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CONTENTS

Varia Gilsoniana

- José Ángel **García Cuadrado**: Gilson y Báñez: Luces y sombras de un encuentro tardío 579

Varia Classica

- Eleni **Procopiou**: The Concept of Relation in the Thomistic Perception of a Person 619

- Sr. Mary **Angela Woelkers**, SCTJM: Freedom for Responsibility: Responsibility and Human Nature in the Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła 633

Editio Secunda

- Andrzej **Maryniarczyk**, S.D.B.: The Discovery of the Existence of the Absolute in Existential Metaphysics, trans. Hugh McDonald 649

- Andrzej **Maryniarczyk**, S.D.B.: Participation: A *Descending Road* of the Metaphysical Cognition of Being,” trans. Hugh McDonald 673

- Berthold **Wald**: Klugheit. Grundbegriff des Praktischen bei Aristoteles 689

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GILSON Y BÁÑEZ: LUCES Y SOMBRAS DE UN ENCUENTRO TARDÍO

En los primeros años de la década de los cincuenta, Étienne Gilson ya había desarrollado sus principales tesis acerca del acto de ser advirtiendo las desviadas interpretaciones dentro de la escuela tomista. Particularmente Tomás de Vío (Cayetano) se hace blanco de las críticas gilsonianas. Es entonces cuando Gilson descubre los comentarios a la *Summa Theologiae* del dominico Domingo Báñez (1528–1604) que dejarán en el filósofo francés una huella profunda pues veía en él la comprobación histórica de sus propias tesis.¹ Gilson no ahorrará elogios para el comentador salmantino: “[es] el más tomista de todos los tomistas que he tenido el privilegio de conocer.”² Su comentario a la *Summa*

¹ Santiago Orrego, “La inmortalidad del alma: ¿Debate entre Báñez y Cayetano?,” en *El alma humana: esencia y destino. IV Centenario de Domingo Báñez (1528–1604)*, ed. C. González-Ayesta (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2006), 77: “Gilson no ve en Báñez solo un comentador más del Aquinate, sino uno de los pocos que habría captado en toda su hondura el núcleo de la metafísica tomista: la existencia como acto y perfección de todas las cosas.”

² Étienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1956), vii–viii. Prouvost comenta a este propósito: “Domingo Báñez est, sans doute, un des rares commentateurs de Thomas d’Aquin qui trouve grâce aux yeux de Gilson en ce qu’il fait droit contre Cajetan a la signification authentique de la métaphy-

Theologiae I (q. 3, a. 4) donde aborda el problema de la distinción real entre esencia y acto de ser, es un punto de partida indispensable para la comprensión de la noción de ser en Tomás de Aquino.³ Pero no todo fueron luces en este encuentro entre Gilson y Báñez.

Etapas del encuentro en la bibliografía gilsoniana

En carta fechada el 13 de diciembre de 1952, Gilson se dirige a Jacques Maritain a propósito de la prioridad ontológica del acto de ser sobre la esencia.

Yo no he inventado la frase de Báñez. Aquí está: “Y aun cuando el mismo ser recibido en la esencia compuesta por los principios esenciales se especifique por ellos, sin embargo en aquello que se especifica, no recibe ninguna perfección, sino que más bien se deprime, y descende al ser *secundum quid* (en algún aspecto); por lo mismo el ser hombre, el ser ángel, no es perfección absoluta (*simpliciter*). Y esto es lo que muy frecuentemente dice santo Tomás y que los tomistas no quieren oír: que el ser es la actualidad de toda forma o naturaleza, y que en ninguna cosa se encuentra como recipiente y perfectible sino como recibido y perfectible de aquello en que se recibe. Él mismo, por el hecho de ser recibido, se deprime, como si dijéramos se imperfecciona.”⁴

sique thomiste de l'être.” *Étienne Gilson/Jacques Maritain: Correspondance 1923–1971. Deux approches de l'être* (Paris: Vrin, 1991), 178, n. 2.

³ Cfr. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 444, n. 1.

⁴ *Scholastica Commentaria in Primam Partem Summae Theologiae*, ed. Luis Urbano (Madrid-Valencia: FDE, 1934), vol. I, 141 (comm. ad I, 3, 4): “Non, je n’ai pas inventé la phrase de Báñez. La voici: «Et quamvis ipsum esse receptum in essentia composita ex principiis essentialibus specificetur ab illis, tamen in eo quod specificatur, nullam perfectionem recipit, sed potius deprimitur, et descendit ad esse secundum quid, eo quod esse hominem, esse se angelum, non est perfectio simpliciter. Et hoc est quod saepissime D. Thomas clamat, et Thomistae nolunt audire: quod esse est actualitas omnis formae vel naturae, et quod in nulla re invenitur sicut recipiens et perfectibile, sed sicut receptum et perficiens id in quo recipitur: ipsum tamen, eo ipso quod recipitur. Deprimitur, et ut ita dixerim, imperficetur.»” Sigo la traducción castellana del texto bañeciano realizada por Juan José Gallego Salvadores. Cfr. *El alma humana: esencia y destino*, 205–206.

Este es el primer texto—del que tengo constancia—que atestigua el encuentro de Gilson con Báñez.⁵ Pocos meses más tarde—agosto de 1953—Gilson en el *XI Congreso Internacional de Filosofía* presentó una ponencia dedicada a la experiencia en Metafísica. A propósito de la aprehensión de los primeros principios, Gilson hace ver que filósofos muy distintos entre sí, como Aristóteles, Tomás de Aquino, Escoto y Ockham, están de acuerdo en identificar al ser como primer principio; las divergencias comienzan cuando se trata de determinar qué es el ser. Incluso dentro de la escuela tomista hay divergencias. Y en este contexto, recoge las palabras de Báñez citadas anteriormente acerca de que el ser es la actualidad de toda forma y naturaleza; doctrina repetida muchas veces por santo Tomás pero “que los tomistas no quieren oír.”⁶

Ese mismo año de 1953 sale a la luz una breve nota de Gilson sobre la noción de *revelabile* según Cayetano.⁷ El filósofo francés ad-

⁵ La referencia bibliográfica de la cita nos indica la edición por la que Gilson leyó al comentador salmantino: *Scholastica Commentaria in Primam Partem Summae Theologiae*, ed. Luis Urbano (Madrid-Valencia, 1934), vol. I. Este comentario sólo llega hasta la q. 26 de la I Pars: el proyecto de reedición del comentario bañeciano quedó truncado y hasta la fecha no se ha vuelto a editar.

⁶ Étienne Gilson, “Remarques sur l’expérience en Métaphysique,” en *Experience and Metaphysics. Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of Philosophy*, vol. IV, Brussels, August 20–26, 1953 (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1953), 8–9: “Aristote, Thomas d’Aquin, Duns Scot, Ockham, d’autres encore qu’il serait aisé de nommer, accordent que l’être est le premier principe, mais à la question: qu’est ce que l’être? ils donnent des réponses différentes. Cela est si vrai que même à l’intérieur des écoles philosophiques, on observe le fait paradoxal, que les disciples n’entendent pas toujours le premier principe au même sens que le maître dont ils se réclament. On peut fermer les yeux sur ce fait, ion le supprimer, car il se vérifie même au sein d’une école aussi traditionnellement une que l’école thomiste. Bañez, dont on récusera difficilement le témoignage sur ce point, l’a noté aussi fermement que possible: «Et hoc est quod saepissime D. Thomas clamat, et Thomistae nolunt audire: quod esse est actualitas omnis formae vel naturae . . .» (Comm. In I, q. 3, a. 4). L’histoire doctrinale confirme pleinement cette remarque. Il n’a pas. Manqué de «thomistes» qui, mis en présence du premier principe par saint Thomas, et avertis par lui de ce qu’il signifie, sont demeurés incapables d’en voir le sens. Et quelle vérité voit-on bien si l’on voit mal celle du premier principe?”

⁷ Étienne Gilson, “Note sur *revelabile* d’après Cajétan,” *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953): 199–206.

vierte la desviación de la verdadera doctrina tomasiana debido al “filosofismo” cayetanista. El contrapunto de esa errónea interpretación es el comentario de Báñez, que es citado por extenso en dos notas a pie de página, destacando de nuevo su fidelidad a Tomás de Aquino.⁸

En 1955 aparecerá otro artículo que nos proporciona datos muy interesantes sobre su encuentro con Báñez. En efecto, en “Cajetan et l’humanisme théologique,” Gilson afila su crítica a Cayetano a propósito de las pruebas de la inmortalidad del alma: para Tomás de Vío habían dejado de tener valor demostrativo debido—según Gilson—a la incompreensión cayetanista del acto de ser de Tomás de Aquino. Báñez ya advirtió con claridad ese error de Cayetano, como Gilson se complaça en referir.⁹ Y a pie de página nos informa con cierto detalle de su “encuentro” en 1952 con el comentador salmantino, agradeciendo al profesor Raeymaeker tan valiosa información.¹⁰ Se lamenta también de la dificultad para conocer la obra del salmantino y auspicia una pronta reedición de su comentario;¹¹ augurios que hasta la fecha no han sido cumplidos. La referencia a Raeymaeker nos parece relevante.¹² Era un

⁸ Id., 202, n. 13.

⁹ Cfr. Étienne Gilson, “Cajetan et l’humanisme théologique,” *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 22 (1955): 118–119.

¹⁰ Id., 119, n. 3: “Nous devons d’avoir connu le commentaire de Bañes sur Saint Thomas à Mgr de Raeymaeker, Président de l’Institut Supérieur de Philosophie de Louvain qui, en nous communiquant le fragment où Bañes accuse les thomistes de surdité quand il s’agit de la notion d’*esse*, nous inspira, en 1952, le désir de connaître personnellement un homme et une œuvre qui, jusque-là, n’étaient guère plus pour nous qu’un nom et un titre. Nous en exprimons ici à Mgr L. de Raeymaeker notre sincère reconnaissance.”

¹¹ Id.: “Il est extrêmement regrettable que l’œuvre soit pratiquement inaccessible. On ne peut pas «consulter» Bañes dans une bibliothèque; or présentement, la réédition espagnole partielle du commentaire sur la Première Partie de la *Somme* s’arrête á la question XXV, et ce premier volume lui-même est pratiquement introuvable. On ne peut que souhaiter la reprise d’une édition qui répond à un vrai besoin.” Sigue citando la edición de Luis Urbano, que llega hasta la q. 26 (y no hasta la q. 25, como dice Gilson). Por lo demás, en este texto se refiere erróneamente a Báñez con el nombre de Louis.

¹² Louis Raeymaeker (1895–1970): sacerdote belga, estudió en Lovaina y fue director de Institut Supérieur de Philosophie (1949–1965), donde se esforzó por continuar con el espíritu del cardenal Mercier, fundador del Institut. Entre otros libros publicó *Philosophia de l’être. Essai de synthèse métaphysique* (1947), un tratamiento profundo y sis-

buen conocedor de la metafísica tomista y uno de sus principales libros trataba precisamente de la metafísica del ser. En la 2ª edición de su *Philosophia de l'être* (1947), cita a Báñez solo una vez para explicar en pocas líneas su postura en la controversia *de auxiliis*. Raeymaeker muestra conocer a Capreolo, Cayetano o Juan de Santo Tomás, pero significativamente pasa de largo sobre la concepción de Báñez del ser como acto primero. Esto hace pensar que para 1947 tampoco el profesor belga conocía el comentario bañeciano.

En todo caso, entre 1953 y 1956 Gilson parece deslumbrado por la lectura de Báñez. Laurence Shook, en su biografía sobre Gilson, recoge unas breves anotaciones donde se muestra hasta qué punto el filósofo francés tenía en mente y hablaba sobre el dominico salmantino. En agosto de 1954, en un encuentro con el P. Moos, este le sugirió la lectura de dos artículos del dominico español Santiago Ramírez: “De propria indole philosophiae S. Thomae Aquinatis”¹³ y “De ipsa philosophia in universum.”¹⁴ A este propósito, Shook comenta que Gilson se interesó mucho por estos artículos “que renovaron su interés por Báñez, el comentarador español de santo Tomás que le había sido de gran ayuda en la cuestión sobre el significado de *esse*, cuando preparaba la 5ª edición de *Le thomisme* (Carta de Gilson a Pegis, 15 agosto 1954).”¹⁵ Sin embar-

temático de la metafísica del ser según Tomás de Aquino. Cfr. Battista Mondin, *Storia de la Metafísica*, vol. 3 (Bologna: Edizione Studio Domenicano, 1998), 690–692.

¹³ Iacobus Maria Ramírez, O. P., “De propria indole philosophiae S. Thomae Aquinatis,” en *Xenia Thomistica. Divo Thomae Doctori Communi Ecclesiae occasione VI Centenarii ab eius Canonizatione oblata*, vol. I (Roma: Angelicum, 1925), 53–64. La referencia a Báñez se reduce a una breve mención a pie de página de su comentario a la *Summa* (I, q. 76, a. 1, dub. 3); se cita la edición de Duaci de 1614. No parece que esta lectura fuera decisiva para Gilson. Por lo demás, la fecha de la referencia bibliográfica está errada en Shook quien pone 1923 el año de publicación de esta obra colectiva.

¹⁴ Se trata en realidad de una serie de artículos publicados bajo ese título: Iacobus Maria Ramírez, O. P., “De ipsa philosophia in universum secundum doctrinam aristotelico-thomisticam,” *La Ciencia Tomista* 26 (1922): 33–62, 325–364; 28 (1923): 5–35; 29 (1924): 24–58, 209–222. En estos artículos Ramírez hace gala de una enorme erudición, especialmente referida a la Escuela tomista. Pero Báñez sólo es citado en dos ocasiones, de manera muy marginal.

¹⁵ Laurence K. Shook, *Étienne Gilson* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1991), 390, n. 5.

go, resulta extraña la conexión entre estos artículos y Báñez. Ciertamente Ramírez conocía y admiraba al dominico salmantino, pero en estos trabajos las citas a él son prácticamente inexistentes; desde luego, mucho menos relevantes que las citas a Cayetano y a Juan de santo Tomás.

En diciembre de 1955 Gilson y Maritain se encuentran de nuevo, y el primero resume así las principales conclusiones de su encuentro. Maritain “no cree ya en Juan de Santo Tomás; pero no quiere que se sepa. Sospecha vagamente que tampoco Cayetano sea mejor. Tiene en mente contactar con Báñez” (Carta de Gilson a Pegis, 16 diciembre 1955).¹⁶ Esta breve anotación da idea de cómo Báñez le había impresionado hasta el punto de instar a Maritain a su lectura: aunque nada nos hace pensar que su compatriota siguiera el consejo. En realidad—añade el biógrafo de Gilson—ni él ni Maritain, veían la necesidad de tales comentadores si no es más que para confirmar sus juicios sobre santo Tomás.¹⁷

En todo caso, como apuntaba Shook, el interés por encontrar apoyo en la doctrina bañeciana se haya muy presente en la edición inglesa de *Le Thomisme*, fechada en enero de 1956 bajo el título *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*.¹⁸ En el prólogo aclara Gilson que la traducción al inglés se hizo a partir de la 5ª edición francesa (1948), aunque no quiere dejar de mencionar el importante descubrimiento de la lectura de Báñez quien le confirma que sus tesis no son originales suyas sino que ya eran conocidas a finales del siglo XVI.¹⁹

¹⁶ Id., 386.

¹⁷ Cfr. id.

¹⁸ New York: Random House, 1956.

¹⁹ Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vii: “The only important event bearing upon my study of Thomas Aquinas during these eight years, was my discovery (for which I am indebted to Msgr. L. de Raeymaeker, President of the “Institute Supérieur de Philosophie” Louvain) of Bañes’ commentary on the first part of the *Summa Theologiae*. My reading of this commentary confirmed my hope that my fancy had not been deceiving me, for I had merely rediscovered in the twentieth century what had been known at least since the sixteenth. On this precise point, historical research

Sin embargo, hay aspectos del comentario bañeciano que le parecen difícilmente comprensibles—y poco tomistas—como la propuesta de que los accidentes tienen un ser propio. A pesar de todo, no duda en afirmar que Báñez es el más tomista de los tomistas por su fiel interpretación de la doctrina del acto de ser como acto primero.²⁰ Y más adelante se remite al comentario de Báñez para comprender esta pieza clave de la doctrina tomista sobre el ser.²¹

Durante unos años Gilson mencionará menos frecuentemente a Báñez, pero el sustrato de su lectura permanece en su obra. En 1960 Gilson publica *Le Philosophie et la Théologie* que viene a ser como el relato de su aventura intelectual. A propósito de la filosofía cristiana, Gilson constata que dentro de la escolástica tomista el verdadero sentido de la filosofía del maestro se había perdido al haber abandonado la noción de ser; a este propósito cita de nuevo la denuncia de Báñez sobre la perfección del acto de ser como acto primero.²² Y en este contex-

wholly confirms the interpretation of Bañes. It is a sad commentary on the present situation of Thomistic studies that the text of Bañes is almost impossible to find, while another commentary, as misleading as it is painstaking, is still considered the quasi-official interpretation of the doctrine developed by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*.”

²⁰ Id., viii: “By and large, however, Bañes appears to me to be by far the most Thomistic of all the Thomists whom it is my privilege to know. This is eminently true concerning the notion of the act of being (*esse*) which is the very core of the Thomistic interpretation of reality.”

²¹ Cfr. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 444, n. 1.

²² Étienne Gilson, *Le Philosophie et la Théologie* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), 173–174: “[A]u début du xx^e siècle, en Europe occidentale, dans l’enseignement des écoles catholiques et même chez beaucoup des scolastiques qui se réclamaient du thomisme, le sens vrai de la philosophie chrétienne de saint Thomas s’était perdu . . . C’est que, depuis le xiii^e siècle, qui fut celui de saint Thomas lui-même, le mal est endémique dans l’enseignement de la philosophie chrétienne. En voici la preuve. Toute métaphysique repose sur une certaine manière de concevoir le premier principe, qui est la notion d’être. Qui l’entend autrement que saint Thomas entend autrement que lui la philosophie chrétienne et en professe une autre que la sienne. Au xvi^e siècle, le dominicain Dominique Bañes, l’un des plus profonds commentateurs de la *Somme de Théologie* rappelait d’abord le fait capital que, chez saint Thomas, l’acte d’être (*esse*) est, à l’intérieur de chaque «étant» (*ens*), l’acte des actes et la perfection des perfections, ensuite de quoi il ajoutait: «C’est la ce que saint Thomas inculque très souvent a ses

to recuerda las enseñanzas de León XIII en la *Aeterni Patris* acerca de la renovación del tomismo acudiendo a las mismas fuentes del pensamiento del Aquinate, o al menos “a las corrientes salidas de la fuente misma, y sobre las que los doctos están de acuerdo en tener por cierto que están aún puras de todo limo.” Gilson lamenta que ya muy pronto dentro del tomismo surgieron diferentes interpretaciones (Capreolo, Cayetano, Báñez) que oscurecieron la doctrina del verdadero Tomás. La tentación de un cierto relativismo se cierne en el lector del Aquinate,²³ y por eso el medievalista francés propone:

Hay, pues, que volver siempre a la fórmula justamente celebrada: que Santo Tomás de Aquino sea su propio intérprete, lo que prácticamente quiere decir que, en lugar de juzgar a Santo Tomás

lecteurs, mais que les thomistes ne veulent pas entendre . . . » *Et Thomistae nolunt audire*; que l'on veuille bien peser cette parole: les thomistes (mettons: il y a des thomistes qui) ne veulent pas entendre ce que saint Thomas s'efforce de leur inculquer touchant le sens du mot «être».”

²³ Id., 224–225: “Il faut donc en revenir á l'encyclique *Aeterni Patris*; puiser la sagesse de Thomas á ses sources mêmes: *Ut sapientia Thomae ex ipsis ejus fontibus hauriatur*. Mais l'entreprise est si difficile, á la distance où nous sommes de la source, que nous appelons á l'aide ceux qui nous ont précédés. Cela n'est pas évitable et c'est pourquoi, dans le passage même de sa lettre où il nous renvoie d'abord á la source, le pape ajoutait: «Ou, du moins, á des courants issus de la même source et dont les doctes s'accordent á tenir pour certain qu'ils sont encore purs de tout limon». Hélas! ce limon commence bien près de la source, et d'ailleurs cet accord certain des doctes n'est pas facile á trouver. Convoquez Capreolus, Cajetan et Bañes, ils refuseront souvent de rester ensemble. Comment choisir? On ne pourra le faire qu'en comparant ces ruisseaux á la source même dont ils se flattent d'être issus. Opération complexe, longue, où les risques de désaccord sont nombreux et dont l'étude conduit d'ailleurs le plus souvent á conclure que chaque interprétation de la doctrine se fonde sur une partie de la vérité, entrevue par l'interprète, et qu'il á seulement le tort de prendre pour le tout. Il faut s'attendre á ces désaccords si l'on veut ne pas succomber bientôt á un scepticisme découragé. Chacun gardera finalement la responsabilité de sa propre décision. Il se conduirait d'ailleurs en esprit mal éduqué (*indisciplinatus*) s'il attendait de ses efforts plus de certitude que la nature même de l'objet n'en comporte. Qu'on ne se fasse aucune illusion, ce n'est pas sans inquiétude qu'un lecteur de saint Thomas, tout bien pesé, en vient á constater qu'il á contre lui l'autorité, fondée en savoir, d'un Cajetan ou d'un Bañes. Nul ne serait assez vain pour ne pas voir que les chances d'erreur sont de son propre côté, mais, après tout, puisque eux-mêmes ne s'accordent pas toujours entre eux, l'enquête n'est pas close.”

por sus comentadores, vale más juzgar sus comentadores por Santo Tomás de Aquino.²⁴

A la hora de comparar a los comentadores, Báñez aparece frente a Cayetano o Capreolo, como el que de manera más fiel ha interpretado la mente de Tomás de Aquino. El propio Gilson parece asumir de buen grado la función “profética” en el tomismo del siglo XX de modo semejante al asumido por Báñez en el XVI.²⁵ La admiración por Báñez no le ciega, sin embargo, a la hora de denunciar sus desviaciones de lo que estima el verdadero sentir del Angélico.

Ese mismo año aparece *Elements of Christian Philosophy*,²⁶ una buena síntesis sobre los puntos que Gilson considera esenciales de la filosofía cristiana. Las citas a Báñez son relativamente numerosas sobre las verdades revelables;²⁷ fe y razón en el conocimiento de las verdades sobrenaturales;²⁸ el carácter subalternado de la Teología;²⁹ la causalidad propia de las causas segundas,³⁰ etc. Pero principalmente Gilson analiza de cerca el comentario bañeciano a las cinco vías de Tomás de Aquino, corrigiendo o matizando algunas de sus afirmaciones³¹ donde parece desviarse de las tesis tomasinas.

²⁴ Id., 225: “Il faut donc en revenir partout et toujours a la formule justement célèbre: que saint Thomas d’Aquin soit son propre interprète, ce qui pratiquement veut dire qu’au lieu de juger de saint Thomas par ses commentateurs, il vaut mieux juger de ses commentateurs par saint Thomas d’Aquin.”

²⁵ Id., 174: “Il en était encore ainsi au début du xx^e siècle; j’ai essayé ailleurs de dire pourquoi il en sera probablement toujours ainsi, mais on verra de temps en temps paraître un lecteur de saint Thomas, comme Bañes, qui entendra ses paroles et en comprendra le sens. Il y en a eu quelques-uns de notre temps, et si l’on examine de près la carrière intellectuelle de ceux qui contribuèrent à cette renaissance du thomisme authentique, on constatera qu’il n’en est pas un qui, à un moment ou un autre, n’ait subi l’influence de Bergson.”

²⁶ Étienne Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1960).

²⁷ Id., 285, n. 4.

²⁸ Id., 55; 291, n. 10 y 11.

²⁹ Id., 287, n. 21.

³⁰ Id., 317, n. 14.

³¹ Id., 65, n. 22; 293–294, n. 20 y 24; 82; 298, n. 46.

Apenas unos meses más tarde, ya en 1961, Gilson publica un artículo sobre las cinco vías tomistas para la demostración de la existencia de Dios.³² Después de exponer brevemente el contenido de cada una de ellas se pregunta por la posibilidad de reducirlas a unidad: una única vía que englobe los cinco modos de demostración. La posibilidad se ha dado históricamente de modo expreso en Báñez.³³ Gilson se muestra contrario a la propuesta bañeciana, aunque no deja de ahorrar elogios a su brillante exposición. La razón del rechazo gilsoniano radica en que el mismo Tomás habla de cinco vías y no solo de una que adquiere diversos modos.³⁴ En 1965 en la 6ª edición de *Le Thomisme*, Gilson solo cita a Báñez sobre esta cuestión, admitiendo la admirable síntesis de las vías, pero mostrándose contrario a la reducción de las mismas.³⁵

En la década de los sesenta la admiración por Báñez no parece haber decaído. En 1963, en una carta a Maritain, manifiesta su acuerdo acerca de la postura bañeciana en la controversia *de auxiliis*, que resultó un feliz antídoto contra el “filosofismo” de Cayetano.³⁶ Por desgracia, Gilson no llegó a desarrollar de manera más extensa esta idea que relaciona la doctrina del *esse* tomista con las controversias sobre la gracia. Y en 1967, en el ensayo *Les Tribulations de Sophie*, todavía se hace eco

³² Étienne Gilson, “Trois leçons sur le problème de l’existence de Dieu,” *Divinitas* 5 (1961): 23–87.

³³ Id., 39: “L’entreprise a été tentée plusieurs fois, mais jamais de manière plus heureuse que par l’illustre commentateur de la *Somme de théologie*, Dominique Bañez. Expliquant l’article de la *Somme* qui contient les cinq voies (I, 2, 5), Bañez fait voir que toutes les preuves peuvent s’organiser dialectiquement à partir d’une seule. Sa déduction est un chef d’œuvre; sa rigueur est telle qu’elle ne se laisse pas résumer et je ne puis que vous y renvoyer.”

³⁴ Id., 41.

³⁵ Étienne Gilson, *Le Thomisme. Introduction à la Philosophie de Saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1965), 92, n. 77.

³⁶ Étienne Gilson/Jacques Maritain: *Correspondance 1923–1971*, 216 (Carta a J. Maritain, 28 de noviembre de 1963): “Tout ce que vous dites de la controverse *de auxiliis* me semble vrai et important. Le néobannésianisme est une suite du bannésianisme, lui-même une réaction (d’ailleurs heureuse) contre le fléau que fut le philosophisme de Cajetan.”

de la denuncia bañeciana en lo referente a la prioridad del *actus essendi*.³⁷

En la década de los setenta encontramos un nuevo hito importante en la relación Báñez-Gilson. En 1972, publica la 2ª edición del *L'êtré et l'essence* (editada por primera vez en 1948). En la 1ª edición no había referencias a Báñez; pero en la 2ª edición hallamos un anexo muy revelador,³⁸ donde Gilson sale al paso de una interpretación “existencialista” de su propuesta. El filósofo francés explica que si ha introducido la palabra *existentia* como equivalente a la noción de *actus essendi*—como acto realmente distinto de la esencia—lo hace movido por la autoridad del comentarista salmantino, y no por la filosofía de Kierkegaard ni Heidegger.³⁹ Todavía en 1975, Gilson no se olvida del fiel comentarista de Santo Tomás cuando describe el proceso de reducción del *esse* a una idea—verdadero empobrecimiento de la metafísica tomista—y como solo unos pocos filósofos (entre ellos Báñez) han sabido mantenerse fieles al realismo metafísico.⁴⁰

En este repaso a la bibliografía gilsoniana desearía subrayar un hecho aparentemente menor. Cuando Gilson cita a Báñez lo hace siempre a través de la edición del P. Luis Urbano de 1934; se trata de una edición latina de los comentarios a la I *Pars* de la *Summa*, pero que llegan tan solo a la q. 26. Gilson conoce muy bien ese texto y expresa sus doctrinas metafísicas, pero desconoce el resto del comentario bañeciano, accesible tan solo en los fondos antiguos de algunas bibliotecas. Por otro lado, Gilson siempre manifestó su admiración por Báñez y busca el apoyo de sus textos para afirmar sus propias posturas sobre la prioridad del acto de ser sobre la esencia, la inmortalidad del alma, o las relaciones entre filosofía y teología. Pero esa admiración no le oculta las dificultades surgidas en la interpretación bañeciana sobre el *esse*

³⁷ Cfr. Étienne Gilson, *Les Tribulations de Sophie* (Paris: Vrin, 1967), 33.

³⁸ Étienne Gilson, *L'êtré et l'essence* (Paris: Vrin, 1972).

³⁹ Id., 356.

⁴⁰ Cfr. Étienne Gilson, “Propos sur l'êtré et sa notion,” en *San Tommaso e il pensiero moderno* (Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 1975), 16.

propio de los accidentes, las vías para la demostración de la existencia de Dios, etc. Veamos ahora con más detalle estos puntos.

Báñez y la doctrina del acto de ser

Battista Mondin en su historia de la metafísica subraya el progresivo descubrimiento de Gilson de la metafísica de Tomás de Aquino.⁴¹ Como es bien sabido el filósofo francés denuncia la defectuosa transmisión de los principios metafísicos de Tomás de Aquino debido a que la escuela tomística—representada por Capreolo y principalmente por Cayetano—había perdido de vista el núcleo esencial de la originalidad del *actus essendi*. De este modo el Aquinate aparecería como mero repetidor de doctrinas aristotélicas. En efecto, especialmente la noción de *actus essendi* habría pasado inadvertida a esos comentaristas del Doctor Angélico, dejando un lastre esencialístico en su pensamiento. Gilson rescata del olvido la metafísica del ser y la concibe como la clave del entero pensamiento tomasiano, revisando en su raíz la interpretación “oficial” de la Escuela tomística. El programa de revisión histórica y crítica del cayetanismo llevada a cabo por Gilson está ya definido hacia 1952. Es entonces cuando descubre que su propuesta cuenta con algunos precedentes dentro mismo de la Escuela tomista con unos representantes olvidados, como Domingo Báñez.⁴²

En efecto, Báñez denunció fuertemente esa desviación del cayetanismo que tendía a concebir el *esse* como acto último que adviene a la esencia. Frente a esto el maestro salmantino denuncia en el famoso texto ya citado: “Y esto es lo que Santo Tomás constantemente proclama y los tomistas no quieren oír: que la existencia es la actualidad de

⁴¹ Cfr. Battista Mondin, *Storia della Metafisica*, vol. 3 (Bologna: Edizione Studio Domenicano, 1998), 653–663.

