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METAPHYSICS IN THE LUBLIN PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOL

The introduction of the term *τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά* into philosophical language as a description that was more a librarian's indicating sign than an indication of subject matter is attributed to Andronicus of Rhodes (around 50 B.C.), who in organizing and publishing Aristotle's works gave this description to a collection of fourteen of the Stagyrte's books on philosophy in general, its chief questions (about what substance is, the principle of non-contradiction, unity, causes, ideas, and God), and for this reason placed them after the books of the *Physics*. This description was intended to indicate the writings that follow the physical writings. Nicholas of Damascus reaffirmed this name in the twenty years following Andronicus' edition of Aristotle's writings. As a historian, Nicholas also made a summary of Aristotle's doctrines. The term as a description of Aristotle's "first philosophy" persisted in the Latin language in the Middle Ages.

As philologists try to demonstrate, the ancient Greek language did not use the word *μεταφυσικά* either in the form of the adjective

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μεταφυσικός or as a noun, τὰ μεταφυσικά (or ἡ μεταφυσική). However, in the catalogue of Aristotle's writings called the *Vita Menagiana* (or *Hesychiana*), the most ancient manuscript of which dates back to the ninth century, the noun form of the adjective μεταφυσικός appears twice to designate the books of the *Metaphysics*: μεταφυσικά ι and μεταφυσικά κ (books “j” and “k”). This fact lends credence to another view (H. Reiner), that the term μεταφυσικά may have appeared already in the third century BC, and that its author was Eudemos of Rhodes or Ariston of Chios (as P. Moraux holds).

The Definition of Metaphysics

Just as it is problematic to establish when the word “metaphysics” appeared, so it is to establish the meaning of the word. It is not perfectly evident that the meaning should be treated in merely technical terms as a librarian's mark for a position in a collection of books. In his division of the sciences, Aristotle put first philosophy (what would be called metaphysics) after mathematics, not after physics.

In the neo-Platonic tradition (e.g., Simplicius), metaphysics was the science concerning divine things, those which are found above the world of nature (physics), but then a more proper term would be ὑπερφυσικά rather than τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά.

Alexander of Aphrodisia proposed another explanation for the term. He thought that metaphysics had been put after physics because the matters with which it dealt were the most difficult for the human mind and should be studied at the end.¹ Therefore, this term would indicate the order of metaphysical cognition, which should follow the cognition of the world of nature (physics), more than it would indicate the order of the things to which it refers (that is, things beyond the physical).

¹ See Pierre Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962).

St. Thomas Aquinas explained the term and the specific character of metaphysical cognition and the object of metaphysics in a similar spirit. For him metaphysics is a science that “goes beyond physics, since for us it is what we do after physics, as we should move from what is knowable by the senses to what cannot be known by the senses.”² The term “metaphysics” appears in Thomas’ work as a synonym for the terms “theology,” “divine science,” and “first philosophy,” since it investigates the ultimate reasons and reaches to the first cause, the Absolute—hence the term “theology” (*theologia*). It is also the most noble body of knowledge, pertaining to God, and man should be concerned for such a body of knowledge,³ hence the term “divine science” (*scientia divina*). It also concerns everything that exists, and for this reason all the sciences receive principles from it, hence the term “first philosophy” (*philosophia prima*).⁴ However, the term τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά conceived as *transphysica* designates a science that teaches how “from what can be known by the senses one should proceed to what cannot be known by the senses.”⁵ It is thus the science whose object is not some extra-physical (transphysical) world, but the same world that the physicist and the natural scientist study, the world in which we can discover what the physicists does not discover, since he holds to what is given to the senses without entering more deeply into it.

According to Aristotle, the science thus understood “considers being as being and that that belongs to it in an essential way . . . No other [science] apart from it considers being as being in general, but singling out some domain of being, it considers what belongs to it in

² S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Super Boethium de Trinitate*, cura et studio Fratrum Praedicatorum (Roma 1992), q. 5, a. 1, resp.: “Metaphysica, id est trans physicam, quia post physicam discenda occurrit nobis, quibus ex sensibilibus oportet in insensibilia devenire.”

³ Aristotle, “Metaphysica,” in *Aristotelis opera*, ex recensione J. Bekkeri, vol. II (Berolini 1831), 982 b 31–33.

⁴ *Super Boethium de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 1, resp.

⁵ Id.

some given aspect.”⁶ Metaphysics as Aristotle intended it designates the type of philosophical thought that concerns the things given to us in experience (*φύσις*—the physical world), that includes the entirety of the world and the entirety of things (*τὰ ὄντα* in the scope of its investigations, and the purpose of these investigations is to reach the truth (*θεωρία*) concerning the first and ultimate causes (principles) of the being of the universe.

From the beginning, the term “metaphysics” was referred to and reserved for the philosophical inquiries initiated by Aristotle. These inquiries were directed at the reality of the world given to us in empirical experience, and so to the same reality that occupies the philosophizing physicist (natural scientist) or the mathematician, but with the difference that whereas the physicist and natural scientist discovered the qualitative richness of this reality, and the mathematician discovered its quantitative richness, the metaphysician intended to enter most deeply into the nature of these things and discover in them that due to which they have being and are what they are (their essence) and he intended to reach the ultimate cause (*ἀρχή*) of the being of the universe. Metaphysics was conceived of as the specific science that teaches how to read out the truth about the nature of things and the internal and external causes of their existence.

Metaphysics in the strict sense was not, and cannot be, understood as some sort of “transphysics” or even less as “hyperphysics” or “theodicy,” which would have as its object a reality above or outside the senses; not is it the way for man “to liberate himself;” but in the basic understanding of metaphysics provided by Aristotle, it is the most empirical of the empirical sciences, since its object is real reality (and only this). It is also a theoretical-contemplative science (*θεωρία*) since its aim is the “intuition and contemplation” of the truth for its own sake (*scire propter scire*), which truth the intellect reads out in the things given to us in empirical experience.

⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1003 a 20–26.

By the autonomous method of cognition that metaphysics employs, the philosopher can read out and discover more than can the physicist, natural scientist, or mathematician. This “more” is the discovery of the causes of the existence of beings, the discernment of the universal (transcendental) properties of being, and among these, properties such as being the truth, the good, and the beautiful, the discovery of the first metaphysical laws that show the foundation of the rational order of the being and cognition of things, the discernment of the ontic compositions that reveal the internal structure and nature of beings, and among these, compositions such as essence and existence, matter and form, body and soul, act and potency, substance and accidents. Further this “more” includes the discovery of the caused and analogical mode of the being of things, which constitutes the foundation for the formation of the theory of causal and analogical cognition, and for reaching—in the area of philosophy—to the truth concerning the creation of the world “ex nihilo.” This all constitutes the “more” that only metaphysics can teach us how to discover and perceive, and which alone allows us fully to understand particular beings and reality as a whole.

