

WOJCIECH CHUDY

**MIECZYŚLAW ALBERT KRĄPIEC  
IN THE UNIVERSAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
PHILOSOPHY \***

Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec was a philosopher, theologian, humanist, co-founder of the Lublin Philosophical School, rector of the Catholic University of Lublin, initiator and chairman of the scientific committee of *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; born May 25, 1921, in Berezowica Mała, the Tarnopol voivodeship in Podolia (at present in Ukraine), died May 8, 2008, in Lublin (Poland).

Krąpiec graduated from the Wincenty Pol Classical Gymnasium School in Tarnopol in 1939. In that same year, he entered the Dominican Order in Kraków. During the German occupation of Poland, he studied in the Dominican Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Kraków. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1945. In 1946–1954, he worked as a lecturer in the Dominican Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Kraków. He wrote his doctoral dissertation in philosophy, entitled *De naturali amore Dei Super Omnia in Creaturis*, under the direction of Fr. Jacek Woroniecki, O.P.; it was accepted by the Angelicum in Rome in 1946. He wrote his doctoral dissertation in theology, entitled

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WOJCIECH CHUDY — John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland  
e-mail: tomasak@kul.pl • ORCID ID: no data

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*De Amore Hypostatico in Sanctissima Trinitate Secundum St. Thomam Aquinatem*, under the direction of Fr. Antoni Słomkowski; and he defended it at the Catholic University of Lublin in 1948. He began his habilitation research, entitled *The Existential Foundations of the Transcendental Analogy of Being*,<sup>1</sup> in the philosophy section of the Theology Department of the University of Warsaw in 1951, but, after the department was liquidated by the communist authorities, he finished it in the Department of Christian Philosophy of the Catholic University of Lublin in 1956. He became docent in 1956, associate professor in 1962, and full professor in 1968. He has been connected with the Catholic University of Lublin since 1951. He was dean of the Department of Christian Philosophy in 1958-1961, and 1969-1970. In 1970-1983, he was elected five times as rector. He contributed to the scientific development, renewal, and national and international promotion of the Catholic University of Lublin, which at the time was the only non-state university in the communist bloc.

Krąpiec was one of the main founders of the Lublin Philosophical School, also called the Lublin School of Classical Philosophy. As early as the 1950s, the School brought together such eminent thinkers as Stefan Swieżawski, Jerzy Kalinowski, Fr. Stanisław Kamiński, Fr. Marian Kurdziałek, and Fr. Karol Wojtyła. The School shaped its identity by taking the legacy of the great tradition of classical philosophy—Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. The School looked to the realistic current of neoscholasticism of the nineteenth and twentieth century, chiefly Étienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain. It went beyond the historical and scholastic framework, and engaged in dialogue with the most important movements in contemporary philosophy, such as neopositivism, neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, analytic philosophy, and existentialism. It became an important antidote to the Marxist philosophy

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<sup>1</sup> Originally in Polish: *Egzystencjalne podstawy transcendentalnej analogii bytu*.

and ideology that was obligatory then in the states of the Soviet bloc. It provided a comprehensive and original philosophical synthesis which encompassed the fundamental domains of philosophy, and which was set apart by its wisdom-oriented and realistic approach. Its understanding of reality was focused on existence—the fundamental reason for the realism of being and cognition. Its understanding of man, in his structure and action, was based on a vision of man as a person.

Krąpiec did research in the fundamental domains of philosophy; this resulted in monographs in general metaphysics, the methodology of metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, the philosophy of law, the philosophy of politics, the philosophy of culture (science, ethics, religion, and art), the philosophy of language, the metaphysics of cognition, the philosophy of the nation, and that of Christian culture. Krąpiec's literary legacy includes 30 books and over 400 articles, studies, and dissertations. 300 master's theses and 60 doctoral dissertations have been successfully completed under his direction; many of Krąpiec's students became full professors.

