

Antonius Alex Lesomar

Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being
by Andrzej Maryniarczyk*

The Polish Thomas Aquinas Society has published a book written by Fr. Andrzej Maryniarczyk, S.D.B., entitled *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*. The book was translated from the original Polish version by Hugh McDonald and appeared as the 5th volume of the series “Notebooks on Metaphysics.” So far, five other volumes from the seven volume series have been published in English: *The Monistic and Dualistic Interpretation of Reality* (vol. 1), *The Pluralistic Interpretation of Reality* (vol. 2), *The Realistic Interpretation of Reality* (vol. 3), *Rationality and Finality of the World of Persons and Things* (vol. 4), *On Causes, Participation, and Analogy* (vol. 6). The publication is an interesting introduction to the metaphysics cultivated in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition.

Fr. Andrzej Maryniarczyk is a metaphysician and student of Fr. Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, O.P., one of the founders of The Lublin Philosophical School. Other well-known founders, who were also part of the first generation of The Lublin Philosophical School, were philosophers such as S. Swieżawski, J. Kalinowski, S. Kamiński, M. Kur-

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działek and K. Wojtyła.¹ These philosophers began to develop realistic philosophy with a good set of methodological-logical instruments. Realistic philosophy is a continuation of classical philosophy, initiated in antiquity by Aristotle and reinterpreted in the Middle Ages by St. Thomas Aquinas. The object of its research is being given in experience. This kind of philosophizing does not limit itself to Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, but it enters into dialogue with modern and contemporary philosophy and seeks to develop methodical reflections on adequate cognitive tools used in the process of metaphysical cognition.²

Fr. Maryniarczyk presents his book to guide the readers to achieve “the internal structure and nature of things,”³ as well as the main reason for everything that exists. Besides that, through his work, the Author points out that being given in experience reveals a very rich structure when it is explored or investigated both by science and metaphysics. Science and metaphysics, however, explore and explain the internal structure of being through different approaches, methods and goals. This book also helps the readers to have “the skill of discovering the mystery of the world of persons and things, a mystery that cannot be unveiled by any other sciences except metaphysics.”⁴ The mysteries are metaphysical elements which are discovered through the metaphysical separation method. By analyzing the internal structure of being, the reader finally finds that all existing beings have a reason and purpose.

In his book, Fr. Maryniarczyk discusses the character and compositional elements of being based on a realistic philosophical or metaphysical approach that has been developed in The Lublin Philosophical School. The main thesis of Fr. Maryniarczyk, which is discussed and

¹ Mieczysław A. Krapiec and Andrzej Maryniarczyk, *The Lublin Philosophical School*, trans. Hugh McDonald (Lublin: PTTA, 2010), 45–46.

² *Ibid.*, 24

³ Maryniarczyk, *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*, 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

elaborated in all chapters of his book, is the reason or cause of the existence of things. In his research for these reasons, he shows the discovery of the internal structure of being and the discovery of the compositional elements that constitute being. Fr. Maryniarczyk states that,

Compositional elements of this type are so-called sub-ontic elements, that is, elements that determine the existence of being in general, and determine the existence of being under a given aspect (regarding dynamism, mutability, identity and contingency).⁵

These sub-ontic elements that determine whether a being can exist, act and become perfect, cannot be achieved with empirical approaches and methods of natural sciences, but through approaches and methods characteristic to metaphysical inquiry.

The reviewed book consists of five chapters, preceded by an introduction and crowned with selected classical texts. In chapter one,⁶ Fr. Maryniarczyk presents various ways of understanding compositions of being and methods for discovering them. He distinguishes the metaphysical method and internal structures of being discovered with its help from methods of physical, scientific, phenomenological, and abstractionist character and elements of being singled out by them. In the next chapter,⁷ the Author focuses on explaining the character of dynamism of being found in experience. He points out the cause of the dynamism of being in the structure of act and potency. Subsequently, he shows another character of being, called mutability of being. The mutability of being is caused by compositional elements, matter and form. These problems are discussed in chapter three.⁸ Fr. Maryniarczyk continues his analyses taking up the problem concerning another character

⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶ Entitled "In Search of Internal Structure of Beings."

⁷ Entitled "The Dynamism of Beings, The Discovery of Act and Potency."

⁸ Entitled "The Mutability of Beings, The Discovery of Compositions from Matter and Form."

of being: the identity of being. He explains that the cause of the identity of being is associated with the structure of substance and accidents.⁹ Finally, in the last chapter,¹⁰ the Author explains the most fundamental property of being, namely contingency. In exploring this character of being, he relates to the fundamental and constitutive elements of being, which are essence and existence.

Regarding the method of discovery of the compositional elements of being, as well as causes of the existence of being, Fr. Maryniarczyk stresses the “method of metaphysical separation”¹¹ by making being the object of its research. Through this method, the compositional elements of being or sub-ontic elements are discovered,¹² and distinguished from compositional elements according to other sciences. This method will also help to distinguish which elements are compositional and which are only carried by being. Fr. Maryniarczyk explains that the process of implementing this method follows a number of stages including the existential judgment stage, which affirms the particular state of being of things, the existential judgment analysis stage which affirms the particular state of being and then the generalization of analyzes on the basis of analogies in being.¹³

Fr. Maryniarczyk insists that the metaphysical method helps to discover the metaphysical elements of the individual substance that is given in experience. Analysis based on this method helps to reflect more on the individual substances that are changing and shows the character of dynamism in real experience. The character of dynamism is indicated by change or motion in each individual state of being. The

⁹ See chapter four entitled “The Identity of Being, The Discovery of the Compositions of Substance and Accidents.”