As long as philosophy worked on the investigation of the really existing world (of plants, animals, people, things), the word “metaphysics” was synonymous with “philosophy.” Over time, the word “metaphysics” and this type of philosophical inquiry lost their fundamental meaning. In the eighteenth century, the word “metaphysics” came to be replaced by the word *ὄντολογία* due to C. Wolff (although the term had appeared in the seventeenth century due to R. Goclenius and J. Clauberg). Clauberg, however, had first used the term *ὄντοσοφία* as a synonym for “metaphysics.” With the change in the term came a change in the object of metaphysical meditations. Clauberg, in his work titled *Metaphysica de ente, quae rectius Ontosophia*⁷ argued that the metaphysical investigations do not concern concrete being given in

⁷ Johann Clauberg, *Metaphysica de ente, quae rectius Ontosophia* (Amstelodami: D. Elzevir, 1664).

empirical experience, but “being in general” (*ens in genere*), and they do not include “this or that particular being distinct from others, designated by a special name or property” (*non circa hoc vel illud ens speciali nomine insignitum vel proprietate quadam ab aliis distinctum*).

The term “ontology” entered the language of philosophy for good through Wolff as a term interchangeable not so much with the word “metaphysics” as “first philosophy.” Wolff used this word in the title of his work, *Philosophia prima sive Ontologia*.⁸ Here as well it is not a question only of a change of names. With the change in name from “first philosophy” (*philosophia prima*) to “ontology,” there was a change of method. Wolff abandoned the autonomous method that first philosophy or metaphysics had employed for a scientific method (*methodo scientifica pertractata*) that first philosophy or ontology would use. Wolff took the scientific rendering of method from Descartes; the method would consist in transferring the *more geometrico* method to philosophy. These two instances where the term “philosophy” was replaced by the word “ontology” or “ontology” are an example of that which was connected with the understanding of metaphysics in the history of philosophy. This understanding was always connected with a conception of the object and method of metaphysics. We encounter an example of this in I. Kant who wrote:

First, concerning the *sources* of metaphysical cognition, it already lies in the concept of metaphysics that they cannot be empirical. The principles of such cognition (which include not only its fundamental propositions or basic principles, but also its fundamental concepts) must therefore never be taken from experience; for the cognition is supposed to be not physical but metaphysical, i.e., lying beyond experience. Therefore it will be based upon neither outer experience, which constitutes the source of physics proper, nor inner, which provides the foundation of em-

⁸ Christian Wolff, *Philosophia prima, sive Ontologia, methodo scientifica pertractata, qua omnis cognitionis humanae principia continentur* (Francofurti et Lipsiae 1730).

pirical psychology. It is therefore cognition *a priori*, or from pure understanding and pure reason.⁹

It is not surprising that “positivism in its different forms, of which the most radical will be the neopositivism of the Vienna Circle, follows the footprints of Kant. Materialistic and radically scientific directions turn out to be metaphysics’ greatest enemies.”¹⁰

The history of modern philosophy is, on the one hand, the history of overcoming Aristotle’s metaphysics, on the other hand, the new grounding of metaphysics, although often in conditions such that this metaphysics is present more in name than by virtue of a rational and grounded interpretation of reality.

We may often encounter two different attitudes toward the term “metaphysics” and toward metaphysics as such. The first attitude leads to the replacement of the term “metaphysics” with the term “ontology,” and in this way metaphysics is taken out of the domains of the philosophical disciplines, and joins ontological inquiries (and thus ontology) into logical inquiries (e.g., Leśniewski’s and Ingarden’s ontology). It is not surprising that at present, apart from John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, there are no chairs of metaphysics in philosophy departments in Poland, although from philosophers’ declarations it could be inferred that they practice metaphysics. The second attitude among philosophers is that that term “metaphysics” is transferred to different philosophical disciplines, e.g., to Cartesianism, Kantianism, phenomenology, existentialism, processualism, analytic philosophy, and others. We may also encounter the practice of transferring the term “metaphysics” to domains outside of philosophy such as poetry, art, and even mysticism (metaphysical poetry, metaphysical art, metaphysical space, metaphysical experience, and other things).

⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. Gary Hatfield (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15.

¹⁰ Władysław Strojewski, *Ontologia* [Ontology] (Kraków 2004), 22.

The transfer of the term “metaphysics” outside the area of the realistic philosophy that grows from Aristotle’s thought, and was completed by St. Thomas Aquinas and continued in the framework of contemporary realistic philosophy, is a linguistic and cognitive mistake leading to misunderstanding, and primarily leading to the deformation of philosophy itself. Someone who practices the philosophy of consciousness, the philosophy of language, or process philosophy while declaring that he is practicing metaphysics performs a twofold deformation: he is deforming the understanding of the philosophy he practices (e.g., Cartesian philosophy, Kantian philosophy, phenomenology, or the philosophy of language), suggesting that he is practicing something else (e.g., Aristotelian metaphysics); furthermore he is obliterating the distinct and separate character of other philosophical systems as he makes a synthetic unification of them, and he also distorts how realistic metaphysics is understood as he calls by that name something that has nothing in common with metaphysics.

In the philosophical tradition, metaphysics provides a foundation for, and determines the set of basic questions concerning reality (substance, man, the soul, truth, the good, generation and corruption, the first principles of being and cognition) that form the basic trunk of the philosophical problematic. These questions were the object of thought and commentary to such a degree that different philosophical directions received their names according to how they resolved metaphysical questions. Sometimes they tried to remove the problematic of metaphysics, trivialize it, or even ridicule it. This was done consciously or unconsciously as each relied on his own special understanding of the questions that traditionally formed the problematic of metaphysics. The effort to get rid of the term “metaphysics” and replace it with the terms “ontology,” “theodicy,” “logic,” and “dialectic” basically confirmed the importance of the perennial fundamental questions concerning the understanding of reality, that is, metaphysics.

In the tradition of classical philosophy, metaphysics in a strict sense is the name for a way of knowing in which the reason employs the universal laws of being and thought and strives to discover the first and singular factors or causes that will render free of contradiction that which exists and which is given to us in a germinal way in the empirical intuition of the material world.

Metaphysical Cognition

Metaphysical (philosophical) cognition took shape out of the common-sense and spontaneous cognition of reality. In ancient Greece in the first period it was a rationalization of the mythological-religious understanding of the world. Common-sense cognition, which designates man's most original cognitive response to reality as he finds it, should be distinguished from naive and pre-scientific cognition, which is already cognition mediated in some theory. Mythology considered many natural questions about the beginning of the world and man, and so its presentations in images were an illustration that was understood by all in the rational translation of that which is initial, original, and essential for reality. A sign of the use of reason is that questions are posed concerning reality. As a child man is already constantly asking questions like: What is it? Where does it come from? And: Why is it? Humankind has been answering these questions for centuries in a reflected and rationally justified manner. Among these questions appeared the one that became the fundamental question of metaphysics: *διὰ τί*—why? Questions and more and more profound answers were the canvas of philosophical metaphysical cognition and the formation of science. In the beginning, scientific cognition was identified with philosophical cognition, and philosophical cognition was identified with metaphysical cognition.

