

THE QUO/QUOD FALLACY

IN THE DISCUSSION OF REALISM

by

John Deely

University of St Thomas, Houston

Part I, *Czlowiek w Kulturze* 19 (2007), 389–425;

Part 2, *Czlowiek w Kulturze* 20 (2008), 289–316.

John Deely

University of St Thomas, Houston, USA

The Quo/Quod Fallacy in the Discussion of Realism (Part One)

1. Setting the Stage

Philosophers of the Latin Age¹ distinguished between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*, meaning what exists in our awareness also independently of it and what exists but only dependently upon and within our awareness. They took little interest in the latter except in what concerns logic as a subject matter and instrument of thought for the advancement of knowledge of reality as *ens reale*. When philosophy transitioned from Latin to the national languages of modern times, especially French, German, and English, a new terminology developed, but the modern development in the old terminology amounted to this: that *ens reale*, things in themselves, are unknowable, while what the mind itself fashions, *ens rationis*, this alone is directly given and knowable as such in our experience.

This doctrine that the mind from its beginnings in sensation forms mental representations or “ideas”, and that these representations precisely as products of the mind’s activity are alone the direct objects of

¹ “Latin Age” is a more proper name for the medieval era when Latin functioned as the mainstream language of thought, from Augustine (AD354–430) to Poinsett (1589–1644): see J. Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding. The first postmodern survey of philosophy from ancient times to the turn of the 20th century*, Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2001: Part II, and J. Deely, *A New Determination of the Middle Ages*, in J. P. Doyle (ed.), *The Conimbricenses. Some Questions on Signs*, Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001.

awareness and judgment, came to be called "idealism". Kant objected to the doctrine on the grounds that it is too subjective, to remedy which he distinguished ideas as subjective qualities from objects known on the basis of ideas. Thus ideas are the foundation of relations to objects and objects are the termini of idea-based relations, the formation of which is mediated by the a-priori forms of understanding which preserve necessity in the objective order, but without opening any way beyond the objective order to the world of things in themselves which Kant, along with Descartes and Locke, deemed unknowable directly or "in themselves".

As a synthesis of the development of "rationalism" after Descartes and "empiricism" after Locke, a synthesis based on the assumption common to the rationalists and the empiricists that the whole of human knowledge is based on mental representation, Kant contrasted his view to the early modern development as an "objective idealism" supplanting the "subjective idealism" of the opening modern century; and there the debate settled with Hegel as a lone modern voice crying in the wilderness the message that an unknowable thing in itself is a *contradictio in adiectis*, is a claim that cannot hold.

Yet the moderns clung to their notion of "representationalism", as many came to call it; which amounts to holding, on the older terminology, that *ens reale* is unknowable and only *ens rationis* can be truly and directly known. Thus the phenomena are a veil between the what the mind knows and things existing in themselves.

By the late 19th century, idealism as the modern mainstream position was well-established, as can be seen, for example, in the early editions of Lalande. When Pope Leo XIII issued his 1879 call for the restoration of the doctrine of St Thomas Aquinas in philosophy, it was with the concern above all to re-establish the knowability of *ens reale*, to bring it out from under the erasure that modern philosophy had place upon it, and in order to restore the notion of *praeambula fidei*, of truths naturally knowable which dispose the human mind to accept the existence of God and embrace religious faith.

So began the final phase of the modern struggle between realism and idealism, in terms that admitted of no middle way. Maritain saw the battle in just such terms, and he was hardly alone:

“Let us make this point once more: realism and idealism are not transcended. There is no higher position that goes beyond and reconciles them. A choice must be made between the two, as between the true and the false. Every realism that comes to terms with Descartes and Kant shall see one day that it belies its name”².

With the battle line thus and truly drawn, however, combatants on both sides failed to see that, once the choice had been made, the “yes or no” uttered, even in favor of realism, there was still another mountain to be climbed, a hill to be taken. This farther frontier had already been indicated by a Latin author Maritain regarded as his main teacher after Thomas himself, namely, John of St Thomas or John Poinsoot (as his family first knew him), when he advised that the study of signs requires a standpoint precisely that transcends the division of being into *ens reale* and *ens rationis*, for the sign as the universal instrument of knowledge, sensory and intellectual alike, works in both orders³. It was not a question of coming to terms with Descartes and Kant, but a question of coming to terms with the notion of being as the formal object distinguishing intellectual knowledge from the formal objects distinguishing the internal and the external senses, *ens primum cognitum*, or “being as first known”, which does not equate with *ens reale* precisely because the *first division* the intellect sees within *ens primum cognitum* is the difference between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*. But of course, this could only be if being as first known already contained both in a confused way.

So we may say that the new Thomists, the “Neothomists” as history would come to call them, despite their own misgivings about this nomenclature⁴, were too single-minded in their concern to restore the knowability of *ens reale*. They accepted too readily the terms of the modern debate over the “problem of the external world” in allowing themselves to think of the external world as *ens reale*, in effect tacitly

² J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite, or The Degrees of Knowledge*, New York: Scribner's, 100.

³ J. Poinsoot, *Tractatus de Signis*, 1632, Book I, Question 1, 117/18–118/18, esp 118/6–9.

⁴ Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, 342n200 and *passim*.

relegating *ens rationis* to the order of psychological subjectivity in the modern sense.

What was needed, however, was something more, not only a restoration of the knowability of the things in themselves or *ens reale*, but also a restoration of *ens rationis* to the order of objective being *alongside ens reale*, the difference being that, while both as cognized or known are necessarily *objective*, the latter is not *only* objective but subjective as well, that is, existing "in itself" as a world of substances or subjects of existence involved in real relationships prior to and independently of the mind's working.

At the root of the modern problem was the doctrine of *Nominalism* reduced to its central tenet that the only relations there are that do not reduce to the subjectivity of particular things related are mind-dependent relations. Poinset alone among the Latins seems fully to have realized that the doctrine of relation is the key to the doctrine of signs as relations, in seeing that what makes a relation belong to the order of *ens reale* or *ens rationis* has nothing to do with the essence of relation as an entitative mode over and above subjectivity in every case (or "suprasubjective"), but rather depends on the *circumstances surrounding the relation*.

Thus, while there are indeed mind-dependent relations, as in grammar or logic and many other places, what makes these relations mind-dependent has nothing to do with the nature of relation as a suprasubjective mode and everything to do with the circumstances under which a given relation is formed or sustained. One and the same relation, say that of a dinosaur bone to the dinosaur whose bone it is or way, can belong to *ens reale* while the dinosaur lives and to the order of *ens rationis* when the paleontologist contemplates the bone and classifies it correctly: yet the *relation itself* is the same in both cases.

So, Poinset realized, signs as consisting in triadic relations necessarily participate in this indifference to the difference between *ens reale* and *ens rationis* that defines the nature of relation in its singularity among the categories of *ens reale* (being the only nature verifiable according to its positive structure outside of as well as within the Aristotelian categorial list), so that objects as precisely what signs signify

too will be sometimes real things and sometimes not, again depending upon circumstances. But this subtle point in turn depends upon an insight best developed among the Scotists, namely, that *fundamentum* and *terminus* as parts of any relation depend for their being as such on the relation itself, not on the subjective status of that which is fundament or that which is terminus. The very same triangular shape of A which is foundation for its real relation of similarity to B when B exists continues unchanged as a subjective quality of A when B ceases to exist except in one particular: upon B's ceasing, A's "unchanged" subjective shape *is no longer a fundament*; and the same remarks apply to the shape of A and B as terminus in this mutual relation of similarity.