⁴² Gilson, *L'etre et l'essence*, 356: “Car enfin, l'interprétation du thomisme que je propose n'est pas de mon invention. D'autres l'ont soutenue avant moi: Thomas Sutton a la fin du XIII^e siècle, Bernard d'Auvergne au début du XIV^e, et d'autres après eux jusqu'à Dominique Báñez au XVI^e siècle.”

toda forma o naturaleza.”⁴³ En estas palabras cristaliza la reivindicación del *actus essendi* como acto primero frente al “olvido del ser” que había introducido el cayetanismo. Para Báñez el acto de ser es el primer acto del ente y fuente de las demás perfecciones. Gilson suscribe las tesis bañecianas en donde encuentra reflejadas sus mismas ideas. En “Cajetan et l’humanisme théologique” trata más extensamente la cuestión del *actus essendi* o existencia en Báñez (ambos términos son equivalentes para él). En efecto, la existencia no es un accidente de la sustancia, tal como proponía Avicena; pero tampoco es la última perfección que adviene a la esencia ya plenamente constituida como afirman Capreolo y Cayetano. Según esta visión, la prioridad ontológica correspondería a la esencia de la que manan las diversas perfecciones, entre ellas, la existencia extramental. La visión de Báñez es radicalmente distinta: es la existencia o acto de ser de donde surgen todas las perfecciones esenciales: más bien la esencia limita, “deprime” e “imperfecciona” el acto de ser.⁴⁴ Frente a Cayetano, Báñez sostiene que el *esse* de la sustancia no es sustancia, ni el *esse* de los accidentes, es accidente; y sobre todo, el acto de ser se halla en el origen del ente como fuente de perfecciones, y no únicamente como un complemento del ente situado ya fuera de sus causas, como el último complemento perfectivo de la esencia. En definitiva, el acto de ser o *existentia* es acto primero del ente; y solo de manera un tanto impropia puede decirse acto último si con esta expresión se quiere significar al acto más excelente y perfecto.⁴⁵ Báñez no

⁴³ Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 3, a. 4, 141.

⁴⁴ Gilson, “Cajetan et l’humanisme théologique,” 119, n. 1: “Par contre, il est important de noter qu’aux yeux de Bañes . . . Cajétan semble bien être un de ces «Thomistes» pour qui Thomas répète sans se lasser la même chose, et qui pourtant refusent de l’entendre, savoir, que l’*esse* est l’acte des actes et la perfection des perfecciones, si bien qu’il est toujours dans un être comme ce qui est reçu dans ce qui reçoit et que, bien loin d’être parfait par l’essence dont il est l’acte, il en est plutôt «rabaissé» (*deprimitur*) et, si l’on peut s’exprimer ainsi, il est «imparfait» par elle (*imperficitur*).”

⁴⁵ Id., 119–120: “Ainsi, l’être de la substance se réduit à la substance, l’être de l’accident à l’accident. La position est philosophiquement soutenable, mais elle n’est certainement pas thomiste, car selon saint Thomas, l’*ipsum esse* de la substance n’est pas réductible à la substance; il est l’acte qui fait de la substance un «être». Comme tout

desconoce los textos del Aquinate donde se apoya Cayetano, pero estos son escasos y deben ser interpretados en el conjunto del pensamiento del Aquinate.⁴⁶

Años más tarde, en 1972, en el apéndice a la 2ª edición al *L'etre et l'essence*, Gilson vuelve a la cuestión de la existencia tomando pie de las observaciones recibidas sobre su propuesta metafísica. A la distancia de los años, el medievalista francés reconoce que si tuviera que escribir de nuevo ese libro utilizaría una terminología distinta, denominando al *actus essendi* como *existentia* tal como Báñez lo hizo, haciendo uso de una terminología moderna.⁴⁷ Gilson advierte que con el em-

habens esse, la substance est le récepteur de ce qui fait d'elle un *ens*. La seconde déviation notée par Bañes, est celle même qui nous avait frappé: l'insistance de Cajétan à identifier l'acte d'être thomiste avec l'être actuel que le sujet acquiert au terme de la génération. Ici encore, Bañes met très exactement le doigt sur la plaie quand il fait observer que l'*esse* thomiste n'est pas l'*actus ultimus*, au sens de l'actualité enfin obtenue par le sujet d'un devenir, mais bien, au contraire, son *actus primus*, celui sans quoi le sujet du devenir ne saurait même pas exister assez pour qu'il y ait devenir. L'acte d'être de saint Thomas n'est pas celui que l'embryon atteindra au terme de son évolution biologique, c'est celui que fait que l'embryon lui-même existe. Ou bien, ajoute Bañes, disons alors que l'*esse* est le premier acte et le dernier au sens l'acte suprême, celui au delà duquel il n'y en a plus d'autre: *ultimus, excellentissimus*."

⁴⁶ Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, 142: "Cajetanum etiam *De ente et essentia*, c. 5, q. 11, ad 8 argumentum ait, existentiam substantiae esse substantiam." Y más adelante añade (id., 145): "Et idcirco non placet mihi explicatio Cajetani ubi supra, videlicet, quod propterea dicatur existentia ultima actualitas rei quia est ultimum in generatione. Certe hic modus loquendi quod ipsum esse sit ultima actualitas rei, raro invenitur apud Divum Thomam. Invenies in quaestione unica *De anima*, art. 6, ad 2^m, ubi inquit, quod ipsum esse est actus is ultimus, qui participabilis est ab omnibus. In quo loco, si sequentia legeris, intelliges quomodo ipsum esse sit actus ultimus, nimirum supremus excellentissimus, qui omnes etiam alios actus perficit."

⁴⁷ Gilson, *L'etre et l'essence*, 350: "En premier lieu, si j'avais aujourd'hui à écrire le livre, j'en modifierais la terminologie sur un point important. J'ai été sans cesse gêné, en l'écrivant, par l'absence d'un mot français distinct, et reçu par l'usage, pour traduire *esse* comme distinct de *ens*. Nous n'avons qu'un seul mot pour les deux: *être*, qui désigne indifféremment l'acte d'être (*esse*) et ce qui est (*ens*). J'ai usé aussi souvent qu'il le fallait de périphrases pour dire en quel sens j'entendais le mot être dans chaque cas particulier. J'ai parfois dit «acte d'être», parfois aussi «existence», qui n'est pas un emploi moderne du terme, puisque Báñez, en s'en expliquant d'ailleurs, l'a déjà pris en ce sens. La crainte française du néologisme ne justifie pas une timidité si dommageable à la clarté et à la précision philosophiques." Con anterioridad ya se había aplicado el

pleo de la palabra *existentia* se abre la posibilidad de interpretar su pensamiento como una aproximación a las doctrinas existencialistas de Heidegger; pero él mismo se apresura a marcar las distancias con los existencialismos del siglo XX.⁴⁸ Solo reconoce su acuerdo con Kierkegaard en su rechazo del esencialismo idealista,⁴⁹ pero las tesis de fondo del existencialismo heideggeriano acerca de la historicidad de la verdad no las puede compartir Gilson. En definitiva, lo que el existencialismo entiende por existencia nada tiene que ver con la existencia tomista, tal como la interpreta—correctamente—Domingo Báñez. Si el ser heideggeriano es el “encontrarse fuera de sí,” el *actus essendi* gilsoniano es “lo más íntimo, fijo y estable del ente.”⁵⁰ Por si hubiera alguna duda,

calificativo de “existencial” a la metafísica bañeciana en cuanto a la prioridad ontológica del acto de ser sobre la esencia. Cfr. Luis Gutiérrez Vega, “Domingo Báñez, filósofo existencial,” *Estudios Filosóficos* 3 (1954): 83–114.

⁴⁸ Gilson, *L'être et l'essence*, 352: “Le langage dont usait le livre rendait le reproche inévitable. Dès que je parlais d'existence, je pouvais être sur qu'on me sommerait de me mettre en règle avec l'existentialisme. Il doit pourtant être permis de parler d'existence au sens qu'avait *existentia* chez Báñez, pour signifier l'acte d'être thomiste en tant qu'il se distingue réellement de l'essence. En fait, la philosophie de Martin Heidegger ne jouait aucun rôle dans cette histoire et je n'aurais pu l'y introduire qu'arbitrairement pour sembler accommoder mon enquête au gout du jour. Outre un manque personnel d'inclination pour une entreprise de ce genre, j'avais une raison de m'abstenir. Je l'ai encore. L'existentialisme n'est entré que très tardivement dans ma vie philosophique, trop tard en vérité pour que je pusse nouer avec lui les longues années de familiarité sans lesquelles, pour moi du moins, il est impossible d'entrer en communion avec la pensée d'un philosophe.”

⁴⁹ Id., 356: “C'est donc saint Thomas qui m'a conduit à Kierkegaard, et non le contraire. Je ne leur ai trouvé de commun qu'une saine réaction contre les doctrine du primat de l'essence, et quant à prétendre que, sans Kierkegaard, je n'aurais pas trouvé dans saint Thomas une doctrine de l'*esse* que tant d'autres de ses interprètes n'y trouvent pas, la proposition implique un tel mépris des faits les plus certains qu'on est tenté de se demander si l'on ne fait pas preuve de naïveté en prenant au sérieux les propos d'un aimable collègue qui s'amuse seulement à discuter pour le plaisir de dire quelque chose de *clever*.”

⁵⁰ Id., 365–366: “Or, contrairement à ce que l'on a paru supposer, ce n'est pas celui-là qui me semble devoir retenir d'abord l'attention d'un thomiste. Il y a malentendu dans le langage. Quand Báñez traduisait l'effet de l'*esse* thomiste par le mot *existentia*, il entendait exactement le contraire de ce que Heidegger nomme l'existence. Celle-ci est la condition de ce dont le mode d'être consiste à se trouver «en dehors de soi-même»;

Gilson vuelve a negar de manera explícita, la conexión del tomismo “existencial” de Báñez con Kierkegaard y el existencialismo contemporáneo. Es definitiva, es inútil encontrar en la tradición tomista ninguna fuente que haga sospechar su influencia en el existencialismo de Kierkegaard, fuera de la crítica de Báñez al esencialismo cayetanista, tres siglos antes del nacimiento del filósofo danés.⁵¹

La reivindicación gilsoniana sobre Báñez encontró prontamente eco en los estudios medievalistas. Así por ejemplo, Maurer, en su *Filosofía medieval* sigue la estela de Gilson y llega a afirmar del teólogo salmantino: “Ninguno de sus contemporáneos captó mejor que él el significado y las implicaciones de la doctrina tomista del ser.”⁵² En esta misma línea, Prouvost sugiere que en la historia del tomismo las interpretaciones metafísicas de Cayetano y Báñez en el siglo XVI difieren entre sí de modo similar a como lo hacen las interpretaciones de Maritain y Gilson en el siglo XX.⁵³

Sin embargo, no todos los tomistas se muestran igualmente partidarios de la ortodoxia bañeciana en este punto. Tal es el caso de Cornelio Fabro que en un extenso artículo de 1958 muestra la evolución de la noción *actus essendi* en los comentaristas de Tomás de Aquino.⁵⁴ Para

tout au contraire l'esse thomiste est ce qu'il y a de plus intime au cœur de l'être, étant *aliquid fixum et quietum in ente*, comme acte de tous ses actes. Les variations du langage philosophique au cours des siècles, en divers pays et sans qu'aucun effort de coordination put être tenté, a donc créé ici une confusion permanente dont il sera difficile de sortir. Quand on dit que l'esse thomiste est existentiel pour le contredistinguer de l'essence, et lorsqu'on dit que le thomisme est une philosophie «existentielle» pour la contredistinguer de celles où l'être s'identifie à l'essence, on use d'un langage légitime en soi, mais sans aucun rapport avec celui de la philosophie moderne de l'ex-sistence.”

⁵¹ Id., 377: “Les remarques qui viennent d'être faites n'ont pour objet de prouver aucune thèse. Leur seul objet est de faire voir qu'il serait vain de chercher dans la philosophie contemporaine de l'existence la source d'une interprétation de la doctrine thomiste de l'acte d'être déjà maintenue contre Cajetan par Báñez plus de trois siècles avant que Kierkegaard ne fut né.”

⁵² Armand Maurer, *Filosofía Medieval* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1967), 351.

⁵³ Cfr. Géry Prouvost, *Thomas d'Aquin et le thomisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 107.

⁵⁴ Cornelio Fabro, “L'obscurcissement de l'esse dans l'école thomiste,” *Revue Thomiste* 58 (1958): 443–472.

Fabro el acto de ser tomista se diluyó en sus intérpretes; y tampoco Báñez escapa a esta crítica. En efecto, Fabro reconoce el esfuerzo bañeciano por reivindicar el ser como acto primero, pero le censura el desconocer la doctrina de la participación (quizás por influencia de Sonzinas) desvirtuando de este modo la metafísica tomista. Así se explicaría su formalismo a la hora de comprender el acto de ser como perfección de todas las perfecciones, las vacilaciones a la hora de establecer la distinción real entre esencia y acto de ser,⁵⁵ así como la distinción bañeciana—extraña al tomismo—entre *esse* de la sustancia y *esse* de los accidentes. Al adoptar Báñez el término *existentia* para referirse al acto de ser, acaba por reducir a éste a la mera efectividad o facticidad, tal como podría interpretarse desde el existencialismo heideggeriano. Estas vacilaciones habían sido ya insinuadas por Maurer, para quien Báñez—a pesar de ser un gran intérprete de la metafísica tomista—“considera que sólo es probable que santo Tomás enseñase la real distinción entre esencia y ser, describe a ambos como cosas (*res*). Además, si bien concede que el *esse* es, hablando en absoluto, más perfecto que la esencia, también afirma que, en cierto sentido, es verdad lo contrario, pues la esencia limita el *esse* de un ser a una especie definida.”⁵⁶

La interpretación de Fabro fue revisada por Llamzon, quien se aproxima más a las posturas de Gilson. En 1962 defiende su tesis doctoral que llevaba por título *Esse as First Actuality in Báñez*. Fruto de la misma son dos artículos⁵⁷ en los que analiza los textos bañecianos don-

⁵⁵ Algunos escolásticos posteriores citan expresamente a Báñez como uno de los partidarios de la distinción real. Cfr. Piero Di Vona, *Studi sulla Scolastica de la Contrariforma. L'esistenza e la sua distinzione metafisica dall'essenza* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1968), 145, 208, 268. Por su parte, Juan de Santo Tomás sostuvo la misma postura que Báñez contra los partidarios de la mera distinción modal (id., 198–203). Tenemos también noticia de una polémica de Pasqualino con Báñez sobre esta distinción (id., 170–172).

⁵⁶ Maurer, *Filosofía Medieval*, 352.

⁵⁷ Benjamin S. Llamzon, “The Specification of *esse*: A Study in Báñez,” *The Modern Schoolman* 41 (1964): 123–143; “Suppositional and Accidental *Esse*: A Study in Báñez,” *New Scholasticism* 39 (1965): 170–188.

de resuelve las aparentes dificultades interpretativas indicadas por Fabro. Báñez, según Llamzon, sí conoce la doctrina de la participación, pero su terminología resulta confusa en ocasiones, pues no logra sustraerse completamente al influjo del formalismo escolástico de la época. Posteriormente, en 1972, Kennedy abordará las doctrinas metafísicas de la Escuela de Salamanca, haciendo especial hincapié en Báñez.⁵⁸ Como conclusión de su estudio afirma que los maestros salmantinos, por influencia de Egidio, Capreolo y Cayetano, no llegaron a entender el núcleo fundamental de la metafísica tomista como se pone de manifiesto en las vacilaciones a la hora de aceptar la distinción real entre esencia y acto de ser. Siguiendo a Fabro, incluye a Báñez entre los responsables de esta corrupción en la doctrina tomista.⁵⁹ Además, para Kennedy, la doctrina de la existencia como acto primero no es original de Báñez sino que se encontraba ya presente en algunos de sus predecesores como Vitoria, Sotomayor y Medina;⁶⁰ por eso concluye que la protesta bañeciana sobre el olvido de ser como acto primero se dirige principalmente hacia sus contemporáneos que no siguieron a sus maestros, y no hacia Capreolo y Cayetano, con los que está de acuerdo en la distinción real.

En la década de los ochenta del siglo pasado, Canals recordaba que “no siempre los que se profesan «tomistas» han tenido la conciencia explícita de aquella caracterización del *esse* como acto y perfección . . . Domingo Báñez señaló con profundidad esto, y también «el olvido

⁵⁸ Leonard A. Kennedy, “La doctrina de la existencia en la Universidad de Salamanca durante el siglo XVI,” *Archivo Teológico Granadino* 35 (1972): 5–71; “Thomism at the University of Salamanca in the Sixteenth Century: the Doctrine of Existence,” *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d’Aquino nel suo VII Centenario (IV)* (Napoli: Edizioni Domenicane Italiane, 1976), 254–258.

⁵⁹ Kennedy ha publicado también un manuscrito inédito de Báñez, anterior al comentario impreso por él mismo, en el que se muestra una evolución de su pensamiento. Cfr. Leonard A. Kennedy, “Un nuevo comentario de Domingo Báñez (Codex Ottobani 1055, ff. 55–101),” *Archivo Teológico Granadino* 36 (1973): 145–182.

⁶⁰ Un estudio histórico con fuentes inéditas sobre la doctrina del acto de ser en la Primera Escuela salmantina puede encontrarse en Santiago Orrego Sánchez, *La actualidad del ser en la Primera Escuela de Salamanca* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2004), 15–111.

del ser» por parte de los tomistas.”⁶¹ Poco después, Forment sale al paso de las tesis de Fabro, e intenta dar cuenta de la coherencia y ortodoxia de la propuesta bañeciana.⁶² En efecto, la crítica a Báñez parece obedecer “a la sorprendente y lamentable mala lectura que ahí hace Fabro de los textos de Báñez.”⁶³ La adopción del término *existentia* como equivalente a *actus essendi* (recordemos que esta fue la postura adoptada por Gilson) no supone un vaciamiento de la doctrina del acto de ser tomasiana, pues en Báñez sigue siendo tanto la *existentia* como el acto de ser un acto intensivo.⁶⁴

Como se puede apreciar, gracias a la propuesta historiográfica de Gilson, se ha abierto un amplio debate interpretativo de gran calado metafísico, de particular importancia a la hora de conocer mejor los orígenes de la metafísica del *actus essendi* frente al esencialismo suareciano inaugurado en la época moderna.

La cuestión de la inmortalidad del alma

Se ha especulado mucho sobre el cambio de postura de Cayetano acerca de la inmortalidad del alma. En efecto, Tomás de Vío, después de defender en su juventud la postura del Doctor Angélico frente a Escoto, acabó reconociendo la insuficiencia de la argumentación tomasiana. Algunos han visto en este cambio de actitud un desgaste físico y mental, una actitud fideísta y agnóstica de sus últimos años, o el peso de la crítica de Pomponazzi. Pero como demostró Gilson, ya en 1513

⁶¹ Francisco Canals Vidal, *Cuestiones de fundamentación* (Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, 1981), 203–204.

⁶² Eudaldo Forment Giralt, “El ser en Domingo Báñez,” *Espíritu* 34 (1985): 25–48. La crítica de Fabro a Báñez ya había sido refutada por este mismo autor en *Persona y modo sustancial* (Barcelona: PPU, 1983), 379–391, y s.

⁶³ Santiago Orrego Sánchez, “El tratado de Báñez sobre la existencia creada: Génesis y sentido de una cumbre metafísica,” en *El alma humana: esencia y destino*, 195. En este trabajo (páginas 193–200) se aborda la cuestión tanto desde el punto de vista especulativo como histórico. Cfr. también, de este mismo autor *La actualidad del ser en la Primera Escuela de Salamanca*, 20–28.

⁶⁴ Cfr. Orrego Sánchez, “El tratado de Báñez sobre la existencia creada,” 197.

Cayetano había tomado posición con respecto al tema de la demostración racional de la inmortalidad del alma, en plena madurez de su pensamiento y tres años antes de las tesis de Pomponazzi sobre el tema.⁶⁵ Luego parece evidente que hay otras razones que explicarían el cambio de postura de Tomás de Vío. Para Gilson ese cambio de postura tiene que ver con la incompreensión de la doctrina del acto de ser. Cayetano no puede llegar a una noción tomasiana de *actus essendi*, porque identifica el *esse* o *actus essendi* con el *esse actualis existentiae*, considerándolo como una realidad distinta de la esencia real de la criatura. Por tanto, la criatura sería un compuesto de dos cosas distintas: la esencia y el *esse*.⁶⁶ Gilson cita en este contexto a Domingo Báñez: éste se muestra admirado por el cambio de postura del quien fuera Maestro General de su Orden, en contra de las ideas del Doctor Común. Báñez se extraña de la insistencia de Cayetano en identificar el acto de ser tomista, con el ser real que el sujeto adquiere al término de la generación. Sin embargo, para el maestro salmantino, el *esse* tomista no es el *actus ultimus*—en el sentido de la actualidad obtenida finalmente por el sujeto en su devenir—sino el *actus primus*: aquel sin el cual el sujeto del devenir no sería el mismo ser, y sin el cual ni siquiera habría devenir. Gilson retoma la crítica de Báñez, por cuanto el acto de ser de Santo Tomás no es el que hace que el embrión llegue al término de su evolución biológica, sino que es el acto que hace que el mismo embrión exista. Por tanto, cuando el Angélico sostiene que el *esse* es el acto primero y último, no se refiere a que sea último en el tiempo, sino que es último porque es

⁶⁵ Étienne Gilson, *Elementos de filosofía cristiana* (Madrid: Rialp, 1970), 276–277. Para esta cuestión cfr. Ceferino P. D. Muñoz, “El aporte de Étienne Gilson al problema de la inmortalidad del alma humana en Cayetano,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 2 (2013): 33–49.

⁶⁶ Una crítica a la interpretación de Gilson puede hallarse en Ralph McInerney en su libro *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 39–69; Mario Silar, “El estudio de Ralph McInerney sobre los *Praeambula Fidei* (Iª parte): El antitomismo en el tomismo,” *Studium: filosofía y teología* 11 (2008): 113.

acto supremo, más allá del cual no existe otro.⁶⁷ No obstante, Gilson intenta explicar a Tomás de Vio teniendo en cuenta que para los teólogos y filósofos de esa época, si algún concepto no se encontraba en la filosofía de Aristóteles, por ende, no estaba en la filosofía.⁶⁸ En cierto sentido, el Estagirita sería la medida de la filosofía mientras que la Escritura, los Padres y la Revelación lo serían de la teología. Es sabido que la noción de un *actus essendi* creado y sostenido por Dios en las criaturas, no se hallaba en el Filósofo. Esta postura es la que Gilson bautiza con el nombre de “filosofismo” aristotélico que según él adopta Cayetano. “Evidentemente, Tomás de Aquino no pensaba así; en su mente no existía esta oposición entre teología y filosofía, entre fe y razón. Por ello, la inmortalidad del alma es una verdad que no se puede desligar de la concepción filosófica del alma humana, que el Aquinate propugna.”⁶⁹

La vinculación del problema de la inmortalidad con la doctrina del acto de ser no aparece, sin embargo, tan evidente. En este sentido Orrego llama la atención de que en Báñez se vincula más la espiritualidad e inmortalidad del alma humana a la posibilidad de que la inteligencia ejerza su operación de manera relativamente autónoma con respecto al cuerpo, y no tanto con la idea del acto de ser como acto primero y más perfecto.⁷⁰ La diferencia con Gilson es que mientras que el medievalista francés acude a la argumentación contenida en el libro II

⁶⁷ Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 3, a. 4, 1^a duda, 145: “Et idcirco non placet mihi explicatio Caietani ubi supra, videlicet, quod propterea dicatur existentia ultima actualitas rei quia est ultimum in generatione. Certe hic modus loquendi quod ipsum esse sit ultima actualitas rei, raro invenitur apud Divum Thomam. Invenies in quaestione unica *De anima*, art. 6, ad 2, ubi inquit, quod ipsum esse est actus ultimus, qui participabilis est ab omnibus. In quo loco, si sequentia legeris, intelliges quomodo ipsum esse sit actus ultimus, nimirum supremus excellentissimus, qui omnes etiam alios actus perficit.”

⁶⁸ Cfr. Étienne Gilson, “Autour de Pomponazzi,” *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale Et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 28 (1961): 173.

⁶⁹ Muñoz, “El aporte de Étienne Gilson al problema de la inmortalidad del alma humana,” 43. Cfr. también Raúl Echaurre, *El pensamiento de Étienne Gilson* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 1980), 54.

⁷⁰ Santiago Orrego, “La inmortalidad del alma: ¿«debate» entre Báñez y Cayetano?,” en *El alma humana: esencia y destino*, 77–93.

de la *Suma contra gentiles* (c. 79), donde esta vinculación parece bastante explícita, Orrego acude a la argumentación de la I *Pars* de la *Summa Theologiae* (q. 75) donde se argumentación a partir de la espiritualidad de la inteligencia humana.⁷¹ Se trata de una cuestión todavía abierta entre los intérpretes juzgar hasta qué punto el *actus essendi* es el fundamento de la demostración racional de la inmortalidad del alma humana.

Las vías tomistas y su valor demostrativo

La admiración de Gilson por el pensamiento de Báñez no la disimula incluso cuando debe corregir algún punto de la interpretación del maestro salmantino. Esto se puede comprobar en el artículo publicado en 1961 sobre las cinco vías tomistas.⁷² Después de exponer brevemente el contenido de cada una de ellas se pregunta por la posibilidad—y necesidad—de reducirlas a unidad: una única vía que englobe los cinco modos de demostración.⁷³ La posibilidad se ha dado históricamente en diversas ocasiones a lo largo de la historia pero nunca de manera más “feliz” que en Báñez.

A la hora de tratar la primera vía tomista, Báñez “encuentra difícil admitir que Tomás realmente intentó presentar la primera vía como

⁷¹ La cuestión ha sido tratada con detalle en Lucas Duarte Silva, “Un estudio sobre la argumentación a favor de la inmortalidad del alma en la *Summa contra gentiles* ¿Es necesaria la composición esencia y acto de ser?,” *Thaumazein* 7/13 (2014): 32–47.

⁷² Gilson, “Trois leçons sur le problème de l’existence de Dieu,” 23–87. En este artículo se recogen las clases que impartió en la Universidad del Laterano (Roma) del 7 al 9 de diciembre de 1960. En 1965 en la 6ª edición de *Le Thomisme*, Gilson se refiere a Báñez sobre esta cuestión, admitiendo la admirable síntesis de las vías pero mostrándose contrario a la reducción de las mismas. Gilson, *Le Thomisme*, 92, n. 77.

⁷³ Gilson, “Trois leçons sur le problème de l’existence de Dieu,” 39: “Certains interprètes estiment qu’il est possible, et par conséquent nécessaire, d’organiser les cinq preuves de manière a en faire un seul tout. La raison qui conseille cette attitude est manifeste. Un simple regard sur les cinq voies révèle que chacune d’elles conduit á poser Dieu atteint d’un certain point de vue et connu sous un aspect particulier. Dieu est le premier moteur immobile, mais il est aussi la première cause; il est encore l’être nécessaire, et la perfection suprême, providence universelle. Pourquoi ne pas assembler les cinq voies en une seule, qui serait la preuve thomiste de l’existence de Dieu?”

autosuficiente y realmente distinta de la segunda. «Y porque el Primer Motor debe ser el Primer Eficiente (de otra forma el Primer Motor sería movido por el Primer Eficiente), por ello Tomás demostró que debe de haber un Primer Eficiente». Pero si esto es cierto, ¿por qué no arguye directamente desde la causa eficiente del movimiento? La intención de Santo Tomás parece más bien haber sido probar que hay un Dios, primero en un universo de causas del movimiento, y luego en un universo de causas eficientes.”⁷⁴ En definitiva, Gilson advierte que Báñez duda del valor demostrativo de la primera vía y por esta razón parece buscar el complemento con la segunda.

Anteriormente Gilson ya había señalado que para Báñez todas las pruebas se pueden organizar dialécticamente a partir de una sola. “Su deducción—dice Gilson—es una obra maestra; su rigor es tal que no es posible resumir, y yo no puedo más que remitirles a ella.”⁷⁵ Y poco después, en una nota a pie de página presenta lo esencial de la argumentación bañeciana no sin antes advertir que: “Báñez ha operado magistralmente esa reducción, en un texto que se debe leer por entero como una obra de arte.”⁷⁶ Y a continuación introduce el texto con la argumentación bañeciana:

En segundo lugar se ha de advertir que como dijimos en el artículo precedente a partir del conocimiento de las criaturas llegamos al conocimiento de Dios. Ya que las realidades invisibles las conocemos por vía de negación; la sempiterna potencia por vía de causalidad; la divinidad por vía de excelencia. Y a estos tres mo-

⁷⁴ Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, 294, n. 24 (*Elementos de filosofía cristiana*, 108).

⁷⁵ Gilson, “Trois leçons sur le problème de l’existence de Dieu,” 39: “L’entreprise a été tentée plusieurs fois, mais jamais de manière plus heureuse que par l’illustre commentateur de la *Somme de théologie*, Dominique Bañez. Expliquant l’article de la *Somme* qui contient les cinq voies (I, 2, 5), Bañez fait voir que toutes les preuves peuvent s’organiser dialectiquement á partir d’une seule. Sa déduction est un chef d’œuvre; sa rigueur est telle qu’elle ne se laisse pas résumer et je ne puis que vous y renvoyer.”

⁷⁶ Id., 40, n. 14: “Bañez a magistralement opéré cette réduction, dans un texte qu’il faut lire en entier comme une œuvre d’art, mais dont voici l’essentiel.”

dos llegamos a partir de las tres (propiedades) que se encuentran en las criaturas: en efecto, la criatura es *ente*, y *por otro*, y de la *nada*. *Ente* dice perfección, y en cuanto a esto conocemos a Dios por vía de excelencia; *por otro* dice causalidad, y por ella conocemos a Dios por vía de eficiencia; *de la nada* dice imperfección, y por esta remoción suya conocemos a Dios por vía de negación. Estas tres cosas son las que santo Tomás demuestra aquí acerca de Dios: su esencia en la cuarta razón, mostrando cual es (su esencia) removiendo de ella todo límite de perfección que se encuentra en las criaturas; es manifiesto que es máximamente ente; la fuerza eficiente y su virtud, en la primera y segunda razón; la sempiternidad en la tercera; mientras que en la quinta (manifiesta) la divinidad por vía de excelencia.

