

Michael Ewbank

Logos Philosophical Research
USA

COUNTERPOINT IN EXPLANATION OF ORIGINATIVE APPREHENSION

Early on Étienne Gilson was emphatic about the profound implications concerning human knowledge discernible in St. Thomas’s insistence—*In Boethium de Trinitate* (5, 3)—that “prima quidem operatio respicit ipsum naturam rei . . . secunda operatio respicit ipsum esse rei.”

But both operations are equally required for knowledge, which always is a cognition of actual being. Fundamental as it is, the distinction between abstract knowledge and judgment should therefore never be conceived as a separation. Abstraction and judgment are never separated in the mind, because essence and existence are never separated in reality.¹

Many, however, when pressed to explain both explanation and immediate awareness, have tended to offer an exposition derived from the focus of logic, moving from most simple or incomplex conceptual abstractions, through combinatory and divisory judgments, to complex reasoning to inferences, and then readily succumbing to “the fallacy of misplaced essentiality.”² However, such is a rather poor description of what actually occurs experientially in knowing and thinking. Rather,

¹ Étienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: P.I.M.S., 1952), 205.

² *Id.*, 232: “Because essence is the proper object of human understanding, we feel inclined to imagine that all that which we conceive as related to some essence is itself an essence.”

each apprehensive attainment is in a way within every other attainment or performance and more often than not all seem simultaneous.

Recent reflections that focus directly upon the character of origi-native apprehension have led to varying appraisals concerning the integrity of previous expositions of the thought of Aquinas.³ Even the meticulous, sustained analyses of Joseph Owens, which further refine Gilson's aforementioned insights, have been disputed and have been alleged to be fatally tainted with "conceptualism."⁴ However, since this criticism is supposedly applied according to the criteria of Bernard Lonergan, it is only appropriate to recall the latter's articulation of exactly what he meant by the term:

Conceptualists conceive intellect only in terms of what it does; but their neglect of what intellect is, prior to what it does, has a

³ Michael Tavuzzi, "Aquinas on the Preliminary Grasp of Being," *The Thomist* 51 (1987): 555–584; Orestes González, "The Apprehension of the Act of Being in Aquinas," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 58 (1994): 475–500; Rosa Vargas della Casa, "Thomas Aquinas on the Apprehension of Being: The Role of Judgement in Light of Thirteenth-Century Semantics," Marquette University Dissertation (2009); Andrew LaZella, "Thomas Aquinas, the Real Distinction between Esse and Essence and Overcoming the Conceptual Imperialism," Depaul University Dissertation (2010); Caery Evangelist, "Aquinas on Being and Essence as Proper Objects of the Intellect," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85 (2011): 361–385; Pawel Gondek, "The Existence of Being and the Original Cognitive Acts," *Espiritu* 53 (2014): 333–346; John Knasas, "The Intellectual Phenomenology of *De Ente et Essentia*, Chapter Four," *The Review of Metaphysics* 68 (2014): 107–153.

⁴ Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, "Reading the *Actio* of Cognitional Acts in Bernard J. F. Lonergan and Joseph Owens," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 88 (2014): 82. See also id., 101: "Owens proposed a position that reproduces the major tenets of the theory of vital act as well as the 'Bannezian pre-motion'. Owens's position advances a confrontationist account of human knowing, precludes the psychological fact of understanding (*intelligere*), and conceives the relationship of God and secondary causes in problematic terms." It should be remarked that Jacobs-Vandegeer shows no awareness in this essay of the extensive philosophical production by Owens to support his allegations, since he only cites sections of Owens' early textbook, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, mainly concerning the categories of *actio* and *passio*, as well as a restricted portion of his *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992) where Owens initially examines abstraction without precision.

variety of causes. Most commonly they do not advert to the act of understanding. They take concepts for granted; they are busy working out arguments to produce certitudes; they prolong their spontaneous tendencies to extroversion into philosophy, where they concentrate on metaphysics and neglect gnoseology . . . Such are the basic positions. The Platonist conceives knowing as primarily confrontation, but the Aristotelian conceives knowing as primarily perfection, act, identity; again, the conceptualist knows human intellect only by what it does, but the intellectualist knows and analyzes not only that intelligence in act does but also what it is.⁵

Given this sharp delineation of the issue, and given the fact that Lonergan's own terminology is being misconstrued to misrepresent Owens' position, it nonetheless remains possible that both Owens's and Lonergan's contrasting emphases manifest distinct approaches to the elucidation of apprehending and conceiving existing things, approaches that are complementary rather than contradictory since the reciprocal priorities granted by each pertain to distinct orders of consideration. To explain how and why this is so one must advert to latent operatives within human cognition in terms of the correlative acts mentioned by Gilson, whether they be performed as direct or reflexive abstractions and judgments, along with their enduring bonds with being.⁶ After all, "conceptualization and judgment always accompany each other," whether such be direct of things or reflexively as concomitant.⁷

⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1970), 186–187.

⁶ Lonergan suggested this early on. See his "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 32 (1958): 72: "If one asks for what is first *quoad se*, for ontological causes, the essence of the soul grounds the potencies, the potencies ground the acts, and the acts ground knowledge of objects. But if one asks for what is first *quoad nos*, for cognitional reasons, the order is inverted: knowledge of objects grounds knowledge of acts, knowledge of acts grounds knowledge of potencies, knowledge of potencies grounds knowledge of the essence of the soul. On this showing, then, the ontological and the cognitional are not incompatible alternatives but interdependent procedures."

⁷ Joseph Owens, *An Interpretation of Existence* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1968), 25.

When a person declares ‘x’ is truly so, is she not comparing her reflexively attained incomplex apprehension with what is now being judged? Is it not proper to infer that what is apprehended reflexively as incomplex is the expression of an implicit synthesizing apprehensive act which reflexion captures as an achieved synthesis that is now able to be compared with that which was originally attained? Thus, judging and judgment connote said cognitional act and its concomitantly reflexively produced iconic similitude in attaining or comprehending identical content, as when one might confirm that “she is judging as true her judgment.”⁸ Said judging attains the synthesizing of being exercised by a known as one act, while concomitant incomplex apprehensions permit one to apprehend substantial and accidental characteristics as iconically grasped dynamic natures, yielding intentions of specific and generic natures of ‘x’ wherever and whenever such is, or of imagined or fictive beings of reason or intentions that solely have being within the knower as concepts or objects that are of individuals, of a species, or pertaining to a genus, and so on without term.⁹

⁸ B. Bazàn has expressed concern that St. Thomas’ utilization of “similitudo” when rejecting Averroism concerning attaining universal being and Platonism concerning universal knowledge hints too greatly of representationalism and thus “inaugurates a kind of thought through intermediaries whose problems are enormous” (“*Intellectum Speculativum: Averroes, Thomas Aquinas, and Siger of Brabant on the Intelligible Object*,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 19 (1981): 436). Bazàn’s concern is repeated by R. Sokolowski and expanded by adding that “Descartes and Locke seem just around the corner” (*Phenomenology of the Human Person* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 298). However, there is no such danger because “Aquinas’ fundamental position about cognitive species should not be confused with talking about two-sided mental items. In short, one should not confuse impressed species with expressed ones . . . Far from mitigating any presence of the thing itself in cognition, similitudo in this sense is the very condition for that presence” (John Knasas, *Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists* (New York: Fordham University, 2003), 199).