Thus the difference between objects and things lies in the fact that the former necessarily but the latter only contingently involve a relation to a knower; but the key to understanding how the former can exist as known and publicly known regardless of their status in the order of *ens reale* as things lies in the fact that the essential status of an object is to be the terminus of a cognitive relation, while this status may or may not attach to a thing in the order of *ens reale*. When a thing happens to be or become known, it acquires this further status of object, not as a phenomenon veiling the thing, but precisely as a phenomenon revealing the thing, a phenomenon wherein the thing as object *represents itself*. There is thus no conflict between being an object and being a thing, just as there is no necessity that every thing be known or every object be real. Whether the object belong to the order of *ens reale* or to the order of *ens rationis*, it stands as object in either case as the terminus of a relation by nature suprasubjective.

Now Maritain knew of these texts from Poinso's *Treatise on Signs* upon which I draw, and he puzzled over them long and hard, though finally without quite getting to the bottom of them. He came close, as I have elsewhere⁵ had occasion to show; and it is to his credit that he stands virtually alone among the neothomists in realizing the importance of Poinso's work to the enterprise of Thomism in laying

⁵ J. Deely, *Semiotic in the Thought of Jacques Maritain*, "Recherche Sémiotique/Semiotic Inquiry", 1986, 6.2, 1-30.

claim to being a *philosophia perennis*. So may I say that my aim in this essay is to close, if I can, what little distance was left at the time of his death in 1973 between his own writings on the subject of concepts as signs and the teaching Poinot had consigned to his Latin texts by the time of his own death in 1644.

It all turns on a simple but subtle and elusive point, which may be reduced to clarity thus: what the moderns called “ideas” and “images” the Latins called by a whole range of about thirteen synonyms⁶; but the principal term in the whole list was unquestionably, at least in the Thomist tradition, the term *species expressa*. I will discuss this terminology shortly, but here for these opening paragraphs let me make only the simple point that *species* as the underlying notion admitted of two varieties, the *species impressa* and the *species expressa*, only the latter of which — this point cannot be emphasized too strongly, and it is one that Maritain first missed completely (in 1924) and later corrected (by 1959), but not without some remaining confusion, confusion central to topic of this present essay, as we will see in Section 6 below — functions in the order of signs formally speaking. And this latter *species*, the *species expressa*, functions in knowledge not as *id quo* but as *id in quo*; only the *species impressa* is an *id quo* for knowing, and an *id quo* in this context is never a sign, while an *id in quo* always is; and a concept as such, whether perceptual or intellectual (the point on which Maritain slips), is *always* a *species expressa*.

An *id in quo* in the sense we are considering is a subjective quality in the sense of a psychological state on the basis of which an organism organizes and interprets objectively the things of its surroundings that awaken its awareness in external sensation — that is to say, a quality unique in that it cannot be except as and by provenating a relation to what is other than itself.

External sensation prescissively considered (this is not the way sensation is experienced, of course, but only as it reveals itself under a logical analysis of factors involved) involves *species* only as *species*

⁶ In J. Deely, *Locke's Proposal for Semiotics and the Scholastic Doctrine of Species*, “The Modern Schoolman”, 1993, 3 (March), 165-188, I tried to identify the complete list of terms on this point. I would certainly welcome any additions to the list there that I may have missed in the wide-ranging Latin literature.

impressa, and *species* of this sort emphatically *are not* ideas, and are not even mental representations at all in this beginning stage of awareness. They are simply the specifications determined in causal interactions which make the animal selectively aware of this rather than that, or vice-versa.

With this much as preliminary, let us turn to the discussion of realism in philosophy, and especially in Thomistic philosophy, in order to clear the air of a pervading confusion that has resulted from the failure of the late modern Thomists to grasp this crucial difference between *species* as *impressa* or “quo”, on the one hand, and *species* as *expressa* or “in quo”, on the other hand. Once this clarification has been made, it becomes possible to understand that realism can accommodate reality as a social construction without losing the ability to show that the mind is open to knowing as well things as they are in themselves prior to and in part (though hardly entirely) independent of social constructions.

2. Specifying Forms, Impressed and Expressed: Terms without Equivalence in Modern Philosophy

This term “*species*” is in some ways unfortunate for late modern — or even postmodern — discussions, because for us today the term “species” is a biological term that has little directly to do with epistemology, but refers primarily to what Aristotle called the diversity of “natural kinds” such as the birds and fishes, camels, zebras, and monkeys. So let us be clear that *species* (the specifying forms of middle to late Latin thought), are not the “species” of biological and genetic investigation. This is a point that needs to be marked terminologically. I will mark it in this text visually by always placing the cognitive *species* in italic font. Aurally, I would suggest marking the point by always pronouncing the cognitive *species* as “spay-chee-ehs”⁷, and never as “spee-sees”. The point in summary is that the usual understanding of

⁷ As I suggested pronunciation-wise in J. Deely, *Introducing Semiotic. Its history and doctrine*, Bloomington, in Indiana University Press, 1982, 45.

the word “species” in English *today* concerns biology, while the Latin term “*species*” in the expressions *species impressa* and *species expressa* does not refer to entitatively natural kinds but to the specification of cognitive powers to become aware of this rather than that.

So what is a *species*? Quite simply, as Maritain and Poinset tell us, it is an *intentional form*, in contrast to, but *not* wholly independent of, a subjective modification or *entitative* or *physical form* as substructure. It is always accompanied in fact by a subjective modification, a physical change, but *it does not consist in that* accompanying physical change. Rather, what is distinctive about it is that the entitative modification with which it is correlated or from which it provenates *always* gives rise to and principally consists in a relation to some object, either actually (in the case of psychological states) or virtually (in the case of material objects which cannot exist otherwise than as involved in relations of interaction and, under the proper scrutiny, provide knowledge about what they have undergone). In other words, a *species* is a modification of subjectivity precisely inasmuch as the modification contains or codifies or *specifies* information. I do not think that this decisive and crucial point is particularly well conveyed when *species* is translated, accurately mayhap, but still obtusely, as an “intentional form”.

The best translation of “*species*”, in the case of cognition, is not as “intentional form” but as “specifying form”, “specification”, or “specifier”. It is ironic that the very etymology of the term in Latin suggested, all along the tortuous history of this concept in Thomism, especially Neothomism⁸ (since transition to the national languages

⁸ I don't know of a single important figure in the late modern Thomistic revival who accepted for himself the label “Neothomist”. Maritain and Gilson rejected it with particular vigor. But here it is not a question of how they thought of themselves, but of where they appear in history and how that place should be named. I doubt that Porphyry or Proclus thought of themselves as “Neoplatonists”, any more than Gilson or Maritain thought of themselves as “Neothomists”. Still, the “Neoplatonists” were the Platonists who belong to a definite historical epoch after Plato, with its distinctive preoccupations and problems. Just so, the “Neothomists” were the Thomists of the revival of Thomism called into being by Pope Leo XIII's 1879 encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*. This revival was distinctively concerned to vindicate, against the modern idealist doctrine that the mind knows only what the mind itself makes, the rights of the Thomistic doctrine that the mind is capable of a grasp of

of modernity was essential to its success), to say nothing of the late-modern development of “phenomenology”, the correct and best translation for the term in question. Yet this transparent rendering of *species* as ‘specifying form’ nonetheless eluded thinkers over the whole course of the neothomistic revival! Maritain felt “that the most suitable expression to render *species* would be presentative or objectifying form”, adding in a footnote:

“The expression ‘presentative form’ would be our preference, if the word ‘presentative’ evoked the idea of *making present* rather than the idea of *presenting*, a meaning that is rather ill suited to the intelligible *species impressa* (it is the concept that *presents* the object to the mind). The expression ‘objectifying form’ is better, but only on the condition that the thing itself is understood to be made object through that form (radically only, in the intelligible *species impressa*; expressly, in the concept). It is to be feared that the habits of modern language lead to misunderstanding on this score”⁹.

