest tak” do naczelnej zasady etycznej. Quaestio disputata* [Ethics as a normative anthropology. In the matter of the epistemologically founded and methodologically correct starting point of ethics, that is from the statement “it is so” – “it is not so” to the supreme ethics principle. Quaestio disputata], in Styczeń, *Dzieła zebrane* [Collected works], vol. 4, *Wolność w prawdzie* [Freedom in truth], ed. Kazimierz Krajewski (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL–Instytut Jana Pawła II KUL, 2013), 313-349.

ty. Moreover, this understanding locates values in a personalistic context (the School also offers a concept of the person, and this concept is normative) what allows us to see scientific truths as the good for the human person and therefore use the good of the human person as a criterion for decisions in research. In this perspective, it is the human person that is the ultimate goal of science. Science should serve the development of the person's potentialities to become the person as the human person should be – this is why becoming a “better and more efficient murderer” is not the fulfillment of human person. It becomes especially obvious when one gives a Baconian answer to the question of the goal of science: research is developed to improve human life. However, without the understanding of who is the human person, the concept of improvement has the foundation only in the subject's will. One group of people may see drugs as improving their life – in response, science should produce ever better drugs. Another group may see the recovery from drug addiction as an improvement – so science should elaborate such cures. Thus, without the realistic concept of the human person and her good, science is “blind to values” and remains in the hands of those who are able to commission research. In short, the Lublin School's philosophy not only justifies the presence of value judgments in science, but also defends science against treating it as “minds to hire.”

Conclusions

The paper argues that the Lublin School's philosophy devised in the 1950s is still relevant for facing contemporary problems. This relevance is a consequence of its methodological characteristics, especially its realism, empiricism, openness to new data, logico-methodological rigor of argumentation, truth- and wisdom-directedness, cognitive maximalism (the search for the ultimate and irrefutable explanation of any being), historicism, autonomy, and unity. These methodological

features make a consistent and integrated unity, i.e., they depend on each other and mutually explain each other. One may then see them as constituting a specific paradigm of philosophizing. According to the School, a philosophy built within such a paradigm is able to fulfill a fundamental role in culture and social life. Philosophy is a self-awareness of culture and allows us to evaluate the directions of cultural changes by determining whether culture becomes more personalistic.

The School occurred as a response to the Marxism administratively imposed on Polish universities. Paradoxically, both Marxists and philosophers from the Catholic University of Lublin agreed in their diagnosis of the significance of philosophy for culture and social life. However, the former, following Karl Marx's famous maxim that "philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it," wanted to harness philosophy in their fight for a communist society, to subjugate truth to politics, and the experience of the real world to an *a priori* construction. The latter followed the program of philosophy faithful to the truth about reality and believed that only then would philosophy fulfill its role in society and culture. The defense of thus understood philosophy grew in those days to the status of a moral task.

Marxism is not imposed on researchers, but the truth about the world and human beings is threatened again. It is then still a moral task to take up contemporary phenomena to show whether they make culture more personalistic. In this paper, I presented two such phenomena considered within the paradigm of the Lublin School: post-truth and the value-ladenness of science. The analysis of the first phenomenon considers the consequences of changing the criterion of truth from facts to emotions and previous beliefs. The conclusion is that this change threatens the human person, for it excludes from our debates an "independent arbiter": reality, therefore making power the final arbiter. The existence of "my truth" and "your truth" does not liberate a subject from intellectual oppression. On the contrary, it makes the power

(financial, political, military) a decisive factor in establishing – not discovering – what is true. It is worthwhile to quote here the warning of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: “In a world without truth, however, one cannot keep on living; even if we suppose that we can do without truth, we still feed on the quiet hope that it has not yet really disappeared, just as the light of the sun could remain for a while after the sun came to an end, momentarily disguising the worldwide night that had started.”²⁴ The second phenomenon here considered is the value-ladenness of science, i.e. the fact that value judgments are part of scientific argumentation. The Lublin School’s philosophy provides a framework in which that phenomenon can be understood without negating the cognitive status of science.