⁹ The priority within apprehension of direct cognitional synthesizing over synthesized is remotely illustrated, albeit without a capacity for reflexive expression, by what occurs inceptively in infants. “By the second month of life, infants can already distinguish between utterances spoken in their native language and those spoken in foreign languages” (Leib Litman and Arthur Reber, “Implicit Cognition and Thought,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Thinking and Reasoning*, ed. Keith Holyoak and Robert

That which is reflexively attained in the prior is by one act, while the latter is subject to diverse acts. Accordingly, existence is attained in the latter principally as actuality and derivatively as synthesis, while in the former's attainment synthesizing is dominant and actuality concomitantly recessive.¹⁰ Yet, this complementary shift of focus in reflexively attaining thing-being(s) or thought-being(s) is within, through and by virtue of ongoing, englobing cognitive synthesizing acts performed by the human knower as constitutively announcing the togethering-in-being of things and thoughts.¹¹

Morrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 440). Likely, future refinements in the ability to observe infants "in utero" will reveal further manifestations of what the authors designate as "implicit cognition," which will confirm aspects of earlier speculation concerning the unified interrelations of different priorities concerning the "vis cogitativa" or "ratio particularis" with "vis imaginativa," "vis memorativa," "sensus communis," and exterior senses.

¹⁰ Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1963), 255–256; 251–252; 240–241; 272–273. "If all judgments retain, implicitly at least, a reference to the real and existential order, it seems clear that our primary and basic judgments are those which refer explicitly to that order . . . No judgment has, as its subject, anything that is purely conceptual, whether this is taken as essential or as accidental" (Ambrose McNicholl, "On Judging Existence," *The Thomist* 43 (1979): 519–520). Owens, however, insists further that judging as reflexively attained synthesis permits us to reason to truths about 'actus essendi' or 'esse' as prior and necessary to any thing's essence, while as grasped originally and directly 'esse' is known as contingent and quasi-accidental to essence or directly apprehended intelligible content (*An Interpretation of Existence*, 61). On direct complex apprehension of synthesizing contrasted with reflexive simple or incomplex apprehension of synthesized, see Joseph Owens, "Judgment and Truth in Aquinas," in *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed. John Catan (Albany: State University of New York, 1980), 47; also his "The Accidental and Essential Character of Being," in *id.*, 67 and 69.

¹¹ Kenneth Schmitz, "Enriching the Copula," *Review of Metaphysics* 27 (1974): 498–499: "The expression of meaning demands embodiment of thought in language in such a way that neither language nor thought remains indifferent to the other. Nor can the two together, *linguo-thought*, remain indifferent to the demands and possibilities of life. There arise in thought and speech, therefore, non-cognitive as well as cognitive modes of expression, and no theory of judgment can be adequate which disregards them. Nevertheless, the focus of judgment is cognition. The cognitive structure of language manifests itself in the sentences of language, the propositions of logic and the judgmental activities of thought. Of these three, the sentence is the most conditioned by

Advertence to this unified yet complex attaining makes it possible to acknowledge that emphasis upon cognitional theory, such as described in the first approach, which generally accords with the approach of Lonergan, ought not be portrayed as implying an eclipse, displacement or obscuring of the notion of being or things. Rather, it is relatively prior as thematic elucidation and mediating interpretation one with concomitant, unified awareness, whether one is apprehending actually existing things or cognitional existence, whether one is formulating questions or offering explanatory models or exemplars. If attention is not granted to details of this relative, performative priority of analytical and phenomenological elucidations of concomitant consciousness in apprehending things or cognitional existence, one's theory of knowledge may tend to be elucidated in terms of experientially remote, rationally abstruse, intellectually opaque, and precisively abstracted formalities.

However, while such elucidations indeed possess relative priority in relation to concomitantly immediate consciousness, such must be acknowledged as being continually bonded with a complementary acknowledgement of the primary, unqualifiedly prior operative implicate within their very being performed, which is emphasized in the second described approach so carefully explored by Owens. This confirms that potencies, forms and acts actually reiterate, and do not merely logically presuppose, the very synthesizing by virtue of which there is togethering-in-act of agent cognizing (and desiring) and content being cognized (and being desired).¹² So long as one does not presume, therefore, "the

the particularity of its language. The proposition is a formalization which comes under more universal conditions of thought. The judgment is the cognitive act by which thought, seeking its ends within human life, seeks them precisely in and through the sentence and the proposition. In its cognitive aspirations, thought seeks to know things as they are, and so it is a transcendental necessity of thought that every language be assertive . . . [T]he need to assert, to describe or to declare, and to judge is written into the nature of human thought, action, and life."

¹² Parenthetically, it should be remarked that what is advocated here partially neutralizes polemics between those who defend 'realism' by making it necessary to

categories or requirements of human thinking” to possess or constitute a priority or basis for inferring the real existence of things, nor substitute any other procedures, whether hermeneutic, semiotic or analytic, for the pervasively operative implicate direct apprehension of things, each of these may be granted, accordingly, a relative priority in terms of departing from concomitant reflexively attained cognitional existence.¹³ However, this relative priority always must be firmly acknowl-

choose exclusively between the explanations offered by thinkers such as Étienne Gilson, and by extension Joseph Owens, and those of Bernard Lonergan, so long as significant qualifications are accepted. Thus one can agree with John Wilkins’ defence of Lonergan against John Knasas that one should not necessarily attribute Cartesianism to Lonergan’s enterprise, although not his dubious charge that one ought not “[be] oriented by the Kantian categories central to Professor Knasas’ presentation, but by St. Thomas’s distinction between two radically opposed conceptions of knowing: knowledge by confrontation and knowledge by identity” (John Wilkins, “A Dialectic of ‘Thomistic’ Realisms: John Knasas and Bernard Lonergan,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 78 (2004): 108). Also, Wilkins misconstrues Knasas’ assertion that beings “always profile themselves against something larger because one with sensation of them is the abstraction of being” (id., 119). Cf. John Knasas, “Intellectual Dynamism in Transcendental Thomism: A Metaphysical Assessment,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 27.

Knasas is fully aware that there is no originative, immediate abstraction of being and that one can only reflexively refine originally attained notions to designate being. On the other hand, neither Wilkins nor Lonergan seem to acknowledge that ‘to be,’ *esse*, is not only synthesized with any and all essential content, but rather is the actual togethering or synthesizing implicate of all performative acts and content, for it is necessary to acknowledge not only that “*esse* . . . is synthesized with essential content,” but also that *esse* is “the very synthesizing of this content” (Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing* (Albany, N.Y.: Preserving Christian Publications, 1991), 93).

Nonetheless, if defenders of Lonergan do not assent to the important arguments posed by Knasas, along with further considerations, some articulated herein, it is difficult to see how heading “though an understanding of all understanding to a basic understanding of all that can be understood” can avoid implying epistemology as foundation of all other disciplines. See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 22. But none of these other “scientiae” await epistemology to be performed or exercised, whether Lonerganian or otherwise. Cf. Joseph Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*, 30, note 22.