El orden de estas razones es tal porque como Dios es conocido por aquellas cosas que han sido hechas, y lo que ha sido hecho, como tal, mira a la virtud del agente de quien es propio llevar a algo de la potencia al acto, por esto se demuestra que hay en la naturaleza algo completamente inmóvil y que mueve las demás cosas. Y como lo primero que mueve debe ser el primer eficiente, pues de otro modo sería movido por el primer eficiente, por eso en segundo lugar demuestra que debe ser uno el primer eficiente. Y como esto debe ser eterno y *a se*, pues de otro modo sería producido por otro, debe tener en sí mismo las perfecciones que produce de un cierto modo más eminente, por eso en tercer lugar demuestra que es un ente necesario y *a se*; y en cuarto lugar que es el más noble y el más perfecto de todos los entes, y finalmente como enseña Aristóteles en el libro XII de la *Metafísica*, conviene que del primer motor provenga toda la ordenación del universo, y por eso en último lugar prueba que el mismo es el ordenador de todas las cosas; por lo que también implícitamente prueba que es el último fin de todas las cosas: en efecto es el primer eficiente y el primer ordenador, y el primer ordenador es el fin último como se dice en XII de la *Metafísica*.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Bañez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 2, a. 3, 114: “Secundo notandum, quod ut diximus in articulo precedenti ex creaturarum cognitione ad Dei cognitionem devenimus. Nam invisibilia cognoscimus per viam negationis; sempiterna virtutem per viam causa-

Añade Gilson que basta un mínimo de sentido metafísico para llevar a cabo dicha reducción: partiendo de la tercera vía (Dios como ser necesario) se puede pasar a la cuarta (el ser absoluto es la causa de todos los seres relativos), y de ella se pasa a la segunda vía (Dios como primera causa eficiente) de donde se llega a la quinta vía (porque lo que es la causa primera es también el fin último hacia lo que todo es dirigido por su providencia).⁷⁸ Gilson se muestra contrario a dicha reducción por una única razón: porque el mismo Tomás habla de cinco vías y no

litis; divinitatem per viam excellentiae. Et ad hos tres modos devenimus ex tribus quae inveniuntur in creaturis: creatura enim est ens et ab alio et ex nihilo. Ens dicit perfectionem, et quantum ad hoc cognoscimus Deum per viam excellentiae; alio dicit causalitatem, et per eam cognoscimus Deum per viam efficientiae; ex nihilo dicit imperfectionem, et per remotionem ejus cognoscimus Deum per viam negationis. Haec autem tria sunt quae Divus Thomas hic demonstrat de Deo: essentiam ejus in quarta ratione, ostendendo qualis sit, removendo ab ea omnem limitem perfectionis quae reperitur in creaturis; scilicet quod sit máximo ens; vim efficientiae et virtutem ejus in prima et secunda ratione; sempiternitatem vero in tertia; in quinta vero divinitatem per viam excellentiae.

Ordo vero harum rationum talis est. Nam cum Deus cognoscatur per ea quae facta sunt, et id quod factum est, ut sic, respiciat virtutem facientis cujus est reducere aliquid de potentia ad actum, ideo demonstratur quod sit in natura aliquid omnino immobile et movens caetera. Et quia primum movens debet esse primum efficiens, alias moveretur a primo efficiente, ideo secundo demonstrat quod debet esse unum primum efficiens. Et quia hoc debet esse aeternum et a se, alias produceretur ab alio, debet in se habere perfectiones quas producit eminentiori quodam modo, ideo tertio demonstrat quod sit unum ens necessarium et a se; et quarto quod sit omnium entium nobilissimum et máximo tale; tandem quia ut docet Aristóteles 12 *Metaph.* A primo movente oportet provenire totam ordinationem universi, ideo ultimo loco probat ipsum esse omnium ordinatorum; in quo etiam implicite probatur ipsum esse ultimum finem omnium: efficiens enim primum et primus ordinator est ultimus finis ut dicitur 12 *Metaph.*”

⁷⁸ Gilson, “Trois leçons sur le problème de l’existence de Dieu,” 39–40: “J’ajouterai seulement qu’il n’est pas nécessaire d’être Báñez pour tenter l’opération avec succès: avec un minimum de sens métaphysique, n’importe qui peut obtenir un résultat au moins passable. Partant de la troisième voie (Dieu est l’être nécessaire par soi), on peut passer à la quatrième (l’être absolu est la cause de tous les êtres relatifs); on passera de là à la deuxième (Dieu est le premier efficient), d’où l’on atteindra aisément la cinquième (parce qu’il est la cause première, Dieu est aussi la fin dernière à quoi tout est dirigé par sa providence).”

de una sola.⁷⁹ Para Gilson los partidarios de la unificación de las pruebas no reconocen, en realidad, su fuerza demostrativa y por eso intentan reforzar unas pruebas con otras, más que dar valor demostrativo a todas ellas de modo independiente.⁸⁰ Ahora bien, Gilson tampoco parece partidario de entender las cinco vías de manera independiente unas de otras, pues reconoce en ellas una cierta relación.⁸¹ En este sentido, la conexión apuntada por Báñez podría ser—empleando las palabras de Gilson—admirable.

Pero ¿realmente propone Báñez esa unificación? El maestro salmantino no parece decir explícitamente eso. En primer lugar, advierte que cada una de las vías presenta distintos tipos de evidencia: física, metafísica y moral.⁸² Ante la objeción planteada de que cada una de las

⁷⁹ Id., 41: “Je ne vois à ces entreprises qu’une seule objection, c’est que saint Thomas lui-même n’a rien fait de tel. Au début de l’article 3, le Maître ne dit pas: Je vais proposer une seule preuve de l’existence de Dieu divisée en cinq parties. A la fin du même article, il ne dit pas davantage que les cinq voies peuvent s’organiser en une seule, dont il décrirait la structure. Saint Thomas dit seulement: «Respondeo dicendum, quod Deum esse quinque modis probari potest». Il dit bien, *quinque modis*; le plus simple est donc d’admettre qu’il y a chez lui, non pas une, mais cinq preuves de l’existence de Dieu.”

⁸⁰ Gilson, “Trois leçons sur le problème de l’existence de Dieu,” 41: “C’est que, le plus souvent, ceux qui organisent les preuves en une seule ne sont pas entièrement satisfaits par certaines d’entre elles; dans leur esprit. Les moins fortes sont renforcées par les autres et le faisceau des cinq tient mieux que chacune en particulier. Mais le moins qu’on puisse dire est qu’on ne trouve chez saint Thomas lui-même aucune trace de cette inquiétude. Il ne dit pas: je vais proposer cinq preuves entre lesquelles vous ferez votre choix, ou que, si vous le jugez bon, vous complétez et renforcerez les unes par les autres. Non, sa parole est simplement: *Deum esse quinque modis probari potest*. Le plus simple, semble-t-il, pour ses interprètes, serait de s’en tenir là.”

⁸¹ Id., 43: “Les conclusions des cinq voies sont-elles vraiment incoordonnées? S’il en était ainsi, la situation serait philosophiquement chaotique. On ne saurait même pas que le premier moteur est le même être que le premier efficient, ou inversement, ni que l’un et l’autre sont identiques au premier nécessaire, au suprêmement parfait et, finalement, à la providence universelle, nous obtiendrions simplement cinq preuves discontinues qu’il existe un être tel que celui que nous nommons Dieu, mais nous ne saurions pas s’ils sont le même Dieu. Nous ne saurions même pas s’il n’y a qu’un seul Dieu, ou s’il y en a cinq.”

⁸² Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 2, a. 3, 114: “Pro solutione horum argumentorum, nota primo id quod saepe admonet viri docti et modesti, ex Aristo. 1. *Ethic.* c. 3,

vías ya da por supuesto la existencia de Dios,⁸³ afirma que estas vías incluso tomadas en su conjunto no prueban de modo *inmediato* y *explícito* la existencia de Dios, ni mucho menos que Dios es un ser perfectísimo, mayor que el cual no puede pensarse; sin embargo esas razones prueban de manera muy eficaz que en la naturaleza se encuentran ciertas perfecciones y propiedades que no pueden atribuirse a ningún otro ser más que a Dios, y por consiguiente de modo implícito prueban la existencia de Dios.⁸⁴ Además, en la síntesis del artículo presenta una única conclusión en donde habla de cinco demostraciones, y no de una sola.⁸⁵

El texto bañeciano también plantea la hipótesis de que incluso si se tomaran como un todo las vías no probarían de modo *explícito* e *inmediato* la existencia de Dios, sino solo de modo *virtual* e *implícito* aunque *directo*, la existencia de Dios. Con estas palabras Báñez parece referirse a un problema que tiene que ver con la interpretación de Caye-

non esse hominis bene disciplinati, aequalem evidentiam exigere in omni materia; sed alia est certitudo Mathematici, alia Physici, alia Metaphysici. Unde cum hae demonstrationes quas S. Tho. adducit, quaedam sint physicae, quaedam metaphysicae, partim etiam morales, ut ultima quae procedit ex gubernatione, quae potest ad mores aptari: non sunt aequaliter evidentes.”

⁸³ Id., q. 2, a. 3, 113: “Arguitur primo contra omnes rationes in communi: nam omnes illae simul sumptae non probant intentum, scilicet Deum esse; ergo. Antecedens probatur: nam prima ratio solum convincit, quod reperiatur in rerum natura primum movens immobile; secunda probat esse unam primam causam rerum omnium effectricem; tertia probat esse aliquod ens necessarium non mendicans ab alio suam necessitatem; quarta, aliquod supremum bonum; quinta, quod sit unus supremus gubernator: sed in his supponitur quod Deus sit; ergo non demonstrant Deum esse.”

⁸⁴ Id., I, q. 2, a. 3, 115: “Ad primum argum. itaque respondetur, quod licet omnes illae rationes simul sumptae non probent immediate et explicite, *Deum esse*, et multo minus Deum esse illud ens perfectissimum, quo perfectius quid excogitari nequit (hoc enim reservatur ad probandum in sequentibus quaestionibus) nihilominus rationes illae efficacissime probant quod in rerum natura reperiuntur perfectiones quaedam, et proprietates, quae alteri quam Deo nequeunt competere; et ex consequenti virtualiter et implicite probant Deum esse. Nam prima ratio convincit reperiri in rerum natura primum movens immobile, et sic alias probant efficaciter alias proprietates, quae vi soli Deo convenire possunt.”

⁸⁵ Id., I, q. 3, a. 3, 115: “Habemus unicam conclusionem affirmativam, Quam D. Tho. quinque demonstrationibus confirmat, desumptis ex Philosopho.”

tano de las vías tomistas. Tomás de Vío, ya en su comentario a la *Summa Theologiae*, afirma que el objetivo de las cinco vías no era demostrar la existencia de Dios, sino de algunas propiedades que convienen de hecho solo a Dios; de tal modo que esas vías concluyen en la existencia de Dios sólo *per accidens* interpretación seguida posteriormente por el suarecianismo.⁸⁶ Así parece atenuarse la fuerza demostrativa de las cinco vías.⁸⁷ Báñez se opone a esta conclusión de Cayetano.⁸⁸ El motivo es claro: Los atributos en los que las cinco vías concluyen son propios de Dios o son comunes también a las criaturas. En el primer caso, sería erróneo sostener que ese primer ente no sea Dios, mientras que en el segundo caso de las cinco vías no se podría concluir la existencia de predicados que son verdaderamente propios de Dios, ni siquiera *per accidens*. En efecto, ¿Quién puede afirmar que lo que es *per se* inmóvil no sea *per accidens* móvil? En segundo lugar, los predicados de las cinco vías solo pueden ser propios de Dios; pero de ser así las cinco vías demostrarían directamente—y no de modo indirecto o *per accidens*—la existencia de Dios.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Cfr. Thomas de Vio (Caietanus), *Commentaria in Primam Partem sanctissimi Doctoris Thomae Aq. Summae Theologiae* [cum commentaris Thomae de Vio Caietani], en *Thomas Aquinas, Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris. Opera Omnia*, vol. IV (Romae: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1888), 14.

⁸⁷ Cfr. Agnese Alemanno, *Aspetti della cultura teologica nell'Università di Parigi (1604–1643). I commenti alla quaestio II della Summa Theologiae di Tommaso d'Aquino (Utrum Deus sit)* (Lecce: Conté Editore, 2009), 17; Carlo Giacon, *La Seconda Scolastica*, vol. 1: *I grandi commentatori di San Tommaso* (Torino: Aragno, 2001), 145–155.

⁸⁸ Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 2, a. 3, 114–115: “Cajet. in hoc art. Dicit rationes istas quasi per accidens concludere Deum esse, scilicet quod invenitur Primus motor, quod est praedicatum proprium Dei secundum veritatem. Haec tamen sententia falsa est.”

⁸⁹ Id., I, q. 2, a. 3, 115: “Et probatur primo: nam vel praedicata quae hic de Deo concluduntur, sunt propria Deo, vel communia sibi, et corpori coelesti sive motori ejus. Si primum, ergo male docet Cajet. per has rationes non concludi motorem magis immobilem, quam anima intellectiva vel forma coeli. Si secundum, ergo non concludunt aliqua praedicata, quae secundum veritatem sunt propria Deo: siquidem communia non sunt propria. Confirmatur: nam si hoc commune tantum concluditur, sequitur, neque etiam per accidens istas rationes probare Deum esse. Nam illud praedicatum *motor immobilis*,

Báñez no sigue tampoco a Cayetano al tratar de la validez de la primera vía, como reconoce Gilson:

Cayetano ha visto bien que la vía de movimiento lleva a un primer motor, no movido, pero movable por accidente. Báñez responde que para plantear la objeción debemos tener en cuenta *una clase* de movimiento, no sólo físico, sino también espiritual, metafísico, o moral, impulsado por el deseo de algún fin más alto (*Scholastica Commentaria*, 115). Esto, por supuesto, supone que la «primera vía» deja de ser exclusivamente física. Puesto que él interpreta las cinco vías desde el punto de vista de la filosofía como tal (que no es extensivo a la certidumbre racional), Báñez llega a la conclusión de que puesto que las demostraciones introducidas por Santo Tomás son algunas de ellas físicas, otras metafísicas y al menos una de ellas ética (a saber, la última, del gobierno del mundo, que puede adecuarse a la conducta moral), no son igualmente evidentes; «non sunt alqualiter evidentes» (o. c. 114).⁹⁰

Sin embargo, Gilson no está de acuerdo con Báñez en establecer esos distintos grados de evidencia: “No hay nada en el texto de Tomás de Aquino que justifique esta restricción. Santo Tomás admitiría que la primera vía es «más manifiesta», porque el movimiento mismo es su-

non curando an aliquo modo, saltim per accidens, sit mobilis, potest competere alteri quam Deo, scilicet, intelligentiae motrici coeli; ergo etiam si probetur huiusmodi motorem esse, nihil proprium de Deo probatur. Secundo: nam praedicata quae in caeteris rationibus probantur de Deo, non possunt alteri ab ipso competere, v. g. esse primum efficiens, ens non ab alio, ens omnium perfectissimum; ergo directe quod istis rationibus probatur Deum esse.” Sobre esta cuestión cfr. Mauro Mantovani, “Los comentarios a la q. 2 de la I Pars de la *Summa Theologiae*. Algunas pistas,” en *De la primera a la segunda Escuela de Salamanca*, ed. Miguel Anxo Pena González (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 2012), 133–151; Mauro Mantovani, *La discussione sull’esistenza di Dio nei teologi domenicani a Salamanca dal 1561 al 1669* (Roma: LAS, 2011), 215–270.

⁹⁰ Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, 298, n. 46 (*Elementos de filosofía cristiana*, 111).

premanente manifiesto, pero nada manifiesta que considere la primera vía más «evidente» que la segunda o la tercera.”⁹¹

En definitiva, la reducción atribuida a Báñez requeriría un estudio más detenido. En todo caso, Báñez parece oponerse a Cayetano en su intento de rebajar el valor demostrativo de las vías. Una muestra más de las correcciones que Báñez apunta en la interpretación cayetanista (aunque es cierto también que en otros puntos de este mismo artículo se remite al comentario de Tomás de Vío).

Otras cuestiones metafísicas

La lectura gilsoniana del comentario bañeciano imprimió su huella en su explicación de la metafísica tomista en otras dos cuestiones: la causalidad propia de las causas segundas, y el *esse* propio de los accidentes sensibles.

En *Elements of Christian Philosophy* Gilson recoge la tradicional doctrina tomista sobre la causalidad divina y la causalidad de las criaturas. Crear es una acción propia de Dios, pues sólo Él puede dar el ser ya que Él es la pura existencia. Por consiguiente, ningún ser finito puede causar la existencia de ningún otro ser finito. En efecto,

una causa eficiente puede dirigir ciertas formas de una materia preexistente, pero la existencia de materia y formas en la potencialidad de la materia son presupuestos por la misma posibilidad de la causa eficiente en el orden de los seres finitos. Esta proposición ha dado lugar a prolongadas discusiones no sólo entre los tomistas y sus adversarios, sino incluso entre los mismos tomistas.⁹²

Y se remite a pie de página al comentario bañeciano quien adopta una postura bastante conciliadora partiendo del hecho de que la existencia es efecto propio solo de Dios. Gilson se remite al *status quaestionis* presentado por Báñez y resume así la postura del maestro salmantino:

⁹¹ Id.

⁹² Id., 175–176.

“La posición de Báñez es que las causas secundarias pueden producir el ser, *a excepción* de los actos propios del ser (Vid. D. Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, 154–158).”⁹³

Más perplejidad causa en Gilson la afirmación bañeciana acerca del ser de los accidentes. Reconociendo el valor de la interpretación de Báñez encuentra algunas tesis “ridículas” refiriéndose a continuación a esta. No comprende que en un tomista de su talla, después de seguir la opinión ortodoxa de su maestro Soto, se incline finalmente por afirmar que los accidentes poseen un ser propio.⁹⁴ El sorprendente texto de Báñez se halla en su comentario a la q. 3, a. 4, 5ª duda, titulada así: Si los accidentes tienen existencia propia, distinta realmente de la existencia de la sustancia. Comienza su argumentación exponiendo la postura de Escoto y Sonzinas a favor del ser propio de los accidentes; a continuación expone la opinión de su maestro Soto, para concluir:

De estas dos opiniones alguna vez me pareció más probable el parecer del Maestro Soto, porque no me había percatado que ella era contraria a la de Santo Tomás. Sin embargo, analizando bien las cosas, me parece a mí mucho más probable la opinión que afirma que la existencia de los accidentes—que se distinguen realmente de la sustancia—se distinguen también realmente de la existencia de la sustancia.⁹⁵

⁹³ Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, 317, n. 14 (*Elementos de filosofía cristiana*, 234–235): “See D. Bañes, *Scholastica Commentaria*, 154–158. The position of Bañes is that secondary causes can produce beings, minus their very acts of being.”

⁹⁴ Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vii–viii: “Even Bañes is not a second one, and anybody mistaking himself for the third leaves himself open to well-deserved ridicule. I find it hard to understand how Bañes, in the field of pure metaphysics, and after subscribing to the correct interpretation of his master Soto, decided that, in a Thomist substance, *accidens* could have an *esse* of their own.”

⁹⁵ Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 3, a. 4, 159: “Ex his duabus sententiis aliquando mihi quod visa est probabilior sententia Magistri Soto; quoniam non adverteram, illam esse contrariam sententiae Divi Thomae. Jam vero, re bene inspecta, multo probabilior mihi videtur sententia quae asserit, existentiam accidentium, qua realiter distinguuntur a substantia, distingui etiam reiliter ab existentia substantiae.”

Y se remite a los diversos textos tomasianos que confirmarían esta opinión.⁹⁶ El asunto ha merecido la atención de algún estudio donde se resalta la oscuridad del texto bañeciano.⁹⁷ En todo caso, el catedrático salmantino afirma que le parece una postura más probable (no la afirma de manera taxativa) que haya una distinción real entre el ser de la sustancia y el de los accidentes, pero no de una posible separación del ser de la sustancia del de los accidentes. En todo caso, no parece apartarse de la doctrina de los sentidos del ser aristotélica cuando habla que el ser de la sustancia es más imperfecto que el ser de los accidentes. El ser accidental es imperfecto, pues requiere el ser de la sustancia para darse. Por otro lado, esta interpretación sería más coherente con la explicación de qué sucede en la transubstanciación eucarística, donde el ser de los accidentes sería sustentado por un ser sobrenatural, y no por el ser natural de la sustancia.⁹⁸

Filosofía y Teología

Gilson se apoya en la autoridad de Domingo Báñez frente a Cayetano no solo en cuestiones metafísicas sobre el acto de ser sino todavía más en cuestiones relativas a las relaciones entre fe y razón, o más en concreto entre filosofía y teología. Según Gilson, Cayetano ha errado al interpretar el núcleo de la doctrina tomasiana, ante todo porque ha desconocido su espíritu, sucumbiendo a la tentación del «filosofismo», es decir a la tentación de un ejercicio de la racionalidad filosófica separada del *intellectus fidei*.⁹⁹ Mientras que para el Angélico, el *revelabile*, objeto de la teología, engloba—en una unidad fundada en la causa fi-

⁹⁶ Tomás de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 77, a. 2; *De ente et essentia* (al principio y en el c. 7); *In I libros Sententiarum*, dist. 3, q. 2, a. 3 y dist. 20, q. 1, a. 1, *IV Contra gentes*, c. 14.

⁹⁷ Llamzon, “Suppositional and Accidental Esse: A Study in Báñez,” especialmente 179–184.

⁹⁸ Cf. Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 4, a. 2, 2ª duda, 172–174.

⁹⁹ Étienne Gilson, “Note sur le *revelabile* selon Cajetan,” *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953): 202–203.

nal—todas las verdades necesarias para la salvación, es decir no solamente las verdades de orden estrictamente sobrenatural, sino también las verdades naturales reveladas, Cayetano minimiza la necesidad de la revelación de las verdades naturales y sustituye la consideración tomásiana de la unidad del fin—la salvación—por una distinción, en el plano de la causalidad formal, entre los *revelabilia* puros, de orden sobrenatural, y las verdades naturales reveladas, que califica de *demonstrabilia*. Estos *demonstrabilia* van a tender a salir de la doctrina sagrada para constituir una teología natural. Cayetano abriría así la puerta a una filosofía sagrada desarraigada de su lugar natural, que es la teología.

Báñez, por su parte, parece interpretar más fielmente al Angélico según Gilson. En efecto, el maestro salmantino admite la necesidad de la revelación incluso en aquellas verdades naturales que para gran parte de los hombres permanecen en la oscuridad. Así lo afirma tanto en “Note sur *revelabile*,”¹⁰⁰ subrayando la ortodoxia bañeciana a la hora de interpretar al Angélico¹⁰¹ como en *Elements of Christian Philosophy* donde recoge estas palabras del maestro salmantino:

¹⁰⁰ Id., 202, n. 13: “Il n’est peut-être pas nécessaire de souscrire au commentaire de Bañez sur ce point, du moins en tous ses détails. Ce n’est pas que la logique en soit fautive, mais le ton n’en est plus tout à fait celui de saint Thomas. Il a pourtant raison sur le fond; l’infaillibilité philosophique de la raison naturelle, même en métaphysique, ne semble pas entrer dans les vues de saint Thomas. Surtout, n’oublions pas qu’il s’agit toujours ici du salut du «genre humain» en général. L’existence d’une poignée de philosophes infaillibles en leur sagesse naturelle (*pauci, paucissimi*) ne changerait rien aux données du problème. La nécessité générale d’une révélation de certaines vérités naturellement connaissables demeurerait exactement ce qu’elle est.”

¹⁰¹ Id., 202, n. 13: “L’interprétation est stricte: «Quia quamvis aliquibus possit contingere aliquis Dei cognitio post longum tempus, tamen hoc non contingit de facto, nisi cum aliqua admixtione errorum. Unde necesse est quod doctrina revelata perficiat naturam» (*Scholastica Commentaria*, 1, 1, 16). Aucun infaillibilisme métaphysique chez Bañez. Outre l’embarras des phantasmes, notre intellect blessé par le péché originel ne saurait, *de facto*, atteindre sans erreur des vérités salutaires: «Et denique distincta cognitio et certa et sine admixtione erroris et de brevi tempore acquisita circa veritates en naturales de ipso Deo quae quidem sunt necessaria homini, non potest haberi in statu naturae lapsae viribus humanis; ergo» (*ibid*). Même Platon et Aristote se sont trompés: après de longues études: «isti in gravissimos errores inciderunt»; saint Augustin fut manichéen pendant neuf ans: «Ergo si tam magno et excellenti ingenio viri erraverunt

Puesto que el hábito de la fe y la luz sobrenatural dan más seguridad al intelecto sobre la proposición «Dios existe» que la luz natural pueda darle por medio de argumentos, no puede negarse que, aun quienes tenemos una demostración de ello, asentimos en cierta forma mediante la fe.¹⁰²

Por esta razón,

en el filósofo cristiano (expresión utilizada por Báñez, aunque Gilson no repara aquí en esto) concurren dos hábitos para el asentimiento de esta proposición: «Dios existe»: de otra forma—continúa Báñez—un rústico que asiente a la verdad de la existencia de Dios sólo a través de la fe, estaría más seguro en su asentimiento que un teólogo que asintiera a la misma verdad sólo por la fuerza de la demostración racional.¹⁰³

De aquí deduce Báñez que a veces asentimos a esta verdad a través de la fe hasta donde la certidumbre es posible.¹⁰⁴ En todo caso, esto no significa creer y saber la misma cosa al mismo tiempo, pues aunque ambos asentimientos recaen sobre el mismo objeto material, no recaen sobre el mismo objeto formal visto bajo la misma luz formal.¹⁰⁵ A pesar

circa naturalia, omnibus necessaria est doctrina revelata» (*ibid.*). La lumière de révélation ne démontre pas les conclusions démontrables, elle confirme l'homme dans leur vérité par sa lumière supérieure (*Ibid.* ad 2^m, 17). Cf. «fides in philosopho non destruit demonstrationem conclusionis, sed insuper quantum ad certitudinem confirmat illam certitudine supernaturali: quamvis quantum ad obscuritatem fidei non possit philosophus assentire conclusione scitae» (*Ibid.* ad. 3^m)."

¹⁰² Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1, 110: "Nihilominus quia habitus fidei, et lumen supernaturale reddit magis certum intellectum circa istam, *Deus est*, quam lumen naturale per discursum etiam illi qui habemus naturale per discursum, non est negandum naturale per discursum, non est negandum quin per fidem quodammodo assentiamus huic, *Deus est*, etiam illi qui habemus demonstrationes."

¹⁰³ Id.: "Duo enim habitus concurrunt in philosopho christiano ad assensum hujus, *Deus est*: alioqui firmius assentiret illi rusticus, quam Theologus, quia ille per fidem supernaturalem, iste vero per discursum naturalem."

¹⁰⁴ Id.: "Dico autem per fidem quodammodo nos assentiri quantum ad certitudinem."

¹⁰⁵ Id.: "[Q]uod habitus qui differunt genere non terminantur ad idem objectum formale sub eadem ratione formali: terminantur tamen ad idem materiale: fides enim terminatur ad illam veritatem confortans intellectum quantum ad certitudinem supernaturalem; lumen vero scientiae sub ratione quadam naturali evidenti."

de que Báñez sigue con fidelidad el camino recto de Tomás de Aquino, Gilson observa que incide más que su Maestro en las heridas inferidas por el pecado original en el intelecto especulativo.¹⁰⁶

Gilson todavía destaca una afirmación más del comentario de Báñez para hacer frente al filosofismo o racionalismo. La razón filosófica no puede demostrar de tal modo la existencia de Dios que haga superfluo el acto libre de fe:

El Dominico Báñez todavía era de la opinión de que dudar de la posibilidad de una demostración racional de la existencia de Dios que fuese suficientemente segura para que fuera para nosotros un deber adorarle, era una herejía. Todos los teólogos suscribirían esta conclusión. Pero Báñez añade que «si alguien dice que (la existencia de Dios) no puede ser demostrada siguiendo el método de Aristóteles, no comete un error de fe, sino en la física, o en la metafísica, y es temerario en la fe» (*Comentarios a ST*, 1, q. 2, a. 2). No hay razón para seguir a Aristóteles sino en aquello de su doctrina que es verdadero, y el mismo Tomás de Aquino no adoptó otra actitud sobre este punto.¹⁰⁷

En realidad, por el contexto de las afirmaciones de Báñez, se observa que lo que está criticando es el fideísmo que niega la capacidad humana

¹⁰⁶ Gilson, “Note sur le Revelabile selon Cajetan,” 202, n. 13: “Bañez nous semble dans la droite ligne de la pensée de saint Thomas; le ton diffère quelque peu en ce sens que Bañez insiste, plus que Thomas, sur la blessure soufferte par l’intellect spéculatif lui-même. Bien entendu, on peut retrouver chez Thomas cette *ignorantia* parmi les suites du péché originel, mais le Maître y insiste certainement moins que le Commentateur, et il n’en parle pas sur le même ton.” Esta observación de Gilson, ya no se encontrará presente en *Elements of Christian Philosophy*.

¹⁰⁷ Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, 293–294, n. 20: “Dominic Bañes still was of the opinion that to doubt the possibility of a rational demonstration of the existence of God that was sufficiently certain to make it for us a duty to worship Him, was a heresy. All theologians would subscribe to this conclusion. But Bañes adds that «if somebody says that [the existence of God] cannot be demonstrated following the method of Aristotle, this is not an error in the faith, but in physics, or in metaphysics, and it is temerarious in the faith» (*Commentaria in ST*, I, q. 2, a. 2; p. 109). There is no reason to follow Aristotle, except in those of his doctrines that are true, and Thomas Aquinas himself would not have us adopt another attitude on this point.”

de conocer racionalmente la existencia de Dios.¹⁰⁸ Pero Báñez distingue dos posturas: una extrema y herética que afirma que hasta tal punto puede ser demostrada la existencia de Dios que obligaría al hombre a darle culto¹⁰⁹ (privando así de la libertad del acto de fe), de la otra postura que afirma que la doctrina aristotélica no es demostrativa de la existencia de Dios: de este modo no hay un error de fe, sino de metafísica o de física; sería una afirmación temeraria pero no herética.¹¹⁰ Se advierte aquí la fuerza de la autoridad del Estagirita, pero sin caer en un filosofismo aristotelizante, como denunciaba Gilson hablando de Cayetano.

Gilson acude también a la autoridad de Báñez para contrarrestar a Cayetano a la hora de tratar de la teología como una ciencia subalternada. Para Tomás de Aquino, la doctrina sagrada se apoya en principios demostrados por una ciencia superior (la ciencia de Dios y la de los bienaventurados). De este texto (I, q. 1, a. 2), Cayetano deduce que la teología es en sí misma una ciencia subalternada en sentido pleno, mientras que Báñez subraya el carácter impropio de esta afirmación: la teología y ciencia divina se relacionan como lo imperfecto a lo perfecto de la misma especie.¹¹¹ Gilson explica así la mente del Aquinate, que una vez más Báñez parece haber interpretado certeramente:

¹⁰⁸ Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1, 109: “Pro hujus rei explicatione sciendum est, fuisse antiquitus quosdam Philosophos qui opinati sunt, non posse demonstrari Deum und esse, nec etiam demonstratione ab effectu et a posterior: sed solum divina revelatione cognosci, atque sola fide certo credi . . . Caeterum hac sententia est temeraria, et ut quibusdam videtur errónea.”

¹⁰⁹ Id.: “Sed nihilominus mihi distinguendum videtur. Si enim quis neget, naturaliter posse cognosci, quantum sat est ad obligandum homines ad cultum Dei, Deum esse demonstrari posse, est haeresis.”

¹¹⁰ Id.: “Si quis autem dicat, non demonstrari secundum artem aristotelicam, non est error in fide, sed in Physica, aut Metaphysica, et temerarium in fide.”

¹¹¹ Cajetan considers that *theologia secundum se est vere scientia simpliciter subalternata* (ad loc.). Báñez does not agree: *Sic nostra theologia non est proprie subalternata, sed solum se habet ut imperfectum et perfectum intra eandem speciem* (ad loc. I, 22). Báñez, *Scholastica Commentaria*, q. 1, a. 2, 22.