The Proprieties of Metaphysical Cognition

Intellectual intuition is a characteristic feature of philosophical cognition. By intellectual intuition we arrive at a comprehensive grasp of plurality in unity, and complexity in the whole. Intellectual intuition is a basic power of the cognitive faculty. If metaphysics investigates the ultimate causes and ultimate principles of things, then it achieves them by intellectual intuition. Intellectual intuition enables man to understand reality more than it enables him to have discursive cognition of reality.

History has credited to the Greek mind the discovery of the scientific spirit and the perception of the leading and sovereign significance of the human reason. The ancient Greek mind called attention to the purpose of human life, which is to explain and understand the world. For the Greeks, knowledge as wisdom, taking in all domains of cognition, was the explanation of things performed by the reason with the help of an appeal to the ultimate causes of their being (this was most evident in Aristotle). This was the most generally apprehended conception of a cognition of reality that was singularly scientific and philosophical. Aristotle emphasized the unity of all the sciences, which unity is expressed in one science (i.e., philosophy), just as the entire world was marked by unity.

The Aristotelian conception of philosophical knowledge persisted in different variations and modification up to our time. However, after Aristotle, the great edifice of philosophical science was divided in parcels and developed into the particular sciences by the singling out of separate objects of inquiry and the application of different methods. But the conception of philosophy in the Aristotelian understanding was preserved, philosophy as cognition that is *de jure* rational, indubitable, and which concerns existing things in the light of ultimate rational justifications. This cognition is obtained by indicating such aspect of reality that cannot be investigated by the particular sciences.

The specific character of philosophical cognition can be reduced to the problem of seeing the ultimate structure of things and the ques-

tions that follow from it. The perceived structure of things gives rise to questions: What is the reason, cause, and rational justification of the inner structure of things? What is the source, that is, the efficient cause, of the existence of the thing itself? Such questions cannot be understood without asking what is the destination (or purpose) of things. Thus metaphysical cognition, which is cognition of causes, forms spontaneously.

One property of metaphysical cognition is that in it we are dealing with the cognition of being, of that which really exists. It is not a question here of knowing abstract contents, or of knowing concrete contents separated from existence, but of the cognitive apprehension of what really exists. This is done in judgments conceived *sensu stricto*, and so in a certain human cognitive act whose feature is either truth or falsehood. This cognition concerns necessary aspects. The necessary aspects of being are at the same time universal aspects that can be of two kinds: universal concerning a defined category of beings, and transcendental concerning all existing beings. The ultimate rational justifications that are indicated in metaphysical cognition are not any logical reasons, but objective (ontic) reasons, or real rational justifications, and so they are called reasons of being.

In metaphysics it is a question of knowing being in its ordering to the real causes of being as such. The real causes of being can only be ultimate causes (real rational justifications), i.e., chief causes. For if in metaphysics as an ultimate cognition we must seek the ultimate reasons common to all beings, then the discovery of these ultimate reasons of being allows us in proportion to understand being apprehended as being (as existing). Our vision of the common object is not an arbitrary construction, but it is the perception of common elements and proportional common perfections that belong to each concrete thing and at the same time to all things.

All the reality of the world (the cosmos), apprehended cognitively in an indistinct way (*actu confuse*) in one common object, can be

studied by an analysis of the object including all concrete things. Everything that exists apprehended as one analogically common object shows in philosophical analysis its ultimate ontic reasons. The world apprehended as a whole in the light of the chief real causes becomes the intelligible world. The cognition of it fills man with happiness, and understanding allows us to situate man in the context of other beings, so showing him the meaning of his action.

One task of metaphysics, which follows from the character of its judgments apprehending the reasons for the existence of beings in necessary and transcendental aspects, is the achievement of truth-based cognition. Truth-based cognition, although general, becomes the basis for all human actions.

Metaphysics cultivated methodically is not always found at the foundations of the branches of human creativity and science. Most often in science we do not ponder the ultimate foundations of a cultivated branch of knowledge. A *quaestio iuris* is one thing, and a *quaestio facti* is another. It is not really necessary for a scientist from within a particular discipline to know metaphysics (and perhaps sometimes it is better that he does not know metaphysics), the general principles of which he intuitively feels in the data of common sense, which, however, does not mean that metaphysics' objective principles do not (of themselves) constitute the foundations of all the domains of science and creative work. The way to reach a verifiable and thereby rational and realistic metaphysics is a similar way to those which lead to the formation of every science: it goes from the data of common sense to scientific refinements of precision and rational justifications. If then we take the position of common-sense cognition, upon which all the sciences, both the particular and the philosophical sciences, rely, then as a result we affirm the existence of the world, and so the existence of the extra-subjective cosmos—together with man, his life, his cognition, conation, and action. Metaphysics, like every other science, starting from the

premises of common sense, has as its aim the ultimate cognition of the world so conceived.

Common-sense cognition provides the rational justification for this direction in philosophical inquiries, which took as its object existing reality (chiefly extra-subjective reality). The human self, ideas, and values are situated in reality so conceived, but they are not investigated in the sense of personal experiences (there is no science concerning individual episodes of experience; it is literature which is concerned with them), but in a general way, in the sense of an analogical generality. Ideas, the human self, and its values, constitute reality, since they are real beings.

The object of philosophy is being, that is, everything that exists, and metaphysics provides an ultimate explanation of the structure of reality. The basic structures of being constitute the basis for real rational justifications. On their basis we indicate what something is—more in a negative way (i.e., presenting the factors that render free of contradiction the existence of the world and its parts) than in a positive way (although this is also done). So it is a question of knowing reality (that which is, and what we know first in empirical intuition) from the aspect of the ultimate rational justifications of being and thought, and so from the aspect of philosophically conceived principles: the principles of identity, non-contradiction, and sufficient reason (the reason of being). Metaphysics discovers and makes precise these principles, as the first intellectually conscious intuitions of being (the object of man's intellectual cognition), and then rationally justifies them by the method of thought proper to itself.

The Object of Metaphysical Cognition

The question of discerning the object of metaphysics and its method is connected with the theory of science. There are two characteristic features of the process of reasoning in metaphysics: (1) the interpretation of the states of things in light of the concept of being (being

as existing), a concept produced in a rationally justified manner, and (2) historicism.

*On the History of How the Object of
Metaphysics Was Discerned*

The first operation performed in metaphysics is an act of discerning, or rather of “seeing” the object of metaphysical cognition in a proper context, the object which is being as existing. In the history of philosophy there have appeared theories that see the basic factor constituting the being-ness of things in one or another element of reality. It was stated, e.g., that in absolute changing reality, the law itself (*λόγος*) of changing is what determines the universe’s act of being. This was the view of Heraclitus and the thinkers who supported such a reading of his thought.