¹³ Joseph Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*, 334. Correlatively, this is why “the analysis of thinking and knowing [can] thus be carried out, not as an independent epistemological inquiry, as it has been done in modernity, but as part of the science of being as being. If we were to adopt this approach, phenomenology could be

edged as a reflexive concomitant in conjunction with affirmation of the unqualifiedly prior versus the relatively prior.¹⁴

Without maintaining complementarity of this mutual relational priority, one cannot acknowledge all that is implied by affirming that hypotheses, theories, untested presuppositions, questions and syntheses may precede judgments as to their being true or false, or that questions and their cognates are ultimately syntheses explicating the cognitive existential exercise of being as judgment, which as exercised synthesizing act is simply prior in all intellection, for *intelligere* posits an *intellectum* just as intentional judgmental cognizing as act must be operative

seen as the part of metaphysics that examines cognitional being, at least as it occurs when human beings know. It would provide an expanded analysis of what the person does in order to achieve knowledge, and it would also discuss the identity of the human 'agent of truth'. It would examine how things present themselves to the dative of manifestation, and how entities are identifiable between the two states of being simply and being known. The transcendental reduction could then be seen as the turn toward the part of metaphysics that studies the cognitional way of being. This approach would pry phenomenology loose from its intricate association with modernity and free it from modernity's disadvantages. It would de-Cartesianize phenomenology" (Robert Sokolowski, "The Relation of Phenomenology and Thomistic Metaphysics in Philosophy of Religion," *The Review of Metaphysics* 67 (2014): 617).

¹⁴ Kenneth Schmitz, "Semiotics or Metaphysics as First Philosophy: Triadic or Dyadic Relations in Regard to *Four Ages of Understanding*," *Semiotica* 179 (2010): 124–125: "*assimilatio*, *convenientia*, *correspondentia* and *conformitas*, that is to say, *assimilatio*: attunement with the thing in its being; *con-venientia*: coming together with the thing, encountering the thing in its being and forming a 'community' with it; *con-formitas*: allowing the knower to take up the 'shape' or form of the thing; and *co-respondentia*: responding to the 'call' of the intelligibility of the thing in its being. So strong is this primordial dyadic relation that it precedes the verbal expression of the relation in the propositional judgment. [Thus] Thomas remarks: 'Truth is manifestive and declarative *esse*' (*Verum est manifestativum et declarativum esse*). It is significant that the comment does not say 'the truth is manifestive of *esse*,' but rather that truth is manifestive *esse*, or *esse* as manifestive. This brings out the dyadic character very well. If one says: 'truth is manifestive of *esse*,' this expresses the relation semiotically, whereas the more direct and ontological dyadic character of the relation is . . . expressed not [as] manifestive of *esse*, but manifesting *esse* or rather, *esse* manifesting itself; being disclosing itself. At this level being and sign coincide, as sign is resolved into being; and sign discloses its deeper, ontological character. This indicates the proper order of semiotics to metaphysics and defines First Philosophy in the most radical terms."

latently prior to any act-potency, essential configuration or formulated proposition that is posited.¹⁵ As originative apprehensive act, true judging is encompassing synthesizing apprehension of that «which-is» what is subsistent/non-subsistent, same/other, dynamic/static, and yet remains irreducible to each and all.¹⁶

Said act of apprehensive judging, as such, is the direct apprehending of real things or reflexive apprehending of cognitional being, in each instance the being of “things” taken globally, attained not as pure meaning or intelligibility but rather as the relating in act by the human knower of meaning-intelligibility through, with and of the known.¹⁷ Were it otherwise, truth would pertain to mere concepts,

¹⁵ Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, 94–96.

¹⁶ Or more succinctly “quid est esse,” although such inevitably emphasizes form: “Uno modo dicitur esse ipsa quidditas vel natura rei, sicut dicitur quod definitio est oratio significans quid est esse” (*In 1 Sent.*, 33, 1, 1, ad 1). Parenthetically, if there is justification for extending in one’s own name aspects of Aquinas’ reflections on judging, it may lend support to Pierre-Ceslas Courtès allegation that Aquinas’ application of certain adverbial modifiers in his exposition of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (IV, 3, lect 6, nos. 599–606) concerning what is “naturally first” *ex intellectu entis* “déplace l’accent et dépasse le donné aristotelicien,” an acknowledgement that some interpreters of Aquinas, however, are quite reluctant to concede. Cf. Courtès, *L’Être et le Non-Être selon Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Téqui, 1998), 214.

In other words, what is unqualifiedly first is not “non-contradiction” as expressed logical proposition, but rather that which is signified by *esse* as ex-cluding contradiction in every performing of exercised act of judging. It is this which justifies certain closely related inferences: “although one cannot say that the act of being of a thing is in the intellect in the same way that it is in the thing, one can say that the act of being somehow informs the intellect and somehow becomes the object of the intellect. For no essence actually present in nature makes itself known to the intellect without simultaneously making known its proper participation in the act of being” (Orestes Gonzalez, “The Apprehension of the Act of Being in Aquinas,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 68 (1994): 485–486).

¹⁷ Given the intimate relation of cognitional and real being, yet the impossibility of deducing the existence of one from the other, it seems problematic to ask without qualification: “Why should the cognitive existence be limited to the inside of the knower, if his perception extends to his surroundings?” (Sokolowski, “The Relation of Phenomenology and Thomistic Metaphysics in Philosophy of Religion,” 618, after considering the status of portraits, photos, or words signifying intelligibility of things). While we, and in other modes all living orders of speciated agencies, constantly infuse

meanings, intelligibilities, and this would imply that “truth” is constituted by mere presence to subjectivity and insularity from public disclosure.

Moreover, unless the synthesizing implicate within apprehending and knowing is irreducible to any and all abstract natures apprehended as content, the synthesized, one can not acknowledge fully both time-tense modulation or historical contextualizing of every attribution or predication along with its necessary and enduring character, when such is appropriate.¹⁸ Such pervades every human attribution because only individual things of ‘x’ nature(s) exist as real, while only nature(s) as universal are objects of immediate awareness in reflexion attained through focal abstraction upon things, and therefore a universal can exist only as concept within cognitional existence as a unit in itself equally related to every ‘x’. But no universal within cognitional existence can be attributed or predicated of any individual as such, for it is a

cognitionally anticipated formal causality within effects or discern formal causality encoded by other agencies or events—once imposed they do not as such possess “cognitive existence” but rather “real existence.”

However, they are virtually or potentially cognizable and/or intelligible, but only if attained in act by an interpretive knower does such have cognitional existence, if one allows for virtual formal causality. One might be reminded of the reported remarks made by Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein concerning his portrait of her in 1906. “Everybody says that she does not look like it but that does not make any difference, she will,” which was quoted by Stein in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Random House, 1933), 46. Stein observed later in life: “I was and still am satisfied with my portrait, for me it is I, and it is the only reproduction of me which is always I, for me” (Edward Burns, *Gertrude Stein on Picasso* (New York: Liveright, 1970), 14). Picasso’s assertion confirmed the actual cognitional existence of that which he discerned in and through his producing and achieved production, while Stein’s subsequent confirmation was as well to actual cognitive existence of that which she discerned as virtually formal within Picasso’s achievement.

