

Synergic Anthropology by Sergiusz Chorużyj as a key to understanding the condition of modern man

Objectives, methodological assumptions and general form of the dissertation

The paper presents Synergic Anthropology (hereinafter: SA) by Sergiej Chorużyj (1941–2020) based on source materials (texts by the author himself) and auxiliary literature (texts by other authors). The aim of the work was (a) a critical presentation of SA, (b) showing its heuristic potential for a number of humanistic disciplines, (c) placing SA in the context of contemporary philosophy, Christian theology and the entire humanities. The implementation of the above objectives required the analysis and comprehensive reconstruction of SA in the form adopted for the academic dissertation.

The reconstruction of SA was made on the basis of Chorużyj's texts, records of his lectures and interviews, striving to understand the author at the source of his thoughts. The adopted research method can be described as **hermeneutic phenomenology** or a type of **descriptive hermeneutics**. Attempts were made to understand the thought of the Russian philosopher in its dynamics, following the logic of its shaping, the way of emerging a new general anthropological perspective from several basic intuitions as well as ontological and epistemological assumptions.

The whole dissertation consists of an introduction, three main parts, a summary and a bibliography of the subject. The introduction defines the objectives of the doctorate, describes the research method and translation assumptions. The first part is **descriptive**. Its content is the presentation of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of SA, the history (logic) of its formation against the background of Chorużyj's biography. The second part is **analytical**. It attempts a systematic approach to SA as a theoretical tool. The third part is **synthetic**. It presents selected areas of practical application of SA. In the summary, a series of juxtapositions of Chorużyj's ideas with authors belonging to the tradition of contemporary Western philosophy and Orthodox thought were made. It also presents a critical discussion around some of the fundamental assumptions of SA.

I present SA in two perspectives – diachronic (§2, §3, §4) and synchronic (§1, §5, §6). In the first case SA appears in its dynamics and development, in the second – as a coherent complex of ideas. The dissertation is a series of insights into the concept of the Russian philosopher, views each time from a slightly different perspective.

Synergic Anthropology in the landscape of contemporary Western thought

The starting point of SA is the conviction about today's anthropological crisis in the theoretical and practical dimension. Perceiving a deep crisis (ethical, epistemological, etc.) – this is the intuition that has been driving philosophy since the time of Plato. SA fits perfectly into the current discussions around the essence of philosophy, its place among other disciplines, its subject area, the methods used in it and the criteria applied. The direct inspiration for the author of SA is the thought of Søren Kierkegaard (the category of 'opening'), Edmund Husserl (the strategy of 'a small fraction saved'), Martin Heidegger (the concept of 'ontological difference') and Michel Foucault (the category of 'self practices').

Chorużyj's philosophical attitude is in line with the trend of deterritorialization of philosophy, its entry into the area of other scientific disciplines (cf. Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou), finding its own foundations, concepts and criteria in them. The Russian philosopher does not identify himself with postmodernism, but rather dissociates from this trend and formulates an alternative to it.

Russian author treats anthropology as a discipline autonomous from philosophy, as a transdisciplinary project based on its own methodology and vocabulary (cf. René Girard). His thought is not strictly theoretical, nor is it a practical science based on facts obtained in empirical research. The key topic for him is today's condition of humanity. Choruży defines it as striving for species euthanasia of man. The ability to counter apocalyptic tendencies is founded in Christianity, which has universal anthropological value (cf. René Girard). The philosopher sees in today's man a confusion of various anthropological formations, different topoi of the Anthropological Border.

Distancing himself from classical Western anthropology and the underlying categories of subject and substance, the Russian philosopher fits into the contemporary discussion on the future of the category of the human subject spun in French phenomenology (cf. Jean-Luc Nancy). For Chorużyj, the place where phenomenology and theology meet is the anthropological experience. The philosopher distances himself from the category of substances and emphasizes the dynamic aspects of existence expressed in terms of 'energy', 'synergy' or 'deification' (cf. Michel Henry). According to the philosopher, the new anthropology is to be an 'Anthropology of the Frontier' rather than an 'Anthropology of the Center'.