Others (notably Parmenides) thought that an absolutely unchanging and self-identical element determines the reality of being. As the result of different historical conditions, different thinkers saw this unchanging element that constituted reality in different factors of reality: in number (Pythagoreanism), in a self-identical idea separate from the world of shadows (Platonism), in the form of the thing that constitutes it in the aspect of unity, capacity to be known, and being-ness (Aristotelianism), in an ecstatic good that overflows by necessity according to a necessary hierarchy, and which constitutes reality (Plotinianism), and in the *natura naturans* that is the soul of universe, a soul just as material as the entire universe (Stoicism). Many more examples could be presented, since in every system there were modifications in how the nature of the object of metaphysics was understood, and thereby there would also be modification in the system.

In the current of philosophy that tries to explain reality (being), different proper objects of metaphysics appeared, which constituted specific interpretations of being: (1) being as absolute potentiality; (2) being as absolute invariability or unity (being as being); (3) being as

number; (4) being as idea; (5) being as form; (6) being as the ecstatic good.

Since the time of Parmenides, his definition of the object of philosophical inquiries, that is, “being as being,” has been used. This description appears among almost all ontologists or henologists. However, the difficulty is how to understand the reduplicative phrase “as being.” We can read it properly only in the context of the whole system.

The proper object of philosophical inquiries, singled out in a natural or constructed way, influences philosophy’s conclusions, for these conclusions are always within the area of the proper object (if a given thinker is consistent in his thinking). The act of singling out and perceiving the proper object is usually not done in a far-reaching reflection. There have been primary intuitions, spontaneous abstractions, the content of which in particular circumstances and conditions interpreted many facts, and then this content was absolutized. A new generation of thinkers who made use of the legacy of their predecessors often modified the concept of the proper object. This modification was made as a result of their seeing the inadequacy of the previously constructed object as applied to the interpretation of the real phenomena observed in reality. The reconstructed object took under consideration new aspects of reality that the previously constructed proper object of inquiries did not consider or explain (it did not allow such explanation).

Thus conceptions of the proper object that would make possible an adequate explanation of the phenomena occurring in the real world were constantly corrected and modified. This was done by virtue of intellectual intuition or by virtue of what could be called heuristic induction directed not only by a general vision of the world but also by a vision of reality in terms of a system. However, constructions of the proper object of philosophy were inadequate for they still were not constructions cognitively neutral, but rather those which set philosophical thought in a defined direction of interpretation. Such a system was

no longer engaged in investigating the world, but was entirely based on the immanent logic flowing from the nature of the object of philosophy.

The Object of Realistic Metaphysics

If philosophy is to avoid the errors and distortions to which it is exposed by reason of a “non-neutrally” constructed proper object, then it should meet the conditions that result from the nature of the philosophical cognition of the world: (1) the proper object of philosophical thought should concern the real world, that is, what is universally called reality; (2) the proper object should include reality as a whole, i.e., it should concern everything that exists; (3) the proper object should be apprehended neutrally, i.e., it should not imply definite solutions to questions, and it should not set thought on a predetermined track of reasoning, but should make possible constant contact with reality and allow the objective philosophical interpretation of reality. The first two conditions connect the proper object of philosophy with the real world in the aspect of reality and in the aspect of entirety. The third condition is most essential, since it is intended to guarantee cognitive objectivity.

In the discerned proper object of metaphysical inquiries the fact (or act) of this object’s existence should be considered. Every proof for the existence of the world in the framework of the constructed system would be unacceptable under the many aspects that have been shown in the history of philosophy. This would be a passage from an ideal state to a real state, that is, from definition to existence, which is a typical Anselmian error; all sorts of variations on this error are repeated in different philosophical systems.

The construction of the proper object of philosophy in isolation from the fact of its existence would be something arbitrary, *a priori*, and unverifiable through ontic states. This would be a construction belonging to the domain of art (as defined by Aristotle), not to science. This happens in different philosophical systems (which does not mean

that these systems are irrelevant or not suited for understanding the world in their content).

The construction of the proper object of philosophy in isolation from the direct and original fact (*in actu signato*) of its existence is a methodological error, because secondary and less clear matters would be used to explain original and self-evident matters. We come to the point of singling out the proper object of realistic metaphysics, the object that meets the conditions of reality, universality, and neutrality, on the basis of proper cognitive acts—called metaphysical separation—which are built upon existential judgments.

The most difficult condition to meet is the third one, which requires objectivity through a neutral conception of the proper object of metaphysics. Unfortunately, the history of philosophy, with Thomas Aquinas as the sole exception, does not know the conception of a neutral object of philosophy. It is not known whether this single case in the history of philosophy was fully reflected upon by Aquinas, but it is known only that it was never fully accepted by those who regarded themselves as the interpreters or continuators of Aquinas' thought.

A neutral conception of the proper object of philosophy is provided in the traditional formula "being as being," but understood as "being as existing being," because only real (actual) existence constitutes reality. That which actually and really exists is really real. Even so-called potential existence, although it belongs to the world's reality, is real in the measure in which it is conditioned by the real and actual existence of a subject (enriched by the most various dispositions). There is no need for proof that the real world as real is constituted by existence, because no proof is more convincing than the original perception of the existence of real being.

The existence of real being does not imply anything about its nature, content, or action, because existence is not identical with the content of a being. To see that reality is constituted by existence does not connect our thought with any philosophical preconception and does not

set thought on tracks of logical consistencies in which nothing is left for the reason except to reason logically, but in isolation from the really existing world. If, however, it is accepted that this existence constitutes reality, then this existence is commensurate to each and every being, and it is modified in each and every being. This being the case, the intellect must constantly be in contact with beings, besides reflection it must constantly use intuition in order to make any rationally justified assertion.

All constructions known in the history of philosophy of the proper object of philosophical inquiries are in relation to the neutral conception of the object of philosophy the result of a too rapid inductive generalization (given a philosopher's realistic attitude). Often these were *a priori* constructions dictated by the preponderance of a school or by non-philosophical aims in the cultivation of philosophy.

The Method for Singling Out the Object of Metaphysics

The determination of the proper object of realistic metaphysics was initially connected with metaphysical abstraction (in Aristotle and the current of Aristotelianism), and subsequently—along with the discovery of a new understanding of being (St. Thomas Aquinas) and its propagation in contemporary realistic metaphysics—with metaphysical separation.

The basis for the method of separation is existential judgments whereby the proper object is singled out and the specific type of metaphysical cognition that guarantees the cognition of really existing things is established on solid ground.