¹⁸ Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*, 170: “The ‘is’ expresses [essential and accidental] synthesis in the one real existent. The synthesis is something over and above the abstract natures involved, and is not required by them. So the actuality that brings them together and synthesizes them into the one real existence is at stake here. In the case of accidents . . . it is comparatively easy to see that the synthesizing factor has to lie outside the abstract natures. But likewise in the category of substance the abstract natures are not sufficient to account for their union in the one individual.”

unit in itself and equally inclusive of every instance of 'x'. Moreover, every conceptualization, although relational to known thing(s) existing or having cognitional existence is incomplex, indivisible, iconic, de-contextualized and de-temporalized.¹⁹

Nonetheless, attribution or predication is commonplace as is evidenced by the performance of elucidative and explanatory articulations by any human in cognizing being. Ultimately, the explanation for how such can occur must neutralize the dialectical dilemma of relating what is a unit in itself within cognitional existence, universal as such, to what is an individual existing real unity, a singular existent. This requires that the nature common to both, and it alone, be apprehended by virtue of the non-restricted human intellective act as identical with both modes of authentic existence, the real 'x' and cognitively abstracted essence.

What is common to both yet able to be attributed or predicated to a *res*, whether such be material substance, a surrogate having only cognitional existence, or analogical inferences concerning non-material beings, is solely attained by virtue of non-material limitation of the human knower. This alone is capable of truly attributing or predicating what is common to abstracted nature or universal having only cognitional existence to a singular existing real that is 'x' nature, or achieving similar performance in relating referents that have only cognitional being.

Were this not so, one could not explain how, through shifting series of abstractive focal references within intentional awareness concerning what a thing is, "one real thing is being known throughout by

¹⁹ Aquinas early on distinguished these primary complementary relational acts of intellect. "[C]um sit duplex operatio intellectus: una quarum dicitur a quibusdam imaginatio intellectus, quam Philosophus dicit (iii de anima) nominat intelligentiam indivisibilem, quae consistit in apprehensione quidditatis simplicis, quae alio etiam nomine formatio dicitur; alia est quam dicunt fidem, quae consistit in compositione vel divisione propositionis: prima operatio respicit quidditatem rei, secunda respicit esse ipsius" (*In 1 Sent.*, 19, 5, 1, ad 7).

one real knower.”²⁰ In his early works, Aquinas readily accepted the correlation of Aristotle’s reflections concerning the apprehension of invisibles and composition/division suggested by later thinkers. While that comprehensive depiction can be read contextually in various ways, it nonetheless is not antithetical to being interpreted as implying that it is by virtue of relational synthesizing apprehensive composition or division that there occur complementary relational incomplex conceptualizations of an existing known, whether thing or cognitional existence.²¹ Thus, this constant reciprocity of act and specification can be referred to with a variety of cognates to contrast their attainment:

fides/credulitas // imaginatio/formatio/informatio
*compositio-divisio // intelligentia indivisibilium/simplex intelligentia.*²²

²⁰ Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*, 142.

²¹ “Primo enim quod cadit in imaginatione intellectus, est ens, sine quod nihil potest apprehendi ab intellectu, sicut primum quod cadit in credulitate intellectus, sunt dignitates, et praecipue ista, contradictoria esse non simul vera, unde omni alia includuntur quodammodo in ente unite et distincte, sicut in principio” (*In 1 Sent.*, 8, 1, 3). The notions of *imaginatio intellectus* versus *credulitate intellectus*, although germinal in Aristotle’s reflections in iii *De anima*, have been argued to markedly reflect influences of a “tradition importante” of Semitic commentaries on that work echoing a “tradition manuscrite antérieure à celle que nous possédons” (Michel Fattal, “L’Intelligence des Indivisibles dans le *De Anima* (III, 6) d’Aristote: Lectures arabes et modernes,” in *Corps et Âme: Sur le de Anima d’Aristote*, ed. Cristiano Viano (Paris: Vrin, 1996), 426, n. 8).

²² Historical precedents of Aquinas’ usage of such notions to interpret the implications of Aristotle’s reflections in the *de anima* and other pertinent works were established by Avicenna, Averroes, Peter of Spain, Bonaventure, and Albert the Great. Cf. Benoit Garceau, *Judicium: vocabulaire, sources, doctrine de saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1968), 107–126. Garceau’s acknowledgement that these mark a somewhat recessive doctrine for Aquinas should be balanced with advertence to the fact that the latter refers to these cognates consistently in various works. For instance: *De veritate*, 14.1; *De spiritualibus creaturis*, q. un., 9.6; *In libros Posteriorum Analyticum*, 1. Even though utilization of these cognates ceases after the period in which these works were written, such does not imply that they were judged to have been erroneous. Cf. André Hayen, *L’Intentionnel selon saint Thomas* (Bruxelles: Desclée de Brouwer, 1954), 41. Many decades before Garceau’s investigation Harry A. Wolfson established that Averroes’ *formatio* and *informatio* were equivalent to Algazali’s *maqâsid* and *tassawur* as the Arabic rendering of Aristotle’s *noêsis* as well as the Stoic notion of *phantasia*

While it is well known that Aquinas permitted these cognates derived from Arabic commentaries to become recessive in his later reflections, as already indicated, he nonetheless recalled them in works that span different phases of his career, and we encounter no repudiation of their legitimacy in conveying certain implications of what Aristotle was after in his explanation of the two-fold operation of the intellect in his “Peri psyches.”²³ There are many possible reasons why St. Thomas may have opted to do this, but there is no clear indication that he would have disavowed all reference to them in his “mature” thought and final positions.²⁴

logikē, while Averroes’ *fides* was the equivalent of Avicenna’s *credulitas*, and *tasdiq* was the Arabic rendering of Aristotle’s *apophantikos logos* and the Stoic *axiōma*. Wolfson further established that one of the notions used by Averroes to illustrate the meaning of *tassawur* is derived from *mithāl*, “an exact translation of the Greek *eikon*, while *tasdiq* implies apprehension of *archai*.” See Harry A. Wolfson, “The terms *Tassawur* and *Tasdiq* in Arabic Philosophy and Their Greek, Latin, and Hebrew Equivalents,” *The Moslem World* 33 (1943): 116–117 and 126.

Proximately, Aquinas’ sources for the notions would have been: *Albertus Magnus: Opera Omnia* (Aschendorf: Monast. Westf., 1968), vol. 7; *Libri de anima*, Lib. 3, Tract. 3, cap. 1, p. 123; and Michael Scot’s translation of Averroes’ Great Commentary, *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois Commentariis* (Venetiis apud Junctas 1562–1574; Frankfurt 1962), suppl. II, 166.

²³ Aristotle’s reflections were anticipated by Plato’s acknowledgment that “*sumplokē eidon*” and “*sunthesis*” define “*logos*” (*Sophist*, 251e10–260d8); Michel Fattal, “Le Sophiste: Logos de la synthèse ou logos de la division?,” in *Etudes sur le Sophiste de Platon*, ed. Michel Narcy (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1991), 150–151.