Synergic Anthropology in the Context of Contemporary Orthodox Thought

The Russian philosopher refers to the distinction between the essence (οὐσία) and the person (ὑπόστασις, πρόσωπον) emphasized by the Cappadocian Fathers. He adopts the Orthodox methodological attitude, according to which the human person cannot be expressed by means of concepts or definitions, man created in the image and likeness of God is objectively unknowable, just as his Divine Archetype is unknowable. The philosopher avoids any definitions of man or human person, focusing on its manifestations (energies), perceiving the human being as dynamic and open to transcendence.

Reaching for anthropological concepts developed in existentialism and phenomenology, without reducing the mystery of the human person to any rational and internally consistent theory, Choruży refers to the Orthodox thought about man, rooted in the heritage of the Cappadocian Fathers and developed in the writings of Grzegorz Palamas. He adopts the ‘Christological anthropology of deification’ as a model of anthropology, thus referring to contemporary Orthodox authors such as Panayiotis Nellas, Christos Yannaras and Joannis Zizioulas. The similarities concern e.g. adopting a relational understanding of the human person, according to which the proper way of being a person is being in a dynamic relationship to something/someone. A person is a relational event irreducible to common human nature, it is a way of human existence. Relationship with others/Other – is a way of actualizing a person, the condition of which is going beyond one's own borders.

The author of SA compares the existence of man in the world to the celebration of the Cosmic Liturgy (cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar). He emphasizes that by referring to man the concepts of *prosopon* and *hypostasis*, the Cappadocian Fathers made an ontological and anthropological revolution, abolished Hellenistic metaphysics in favor of a Christian understanding of reality, in which ontological priority is not given to generalities, but to the person.

The main message of Synergic Anthropology (own interpretation)

SA considers man as a dynamic and open reality, in its decisions and behavior oscillating between the *topoi* of the Anthropological Border – Ontic (internal and external) and Ontological (transcendent). Through his own, conscious and consistent effort, man is able to map these three areas in a new way, both in himself and in the surrounding space. Accord-

ing to SA, man is called to include two ontic areas in the transcendent area – the area of his own *psyche* and the surrounding empirical world. In this way, man saves, in the ontological sense, himself and the whole world around him.

The Russian philosopher defines a man consciously aiming at a similar goal as the Ontological Man. His coming is supposed to be a rescue from the ‘species euthanasia of man’. The Russian philosopher urges us to stand on the side of life, to preserve the image of man created ‘in the image and likeness of God’ [Genesis 1:26], to preserve ‘the image of the invisible God’ [Col 1:15]. In this respect, Chorużyj's thought is Christian *par excellence*. It resonates with the message of the papal encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (1995): ‘man is called to the fullness of life, which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in participation in the life of God himself’ (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, TUM, Wrocław 2021).

The significance of the dissertation

The work is the most complete of the existing critical approaches to SA, both in Poland and in the Russian-speaking area. The author of SA himself did not leave behind a comprehensive monograph in which he systematically presents not only SA itself, but also its various contexts and practical applications of his ideas.

A number of additional goals were also achieved in the dissertation, such as: (a) creating a complete bibliography of Sergiusz Chorużyj's texts and a critical bibliography of the author, (b) formulating the creative biography of the Russian philosopher, (c) indicating other areas of the humanities where it can be creatively and fruitfully used SA (including interpretation of a musical work, creation of a new theory of law).

The dissertation is intended to foster intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The dialogical attitude itself corresponds to the deepest theological and pastoral mission of the Christian Church. I see my dissertation as a continuation of the work and a tribute to Sergiej Chorużyj, an Orthodox Christian open to Catholicism, an author looking for deeper spaces for dialogue between both Christian churches, as well as between Christianity and modern culture.

Roman Turowski

Roman Turowski
Kraków, 07.11.2022