As is usual with Maritain, all of these musings bear on what is essential to understanding the point. Yet it still seems to me that, in the case before us, the most central function of the *species* is that it *specifies* an awareness to have for its content this rather than that objectivity, this rather than that feature known. For this is the one function (unlike ‘being presentative’) that transcends even the distinction between *species impressa* and *expressa*, and that has its origin not inside but outside the animal organism. For these *species* or intentional forms of medieval Latin thought were conceived of, correctly, as existing in the environment itself prior to the arising of animal awareness and

things as they exist in *ens reale*. This was the modern meaning of “realism”, as also of the post-Aquinian “scholastic realism” that Peirce identified as belonging to the distinctive essence of pragmatism in its difference from pragmatism and modern philosophy generally (C. S. Peirce, *What Pragmatism Is*, “The Monist”, 1905, 15 (April), CP 5.423; discussed at length in Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, Chap. 15, “Pragmaticism is not Pragmatism”, p. 616ff.). The Thomists who were preoccupied with the claims of modern idealism, and especially who championed realism against that idealism, are, as a historical group and intellectual movement of the late 19th through the 20th century, the “Neo-Thomists” (from Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, 342n200).

⁹ Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 115.

as essential thereto (even if incorrectly conceived as free-floating, unaccompanied necessarily by any subtending and supporting entitative structures).

Maritain waxes eloquent on the point:

“Even when *esse intentionale* has nothing to do with the world of knowledge, it is already a way for forms to escape from this entombment in matter [which characterizes the subjectivity of material substance]. The scholastics often gave the name *esse spirituale* to this existence (which is not for itself), the tendency-existence whereby forms, other than their own, come upon things. We think it would be of great interest to philosophers to study the role that *esse intentionale* plays in the physical world itself, wherein there undoubtedly arises from such existing, that sort of universal animation whereby motion puts into bodies more than they are, and colours the whole of nature with a semblance of life and feeling undoubtedly derived from it”¹⁰.

He goes on, in a note to the text¹¹, to suggest that the physical action of a mover upon a moved “passes into the mobile thing *secundum esse intentionale*”, providing a point of view from which “it would become possible to hold Galileo’s principle of inertia to be valid” from the point of view of philosophy of nature as well as from the point of view of physico-mathematical science¹².

Yves Simon, who pushes the entitative/intentional distinction harder than perhaps anyone else on the late modern scene, insists¹³ that the term “‘idea’ alone can express with the needed vividness the meaning of the Aristotelian εἶδος and of the scholastic *species*”. This rendering enables him to claim that¹⁴, while “other philosophies know of ideas born in the soul, e.g., intellectual representations consequent upon images, images consequent upon sense impressions”, only “Aristote-

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 115n.

¹² I am simply reporting, not subscribing to, this remark by Maritain. I have no idea whether he was familiar or not with the contemporary work of Analiese Maier. But I am sure that Maier has written nothing on the prospect of physiosemosis, to which the remarks of Maritain have some pertinence.

¹³ *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, trans. Y. R. Simon et al., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955, 613–614n4.

¹⁴ Ibid., 615.

lianism knows of ideas that are initial in an absolute sense and are not born in the soul but in nature. The sensorial idea is the Aristotelian answer to the problem of the initial connection between physical nature and the soul. Those things are impossible to explain if we translate *species sensibilis* by sensible 'species' or 'form' or anything short of the thought-provoking power of the word 'idea'."

Thus, when the scholastics distinguish between the initial stimulus to external sense as a *species impressa* and the perceptual response of internal sense a *species expressa* or "phantasm", Simon would have us say that we are dealing with impressed ideas initially and ones developed by the animal organism itself in response as expressed ideas! This way of speaking is not only vivid, but sounds at least as much like Locke as it does Aristotle and Aquinas. What differentiates Aristotle and Thomas from Locke and Hume in the matter of sensations, however, is that the stimulus specifying what the sense will objectify in its interaction with the physical surroundings (for *sensatio est actio sensibilis in sensu*, after all) is precisely *not* an idea or representative form at all but quite simply the effect of a stimulus here and now active upon a sense organ and placing it in relation with the here and now active source existing on the same material level as the sense organ itself being transactionally stimulated and "specified" toward the source of the stimulation. The "form" carried by the stimulus *specifies* the response of the organ to objectify this rather than that aspect of the surrounding environment, nothing more. It is not an 'idea'. Only *species expressae* fit that notion.

Thus the word *species* not only has no equivalent in the languages of modern philosophy, as Maritain noted, but also:

"For the philosophers, the notion of *species* is not, any more than the notion of *esse intentionale*, an explanatory factor already known and already clarified by some other means. ***Species* are, as it were, the abutments upon which an analysis of the given leans for support, the reality of which the mind, by that very analysis, is compelled to recognize — with certainty**, if the analysis itself has proceeded correctly and under the constant pressure of intelligible necessities. Some determination must, of necessity, actually supervene upon the knower, thanks to which a thing that is not the knower will

exist in the knower *secundum esse intentionale* (not as an accident in a substance) and by which the thing will be able to exist with the very same active superexistence which is the existence of the knower that has become the thing known. The *species* is nothing but that internal determination¹⁵.

And he refers us to St Thomas on this point¹⁶. The intentionality, however, comes from the relation which has as its terminus whatever is known, while the “internal determination” is a subjective qualitative modification or state that provenates the relation in question as fundament thereof.

2.1. Why the Modern Notion of Intentionality Is Crippled

So we see the profound difference between the *esse intentionale* of the Thomistic development and the intentionality proposed by Husserl. For the Husserlian intentionality *begins with* the consciousness as being directed toward or related to its object, whereas, on the contrary¹⁷, the Thomistic intentionality “brings *the other* into me ‘beginning with’ its own otherness and makes me be the other”. Intentionality transcends the difference between physical and psychological subjectivity, between the “inner” and “outer” of consciousness. Husserl has missed the distinction that Simon blurred between intentional forms or *species impressae* originating in the environment and conveyed to the knower in sensation prior to any active involvement of the soul in forming ideas, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the intentional forms or *species expressae* thanks to which the subjectivity of the knower enters into the higher processes of structuring the world of objects. This process Husserl well sees is according to the knower’s own constitution of needs and desires, but his approach is unable to take account of how and why the process is as well according to the demands of the physical constitution of the environment acting upon the physical organism of some animal to make that animal perform

¹⁵ Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 115, bold face added.

¹⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, in Busa ed. by vol. 2, 98.

¹⁷ Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 104.

aware of some aspects of the environment rather than others. Only then is the animal faced with the need of interpreting that initial awareness by turning it to the organism's advantage in the struggle for existence here and now.

Indeed it is in interpreting, first perceptually, later (for semiotic animals) intellectually as well, that intentionality realizes its function in consciousness. But the process is two-sided, not one-sided. The intentionality as recognized by phenomenology can be compared to the situation of a soldier who has lost a leg in the modern philosophical war between realism and idealism (and Sokolowski has proven that a one-legged man can still hop, even if walking is beyond him without prosthesis¹⁸). Husserlian intentionality knows only the *species expressa*, without articulating or even realizing its dependency in formation upon a *species impressa*, first one formed by the physical environment in sensation, then one formed by the understanding's own activity in transcending perception.