Metaphysical Separation

The proper understanding of metaphysical separation as a specific type of cognition is supported by the meaning the term has in the Code of Canon Law. The term “separation” describes a situation of spouses who in a marriage crisis, in order to avoid the marriage break-

ing up, agree to be apart (separated) from the shared table, dwelling, and relations, in order to rediscover in this way the value of their bond and to put the unity of the marriage again on solid ground. The rediscovery of the value and unity of the bond will be shown, among other things, in the fact that each party experiences his or her insufficiency and need to be joined with his or her partner, without whom life loses its meaning and value. Separation thus conceived is not the activity of tearing apart and shattering either of the parties in the bond, but the activity of distinguishing the factors that compose the bond, so—by such a distinction—to learn the truth about the unity and wholeness of the marriage.

By transferring the intuition of the meaning of the word “separation” from the field of Canon Law to the terrain of metaphysics, this term indicates a method, and also a type of cognition in which we make a distinction between (but we do not tear apart) the factors of being without which no being can exist. For this reason, the method of separation leads to cognition of that whereby something really exists (whereby it is a being) by discovering and distinguishing the necessary and universal (transcendental) factors without which no thing could exist.

Meanwhile in metaphysical abstraction we try to divide and tear apart the aspect of the thing that is the object of our inquiries and which is identified with being, an aspect distinguished for the purposes of inquiry. In abstract cognition the reason appears in the function of tearing apart, and as a result it chooses (tears off) a certain aspect according to the accepted criterion (physical, mathematical, metaphysical) from sense data, making it the proper object of philosophical cognition. As a result of this kind of abstraction in Aristotle’s philosophy, the objects of cognition were singled out, such as number, quality (e.g., color, material, shape), or form (substance); at the same time they form the basis for differentiating the mathematical, natural, and philosophical sciences.

Cognition by separation is a cognition directed primarily at affirming the objective reasons (or causes) of the unity and wholeness of the existence of beings or processes, and secondarily at determining their content. Cognition by abstraction, on the other hand, is a type of cognition that excludes a part from a whole so that the cognition of a part can be transferred to the whole of a composite thing. Metaphysical separation also constitutes a guarantee for realistic cognition and provides cognition of a thing in terms of the whole.

St. Thomas Aquinas went further than Aristotle in providing a foundation for cognitive realism and in determining the principles for building certain knowledge. He agreed with Aristotle that there was not and could not be any realistic cognition without a real object of thought, but he saw the limitations of the Aristotelian theory of cognition (built for the needs of philosophy) called metaphysical abstraction. In cognition by abstraction we do not grasp the moment of the existence of things; it eludes our cognition. In abstractive cognition an image of the thing becomes restricted to the arrangement of a content, a content organized by some form. But the form as such does not represent by itself the truth concerning the thing as a whole.

Definition-based and concept-based apprehensions of being obtained as the result of abstraction concern the arrangement of a content. The content of a being can be an object of abstract cognition in which the mind grasps necessary arrangements of content and creates from them a concept of being. This leads to an essentialization of metaphysical cognition consisting in this: general “essences” of things, not individual things, are the object of cognition. In this way it came to the point where the image of being was reduced to an arrangement of content of which the sign was a concept or a definition, and the cognition of the concrete thing was replaced by analysis of general concepts common to many thing. Regarding this, it was necessary to rebuild the method of realistic cognition, and therein also the entire conception of metaphysics.

Instead of the method of cognition by abstraction, in which the way matter is organized into the determined content of a being is apprehended, St. Thomas proposed the method of cognition by separation in which we apprehend being as a whole and reach the elements that constitute the existence of being. Aquinas indeed did not formulate this method explicitly, but—by his existential conception of being and by singling out the conception of cognition by judgment as suited to apprehending the existence of being—he created the foundations for the method. The contemporary continuators of the heritage of realistic (existential) metaphysics provided metaphysical separation with its final form and with a theoretical justification.

Spontaneous and Reflected Separation

We can characterize separation at two stages of human cognition. At the pre-scientific stage, where it constitutes man's natural cognitive attitude directed at affirming in existential judgments what is given to us in experience, without determining the content of what is affirmed; and at the scientific stage, where separation is treated as a method for singling out the object of metaphysics, and also as a kind of metaphysical cognition in general. At the second stage of cognition we encounter metaphysical separation in a strict sense.

(1) *Spontaneous separation.* Spontaneous separation consists in singling out and affirming the existence of the particular things given to us in experience. It is the man's most original and at the same time most fundamental cognitive response to the fact that things exist. In spontaneous separation we distinguish the objects of the real world and we mark the field of our cognition, the field which really existing things create. The results of this stage of cognition by separation are expressed in so-called existential judgments of the type: "something is," or "someone is," in which we are affirming the fact of a thing's existence. They are individual judgments, although they are vague, in which information concerns the fact of the existence of "something."

At this stage metaphysical separation can be treated as a defined cognitive attitude (analogous to spontaneous abstraction), which is characterized by openness to affirming that which actually exists and by the grounding of cognition as a whole in the world of real things.

(2) *Metaphysical separation.* Metaphysical separation as a way of singling out the object of metaphysics is a complex operation. In metaphysical separation we arrive at the formation of the object of metaphysical cognition, which will be conceived as that which exists. In separation thus understood as the method for singling out the proper object of metaphysics we distinguish three basic stages.

At the first stage in existential judgments we indicate the scope of cognition, which is set by individually existing objects (hence we affirm “John’s existence,” “the tree’s existence,” “a thought’s existence,” “the existence of the color of the table”). However, this is not an inductive procedure directed at gathering data; the purpose of this stage is to connect our cognition with really existing things. Hence one existential judgment in which we affirm the existence of something, and so the existence of something beyond us, is sufficient for separation. However, the fact that we make more of these judgments is a fact that clarifies the nature of existential judgments rather than obliges us to multiply them.

The existential judgment is the foundation for cognition by separation; in it the whole of metaphysical experience concerning the existence of a concrete being and the implicitly contained knowledge about reality have been verbalized. For this reason the existential judgment is the direct object of analyses in the process of separation.

The existential judgment as the result of cognition by judgment, as distinct from predicative judgments (of the type, “John is a teacher”), is not something secondary (in relation to a concept), but is most fundamental and original. This judgment is characterized by a strong moment of affirmation directed at the affirmation of the actual existence of

a thing (and only the thing's existence!). Hence the theoretical thought and informative content that occur in it are at a minimum.

The existential judgment, being a direct cognitive apprehension of an existing thing, is characterized also by the fact that it does not possess the qualification of truth or falsehood. The act of affirmation cannot come into existence without the presence of an object, hence the intellect cannot be in error regarding whether "something exists," since in affirming the "existence of something" it makes a pronouncement on its proper object (just as happens in the case of each faculty: hearing, touch, sight, etc., which cannot be in error when it affirms its proper object: e.g., a sound or color). The intellect, however, can be in error when it asserts that "the existing something is John," and so when it is already starting to connect or separate predicates to or from a subject. Therefore the existential judgment cannot be reduced to predicative judgments; the existential judgment is represented by a predicative proposition of the type: "something exists," in which the subject indicates the affirmation of content, and the predicate indicates the act of affirmation.