Krąpiec was a member of many learned societies, including the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Academia Scientiarum et Artium Europaea, Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, Görres Gesellschaft, Societas Humboldtiana Polonorum, Società Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino, Polish Academy of Sciences, Polish Academy of Learning, Polish Philosophical Society, Learned Society of the Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin Learned Society. In 1996, he co-founded and became the first president of the Polish Society of Thomas Aquinas (a section of the Società Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino). He was awarded the degree of doctor *honoris causa* by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto, Canada (1989), the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium (1990), and the Ternopil Experimental Institute of Pedagogical Education in Ukraine (1993). He was decorated and honored many times, receiving,

*inter alia*, the Order of Academic Palms from the French Government, the Grand Officer Order of Leopold II (Belgium), the Order of Polonia Restituta with the Star (Poland), the Premio Internazionale Salsomaggiore Parma (Italy), the Medal for Merit to the Catholic University of Lublin, and the Order “Polonia Mater Nostra Est” awarded by the Public Foundation for the Memory of the Polish Nation.

Krąpiec’s major works include: *Realizm ludzkiego poznania* [*Realism of Human Cognition*] (1959), *Teoria analogii bytu* [*Theory of the Analogy of Being*] (1959), *Dlaczego zło? Rozważania filozoficzne* [*Why Evil? Philosophical Considerations*] (1962; in French: *Pourquoi le mal? Reflexions philosophiques*, trans. G. Roussel, 1967), *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki* [*On the Theory and Methodology of Metaphysics*] (co-authored with Stanisław Kamiński, 1962), *Struktura bytu. Charakterystyczne elementy systemu Arystotelesa i Tomasza z Akwinu* [*Structure of Being. Typical Elements of the System of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas*] (1963), *Metafizyka. Zarys podstawowych zagadnień* (1966; in English: *Metaphysics. An Outline of the Theory of Being*, trans. T. Sandok, 1991), *Ja-człowiek. Zarys antropologii filozoficznej* (1974; in English: *I-Man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. M. Lescoe et al., 1983), *Człowiek i prawo naturalne* (1975; in English: *Person and Natural Law*, trans. M. Szymańska, 1993), *Byt i istota* [*Being and Essence*] (1981), *Człowiek, kultura, uniwersytet* [*Man, Culture, University*], ed. A. Wawrzyniak (1982), *Język i świat realny* [*Language and the Real World*] (1985), *Człowiek w kulturze* [*Man in Culture*] (1990), *O rozumienie filozofii* [*On the Understanding of Philosophy*] (1991), *Wprowadzenie do filozofii polityki* [*Introduction to the Philosophy of Politics*] (1992), *O ludzką politykę* [*On a Human Politics*] (1993), *Poznawać czy myśleć. Problemy epistemologii tomistycznej* [*To Know or to Think. Problems of Thomistic Epistemology*] (1994), *Psychologia racjonalna* [*Rational Psychology*] (1996), *Ludzka wolność i jej granice* [*Human Freedom and its Limits*]

(1997), *Filozofia—co wyjaśnia?* [*Philosophy—What Does It Explain?*] (1998), *Filozofia w teologii* [*Philosophy in Theology*] (1998), *Rozważania o narodzie* [*Considerations on the Nation*] (1998), *Arystotelesowska koncepcja substancji* [*The Aristotelian Conception of Substance*] (2000; its part I published in 1966 as: *Arystotelesowa koncepcja substancji* [*Aristotle's Conception of Substance*]), *O rozumienie świata* [*On the Understanding of the World*] (2002), *Sens kultury chrześcijańskiej* [*The Meaning of Christian Culture*] (2004).

Krąpiec sets maximal tasks for philosophy. In his conception, philosophy is wisdom-oriented knowledge. It has as its object the world of real beings (persons and things). Its method (called “decontradictification”) consists in identifying the ultimate causes—the negation of which would be the negation of a being that is being explained. Its primary domain is metaphysics; metaphysics is understood as a general theory of being, where being is understood primarily as a concrete existing thing. According to Krąpiec, without an appeal to existence as the fundamental reason for being, metaphysics cannot be cultivated, and philosophy becomes at most mythology or ideology. Therefore, metaphysics is the first among the philosophical disciplines.

## Metaphilosophy

Krąpiec's conception of philosophical cognition is rooted in the classical understanding of science that was developed in the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition. Common-sense pre-scientific cognition (everyday cognition) is the basis for scientific knowledge, and in the explanation of reality the accent is placed on the objective reason for cognitive apprehensions. The question “why?” underlies philosophical cognition; that question concerns the existence of all reality. That conception of knowledge is in opposition to the conceptions that have been dominant in the philosophy and methodology of philosophy of the twentieth cen-

tury where, on the one hand, following the thought of Immanuel Kant, various *a priori* elements of scientific cognition were highlighted, or, on the other hand, looking to the views of Auguste Comte, scientific knowledge was instrumentalized and subordinated to utilitarian ends. Krapiec's conception of philosophical knowledge is built upon cognitive realism. This kind of philosophy is in a position to provide cognition that is both universal (due to its analogical character) and concrete. The methodological principles of such a scientific attitude include the principle of historicity (including the postulate to draw on solutions already known in history—both in a positive and a negative sense), the principle of objective explanation, and the principle of cognitive neutrality, especially at the starting point of scientific cognition (in the case of philosophy, the fact of the existence of being is such a neutral starting point).