Hence "it so often seems to happen to E. Husserl," opines Maritain, that "he seems to be brushing the skirts of the true nature of knowledge," yet "in the final reckoning he always misses the great secret":

"He does not see that knowledge has no need to get outside of itself to attain the thing that exists or can exist outside knowledge. ... For the very glory of the immateriality of thought is to be a higher life which perfects itself by that which is not it, itself, even without going outside itself, by an intelligible reality whose fertile substance the mind grasps through the senses, that fertile substance drawn by the senses from actual, existing (material) things. The way to make the proper mystery of knowledge vanish is precisely to get rid of extramental being, to suppress those ontological (metalogical) "for themselves",

¹⁸ See Sokolowski's remarks on "realism" (*Introduction to Phenomenology*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 21, 216), which he does not seem to realize are fully compatible with the Kantian sense of 'realism' according to which we know only *that* there are 'things in themselves' without being able to penetrate to an awareness of *what* they are in their own constitution as obtaining subjectively prior to or independently of consciousness. Cf. Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, 559–565.

fully independent of my thought¹⁹, and which my thought makes its own by making itself them”²⁰.

There is thus no room to doubt that the very notion of intentionality, in passing from the hands of the medieval scholastic realists to the hands of phenomenologists and analysts via Brentano has, from a Thomistic point of view, “lost its effectiveness and value”, exactly as Maritain says, for the reason that the whole meaning of *esse intentionale* was originally conceived through an opposition to and contrast with the *esse entitativum* of material substances:

“Intentionality is not only that property of my consciousness of being directed transparency, of aiming at objects in the depths of itself. Above all, **intentionality is a property of thought**, a prerogative of its immateriality, **whereby** being in itself, posited “outside thought”, i.e., **being which is fully independent of the act of thought, becomes a thing existing within thought**, set up for thought and integrated into its own act through which, from that moment, they both exist in thought with a single, self-same suprasubjective existence”²¹.

2.2. Toward a Postmodern Context for Understanding Intentionality

When Maritain says, after all this²², that “the problem of thing and object” is the heart of the matter, he cannot be accused of exaggeration. “Every realism”, he warns²³, “that comes to terms with Descartes and Kant” — esteemed by Husserl as the “two great pioneers” of his new approach, remember — “shall one day see that it belies its name.” Yet, like Husserl dealing with the nature of intentionality, Maritain himself, in dealing with the relation of thing and object, “in the final reckoning misses the great secret”. For he casts the matter in terms of an either/or choice between realism and idealism in the post-Cartesian

¹⁹ So we have from Maritain a whole series of synonyms for *esse entitativum*.

²⁰ Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 104.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

²² *Ibid.*, 107.

²³ *Ibid.*, 100.

context, without ever realizing that the “problem of thing and object” transcends the terms of that *context* of choice.

Yet his very admonition should have alerted him to a fuller dimension of the problem²⁴: “It is a serious matter for a philosopher not to be able to distinguish between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*.” Indeed it is. One might almost call it that part of the human condition which philosophy was born to remedy, the very difference *in potentia* or *virtualiter* between the brute and the rational animal, the animal capable of knowing that there are signs and not only of using signs (the semiotic animal). And yet the remedy cannot be effective if the terms of the distinction are not fully understood. And the terms of this distinction between *ens reale* and *ens rationis* cannot be understood with sufficient fullness if the animal contribution to rationality is minimized, denigrated, or marginalized (as it typically is among all the moderns, not merely the neothomists) in the theoretical analysis of “ideogenesis”, the formation of species-specifically human concepts.

3. The Problem of Thing and Object

We can agree with Maritain that “the proper task of a straightforward philosophy” is “to assign the reasons for what is given to it and to gain an understanding of that datum.” Yet “what is given” to the human intellect in its first, its species-specific, awakening and difference from animal sense-perception is precisely *being* or *ens*, yet this *ens primum cognitum* is not simply *ens reale*. It is that which *first divides* into *ens reale* and *ens rationis*: that is the “datum” that is given to be understood, and the needed understanding cannot be arrived at by any analysis that begins by omitting or waving to the side half the datum.

St Thomas was clear on this point, without thematically pursuing it: *ens primum cognitum, id quod primum cadit in intellectu*, is what provides human understanding with its formal object, the means of distinguishing understanding as a cognitive power distinct from and

²⁴ Ibid., 106.

superordinate to the estimative power of sense perceptions, as also from the internal sense of memory and of imagination. These three cognitive powers of internal sense — estimation, memory, imagination²⁵ — share with the understanding, *intellectus*, the need for a specifying stimulus or *species impressa* in order to initiate the proper activity which results in the formation of a ‘concept’ or *species expressa*, the “intentional or presentative form” which, as a quality of the soul, has for its defining distinctiveness precisely the directedness upon an object²⁶ which alone the phenomenologists emphasize.

3.1. Heidegger on Aquinas

There are not many points, perhaps only one, on which Martin Heidegger is a better guide to understanding St Thomas Aquinas than is Jacques Maritain, but if there is one such point, this is it. The point is put in a fundamental statement, occurring at various points in Aquinas’ writings, but specifically in the *Prima Secundae* of his *Summa theologiae*, Q. 94, art. 2c: “illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione [hominum], est ens, cujus intellectus includitur in omnibus, quaecumque quis apprehendit” — “That which occurs first to human awareness and which distinguishes that awareness in everything whatsoever it bears upon is the awareness of being”.

Here, Heidegger correctly tells us, “the term ‘Being’ does not define that realm of entities which is uppermost when these are articulated conceptually according to genus and species”, which would

²⁵ See J. Deely, *Animal Intelligence and Concept-Formation*, “The Thomist”, 1971, 1 (January), 43–93, for a textual analysis of St Thomas on the number and function of internal senses.

²⁶ Cf. J. Poinsot, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, Alcalá, Spain, 1632, 290b45–4 (*Tractatus de Signis*, First Preamble, Article 2, 58/13–20: “Et sumitur intentio in praesenti, non prout dicit actum voluntatis, qui distinguitur ab electione et respicit finem, sed pro actu seu conceptus intellectus, qui dicitur intentio generali modo, quia tendit in aliud, scilicet in obiectum”. — “And we are using the term ‘intention’ in the present context not as bespeaking the act of the will distinguished by choice and respecting a goal, but for the act or rather the concept formed by the understanding which is called an ‘intention’ in a general way by reason of the fact that it tends toward something, namely, toward an object”.

have to be the case if the being here were determinately *ens reale*. No. The problem is rather the prior “unity of Being as over against the multiplicity of ‘categories’ applicable to things”, the grasp of being prior to its division into *ens reale* vs. *ens rationis*, let alone the further contraction of *ens reale* into the categories. “In medieval ontology this problem was widely discussed, especially in the Thomist and Scotist schools, without reaching clarity as to principles”²⁷. For the principles which bring clarity to this problem of ‘fundamental ontology’ (notice that I do not say *epistemology*²⁸) are precisely the principles of the doctrine of signs, as I try elsewhere²⁹ to show in full.

In the Latin Age, the focus of discussion of this question of the *primum cognitum* was as a preamble to discussion of the Aristotelian physics, wherein the focus would be on the knowability of categorial being, *ens reale*, from which all socially constructed reality as such is in principle excluded. In hindsight, it seems clear that this placement was a kind of misplacement resulting from the tendency to see *ens reale* as all that really counts in the complex of experience and problem of objectivity.