¹⁰ Entitled “The Contingency of Being, The Discovery of Compositions from Essence and Existence.”

¹¹ Maryniarczyk, *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*, 43.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 43–44.

change and motion show that there are compositional elements that are act and potency in the dynamism state of being. Act and potency are the reason for the dynamism of being. Even these elements are necessary elements found in the internal structure of being. The act is the actualization of potency or what makes potential beings exist. Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* stated, “act is what makes a thing be, but not in the same way when it is in potency.”¹⁴ Meanwhile, potency is a real element of being and a principle of change and motion. Fr. Maryniarczyk concludes, “every being that is not the Absolute is composed of potency and act.”¹⁵ In other words, act and potency are the elements that constitute the unity of being. Fr. Maryniarczyk insists also that act and potency are actually not new elements but “a new function of the fundamental composition of being,”¹⁶ i.e., matter and form in the concept of Aristotle, and existence and essence in the concept of Aquinas.

Regarding the character of the mutability of being, Fr. Maryniarczyk highlights the change or alteration to the state of being of things that is given in experience. The metaphysical analysis discovers that there is a metaphysical element in the internal structure of being which causes the character of the mutability of being, as well as a compositional element of being that constitutes a substantial unity and wholeness, called matter and form, as Aristotle discovered and explained in his hylomorphism theory. The matter is a constitutive or sub-ontic element of being and not “an independent being”¹⁷ like in the ancient hylozoist concept or “matter as a place or space”¹⁸ in Plato’s concept. Furthermore, matter in the sense of the prime matter is “pure potenti-

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1048 a 30, cit. after Maryniarczyk, *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*, 60.

¹⁵ Maryniarczyk, *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*, 68.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

ality”¹⁹ and source of potential changes in being. Meanwhile, the form is the sub-ontic element that also determines the existence of being but it does not exist independently. The form is always in correlation with matter because it is the source of action and also the actualization of potency. Aristotle regarded the substantial form as the “first act of prime matter”²⁰ which creates the nature of being and which determines the ontic identity of being. The matter and form are concrete constitutive elements of being. The unity of them constitutes the whole being substance. In the substantial wholeness of being, the form is the reason for the unity and identity that actualizes and determines the potentiality of being. Meanwhile, the matter is the reason for divisibility and variety because matter is a potential element.²¹ The substantial unity of being formed by matter and form has a purpose, called “the good of being.”²²

Fr. Maryniaczyk also stresses that in our daily life we experience our own identity, even though we change and undergo various modifications. We also see the identity of things surrounding us, although we see that things are constantly transformed and changed. Through the metaphysical method we can discern the element that is constant and determines the identity of being. The constant element which determines and limits the identity of being is the substance or subject. Substance exists in itself and constitutes the foundation for properties or accidents. Meanwhile, the changing elements, called accidents, do not exist independently, but they are carried by the substance and modify the substance. In the analysis of substance modification, the quality, quantity, relations, place, time, action, passion, arrangement and possession are found as accidents or properties of being. Fr. Maryniarczyk also explains that in the analysis of various modifications of substance as a sub-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

²² *Ibid.*, 142.

ject, “we discover the most perfect form of the being of a substance as a subject is the person”²³ with various properties.

The final chapter presents the fundamental compositional element of being as contingent. The dynamism and mutability of being that are given in experience are manifestations of the contingency of being. The experience of encounters with each and every person, animal, plant and thing around us shows that all of them are not necessary beings but contingent beings. Fr. Maryniarczyk explains that the contingent being given in experience guides to the discovery of the Absolute.²⁴ The Absolute is the main cause of the existence of all particular beings and the whole world. In this chapter, the Author underscores the elements that make things exist from the point of view of Aristotle’s and Aquinas’s realistic philosophy. Aristotle argued that the source of the existence of every concrete being is a prime matter. Meanwhile, Aquinas in his philosophical theory of creation of the world *ex nihilo* held that the source of the existence of all concrete being is not matter, or form, but “*Ipsum Esse* (Existence itself)”²⁵ that is the Absolute, God. Moreover, all concrete beings in themselves are rational and purposeful. It indicates that the origin of all concrete beings is in the intellect and will of God. Therefore, the main reason for all that exists is in the intellect and will of God as Creator.

Fr. Maryniarczyk’s book is a reinterpretation of Aristotle’s and Aquinas’s understanding of the internal structure and compositional elements of being, without leaving out discussions with ancient to contemporary philosophies and with modern and contemporary sciences. This book is a valuable work presented with solid and clear arguments, and using language that can be easily understood by the reader equipped

²³ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.

with some basics in philosophical knowledge, such as students and lecturers of philosophy.



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SUMMARY

This paper is a review of the book: Andrzej Maryniarczyk, S.D.B., *Discovery of the Internal Structure of Being*, trans. Hugh McDonald (Lublin-Roma: PTTA, 2018). According to the author, Fr. Maryniarczyk's book is (1) a new interpretation of Aristotle's and Aquinas's understanding of the internal structure and compositional elements of being, and (2) a recommended reading for students and lecturers of philosophy.

KEYWORDS

Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Andrzej Maryniarczyk, metaphysics, being, matter, form, potency, act, substance, accident, existence, essence, contingency, Absolute.

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