Philosophy is rational cognition that seeks an ultimate rational justification for everything that exists. It starts from common-sense cognition, which is the primary or primitive intuition of the real world. It ends with the explanation of the investigated fact by indicating a necessary and objective factor that allows the philosopher to ultimately explain that fact. Philosophy, thus understood, is metaphysics (the cognition of really existing reality). Metaphysical cognition is also that to which the purpose of philosophy—the rational, necessary, and ultimate explanation of known reality—is subordinated. In Krapiec's conception, the purpose of metaphysical cognition is focused on showing the ultimate causes of the existence of reality (unlike idealism, agnosticism, or radical empiricism). Krapiec appeals to the immediate experience of being, the basis of which is the primary or first cognitive act, i.e., the human intellect's contact with existing reality. The character of this act is defined by Krapiec's theory of immediate experience; according to this theory, the spontaneous and pre-reflective act of cognition, in which no intermediaries of an emotional or semiotic (*quo* or *quod*) type

participate, is a condition (both an ontic and epistemic condition) for the cognitive relation between subject and object. In Krąpiec's terminology, this act is called the existential judgment.

The existential judgment, in which we affirm the existence of anything whatsoever immediately and directly, constitutes the genetically and structurally primary and first cognitive act in the system of metaphysics; it is the "man's most primary cognitive experience."<sup>2</sup> It is filled with the content of what exists, and with the affirmation of the existence of that content. The next phase of metaphysical cognition, including reflection, subjective consciousness and reference, and the critique of cognition, is built upon the act of the existential judgment.

Krąpiec lists two types of immediate existential judgments: the judgment which affirms the existence of a being that is external to the cognizing subject ("something is—it exists"), and the existential judgment which is reflective with respect to the cognizing subject ("I am—I exist"). The judgment of the first type constitutes the metaphysical and epistemic point of support for the realism and objectivity of philosophy.

### **Metaphysics: The General Theory of Being**

In Krąpiec's conception, metaphysics is the fundamental philosophical discipline from which all the other disciplines of philosophy are derived or upon which they are dependent (as they are essentially particular parts of metaphysics). Metaphysics has as its task to explain in an ultimate way both individual beings (concrete things) and beings in general by indicating the inherent and necessary factor due to which they are beings. Krąpiec's existential conception of being, by highlighting the factor of existence and the fundamental composition of being from essence and existence, allows us to explain in ultimate terms met-

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<sup>2</sup> Stanisław Kamiński and Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Z teorii i metodologii metafizyki* [*On the Theory and Methodology of Metaphysics*] (Lublin: TN KUL, 1962), 194.

aphysical facts, such as the contingency of beings (the non-necessity of their existence), the pluralism of beings, their interdependence, and the problem of the source of existence. In this conception, the act of existence (*esse*) is the most profound and most perfect act of being; without the act of existence, any content (*essentia*) would remain only a pure possibility. Being apprehended in the aspect of existence ensures the realism and objectivity of cognition and of the language that man uses.

The composition of being from existence and essence as fundamental elements is made more clear by the discernment of universal properties, called the transcendentals, of cognition and language. The transcendentals (described by abbreviated names, such as: being, thing, unity, something, truth, good, and beauty), which are the results of reading the necessary and, at the same time, universal properties of beings, are fundamental cognitive structures, in the framework of which the process of cognizing both concrete things and all existing reality, takes place. The fundamental character of the transcendentals is expressed in the fact that they also encompass the so-called “first principles” of being and thought (the principle of identity, the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of the excluded middle, the principle of the reason of being, and the principle of finality), the articulation of which shows the unity of the fundamental laws of being and those of logic. On account of the analogical way of being of things, all metaphysical cognition also has an analogical character. Moreover, the order of metaphysical cognition (the construction of the theory of being, the primary and secondary character of theses, the hierarchy of determinations of compositions of being, of aspects of apprehensions, etc.) is determined by the ordering of internal and external relations of being. In connection with this, metaphysics in the formal aspect has the character of a system, the coherence of which is determined by the coherence of being and of all reality.