Existential judgments can be direct ("John exists," "something exists") or indirect ("the soul exists," "a thought exists"), vague ("something exists") or clear ("John exists"). In each case, however, they are individual existential judgments. General existential judgments cannot occur on account of the lack of any object of affirmation (in the real world no general objects exist, but they are only thought-constructs).

The second stage of separation is connected with the analysis of existential judgments. In the course of analyses we see that existential judgments carry information concerning the content of an affirmed being and concerning the fact (or act) of this content's existence. In judgments we also affirm some content, and the fact of its existence when we affirm that "John exists," "the apple tree exists," "the red rose exists," "my thought about Eve or Adam exists").

When we separate (or distinguish) the factors apprehended in every existential judgment, we discover (1) that every concrete being is “composed” of a content-factor and a factor that actualizes this content to existence, that is, an act of existence, and (2) that to be something real does not necessarily entail being some single strictly defined essence (e.g., John, the apple tree, or the rose), since other objects exist.

The second stage of analysis by separation allows us to see the strict connection of content (essence) with existence, and at the same time their non-identity. Furthermore, we can see that existence in particular concrete things is limited (in the sense of being determined) by an essence (content): the existence of John is determined by the system of the content that determines John as such (e.g., body, height, skin color, smile, etc.). We see as well that content is also determined by a definite existence. Therefore we speak of John’s existence, and not that of someone else. We distinguish the existence of a tree from the existence of a man, the existence of one chair from another, even though they may be similar to each other externally.

At the third stage there is a transition from categorial apprehensions of things (John, Eve, the red rose), and their components (as John’s “existence” and John’s “content” have been indicated) to transcendental apprehensions, and so to apprehensions of the elements in John that determine the existence of “this here concrete John,” but also determine him as a being, that is, as someone real. We obtain the transcendentalization (or universalization) of this apprehension as a result of resorting to analogy in the existence of things.

In this way we arrive at the formation of an understanding of being, which is always “some concrete content of a determined existence,” and so we arrive at the point where we single out the proper object of metaphysics. From this moment, being in the terrain of metaphysics acquires a new meaning. Being is what exists individually and concretely, and so not some generalization or idea, a form or a proto-

element, but a concrete thing which is created by a determined content and an existence proportional to the content.

Cognition by Separation

Besides separation understood as a method in singling out the proper object of metaphysics, we distinguish separation as a specific type of realistic cognition. Cognition by separation is the development of the most spontaneous, common-sense, human cognition, which concerns the fact that “a thing is,” not “how a thing is” or “what a thing is.” The first results of this cognition were verbalized in existential judgments of the type “something is,” or “something exists.” These judgments were not so much the first results of direct cognitive acts, as an expression of the first states of man’s (as a knowing being’s) conscious existence. They are also an expression of the beginning of man’s cognitive activity, which takes various forms, and which cannot begin without some contact with a real being. In this way we arrive at the grounding of human cognition (metaphysical cognition in particular) in the really existing world.

One of the chief problems that abstractive cognition brought with itself was the problem of the mediation of cognitive tools (concepts) in relation to the cognized object. The result of this mediation was that in the “starting point” it was impossible to reach a real thing. The rationally justified fear arose that in transferring the Aristotelian conception of abstractive cognition to contemporary realistic cognition, the realism, universalism, and neutrality (objectivity) of the proper object would disappear in metaphysical cognition, and instead of knowing concretely existing beings, we would have to begin with the analysis and explanation of concepts, the establishment of the meanings of expressions of language, etc. The conception of cognition by separation is proposed as a way of resolving this difficulty. The basis of cognition by separation consists of judgment-apprehensions that in the starting point do not have any moment of mediation, and thereby they put us

do not have any moment of mediation, and thereby they put us directly in touch with the existing thing.

In realistic metaphysics the existential judgment is the basis (and so the starting point, not the final goal) for further cognition. In the language of metaphysics we verbalize the theoretically reflected existential judgment (having as its original form “something exists,” “something is”), with the help of the expression “being” (as an abbreviation of the judgment “something exists”) and with the help of the expressions called the transcendentals, such as thing, one, separateness, the true, the good, and the beautiful, and also with the help of metaphysical terms of the type: substance, accident, matter, form, essence, existence, and person. In the process of cognition by separation we obtain a basic understanding of a thing, on which basis we can better understand the aspective apprehensions with which we are dealing in other types of scientific cognition. As we read out the content of particular transcendentals, we discover the first metaphysical laws that rule the being of things and our cognition of them. In this way, we delineate the foundations of the rational order. For this reason, metaphysical cognition is the base cognition (also for the other types of sciences) permitting us to achieve an aspective understanding of things.

Historicism in metaphysics

An important feature of the track of reasoning by demonstration in the philosophy of being is so-called historicism. All philosophical assertions about reality possess their own history. They arose in certain conditions of the development of philosophical thought. All philosophical problems, even if they were formulated abstractly, are manifestations of concrete human life and as connected with this life they explain something, rationally justify something, or express protest against the way things are. Philosophy cannot be divorced from the context of life. In the investigation of the different contents of philosophical theses this moment in particular cannot be ignored.

Apart from the context in which a particular philosophical problem arose, we also see its historical development. A closer acquaintance with different systems of philosophical thought convinces us that in essence we are constantly dealing with the same problems that in different systems receive different names and various formulations. The history of philosophy is also the place where we can study the formulations and rational justifications of philosophical problems in the most varied systems and directions of philosophical thought. Then we also obtain an additional confirmation of the rightness or wrongness of philosophical theses. If some problem (even if formulated in various ways) was studied by many thinkers over the centuries, then the results of those studies should be learned, since then our personal view will be clearer and our formulations and rational justifications will be more profound through the results of the analyses of our predecessors.

Historicism in metaphysics lets us eliminate many pseudo-problems resulting from other conceptions of the object of philosophical thought. Metaphysics is not afraid of the results of thought shown in other philosophical directions or systems, since it is only metaphysics which can show their objective reasons and the consequences to which they lead. For this reason, controversies over the value of cognition can be considered in the history of philosophy (in the context of revealing the mistakes and distortions of philosophical thought). The history of philosophy should also provide factual material for choosing the proper way to cultivate metaphysics. The history of philosophy so understood is indispensable for metaphysics, since it is the introduction to metaphysics by the fact that it follows various solutions to philosophical problems as they have appeared in the course of history, and since it constitutes the plane for resolving epistemological problems, and is an aid in choosing the right type of metaphysics in which the explanation of the world has been verified objectively and also historically.

Ways of Demonstration and Rational Justification

The process of thought in metaphysics has the character of reductive demonstration in the form of so-called negative demonstration, which takes a threefold form. Demonstration from the coherence of a system, that is, from an appeal to the conception of being, plays an important and sometimes decisive role in metaphysical demonstration.