El mismo Santo Tomás sólo ha hablado de una *quasi* subalternación: *Est ergo theologia scientia quasi subalternata divinae scientiae a qua accipit principia sua* (*Sent.* Prólogo, 9, 1, a 3). En la *Summa Theologiae* . . . Tomás no hizo nunca uso de la fórmula. No obstante, se encuentra de nuevo y sin el *quasi* en *Expositio Super Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5. En realidad, incluso cuando Tomás no lo escribe, el *quasi* está necesariamente implicado. En una verdadera subalternación, la ciencia inferior ve a la misma luz que la superior de la que recibe sus principios; pero la filosofía contempla la verdad en la fe de los teólogos en la palabra de Dios, no a la luz de la ciencia divina misma, que es una con Dios, y el mismo *esse* de Dios. Entre nuestra teología y la ciencia divina hay una relación de lo imperfecto a lo perfecto, de efecto a causa, y consecuentemente de orden, pero hay discontinuidad en la esencia misma de la luz inteligible. Esta es probablemente la razón por la que Tomás de Aquino ha hablado al menos una vez de una *quasi* subalternación, y en otros casos ha omitido toda referencia a la subalternación. Como ocurre con tanta frecuencia, los comentaristas han atribuido a lo que era una simple comparación una importancia desproporcionada a la que realmente tiene en la doctrina de Santo Tomás.¹¹²

Balance conclusivo

Del estudio pormenorizado de las obras de Gilson podemos concluir que para el medievalista francés en la metafísica de Báñez hay más luces que sombras. Aunque encuentra en él algunos puntos en donde se aparta de la senda de su Maestro le sigue en su tesis fundamental: el acto de ser como acto primero de todos los seres. Y esta tesis, que en tiempos del maestro salmantino ya comenzaba a perderse dentro de la tradición tomista, le sirve para afirmar que Báñez es “el más tomista de los tomistas,” una piedra de toque de la ortodoxia tomista, convirtiéndose así en el antídoto del cayetanismo. Cayetano, en efecto, “minimiza la necesidad de la revelación de las verdades naturales,

¹¹² Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, 287, n. 21.

abriendo el camino a un acercamiento puramente filosófico de estas verdades, en la misma medida Báñez insiste sobre la importancia de la razón *pro statu isto*, salvaguardando el arraigo teológico concreto de la metafísica.”¹¹³

En definitiva, el tomismo de Báñez “se encuentra en perfecta coherencia con las intuiciones centrales del gilsonismo, de las cuales dos se nos han impuesto como centrales: por una parte, el papel decisivo del primer principio y su identificación con una cierta comprensión del «esse», y, por otra, la necesidad de un ambiente teológico para alcanzar este principio.”¹¹⁴ Bonino, sin embargo, esboza algunos límites a la interpretación gilsonianas, pues “opera sobre una base inductiva relativamente estrecha, de donde proviene la impresión, en ocasiones, de un cierto apriorismo, precio de una sistematicidad muy desarrollada: el filósofo lleva demasiada ventaja al historiador. En consecuencia, la reducción de los criterios de fidelidad a Santo Tomás a la única comprensión del «esse» es por lo menos discutible y no podría constituir una hipótesis historiográfica suficiente para la historia del tomismo.”¹¹⁵

En todo caso, la investigación histórica de Gilson supone una aportación fundamental para la comprensión de la Escolástica salmantina de finales del XVI. En efecto, Domingo Báñez aparece todavía para gran parte de la historiografía teológica como un escolástico decadente y polémico, aferrado a la interpretación cayetanista de santo Tomás de cuño aristotélico, y por consiguiente, tenaz opositor de los nuevos rumbos de la teología humanista. Su teología se encuentra más centrada en cuestiones metafísicas abstractas que en los problemas vivos de la existencia humana.¹¹⁶ Este acercamiento al pensamiento de

¹¹³ Serge-Thomas Bonino, “La historiografía de la Escuela tomista: El caso Gilson,” *Scripta Theologica* 26:3 (1994): 975.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

¹¹⁵ *Id.*, 975–976.

¹¹⁶ Evangelista Vilanova, *Historia de la teología cristiana*, vol. II (Barcelona: Herder, 1989), 614. En esta línea interpretativa se hallan también otros estudios: Juan Belda Plans, *La Escuela de Salamanca y la renovación de la Teología en el siglo XVI* (Ma-

Báñez puede estar motivado por un modo de hacer teología donde se respira cierto recelo de la especulación metafísica con una preocupación más vitalista o existencialista que ha guiado los pasos de la Teología en la segunda mitad del siglo XX. Un modo de hacer teología muy fecundo, pero que presenta también sus limitaciones y carencias.

El estudio sobre Báñez realizado por Gilson—que desconocía esta perspectiva historiográfica—viene a equilibrar ese enfoque, concretamente en lo referente a la influencia de Cayetano en la Segunda Escuela salmantina, y de modo particular en Domingo Báñez. La interpretación de Cayetano aparece a los ojos de Gilson afectada del filosofismo aristotélico, y del empobrecimiento metafísico de la teología humanista, frente a las que Báñez parece un firme bastión.¹¹⁷

**GILSON AND BÁÑEZ:
LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF A LATE ENCOUNTER**

SUMMARY

Gilson came across Báñez's commentary on the *Summa Theologiae* in 1952, and since then he saw in Báñez the confirmation of his own understanding of the act of being against the background of deviant interpretations made by other Thomists, especially Cajetan. In this paper, Gilson's claims about the metaphysics of Báñez, including the *actus essendi*, the immortality of the soul, the relation between philosophy and theology, etc., are discussed. Although Gilson rectifies Báñez's interpretations of Thomas' ways and the act of being of the accidents, Gilson's ultimate assessment of Báñez is positive to such an extent that for the French medievalist the Dominican of Salamanca will remain "the most Thomistic of all the Thomists that I have had the privilege of knowing."

drid: BAC, 2000), 779–794; Miguel Anxo Pena González, *La Escuela de Salamanca: de la monarquía hispánica al orbe católico* (Madrid: BAC, 2009), 163–169; Raúl de Almeida Rolo, "Duas linhas de restauração tomista na segunda Escolástica do século XVI," en *Atti del Congresso Internazionale nell VII centenario* (Napoli: Edizione Domenicane Italiane, 1976), 230–241.

¹¹⁷ Cfr. Gilson, "Cajetan et l'humanisme théologique," 113–136.

KEYWORDS: actus essendi, immortality of the soul, faith and reason, Thomistic five ways, accidents, Thomas Aquinas, Cajetan, Thomism, school of Salamanca.

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THE CONCEPT OF *RELATION* IN THE THOMISTIC PERCEPTION OF A *PERSON*

In the thought of Thomas Aquinas, theology and philosophy unite in a whole while maintaining their own entity, in what Étienne Gilson has called “Christian philosophy,” which was founded by the Fathers of the Church by incorporating for the first time Greek philosophy in the corpus of Christian thought.¹ Thomistic philosophy, a product of the joining of Hellenism and Christianity and the reconciliation of theology and philosophy, faith and reason, contemplates man both in the context of a logical construction and as a person in the context of a set of experiences.

Thomas Aquinas, an heir to both Greco-Roman and Christian traditions, returns to the ancient ontology of Greek philosophy in order to face his era’s greatest challenge, that is, the incorporation of Aristotelian nature with its own ontological composition into the Universe created by God, according to Christian faith. The connection of the metaphysics of being with Aristotle’s philosophy of nature allows for the composition of “anthropology” *per se*, in whose context is placed the concept of a person as it emerges from the following two funda-

¹ Étienne Gilson, *L’Esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1998), 212.

mental issues: the metaphysical approach to a person ontologically connected with “nature,” and the concept of a person as “relation.”

The Relation between Person and Nature

The realization of nature’s particular structure and the study of the nature and causes of things in the context of the Thomistic interpretation of the world has led to an acknowledgement of the nature of things not only as essence, but also as an activity *per se*, that is, a second causality participating in the hierarchical order of the universe and immanent in beings.

The acknowledgement of the nature of things as a second causality is founded on the acceptance of the possibility of all beings but God, and their ontological submission to the primary cause. This finds its metaphysical expression in the Thomistic distinction between essence and existence in every being but God.²

Thomistic ontology focuses on the reality of being as a synthesis of essence and existence, and achieves the ontological foundation of a person by distinguishing it from the concept of essence or nature.

The contemplation of the person as substance vis-à-vis the concept of essence or nature, which originates from the Patristic tradition,³ setting the concept of a person in the field of individuality, combined with Aristotelian hylomorphism, leads to the unity of the human synthesis, consisting of soul and body.

Human nature is based on the synthesis of soul and body, the soul being ontologically united with the body. A person as individual substance (*substantia*) is a hypostasis, in whose context rational nature

² Ernest L. Fortin, “St Thomas Aquinas,” in *History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Leo Strauss, Joseph Cropsey (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 223–250. See also ST, I, q. 3, a. 4 and SCG, I, 22.

³ Eleni Procopiou, *The Person as a Subject of Law in the Work of Thomas Aquinas* [in Greek] (Athens: Herodotos Publ., 2013), 158 ff.

takes place, making it supreme. “The synthesis of this matter and this form is a hypostasis, or person.”⁴

Thomas Aquinas’ conviction of the idea of natural order and the interpolation of nature between man and God has resulted in an ontological upgrading of the material world and the acknowledgement of man as a natural being, that is, the acknowledgement of his partly autonomous existence—a significant fact for the whole of modern thought—without denying the metaphysical foundation of a standard human essence.

A person as an individual component of this soul and this body safeguards the individual existence of this particular synthesis,⁵ whose ingredients are individuality and unity, since the human being is a whole founded on man’s psychosomatic unity. A person as an ontological subject is an autonomous whole existing *per se* and for himself, an individual with a personal soul, mind and body, a singular subject of human nature not “directed by others,” but being “a master of his acts.”⁶

A person’s ontological autonomy forms the foundation of his practical moral freedom. Therefore, a person as a metaphysical reality is founded on the contemplation of a person as a self-existing being and a performer of personal acts.

Thus, the concept of a person, a theological concept originating from the dogmatic elaboration of the theology of Trinity and Christ, is complemented by a philosophical (metaphysical) viewing. In this context, there emerges the concept of the Christian person which is not identical with Plato’s or Aristotle’s “man.” The metaphysical dimension of a person is Thomism’s great contribution which forms the foun-

⁴ ST, I, q. 29, a. 2 ad 3.

⁵ Aquinas’ view on the individuality of the soul confronted Averroism.

⁶ ST, I, q. 29, a. 1, resp.: “persons . . . distinguish themselves from other substances because they are ‘masters of their own acts’. They do not simply endure energy, like other substances, but act on their own. Therefore, acts belong to persons.”

dition of Western thought and takes shape—not against nature but—based on the ontological unity of the common nature of all men.

Consequently, the crowning moment of Christian metaphysics is the one in which the concept of a person is complemented by the Aristotelian concept of nature. Aquinas' view follows the Greek tradition as well as the Patristic tradition of the approach of taking human nature as a universality, a part of which is individuality, the hypostasis or person.

The abstract idea of human nature accompanies a person's historical existence and Aquinas, despite his admiration for the person as the unique product of a particular historical existence, looks consistently towards human nature as a metaphysical concept.

By the metaphysical synthesis of the concepts of person and nature in the field of ontology, Thomas Aquinas managed to combine the impersonal metaphysics of ancient Greeks (primarily that of Aristotle) with Christian personalism. Thus, in the thought of Aquinas the ontological concept of a person as expressed in Christian theology, that is, in the image of divine substances, remains attached to the metaphysical reality of human nature.

The world, however, does not consist solely of persons but is primarily a world of natures, that is, purposes, destined for a teleological prospect, so much so that the idea of a complete transcendence of the human person appears weak. Therefore, it is impossible to contemplate the human person without simultaneously contemplating the human species.

In this context, the metaphysical contemplation of a person is based on the distinction between person and nature and their coexistence. It is not based on the identification of person with nature⁷ that leads to the identification of human substance with essence, that is, the

⁷ This identification originates from the acceptance of the unprecedented uniqueness of the person in the nominalist philosophy, which rejected the ontological reality of universal concepts and turned to individual things, thus undermining the foundations of ontology itself.

disappearance of universal nature which results in ontology being reduced to the metaphysics of individual substance and in the absolute acceptance of a person by the abolition of the concept of essence and the sole acceptance of the individual. This would amount to a nominalist position, the very opposite of ancient Greek and medieval ontology.

In the thought of Thomas Aquinas, a person at a supernatural level is not detached from mankind, while, as a historical person, he or she is not detached from society. The concept of person becomes metaphysical by reduction from the natural order. Therefore, natural sociability lies at the foundation of a person's supernatural fulfillment.

In this way Thomas Aquinas achieves a synthesis between man as such, as human nature or mankind, with man as a person vis-à-vis others.⁸ By means of an ontological approach, he extends the concept of person to all men, making them equal in the field of ontology and attributing an all-human value (*dignitas*) to human nature and to every individual person, being responsible for its own acts.

The Concept of "Relation"

The synthesis of person and nature is completed through the contemplation of person as "relation," and is therefore closely associated with the Trinitarian principle of "homoousion." Thomistic theology has fully adopted the doctrine of homoousion of the Greek Fathers, in whose context hypostasis (person) is connected with the common essence, or nature.

Thomas Aquinas' concept of a person as a self-existent relation consists of the contemplation of person as society or relation, and is fundamental in the history of theological thought. In the Trinitarian doctrine, divine persons are identical with their substantial relations.⁹ There is no ontological precedence of substance or person: divine sub-

⁸ ST, II-II, q. 64, a. 1, ad 3.

⁹ ST, I, q. 29, a. 4, resp. and ad 1 and 3. "Persona significat relationem prout est subsistens in natura divina" (ST, I, q. 39, a. 1, resp.).

stance exists in full in each of the divine substances, so that they may join in the common essence and that the otherness and the personal existence of divine persons may be safeguarded. These persons are distinguished by their relations, meaning that persons are the actual substantial relations of fatherhood, “sonhood” and precedence.

A substantial relation does not presuppose a distinction between persons. Rather, it carries it along, and it is naturally simultaneous with the person.¹⁰ Thus, there is no ontological precedence of person vis-à-vis substantial relation. Through these relations persons relate with each other, because these relations are identical with the persons themselves. However, these relations are not based on occurrence; they are essence itself, relations or substances within the divine nature; relations substantiating persons in a way that each divine person signifies a substantiated relation, that is, “the Greek Fathers’ way of existing.”¹¹

When it comes to God, the concept of individual substance includes relation; not as a simple relation, but a relation indicated by the way of *substantia*, that is, hypostasis.¹² The three substances hold individually the whole of one substance, being independent of each other as persons but fully united because of their common essence; existing as self-existing relations, that is, as persons defined by their relations, which are characterized by an ontological reality.

Thus, the persons of the Trinity are distinguished by their relations, since there is no synthesis of form and matter in God, nor a synthesis of essence and occurrence. Therefore, each divine attribute is divine nature itself.

This Thomistic approach to a person as society or relation is equal to the contemplation of a person as universality; in fact, it is based on it. Through it there arises the issue of the difference between

¹⁰ ST, I, q. 40, a. 2, ad 4.

¹¹ Emile Bailleux, “Le personnalisme de Saint Thomas en Théologie trinitaire,” *Revue Thomiste* 61 (1961): 25–42.

¹² ST, I, q. 29, a. 4, resp. Also, John of Damascus, Ἐκδοσις ακριβῆς της Ορθοδόξου πίστεως [*An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*], III, 21.

divine and human persons, as the society of persons, and the identification of persons with their relations concerns the way of existence of divine persons, consisting of “correlation with the other,” with the other being “naturally simultaneous,”¹³ meaning that a self-existing relation, being a component of the person, incorporates a correlated “other,” who is naturally simultaneous with substance. The person-substance acquires its ontological content being in relation; a relation that exists in itself.

The society of divine persons, however, cannot be transferred to the human society of persons. Human persons do not indicate substantial relations, because their relations are simple. The model of the absolute connection of the person with “relationality” may not, according to Aquinas, be applied to human persons because their relations do not have an ontological context, “they do not signify a person but a person’s relation.”¹⁴ On this point also Thomas Aquinas follows the doctrine of the “homoousion” of the Greek Fathers, primarily John of Damascus.¹⁵

Human persons are separate, not within each other. Therefore, although Aquinas acknowledges the analogy between the immaterial and the material world (*analogia entis*), he deems relations applications of a person, not its ingredient, as with divine persons.

Conveyance of the theological concept of a person to a human person may only occur by means of the assumption of a supernatural role by a fellow being as third party.¹⁶ However, this does not mean that

¹³ ST, I, q. 40, a. 2, resp. and ad 4.

¹⁴ ST, I, q. 33, a. 2, ad 1.

¹⁵ John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I, 8: “In the case of all created things, the distinction of the subsistences is observed in actual fact . . . [they] are both separated in space and differ in time . . . and all differentiating properties . . . they do not dwell in one another . . . but in the case of the holy Trinity . . . the community and unity are observed in fact . . . each one of them is related as closely to the other as to itself . . . it is by thought that the difference is perceived.”

¹⁶ Philippe Vallin, *Le prochain comme tierce personne chez Saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2000), 274.

a human person, as a specific individual, is subject to substantial relations that constitute his existence as substance, because a human person “is” only by analogy to divine persons.

Man *per se* carries with him the ontological absolute of human nature, along with its value, which is higher than that of any other nature. Man exists as a person in relation to “things” and “others,” as primarily expressed in the field of knowledge,¹⁷ within which the close association of soul and being is the outcome of the correlation of subject and object, of a person and the world. “To know,” says Aquinas, “signifies primarily an experienced relation of the knowing subject with the object of knowledge,”¹⁸ since through an object a subject becomes aware of itself.

Apart from the field of knowledge, however, man exists in relation to things and others. Such an existence is the product of relations between men; not “substantial” ones but objects of moral-juridical regulations.

The Thomistic contemplation views the issues of individuality and personal identity as a life’s course, with the teleological arrangement of life as a whole. However, this personal identity is not just the total sum of a life’s episodes and events, or relations with others, because “a relation includes beings in relation. It is something else that adds up to the participants.”¹⁹

The procedure of the completion of a man’s perfection relies primarily on his relations with God and his fellow being, that is, activities by which a human person advances to his completion. The human face, however, precedes and distinguishes itself from its activity, since

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas’ epistemological principle consists of an agreement between the order of knowledge and the order of being; that is, an agreement of the intellect with “things” (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*), so that knowledge may be an expression of this agreement between knowledge and the being. Cfr. Michel Villey, *Réflexions sur la philosophie et le droit. Les Carnets* (Paris: PUF, 1995), 477.

¹⁸ ST, I, q. 34, a. 1, ad 2–3. The awareness that one perceives something that can be perceived includes one’s awareness of oneself (*De Veritate*, 10, 8).

¹⁹ Villey, *Réflexions sur la philosophie et le droit*, 477.

the latter is an application of the face and does not belong to its essence. Although the human face can only achieve its completion by many activities, it does not identify with them. A human person is conceived in his or her progressive development in the time span of both their personal history and human history in general. However, the meta-physical approach to a person's identity does not occur through a person's relations or activities, because in Christian teleology a man's soul is free, being destined for a cause higher than that of the earthly state.²⁰ This, after all, is the contribution of Christianity.

This contemplation of Thomas Aquinas on the free side of the person constitutes the idea of the transcendence of the human person as regards any social order.²¹ It relates, however, to the spiritual, supernatural sphere, not the physical side of the person's existence in society. In the context of his or her social relations, an individual-natural person comprises his or her "roles" and relations by which he or she is placed in a society and the service of the common good.²² On the other hand, a person in his or her supernatural accomplishment is independent of these roles since man *per se*, human nature as an ontological category, is beyond and above social roles and relations or a person's acts, since a person heads towards an "end," the end of human nature. This contemplation identifies neither with the absolute autonomy of the person as existence, that is, the metaphysics of individual substance, nor with its definition via its relations with other persons and universal nature.

Thus, according to Thomas Aquinas, the ontological density of the essence of person, which enriches the individual existence through essence or nature, can be rendered neither by the historical approach to a person as proposed by MacIntyre—who identifies a person with his or

²⁰ ST, II-II, q. 104, a. 5, resp.

²¹ Procopiou, *The Person as a Subject of Law in the Work of Thomas Aquinas*, 354.

²² A person is indeed part of a tradition in the context of a community, not a separate individual (Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (London: Duckworth, 1990), 138 and 199).

her relations and social roles²³—conceiving it as a narrative identity of a life lacking any transcendental foundation, nor by the secularization of the theological concept of a person, by which the latter is moved as a relational category from the field of metaphysics to that of morality.

Persistence in the “relational” dimension of the person leads, in the final analysis, to a denial of the individual personal soul and individuality for the benefit of the “other,” to the identification of person with relation which, however, does not bear the ontological contents of a person but simply the moral ones, and is a form of return to Averroism which lies in the antipodes of Thomistic metaphysics of a person.

The metaphysical concept of the human person may only be perceived in relation to the order of blissfulness, the final end of human existence, which bears the contents of a moral approach in a person’s relational dimension. In the Thomistic interpretation of a person, the human person is not just the final product of a procedure of historical change, a transformation of one’s “self” and his relations,²⁴ as the postmodern era believes, since it is neither detached from the world and social life, that is, an isolated self, nor does it identify fully with its social existence. Moving between two lives and two perfections, the perfection of birth and that of nature, it connects history and metaphysics.

Thus, in modern personalism the identification of a person with its relations, or the contemplation of a person as a “relational” category is equivalent with an identification of the person with its “roles” or qualities, and the contemplation of human personality as a unity of narration, or through its historical unfolding.²⁵ In other words, it is not

²³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 160.

²⁴ *Id.*, 33.

²⁵ *Id.*, 26 and 206. As Eleonore Stump notes, the experience of a second person as interpersonal relation is characteristically presented in the biblical narrative. See Eleonore Stump, “Second Person Accounts and the Problem of Evil,” *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 57:4 (2001): 745–771.

compatible with the metaphysical-ontological foundation of the person as understood by Thomas Aquinas, which goes beyond history.

Man as a natural person, a subject of history, is strongly dependent on his relations with others, while also a carrier of both “relations of love” founded primarily on the teachings of Christian life,²⁶ and “relations of justice,” concerning primarily social life, since justice views goodness as a “duty towards the community or God.”²⁷ A person, as part of a community and in relation to it, is a carrier of relations of justice, since “the truth of justice does not concern the truth of life, which is a personal truth; it is the rule which opinions on fellow beings follow.”²⁸

Such relations are regulated by the virtue of justice, whose reason for existence is “the relation with the person of the other” (*ad alterum*). Thus, in the context of justice, the paramount moral virtue, as it is a “relation with another,” there arises the precise and practical character of the person as well as the concept of “relation” in the field of relations of justice, as adopted by Aquinas from the Aristotelian philosophy of law.

Justice, according to Aquinas and following Aristotle, is a social virtue concerning a social group; it specifically serves natural and social order seeking a “just relation,” that is, a “relation of equality” concerning things.

Therefore, a person as natural person is a member of a city and a carrier of relations of justice, and as such is subject to the common good. A person, as protagonist of cosmic order, is born with law, that is, relations of justice, and is connected with “things” through which persons enter a status of individual roles that safeguard individual benefit. In other words, in the context of justice persons are again juxta-

²⁶ ST, I, q. 108, a. 3, resp., and ST, II–II, q. 184, a. 3, ad 3: “[I]n Christian life there is a perfection of love . . .”

²⁷ ST, II–II, q. 79, a. 1, resp.

²⁸ ST, II–II, q. 109, a. 3, ad 3.

posed with “things,” the world of “having,” because, as Thomas Aquinas states, “through actions . . . and external things men can communicate with each other . . . because through them a man is validated vis-à-vis another (man).”²⁹

Man’s close connection with nature, a person’s with “things” and the “nature of things,” takes place primarily in the context of relations of justice, which are relations between persons, a product of the correlation of things.

Factum relationis as a primary “relational” event is founded above all in the relation of the person with things and others, and occurs in the field of justice, which has a “public aspect,” as it concerns the community. In this context, relations between persons occur in the sphere of an objective framework of relations, not the sphere of a “consensus between subjects.”³⁰

Thus, in Thomistic contemplation of the human person, the supernatural world of persons, in its theological and metaphysical sense, coexists with the world of persons as protagonists of cosmic order and legal relations. A person’s inclusion in the framework of legal relations and its ontological liberation in the supernatural field have opened up the way for the social acknowledgement of the human person, which has since been placed within the community, in the heart of social relations.

Thomas Aquinas’ metaphysical contemplation of a person, founded on the concept of relation as complemented by its contemplation in the field of human knowledge and its moral-juridical approach in the field of social and legal relations, raises primarily the issue of unity and individuality of the human being as precondition for the protection of human individuality from a confusion with nature, species or

²⁹ ST, II–II, q. 58, a. 8, resp.

³⁰ Consensus between subjects, as perceived by Arendt, that is, a common sense within a community (*sensus communis*) cannot replace “relations of justice” on which the life of a community is primarily founded. See Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 70–71.

God,³¹ as Gilson has rightly noted. As far as human existence is concerned, what is non convertible is not the “relational event,” but the person *per se*, with his or her unbreakable unity as a psychosomatic entity of the human person, vis-à-vis which “others” and their actions are seen as having occurred objectively, so that personal as well as social relations may be combined with personal commitments. This allows for the concept of a person to be perceived without conversion to anything else, that is, in a non convertible manner.³²

Indeed, in social life we perceive ourselves as persons, because we act and interact on each other according to a common human nature. However, the concept of a person cannot be replaced by the concept of a team: by “us” or the contemplation of persons as members of a group, on the basis of their roles in a joint activity.

The ontological foundation of a person as relational category dismisses metaphysical individualism. It needs, however, to confront the issues of modern personalism with its origins in Kant’s philosophy, veering between two extremes: 1) an exaltation of subjectivity far from any demand for transcendence, once again in the service of an individualistic perception of life, and 2) a transcendence-denial of individuality and a replacement of individualism by a “communal personalism” that cancels any sense of individual autonomy.³³

³¹ Saint Thomas, *Textes sur la morale*, French transl. and comments by Étienne Gilson (Paris: J. Vrin, 1998), 12.

³² Strawson raises the issue of the “primitiveness of the concept of a person.” See Peter F. Strawson, *Individuals* (London: Methuen, 1959), 102.

³³ Emmanuel Mounier, *Le personnalisme* (Paris: PUF, 2007), 34: La personne “n’existe que vers autrui, elle ne se connaît que par autrui, elle ne se trouve qu’en autrui. L’expérience primitive de la personne est l’expérience de la seconde personne.”

**THE CONCEPT OF *RELATION* IN
THE THOMISTIC PERCEPTION OF A *PERSON***

SUMMARY

The article aims to show that the connection of the metaphysics of being with Aristotle's philosophy of nature allows for the composition of anthropology *per se* which involves the concept of a person as it emerges from the two fundamental issues: the metaphysical approach to a person ontologically connected with nature, and the concept of a person as relation. The article concludes with the claim that, in Thomistic anthropology, the supernatural world of persons coexists with the natural world of persons who are subject to cosmic order and legal relations. Thus, a person's inclusion in the framework of legal relations and its ontological liberation in the supernatural field open up the way for the social acknowledgement of the human person.

KEYWORDS: relation, person, Thomism, nature, anthropology, metaphysics, God, society.

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**FREEDOM FOR RESPONSIBILITY:
RESPONSIBILITY AND HUMAN NATURE IN
THE PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF
KAROL WOJTYLA**

Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.

– Pope John Paul II¹

The mission of John Paul was to be a witness . . . He is a witness that the human person was created for full freedom, a freedom that resides in the gift of being able to choose the good, of making choices of the highest grade of love, choices that transform his history and the history of the world in the history of salvation.

– Mother Adela Galindo, Foundress SCTJM²

Responsibility is a theme that particularly marked the pontifical magisterium of St. John Paul II, a theme presented always in a strict relationship with the very identity of the human person. This is evident

¹ Pope John Paul II, “Homily at Oriele Park at Camden Yard,” Baltimore (8 October, 1995), § 7 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19951008_baltimore.html, accessed on 15 December, 2016].

² Mother Adela Galindo, Foundress SCTJM, “Letter of Mother Adela at the Announcement of the Beatification of John Paul II” (24 January, 2011), 1–2 [http://www.piercedhearts.org/mother_adela/words_mag_beatific_jp2_1.pdf, accessed on 15 December, 2016].

from the very theme of his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*,³ in *Familiaris Consortio*,⁴ *Laborem Exercens*⁵ (to name just a few pertinent writings), and consistently throughout his magisterium. This wealth of teaching is imbued with a consistent philosophical perspective of the identity and dignity of the human person as closely bound up with, and finding particular expression in, responsibility. These philosophical assumptions can be traced to his earlier works, to the philosophical writing of the young Karol Wojtyła. The careful examination of responsibility within the thought of Wojtyła, therefore, illumines and enriches the understanding of the magisterium of Pope John Paul II, a wealth of teaching that has yet to be exhausted in its vital contribution to the fundamental questions of the human person in our modern age.

Responsibility is a central theme within the thought of Karol Wojtyła, so much so that it is included in the very title of one of his most lengthy works, *Love and Responsibility*. This work is a principle example of the importance Wojtyła places on responsibility, as a central philosophical theme that reaches beyond the realm of anthropology and ontology, also extending into the realm of ethics. The primary confirmation for the multiple applications of this theme is found within Wojtyła's characteristic method of experience. He defends this integration, stating, "[t]hese two experiences—the experience of the human being and the experience of morality—can really never be completely separated, although we can, in the context of the overall process of reflection, focus more on one or the other."⁶

³ The attention to the dignity of the human person is evident within the choice to consider Jesus precisely as the Redeemer of *man*, a theme developed throughout the Encyclical. See Pope John Paul II, Encyclical on the Redeemer of Man *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March, 1979).

⁴ See especially §11 and 17, in Pope John Paul II, Encyclical on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World *Familiaris Consortio* (22 November, 1981).

⁵ See especially §15–17, in Pope John Paul II, Encyclical on Human Work *Laborem Exercens* (14 September, 1981).

⁶ Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1979), 189.

In order to understand the meaning of responsibility within the work of Wojtyła, the subject of freedom must first be considered. This study will seek to demonstrate that there is, within the philosophical thought of Karol Wojtyła, an essential connection between human nature and responsibility. To elucidate this claim, the present study will consider freedom as an essential part of human nature, then discuss Wojtyła's understanding of responsibility, and then consider the integration of responsibility and human nature within the human dynamism through freedom. Concerning method, the present study will follow the course pursued by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, incorporating the content of experience to gain a better vantage of this fundamentally ontological question. While focusing on his work *The Acting Person*, the study will also incorporate some of his other writings, particularly his article "The Personal Structure of Self-Determinism" and his book *Love and Responsibility*.

Freedom: Characteristic of the Human Person According to the Order of Being

Wojtyła assumes the Thomistic explanation of the hylomorphic structure of man, comprised of body and spiritual soul. The faculties of the soul that are particular to the human person are the intellect and will, which have as their proper function reason and volition, respectively. The will is first an ontological component of the person, but enters the realm of observation and experience in actions.⁷ Consistently applying his personalistic perspective,⁸ Wojtyła perceives the concrete act of willing as a singular communication of the person who wills. The will, as this claim demonstrates, is not strictly synonymous with the

⁷ Id., 106.