²⁴ A recent excellent overview of literature concerning refinements made by St. Thomas over his career, along with the author’s examination of a limited number of issues about which he eventually reversed positions, is Giorgio Pini, “The Development of Aquinas’s Thinking,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), 491–510. Also, Harm J. M. J. Goris presents a carefully crafted presentation of texts concerning the development of Aquinas’ analyses of the human cognitive process, particularly in regard to the inner word and concept, but when examining his subsequent reflections on knowledge of the singular determine that what occurs in later works “is less clearly expressed” (*Free Creatures of an Eternal God* (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 176 and 196.

Attending to subtle differences of emphasis and shifts of focal reference in treating the same subject in varying contexts often better explains distinct articulations by an author, so long as such neither contradict nor nullify anterior elucidations, and may be

Leaving aside historical questions concerning Aquinas' diminishing utilization of the notions, it may be beneficial, nonetheless, to judiciously develop the implications of these suggestive notions adverted to earlier from his Arabic sources that confirm "being [*ens*] is the first which occurs within the imagination of understanding [*in imaginatione intellectus*]," even though in more synoptic distilled contexts it suffices to say "in the understanding [*in intellectu*]." ²⁵ Arguably, attending to the implications of these complementary notions can reinforce one to avoid viewing metaphysical elucidation as mere explicitation of an original compact attainment rather than consisting of forging true explanations. If the former view gains ascendancy, metaphysics will tend to be considered merely experientially descriptive, and no matter how profound such might be, such will not strictly be explanatory.

If, indeed, what falls first within unified awareness through the specifying iconic attainment of *imaginatio* or *formatio intellectus* is auto-positized by the complementary apprehension of *fides intellectus* or *compositio/divisio* of *esse ipsius*, then what is, whether an *ens res* or *ens rationis*, must be togethering-into-being by virtue of the unqualifiedly *principium quo*. ²⁶ Any attribution of "something" (*aliud quid* or

more justified and economical than postulating new formulations that supposedly entirely supersede earlier analyses.

²⁵ Robert Wood has recently utilized this latter formulation in *Summa theologiae* (1, 5, 2) as a point of departure to develop a nuanced historical reflection ("First Things First: On the Priority of the Notion of Being," *Review of Metaphysics* 67 (2014): 719–741). His encapsulative assertion that "the notion of Being, making its appearance in human awareness, has absolutely unrestricted universality: it covers everything that is and everything about everything" may, however, be taken as referring to pervasive implicate actualizing, rather than explicitated or explicit attainment, since any *ens* that *cadit in imaginatione intellectus* is originally iconic attainment of the quiddity or *ess\entia* of a *habens esse*, whether actual *res* or actual *ens rationis*, whether directly or reflexively attained in, through and by actual focal cognitional identity.

²⁶ To view these texts as confirming these profoundly reciprocal attainments of apprehending and considering existents does mean, if one is speaking "formally," that "each intellectual operation has its own proper object" (Evangelist, "Aquinas on Being and Essence as Proper Objects of the Intellect," 375, n. 33). But there is one unified "object" apprehended, considered and comprehended by unified cognitional intellectual

an-other-what), thus, simultaneously manifests the fact of the act of being of any *ens*, as well as that there is no originative, abstractive conceptual attainment of that act directly. Moreover, since there is no direct original universal abstraction of such there cannot be, strictly speaking, an empty concept of existence as such.

Rather, any conceptual content that may be reflexively refined and said truly of *esse* will require the disciplined sifting of intelligibilities harvested from a quite limited repertory of categorially derived cognates, such as “act,” “perfection,” or “synthesis,” without prescinding from their underlying reference to participial “acting,” “perfecting,” and “synthesizing.”²⁷ Nonetheless, each of these reflexively refined

act of both enduring nature and fleeting existence subject to shifting focal reflection. Joseph Owens, “Aquinas on Knowing Existence,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 29 (1976), esp. 674, n. 9, and 677–678.

This is emphasized in a recent penetrating reflection by John F. X. Knasas, who presents Aquinas’ doctrine of the two-fold intellectual operation as “an ebb and flow in our cognitive attention” (“The Intellectual Phenomenology of *De Ente et Essentia*, Chapter Four,” 120). While the focal referent and content of such may concern reciprocity of “commonality in some multiplicity, upon the one in the many” and a “rebounding of attention back off the commonality to the particular instances in which it was spied,” this would seemingly be a derivative or concomitant thematic of the fugal conjoining of iconic, incomplex abstractive attainments within *compositio-divisio* apprehensions synthesizing universal assertions of properly metaphysical reasoning about the act of being. After all, “for a subject to be anything at all [whether particular or universal], in a way that offers a ground for a proposition, existence in its synthesizing function must be present” (Owens, *An Interpretation of Existence*, 34). Cf. Joseph Owens, “The Causal Proposition, Principle or Conclusion,” *The Modern Schoolman* 32 (1955): 323–339.

²⁷ This is why Joseph Owens, in a carefully sustained analytical reflection, judged that we ought to discard notions such as “fact,” “facticity,” “factuality,” “occurrence,” “emergence,” “arise,” “become,” “take place,” and “ground,” for each of these notions are inadequate to serve as proper designations of “being” as *esse* as articulated by Aquinas (cf. *An Interpretation of Existence*, 53–57 and 101). “The concept of existence, in a word, is not exactly a hyaline. Its content is the content of some other concept, whether of ‘something,’ of ‘actuality,’ of ‘perfection,’ or of a ‘synthesis’. Each of these has its own pigments, but none of them tinctures existence” (id., 70).

Where any of the previous litany of notions is given favor, I would suggest it is because one is emphasizing what is relatively prior within the psycho-genesis of being, that is, what occurs in and through the concomitant awareness of the knowing subject, and thus

notions originally was abstractively attained from the categorial focusses upon what things or operations are. Thus, one is not disputing the fact that, based on Aquinas' analysis of the mode of signification of the terms 'ens', 'esse', and 'est', all have *esse*.

Even with a simple affirmation such as "the rose is red" or "I am certain that I understand the truth of what you intend to say," strictly and metaphysically what is monstrated is that "the rose ises redly" or "I certitudinally know my apprehending truly what you are expressing propositionally to be understood."²⁸ In the suggestive terminological

making recessive what is absolutely prior attained through the judgmental actualizing, perfecting, and synthesizing origin as causing this concomitancy that reiterates the "synthesizing to be" of an actual existing known. Although differing in emphases and nuances, these articulations accord with what Michael Tavuzzi long ago remarked: "[The preliminary grasp or original apprehension of being] . . . has a content, which if it is to be seized at all by the mind, requires the performance of a highly sophisticated process of resolute reasoning, a process of reasoning which involves, as its specific and constitutive element, the exercise of that properly metaphysical . . . abstraction or 'distinctio' which is the negative judgment of separation" ("Aquinas on the Preliminary Grasp of Being," 559).

Moreover, it should be noted that "compositio" and "resolutio," in different ways, may be discerned not only within reasoning, but within abstraction and judgment. Cf. Louie-Marie Regis, "Analyse et Synthèse dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas," *Studia Mediaevalia in Honorem admodum Reverendi Patris Raymundi Josephi Martin* (Bruges: De Tempel, 1947), esp. 317–328.