The analysis of the two phenomena is in its foundations based on decontradictification: indicating such factors that if one rejects them, one has to reject the phenomenon in question. And in both cases the argumentation is based on the recognition of ontic relations: in the case of post-truth, it is the relation of the intellect to being, and in the case of the value-ladenness of science, the relation of beings (properties of being) to the human subject. We may also evaluate the phenomenon in question. The development of post-truth conditions threatens the rationality and freedom of the human person and thereby makes culture less personalistic. The understanding of science as value-laden supports personalistic culture, for it allows us to develop science as a good for the person. There are also other phenomena in contemporary culture that could have been considered within the paradigm of the Lublin School. There is, for example, the debate over personhood: on the one hand, the concept of person is extended to refer to some animals (the Great Ape Movement), and on the other hand, it is ignored in the transhumanist project to develop post-human beings. There is also a debate

²⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, “Why I Am Still in the Church,” 21 April 2021, <https://www.preasantatreime.ro/en/blog/2021/04/19/why-i-am-still-in-the-church>.

on the value of technology: neither artifacts nor technological progress are value-neutral, but we need an axiological framework to develop a response to this fact – be it Technology Assessment or Value-Sensitive Design. Also, the development of AI opens an array of problems. But what has been presented in the paper constitutes a good argument that the Lublin School’s philosophy can successfully face contemporary intellectual problems in culture. Moreover, the analysis shows that after 70 years, the defense of truth and realism in philosophizing as well as defending philosophy as a scholarly discipline is still needed. It is not then surprising that John Paul II – Karol Wojtyła who was a member of the School – in his encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* claims: “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.”²⁵ The paper indirectly shows that the Lublin School strives to fulfill the original vocation of philosophy.²⁶

²⁵ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html, point 6.

²⁶ For discussion of this issue see Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, “The Vocation of Philosophy and Philosophy as a Vocation”, in *Logos et Musica. In Honorem Summi Romani Pontificis Benedicti XVI*, E. Szczurko, T. Guz, H. Seidl (eds.), Frankfurt a. Main, Peter Lang 2012, 277-291; Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, “O rozumieniu, jakie niesie filozofia,” [On the understanding which philosophy brings] in *Filozof wpatrzony w naturę i to, co boskie. Księga pamiątkowa z okazji Jubileuszu urodzin i pracy naukowej na KUL Księdza Profesora Andrzeja Maryniarczyka SDB* [Philosopher gazing at nature and at what is divine. A commemorative book on the occasion of Fr. Prof. Andrzej Maryniarczyk SDB’s birthday and anniversary of scientific work at KUL], Tomasz Duma, Arkadiusz Gudaniec, Zbigniew Pańpuch, Katarzyna Stępień, Paulina Sulenta (eds.) (Academicon, Lublin 2020), 657-679.



The Relevance of the Lublin Philosophical School to Contemporary Intellectual Milieu

SUMMARY

The term „Lublin Philosophical School” refers to the mode of philosophizing devised in the 1950’s at the Catholic University of Lublin. After a brief history, the paper first discusses some methodological features of this mode and the social role of philosophy as a self-awareness of culture. Employing the School’s philosophy, the paper then considers the issue of post-truth and that of the value-ladenness of science. The post-truth approach replaces evidence with emotions, and in consequence, argumentation is replaced with power. This in turn threatens the human person, her rationality and freedom. Admitting that science is value-laden and values are subjective leads to denying the cognitive status of science. Lublin philosophy offers such a concept of value and scientific knowledge which allows one to solve the problem created by the value-ladenness of science. Thus, the paper shows that the Lublin School’s philosophy can provide answers to contemporary problems and evaluate intellectual developments of culture.

Keywords: Lublin Philosophical School, realism, empiricism, truth, post-truth, science, values, vocation of philosophy

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