⁸ See Karol Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Lang, 1993), 165: "Personalism is not primarily a theory of the person or a theoretical science of the person. Its meaning is largely practical and ethical: it is concerned with the person as a subject and object of activity . . ."

person, but neither simply an appendage external to the subject, something a person merely has. The act of will, rather, expresses the ontological identity of the person, for action follows being, and is expressed in the experience of “I may, but I need not.”⁹

The concrete act of the will, however, not only expresses the being of the person, but also shapes the person. As Wojtyla states, “when I am directed by an act of will toward a particular value, I myself not only determine this directing, but through it I simultaneously determine myself as well.”¹⁰ This dynamic, which reaches beyond the intentionality of willing to the subject as “creator of myself”¹¹ is expressed in the term ‘self-determination’. Wojtyla apprehends self-determination as the key implication of authentically human acts of willing, for it indicates not only the experience of the willing subject’s efficacy in the act,¹² but precisely their experience of their own self as the *subject* of their willing, and at once the object of the same. Before proceeding to consider more fully the connection between efficacy, self-determination, and freedom, we must first consider the foundations for self-determinism with the human dynamism.

Self-determination is a feature of the human person that is built upon the more fundamental attributes of self-governance and self-possession. Self-possession, which Wojtyla alternately defines as self-ownership,¹³ is assumed in self-governance, and constitutes the necessary ground for self-determination. Self-governance concerns the reality that every person “actually exercises that specific power over himself which nobody else can exercise or execute.”¹⁴ It must be empha-

⁹ Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 120.

¹⁰ Karol Wojtyla, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determinism,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Lang, 1993), 191.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*, 189: “The first definition of self-determinism in the experience of human action involves a sense of efficacy on the part of the personal self: «I act» means «I am the efficient cause» of my action and of my self-actualization as a subject . . .”

¹³ Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 106.

¹⁴ *Id.*, 107.

sized that ‘actually’ in this phrase does not refer to a current state of affairs, but rather emphasizes that the power of self-governance is exercised precisely through action. These two dynamisms are integral to the foundation of will as self-determinism, considered “within the framework of the whole dynamic structure that is constituted by the person.”¹⁵

Self-control, on the other hand, is not considered as fundamental to self-determination, as self-possession and self-governance are. For Wojtyła, the notion of self-control is not synonymous with the essential dynamism of the will, but rather constitutes a concrete act of the will.¹⁶ It remains an important virtue, a mode in which the will is expressed. As such, it assists in the ordering of one’s actions based on the truth, rather than being guided by the situations one may experience that more properly as what-happens-in-man and what-happens-with-man. Self-control is a virtue that assists the person to act in authentic freedom.

What, then, is the definition of freedom intended by Karol Wojtyła? We shall begin by observing the negative formulation. Freedom is not synonymous with license, and is not an indication of the number of possible objects of choice. As Wojtyła states, “[w]e discover the structure of freedom in volitions as intentional acts directed toward a value as their end.”¹⁷ Freedom is not a power of the soul, or alternately a characteristic of the human faculty, that opens to limitless possibility. Freedom is not something that one possesses, but rather one’s self-possession is indicated by means of freedom as expressed through acts. Freedom does not itself have ontological being, but is ordered toward something external to its proper subject, the subject of the human person. Freedom is never simply an unqualified freedom, but always freedom *for* a value. This is expressed in the fundamental formulation to which Wojtyła constantly returns when considering the human will

¹⁵ Id., 134.

¹⁶ Id., 106.

¹⁷ Id., 120.

within the human dynamism. He states, with frequent repetition through his work and overall corpus, that freedom is directly related to the will and its simple formula “I may, but I need not.”¹⁸

Freedom is a capacity rooted deeply within the human dynamism, and inherent to the person, one that does not admit of removal. Even in the extreme situations where external liberty to choose is violated and withheld from the human person, their ontological subjectivity remains intact, despite the fact that their somatic capability to act be impeded by some external factor. This is so because the very core of the human dynamism is characterized by inalienability, by a uniqueness and ontological internal freedom over oneself. Observed primordially in self-possession, and expressed in self-governance and the resulting acts of self-determination,¹⁹ the inviolability of the human person is such that not even God will interfere in this most personal core, which is thus radically free. This understanding of the personal core is of great importance because it preserves the authentic freedom of the human person, viewing the ontological identity of the person based on the potential for freedom, rather than the action of the same.²⁰ Thus, the human person is always, and in all circumstances, a free subject, characterized by self-determination.

The consideration of the definition of freedom leads to the question of the integration of the whole person. As Wojtyla states, “[i]t would be helpful . . . to have a basic notion of what it is about action that allows it somehow to reveal the wholeness originality, and unrepeatability of each human being.” He continues, in answer to the proposed need, “[a]n essential element for every action consciously per-

¹⁸ Id., 115.

¹⁹ Id., 107.

²⁰ See Karol Wojtyla, “The Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 20. Wojtyla’s explanation the Thomistic understanding of will as a “passage from potency” is helpful here.

formed by a concrete human being is self-determination.”²¹ Freedom, directly related to the ability for self-determination as shown, is integral to the expression of the person according to the decision of the person as subject. Wojtyla extends this understanding in *Love and Responsibility*, where he states:

Because a human being—a person—possesses free will, he is his own master, *sui juris* as the Latin phrase has it. This characteristic feature of the person goes with another distinctive attribute. The Latin of the philosophers defined it in the assertion that personality is *alteri incommunicabilis*—not capable of transmission, not transferable.²²

Thus, freedom closely relates to the inviolable personal core, the personal ego which is the seat of personal identity.

The freedom of the human person, as a characteristic that pertains according to nature, is a singular moment of the personal experience of the personal transcendence as subject and master of oneself. Tarasiewicz, emphasizing the importance of the philosophical concept of transcendence to personalism, attests that freedom is a primary expression of the transcendence of the human person “in relation to nature,”²³ that is, his analysis points to the essential bond between the accident of freedom and the substance that is the human person. As Wojtyla states:

[S]elf-determination is a property of the person, who, as the familiar definitions says, is a *naturae rationalis individua substantia*. This property is realized through the will, which is an accident. Self-determination—or, in other words, freedom—is not limited to the accidental dimension, but belongs to the substantial

²¹ Karol Wojtyla, “Participation or Alienation?” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 199.

²² Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1993), 24.

²³ Pawel Tarasiewicz, “The Common Sense Personalism of St. John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla),” *Studia Gilsoniana* 3:supplement (2014): 623.

dimension of the person; it is the person's freedom, and not just the will's freedom, although it is undeniably the person's freedom through the will.²⁴

Freedom is innate to the human person according to nature, such that Wojtyla even speaks of it in the metaphorical terms of "the instinct of freedom."²⁵ Though freedom is not an ontological structure *per se*, it is rooted in the very core of the person, where it exists as the self-determination that is actualized through the intentionality of the will. Kupczak affirms the importance of Wojtyla's theory of human volition, precisely in the new perspective it brings of these two dimensions of freedom natural to the human person.²⁶ Freedom is natural to man, and an expression of the full and unique dignity of the human person.

Responsibility: Freedom for

The transition from freedom to responsibility for Wojtyla passes by way of the will and values. "Man is conditioned in the broadest sense by the world of objects, in particular, by the domain of values."²⁷ This statement, at first reading, bears some contradiction with the description of freedom previously considered, a confusion that is furthered by the modern philosophical and social understanding of freedom. Wojtyla's discussion of this seeming contradiction is the key to unveiling the authentic meaning of responsibility as an ontological concept, rather than a rational construct of duty. This clarification leads to Wojtyla's definition of responsibility, and then into a deeper analysis of the internal structure.

In *The Acting Person*, Wojtyla identifies freedom as a characteristic that conditions choosing as an act that is indeterminate regarding

²⁴ Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determinism," 190.

²⁵ Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 122.

²⁶ Jarosław Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 124–125.

²⁷ Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 132.

its object.²⁸ Closely related to his self-determination, Wojtyła is attentive to the anthropological problem of determinism, which bears a narrow but deep distinction from his concept of self-determinism. To clarify the difference, he considers the theme of the motivation of various objects as factors that are subject to the human will, which remains always free to choose between them.²⁹ Though no object moves man by necessity, the objective value that each object bears determines the extent to which this object should move the human person to choose for it. As he states, “[i]n his responding [to values] there is that independence with regard to objects which does not abolish all the bonds and thus leaves a certain measure of dependence on objects.”³⁰ This dependence is founded on the dependence of the subject on truth, which Kupczak affirms is a necessary determinate of freedom.³¹ As Wojtyła states, “[i]t would be impossible to understand choice without referring the dynamism proper to the will to truth as the principle of willing.”³² The degree to which a value calls for a response in the intentionality of the subject is one sense in which Wojtyła employs the term ‘responsibility’—“it is the essential surrender of will to truth that seems finally to account for the person’s transcendence in action, ultimately for his ascendancy to his own dynamism.”³³

Responsibility is closely linked to the dual dimension of transcendence within the human dynamism. The intentionality of the will, the horizontal dimension of transcendence, is accompanied by the reminder that human choosing is also and concurrently an act of self-determination, which corresponds to vertical transcendence.³⁴ This dual dimension is important to the understanding of responsibility, for tran-

²⁸ Id.

²⁹ Id., 129.

³⁰ Id., 134–135.

³¹ Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty*, 125.

³² Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 137.

³³ Id., 138.

³⁴ Id., 132.

scendence illuminates the intended understanding of independence in relation to truth, in contradistinction with independence from objects. Speaking of this facet of the human dynamism, Wojtyła states:

His independence in the intentional sphere is to be explained by this inner reference to truth and dependence on truth inherent in the will. It is this dependence that makes will independent of objects and their presentation, and grants the person that ascendancy over his own dynamism which we have here described as the transcendence in action (as vertical transcendence).³⁵

Rostworowski confirms transcendence as “the motor and continuous source of his dynamicity,”³⁶ thus at the core of the human person and his authentic liberty.

Having considered the role of intentionality and motivation, the manner in which man is conditioned by values can be properly understood. As Wojtyła states, “[f]or his [referring to the human person] is not the freedom *from* objects or values, but, on the contrary, the freedom of, or rather *for* objects and values.”³⁷ Human indeterminism in the realm of intentionality is not the primary definition of freedom for Wojtyła, but rather “independence . . . is due to the fact of decision.”³⁸ Though freedom *for* is an affirmative choice, this one “yes” is necessarily accompanied by “no” to every other option by virtue of the demands of the principle of non-contradiction. (We assume here a choice that is absolute, though the same argument validly applies to any choice, applied in proportion to the amount of exclusivity inherent in a particular

³⁵ *Id.*, 138.

³⁶ Tadeusz Rostworowski, “Autodeterminazione nella Visione Personalistica di Karol Wojtyła,” *Forum Philosophicum: International Journal for Philosophy* 15:1 (2010): 228: “La dimensione trascendente della persona che svela la sua libertà costituisce il motore e la continua fonte della sua dinamicità. Una dinamicità che principalmente si svolge nel campo interno dell’uomo stesso per poi sfociare nell’atto, per tramite del quale si realizza oppure no.”

³⁷ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 132. The emphasis of the author is maintained within all quoted citations.

³⁸ *Id.*

choice. For example, one may choose to eat more than one flavor of ice cream at the same time, but the fundamental choice of a vocation is one that is inherently exclusive to all other options.) This is quite distinct from indeterminate freedom, which would present freedom as always capable of responding affirmatively, even to the point of contradiction. Freedom in this sense of license is founded on a fundamental error in logic. Wojtyla, however, responds to this error by considering freedom *for* in the light of the whole person and the integrated human dynamism.

Responsibility is defined by Wojtyla in strict relation with transcendence, being primarily an “intrapersonal fact that man has the experience of in an intimate relation with his conscience.”³⁹ There is a parallel relationship between freedom and responsibility, both of which bear a distinct manner of expression and experience by the subject. Thus freedom is expressed in the act of choosing, though most fundamentally experienced by the subject in self-determinism. Responsibility, in a similar manner, is primarily expressed in choices for the other, but the human person experiences themselves as the subject of their responsibility within the conscience, a structure located within the most central core of the human dynamism. He continues to describe responsibility as, “most intimately connected with the action, because it is action that carries in it the response to values that is characteristic of the will.”⁴⁰ This response to values bears the inherent mark of human freedom characteristic of acts of willing, and also self-determination, which coincides with the dual dimension of transcendence in action.

Responsibility directs the human person, as a criterion operating within the depths of the human conscience, from the apprehension of the ontological being which is the object of willing, or simply the object with which the human person has come in contact, and transfers this truth through the obligation that the nature of the particular truth entails

³⁹ Id., 170.

⁴⁰ Id.

into an action motivated by the sense of “I should.”⁴¹ While Wojtyła notes that responsibility finds its most elevated expression in the relationship of “betrothed love” between a man and woman, he defines its content as universally applicable, “a concern for the true good of the person—which is the quintessence of altruism in any form . . .”⁴²

The foundation of the experience of responsibility resides in the recognition of the other as a human person, and the recognition of the intrinsic and unique value that is afforded to each one as a result of this ontological reality.⁴³ This recognition involves the understanding that all that the subject experiences as ‘I’ are also experienced by the other within their own personal dynamism: all the intricate features of the human dynamism, and the inherent dignity afforded by self-determination, freedom and inalienability. That is, the other person always constitutes ‘another I’, though the degree to which this identification is applied to each particular relationship will vary. Still, the following explanation can be universally applied; the sense of responsibility is “an infallible sign of a broadening of one’s own existence in contact with that ‘other I’, that other existence, which are as near and dear as one’s own.”⁴⁴ Wojtyła notes that, while the responsibility of the person concerns the whole range of social relationships with others, it first concerns the “inner reality of the person.”⁴⁵

Responsibility flows from the personal experience of efficacy, the inner experience of oneself as the efficient cause of one’s own actions. The knowledge of subjectivity and self-determination constitute a natural obligation upon the act of will and the relationship of these processes within the human dynamism. As Wojtyła states, “[m]y sense

⁴¹ Id.

⁴² Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 130.

⁴³ Id. Wojtyła distinguishes between the perception of the intrinsic and ontological value of the human person with mere acknowledgement of the sexual value, or any other utilitarian perception of value which reduces the person to a means.

⁴⁴ Id.

⁴⁵ Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 168.

of efficacy as an acting subject in relation to my activity is intimately connected with a sense of responsibility for that activity; the latter refers mainly to the axiological and ethical content of the act.”⁴⁶ The awareness of the subject of their own subjectivity and efficacy at once develops within the person the sense of responsibility, and grounds the objective ethical duty to act in a responsible manner.

Responsibility is also foundational to the moral life of the human person, as Wojtyla explains:

Together with the responsibility for the value of intentional objects, the first and fundamental responsibility that arises in acting on the basis of self-determination and self-dependence is the responsibility for the subject, for the moral worth of the ego who is the agent performing the action.⁴⁷

Just as responsibility in the realm of intentional objects or persons can be simply expressed as freedom for the good, so too the moral responsibility of the subject for the development of the personal ego is expressed as freedom for the development of the moral good.

Conclusion

Wojtyla describes freedom as always oriented toward a value, and the proper expression of this aspect of the human dynamism, at least implicitly within each instance of its use, is freedom *for*. This freedom, a feature of the human life that flows from the ontological structure of the human dynamism, reaches out for values based on their objective claim on the will according to the truth. Freedom, at once dependent and independent of objects, forms the vital link between the ontological being of the person and the phenomenological experience of responsibility for and within one’s choices and acts. Kupczak emphasizes the importance of this philosophical elaboration of freedom as

⁴⁶ Wojtyla, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determinism,” 189.

⁴⁷ Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 171.

a “coherent and realistic theory . . . which not only avoids the mistakes of moral relativism and subjectivism but clearly rejects any kind of determinism and totalitarianism. By doing this, the Pope preserves and saves for the next generations the essence of Western civilization.”⁴⁸

Responsibility is a natural aspect of an authentically human life. Wojtyla emphasizes this relationship through freedom, but not as a static reality. Rather, the natural aspect of responsibility is also central to authentic human development. As he states:

My sense of efficacy as an acting subject in relation to my activity is intimately connected with a sense of responsibility for that activity; the latter refers to the axiological and ethical content of the act. All of this in some way enters organically into the experience of self-determination, although it is disclosed in this experience in varying degrees, depending to some extent on the personal maturity of the action. The greater this maturity, the more vividly I experience self-determination. And the more vividly I experience self-determination, the more pronounced in my experience and awareness become my efficacy and responsibility.⁴⁹

The relationship of oneself as the subject and the responsibility that this elicits within the human person are expressed as an obligation, one internally determined by the integration of the various features involved. Thus, Wojtyla states that man “realizes himself neither by the intentionality of volitions nor through self-determination but through *his sense of obligation as the peculiar modification of self-determination and intentionality.*”⁵⁰

Thus, the obligation felt to employ the ‘freedom *for*’ of the subject in responsibility leads to the fulfillment of the human person.

⁴⁸ Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty*, 125.

⁴⁹ Wojtyla, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determinism,” 189.

⁵⁰ Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 169. Wojtyla supports this claim by referring to the fundamental structures of self-governance and self-possession within the human dynamism as considered within the previous section of the present study (Freedom: Characteristic of the Human Person According to the Order of Being).

Though the topic of fulfillment itself is beyond the scope of the present work, the achievement of the goal for which something was created, the purpose which is appropriate to it according to nature, clearly coincides with the goal of the human nature in responsibility. We must conclude with a final word from Karol Wojtyła, precisely regarding the relationship of human nature and responsibility in fulfillment:

The best and the most comprehensive example of obligation initiated by value in the positive sense is now and will always remain the evangelical commandment, “Thou shalt love.” Obligation is then directly released by value with all its intrinsic content and all its attractive power.⁵¹

**FREEDOM FOR RESPONSIBILITY:
RESPONSIBILITY AND HUMAN NATURE IN
THE PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF KAROL WOJTYŁA**

SUMMARY

This article considers the essential connection between human nature and responsibility within the philosophical thought of Karol Wojtyła, focusing on his works *The Acting Person* and *Love and Responsibility*. The study begins by examining the freedom as characteristic of the human person according to the order of being, and then turns its attention to the authentic understanding of freedom precisely as freedom *for* the good. The freedom of the human person is finally considered as the foundation of responsibility.

KEYWORDS: Karol Wojtyła, John Paul II, personalism, philosophical anthropology, freedom, responsibility, ontology, *Acting Person*, *Love and Responsibility*, self-determination, human nature, human person, efficacy, intentionality.

⁵¹ *Id.*, 167.

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THE DISCOVERY OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE ABSOLUTE IN EXISTENTIAL METAPHYSICS

One feature of existential metaphysics is that its philosophical thought begins with the investigation of that which really exists. That is, it begins with being. In the history of philosophy being was understood in different ways, beginning with the identification of being with a primordial material element (water, air, fire, the limitless), with a thought, an idea, a law, a formed concrete thing (a substance), a generic concept, or a number. However, metaphysical knowledge as a whole was concentrated on being and was about being.

Metaphysical theism is based on philosophical thought which begins with being and concentrates on being, and so it begins from and concentrates on reality given in experience. Thus the knowledge concerning being is supplied to metaphysical theism by metaphysics. Metaphysics passes on knowledge concerning a being as something that exists, something that is particularized, and something that is given in experience as changing, caused, contingent, and purposeful (or ordered). Thus we have, as it were, the content of our experience of being

Editio prima (in Polish): Andrzej Maryniarczyk SDB, *O przyczynach, partycypacji i analogii* [On Causes, Analogy, and Participation] (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2005), 101–120.

given from the side of metaphysics. It is given from the outside and from the inside. From the outside things are discovered as defined in content, internally free of contradiction, separate, true, good, and beautiful. From the inside, they are discovered as composed of constitutive parts, integrating parts, and perfective parts, of act and potency, matter and form, substance and accidents, and primarily of essence and existence.

So it is not a matter of indifference what type of metaphysics underlies theism. The way of understanding being that is discerned as the object of metaphysics also resolves the question of how God should be understood. Hence a wrong understanding of being entails a wrong understanding of God (the Absolute).

The Search for the Foundations of Metaphysical Questions

In realistic metaphysics, the effort to reach the Absolute using the natural powers of the human reason is treated not only as a scientific “task” or “satisfaction of curiosity,” but it is treated primarily as the actualization of man as a being who cognizes. In this sense we speak of the fulfillment of human knowledge. Just as reality finds its ultimate real decontradictification of the act of existence by connecting the act of existence with the existence of the Absolute, so it is with the existence of the human being, who as a knowing being finds his ultimate decontradictification in the discovery of the deepest mystery of being, and at the same time of himself, in the act of affirmation of the existence of the Absolute.

The question of God’s existence is grounded in reality itself. Reality is composite and plural, and it demands an explanation and response for why it exists, since it does not need to exist. The response to the question is the fulfillment of the obligation to be a rational being, and not merely a satisfaction of curiosity. Therefore we should indicate the objective reasons for the reason why human questions have their

capacity as questions, as opposed to subjective reasons. What then is the reason for the question-capacity of questions, and at the same time for the capacity to be known?

Curiosity as the Source of Questions

In the history of philosophy we can find several proposals for how to describe the source of philosophical questions. As we set those proposals in order, we obviously cannot avoid a certain amount of simplification. It is not a question of how to interpret the answers, but it is question of searching for the foundations of the questions that generate the answers. In response to the question concerning the reason for “our cognition’s capacity for questions,” the ancient philosophers indicated sensory curiosity. So begins Book I of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*:

The desire for knowledge is innate to all human beings. One sign of this is pleasure in sensory impressions. Regardless of the benefits that result from them, they are desired for their own sake. This applies in particular to visual impressions. For indeed it is not only in order to act, but also when we have nothing to do, that we put vision, so to speak, above all other impressions. The reason for this is that of all the senses, vision plays the greatest role in our cognition and it discovers many differences in what is seen.¹

In this case, cognition is identified with experience (we know redness by redness, odor by odor, light by light, etc.). The whole of knowledge is contained in experience or sensory cognition. Just as “how” reality is experienced, so it is known. Hence the generalization

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 980 a. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1933, 1989) [hereafter cited as *Tredennick*], 980 a: “All men naturally desire knowledge. An indication of this is our esteem for the senses; for apart from their use we esteem them for their own sake, and most of all the sense of sight. Not only with a view to action, but even when no action is contemplated, we prefer sight, generally speaking, to all the other senses. The reason of this is that of all the senses sight best helps us to know things, and reveals many distinctions.”

of sensory cognition that we encounter among the Ionian empiricists was the ultimate fulfillment of cognition. The indication of water, fire, air, the limitless, and the earth as the ἀρχή of being entailed a reduction of cognition to the world of the senses. However, this did not allow for the ultimate actualization of the potentiality of our cognition.

Aristotle stated that “[t]hose who are experienced know only how it is, but not why it is.”² And furthermore, we do not think that sensory cognition constitutes wisdom. While it is the richest cognition of individual things, it does not say why it is such, for example, why fire heats, but only that it heats.³

Human cognition is fulfilled in wisdom-oriented cognition—“wisdom is knowledge concerning causes and principles.”⁴ Knowledge is thus fulfilled in the search for something that exceeds sensory knowledge. It also exceeds the realm of the experience of causes, and so it exceeds the fact of “how” a being exists, and it rises toward the question “why.”

The Aristotelian support for causal knowledge is not a mere declaration but it rises from the very nature of things. Reality does not exist as simple, as the Ionians thought (under the form of sensibly discerned elements), but reality is “problematic,” “composite,” and it is not “self-intelligible.” Hence, in order for human cognition to be fulfilled, in order for its potentialities to be actualized, we must pose the question δὲ τί and search for the ultimate cause. As Aristotle argued:

The wise man has knowledge of everything that can be cognized, and that knowledge of his does not consist in cognizing particular things separately. Next we consider that the wise man is he who

² Id., 981 a 29. Cf. *Tredennick*, 981 a 29: “For the experienced know the fact, but not the wherefore.”

³ Id., 981 b 10–13. Cf. *Tredennick*, 981 b 10–13: “Further, we do not consider any of the senses to be Wisdom. They are indeed our chief sources of knowledge about particulars, but they do not tell us the reason for anything, as for example why fire is hot, but only that it is hot.”

⁴ Id., 982 a 4.

cognizes that which is difficult for men to cognize, and not only that which is easy to cognize. For indeed sensory cognition is common to all and comes easily, but it also has nothing in common with wisdom. Moreover, we think that he is wiser in any realm of knowledge who knows more exactly the causes and is better able to teach about them . . . the sciences concerning what is first provide the most exact knowledge.⁵

This is one of the proposals for showing the reason for the question-capacity of the philosophical question.

*The Will of Gods as the Source of
the Capacity for Questions*

The knowledge of the ultimate truth and the question-capacity of questions are both the domain of the gods. In this way we could reconstruct the reason for the capacity for questions and the capacity for knowledge in Plato's philosophy. Hence that which is divine in man demands to be present in awareness; that which is forgotten demands to be remembered. Hegel had the most radical conception of this when he said that in knowledge, the spirit (the Absolute) becomes conscious of himself.

In his Seventh Letter, Plato showed the path of ascending to truth. This path is an arduous climb for the soul. On the climb we become not so much conscious of ideas, as our soul is liberated, fulfilled, and delivered from that which restrained it.

For every object there are three representations upon which knowledge about that object must unconditionally rest; the fourth

⁵ Id., 982 9–30. Cf. *Tredennick*, 982 9–30: “[T]he wise man knows all things, so far as it is possible, without having knowledge of every one of them individually; next, that the wise man is he who can comprehend difficult things, such as are not easy for human comprehension (for sense-perception, being common to all, is easy, and has nothing to do with Wisdom); and further that in every branch of knowledge a man is wiser in proportion as he is more accurately informed and better able to expound the causes . . . the most exact of the sciences are those which are most concerned with the first principles . . .”

is the knowledge itself, the knowledge concerning the object. That which is the object of knowledge and is truly existent should be taken as the fifth. Now, the first is the name, the second is the definition, the third is the image, and the fourth is knowledge . . . The soul seeks to know the essence, not qualities. Now each of the four manifestations presents before the soul, both by word, and in facts, something to which the soul cannot strive at all, and in this way as it always provides to the senses the ability to refute easily that which is said in any case, or that which is indicated, it fills in every domain each man, if we may say so, with confusion and perplexity . . . After much effort, as if we rub together in friction names and definitions, visual images, and sense experiences, scrutinizing their power with kindly applied attempts, and using the method of questions and answers without ill will, only then will there spring up the light of the proper grasp of each thing, and understanding pushed to the highest limits of human abilities.⁶

According to Plato, the reason for the capacity for questions in human cognition was placed in the soul by the gods, and the release of

⁶ Plato, *Listy [Letters]*, trans. [into Polish] M. Maykowska (Warsaw 1987), VII, 342 A–B, 343 C, 344 B–C. Cf. Plato, “Letter VII,” in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 7, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1966), 342 A–B, 343 C, 344 B–C: “Every existing object has three things which are the necessary means by which knowledge of that object is acquired; and the knowledge itself is a fourth thing; and as a fifth one must postulate the object itself which is cognizable and true. First of these comes the name; secondly the definition; thirdly the image; fourthly the knowledge . . . and the soul seeks to know not the quality but the essence, each of the Four proffers to the soul either in word or in concrete form that which is not sought; and by thus causing each object which is described or exhibited to be always easy of refutation by the senses, it fills practically all men with all manner of perplexity and uncertainty . . . and it is by means of the examination of each of these objects, comparing one with another—names and definitions, visions and sense-perceptions,—proving them by kindly proofs and employing questionings and answers that are void of envy—it is by such means, and hardly so, that there bursts out the light of intelligence and reason regarding each object in the mind of him who uses every effort of which mankind is capable” [<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>, accessed on 15 December 2016].

this divine particle, and the achievement of self-awareness, are the fulfillment of the human soul's life.

*Man's Mental State as the Reason for
the Capacity for Questions*

Another proposal for the reason of the capacity for questions of our cognition is an appeal to man's mental state. The human being is torn between certainty and doubt, between a question and a doubt. This state of being torn, a natural state as it were, is the reason for our cognition's capacity for questions. Krąpiec writes on this:

In Aristotle, *aporia* was the beginning of philosophical inquiries, the typical mental state at the boundary of a question and a doubt, of an incipient vision of the truth flowing from cognitive contact with a being whose necessary structures, appearing in general outlines, were immersed in concrete, changing, individual, and unknown reality. Aporematic cognition stimulated the search for a solution, to find support for the solution in historical and systemic data, or to put it succinctly, it passed through a stage of being mooted, of *diaporesis*, in order to find its way out in *euporia*, that is, a sort of cognitive solution, which in turn would become an *aporia* for further searches. The aporematic character of human scientific cognition really seems to be a constant phenomenon in the history of human thought.⁷

Aristotle in Book III of the *Metaphysics* mentioned the aporematic state of the mind as that which generates cognition. At the beginning of the book he writes:

On account of the knowledge that we concern about here, we must first mention the doubts that should be first discussed . . . Now if one wants to resolve a problem, one should first consider it exactly, because later solution will consist in resolving previ-

⁷ Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, "O rozumienie dróg poznania Boga [On Understanding the Ways to Know God]," in *W kierunku Boga [In the Direction of God]*, ed. B. Bejze (Warsaw 1982), 51–52.

ously perceived difficulties. And this is impossible if one does not know wherein lies the difficulty. The difficulty shows that in a particular question there is a sort of knot to unravel. Thinking that is entangled in doubts is like a bound man: it also cannot move forward.⁸

Another reason is man's mental state caused by the awareness of death, a certain *meditation mortis*. It was typical of the stance of the Stoics, and in the Middle Ages and recent times it was seen in fear and trepidation, which are a constant attitude of the human spirit that certain Christian philosophers in the Middle Ages and some in existential philosophy emphasized. Epicurus of Samos argued as follows:

The youth should not neglect philosophy, and the elder should not feel incapable of studying it further. It is not too early or too late for anyone to begin to concern himself with the health of his soul. Therefore he who says that the time for philosophizing has not yet come for him, or that it has already passed, is like he who states that the time for happiness has not yet come or that it has already passed. Therefore both the young and the old should philosophize; the old so that as they age they may feel young, recalling the goods with which fate endowed them in the past, and the young again so that despite their youth they may feel unshaken in the face of the future, like older people. And so incessantly we should seek what can win happiness for us; for he who has taken possession of happiness has everything that he could have at all, while he whom happiness has passed by does everything to get it

⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 995 a 25–34. Cf. *Tredennick*, 995 a 25–34: “It is necessary, with a view to the science which we are investigating, that we first describe the questions which should first be discussed . . . Now for those who wish to get rid of perplexities it is a good plan to go into them thoroughly; for the subsequent certainty is a release from the previous perplexities, and release is impossible when we do not know the knot. The perplexity of the mind shows that there is a ‘knot’ in the subject; for in its perplexity it is in much the same condition as men who are fettered: in both cases it is impossible to make any progress.”

. . . Indeed all we do is so that we may be free of suffering and disquiet.⁹

So for the Stoics, cognition is fulfilled in the solution of the riddle of fear and suffering, and that is at the moment that one achieves the state of apathy (Gk. ἀπάθεια).