3.2. The Neothomist Approach

But the Neothomist treatment of this problem-area has been neither phenomenological nor particularly semiotic. It can be given a summary statement as follows. Objects are presented to the human mind by concepts. But for the realist true objects must be things. So we arrive at the famous quo/quod distinction of American Neothomism:

²⁷ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie, E. Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1962, 3. For an actual list of the Latin scholastics who disputed this question between Aquinas and Poinsot, see J. Poinsot, *Philosophiae naturalis prima pars*, 1633, esp. 22a35–b29, 24b7–13.

²⁸ I consider “epistemology” mainly to be one of the misbegotten notions of modern philosophy, because the semiotic relations which actually sustain knowledge are not originally in any contrast with “ontology”, as the reader of J. Poinsot, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, Alcaláá, Spain, 1632, can see for him or her self.

²⁹ J. Deely, *Evolution, semiosis, and ethics: rethinking the context of natural law*, in *Contemporary Perspectives on Natural Law*, ed. by A. M. González, Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007, volume in preparation.

concepts are not *that which* (id quod) we know, but that *by which* (id quo) we know. And, they imagine³⁰, at a stroke idealism is overcome and realism vindicated.

But there is a problem here. Not so fast. For the “realist”, objects must *sometimes* be things, or at least *be able to include* things, where is meant by “thing” what exists whether or not it is known, and by “object” is meant precisely something known. For not even the staunchest “realist” could soberly maintain that *all* objects are things. And even when they are also things, they are not quite “things” in just the same sense that they exist as objects. The president of Johns Hopkins University, assuming that the post is filled just now and that the one assigned to that post is not dead, is, as a biological organism, a thing indeed, a veritable *ens reale*; but as president of the university he is something more, indeed an *ens rationis* as well, a reality *socially constructed*, a reality which *could not be as such* outside the context of cognitive social relations, *entia rationis*³¹ intermingled with *ens reale*.

³⁰ Into this simplistic trap even Maritain stumbles in his exposition of “The Concept”, Appendix I to Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite, or The Degrees of Knowledge*, 390.

³¹ Poinset, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, 291b22–46 (*Tractatus de Signis*, First Preamble: On Mind-Dependent Being, Article 2, 60/26–44): “Ubi discerne, quod licet cognitio sit causa, ex qua resultat relatio rationis (quod omni enti rationis commune est), et ita ut conveniat et denominet relatio rationis aliquod subiectum, necessario exigit cognitionem, non tamen semper cognitio reddit ipsum obiectum aptum et congruum susceptivum talis denominationis, ita ut solum conveniat illi in esse cognito, sed solum hoc contingit in intentionibus secundis. Et ita relatio Creatoris et Domini, iudicis et doctoris, ut denominet subiectum, requirit cognitionem, quae talem relationem causet, sed non quae constituat subiectum in esse cognito capax, ut denominationem illam suscipiat. At vero esse genus vel speciem non solum supponit cognitionem causantem tales relationes, sed etiam supponit cognitionem, quae reddat subiectum abstractum ab inferioribus, et super rem sic abstractam cadit illa denominatio”. — “Here note this difference: even though cognition is the cause from which a mind-dependent relation results (as it is the cause of all mind-dependent being), and thus, as the mind-dependent relation belongs to and denominates some subject, it necessarily requires cognition, yet cognition does not always render the object itself apt and congruous for the reception of such a denomination, so that the denomination belongs to that object only in cognized being, for this happens only in second intentions. And thus the relations of Creator and Lord, judge and doctor, as they denominate a subject, require cognition, which causes such relations, but does not render the subject capable in cognized or known being of receiving

3.3. Reality and Social Construction

We are at the beginning of a great problematic here, solidly rooted in the philosophy of being, yet one of which the great masters of that tradition in the high middle ages barely did more than enucleate. The social construction of reality was not one of their themes. Today, a woman cannot be burned for being a witch, but it was not always so (and may not always be so). Today, a man cannot be imprisoned for life for being suspected of undermining the revealed truth that the sun revolves around the earth, which is stationary and at the center of the universe; but it was not always so. Today, at least in many states, a woman cannot be forced to wear a scarlet letter in order that she be publicly known as an adulteress, or put to death for the deed of adultery; but it remains an uphill climb. Today, there are persons in positions of legal responsibility who are unable to understand why marriage should necessarily involve more than one gender.

You can see from these dramatic examples, and others of your own experience I am sure, how true it is that³² “it is a serious matter for a philosopher not to be able to distinguish between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*”. No less serious is the matter when a judge and jury fail to tell the difference, and wrongly sentence an innocent man or woman. On the other hand, the successful lie depends upon the same confusion, so we are dealing with something truly fundamental. The datum given us to understand is that the particulars of the *ens reale/ens rationis* difference often elude us, and that as far as socialization is concerned *ens rationis* can be in some ways more fundamental than *ens reale*. We have to assign reasons for this fundamental feature of experience, and dismissing *entia rationis* as subjective phenomena will hardly do, for the president of Johns Hopkins University is not a state of my mind, even though a state within my mind is essential for that president to appear to me and be recognized as such.

that denomination. But indeed the being of a genus or species not only supposes cognition causing such relations, but also supposes a cognition which renders the subject abstracted from individuals, and upon the object so abstracted falls that denomination [i.e., the denomination by a second intention]”.

³² Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 106.

4. Specifying Forms, Objects, and Things

Let us go back to the problem of the *species*, the word which “has no equivalent in our modern languages”, the “specifying form”, as we said above, which exists in nature before it exists as a quality within the soul as *species expressa*. We have seen that this notion is intimately bound up with the notion of *esse intentionale*, a notion which, in its own turn, depends for its original sense on a contrast with *esse entitativum*, the being proper to things in their contrast to *known* things, objects. Known things presuppose intentional forms by which they exist within the soul as qualities on the basis of which the knower is cognitively related to what *also* exists “extramentally”, that is to say, in the physical environment surrounding the organism. Of this complexus Maritain says (but here I substitute for his translation as “presentative form” the translated original term *species*, otherwise leaving alone his text and use of italics):

“it seems that St Thomas was much more concerned with the relation between the *extramental thing* and the *species* thanks to which it [the extramental thing] is made object than with the relation between the *species* and the *object* itself taken as such. That is why ... it often happens that he deals with the concept not by distinguishing between *mental concept* and *objective concept*³³, but rather by speaking of it,

³³ Here let me enter my protest to the later medieval resort — already in Scotus and Cajetan after — to the expression “conceptus objectivus” to express the difference between the terminus of the intentional relation of cognition and its fundament or subjective ground, the “conceptus subjectivus” or idea in the knower. This was a terminological marker along the way of the developing Latin appreciation of the difference in principle between object and thing, but one so pregnant with a prospect of misunderstanding that what it principally came to mark was the fork in the road where the moderns took their leave of the semiotic consciousness so hard-won among the later Latin Iberians (after d’Ailly, I think especially of Soto, the Conimbricenses, Araújo, and Poinsoy) in order to follow rather the Way of Ideas than the Way of Signs, and to develop the modern idealist doctrine of objectivity in the place of a semiotic objectivity permeable to the order of environmentally existing things. Gilson, in his *Index Scolastico-Cartésien* (Paris, 49, text #80), identifies this expression in Suarez 1597, an author certainly read by Descartes; but Suarez repeats it as a “vulgaris distinctio” — a manner of speaking already widespread toward the close of the 16th century.

at one time, in the sense of mental concept (*intentio intellecta* could then be translated as “the mental aim”) and, at another time, in the sense of objective concept (*intentio intellecta* could then be translated as “the object aimed at mentally”). This is to say, he speaks of the concept by thinking of the mental concept not precisely as *species* but from the point of view of the *object* it presents to the mind³⁴.