(1) Demonstration by showing absurdity (*probatio per absurdum*). This consists in justification of the truth of a philosophical thesis by showing that its contrary is an evident falsehood. This means that the acceptance of the contrary thesis would be the realization of a contradiction conceived metaphysically. The absurdity of such a thesis is seen and understood basically in a system, since a system can show the absurdity of a thesis by showing its consequences.

(2) Contradiction with real facts (*contradictio in re*). Showing that the negation of a philosophical thesis stands in disagreement with ontic facts or states (easily observed by people in general) given to us to explain. Here, however, a difficulty arises, since science does not know so-called naked facts, that is, facts that have not been interpreted cognitively or spontaneously (often in an unconscious way) in the framework of some system. Such an objection would be fitting if the interpretation of facts by a system were performed “non-neutrally,” and so if it were performed by a non-neutralized proper object of philosophy. Then the facts would always appear as a manifestation of a given aspect of cognition. In the case of metaphysics, where there is a neutralized interpretation (where facts occur only as existing), there is no room for non-neutral interpretation, but the conditions of truth are preserved, namely agreement with what is.

The moment of agreement or disagreement with facts in a system of metaphysics has decisive significance, and it requires a constant cognitive intuition of reality. Even the most logically constructed and most coherent theses are meaningless if they turn out to be in disagreement with the facts.

The method of finding agreement with the facts is most proper to realistic metaphysics. For if the object of metaphysics (i.e., actually existing being) virtually “contains” the whole truth about reality, then it cannot be in disagreement with any fact. Considering this, the intuition of a concrete thing in the light of the understanding of being (based on metaphysical separation) and of the metaphysical principles (of identity, non-contradiction, and excluded middle), that govern being, constantly checks the value of a stated metaphysical thesis.

(3) Reduction to absurdity (*reductio ad absurdum*). The third possible form of negative proof consists in reducing an assertion to absurdity. This reduction is understood as the demonstration of the falsehood of a thesis that is negative in relation to the stated assertion by showing that a false proposition follows from the thesis, whereby the truth of the defended (stated) thesis is shown indirectly. The reduction to absurdity presupposes one of the important philosophical principles, namely the principle of the reason of being or the principle of being (this principle should not be identified with the principle of sufficient reason as G. W. Leibniz formulated and understood it). The principle of the reason of being indicates the fact of the so-called intelligibility of being: being is intelligible to our intellect because it is rational (it has a reason for its existence in itself and beyond itself). Thus both the being and its component elements have an ontic rational justification whereby being cannot be identified with non-being. For this reason, being is understood and explained ontically only by being, not by thought or desire. When having the reason for its own being-ness in itself (and it has this reason only in the constitutive aspects), being does not cause further intellectual unrest. To satisfy our intellect so that it could understand being in itself, it is enough to indicate the constitutive elements of being. However, if we see some being which does not have a reason of being-ness (an ontic justification) in itself, then it has this reason beyond itself in another being whose ultimate reason of being-ness is in that being itself. Otherwise, if a given being exists but does

not have a reason for its existence in itself or in some being beyond itself (one that already has this reason—an ontic justification—in itself “by definition”), the result would be absurdity: a being is at the same time a non-being. It is a being because it exists, and at the same time it is not a being, because it does not have a reason for its existence in itself or beyond itself. Such a rational justification would be closest to the negative justification by reduction to absurdity known in logic.

Demonstration from the Coherence of a System

Besides the negative arguments that occur in the philosophy of being, there are still other ways of demonstration from the coherence of a system. In metaphysics we encounter a system understood in specific terms. The system of metaphysics is not so much a collection of axioms, rules, and theses derived from axioms with the help of rules, but the result of an objectively cohesive system in which the system of theses, their organization and their relations of dependence are grounded in the internal structure of being. The cohesiveness of being in its constitutive elements marks the cohesiveness of the theses that concern these elements. The organization of these theses is not the result of the consequences of logical implication but of whether these theses refer to constitutive or accidental, categorial or transcendental elements.

As we call to mind the ways of demonstrating and rationally justifying philosophical theses, we should note the following:

(1) In metaphysics, deduction as understood in the contemporary sense does not occur, for metaphysical thought is not formal thought that uses implication in an inferential sense.

(2) Syllogistic deduction in the Aristotelian sense does not occur in metaphysics either. For this reason there is no apodeictic argumentation (also understood in an Aristotelian sense). The basic reason for this is that metaphysical concepts cannot be defined “though proximate genus and the specific difference” (*per genus proximum et differentiam*

specificam). The concepts of metaphysics are above-generic concepts and have universal (transcendental) scope.

(3) If we gave the name “deduction” to thinking with the use of necessary states of affairs, then deduction so conceived would occur in metaphysics. However, this deduction would assume the following: (a) being conscious of the structure of the object of metaphysics (also in the form of the noetic first principles: identity, non-contradiction, excluded middle, reason of being); (b) purely negative argumentation by indicating the evident absurdity of the contrary proposition; the disagreement of an opposing proposition with the facts: the reduction of an opposing proposition to absurdity; the impossibility of another presentation of the matter by a real (or even fictitious) opponent.

All negative arguments are made in light of a perceived proper object of philosophy (not perceived arbitrarily, but on the basis of the process of separation), the object in isolation from which philosophy cannot be cultivated at all, just as no particular science can be cultivated in a cognitively valid way in isolation from its proper object.

(4) Aside from rational justifications based on necessity and demonstrations, in metaphysics there are also hypotheses (understood in a particular way). By a metaphysical hypothesis we understand a proposition with philosophical content that at least in itself is free of contradiction, which explains facts not yet explained by philosophical theories, in agreement with the general proper object of a philosophical system and its theses.

(5) In the philosophical explanation of reality we can see a special reductive method of thinking. Considering only the process of reasoning from effect to cause—which in the noetic order is explained as reasoning from consequence to reason—we can call certain philosophical processes of rational justification by the name of reduction. However, such reduction has nothing in common with the method of reductive thought as described by the methodology of the science. It is not based on the logic of probability and does not lead to uncertain proposi-

tions, as takes place in the natural sciences, where the method of reductive thinking has its chief application.

We can also see the elements of understanding called “demonstration” (wherein a consequence is matched to a reason previously recognized as true), insofar as we interpret concrete ontic states in the light of a rationally justified concept of being as the proper object. Here, however, we are dealing with another order of reasoning than the one distinguished by contemporary methodology. In methodology types of reasoning are distinguished from the point of view of formal cognitive procedures, expressed in the form of propositions, among which relations are established, while in metaphysics we operate with analyses of the states of things. Although in these analyses all the methods of reasoning known in the contemporary methodology of the sciences can be distinguished, we are dealing here with a special kind of cognition that does not fit in disjoint formal classifications.

The basic problems in metaphysical cognition, explanation, demonstration, and rational justification, can be reduced to that concerning the proper understanding of being (as analogically existing). This understanding is constructed upon the cognition of the internal structure of being and its causes, as well as on the analogy of being and the analogy of the cognition of being.