*The Nature of the Intellect as the Reason for
the Capacity for Questions*

The very nature of the human intellect may also be a foundation for the question-capacity of human questions. The intellect by its nature constructs a question in the form of categories. The question is constructed as an instrument for the cognition of material and changing things. Thus man is the author of the question and of the content of the answer to the question.

The controversy over the reason for knowability began in the seventeenth century from—as Eric L. Mascall writes—the distinction between primary and secondary qualities of the object made explicitly for the first time by Galileo, but known better from the writings of John Locke. Secondary qualities such as color or smell are obviously dependent to a certain degree

⁹ Diogenes Laertios, *Żywoty i poglądy słynnych filozofów* [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*], trans. I. Krońska, K. Leśniak, W. Olszewski (Warsaw 1984), X 122–128. Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, X 122–128, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972): “Let no one be slow to seek wisdom when he is young nor weary in the search thereof when he is grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more. Therefore, both old and young ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed toward attaining it . . . For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear” [<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>, accessed on 15 December 2016].

on the sensory equipment of the percipient and indeed did not exist except when perceived; whereas primary qualities, such as shape, solidity and mass, were inherent possessions of the object, so it was held, and they existed whether they were being perceived or not. Thus, for Locke, substances existed with their primary qualities beneath the superficial array of secondary qualities with which we perceive them. Berkeley had little difficulty in showing that Locke's primary qualities were just as subjective as the secondary; indeed, that, in Locke's sense, there were no primary qualities at all. Physical objects thus became entirely subjective: *esse est percipi*, to exist is simply to be perceived. Berkeley tried to preserve their substantiality and continuity by holding that even when no one else perceived them God did; and that to exist in the mind of God was a sufficiently exalted status for any finite object to have. Later thinkers and in particular David Hume, eliminated God and, with him, the last vestiges of physical substantiality. Physical objects were simply concatenations of impressions in the mind, though Hume never managed to give a satisfactory account of the mind in which they were concatenated.

The story continues through Kant and Hegel . . . Kant tried to preserve the objective character of physical objects by holding that although the actual object of perception is a product of the very act in which it is perceived, so that we can never know things as they really are, there is nevertheless at the root of the phenomenal object a being-in-itself, a *Ding an sich* or *noumenon*, which is wholly real and non-subjective. It has always been difficult to see how Kant accounted for his knowledge that there is a *noumenon* at all, in view of his doctrine that all we can know is the *phenomenon* which the mind has constructed in the act of perceiving. Some have indeed thought that for Kant the *noumenon* (and probably God as well) was only a regulative principle for human thought and not a constituent element in reality.¹⁰

¹⁰ Eric L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being: Natural Theology Today* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971), 64–65.

The reason for the question-capacity of cognition formulated in this way also determines the term of cognition, which is already inscribed in the question. One example here could be Kant's proposal. Man is fulfilled as a cognizing being in making cognitive instruments (or categories), among which is the Absolute, which appears as one of the *a priori* categories of the practical reason. Kant in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals* wrote:

All rational knowledge is either material and considers some sort of object, or formal and is concerned only with the form of the intellect and of the reason, and with the general laws of thought in general without regard for the difference of objects.¹¹

In this way any connection between philosophical (metaphysical) cognition and the object was broken. Cognition was made independent and it exists with its own independent life. Cognition is above beings, above things, and things are subject to it. Without going any further into a description of Kant's proposal, we may note only that the intellect is creative. As such it is fulfilled in its creativity visible in the formulation of *a priori* categories (laws and principles), and that creativity is the deepest reason for the question-capacity of cognition. However, it would be more appropriate here to speak of the creativity of cognition rather than of the question-capacity of cognition.

In this way we have presented various foundations for the question-capacity of our questions (more by way of examples than by an exhaustive list). Those foundations determine for cognition ends that are useful (practical), religious, or psychological. In philosophical cog-

¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *Uzasadnienie metafizyki moralności* [*Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*], trans. [into Polish] M. Watenberg (Kęty 2001), 5. Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. Jonathan Bennett (online version: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/kant1785.pdf>, accessed on 15 December 2016), "Preface:" "There are two kinds of rational knowledge: material knowledge, which concerns some object, and formal knowledge, which pays no attention to differences between objects, and is concerned only with the form of understanding and of reason, and with the universal rules of thinking."

niton, and especially in metaphysical cognition, which we describe as wisdom-oriented, the purpose is to reach the ultimate reason or cause of existence (in a certain aspect). This cognition is expressed in the art of separating being from non-being, that is, in the art of the decontradiction of a fact that is given to us to explain by indicating the objective reasons for the fact's existence. Hence a metaphysical question is a question of the type (as Heidegger said) in which the one who is asking is also put under a question mark. Therefore in metaphysics we indicate the structure of being as the foundation for the question-capacity of a question. Being is capable of being an object of questions. It is not completely intelligible, and it is mysterious, because it is composite and plural. It is reality which compels us to ask the question about its own existence. The act of providing an exhaustive and final answer is a fulfillment of man as a cognizing being.

*Being as the Reason for the Question-Capacity of
the Question "Why?"*

In metaphysical cognition we indicate the structure of being and the composition of being as the foundation for the question-capacity of questions. As Krapiec writes:

The foundation of all questions, of all "whys," that appear in various domains of life, can be, and ultimately is, the very structure of being. For indeed an existing being is not completely legible to the intellect; it is not self-intelligible, since in itself it is composite. As it is given to us originally in sensory experience, it appears as changing, plural, divisible, and contingent. All this points to an internal structure of being that alone can decontradictify the observed state of things: plurality, divisibility, and contingency. This structure is the internal composition of being, which is unusually difficult to understand since the "parts" of this composition (the factors that compose the really existing being and which constitute the being) do not exist before the composition, and are not capable of existing independently after the being disintegrates. Simply, the concrete being "is composed" of the

factors that “themselves” never become an independent being; for example, a man’s head does not become an independent being after it is cut off from the body, since it ceases to be a head at all and ceases to perform all the functions that it performed when the human being was a being composed of a head, a trunk, and other “parts” that constituted him. The schema for the “artificially” constructed composition from the material parts of an object is not at all a model for the composition of a really existing being, for in a being the “parts” did not exist previously, not are they capable of becoming a being, that is, that which exists. They are real insofar as a being that really exists is “from them.”

The reality of one being alone composed from an unimaginable number of components becomes a “problem” for the cognizing intellect, for indeed every composition (and by the same token, its conditionings and its consequences) causes non-self-intelligibility of a being (given to us in experience), but causes intellectual “perplexity” manifested in the question “why.” Therefore we search for “reasons” for an observed (or supposed) composition, in order to make a being intelligible and to “calm” the intellect. Thus questions of “why” have their ultimate objective foundation in a being, in its composite structure, which connects our understanding of a composite being with the factors that more or less condition this “troublesome” composition.¹²

Among the compositions of being, both integral and perfective compositions, we indicate the compositions without which a being could not be what it is. The composition from essence and existence is the fundamental composition. This composition expresses the deepest mystery and reason for the existence of a being. The apprehension of this composition is the beginning of metaphysical or wisdom-oriented explanation. All other compositions, both integral and perfective, that are manifested in the divisibility of being (matter and form), change or mutability (act and potency), and identity (substance and accidents), have their ultimate ground in a being composed of essence and exis-

¹² Krąpiec, “O rozumienie dróg poznania Boga,” 52–53.

tence. In other words, they have their ground in a being, and they are not suspended in a vacuum, and so, not suspended in non-being.

When we reach the composition of being from essence and existence, and when we become aware of the non-necessary connection of essence with existence in a being, then a vision of reality opens before us as reality composed of contingent beings. In turn, this plurality of non-necessary (contingent) beings stands as the capacity for questions, as the next “why” before the human being who cognizes.

The discovery of the ultimate reason “why” for the existence of contingent beings is the fulfillment of human cognition. It is necessary, since man cannot live in a world of absurdity, and so he cannot allow a question to remain unexplained. It is not a question merely of theoretical explanation, but of drawing a dividing line between being and non-being, that is, it is a question of showing a reason for being such that by that reason the contingent and non-necessary being is realized. Thus in cognition we reach the Absolute.

Krapiec explains:

The affirmation of the necessity of the Absolute’s existence is the only rational way out of the realm of absurdity for the intellect in the field of explanative philosophy. This does not mean that when one accepts that the Absolute must exist, everything right away becomes clear and understandable, but it means only that being ceases to be irrational, or even absurd. Most often we face a mystery, for we cannot connect all the elements of being into one rational range of being that is legible to all and does not raise objections . . . Although we face a mystery, we find ourselves in the sphere of intelligible being, and not in the sphere of absurdity. For indeed a being that is not understandable by itself is completely referred in all that is not understandable by itself to the Being that is understandable by itself, to the Absolute. Its presence makes being itself intelligible, because (a) the only possibility for the being-ness of the reality that we see is its connection with the Pure Existence, that is, with the being *per se*; (b) the internal non-division of things and their separateness can be ex-

plained by the participation of beings that in themselves [each] are one, but are separate from each other in the oneness of the Absolute Being; (c) the whole intelligible order called truth is only the consequence of ordering to the Creative Intellect; (d) the order of the good is connected with the Absolute's creative love. Therefore both the being-ness of being and its transcendental perfections are ultimately explained by the necessary connection of the contingent beings given to us in everyday experience with the First Being, the Absolute. Everything that in reality is an expression of real being apprehended in different aspects is ordered to the necessity of the affirmation of the Absolute's existence, which becomes a real response to the fundamental "why" that emerges from our cognition of the really existing world.¹³

In this way, the end-purpose of man's cognitive life is also realized. That end-purpose is expressed in wisdom-oriented cognition, which found the ultimate decontradictification for the existence of the contingent being, and in this way being was separated from non-being.

The Cognition of the Ultimate Reason for the Existence of Beings: The Absolute

The Absolute appears in realistic metaphysics as the ultimate reason that decontradictifies the explanation of a really existing being. The reason for the existence of a non-necessary being and our cognition of it appears as the Being who is transcendent to the world both in being and in cognition. His existence is not in any way necessitated by the world's existence. We do not affirm His existence directly or immediately, but by explaining being in ultimate and philosophical terms we indirectly affirm God's existence. We discover only the necessity of His existence upon the background of the structure of being; that structure is not intelligible (it is absurd) in its own existence unless it has its ground in the decontradictifying context of God. Hence Thomas said very cautiously:

¹³ Id., 54.

The word “is” has two meanings: the first means real existence, or actualized existence, and the second means a copula that connects a proposition together, when a thought connects a predicate with a subject. If we take “is” in the first meaning, we acknowledge that we cannot know at all what is God’s existence or being, just as we cannot know what His essence is; however, in the second sense we can; for we know that the proposition “God is” is the truth; and we know this from God’s effects, as we said above.¹⁴

In connection with this, the “ways” of arriving at knowledge of God’s existence that Thomas Aquinas formulated in the form of proofs, spring from an analysis of composite being; a composite being which in its existence is contingent, changing, and has a cause. Composite beings differ in their degrees of perfection. A composite being exists as ordered and as having its origin in the reason. Hence the Absolute appears as the ultimate explanation for the existence, action, perfection, and nature of a contingent being.

As Krapiec explains:

For if we turn our attention toward existence in a contingent being, then the becoming of existence in every order of being takes the form of motion, or it can be called in a broad sense “motion” as the actualization of potentiality, and this is the object of considerations in the so-called first “way”—from motion. The realized existence of a being indicates its first efficient cause, the first being from the second “way;” the relation of existence to essence in a contingent being is the foundation of the affirmation of being *per se*, the Necessary Being of the third “way;” the mo-

¹⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I. q. 3, a. 4, ad 2. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Benziger Bros. edition, 1947), I, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2: “*To be* can mean either of two things. It may mean the act of essence, or it may mean the composition of a proposition effected by the mind in joining a predicate to a subject. Taking *to be* in the first sense, we cannot understand God’s existence nor His essence; but only in the second sense. We know that this proposition which we form about God when we say *God is*, is true; and this we know from His effects.”

ment of a more or less perfect essence under actual existence takes the form of the fourth “way;” finally, the action of a contingent being (the understanding of which has been outlined in the first four “ways”) constitutes the essential background of the fifth “way;” which indicates the personal character of the first Being. Therefore Thomas’ five “ways” are nothing other than the ultimate philosophical understanding of a contingent being in the perspective of ontic decontradictifications. In order to separate the contingent being from nothingness, from non-being, we must refer it to the reason that is the Being.¹⁵

When we emphasize that in realistic metaphysics the Absolute appears as the ultimate reason that decontradictifies the existence of the contingent being, we should note that this is not a theoretical assumption or a verifying hypothesis, but it is a response that involves the entire human being, since it also contains the resolution of the riddle of human existence.

With the affirmation of the existence of a being, an “image” of the Absolute emerges. For we cannot conceive of the existence of anything except in the manner of a being. Here we encounter a difficulty that is not any less (and may be greater) in determining the nature of the Absolute. First, we must overcome the pictorial and metaphorical descriptions of God’s nature that we have inherited from mythology, religion, and the Bible. Second, we must overcome the anthropomorphic tendencies with which biblical and religious literature are full. Third, and finally, we must overcome *a priori* conceptions of God proposed in various types of definitions, so as far as possible we can take a position where we do not distort the image of God.

In philosophy we often encounter the identification of the nature of God with various things.

1. The nature of the world is that of God—this is seen in the *Book of Twenty-Four Masters* in which we read: “Deus est sphaera

¹⁵ Krąpiec, “O rozumienie dróg poznania Boga,” 55.

infinita, cuius centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam” (God is the infinite sphere, whose center is everywhere, but whose circumference is nowhere). In descriptions of this kind we find echoes of Orphic beliefs, of Anaximander’s conception of the “apeiron,” and of Anaxagoras’ “Nous” that stretches along the infinite mixture of “Krisis.”

2. Conceiving God as an infinite spirit, in ancient times, quite naturally led, in the Middle Ages, to the identification of God with space, and also with ὄλη. We find the following in Alan de Lille’s *Regulae theologicae*: “Deus est sphaera intelligibilis, cuius centrum ubique, circumferentia nusquam” (God is an intelligible sphere, whose center is everywhere, and whose limits are nowhere). Nicholas de Cusa referred to this: “those who pondered God’s most actual existence, conceived of God as an infinite sphere.”¹⁶

3. Among the German mystics (John Eckhart, John Tauler, and Henry de Suso) we encounter a tendency to identify God with the Soul, which in turn as identified with the “pure self” underlies the image of God as the “Pure Self” or the “Pure I.”

Krąpiec comments on Eckhart’s thought:

Properly speaking, such a state of the “pure self” would be achieved after a man’s death, when the soul, losing its relation to this body . . . is no longer found “before,” “after,” or “beside” anything, but “is in itself” and at the same time by virtue of its structure it retains a transcendental (necessary) relation to matter. Wherever there is matter—through this necessary relation—there is the soul, insofar as it acts there. The action of the soul is reduced to cognition and love. Such a state of the soul’s presence in the world would be a realization of the “pure self” . . . The pure self, present in itself and equally distant from all things and processes of matter, would be the foundation for grounding pure

¹⁶ Nicolaus de Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, ed. E. Hoffman, R. Klibansky (Lipsiae 1932), I 12.

objectivism, since such objectivism can be given in relation to “pure subjectivity.”¹⁷

In this way what puts down its roots in theism is the conception (or image) of God—as the “Pure I,” the “Architect of the World,” “The Self-Thinking Reason,” “Will,” “Pure Subjectivity,” or the “Transcendent Subject”—which is a foundation of knowledge, a postulate of the reason, the reason for consciousness, while the image of God as really connected with the world becomes more distant.

4. Hence in Thomas’ theism we primarily indicate that God is a being. We connect with a being all the properties that we are trying to ascribe to God both by way of positive predication and by way of negative predication. They cannot violate the “principles of the existence of being” (like a square circle, a contradiction in itself, etc.), and therefore when we speak of the properties of God the Absolute, we connect those properties with the conception of the Absolute Being and with the conception of being in general. In this way we guard ourselves from various absurdities and we avoid contradictions.

The problematic of the Absolute’s existence in realistic philosophy is an integral part of metaphysical cognition and grows, as it were, from that cognition. The absolute, the ultimate reason for the world’s existence, appears in metaphysical cognition as the completion and culmination of our understanding of reality, as the “keystone” of a rational and coherent vision of the world. One condition for this is that as we search for the ultimate reasons for the existence and action of beings, we see the necessity for the existence of a being that ultimately provides the explanation for all that. In philosophy we call that being “the Absolute,” and in religion we call that being “God.”

It should be noted that the Absolute is not a direct object of human experience and cognition. This impossibility follows from man’s ontological condition; man is a contingent (finite) being. The Absolute

¹⁷ Krąpiec, “O rozumienie dróg poznania Boga,” 58.

or God is a necessary (infinite) being. Thus man “has existence,” while the Absolute or God “is existence” (*ipsum esse subsistens*). Just as a drop of water cannot engulf the ocean, so a human being in his experience or knowledge cannot engulf God. Moreover, God who is present in the world as the world’s cause, is transcendent to the world with respect to existence and cognition. This means that the world does not exhaust the wealth of God’s existence.

Agnosticism or skepticism does not follow from those limitations. Metaphysical theism teaches that it is possible to cognize God from the world of nature. In this world God is present as the ultimate cause of its existence and action. If in keeping with the actual state of affairs we affirm the pluralism of beings, which will be free of contradiction only if beings are internally composed of non-identical elements that are incapable of existing on their own without their correlates in composition, then a question arises which is fundamental if we are to understand contingent being: why does the pluralistic world exist, rather than not exist? If a new being (composed of a concrete essence and an existence proportional to it) arises, which did not exist previously, and if its essence does not explain the fact that it came into existence, since the essence “would give” to itself what it is not and what it does not possess, then the reason why a contingent being comes into existence (the reason why its concrete essence is internally connected with an existence proportional to that essence) is not the “ontic interior” of the being that arises. The reason is “outside.” If that “reason for being” did not exist, then the being that exists would not differ in any respect from “nothingness,” since as it does not possess “within itself” or “on its inside” the reason why it came into existence, that is, it does not possess the reason for its coming-into-existence in its component factors, at the same time it would not possess that reason “externally” or outside of itself, and thereby it would be “nothing;” the being would not exist. However, since it exists, even though previously it did not exist, and since it has no reason in itself for being, because that would

also be a contradiction, then it possesses that reason for being “outside” itself, outside its compositional factors. This “external” reason for being is not, and ultimately cannot be (in a decontradictifying explanation) a contingent being composed of an essence and an existence that is not identical to the essence, for then that reason of being would be found in the same ontic situation as the contingent being whose existence we are trying to explain.¹⁸

In this way on the basis of an analysis of reality given to us in experience, we show the necessity for the existence of the First Being who is absolutely non-composite, without whom the existence of the contingent world would be an absurdity. In metaphysical analyses we are trying not so much to show the existence of God as to show that without His existence, the existence and action of the contingent world would be unintelligible and absurd.

So we come to know the existence of God indirectly through analyzing the fact that the world exists and is given to us in sensory experience. This is a world that is changing, contingent, caused, ordered, and differentiated in perfections. As we seek the ultimate reason (or cause) to explain the existence of this world, we indicate the Absolute as its ultimate cause.

In turn, as we discern the universal (transcendental) properties of beings (truth, the good, and beauty), we discover the relation of origin of all reality from the Intellect and the Will of the Creator, and we learn that the Absolute is a Person, since the Absolute is a rational and free being.

Metaphysical theism, which is found in the five ways of St. Thomas (the *quinque viae*), which are based on an analysis of motion, causation, contingency, degrees of perfection, and purposefulness, is a classical example of realistic cognition, which is fulfilled in the discov-

¹⁸ Cf. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, “Metafizyka—ogólna teoria rzeczywistości [Metaphysics: The General Theory of Reality],” in *Wprowadzenie do filozofii [Introduction to Philosophy]*, vol. 1 (Lublin 2000), 165–169.

ery of the First Cause of the existence of the world and of man. This discovery shows to philosophers the way out of absurdity, both existential absurdity (that the world does not make sense), and cognitive absurdity (which resorts to chance or blind necessity to explain the existence of the world).

Moreover, the experience of contingency and non-necessity that each and every man has, direct man's thought naturally toward the Absolute as toward the sole guarantee of his existence and action. Hence we can describe man as a being who by nature is open to God.

The discovery of the Absolute is thus a natural consequence of the ultimate cognition of the truth concerning the real world. Hence metaphysical cognition reaches its ultimate end by rising to discover the existence of the Absolute as the ultimate cause of the existence of this world, which is given to us in experience as contingent, changing, caused, ordered, rational, and purposeful.

The proposed ways to cognize God are not so much proofs, as they are ways to cognize the ultimate truth about the world, its end-purpose, and its existence. It is reality, existing as changing, non-necessary, caused, purposeful, and intelligible, and put up for cognitive analysis, that leads us to discover the ultimate reason for its existence and action, which is the Absolute. The Absolute also indicates the ultimate way of making sense out of the existence of the world and of man (their purpose), and reveals that the world is not some kind of chaos, and that human life is not an absurdity or an accident.

Conclusion

The discovery of the existence of the Absolute is one of the crucial steps on the way to understanding reality. The world in which we live and act is varied in many ways. We cannot succumb to monistic and reductionistic tendencies. Nature and reality have "many names." Someone who wants to show the truth, good, and beauty of reality cannot work with some sort of global and reductionist vision of the world.

Reality, which we call the “natural environment,” is composed of various objects; the end-purposes of their existence are inscribed in those objects, and they are ordered to each other in various ways. Thus we should not lose sight of the natural hierarchy of beings that form the world of nature, at the summit of which stands man.

This existential metaphysics provides us with knowledge about reality. It shows the content of the experience of being, the content given to us in the transcendentals. It also unveils the foundation of the rational order, which is given to us in the discovery of the first principles of the existence of being and of cognition. Metaphysics provides us also with knowledge concerning the structure of being. It shows us being as composite and plural; being which is “insufficient” in its structure and calls for an explanation. That being—that is problematized in existence, given to us in experience, and incompletely intelligible in itself—lifts us toward its ultimate “complement” and understanding, to the Absolute.

Translated from Polish by Hugh McDonald

**THE DISCOVERY OF THE EXISTENCE OF
THE ABSOLUTE IN EXISTENTIAL METAPHYSICS**

SUMMARY

The article shows the way in which the discovery of the existence of the Absolute is made in existential metaphysics. This existential metaphysics provides us with knowledge about reality. It shows the content of the experience of being, the content given to us in the transcendentals. It also unveils the foundation of the rational order, which is given to us in the discovery of the first principles of the existence of being and of cognition. Metaphysics provides us also with knowledge concerning the structure of being. It shows us being as composite and plural; being which is “insufficient” in its structure and calls for an explanation. That being—that is problematized in existence, given to us in experience, and incompletely intelligible in itself—lifts us toward its ultimate “complement” and understanding, to the Absolute.

KEYWORDS: Absolute, existence, reality, being, metaphysics, cognition, why, curiosity, gods, mental state, intellect, reason.

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PARTICIPATION: A *DESCENDING ROAD* OF THE METAPHYSICAL COGNITION OF BEING

The theory of participation in the structure of existential metaphysics was discovered to be the most general “road” in the wisdom-oriented cognition of being, and at the same time as the most far-reaching road to the mystery of being.¹ This theory is the crowning point and completion of metaphysical cognition. It shows the necessary connection and ordering of being to the Absolute. The theory of participation situates the cognition of being and of all reality in the perspective of the Absolute’s existence.²

With the description of participation as a “descending road” in the cognition of being, we are restricting ourselves to the presentation of how participation is understood in realistic metaphysics (while we shall leave aside the history of the question). We will show the aspects of participation that provide a foundation for wisdom-oriented cogni-

Editio prima (in Polish): Andrzej Maryniarczyk SDB, *O przyczynach, partycypacji i analogii* [On Causes, Analogy, and Participation] (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2005), 87–100.

¹ This is because we indicate the ultimate reason for the existence of contingent and non-necessary beings.

² This is the indication of the deepest reason for the existence of being.

tion, and we will show the specific character of participation-oriented cognition as a “descending road.”³

When we see in the world the fact that there are many beings, and we indicate that the particular beings exist in a compositional way, we face the task of learning about a new problem: how can we define and determine the relations between beings and between the elements within a being? Although the theory of participation has roots that go back to Plato, and so to a philosophy in which the pluralism of being was rejected and which accepted an identity-based conception of being, participation finds its ontological rational justification only (and ultimately) in the pluralistic and compositional conception of being.⁴

A Terminological Explanation

The term “participation” (μέθεξις) is from the words *pars* (a part) and *capere* (to take hold of). The expression *partem capere* or *partem habere* means to possess some part in a whole, or to get some part from a whole.⁵ Zofia J. Zdybicka explains that the word “participation”

means a relation that occurs between two realities, where one of the members of the relation, which usually contains a series of elements, is to the other as a part to a whole, as many to one, as

³ Here the primary point is to preserve the existential character of cognition. Cf. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, “Metafizyczne rozumienie rzeczywistości [The Metaphysical Understanding of Reality],” *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 29:1 (1986): 9 ff; *Prospect for Metaphysics. Essays of Metaphysical Exploration*, ed. I. Ramsey (London 1961); Stanisław Kamiński, “Wyjaśnianie w metafizyce [Explaining in Metaphysics],” in his *Jak filozofować? [How to Philosophize?]* (Lublin 1989), 165 ff.

⁴ This would be typical of the Platonic-Parmenidean conception of cognition in which the moments of contemplation, recollection, and beholding are emphasized. In that approach there is no aspiration to apprehend any relations within a being or between beings.

⁵ St. Thomas described participation as follows: “Est autem participare quasi partem capere” (*Expositio libri Boetii De ebdomadis*, in his *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, cura et studio Fratrum Paredicatorum (Roma 1992), lect. 2), and “Nam participare nihil aliud est quam ab alio partialiter accipere” (*In Aristotelis libros De caelo et mundo*, cura et studio R. M. Spiazzi (Taurini 1952), lib. II, lect. 18, n. 6).

the imperfect to the perfect, the non-identical to the self-identical, the limited to the unlimited, the similar to the identical, that which possesses to that which is, the composite to the simple, the derivative to the original, the caused to the uncaused. Thus participation means a share in a certain whole, which implies the existence of some whole (a unity or community), and kinship, a community between parts and a whole (plurality and unity) and between particular parts.

We should make a clear distinction between the term “participation” used in everyday language and the technical term, the philosophical or theological term. In everyday language the term “participation” means a share or membership. It may refer to various realms (material, mental-moral, social, cultural) which imply the existence of some sort of a whole, unity, or fullness (an absolute one or a relative one): a material one (a given estate), a moral one (a fullness of suffering or joy), a cultural one (some sort of cultural creativity or receptivity). This constitutes the participated reality (a whole, a fullness, a unity, a relative perfection).⁶

We will only proceed, however, as far as the philosophical context of how the term “participation” is understood and attempt to show the role of participation in cognizing reality.

The Ontic Foundations of Participation

In the monistic vision of the world and the identity-based conception of being, the entire order of relations is an illusion, and so it is missing the purpose to speak of participative existence. An explanation that appeals to participation is not a metaphysical explanation, but it is another version of noetics (the theory of cognition). So it is not strange that although Plato introduced the term “participation” (μέθεξις), Aristotle strongly criticized the appeal to participation as a form of causation. According to Aristotle, Plato regarded

⁶ Zofia J. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu [The Participation of Being]* (Lublin 1972), 19–20.

it as impossible for a general definition to refer to something from the world of things that are constantly changing. And he called this second kind of being ‘ideas’, stating that all perceptible things exist separately from them, and have from them their names, since by participation in ideas many individuals that are one in name with them exist. But if it is a question of participation, then he merely used another name. For indeed the Pythagoreans say that things are through participation in numbers, but Plato changes the terminology and says that they exist by participation. However, what this participation in ideas or imitation would consist in was not explained.⁷

Participation as a metaphysical theory to explain reality takes on a proper and not illusory meaning in a conception of being and reality where we are dealing with the real order of relations (within beings or between beings), and so, in a pluralistic vision of the world and in a compositional conception of being. However, here as well we can find, as it were, two trends in explanation: the Aristotelian trend in which the description of relations (within a being and between beings), and the determination of relations is made completely sufficiently within the theory of the four causes, and without any appeal to participation; and the Thomistic trend where the theory of participation seems to be indispensable for metaphysical cognition to be “complete.”⁸

The Aristotelian world, which exists by necessity, does not mediate its existence in anything or anyone. It only mediates the “form” of

⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 987 b 7–14. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1933, 1989), 987 b 7–14: “[T]hat there can be no general definition of sensible things which are always changing. These entities he called ‘Ideas’, and held that all sensible things are named after them sensible and in virtue of their relation to them; for the plurality of things which bear the same name as the Forms exist by participation in them. (With regard to the ‘participation’, it was only the term that he changed; for whereas the Pythagoreans say that things exist by imitation of numbers, Plato says that they exist by participation—merely a change of term. As to what this ‘participation’ or ‘imitation’ may be, they left this an open question.)”

⁸ This follows primarily from the existential conception of cognition.

its existence. Thus this was purely “formal” mediation, explained in the theory of causes where the formal cause was the highest reason for the being of things.⁹ Thus the theory of causes sufficiently explained the fact of relations within beings and between beings, and in the theory of potency and act, only the unity of cognitive apprehensions and the coherency of the holistic vision of the world were guaranteed.¹⁰

In Thomistic metaphysics the question is presented differently. The world does not exist by necessity. A composite being is a contingent being. Thus not only the reason for the organization of matter to a proper type of being requires explanation, but above all the very fact of matter’s existence needs to be explained. Moreover, not only does the very fact of the existence of a being require explanation, but also that which constitutes the content of that existence needs to be explained. For indeed nothing in a being is necessary, and nothing is explained through itself. And thus the whole of being and the world requires explanation. For indeed a being in its existence is “mediated” and that mediation concerns the whole of the being, and so it does not concern existence alone, but also concerns content.¹¹

In this way, participation in realistic metaphysics appears as a “descending road” in our understanding of the existence of reality. We treat participation in Thomas’ metaphysics as a completion of cause-oriented explanation, and primary as a completion of analogical explanation. For indeed if analogy allows us to see in plurality the fact of “unity” that the analogically single act of existence gives to a being, then participation shows us the fact of the unity in which the concrete individual being “participates” and whereby it exists. Thus by participation we learn about the fact of “imparted” and “given” existence, re-

⁹ In this also we can see the essence of Aristotle’s essentialism.

¹⁰ Hence in the Aristotelian system, the theory of participation did not appear. Cf. Marian Wesoly, “Arystotelesowa koncepcja wyjaśniania naukowego [Aristotle’s Conception of Scientific Explanation],” *Studia Filozoficzne* 22:3 (1978): 121–131.