In other words, in St Thomas’ own context (where the misshapen term “conceptus obiectivus” as such never rears its ugly head), the emphasis was on the ordering of sensation to objectify or make known aspects of things physically existing in the organism’s immediate surroundings, and on showing that it is in the becoming aware of these things external to us that all knowledge of animals, including the rational animals, begins and finds its normal terminus.

But St Thomas also had much to say, not wholly unified thematically, it is true, but nonetheless rich (indeed, much as was the case with his reflections on *signum*³⁵), about the necessity of *entia rationis* for the knowledge we acquire of *entia realia*. Principally, but not exclusively, the necessity for *entia rationis* in developing knowledge even of *ens reale* is rooted not only in the finitude of our knowledge³⁶, but in its perceptual animal origins, and especially in its discursive

³⁴ Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 389n4.

³⁵ See J. Deely, *The Role of Thomas Aquinas in the Development of Semiotic Consciousness*, “Semiotica”, 2004, 152–1/4, 75–139; Poinso, *Tractatus de Signis*.

³⁶ Poinso, *Tractatus de Signis*, Art. 5, “Utrum Deus Formet Entia Rationis” — “Whether God forms mind-dependent beings”, 308a17–32: “aliquas relationes rationis et intentiones logicas fundari super cognitionem imperfectam manifeste constat, quia istae relationes fundantur in rebus cognitis per abstractionem, per praedicationem seu compositionem aut discursum; sunt enim relationes universalis abstracti ab inferioribus, praedicati ad subiectum, antecedentis ad consequens. Ergo intellectus carens abstractione [scilicet, intellectus angelicus seu divinus, sed non humanus!], compositione et discursu non poterit per se immediate talia entia rationis formare, sicut neque sensus externus ea format, quia caret isto modo cognoscendi”. — “that some mind-dependent relations and logical intentions are founded or based upon an imperfect cognition is fairly plain to see, because the relations in question are founded upon objects known through abstraction, through predication or composition or discourse; for they are universal relations of predicate to subject, antecedent to consequent, abstracted from instances. Therefore an intellect without need for abstraction [such as an angelic intellect or the divine intellect, in contrast to the human intellect!] will not itself be immediately able to form such mind-de-

character. Human understanding, Poinsot remarks³⁷, develops only over time (“*mensuratur tempore*”) “on account of its dependency upon the phantasms”, the *species expressae* of sense perception, as we have seen, “from which we receive the *species*” as intellectual stimuli (*species impressae*) to the formation by the understanding of its own proper concepts or *species expressae*. This is indeed the root of the *fallibilism* of human knowledge so emphasized by Peirce.

4.1. The World in the Soul

Consider the order of the primitive concepts³⁸ necessarily acquired by the human mind in order to reach a grasp of the difference between an objective world of experienced objects as something common to all animals and the species-specifically human idea of a physical environment of things existing independently of their relation to us as objects experienced.

“Being as first known” is not so unlike the “blooming buzzing confusion” that William James (1842–1910) reflected upon³⁹. For

pendent beings by composition and discourse, as neither can external sense form them, by reason of lacking the requisite manner of fashioning awareness”.

³⁷ J. Poinsot, *Tomus Secundus Cursus Theologici*, Lyons, France, 1643, disp. 40, art. 5, par. 37, pp. 542–43: “Intellectio non mensuratur tempore per se et ex natura sua, quia indivisibilis actio est, sed per accidens, ut in nobis, propter dependentiam a phantasmatis a quibus accipimus species. Et in tali intellectione philosophandum est sicut de aliis motibus tempore mensuratis: quod non est possibile quod intellectus tempore praecedenti quiescat, non accipiendo species, et in ultimo instanti terminativo illius temporis sine alio motu phantasmatum illas habeat”. — “Because its action is indivisible intellection is not of its proper nature and essentially measured by time, but it is so measured accidentally in our case on account or our understanding’s dependence upon the phantasms from which we derive the intelligible specifying forms. And in such circumstances of intellection the act of philosophizing is measured by time just as are other movements: for there is no way that the human understanding can remain in a time prior to the accepting of impressed forms of specification and in a final instant terminative of that prior time possess those specifications without any other movement of the phantasms”.

³⁸ See also Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, 347–357, esp. 355ff.

³⁹ James attributes the expression to “someone”.

Aquinas, and in his school after him⁴⁰, the Latins saw quite well that the *primum cognitum* was not an abstract genus of logic, but an initial apprehension of the intelligibly knowable as such within the objective world of sense-perception, apprehended in a confused and indistinct or quasi-potential manner, according to the everywhere accepted maxim, *anima est quodammodo omnia*: “the soul” — the human soul — “is in a certain way all things”, to wit, as able to know being in its transcendental amplitude. Understanding, they divined, proceeds naturally from potency to act, from the imperfect to the (relatively) perfect. The proportionate object of such a progression must likewise be something confused and imperfect but admitting of development. And, inasmuch as the more distinct as such is comparatively more perfect than the confused, the notion of being as manifested in any particular object of awareness has a more confused — a more “potential” — intelligibility as indistinctly mingling or portending every character actually found or findable in that object (*including aspects there as a consequence of that object’s involvement in the realm of concern of another animal*, of our own or some other species — *entia rationis*, in a word, objectively given in the world of things objectified⁴¹).

⁴⁰ The most extended discussion of being-as-first-known, *De Primo Cognito*, in the school that developed out of the writings of Aquinas seems to be that of Poinset (*Philosophiae naturalis prima pars*). But, in Thomist terms, Cajetan (1493) also treats of the matter; and the postmodern development of semiotics has made unmistakable the limited purview of the earlier discussions, hampered as they were by being located in the context of aiming primarily and virtually exclusively at expounding the doctrine of substance and accident as *ens reale*. Cf. V. Guagliardo: *Hermeneutics: Deconstruction or Semiotics?*, in *Symposium on Hermeneutics*, ed. by E. F. Bales, private circulation; Conception, MO: Conception Seminary College, 1992, 63–74, followed by a Discussion, 75–78; *Being and Anthroposemiotics*, in *Semiotics 1993*, ed. by R. Corrington, J. Deely, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994, 50–56; *Being-as-First-Known in Poinset: A-Priori or Aporia?*, “American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly”, *Special Issue on John Poinset* (Summer, 1994), pp. 363–393.

⁴¹ Poinset, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, Art. 5, “Utrum Deus Formet Entia Rationis” — “Whether God forms mind-dependent beings”, 307b21–36: “id, quod cognoscitur ut existens extra propriam potentiam, non potest habere esse ex vi talis cognitionis; nam ens rationis non potest esse extra potentiam formatem illud. Quando autem cognoscitur ens rationis ut formatum ab alio, cognoscitur extra potentiam, scilicet in cognitione alterius. Ergo ex vi talis cognitionis non accipit esse et formationem tale ens rationis, atque adeo illa cognitio non est formativa entis

This “being”, as the most primitive of intellectual apprehensions⁴², *ens primum cognitum*, is given to understanding by the senses, to be sure, but especially by the *internal* senses, where the *species impressae* of external sense have already been cognitively responded to and elaborated by the higher internal senses of memory, imagination, and estimation to produce yet a further, higher level of cognitive specification, namely, a “concept” or *species expressa*. ***And this ‘species’ is not that by which (“id quo”) but that on the basis of which (“id in quo”) an object is presented as known — that is to say, as object in what differentiates object as such from thing as such, namely, the relation to the knower on the basis of which every object as such, whether also a thing of nature or not, exists as presented in awareness and known.***

Nor is this all. The *species expressae* of the three higher internal sense powers — “phantasms” or the *species expressae* of perception, of *phantasiari*, as we may follow the Latins in saying⁴³ — do not of

rationis, sed cognoscitiva formati; unde cognoscit illud ut pendens a meo intellectu, non a suo” – vel e converso ex suo intellectu, non a meo! — “that which is cognized as existing independently of one’s own mind cannot have its existence by virtue of the very cognition in question; for a mind-dependent being cannot exist independently of the power forming it. But when a mind-dependent being is cognized as formed by another, it is known independently of the cognitive power of the one knowing it, to wit, as existing in the cognition of the other. Therefore the mind-dependent being in question does not receive its existence and formation by virtue of the cognition recognizing it, and therefore neither is that cognition formative of the mind-dependent being, but rather the becoming aware of something already and elsewhere formed; whence it cognizes that being a depending upon my understanding, not upon yours” – or conversely upon your understanding, not upon mine!