Metaphysics and Other Domains of Philosophy

In cultivating realistic metaphysics, we pay attention to the unity of philosophy that general metaphysics and particular kinds of metaphysics create. This unity results from the fact that philosophy has one analogical object (this object is everything that exists), apprehended generally (transcendentally and analogically), and explained in metaphysics. For this reason metaphysics constitutes the base philosophical discipline. It discovers the properties that belong to all beings (transcendental properties), it reads out the laws that govern everything that exists, and it cognizes the internal structure of every being and its

causes. The ultimate explanation of beings requires the affirmation of the existence of the Absolute Being as the single reason that ultimately explains the existence of composite, changing, and non-necessary beings.

Metaphysics is the fundamental philosophical discipline, which performs a central role in the whole cultivation of philosophy. This particular place of metaphysics in realistic philosophy results from the fact that

the theory of being thus conceived includes all the disciplines of realistically conceived metaphysics and constitutes a uniform philosophical cognition in an epistemological-methodological respect. This means that the theory of being covers the entire fundamental problematic of so-called classical philosophy and resolves it basically in the same way in all its disciplines. Here we do not distinguish the theory of cognition from metaphysics as two disciplines of philosophy (on account of the method of ultimate explanation). The theory of cognition as a separate philosophical discipline simply loses its reason for existence, since many of its main questions arose on erroneous ways of metaphysics and it has a meta-philosophical character. For example, a discussion on different kinds of idealism can occur on the occasion of the meta-philosophical rational justification of the way the concept of being is formed. While controversies over the value of cognition can be examined in the history of philosophy (in the context of revealing errors and distortions of metaphysical thinking). The history of philosophy indeed should provide the theory of being with factual experience to choose the proper way to cultivate metaphysics.¹¹

If it is a question of disciplines such as logic, methodology, or the theory of cognition, they constitute a group of auxiliary disciplines

¹¹ Stanisław Kamiński, "Osobliwość metodologiczna teorii bytu" [The special methodological status of the theory of being], in his *Jak filozofować?* [How to philosophize?] (Lublin 1989), 76.

for cultivating metaphysics, and their status is described as that of metaphilosophical disciplines.

Philosophy so understood constructed on metaphysics constitutes an organic unity. It is a unity conceived analogically, not univocally. The unity of cognition in metaphysics

is achieved by the acceptance of object-based philosophical thought and of the explanation in ultimate terms entirely on the basis of being's internal structure. He who assumes, however, that a non-dogmatic philosophical explanation must be metaobjective (of the reflective or interpretative type) or can appeal ultimately to the exclusively qualitative structures of reality, sets up the theory of cognition as the fundamental (first) philosophical discipline and breaks metaphysics into methodologically different disciplines. Meanwhile, metaphysical cognition in the theory of being splits into particular disciplines only in view of the different starting point (the separate type of an object of the data of experience), not in view of the way of ultimate explanation (and the formal object of the most theoretical theses).¹²

In the system of philosophical disciplines the philosophy of God (theodicy) is not treated as a separate particular metaphysics, since neither God nor the experience of God is accessible in the starting point of metaphysical inquiries (the distinction that we encounter in practice has purely didactic ends). In the starting point of metaphysics we operate with the experience of being as being or of particularized being (i.e., the being of cognition, the being of man, moral being, the being of culture, the being of religion, the being of art, the being of society, etc.). For this reason, the problematic of the Absolute (God) appears as the ultimate reason of metaphysical explanation and as the completion of the rational cognition in ultimate terms of the world (of persons and things).

¹² Id.

Besides general metaphysics, we distinguish several particular metaphysics in view of different starting points, such as the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of man, the philosophy of morality (individual ethics, economic ethics, and politics) and the philosophy of culture and art. However, each discipline of the philosophy of culture (that has human actions and products as its object) looks to the philosophy of man and other particular metaphysics.

The disciplines of particular metaphysics, although they are independent in their starting point, depend structurally upon general metaphysics, for in their ultimate explanation they also appeal to the theses of general metaphysics. This applies also to axiology and the philosophy of culture. Such a position allows us to preserve the unity of explanation in the entire theory of being without falling into philosophical naturalism.¹³

Regarding the relation of metaphysics to the particular (mathematical-natural) sciences, we should note that he who cultivates metaphysics (both general and particular) should use

the results of appropriate sciences, but only as an initial erudite foundation, particularly in a negative way, i.e., for the determination of his own object of inquiry. Such a position does not deny the need (e.g., in inspiring a new scientific problematic) or the cognitive value (e.g., to overcome a partial agnosticism) of scientific philosophy, that is, philosophy of the epistemological or critical-ontological type, beside the theory of being as philosophy of the metaphysical type. It rejects the methodological combination of these ways of cultivating philosophy and rejects the idea that non-metaphysical philosophies are indispensable for natural non-dogmatic philosophical thought (from this, after all, comes metaphilosophy) and for the ultimate grounding of the rational foundations of a view on the world and philosophical assumptions of scientific cognition. In particular it excludes the possibil-

¹³ *Id.*, 77.

ity that the theory of being would be replaced by scientific types of philosophy.¹⁴

By such a way of cultivating metaphysics, a universal type of philosophizing is obtained, since every domain of philosophical cognition concerns only one particularized object of metaphysics. This object is being apprehended analogically in the aspect of existence. There is also ultimately one method of inquiry. Differences are delineated in the fact that while in metaphysics we investigate the structure of being in general terms, in the particular philosophical disciplines we consider domains or aspects of being that are important for specific reasons, e.g., human society, the material structure of the object, products of culture, or human decisions. In this way disciplines such as social philosophy, the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of culture, and ethics, are differentiated. Although the philosophical apprehension and explanation of categorial beings—man, morality, culture, society, art, or religion—is done on the basis of an experience that is separate from metaphysics, but in explaining in ultimate terms, the particular philosophical disciplines resort to the method of metaphysical explanation conceived analogically, and they use the concepts elaborated in metaphysics. This guarantees the unity and cohesion of philosophical explanation.

Translated from Polish by Hugh McDonald

METAPHYSICS IN THE LUBLIN PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOL

SUMMARY

The article is aimed at presenting the way in which metaphysics is understood and cultivated in the Lublin Philosophical School, Poland. It includes such topics as: the definition of metaphysics, metaphysical cognition (its object and the method for singling it out), ways of metaphysical demonstration and rational justification, and the

¹⁴ Id., 77–78.

relation of metaphysics to other domains of philosophy. In the light of the information delivered, it can be concluded that metaphysics in the Lublin Philosophical School is understood as a way of knowing in which the reason employs the universal laws of being and thought and strives to discover the first and singular factors or causes that render free of contradiction that which exists and which is given to us in a germinal way in the empirical intuition of the material world.

KEYWORDS: Lublin Philosophical School, metaphysics, philosophy, cognition, object, being, method, demonstration, justification, reason, cause, separation, reality, world.