¹¹ We would like to show (or emphasize) the derivative character of a being not only in existence, but also in what it is and how it is.

membering also that it is a question of the whole of a being, and so, it is a question of the fact that a being exists and of how it exists.¹²

We can speak of participation in realistic metaphysics as the “descending road” in our cognition of the existence of a being by unveiling the being’s connection with the Absolute, and we can speak of it as a way of predicating the nature of that mediation—participation. Of course, participation becomes a realistic theory by the fact that it has a foundation in the way reality exists—in being.¹³

When we appeal to participation in metaphysics, we explain the relation between non-necessary beings and the Absolute, between the principal cause and instrumental causes, and between elements within a being. Moreover, we speak of the participation of a being in the good, truth, and beauty of the Absolute. However, in addition to that, we speak of the participation of a being in unity, separateness, and factuality (concreteness, content-possession).¹⁴ And thus by participation we can learn about and explain the “mediated” mode of existence of a being, and we can indicate the type of this mediation.

Thus it is a question of the indication of the holistic connection of a being with the Absolute. When we speak of participation with respect to “what a being is,” we should emphasize that the “assimilation” of the concrete thing does not consist in the fact that a being is in its external structure a “reflection” or “gleam” of the Absolute, as was the case in Platonic participation, but that “a being is” and that “it is what it is” by a necessary connection with the Absolute. The Absolute is thus the ultimate reason not only for the existence of being, but also for its endowment of content. A being as a whole participates in the existence

¹² Hence we want to connect the theory of participation with the transcendentals, so in this way to show more clearly the holistic connection of a being with the Absolute.

¹³ For indeed the holistic connection of a being with the Absolute is indicated.

¹⁴ In this way, the transcendentals are typical of the holistic connection of being with the Absolute, and they do so in a more complex way presented by the metaphysical theory of causes.

of the Absolute as the Creative Cause.¹⁵ This is the deepest reach available to man into the “mystery” of being, and the discovery of that mystery “from above,” from the side of the Absolute. This type of the interpretation of participation is marked by the character of being as composed of essence and existence, the transcendence of the act of existence in relation to the element of content, and the universality of the act of existence.¹⁶

The Function of Participation

We describe the heuristic function of participation in realistic metaphysics as the “descending road” of wisdom-oriented cognition of being and of all reality.¹⁷

In realistic metaphysics participation is considered as a theory that explains the relation of non-necessary beings to the Absolute from three perspectives: with respect to efficiency, exemplarity, and finality or teleology, and so it considers participation both in existence and in similarity. In practice, however, participation is connected with the theory of the causes and of causal explanation. Therefore it seems that in realistic metaphysics in which we primarily emphasize the existential character of cognition (and of all metaphysical knowledge), participation should be connected with the transcendentals and with the theory of the transcendentals. In this way we expand the scope of participation-based predication, and what is most important, we avoid certain problems, especially those that appear in explaining the similarity of beings to the Absolute.¹⁸

¹⁵ Cf. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu*, 184 ff.

¹⁶ Cf. *id.*

¹⁷ We obtain universality by the universalization of the transcendental apprehension of the concrete thing, and on the basis of analogy in existence we transfer it to reality as a whole.

¹⁸ This approach does not differ essentially from the interpretation of participation that Zofia J. Zdybicka, for example, presents. The example is merely shifted to the causation as a whole (and so to content and to existence) that the transcendental express.

Of course, this interpretation is not contrary to the interpretation of participation in terms of the causes, but it allows us to look at reality from a difference perspective. For indeed the transcendentals indicate aspects of the way a being exists, and each of transcendentals, as it is an ultimate or critical apprehension of being, refers us ultimately to the Absolute. Moreover, in the transcendentals we apprehend and express the holistic “picture” of being, and so the holistic connection of being with the Absolute.¹⁹

In connection with this, it no longer makes sense to make a distinction between the function of participation as explaining relations of origin, and the function that explains relations of the similarity of a being to the Absolute. In the transcendentals we emphasize the unity of a being (the unity of content and existence), and so its holistic connection with the Absolute.²⁰

Hence in the transcendentals we can show the apprehension of the “moments” that in connection with participation-oriented cognition provide a foundation for our knowledge of being and of reality as a whole. These aspects are as follows: making-into-a-being, content-making, making-into-one, making-into-a-subject (sovereignty), making-into-truth, making-loveable, and making-perfect.

If we proceed in this way, we avoid, as it were, a kind of dualism in interpretation that creeps in when one accents the explanation of the relation of existence and ignores the relation of similarity to the Absolute. That would entail a radicalization of the previous interpretation of the theory of participation in realistic metaphysics, and a radicalization of the concept of similarity. This would be nothing new, but merely a

¹⁹ The specific character of the transcendentals is that they connect a being composed in the aspect of content and existence with its ultimate term, which is the non-composite being, the Absolute.

²⁰ Of course here we are taking as our foundation an earlier interpretation of the transcendentals, which shows the holistic mode of the existence of being in various aspects. Cf. Leo J. Elders, *Die Metaphysik des Thomas von Aquin in historischer Perspektive*, übers. K. Hedwig, Bd. 1 (Salzburg 1985), 175 ff., and Louis-Bertrand Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris 1942).

return to a way of understanding that Thomas often emphasized in the *Summa theologiae*. Let us examine this more closely.

The basic cognitive function of the discerned “moments” of participation-oriented cognition is to show the “holistic” connection of a being with the Absolute (“that it is”, and “how it is”). Thereby we avoid the formal picture of the Absolute as he who constructed the world or as the first mover who does not have any further knowledge of the world.²¹

The discovery of the most fundamental relation between a non-necessary being and the Absolute is expressed when participation-oriented cognition reaches the mystery of its “being-made-a-being”. Participation thus unveils the ultimate reason for “being-made-a-being,” the Absolute. The discovery of this relation is at the same time an occasion to try to describe the character of the relation. This is a unilateral relation: beings participate in the Absolute as in the reason for their existence, but not conversely. This is the most general and holistic way to understand the meaning of the existence of being, by showing its “being-made-a-being” in the Absolute. Here we also have an apprehended aspect of “assimilation” or “being-made-similar,” since “being-made-a-being” concerns the fact that a being is (or exists) analogically, just as the Absolute is or exists, but it also concerns the aspect of “how it is.” However, the Absolute “is existence,” while everything else “has existence” that has been imparted by the Absolute. Thus this is an “assimilation” that is seen and described from the perspective of existence. In this way each transcendental within participation-oriented cognition shows “from above” in different aspects the ultimate reason for the existence of being, and for a particular sort of existence.²² Thus

²¹ In this way the holistic connection of the world with the Absolute will be shown, and not merely the formal connection (cf. Elders, *Die Metaphysik des Thomas von Aquin*, 184).

²² Cf. Krąpiec, *Metafizyczne rozumienie rzeczywistości*, 9 ff.

participation-oriented cognition further on will be an explanation of various actions of how a being is made into a being by the Absolute.

The aspect of “making-content” that is indicated by the transcendental *res* allows us to answer the question whether there is some similarity between the content-based aspect of the world and the Absolute. It seems that when participation is connected with the transcendentals, the problem of similarity should be presented differently at all. Similarity is usually connected with the content-based side of a being. Meanwhile, in existential epistemology where cognitive apprehensions concern what is content-based in a being and that which content-possession actualizes, the problem of participative “assimilation” or “being-made-similar” must find a proper interpretation. “Assimilation” primarily concerns the whole of a being, and so it concerns the mode of the “fulfillment of a being” as a being. Hence the moment of “being-made-a-content” is indicated. This “content-making” mode of existence (or realization) in being is the determination that each being receives at the moment it is brought into existence. The concrete individual being participates in the Absolute holistically (“that it is”, and “how it is”).²³ Let us remark that here we are not searching for any “assimilation” to the Absolute, whether by reflection, imitation, or modeling, but we are indicating the holistic origin of a being from the Absolute, and so we are indicating the connection of the relation of existence and content in a non-necessary being with the Absolute.²⁴

The aspect of “being-made-into-one” is the next stage in the discovery of the connection of a contingent being with the Absolute in participation-oriented cognition built on the transcendental *unum*. The non-contradictory mode of existence, existence not divided into being and non-being, is an expression of “assimilation,” “attendance,” or the

²³ Cf. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu*, 151 ff.

²⁴ Cf. *id.*, 171. We read in St. Thomas: “Unde [Deus] participatur a rebus, non sicut pars, sed secundum diffusionem processionis ipsius” (*Summa theologiae*, I, 75, 5, 1).

participation of composite and contingent being in the Absolute's unity.²⁵

If we indicate the participation of being in unity—this aspect of the participative existence of being in the unity of the Absolute does not concern the qualitative or quantitative aspect, but primarily concerns the non-contradictory mode of existence. By participating in the existence of the Absolute, a being also participates in the unity of that existence, which means in His non-division “into being and non-being.”

The aspect of “being-made-a-subject” (sovereignty), and so the aspect of individual qualification and separateness that the transcendental *aliquid* indicates, is the next step on the road to explain the relation of the world to God. It indicates participation in separateness and in individuality. Hence the “subjectivity,” “individuality,” “personality,” and the “definiteness” of every being is not what arrives to it, as it were, but it is a consequence of having been made into a being. In this way every ontic individual, every separate being, is separate because it has its origin in the one, separate, and individual being that is the Absolute.²⁶

The next aspect of the participative mode of the existence of being is described by the transcendental *verum*. This transcendental concerns the aspect of “being-made-into-a-truth” (rationality). This means that in participation-oriented cognition we indicate the origin of being also with respect to its intelligibility. Thus rational “life” as a whole, the entire rational order of being, which includes every existing being, is imparted to a being in the same way as existence is imparted to it. This assimilation in the “truth-based” mode of the existence of a being does not concern any qualitative aspect of a being, but it indicates the mode of the realization of each contingent being as a vehicle of truth.²⁷

²⁵ We are referring here to one of the functions of the transcendentals that they perform in our cognition of the being.

²⁶ Cf. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu*, 174 ff.

²⁷ Both here and in the preceding transcendentals we would like to show that it is not only a question of the moment of agreement or correspondence between a being and an

In turn the aspect of “being-made-loveable,” and so, the aspect of participation “in the good of the Absolute” is apprehended and unveiled in participation-oriented cognition on the basis of the transcendental *bonum*. Assimilation “in the good” is not an indication of some sort of qualitative feature in a contingent being, but it shows the next aspect of the participation of a being that, when originating from the Absolute, is realized as an “act” of the will and in its action “toward the good” is fulfilled. As in the case of the truth, here we also discover the necessary connection of a being with a will. A being is a vehicle of the good, since it is necessarily connected with the will of the Absolute, and it has the will of the Absolute inscribed in under the form of an end-purpose.²⁸

The aspect of a being’s “being-made-perfect” as a synthesis of truth and the good is unveiled by the transcendental *pulchrum*. The integrity and perfection of a being is an expression of its participative mode of existence. The moment of perfection, which is connected with the act of existence that realizes the composite concrete thing, is the most universal and general expression of the “assimilation” of contingent being to the Absolute. Beauty, which is a mode of the existence of a concrete being, and is a synthesis of the good and the truth, is also an indication of the most holistic moment of assimilation (or participation) of a contingent being to the Absolute.²⁹

intellect, but also it is a question of the holistic connection of a being with an intellect (the fact that the being is, what it is, and how it is).

²⁸ Here, as above, we are emphasizing the holistic character of mediation in the good. Analogically, as when we consider the truth, we read in St. Thomas: “Quod enim totaliter est aliquid, non participat illud, sed est per essentiam idem illi; quod vero non totaliter est aliquid, habens aliquid aliud adiunctum, proprie participare dicitur” (*In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, cura et studio R. M. Spiazzi (Taurini 1977), lib. I, lect. 10, n. 4).

²⁹ Here the transcendentals would show most fully the unity of the transcendental model (cf. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu*, 176 ff.; H. Berger, “Der partizipationsgedanke in Metaphysik Kommentar des Thomas von Aquin,” *Vivarium* 1 (1963): 115–140).

This type of interpretation of participation in metaphysics allows us to grasp the holistic connection between being and the Absolute, and to understand the character of that connection. Above all, we see the transcendence of the Absolute (an absolute transcendence) as the ultimate and first cause of the fact “that a being is,” and that it is “as it is.” In addition, we avoid all types of anthropomorphization in the interpretation of the “moment” of assimilation. It is indicated that this “similarity” does not concern the qualitative aspect of a being, but concerns its entire origin from the Absolute in the fact “that it is” and “how it is.” The separateness of the being and the analogical character of existence are preserved.

The nature of this similarity cannot in any way be described in terms of qualities, since all the transcendence of God would then be lost (both in existence and in cognition). Therefore participation “from above” unveils the “mystery” of the existence of a being, and in this way it completes the process of understanding reality.³⁰

Conclusion

To conclude we will try briefly to show the specific character of participative cognition by discerning its fundamental wisdom-oriented moments. The end-purpose of participative cognition was to describe or determine the relation between a contingent being and the Absolute.

1. For the sake of precision, it is not a question here of a relation as such, and so it is not a question of a formal description of a relation, whether or not the relation is reflexive or not. Nor is it a question of describing the relation in terms of causes: the formal (exemplar), efficient, or final cause. Rather it is a question of trying to describe how a finite and contingent being is related “in its entirety” to the infinite and

³⁰ Cognition by participation shows, on the one hand, the unity of the world with the absolute, and on the other hand it shows the separateness of the Absolute.

necessary being, the Absolute.³¹ And thus, the question is about what sort of connection a contingent being has with the Absolute.

2. In the above description we can indicate that this connection concerns not only the fact “that a being exists” but also the fact concerning “how a being exists.” Thus it concerns the fact that the “whole” of an existing being (and of the world) participates in the Absolute. This “participation” is characterized by the fact that everything “what a contingent being has,” “what it is,” and “that it is,” comes from the Absolute and due to the Absolute, while the Absolute is not in any way determined by the existence of a contingent being.

The Absolute is transcendent in existence and in cognition. Only the reality of a contingent being that is being realized is revealed in participation-oriented cognition as a reality that is mediated in the existence of the Absolute, its ultimate cause. And, while in the cause there is everything that is in the effect, the effect cannot exhaust the cause.³²

3. Since we use participation-oriented cognition, that is, the “descending road,” we discover the moment of “assimilation” and “participation” of contingent beings. This description, however, is not an attempt to determine the measure of similarity and intensity of the reflection or the fidelity of the copy to the model, but in it we see universal dependence.

4. Thus it is a kind of cognition that indicates the ultimate reason of similarity between contingent beings.³³ That type of cognition does not consist so much in seeing “similarity,” “community,” and “unity” in plurality and variety, as it consists in discovering the ultimate reason for this “similarity,” “community,” and “unity.”³⁴

³¹ So it is a question of describing the nature of the relation between the world and the Absolute.

³² This is the classical position.

³³ Cf. Zdybicka, *Partycypacja bytu*, 178 ff.

³⁴ Thus we are dealing with a specific type of cognition. This is not content-oriented cognition. In it we affirm the necessary and transcendental connections between the world (a being) and the Absolute.

5. The moment of wisdom in participation-oriented cognition is expressed in the fact that when we discover the Absolute as the ultimate reason for the fact “that being is,” and “how it is,” at the same time we see His transcendence in existence and in cognition. Thus everything that a contingent being is (the being’s content and existence), the being possesses due to the Absolute. Thus the similarity in no way concerns the qualitative aspect of a being, and so it cannot be expressed in the concepts of “reflection,” “model,” “gleam,” etc., terms that are often connected with participation-oriented cognition, but here the similarity indicates the complete origin of the contingent being from the Creative Cause. Thereby, in the realm of the content-endowment of a being we indicate the ultimate reason without resorting to explanation in terms of “non-being” or “chance.”

6. In this way in the framework of participation, we see the unity of the existence of reality, on the one hand, and the separateness of reality, on the other; the transcendence of the Absolute, and at the same time the immanence of the Absolute; the similarity of the world, and at the same time the variety of the world. Participation-oriented cognition as a whole becomes a completion of analogical cognition.

7. Participation-oriented cognition is also a completion of cause-oriented cognition, which concerns not only existence, but also the content-endowment of being as it shows the supra-categorical relation between finite beings and the Absolute. It unveils the complete dependence of finite beings upon the Absolute in the formal aspect, the efficient aspect, and the final or teleological aspect. For when a being participates in existence, it participates in everything that belongs to that existence (as necessary to be a being), and so in thing-ness (content-possession), unity, separateness, the truth, the good, and beauty.³⁵

Translated from Polish by Hugh McDonald

³⁵ Above all, it unveils before us the holistic connection (mediation) of being with the Absolute (cf. Berger, *Der Partizipationsgedanke im Metaphysik der Thomas von Aquin*, 115 ff).

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THE METAPHYSICAL COGNITION OF BEING**

SUMMARY

When we see in the world the fact that there are many beings, and we indicate that the particular beings exist in a compositional way, we face the task of learning about a new problem: how can we define and determine the relations between beings and between the elements within a being? Although the theory of participation has roots that go back to Plato, and so to a philosophy in which the pluralism of being was rejected and which accepted an identity-based conception of being, participation finds its ontological rational justification only (and ultimately) in the pluralistic and compositional conception of being. With the description of participation as a “descending road” in the cognition of being, we are restricting ourselves to the presentation of how participation is understood in realistic metaphysics (while we shall leave aside the history of the question). We will show the aspects of participation that provide a foundation for wisdom-oriented cognition, and we will show the specific character of participation-oriented cognition as a “descending road.”

KEYWORDS: participation, Absolute, cognition, being, transcendentals, metaphysics.

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KLUGHEIT. GRUNDBEGRIFF DES PRAKTISCHEN BEI ARISTOTELES

Sprachgebrauch und Klugheitsbegriffe

Josef Pieper beginnt seinen “Traktat über die Klugheit” mit einer Feststellung über den heute weitgehend mißverstandenen Vorrang der Klugheit unter den sittlichen Tugenden.

Keinen Satz der klassisch-christlichen Lebenslehre gibt es, der dem Ohr des heutigen Menschen, auch des Christen, so unvertraut, ja so fremd und verwunderlich klingt wie dieser: daß die Tugend der Klugheit die ‘Gebälerin’ und der Formgrund aller übrigen Kardinaltugenden sei, der Gerechtigkeit, der Tapferkeit und der Mäßigung; daß also nur, wer klug sei, auch gerecht, tapfer und maßvoll sein könne; und daß der gute Mensch gut sei kraft seiner Klugheit.¹

Im Sprach- und Denkgebrauch der Gegenwart verhält es sich damit gerade umgekehrt. Da “schließt . . . der Begriff des Guten den des Klugen

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¹ J. Pieper, “Traktat über die Klugheit,” in: ders., *Schriften zur philosophischen Anthropologie und Ethik: Das Menschenbild der Tugendlehre*, Hrsg. B. Wald (Hamburg 1996), 2.

eher aus als ein. Es gibt, so scheint es, keine gute Tat, die nicht unklug, und keine böse, die nicht klug sein könnte; Lüge und Feigheit wird oft genug klug, Wahrhaftigkeit und tapfere Selbsthingabe ebenso oft unklug heißen.”² *David Hume* wunderte sich denn auch, wie die “alten Philosophen” auf die Idee kommen konnten, die Klugheit an die Spitze der sittlichen Tugenden zu stellen.³

Die Spannung zwischen dem alltagssprachlichen Verständnis von Klugheit und dem philosophischem Wortgebrauch ist allerdings nicht neu und bereits für den antiken Sprachgebrauch belegt. Kristallisationskern der unterschiedlichen Bedeutungen von “Klugheit” ist auf der einen Seite der Bezug auf das eigene Wohlergehen; hier bezeichnet “klug” ein Verhalten, das Risiken scheut, eigennützig und schlau ist bis hin zur Gerissenheit. Nach der anderen Seite hin ist das Bedeutungsfeld von “klug” dem von “weise” benachbart. Umfassende Verständigkeit gilt dann als klug, wenn das Nachdenken darauf abzielt, gerecht, tapfer und maßvoll zu handeln.

Dem Bedeutungsspektrum im Wortfeld von Klugheit entsprechen so verschiedene Möglichkeiten, Klugheit begrifflich zu fassen. Allerdings werden negative Konnotationen wie List, Gerissenheit, Eigennutz nur selten in einen normativen Begriff von Klugheit integriert. Ein Beispiel dafür ist der Klugheitsbegriff der antiken Sophistik und der Begriff der Tugend (*virtú*) bei *Niccolo Machiavelli*. Gemeinsam ist allen begrifflichen Festlegungen der Rekurs auf grundlegende Fähigkeiten der handelnden Person, die es ihr ermöglichen sollen, in unterschiedlichen, vor allem aber in unvorsehbaren Handlungssituationen das jeweils Angemessene zu erkennen und sich richtig zu entscheiden. Weil die Ansichten über das sittlich Richtige und das Gute jedoch verschieden sind, gibt es nicht den einen Begriff von Klugheit, wie schon die semantische Vieldeutigkeit von “klug” nahe legt. Vielmehr bestimmt

² Ebd., 3.

³ D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* III, 3, 4, Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford 1978), 609.

die Abhängigkeit von anderen Begriffsverhältnissen den korrespondierenden Begriff von Klugheit. Grundlegend ist das jeweilige Selbstverständnis des Menschen, das unterschiedliche Auffassungen über das Gute als Ziel des sittlichen Handelns impliziert.

Im Kontext der antik-mittelalterlichen Anthropologie wird das Interesse an eigenem wie fremdem Wohl teleologisch vermittelt gedacht im Begriff einer menschlichen Sozialnatur. Sittlich gutes Handeln und das Wohl des Handelnden (εὐδαιμονία) fallen zusammen, weil Gerechtigkeit im Umgang mit Anderen zu den Verwirklichungsbedingungen des eigenen Glücks gehört. Erst nach dem Wegfall des teleologischen Interpretationsrahmens sittlicher Handlungen ergibt sich ein fundamentaler Zielkonflikt zwischen dem eigenem und dem fremdem Wohl. Die Folge ist ein Überlegungsspielraum, in welchem die elementaren Ziele des sittlichen Handelns erst festzulegen sind. Der eudaimonistische Klugheitsbegriff löst den Zielkonflikt nach der Seite des Individuums auf, während im utilitaristischen Klugheitsbegriff dies nach der Seite des größtmöglichen Glücks der größtmöglichen Zahl geschehen soll. *Kants* populär gewordene Eudaimonismuskritik wie auch die Selbstkennzeichnung des Utilitarismus als einer teleologischen Ethik begünstigen allerdings bis heute das Mißverständnis, als stünde in beiden Fällen das aristotelische Konzept von Klugheit im Hintergrund. Im folgenden soll deutlich werden, weshalb dies ein folgenschwerer Irrtum ist.

Klugheit und praktische Wahrheit bei Aristoteles

Verschiedene Arten von Wahrheit

Grundlegend für die aristotelische Ethikkonzeption ist die These, daß sittliche Urteile objektiv wahr oder falsch, d. h. wirklichkeitsgemäß oder wirklichkeitswidrig, sein können. Praktische Wahrheit bei *Aristoteles* ist eine von fünf verschiedenen Weisen der Wirklichkeitserkenntnis. Gegenüber den auf das Notwendige und sich Gleichbleibende ge-

henden Formen der theoretischen Erkenntnis (Weisheit/σοφία, Wissenschaft/ἐπιστήμη und Intellekt/νοῦς) haben es das Handlungswissen der Klugheit (φρόνησις) und das Herstellungswissen der technischen Vernunft (τέχνη) mit dem zu tun, was sich immer wieder anders verhalten kann.⁴ Ihr Gegenstandsbereich ist das Singuläre, das nicht ableitbar Veränderliche, im gewissen Sinn auch das Noch-nicht-Seiende, erst künftig Wirkliche, sofern es vom Tun des Menschen abhängt. Gleichwohl beruhen Klugheit und technischer Sachverstand nicht auf Vermutungen oder Meinungen und schon garnicht auf bloßen Gefühlen. Es sind Formen wahrer Erkenntnis im Bereich der konkreten Umstände und Folgen des Handelns, mit denen es sich immer wieder anders verhält.⁵ Wegen der Unableitbarkeit der Begleitumstände besitzt aber weder das Handlungswissen noch das Herstellungswissen den Status einer beweisenden Wissenschaft, das heißt eines solchen Wissens, das sich in der Weise des Lehrens auf Andere übertragen lässt. *Aristoteles* definiert beide Fähigkeiten, angesichts des Zufälligen und Regellosen das Richtige zu treffen, als Formen der rechten Vernunft: die technische Vernunft ist “ein mit wahrer Vernunft verbundener Habitus das Herstellens (ἔξις μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς ποιητική),”⁶ die praktische Vernunft “ein untrüglicher Habitus vernünftigen Handelns (ἔξις ἀληθοῦς μετὰ λόγου πρακτική) in den Dingen, die für den Menschen Güter und Übel sind.”⁷ Zweck des Herstellens ist allein seine äußere Wirkung (das hergestellte Produkt) und nicht die dazu erforderliche Tätigkeit selbst, während es beim sittlichen Handeln auf beides ankommt: die Tätigkeit selbst und ihre Folgen.

⁴ Vgl. Aristotelis, *Ethica Nicomachea* VI, 4, Ed. I. Bywater (Oxford 1975); dt. Ausg. hrsg. v. G. Bien (Hamburg 1972); zit. als *EN*.

⁵ Vgl. *EN* VI, 3.

⁶ *EN* VI, 4; 1140a 10.

⁷ *EN* VI, 5; 1140b 5 f.; ebenso 1140b 20 f. Statt μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς findet sich häufig auch die Formel κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον (z. B. 1138b 25; 1144b 23). In der scholastischen Aristotelesrezeption sind die Definitionen von *poesis* und *praxis* formal vereinheitlicht worden zu “recta ratio factibilium” als Definition der ars und zu “recta ratio agibilium” als Definition der prudentia.

Abgrenzung von Platons "Tugendwissen"

1. Unterschied von Klugheit und Weisheit. Mit diesen Unterscheidungen grenzt sich *Aristoteles* in doppelter Hinsicht von *Platon* ab. Zunächst einmal sind Klugheit und Weisheit nicht dasselbe, weil ihr Gegenstandsbereich, das veränderlich Besondere und das unveränderlich Allgemeine, auch die Wahrheitsbedingungen modifiziert. Im Bereich der Praxis ist mit der Erkenntnis des Allgemeinen noch wenig erreicht, und der Graben zwischen der Idee des Guten und der konkreten Bestimmung des sittlich Guten auch durch intuitiv fassbare Leerformeln wie "jedem das Seine!" und "tue Gutes!" nicht zu schließen. Ihnen fehlt die zum Handeln notwendige Kenntnis des Besonderen. Denn gehandelt wird nicht im Allgemeinen, sondern in dieser bestimmten Weise, zu dieser Zeit und unter diesen Umständen. Klugheit geht daher auf die zu beschließende Handlung als das zuletzt Erkennbare und Mögliche (ἐν ταῖς πρακτικαῖς τοῦ ἐσχάτου καὶ ἐνδεχομένου).⁸ Ihr Handlungsbereich, das Einzelne, Konkrete, Besondere, womit es der Handelnde zu tun hat, ist nicht a priori wissbar und ableitbar, sondern in Analogie zur Wahrnehmung immer nur a posteriori feststellbar.⁹

2. Unterschied von Handlungswissen und Herstellungswissen. Aber auch im Hinblick auf die Vergleichbarkeit von Klugheit als Handlungswissen und Herstellungswissen korrigiert *Aristoteles* das *platonische* Bild.¹⁰ Das Wissen des Technikers dient ihm nur als Metapher, während es für *Platon* die höchste Form praktischer Erkenntnis darstellt. Was an Vergleichbarem vorliegt, ist leicht zu sehen: die Notwendigkeit hinreichender Erfahrung, das Urteil über den besonderen Fall, die Sicherheit im Hervorbringen der beabsichtigten Wirkung. Alles das zeichnet den technischen Könnler wie den klug Handelnden aus. Das

⁸ *EN* VI, 12; 1143b 2 f.

⁹ Vgl. *EN* VI, 9; 1142 a 28.

¹⁰ Vgl. dazu D. Thomsen, 'Techne' als Metapher und als Begriff der sittlichen Einsicht. *Zum Verhältnis von Vernunft und Natur bei Platon und Aristoteles* (Freiburg/München 1990).

Gemeinsame von Handeln und Herstellen liegt darin zu wissen, *wie* man etwas macht. Das dazu notwendige Können ist nach der Seite des Wissens rein instrumentell. Es besteht in der Fähigkeit, zu einem gegebenen Zweck die geeigneten Mittel zu finden.

Die Grenzen der Vergleichbarkeit und der nicht-instrumentelle Charakter des sittlichen Wissens sind allerdings schon im *platonischen* Dialog *Hippias Minor*¹¹ angedeutet. Der *sokratische* Standpunkt, dass Tugend Wissen sei und Klugheit die höchste Stufe instrumenteller Vernunft (*βασιλική τέχνη*) führt zu dem Problem, dass ja dann der absichtlich schlecht Handelnde der bessere Mensch sein müsste, wie sich der bessere Techniker durch absichtliche Kunstfehler statt ungewollter Versehen ausweist. Zudem ermöglicht dieselbe Kunstfertigkeit, etwa des Apothekers, die Herstellung medizinischer Heilmittel ebenso wie die Herstellung von tödlichem Gift. Das reine Herstellungswissen verhält sich zu seinen Gebrauchsmöglichkeiten neutral; die Vollkommenheit technischer Könnerschaft liegt allein im Wissen und nicht im Gebrauch, den Wissende von ihr macht. Darum bedarf das Herstellungswissen noch eines außerhalb gelegenen Gesichtspunktes, unter dem es in Gebrauch genommen wird; es bedarf der moralischen Tugend, während der richtige Gebrauch des Handlungswissens schon wesentlich zur Klugheit gehört: “Wenn sich der Kunstfertigkeit die Tugend zugesellen lässt, so lässt die Klugheit solches durchaus nicht zu, [woran deutlich wird], dass sie eine Tugend (*ἀρετή*) ist und keine Kunstfertigkeit (*τέχνη*).”¹²

Das technische Wissen ist so, wie alles reine Wissen, niemals im Stande, die richtige Anwendung von sich her zu garantieren. Darin liegt der Unterschied zur Klugheit. Diese ist vom sittlich Guten her in Gebrauch genommenes Wissen, eben weil die Klugheit nicht einfachhin Wissen, sondern vom Ziel her bestimmtes Wissen ist. Hinsichtlich der Ziele des sittlich guten Handelns gibt es für die Klugheit nichts zu

¹¹ Vgl. Platon, *Hippias Minor*, 374 c.

¹² *EN* VI, 5; 1140b 25 f.

überlegen; diese müssen als Ziele des Überlegens bereits erfasst sein und können nur so weitere praktische Folgerungen motivieren.¹³ Konstitutiv für das Handeln-können in einer überlegten Wahlentscheidung (προαίρεσις) ist daher, dass “eines und dasselbe von der Vernunft bejaht *und* vom Willen erstrebt” ist.¹⁴ Denken allein “bewegt nichts, sondern nur das auf einen zu verwirklichenden Zweck gerichtete Denken.”¹⁵ Konstitutiv für die im Handeln zu realisierende “praktische Wahrheit” ist daher beides: der “Imperativ der Vernunft [muss] *wahr* und das Begehren *recht*”¹⁶ sein.