And, of course, when it is a question not of *intellectus* but of *vis aestimativa* in the case of brute animals, the *ens rationis* is grasped objectively but only materially rather than formally (“phantasiandi, non intelligendi”, as we might put it), that is to say, it is apprehended as structuring the objects apprehended but is never formally recognized as *non ens* comparatively to what those objects have of *ens reale*.

⁴² The “*prima ratio cognoscibilis seu primum cognitum formale respectu nostri intellectus*” (“primary rationale of knowability or first formal known in respect of human understanding”), as Poinset formulated it (*Naturalis Philosophiae Prima Pars*, Madrid, Spain, 1633, Q. 1, Art. 3, 20a2–33b38).

⁴³ “Phantasiari”, the activity of producing ‘phantasms’ or ‘mental representations’, is the richest Latin term for the combined cognitive activity and production of the internal sense, distinct on the one side from (but incorporative of) the activ-

themselves present their objects as intelligible, not even in what they contain directly from external sensation of the surrounding physical environment of existing things. They present their objects as interpretively constructed, that is to say, as sense-perceptible, not as intelligible. As St Thomas puts it, “things are per se sensible, but they have to be *made* intelligible”⁴⁴. Aquinas assigns this task — of making actually intelligible the actually sensible but only potentially intelligible objects of experience — to the preconscious activity of the intellect as *agens*. The obscurely and (in hindsight⁴⁵) perhaps poorly named “process of abstraction” associated with this transformation should not and cannot properly be (though it usually is!) presented as a simple process of *extraction* or “drawing out” from the sensible; or — worse yet — as an “*intus legere*” like an x-ray machine⁴⁶ revealing the intelligible skeleton maintaining and underlying the sensible appearances. If anything like that were the case, the “intelligibility” would already have to actually be there in the sensible things as such. To the contrary, however, Aquinas is quite clear that what is “there” per se is something sensible that has to be *made* intelligible. Per se, there is no actual intelligibility in material substances as such, only the *possibility* of *being made* intelligible by a discursive intellect.

In what then does this “making intelligible”, this “abstraction” so-called, consist?

ity of external sense, and on the other side from the activity of the intellect and linguistic modeling which renders the phantasms intelligible by adding to them the *ens rationis* of self-identity which severs the otherwise exclusive link of the ‘phantasized’ to the biological self. See Poincaré’s use of this term in his *Tractatus de Signis*, Book II, Question 2, 240–253, esp. the extended discussion of this term in note 2, pp. 240–41.

⁴⁴ See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, Q. 79, art. 3, corpus and ad 3 (reply to objection 3).

⁴⁵ See the fuller discussion of “Abstraction” in Deely, *Evolution, semiosis, and ethics*.

⁴⁶ Maritain actually resorts to this desperate image (unsustainable by reason of the synchrony of perspective in which alone it makes sense) in his early *Introduction Générale à la Philosophie*, Paris: Librairie Pierre Téqui, 1920, 171.

4.2. The Leap from Sensible to Intelligible in Objects

There are at least two reasons why the intentional passage of the form of the thing entitatively independent of awareness into the soul of the knower (where it is received formally and without the attendant matter necessary for entitative existence) is not sufficient to explain this *saltus* wherein the perceived world of objects becomes a world of things able to be understood.

First, and again Thomas is quite clear, it is **never** the *substantial form* as such and directly that is presented to sense, internal or external, but only the accidents of environmental things⁴⁷. The *esse intentionale* of the *species impressa* of external sensation, wherein alone that “thing” is purely (if only aspectually and accidentally) presented objectively, is not a migration of a *substantial* “form without matter” across the boundary of “inner/outer” separating cognitive organism from its environment. Yet it is only the substantial form that, together with the matter, enters into and constitutes the *actual essence* of material substances. So, if the *species* are never substantial forms, how do they “identify the knower with the known” in such a way as to yield knowledge of the essence of the known? How does intentional identification of concept as fundament with object as terminus yield a knowledge of essence, if essence is substantial form and *species* is never substantial form⁴⁸?

Second — and this is the point respecting which the Neothomists in particular, along with religious fundamentalists generally, were the most recalcitrant to recognize — the essences of material substances are not in detail⁴⁹ fixed and unchanging, as could still be thought in the

⁴⁷ See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 77.1 ad 7.

⁴⁸ The question raised here requires many preliminaries, so the reader may want to consult further Deely, *Evolution, semiosis, and ethics*, Chap. 14, among other relevant *loci*.

⁴⁹ Thus, the apparent “natural kinds” of the birds and the fishes, for example, do not as such represent essential kinds, even though to be alive simply or to be alive as an animal, or again to be alive as a brute or as a ‘rational’ animal, do represent saltational levels or types of being in nature, types as incompatible with intermediary states as is being pregnant. See M. J. Adler, *Problems for Thomists. The Problem of Species*, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940; *Solution of the Problem of Species*, “The Thomist”, 1941, 2 (April), 279–379; and *The Hierarchy of Essences*, “The Review of

time of Aquinas, when it was believed that the world today consisted of the same “natural kinds” as the world indefinitely past from the beginning or indefinitely future until the end⁵⁰. Hence (in Aquinas’ day) once the “form without matter”, *one and the same form*, the *species*, the “intentional form”, had “spiritually” migrated into the soul of the knower and been grasped there conceptually, supposing that it could somehow reveal an essence or make the essence of its source known, not only would the essence be known, however imperfectly, but the essence would be known once and for all. For that same form revealing the essence in the knower would exist *secundum esse entitativum* in the thing (constituting the thing as an individual of a natural kind) and *secundum esse intentionale* in the knower (constituting the knower as “quidditatively aware” of the thing), and *secundum esse divinum* in the creative idea of God; whence human wisdom, in grasping the essences of things, would also participate however feebly in the timeless wisdom of God himself, albeit externally.

It is a nice picture, but it cannot work. Where it cannot work, ironically, is in the *real* world of physical nature as scientifically known; only in the ideal world of a pre-Galilean dreamland perpetuated by self-styled would-be “realists” can it work.

For the picture to be a true picture, first, it would have to be the substantial forms, not the accidents, that intentionally penetrate the senses and work their way up through the internal senses to the possible intellect, and this St Thomas expressly rules out⁵¹. Second,

Metaphysics”, 1952, 1 (September), 3–30; together with J. Deely, *The Philosophical Dimensions of the Origin of Species*, “The Thomist”, 1969, January and April, Part I, 75–149, Part II, 251–342.

⁵⁰ The case is comparable to the model of a geocentric universe in the time of Eudoxus, Plato, and Aristotle: the *prima facie* true theory which most or all thinkers accepted as such and which conformed the most readily to the best available evidence simply proved over time to be in fact false and not compatible at all with the weight of evidence that would accumulate over time. Astronomy and biology, thus, as modernity has established them, are outstanding examples of understanding as *discursus*.