²⁸ "The concession which the metaphysician must needs make to the ordinary and natural ways of speech, must be made, as the French phrase so aptly expresses it, 'en pleine connaissance de cause'. It would be absurd to insist that instead of saying, 'The rose is red,' one should say, 'The rose ises redly,' although the latter expression is metaphysically more correct (and incidentally, the barbarous expression 'ises' is no more barbarous than the Latin word *essendi* which no one seems to boggle at)" (Gerald Phelan, "Being, Order and Knowledge," in *G.B. Phelan: Selected Papers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), 127).

This acknowledgment ought not be considered to be utterly alien and abstruse since Aristotle long ago tacitly proposed "protocol transformations of colloquial (surface level) 'S is P' assertions . . . [implying that] 'a (the) man's being running', or 'a (the) man's being pale', such that the corresponding assertion takes the form: 'Is: [a (the) man&run]'s be-ing]', or 'Is: [a (the) man&pale]'s be-ing], indiscriminately meaning 'A (the) man runs', or 'There is a running man', and 'A (the) man is pale' or 'There is a pale man'" (Lambert Marie de Rijk, *Aristotle: Semantics and Ontology*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 84–85). Further, if one prefers, "Platonic sentencehood should be

cognates that Aquinas discerned in certain predecessors, our understanding, by virtue of *credulitas intellectus*, apprehends the actual authorizing bespeaking of being(s), *entia*, and concomitantly envisions their natures through properties and accidents by virtue of *incomplex formatio* or *imaginatio intellectus*. For just as causes cause one another, each in their own orders, so also the principal apprehensive act of *esse ipsius* or *credulitas intellectus* posits its complementary determining principles of the *essentia rei* as known through *imaginatio-informatio intellectus* as determined performance.²⁹

The contention, thus, is not that “esse is a *synthesis*.”³⁰ Rather, it is argued that the term denotes that by which there is any synthesizing of all con-created principles, which include form/matter/accidents, that are ‘of,’ yet are not identically the act of being; and it is by virtue of these latter, proximately, that there is specifying, individualizing and individuating.³¹ Such not only remains constant in dealing with sensible things but also serves as proximate *propter quid* concerning our inability to directly conceive *Causa Essendi*, since we attain no direct, origi-

expressed . . . not as ‘This man (Socrates) is wise’, but as ‘here and now obtains: [man-being]’, as the corresponding cognitive act is, not ‘I know that this man is wise’ but rather something like ‘I am acquainted with here and now man-being *plus* wise-being’” (Lambert Marie de Rijk, *Plato’s Sophist: A Philosophical Commentary* (Amsterdam-New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1986), 353–354).

²⁹ “Intelligibility in act, such as the content going into any judgment, causes subsequent affirmation or negation (dependent, of course, on evidence and reasoning) in the line of formal causality . . . Forms are causes of being within the formal or essential order because they constitute things to be *as* they are. But forms can cause only if they function existentially, if they perform their roles: the performing of these roles is ultimately being in act. And the so-called ‘principle of contradiction’ is, in signified act, simply the conscious exercise within the intelligence of being” (Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, 95).

³⁰ Cf. Lawrence Dewan, *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 237–238.

³¹ “[A]ccidens magis proprie dicitur entis quam ens. Sicut igitur accidentia et formae, et huiusmodi, quae non subsistunt, magis sunt coexistentia quam entia; ita magis debent dici concreata quam creata. Proprie vero creata sunt substantia” (*Summa Theologiae*, 1, 45, 4).

native abstractive concept of any *esse*, which principally and strictly speaking, is proper effect of *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* alone.³²

Bearing in mind these considerations, one may appropriate Heidegger's suggestive remark: "*Being* that is not God and not a cosmic ground . . . is essentially farther than all beings and is yet nearer to the human being than every being . . . Yet the near remains farthest from the human being."³³ However, one needs to add parenthetically to this observation the insistence that yes, "farthest" in terms of what is directly conceptual, but in terms of that attained by apprehensive synthesizing judging "nearest" in the sense of an intimacy that eludes any far/near descriptive relative opposition.³⁴

³² "[N]on sic proprie dicitur quod esse sit, sed quod per esse, aliquid sit" (*In De divinis nominibus*, 4, 751). "[C]ausa prima, quae Deus est, non intret essentiam rerum creatarum; tamen esse, quod rebus creatis inest, non potest intelligi nisi ut deductum ab esse divino; sicut nec proprius effectus potest intelligi nisi ut deductus a causa propria" (*De potentia Dei*, 3, 5, ad 1). "Primum autem in omnibus effectibus est esse: nam omnia alia sunt quaedam determinationes ipsius. Igitur esse est proprius effectus primi agentis, et omnia alia agunt ipsum in quantum agunt in virtute primi agentis. Secunda autem agentia, quae sunt quasi particulantes et determinantes actionem primi agentis, agunt sicut proprios effectus alias perfectiones, quae determinant esse" (*Summa contra gentiles*, 3, 66).

³³ "Dies zu erfahren und zu sagen, muß das künftige Denken lernen. Das «Sein» – das ist nicht Gott und nicht ein Weltgrund. Das Sein ist weiter denn alles Seiende und ist gleichwohl dem Menschen näher als jedes Seiende, sei dies ein Fels, ein *Tier*, ein Kunstwerk, eine Maschine, sei es ein Engel oder Gott. Das Sein ist das Nächste. Doch die Nähe bleibt dem Menschen am weitesten. Der Mensch hält sich zunächst immer schon und nur an das Seiende. Wenn aber das Denken das Seiende als das Seiende vorstellt, bezieht es sich zwar auf das Sein. Doch es denkt in Wahrheit stets nur das Seiende als solches und gerade nicht und nie das Sein als solches" (*Brief über den Humanismus* (Bern: Francke, 1947), 8).

³⁴ "Esse autem est illud quod est magis intimum cuilibet, et quod profundius omnibus inest, cum sit formale respectu omnium quae in re sunt . . . Unde oportet quod Deus sit in omnibus rebus, et intime" (*Summa theologiae*, 1, 8, 1). "Ipsum enim esse est communissimus effectus primus et intimior omnibus aliis effectibus; et ideo soli Deo competit secundum virtutem propriam talis effectus" (*De potentia Dei*, 3, 7). "Cum ergo esse sit intimum cuilibet rei, Deus, qui operando dat esse, operatur in rebus ut intimus agens . . . Unde, cum rei sit intimum in qualibet re, manifestum est quod Deus per essentiam suam, per quam omnia creat, sit in omnibus rebus" (*In Johannem*,

Indeed, a parallel response is relevant to polemics concerning whether one may attain either a “thin” versus a “thick” concept of existence.³⁵ As already suggested, to endeavor to conceive existence, which apart from the present is not, via immediate, directly attained, abstracted notions from the categories results, ultimately, in an empty concept as one ascends ever more inclusive extensional notions.

Even if one fixes upon metaphorical surrogates derived proximately from categorial content, such as “arise,” “fact,” “facticity,” “factuality,” “occurrence,” “emergence,” “take place,” “become,” “ground,” and related notions, in spite of seemingly promising suggestive meanings, such will give rise to perplexing problems vulnerable to serious critiques due to abiding connotations saturated from the categorial essential order. However, if focus is maintained upon actual existing tinted by a limited repertory of reflexively refined conceptual cognates tempered and immunized by ongoing separational judgmental inferences *esse* manifests itself as a “thick” yet ascetically lucid focal referent capable of sustaining rigorous demonstrative inferences concerning human destiny and what is intimated or adumbrated within the deepest and most far-ranging human concerns and operations.³⁶

1, 5, 133–134). “Deus est unicuique intimus, sicut esse proprium rei est intimum ipsi rei” (*In 1 Sent.*, 37, 1, 1).