Praktische Wahrheit und sittlicher Wille

Diese notwendige Verschränkung von Vernunftkenntnis und sittlichem Willen im Handlungswissen der Klugheit kann nach verschiedenen Seiten hin näher bestimmt werden. Auf der Vernunftseite gehören zur Klugheit Wohlberatenheit (εὐβουλία) als die Fähigkeit, mit sich selbst (und anderen) darüber zu Rate zu gehen, welche Möglichkeiten bestehen, einen sittlich guten Zweck handelnd zu realisieren. Eine solche Erkundung von Handlungsmöglichkeiten braucht nicht bloß Zeit, sondern auch ein erhebliches Maß an Findigkeit und Phantasie hinsichtlich möglicher Alternativen und Handlungsfolgen. Wer sich berät, wird aber nicht selten im Zweifel darüber sein, wie er denn nun handeln soll. Die Entscheidung über die beste Möglichkeit zu handeln verlangt darum Urteilsfähigkeit (σύνεσις). Sie wird am ehesten dem zukommen, der dank hinreichender Erfahrung die nötige Sicherheit in der antizipierenden Beurteilung von Handlungsalternativen besitzt. Schließlich gehört zur Klugheit die Fähigkeit, über den Einzelfall richtig zu urteilen (γνώμη), weil es Entscheidungsfälle gibt, die durch die Kenntnis allgemeiner Regeln allein nicht zu beurteilen sind und sich der Sub-

¹³ Vgl. A. W. Müller, *Praktisches Folgern und Selbstgestaltung nach Aristoteles* (Freiburg/München 1982), 270 ff.

¹⁴ *EN* VI, 2; 1139a 26 f.

¹⁵ *EN* VI, 2; 1138a 35 f.

¹⁶ *EN* VI, 2; 1139a 24.

sumption unter bestehende Gesetze oder Regeln entziehen. In solchen Fällen verlangt die Gerechtigkeit, das gesetzlich Vorgeschriebene mit der nötigen Billigkeit (ἐπιεικία) zu beurteilen.¹⁷ Diese kognitiven Fähigkeiten sind notwendige, aber keine hinreichenden Bedingungen der Klugheit. Weitere Dispositionen liegen auf der Antriebsseite des Handelns: Neigungen wie Wohlwollen, Freude am schön und richtig Getanen, vor allem aber Affekte wie Zürnkraft und Mut. Sie sind die Regelungsmaterie der im engeren Sinn ethischen Tugenden.

1. Ambivalenz natürlicher Anlagen und Fähigkeiten. Alle genannten Fähigkeiten, die kognitiven wie die volitiven und emotionalen, sind weder ausreichend für sittliches Handeln, noch sind es sittliche Vorzüge der handelnden Person. Es sind unverzichtbare natürliche Anlagen, die in unterschiedlichem Maße ausgeprägt sein können. Schon Kinder ohne entwickelten Vernunftgebrauch, wie auch bestimmte Tierarten, besitzen von Natur das Vermögen, vorausschauend zu handeln, weshalb man sie klug nennen könnte. Doch sind diese Vorzüge als natürliche Tugend (φυσική ἀρετή) nur Voraussetzung der sittlichen Tugend, weil das sittlich Gute nicht schon in naturgegebenen Vorzügen besteht.¹⁸ Der Unterschied zwischen natürlicher Anlage und sittlicher Tugend zeigt sich besonders deutlich an der Klugheit selbst. Diese wird nicht selten verwechselt mit der bloßen Geschicklichkeit (δαιμότης) in der Bestimmung dessen, was zum Ziel führt.¹⁹ Bloße Geschicklichkeit, wie alle natürlichen Fähigkeiten sonst auch, bleibt jedoch ambivalent; Klugheit (φρόνησις) wird daraus erst in Verbindung mit den sittlichen Tugenden, während Geschicklichkeit ohne die sittlichen Tugenden zur Gerissenheit (πανουργία) werden kann.²⁰

2. Kohärenz sittlicher Dispositionen. Es muss darum eine Vermittlung geben zwischen den naturhaft vorgegebenen Anlagen und dem

¹⁷ Vgl. zu den kognitiven Fähigkeiten *EN VI*, 11.

¹⁸ *EN VI*, 13; 1144b 3–9; vgl. auch *VI*, 7; 1142a 26–28.

¹⁹ Von daher wird der sprachliche Befund verständlich, auch die Extreme des sittlichen guten wie des schlechten Handelns als klug zu bezeichnen.

²⁰ *EN VI*, 13, 1144a 23 ff.

von uns selbst abhängigen Tun, damit aus natürlichen Fähigkeiten sittliche Tugenden werden. Wie sich dieser Übergang vollzieht, erscheint auf den ersten Blick paradox. Es geht immer so zu, sagt Aristoteles, dass wir das, "was wir tun müssen, nachdem wir es gelernt haben, lernen, indem wir es tun."²¹ Wie das Spielen der Zither durch Spielen der Zither erlernt wird, so bildet sich die sittliche Tugend durch das sittliche Handeln heraus. Im Verhältnis der Tugenden zueinander hängt die Blickrichtung auf das Gute vom sittlichen Charakter ab, wie umgekehrt das sachlich angemessene Tun vom richtigen Urteil abhängt. "Die sittliche Tugend macht, dass man sich das rechte Ziel setzt, die Klugheit, dass man die rechten Mittel wählt."²²

Dieser Lernprozess darf jedoch nicht mechanistisch missverstanden werden als Prozess der Selbstkonditionierung durch bloße Wiederholung des immer Gleichen. Gerecht und maßvoll wird nicht schon, wer stets dasselbe tut, indem er Werke der Gerechtigkeit und der Mäßigkeit verrichtet, "sondern wer sie so verrichtet, *wie* es der Gerechte und der Mäßige tun,"²³ was heißen soll: "um der tugendhaften Handlung (εὐπράττειν) selbst willen."²⁴ Erst wo das gute Handeln als Zweck gewollt ist (ἢ εὐπραξία τέλος), kann die natürliche Geschicklichkeit im Auffinden der geeigneten Mittel zur Tugend der Klugheit werden.²⁵ Umgekehrt gilt dasselbe von der Klugheit im Verhältnis zur sittlichen Tugend. Ohne Klugheit ist sittliche Tugend nicht möglich, weshalb die Klugheit in die Definition der Tugend gehört.²⁶ Wer gerecht handeln

²¹ EN II, 2; 1103a 32 f. Hier gilt, was "die natürlichen Verhältnisse auf den Kopf" zu stellen scheint: Erst "die Funktion schafft das Organ." F. Inciarte, "Theorie der Praxis als praktische Theorie. Zur Eigenart der aristotelischen Ethik," in: P. Engelhardt (Hrsg.), *Zur Theorie der Praxis* (Mainz 1970), 60.

²² EN VI, 13; 1144a 7–9.

²³ EN II, 3; 1105b 6 f.

²⁴ EN VI, 13; 1144a 19 f. ἔνεκα τῶν πραττομένων.

²⁵ Vgl. EN VI, 13; 1144a 23–31.

²⁶ Aristoteles definiert die Tugend als "Habitus des Wählens (ἔξις προαιρετική), der die nach uns bemessene Mitte hält und durch die Vernunft bestimmt wird, und zwar so, wie ein kluger Mann ihn zu bestimmen pflegt (ὡν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσσειε)."

will, muss nicht bloß tapfer und maßvoll sein; er muss auch wissen, wie er tapfer und maßvoll wird, vor allem aber, wie er um der Gerechtigkeit willen jeweils handeln soll. Darum schließen die sittlichen Tugenden untereinander den Bezug auf die Tugend der Klugheit ein. Nur die natürlichen Tugenden können getrennt vorkommen (*χωρίζονται ἀλλήλων*), da “nicht ein und dieselbe Person von Natur die gleichen glücklichen Anlagen hat.”²⁷ Für die ethischen Tugenden genügt das nicht; diese sind nur zusammen gegeben, weil niemand “im eigentlichen Sinn tugendhaft sein kann ohne Klugheit, noch klug ohne die sittliche Tugend.”²⁸ Mit dieser expliziten Verhältnisbestimmung der Tugenden untereinander grenzt sich *Aristoteles* noch einmal mehr von *Sokrates* ab, der die Tugenden einseitig nach der Seite des Wissens hin definiert. Die im Mittelalter viel diskutierte wechselseitige Konstituierung der Kardinaltugenden ist daher ganz und gar aristotelisch; die sogenannte “*connexio virtutum*” ist das notwendige Gegenstück zum Begriff der praktischen Wahrheit.

3. Gründe des Scheiterns. Vor allem an den Gründen für das Scheitern praktischer Wahrheit lässt sich erweisen, dass die Einheit von rechter Vernunft und rechtem Wollen aus handlungstheoretischen Gründen notwendig ist. Der Handlungsbezug als das Unterscheidende der Klugheit tritt gegenüber der Unenthaltbarkeit (*ἀκρασία*) und der Schlechtigkeit (*κακία*) noch einmal deutlicher vor den Blick. Wie Klugheit und Unenthaltbarkeit sich ausschließen, so auch Schlechtigkeit und sittliche Tugend. Der Unenthaltbare “weiß, dass das, was er tut, verkehrt ist, und tut es aus Leidenschaft doch.”²⁹ Die Schwierigkeit beim Handeln liegt oft nicht darin, nicht zu wissen, was zu tun wäre. An theoretischem Wissen um das Gute und Schlechte mangelt es dem Unenthaltbaren nicht, solange es nicht zur Anwendung kommt. Die einzelne Handlung hat es jedoch mit konkreten Gütern und Übeln zu

²⁷ *EN* VI, 13; 1144b 33–35.

²⁸ *EN* VI, 13; 1144b 30–32.

²⁹ *EN* VII, 2; 1145b 13 f.

tun, weshalb die Erwartung der damit einhergehenden Lust- oder Unlusterfahrung in der konkreten Handlungssituation die Oberhand gewinnen kann und das Wissen um Gut und Schlecht verdeckt. “Ist man aber einmal durch Lust oder Unlust bestochen, so verbirgt sich einem sofort das rechte Prinzip.”³⁰ Die Affekte Lust und Unlust “sind darum notwendig die Angelpunkte unserer ganzen Theorie.”³¹ Man kann nicht klug und unenthaltensam zugleich sein, weil Klugheit ebenso auf die Einzelhandlung geht und sich gerade hierin als handlungswirksames Wissen (ἐπιτακτική) erweisen muss. Schlechtigkeit wiederum ist nicht bloß dem richtigen Urteil, sondern der sittlichen Tugend überhaupt entgegengesetzt. Sie verbirgt nicht bloß das Prinzip des Urteils im Moment des Handelns, sondern sie verdirbt es weitgehend ganz, während sittliche Tugend es bewahrt. Schlechtigkeit führt hinsichtlich der Prinzipien des Handelns in die Irre,³² weshalb der sittlich Schlechte auch keine Reue zeigt, eben weil er nicht um seine Schlechtigkeit weiß.³³ Schlechtigkeit und Unenthaltensamkeit heben so die Möglichkeit praktischer Wahrheit auf je verschiedene Weise auf, während die Tugend der Klugheit sie bewahrt. Zur Verdeutlichung dieses Unterschiedes benutzt *Aristoteles* einen bildhaften Vergleich: “So gleicht denn der Unenthaltensame einer Stadt, die alles Notwendige beschließt und vorteilhafte Gesetze hat, dieselben aber nicht zur Anwendung bringt . . . Der Schlechte aber gleicht einer Stadt, die ihre Gesetze zwar in Vollzug bringt, aber schlechte Gesetze hat.”³⁴

Normative Unbestimmtheit des aristotelischen Modells?

Eine Schwierigkeit des aristotelischen Konzepts der Klugheit wird nun darin gesehen, dass die Handlungsziele als normative Grund-

³⁰ *EN* VI, 5; 1140b 16 f.

³¹ *EN* II, 3; 1105a 5 f.

³² *EN* VI, 13; 1144a 34–36.

³³ Vgl. die Diskussion des Unterschiedes von Unenthaltensamkeit und Schlechtigkeit in *EN* VII, 9.

³⁴ *EN* VII, 11; 1152a 19–24.

lagen des sittlich richtigen Urteils auffallend unbestimmt bleiben.³⁵ Stattdessen verweist *Aristoteles* auf die Extreme von sittlicher Exzellenz bzw. Schlechtigkeit. Maßstab des sittlich Guten scheint ihm allein der sittlich gute Mensch zu sein, der in eigenen und fremden Angelegenheiten einen Blick für das sittlich geforderte Handeln und das Gelingen des Lebens im Ganzen hat.³⁶ Wenn aber sittliche Schlechtigkeit prinzipienblind macht, wer, außer dem bereits sittlich Guten, soll dann zu erkennen in der Lage sein, was die Prinzipien des sittlichen Handelns sind? Hier scheint doch ein Begründungszirkel vorzuliegen, der sittliches Wissen an die privilegierte Innenperspektive des Wissenden bindet. Und in der Tat lassen sich dafür etliche Belege anführen, so wenn *Aristoteles* darauf verweist, “dass die Qualität des Zieles, das wird uns vorsetzen, von unserer eigenen Qualität abhängt.”³⁷

Prinzipienwissen und konkretes Handlungswissen

Es ist allerdings unzutreffend, dass *Aristoteles* diesen Zirkel nicht bemerkt hätte, wie es unzutreffend ist, dass die von ihm präferierte Klugheitsethik keinerlei Wissen um normative Prinzipien impliziert. So formuliert er als allgemeine Regel, dass man nach der rechten Vernunft handeln muss,³⁸ um dann hinzufügen, dass mit solchen Regeln nicht viel an konkreter Einsicht gewonnen ist.

³⁵ So spricht A. W. Müller (Anm. 13) von einer “Leerstelle” (304) im Hinblick auf die Zielsetzung des Handelns. “Mit einem Kriterium der Wahrheit scheint *Aristoteles* allerdings die Klugheit nicht auszustatten” (303). “In der Absicht ihrer Ergänzung [sei] zu fragen: Welche Ziele *muß*, um gut zu leben, ein Lebewesen verfolgen, das sich selbst Ziele setzen *kann*? Diese Frage hat *Aristoteles*, soweit ich sehe, nicht gestellt” (305). Zur neueren Diskussion ausgehend von den konträren Positionen von P. Aubenque und R. A. Gauthier (siehe Literatur) vgl. G. Fiase, “Aristotle’s phronesis: A true grasp of ends as well as means?” *The Review of Metaphysics* 55 (2001): 323–337.

³⁶ Vgl. *EN* VI, 9. Dafür lassen sich eine Vielzahl von Belegen finden, so wenn *Aristoteles* sagt, was Klugheit sei “können wir daraus lernen, dass wir zusehen, welche Menschen wir klug nennen” (*EN* VI, 5; 1140a 24 f.).

³⁷ *EN* III, 7; 1114b 22–24.

³⁸ *EN* II, 2; 1103b 31 f.

Man meint, Recht und Unrecht zu kennen sei keine besondere Weisheit, da es ja nicht schwer sei, zu verstehen, wovon die Gesetze reden. Aber . . . Recht an sich ist, was in konkret bestimmter Weise getan und zugeteilt wird. Und hier immer das Richtige herauszufinden . . . ist schwer.³⁹

Auch die später so bedeutsame Unterscheidung von natürlichem und positivem Recht⁴⁰ findet sich bei Aristoteles ebenso wie der Hinweis auf konkrete Prinzipien normativer Vernunft. Sittliche Klugheit ist nicht prinzipienlos, sondern in Kenntnis der Prinzipien auf das Einzelne und Konkrete gerichtet.⁴¹ Wer die Tugend der Klugheit besitzt, weiß sehr wohl, dass es bestimmte Handlungsziele gibt, die in sich schlecht sind und darum niemals Ausgangspunkt sittlicher Überlegungen sein können:

Handlungen wie Ehebruch, Diebstahl und Mord schließen schon ihrem Namen nach die Schlechtigkeit in sich. Denn alles dieses und ähnliches wird darum getadelt, weil es in sich schlecht ist, nicht sein Zuviel und Zuwenig. Demnach gibt es hier nie ein richtiges Verhalten . . . Und das Gute und das Schlechte liegt bei solchen Dingen nicht in den Umständen . . . sondern es ist überhaupt gefehlt, irgendetwas *derartiges* zu tun.⁴²

Der Ausschluss bestimmter Handlungstypen wie auch Überlegungsgrenzen normativer Vernunft sind für Aristoteles vielmehr eine Selbstverständlichkeit, was einmal näher zu untersuchen bis vor kurzem noch ein Desiderat der Aristotelesforschung gewesen ist. Erst kürzlich ist dazu ein bahnbrechender Artikel von Stephan Herzberg vorgelegt worden

³⁹ *EN* V, 13; 1137a 9–17, wo als Standardbeispiel auf die ärztliche Heilkunst verwiesen wird.

⁴⁰ Vgl. die Diskussion zum Naturrecht in *EN* V, 10.

⁴¹ *EN* VI, 8; 1141b 14–16.

⁴² *EN* II, 6; 1107a 9–16; vgl. auch III, 1; 1110a 27–29, wo Muttermord als Beispiel für eine schändliche Handlung angeführt wird, zu der man unter keinen Umständen zwingen lassen darf.

mit dem Titel: “Das Lehrstück von den ins sich schlechten Handlungen bei Aristoteles.”⁴³

Das konkrete Gute als Ziel des Handelnden

Der Grund für die nur beiläufige Erwähnung normativer Prinzipien der Klugheit liegt auf der Hand. *Aristoteles* würde in der wie auch immer durchgeführten Begründung normativer Handlungsprinzipien noch keine Lösung der eigentlichen Schwierigkeit des sittlichen Handelns sehen, das Gute im Einzelfall zu kennen und zu verwirklichen, und das wohl zu Recht. Denn Prinzip des Handelns ist weder die Vernunft noch der Wille, sondern der Mensch, “in dem sich beides, Denken und Begehren, verbunden findet.”⁴⁴ Auch eine normative Ethik vermag den Begründungszirkel von Vernunft und Willen nicht zu durchbrechen. Solange normative Prinzipien für den Handelnden nicht die Bewandnis von Zielen annehmen, bleibt ihre Geltung in der Situation des Handelns abstrakt. Die erkenntnistheoretische Schwierigkeit besteht dann darin, wie jemand wissen kann, dass er die falschen Ziele hat, solange er Anderes als das, was ihn gegenwärtig bewegt, nicht als ein alternativ mögliches Ziel seines Handelns erfasst. Hier ist offenbar für *Aristoteles* mehr vonnöten als sittliche Aufklärung und normative Vernunft. Die Frage nach dem Übergang zum praktischen Wissen der Klugheit bleibt auf dem Standpunkt normativer Vernunft noch ungeklärt. Wenn gilt: “das Ziel . . . offenbart sich *nur* dem Tugendhaften (τὸ ἀγαθόν),”⁴⁵ dann ist die wichtigste Frage die, wie man tugendhaft wird. Denn erst wer tugendhaft geworden ist, “urteilt über alles und jedes richtig . . . sieht in jedem Ding das Wahre und ist gleichsam Regel und Maß dafür. Die Menge aber wird durch die Lust betrogen.”⁴⁶ Es besteht zwar kein symmetrisches Verhältnis zwischen dem Wissen der Klug-

⁴³ S. Herzberg, “Das Lehrstück von den in sich schlechten Handlungen bei Aristoteles,” *Theologie und Philosophie* 91 (2016): 196–214.

⁴⁴ *EN* VI, 2; 1139b 5; ebenso *EN* III, 5; 1112b 31 f.

⁴⁵ *EN* VI, 13; 1144a 32–34; ebenso *EN* II, 3; 1104b 30–35.

⁴⁶ *EN* III, 6; 1113a 29–34.

heit und dem Unwissen der Schlechtigkeit. Wer einmal von der Schlechtigkeit losgekommen ist, sieht beides: die Falschheit seiner vormaligen Handlungsprinzipien und die Richtigkeit der neuen Prinzipien.⁴⁷ Auch wird ein sittlicher schlechter Mensch nicht wirklich glücklich sein können, weil seine Absichten dem widersprechen, was eigentlich gut für ihn ist und worum er naturhaft weiß.⁴⁸ Dieser Selbstwiderspruch kann auch schon von Aristoteles her gedeutet werden als Gewissenserfahrung.⁴⁹ Das ändert aber nichts daran, dass teleologisch wie deontologisch, also rein theoretisch begründete Unterscheidungskriterien des sittlich Guten zwar eine metaethische Relevanz zukommt, aber kein unmittelbarer Einfluss auf die Selbstreflexion der handelnden Person.

Gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen ethischer Vernunft

Den Ansatzpunkt für eine Auflösung dieser Schwierigkeit sieht *Aristoteles* in der politischen Ethik, in welcher die Frage nach der Klugheit noch einmal von neuem in den Blick kommt. Weil das politische Leben Rahmenbedingungen setzt, die Einfluss nehmen auf das Leben des Einzelnen, ist die Ethik für *Platon* wie *Aristoteles* wesentlich "Teil der Lehre vom Staat."⁵⁰ Gute Gesetze, richtige Erziehung und Eingewöhnung sind gleichermaßen Voraussetzungen für die Ausbildung sittlicher Urteilsfähigkeit und für ein sittlich gutes Leben. Hier stellt sich dann erneut die Frage nach dem Ausgangspunkt der praktischen Vernunft. Wenn gute Gesetze mit Einsicht verbunden sind, dann muss es jemanden geben, der über diese Einsicht verfügt. Spätestens an diesem

⁴⁷ Darin besteht bereits die Pointe des platonischen Höhlengleichnisses.

⁴⁸ "Der Mann der Tugend steht mit sich selbst in Übereinstimmung und begehrt seiner ganzen Seele nach ein und dasselbe" (*EN IX*, 4; 1166a 13 f.), während von den schlechten Menschen gesagt wird: "Sie liegen mit sich selbst im Zwiespalt, und ihre sinnliche Gier geht nach anderen Dingen als ihr vernünftiger Wille" (1166b 6–8).

⁴⁹ Zur Frage nach dem Gewissen als Quelle moralischer Einsicht vgl. B. Wald, "Gewissen—Grundbegriff des Praktischen," in T. S. Hoffman (Hrsg.), *Grundbegriffe des Praktischen* (Freiburg/München 2014), 72–89.

⁵⁰ So gleich zu Beginn der *Nikomachischen Ethik* (*EN I*, 1; 1194b 10), wie am Schluß (*X*, 10).

höchsten Punkt des Überlegens, wo das gemeinsame Gut aller (κοινῆ συμφέρον)⁵¹ in den Blick kommen soll, muss es die Klugheit als handlungswirksames Wissen schon geben. Deshalb ist sie für *Aristoteles* wie schon für *Platon* zuallererst eine Tugend des Herrschers,⁵² während den Beherrschten an ihrer Stelle die wahre Meinung (δόξα ἀληθής) genügen kann.⁵³ Mag nun die Vernunft als wahre Meinung durch Erziehung und Eingewöhnung in Fleisch und Blut übergegangen sein, in letzter Hinsicht kann sie nicht auf Gewöhnung beruhen. An irgendeiner Stelle muss ein Anfang gemacht sein, von dem aus das Überlegen und Wollen der Anderen angeleitet und berichtigt werden kann. Dieser Anfang wird, wenn nicht in jedem einzelnen, so doch an prominenter Stelle vorhanden sein müssen: in gewohnheitsbildenden Gesetzen, aber mehr noch, in der Klugheit derer, die Verantwortung für das Ganze tragen.

Rehabilitierung der Klugheit als Grundbegriff der Ethik

Auch wenn die Notwendigkeit der Klugheit aus handlungstheoretischen Gründen anerkannt wird, ist ihr Status als Grundbegriff der Ethik weiterhin umstritten. Das Projekt einer "Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie"⁵⁴ hat im Blick auf die Klugheit gegensätzliche Positionen hervorgebracht. Dazu gehört die sozialkritische Erneuerung der *kantischen* Unterscheidung von instrumenteller, pragmatischer und moralischer Vernunft in der Diskursethik (*Jürgen Habermas, Otto Apel*).

⁵¹ Aristotelis, *Politica*, III, 3; 1276a 13, Ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford 1980); dt. Ausg. hrsg. v. E. Rolfes, G. Bien (Hamburg 1981); zit. als *Pol.* Das folgende 4. Kapitel des III. Buches ist der Anknüpfungspunkt für die mittelalterliche Diskussion um die Klugheit als Herrschertugend.

⁵² ἡ δὲ φρόνησις ἄρχοντος ἴδιος ἀρετὴ μόνη (*Pol.* III, 4; 1277b 24 f.).

⁵³ *Pol.* III, 4; 1277b 28 f. Schon in der *Nikomachischen Ethik* kommt Aristoteles auf die Notwendigkeit der politischen Klugheit zu sprechen. Sofern "in den irdischen und menschlichen Dingen ein architektonisches, leitendes Vermögen" vonnöten ist, sind die "Klugheit und die Staatskunst im Grunde derselbe Habitus, jedoch ist ihr Sein oder ihr Begriff nicht ein und derselbe" (*EN* VI, 8; 1141b 23 f.).

⁵⁴ Vgl. M. Riedel, *Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie*, Bd. 1: *Geschichte, Probleme, Aufgaben* (Freiburg 1972).

Darin geht es vor allem um den richtigen Ausgangspunkt für die Rechtfertigung ethischer Grundnormen. Die Notwendigkeit, mit *Kant* zwischen pragmatischer Klugheit und moralischer Vernunft zu unterscheiden, wird damit begründet, daß “der vor-christliche Grieche” (*Aristoteles*) “eine grundsätzliche Spannung und einen möglichen Konflikt zwischen *strategisch geschickter Selbstbehauptung* und *kommunikativer Verständigungsorientierung*, zwischen Selbstliebe und Nächstenliebe noch nicht [sieht].” Dieses “Problembewusstsein wird erst das Christentum in die abendländische Ethik und Politik einbringen.”⁵⁵ Wenn das so wäre, wie eine von der lutherischen Orthodoxie abhängige Philologie meint, hätte die Klugheit durch das Christentum ihren Tugendcharakter verloren. *Piepers* Rehabilitierung der Klugheit im Geist des *Thomas von Aquin* belegt das Gegenteil. Wie *Kant* unterstellt auch der moralische Präscriptivismus von *Richard Hare* eine grundlegende Spannung zwischen normativer Vernunft und pragmatischer Handlungsorientierung. Doch anders als *Kant* ist *Hare* der Ansicht, dass der Rekurs auf das “prudentielle Interesse” des Handelnden unverzichtbar ist, um die “Lücke” zwischen moralischen Urteilen und Handlungsdispositionen zu schließen.⁵⁶

Die Rehabilitierung der Klugheit als sittlichem Grundbegriff im Neoaristotelismus war dagegen von Anfang an mit einer Kritik an den handlungstheoretischen und moralphilosophischen Prämissen der *kantischen* Ethik verbunden. Wesentliche Anstöße sind hier von *Elisabeth Anscombe* ausgegangen, die im angelsächsischen Raum auch ein ganz

⁵⁵ D. Böhler, “Kosmos-Vernunft und Lebens-Klugheit,” in: K.-O. Apel, D. Böhler, G. Kaltenbach (Hrsg.), *Praktische Philosophie/Ethik: Dialoge* (Funk-Kolleg), Bd. 1 (Frankfurt a. M. 1984), 321 (Herv. von D. B.). Man sieht sofort, dass Böhler der lutherisch-kantischen Sicht des Christentums folgt, wenn er in der Anmerkung den neutestamentlichen Begriff der *Agápē* als grundlegend “für uneigennütziges Handeln” versteht und darauf verweist, dass “dieser Begriff der selbstlosen Liebe . . . zum *griechischen* Geist quersteht.”

⁵⁶ Vgl. Kapitel 11: “Klugheit, Moral und Supererogation,” in: R. M. Hare, *Moralisches Denken: seine Ebenen, seine Methode, sein Witz* (Frankfurt a. M. 1992), 258–277.

neues Interesse für die Ethik des *Thomas von Aquin* geweckt hat.⁵⁷ Deren unmittelbare Weiterführung mit Wirkung auf die kontinental-europäische wie die nordamerikanische Philosophie ist vor allem das Werk ihrer Schülerin *Philippa Foot*. Deren auf *Aristoteles* und *Thomas von Aquin* gestützte Rehabilitierung der praktischer Rationalität dient dem Nachweis, dass Vernunft auch ohne das Hilfsmittel des "prudentiellen Interesses" praktisch sein kann, weil die Verwirklichung des Guten aus ihrer objektiven Beziehung auf das Glück des Menschen als vernünftig erkannt werden kann.⁵⁸ *Robert Spaemann* hat diesen Gedanken durch die Klärung des Verhältnisses von Wollen und Sollen philosophisch weitergeführt und sowohl gegenüber der Diskursethik der Frankfurter Schule wie dem utilitaristischen Moralprinzip des Konsequentialismus verteidigt.⁵⁹ Nimmt man die hermeneutisch aufschlussreichen Interpretationen von *Josef Pieper* zum Sinn des moralischen Handelns und der Klugheit bei *Thomas von Aquin* hinzu, dann sollte es heute wieder möglich geworden sein, die Missverständnisse zu vermeiden, die seit *Luther* und *Kant* das Verständnis der Klugheit als ethischen Grundbegriff verstellt haben.⁶⁰

**PRUDENCE. THE BASIC CONCEPT OF
THE PRACTICAL IN ARISTOTLE**

SUMMARY

The article begins by recalling the most important understandings associated with the term *prudence* in the history of philosophy. Then it introduces the Aristotelian concept

⁵⁷ Den Anstoß gab Anscombes Artikel "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33 (1958): 1–19; dies., *Intention* (Oxford 1979).

⁵⁸ Ph. Foot, *Virtues and vices and other essays in moral philosophy* (Oxford 1978); dies., *Natural Goodness* (Oxford 2001).

⁵⁹ R. Spaemann, *Glück und Wohlwollen* (Stuttgart 1989).

⁶⁰ J. Pieper, "Die Wirklichkeit und das Gute" (1935), in: ders., *Werke in acht Bänden* (Hrsg. B. Wald), Bd. 5 (Hamburg 1997), 48–98; ders., "Traktat über die Klugheit" (1937), in: ders., *Werke*, Bd. 4 (Hamburg, 1996), 1–42.

of prudence linked to practical truth—prudence seen in contrast to wisdom and knowledge of manufacturing. The article discusses various forms of rational knowledge associated with the right will, and proves the need of linking prudence to all the other ethical virtues based on moral principles. It emphasizes the problem of how to relate general principles to specific actions which involve particular goods. For resolving this problem, the article refers to Aristotle who sees the solution in political ethics which has a significant impact on individual behavior; consequently, good law and proper education are considered to be necessary conditions which allow to form the moral judgment skills for providing a morally good life. The article concludes with the claim that the proper field to capture the specificity of prudence includes the theory of human action and that of human morality.

KEYWORDS: prudence, Aristotle, truth, wisdom, knowledge, will, virtue, morality, action, ethics, judgment, skill.