In Krąpiec's system, an especially important role is played by metaphysical separation. It is the method for singling out the object of metaphysics (being as existing). By separation we establish the difference between existence and essence, and we affirm the necessary character of this difference in the dimension of every contingent being. The definition of being as something existing makes possible the further analysis of being in metaphysical cognition. Beside the discernment of the transcendentals by separation, the discernment of the fundamental structures and compositions of being takes place in metaphysical cognition. These include the following: substance and accidents—the composition which allow us to explain the identity-based way of the being of things, and which also is the basis for the formation of the concept of person and that of relation; form and matter—the composition that explains the mutability of material beings; and act and potency—the composition that allows us to explain the dynamism of existing things.

The problems of the Absolute constitute the crowning point of metaphysics. In cognizing the Absolute, a special role is played by the reference to the analogy of being which consists in the similarity of all beings in the aspect of essence and existence. The affirmation of the analogical character of beings allows us to establish the hierarchy of beings, and makes it possible to answer questions concerning the ultimate source of existence, and the Being that is the reason for all reality. The answers are contained in the theory of the Absolute which results from the metaphysical analysis of contingent beings; that metaphysical analysis requires us to indicate the ultimate reason for their being. The establishment of the properties of the absolute Being and of the ways in which contingent beings participate in the perfection of the Absolute (the theory of participation) brings the theory of being to completion in the systemic aspect.

In Krąpiec's entire metaphysics, what comes to the fore, and determines its specificity, is the general existential aspect of the explana-

tion of being. There, existence (*esse*) is regarded as doubly important: in terms of being—for existence commensurate with essence is the ultimate and necessary reason, irreducible to other reasons, for the factual reality of everything that exists; in terms of cognition—for the capacity of being to be cognized is conditioned by the reality of being, and existential judgments constitute a constant element of metaphysical cognition.

### **Philosophical Anthropology and Ethics**

The starting point of the philosophy of man is found in the data that come from the apprehension that accompanies the existential judgment: “I exist.” The scope of the fundamental data includes especially man’s subjectivity and efficacy. At the same time, the results of general metaphysics serve the philosophical analysis of that data. Philosophical anthropology in its fundamental dimension is the metaphysics of man; the end of the metaphysics of man is to present the structure of human being, and to show and explain the foundations of man’s transcendence. Considered in metaphysical terms, man appears as a material-spiritual being whose reason for unity is the act of existence; considered as a substantial being (a subject), possessing a personal nature that is expressed in free and conscious action (science, morality, religion, creativity), man is open to truth, the good, and beauty, and in particular to God.

The cognition of the existence of one’s own “I” has its foundation in an existential judgment concerning the external world; the affirmation of the existence of “I” is epistemically based on the primary and first affirmation of the world’s existence. In the existential judgment of the type “I exist,” man discovers the specific existential value of his own “I,” which constitutes the center of all “his” (he would say “my”) acts, operations, and passive experiences. The existence of the

“I” is apprehended by reflection, for “in every instance of the intellectual cognition of our operations, especially intellectual operations, we have *in actu exercito* the affirmation of our own existence.”<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it is in the existential judgment concerning his “I” that man determines his own identity and the reality of the world and of himself. In his book *Ja-człowiek [I-Man]*,<sup>4</sup> Krąpiec presents a description of man’s fundamental psycho-physical structure: “I—mine.” By the variety of acts of which man is the efficient cause (“mine”) or with which he has solidarity, the “I” is manifested in its real existence; as it is at the same time immanent and transcendent in that which is “mine,” the “I,” just through what is “mine,” expresses itself and determines its own identity and development.

The metaphysical interpretation of the structure “I—mine” leads to the definition of the human being—the human being is a person, which Krąpiec defines as a “self of a rational nature.”<sup>5</sup> The main element that is typical of man’s personal being is his transcendence, both in relation to the world of nature and to society. The person is a being who exceeds the determinations of the world of nature because the person is endowed with the faculties of intellectual cognition and free will, and the ability to love disinterestedly. In turn, the person transcends society by virtue of being the subject of law, and on account of the completeness (the substantial character) of his being, and the dignity that he possesses; his dignity indicates that man is an end and not a means.