³⁵ Peter van Inwagen, *Ontology, Identity, and Modality: Essays in Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001), 4–5: “The thin conception of being is this: the concept of being is closely allied with the concept of number. To say that there are Xs is to say that the number of Xs is 1 or more, and to say nothing more profound, nothing more interesting, nothing more. Continental philosophers of being have never seen matters this way. (The Continental philosophy of being is, I believe, rooted in Thomism.) . . . I can only say that, in my view, it is possible to distinguish between the being and the nature of a thing, any thing; anything, and that the thick conception of being is founded on the mistake of transferring what belongs properly to the nature of a chair, or of a universal or of God, to the being of the chair. To endorse the thick conception of being is, in fact, to make (perhaps for other reasons; perhaps in a more sophisticated way) the very mistake of which Kant accused Descartes, the mistake of treating being as a ‘real predicate.’”

³⁶ Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*, 173–176: “[E]xistential actuality just by itself, or the nature just by itself, can never be immediately attained. As separate

Finally, the aforementioned considerations contribute towards explaining why judging truly is reflexive apprehending of apprehending-what-is and judging with certitude is reflexive apprehending of reflexive-apprehending-of-the-truth-of-immediate-apprehending-what-is. However, while originative immediate judging may implicate, but not necessitate, judging truly; neither does judging truly necessitate reflexive certitudinal apprehension as an act even though identical content is shared throughout. Rather, certitudinal judging that is truly of what is necessarily implicates virtual possession of immediate apprehending as originative, and reflexive apprehending truly implicates that of immediate apprehending.³⁷

objects the two are inferred from a metaphysical study of the existent thing, and each of them has to be represented as an existent something . . . If an attempt is made to attain [the concept of existence or being] by continuing the process of abstracting grade after grade in the natures of sensible things, the result will inevitably be an empty concept. But if attention is given to the actuality attained in judgment, over and above what is attained through abstraction, the result is very different. The abstract natures of things can be graded in terms of actuality or perfection . . . Existence can accordingly be defined as the actuality of all actualities and the perfection of all perfections . . . [although] this concept of existence is not without anomalies. Of itself it does not inform you whether the thing to which it is applied exists or not . . . As far as human cognition is concerned, perfection in the order of nature is known through abstraction, while existential perfection is known through judgment.” Cf. also Gondek, “The Existence of Being and Original Cognitive Acts,” 339.

³⁷ Such are, arguably, Owens’ legitimate developments of Aquinas’ own creative integration of anterior sources. Yet, one may wonder how there might be a “naïve realism in play in Owens’s attempt to explain the difference between a judgment that reaches the real (e.g., *this is a chair*) versus one concerning fictional objects (e.g., *Zeus is mightier than Poseidon*). Owens answers that such “existence in thought” is not some partial existence half-way between being and nothingness *en route* to real existence, but a genuine, albeit lesser, way of existing. What needs to be explained, however, is how exactly judgment puts us in contact with the real as something distinct from the merely fictional . . . Hegel was well aware of the dynamism of judgment set against the static abstractions of concepts; to reach existence outside conceptual determinations through the movement of synthetic thought, however, requires existentialism to locate the gap in thought where the ideal encounters the real without the latter being enfolded by the former. But does the synthetic dynamism of judgment locate this gap and allow us to *think the real* beyond conceptual determinations?” (LaZella, “Thomas Aquinas, the

Judging as immediate originative apprehending, apprehensive judging of the truth of that originative apprehending, and certitudinal judging of judging truly that originative apprehending are distinct attainments, even though experiential awareness of such may be simultaneous.³⁸ Moreover, while immediately grasping a directly perceived or sensed known as existing, there is immediate concomitant grasp of

Real Distinction between Esse and Essence and Overcoming the Conceptual Imperialism,” 384, n. 73).

However, there is no “gap” to be located, unless one conjures an imaginatively reified, precise consideration of the constitutive unity of synthesizing/synthesized performing within intellectual-ratiocination exercised by humans in direct or reflexive cognition. “We are conscious of producing this new existence for things as we think of them. We are conscious of giving them cognitional existence in our minds. We are reflexively aware that their cognitional existence is caused by our own activity. The new existence manifests itself as an effect brought about by an agent. It manifests itself, too, as a genuine, authentic existence, radically different though it is from real existence” (Joseph Owens, “The Range of Existence,” *Proceedings of the Seventh Inter-American Congress of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Quebec: Les Presses de l’ Université Laval, 1967), 48). The author’s projection of an exaggerated “diminished being” into Owens’ elucidations is gratuitous and ill-founded, especially given the fact that such a tendency arose within an encoded speculative lineage other than that of Aquinas’. Cf. Armand Maurer, *Being and Knowing: Studies in Thomas Aquinas and Later Medieval Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 211 and 378.

³⁸ Analogous reciprocal virtual and eminent priorities, arguably, simultaneously pervade speech as well. “One could dramatize [the] conception of the role of the verb in the typical sentence by characterizing the verb as the enter or source of the ‘flow’ of the sentence or, taking advantage of a Chinese way of thinking, by speaking of the verbal kernel as the source of *chi* (*ki* in Japanese), or energy, within the sentence as a whole, only able to communicate itself to other parts of the sentence through the presence of appropriate structurizing features, namely, inflections, connectives, configuration, and intonation, which integrate subjects, other complements, and adjuncts with the source of *chi*. The *chi* passes from verb arguments through case markings or adpositions; to adverbs, adverbial clauses, and adverbial phrases modifying verbs through the use of conjunctions, adpositions, or affixes; through the noun arguments to various kinds of modifier in ways that depend in different cases on concord between noun and adjective, word order, and adpositional connectives (modifiers including relative clauses); and through adjectives or adverbs it can pass to other adverbs. It is only by means of these appropriate connectives and affixes, configuration, and intonation that the *chi* can flow. For a sentence to be ungrammatical is for there to be a bar to the flow of *chi*” (David Braine, *Language and Human Understanding: The Roots of Creativity in Speech and Thought* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 614).

cognizing-self-agency as existing, which permits relational contrasts of something being directly known versus something possessing cognitive existence, and each necessitates a judgment of certainty, for truth is based upon existing and certainty upon existing truth about the known. Similarly, when focussing reflexively upon abstractions not having existence strictly in real things but rather only in understanding, as in other instances existence unqualifiedly precludes its opposite.³⁹

Within awareness this may be “simul,” as for example signified in stating “I am certain that it is true that lightning just struck that tree” or “I am certain that the author intended this principal meaning that is explicitly stated in this text.” The “that ‘x’ is” or “that ‘x’ is what ‘x’ is” potentially is true is not confirmed to be such without a concomitant act of apprehensive judging such to be the case; and the latter is only potentially certain by means of a concomitant act of apprehensive judging it to be certain. Reciprocally, an attainment of certainty in an eminent manner subsumes virtually both the apprehension of truth and the originative apprehension of the being that was known.