General metaphysics and philosophical anthropology is the basis upon which Krąpiec constructs his conception of ethics, i.e., his philo-

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<sup>3</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Realizm ludzkiego poznania [Realism of Human Cognition]* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1959), 589.

<sup>4</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Ja-człowiek. Zarys antropologii filozoficznej [I-Man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology]* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1974).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

sophy of human conduct. Metaphysical investigations allow us to discover the purpose of man's life, which is the actualization of the good of the person. Human nature is endowed with specific inclinations that direct man to the achievement of the end of life. Those inclinations are perfected by virtues, which are acquired by education and culture. On the basis of those inclinations, man freely makes moral decisions. A decision that leads to action that realizes a good perfects the human being in harmony with his human nature. Hence, in Krąpiec's conception, the decision is the proper object of ethics; the decision is the "reason for the being of rational and conscious human action."<sup>6</sup> Morality is present wherever man consciously and freely makes a decision regarding the realization of a concrete act; the good of the person (read in harmony with the truth of being) is the norm of morality.

### **The Philosophy of Politics and of Culture**

According to Krąpiec, man as a sovereign being and the author of culture stands at the center of the conception of society and culture. Sovereignty, which belongs to the human person by reason of the person's ability to make conscious and free decisions, determines man's priority over all group forms and structures, such as society or the state. Society is "the group of organized inter-human relations;"<sup>7</sup> those relations are by nature ordered to man's comprehensive personal development; this development constitutes the common good to which all other social goods are subordinated. The common good also constitutes the criterion for the evaluation of political and social systems. In Krąpiec's conception, the group of real relations of each human person to the

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<sup>6</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, "Decyzja—bytem moralnym [Decision—A Moral Being]," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 31, no. 2 (1983): 65.

<sup>7</sup> Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *O ludzką politykę [On a Human Politics]* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Tołek, 1995), 93.

common good, understood as the actualization of their personal potentialities, is the foundation for the existence of society.

Society, as a “naturally necessary” being, is bound by the principles of natural law. The realization of the common good depends on how the rules for the functioning of the community are based on principles resulting from a reading of man’s nature. Many social structures that exist are ordered to the supreme natural end, but the natural forms of society, i.e., the family, the nation, and the state, have special value and permanence; for they possess the closest relation to the realization of the common good of individual persons.

The whole of actions and their results, that constitute and at the same time express social life, compose culture. Man, as he realizes the common good and is turned toward the truth, the good, the beautiful, and the holy, is the author of culture. The subject of culture, i.e., man who directs himself in his action by the truth and the good, is the guarantor of culture in terms of culture’s being authentically humanist. In connection with its intentional mode of being, culture constitutes a system of signs that are of human origin and are given to man to read. Hence, language is an essential and constitutive element of culture; the fundamental connection of language with reality ensures the permanence of culture and defends culture from being separated from culture’s real ends, i.e., man’s good.

The life of the individual in society is determined on the basis of natural law by the domain of human rights. Those rights are the natural entitlements of each and every human person. Entitlements (*ius*), such as the right to life, the right to truth, and the right to freedom of conscience, possess their grounding in man’s rational nature, in particular in the human being’s relation to the common good, unlike positive law (*lex*), which is binding by virtue of the legislator’s will. Human rights in the sense of *ius* are the reason for positive law; the criterion for the legality of *lex* is whether or not positive law agrees with the principle of

the common good (Krapiec underscores that the UN Declaration of Human Rights is a document that ultimately appeals to rational human nature).

In the domain of the philosophy of politics, Krapiec advocates the priority of the common good and morality, and opposes the modern tendencies which (following Niccolò Machiavelli) shifted politics from the sphere of morality to the sphere of art, and reduced it to an order of contract and efficiency. In Krapiec's conception, politics is the prudent realization of the common good; politics as such, since it is subordinated to the end that is man's personal good, constitutes the domain of "the morality of human social action."<sup>8</sup> The state, which Krapiec defines as "the natural, necessary, and ordered association of families and small communities to achieve the human good,"<sup>9</sup> is brought into being for the sake of the good of sovereign individuals. Any absolutization of the state (e.g., the totalitarian mode of governance) is a deformation of social order and an axiological usurpation, even if it is done in the name of the common good, because only the individual person possesses the ability to realize the common good that, as the essential end, stands before the organism of the state. While persons are sovereign beings, the nature of social life consists in relinquishing parts of their sovereignty by individual persons. The structure of the state includes such essential elements as: law (the system of law) and state power (its role and the ways it is exercised). Therefore, the evaluation of a particular concrete state depends on the degree of realization of the common good by social and economic institutions under conditions of a specific legal and constitutional system.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

Krąpiec's metaphysical views are the foundation for the rational justification of his views in the domain of the philosophy of history.<sup>10</sup> A structural and essential analysis of particular types of civilization (in which he looks to Feliks Koneczny's historical findings) leads him to the conclusion that only Latin civilization creates real conditions to ensure and realize the natural rights of the human person. This is determined by fundamental features of Latin civilization, such as (1) the affirmation of the truth which is accepted as the end (norm) of cognition, (2) seeing the end of action in the honest good as such, (3) treating health as a condition for man's development, and (4) respecting private property as the foundation of economic life. Only in this type of civilization is the human person protected from and secured against usurpation or domination by the structures of the state. In the selection of Latin-Roman culture at the dawn of Poland's existence as a state, and in the role that the Catholic Church played over the entire history of Poland, Krąpiec sees the essential elements of the identity of the Polish nation.

### **Students and Continuers**

For more than half a century of his academic work, Krąpiec has influenced philosophical culture and formed several generations of philosophers. The large group of his students form a major part of those who developed or still develop realistic philosophy in academic centers in Poland. His students who became university professors include the following: Marian Card. Jaworski, Antoni B. Stępień, Władysław Stróżewski, Bp. Bohdan Bejze, Zofia J. Zdybicka, Tadeusz Kwiatkowski, Edmund Morawiec, Andrzej Woźnicki, Andrzej Wawrzyniak, Romuald J. Weksler-Waszkinel, Andrzej Maryniarczyk, Piotr Jaroszyński, Hen-

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 90 and 137.

ryk Kiereś, Krzysztof Wroczyński, Włodzimierz Dłubacz, Wojciech Chudy, Jan Sochoń, Bp. Ignacy Dec, Hugh McDonald, and Bogusław Paź.

## **Conclusion**

Because of the aspect of the existence of being, which is dominant in Krąpiec's investigations, his philosophy constitutes a cohesive system that explains all reality. The unity of cognition, man, and the world is in Krąpiec's metaphysics demarcated by the unity of being. His metaphysical work introduced many original solutions; e.g., he pointed to the absolutely primary and immediate existential judgment, he singled out the method of metaphysical separation, emphasized the significance of the integral language of metaphysics, singled out transcendentalizing cognition, formulated the theory of the analogy of being and cognition, based individual and social ethics on the foundation of the natural law, formulated the conception of man as a sovereign person, upon which he built the fundamental domains of culture (science, ethics, art, and religion).

For more than half a century of philosophical work that was consistent with and faithful to realism, Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec created a coherent system that, by a metaphysical explanation, encompassed the whole of reality that is accessible to human cognition. Both with respect to its comprehensive scope and its meritorious importance, Krąpiec's philosophy is the greatest achievement in classical philosophy in Poland and in the world in the twentieth century. The vision of the world that it reveals shows man's unity and harmony with the reality that surrounds him, and at the same time opens man to a connection with the transcendent Absolute.



**MIECZYŚLAW ALBERT KRĄPIEC  
IN THE UNIVERSAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY**

SUMMARY

This article introduces the life and work of Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec (1921-2008)—a Polish philosopher, theologian, humanist, co-founder of the Lublin Philosophical School, rector of the Catholic University of Lublin, initiator and chairman of the scientific committee of *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Krąpiec created a coherent philosophical system that, by a metaphysical explanation, encompassed the whole of reality that is accessible to human cognition. According to the author, Krąpiec's philosophy is the greatest achievement in classical philosophy in Poland and in the world in the twentieth century, both with respect to its comprehensive scope and its meritorious importance; for the vision of the world that it reveals shows not only the human person's unity and harmony with the reality that surrounds him, but also his openness to a connection with the transcendent Absolute.

KEYWORDS

Krąpiec, Lublin Philosophical School, Catholic University of Lublin, *Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, philosophy, metaphysics, realism, Thomism, existential judgment, metaphysical separation, metaphysical language, transcendentalizing cognition, theory of analogy, sovereign person.

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