³⁹ “When scrutinized as an abstract concept, this necessitating role appears with full vigor in the relevant existence. It is manifest immediately. Existence contradicts non-existence . . . Existence absolutely excludes its opposite” (Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*, 256). Only concomitant interpolative interpretation caused by the reflective knowing subject as agent of judging can occlude this enduring operative and its implications. “The directly perceived . . . is grasped as existent in itself. It is not apprehended as existent in the percipient, even though the existence of the percipient is concomitantly attained. Neither existence is apprehended as dependent on the other, from the epistemological viewpoint in which knowledge of the one would allow inference to the knowledge of the other. The basic synthesizing actuality in the . . . sensed or perceived, then, is its own existence. It is not something brought about by the percipient . . . The initial query should not ask whether the directly perceived . . . exists outside the percipient, but whether it exists in its own self. The notion of externality should not for the moment be introduced . . . Concomitantly, of course, the percipient’s existence is also apprehended. But it is an independent existence, from the epistemological viewpoint . . . In contrast, the cognitional existence of [the known] within the percipient’s activity is apprehended as dependent upon the percipient’s activity and in this way reducible to him as to its efficient cause” (id., 249).

Of course, all of these considerations presuppose the diaphonous nature of the human *intentio* or *conceptio*, since the act of understanding is not the principle of understanding. The *quo* of understanding that occurs is distinct from the *quod intelligitur*, as well from the *verbum*, which is both a *quo et in quo*. Nonetheless, the *esse* attained is the *esse* of understanding; while in direct knowledge of material things, the essence is the understood of a thing being known and which specifies sensible and intelligible species. Since the human knower is constituted as an incarnate spirit, sensorially attained symbolic phantasms are “subject(s)” of and to an ongoing, shifting focal abstractive awarenesses that “iconize” and “detemporalize” what is known as wholes focussed upon non-precisively or precisely, including one’s reference to substance(s) and proper or incidental accidents. Yet all occurs in and through the synthesizing into unity of affirming and denying, composing and dividing, of intelligible predicates that are one with said subject—thus reiterating truly that which is being considered historically and temporally.

The above considerations support Joseph Owens’ explanations and developments of Aquinas’ principles concerning metaphysics and the theory of knowledge, which are not at all vitiated by “conceptualization” as defined by Bernard Lonergan. They also suggest that it possible to reconcile the reciprocal priorities of Owens’ and Lonergan’s complementary, distinct points of departure and personal contributions as legitimate developments of Aquinas’ elucidated principles.⁴⁰ Yet

⁴⁰ Admittedly, this conclusion presupposes assent to the fact that the heart of human cognition is continually manifested as judging, which is basically an act of apprehension of being that is not limited to what is immediately grasped as composed, but also as capable of further auto-compositions.

Aquinas, arguably, did not deny that judging is apprehension. Indeed, he occasionally referred to “the apprehension of the cognitive power proportioned to the thing’s being” and to the fact that “intellect’s cognition [that] takes its rise from things having composite being apprehends that being only by composing and dividing.” Moreover, “composition when intellect compares one notion with another, as it were apprehending conjunction or identity of things of which they are conceptions” occurs because it “pertains to intellect to judge and this is called to know and to apprehend.” “[R]atio veritatis in duobus consistit: in esse rei, et in apprehensione virtutis cognoscitivae

these issues transcend intramural disputes concerning who truly has achieved the deepest or more correct insights into a given tradition or author.

Rather, an inclusive, conciliatory elucidation of what is implied in this reciprocity of unqualified versus qualified priorities between primary points of departure concerning original apprehension, if properly appreciated, offers insights into diminished or augmented horizons and focal depth attained within different historical philosophical approaches to various matters, as well as modulations and differentiations within the expansion of human speculative, practical and productive knowledges. Such inevitably deal not only with essential stability of beings having their existing outside of themselves, such as transient material substances and finite spiritual substances that are actual by virtue of existence immediately communicated to their forms, but even extend to apprehending truths regarding the sole unique nature identical with existing—for all have duration to the extent they are actual through existing, and existing is continually grasped by the human be-

proportionata ad esse rei” (*In 1 Sent.*, d. 19, 5, 2); “intellectus noster, cujus cognitio a rebus oritur, quae esse compositum habent, non apprehendit illud esse nisi componendo et dividendo” (id., 38, 1, 3, ad 2); “Compositio quidem, quando intellectus comparat unum conceptum alteri, quasi apprehendens coniunctionem aut identitatem rerum, quarum sunt conceptiones; divisio autem, quando sic comparat unum conceptum alteri, ut apprehendat res esse diversas” (*In 1 Periherm.*, 3, 4); “Intellectus enim habet iudicare, et hoc dicitur sapere et apprehendere” (*In 3 de Anima*, 4, n. 15).

For those, however, who would insist upon a strict equivalence of Aquinas’ positions with those of Aristotle, or upon ignoring his disciplined flexibility in utilizing certain terms, it might be worthwhile to wonder whether, in endeavoring to relate Aquinas’ insights to one’s contemporaries concerning how and why human cognition is exercised as it is, one must be totally subservient to restrictive historical exegetical repetition of his final formulations. After all, in his expositions of Aristotle, while sifting through anterior interpretations offered by Ammonius and Boethius, Aquinas constantly sought “Aristotle’s real intentions,” but nonetheless occasionally went “his own way” since his “ultimate interpretation is strongly influenced by his own metaphysical position in which the doctrine of the ‘actualitas formarum’ is a predominant issue” (de Rijk, *Aristotle: Semantics and Ontology*, vol. 1, 238–241).

ing through, with, and in a unified two-fold apprehension, each implying distinct yet reciprocal priorities.⁴¹

COUNTERPOINT IN EXPLANATION OF ORIGINATIVE APPREHENSION

SUMMARY

Originative apprehension often has been examined in recent decades in light of Aquinas' reflections. Yet there has not always been agreement in regard to what constitutes such, often due to different emphases given by interpreters to aspects of St. Thomas' analyses articulated in different contexts. Arguably, it is possible to reconcile certain seemingly divergent important interpretations by reflecting on an important, yet somewhat recessive, theme that Thomas adverted to sparingly throughout his career in utilizing analyses of predecessors to forge his own synthesis to explain cognition in terms of being that is centered on the reciprocal priorities of judging and concomitant incomplex abstracting.

KEYWORDS: originative apprehension, Thomas Aquinas, cognition, being, judgment, abstraction.

⁴¹ "Duratio autem omnis attenditur secundum aliquid est in actu" (*In 1 Sent.*, 19, 2, 1); "Quaedam autem sic recedunt a permanentia essendi, quod esse eorum est subiectum transmutationis, vel in transmutatione consistit; et huiusmodi mensurantur tempore, sicut omnis motus, et etiam esse omnium corruptibilium" (*Summa Theologiae*, 1, 10, 5); "Esse autem rerum corruptibilium, quia est transmutabile, non mensuratur aeternitate, sed tempore" (id., 1, 10, 4, ad 3). Cf. Joseph Owens, "Material Substance: Temporal or Eiternal?" *The New Scholasticism* 56 (1982): 442–461.