⁵¹ The point could hardly be more clearly stated (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 77.1 ad 7): “quia tamen formae substantiales, quae secundum se sunt nobis ignotae, innotescunt per accidentia; nihil prohibet interdum accidentia loco differentiarum substantialium poni”. — “because, however, substantial forms are in their own being

and decisively, it would have to be the case — as both Aristotle and Aquinas had good but wrong reason to believe⁵² — that the natural kinds found now would be the natural kinds that would always be found in the past or in the future of our planet for however long the earth might last — an imaginary possibility which we have learned, slowly, beginning in the 17th century, to be definitively false.

5. The Problem of Actual Intelligibility

So how does intelligibility enter the horizon of human knowledge of material substances? How is it the case that it is the “quiddity” of material things that is the formal object of human understanding in its difference from sense perception?

To appreciate the true proportions of Thomas’ remarkable doctrine about what distinguishes human understanding (as well as the brilliance of Kant’s insistence that *reinen Vernunft* itself is obliged to provide the element of necessity in the objects as sense provides them, once the mistaken assumption common to rationalists and empiricists — that even sensation terminates in ‘ideas’ — was in place, however), it is necessary at once to get clear about the basics concerning essences.

5.1. The Essence of Essences in *Ens Reale*

When it is said that a thing has an “essence”, what is basically meant is not at all that every individual instantiates an unchanging

unknown to us, they become known through individual characteristics or accidents; in the interim there is nothing to stop us from taking congeries of characteristics or accidents as standing for differences of substance”.

⁵² In the natural collections of Albertus Magnus, the principal teacher of Aquinas and sponsor of his first appointment to the University of Paris Faculty of Arts, there were fossils; but no one, including Albert, recognized them as such. What we now call fossils they then had neither idea nor name. What we now see as the key to the former existence and constitution of the great reptiles as they were in themselves, they then saw as anomalies, experimental data defying explanation on the basis of what was known or thought to be known about the natural world. Stones that are not carvings yet resemble living things? Come on!

form across generations and corruptions. What is meant, rather, is threefold.

First, that every individual existent has an internal constitution by which the individual tends toward stability and regularity between its generation and corruption. *Second*, that this internal constitution at root is a substantial form, and not a mere complex of accidental forms, *if* the individual in question is truly a natural unit, an *unum per se* (which is not readily determined by “common sense” or cónoscopic knowledge alone when it comes to investigating the details of nature, by reason of what my old teacher and friend Ralph Austin Powell used to call “the diminishing illuminative power of the humanesque analogy”, wherein we judge of individuality from our experience of our own selves together with what appear to us as “unities” in common experience — a not altogether reliable guide in the question of which unities are “natural”, i.e., the unities of substance, that is). And *third*, that there must indeed be such natural units or “substances” if the world is not simply one, because every many by definition presupposes ones.

So we come to “what is essential in the idea of essence” as the objective formality distinctive of human apprehension. When it is said that the human mind is capable of grasping the essences of material things, all that is being said is that the human mind *is ordered to knowing and can come to know the internal constitution of its environmental world*, but only by observation and patient analysis, trial and error, as it were (experimental interaction with the surroundings), and not by intuition of form alone, as so many “realists” have for so long imaginatively (not to say wistfully) postulated.

So, when the intellect grasps as its formal object being, *ens primum cognitum* as the species-specifically distinctive element of intellectual awareness in contrast with the purely perceptual awareness of brute animals, what it grasps is the world of perceived objects according to a possibility of conceiving those objects as existing in themselves. Once given as existing more than in relation to the animal’s classification of +, -, 0, the objects of experience over the course of experience soon manifest a great difference, namely, the difference between aspects of the world of objects that simply reduce to our experience of the

objects (such as a flag signifying Napoleonic France; and this is the dimension of *ens rationis* already given in the perceptual experience of brute animals⁵³, although not there recognizable as such) and other

⁵³ Poinsot, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*: “Per quam potentiam et per quos actus fiant entia rationis” — “By what powers and through which acts do mind-dependent beings come about”, 301b33–302b4 (*Tractatus de Signis*, First Preamble, Article 3, 66/46–68/31): “Sensus interni formant entia rationis materialiter sed non discernendo differentiam inter ens reale et ens rationis, seu ens et non ens, et inde non formaliter. “Dicimus ‘formaliter loquendo’ non formare illa, id est discernendo inter ens rationis et ens reale, et concipiendo id, quod non est ens, ad instar entis realis. Materialiter autem cognoscere ens rationis est ipsam apparentiam realis entis attingere, sed non discernere inter id, quod rationis et realitatis est. ... Sed in istis solum attingit id, quod sensibile seu quoad sensum repraesentabile est. Quod autem habeant habitudinem ad non ens et ex ista habitudine entia ficta seu rationis dicantur, quod est formaliter discernere inter ens et non ens, sensus internus non attingit.

“Ratio videtur manifesta, quia sensus internus non potest ferri in aliquid nisi sub ratione sensibilis; quod autem id, quod sibi repraesentatur ut sensibile, opponatur enti reali, ad ipsum non pertinet iudicare, quia non concipit ens sub ratione entis. Quod autem aliquid accipiatur tamquam ens fictum, formaliter consistit in hoc, quod cognoscatur nihil entitatis habere in re, et tamen ad instar entis attingi; alioquin non discernitur inter ens reale et ens fictum, sed solum attingitur illud, ad cuius instar formatur ens rationis. Quod quando est aliquid sensibile, non repugnat a sensu cognosci, sed ad sensum solum pertinet id, quod in illo de sensibilitate est attingere, habitudinem vero ad non ens, cuius loco subrogatur et unde ficte habet esse, ad sensum non pertinet, et ideo ens fictum sub formali ratione ficti ab ente vero non discernit.

“Quod vero ens fictum *materialiter* possit cognoscere sensus, constat manifeste. Non quidem, quia sensus etiam externus potest v. g. cognoscere colorem fictum seu apparentem, quia iste color, licet apparenter sit color, non tamen est ens fictum, sed verum et reale, scilicet aliquid ex luce resultans. Sed ex eo probatur, quia sensus internus multa ad invicem componit, quae extra se nullo modo sunt aut esse possunt. Cognoscit ergo aliquid, quod in se est ens fictum, licet ipsam fictionem non apprehendat, sed solum id, quod in illo ente ficto tamquam sensibile se offert”. — “Internal senses form mind-dependent beings materially but without discerning the difference between a mind-independent being and a mind-dependent being, the difference, that is to say, between being and nonbeing, and for this reason internal sense is not said to fashion mind-dependent beings ‘formally speaking’. “We say that the internal senses ‘formally speaking’ do not form mind-dependent beings, that is, they do not form them by discriminating between mind-dependent being and physical being, and by conceiving that which is not a being after the pattern of physical being. Materially, however, to cognize a mind-dependent being is to attain the very appearance of a being physically real, but not to discriminate between that which is of the mind and that which is of the physical world. For example,

aspects of objects which do not reduce to but seem to antecede and transcend the objectivity of experience (such as milk in a woman's breasts signifying child-birth, or smoke signifying something burning; and this is the dimension of *ens reale* in the categorial sense concentrated on by Aristotle and the Latin scholastics).

5.2. The Importance of *Ens Rationis* in Objectivity

So this initial grasp of *ens* — *ens primum cognitum*, that is, 'equidistant', as it were, from the subsequent polarization of awareness

the imaginative power can form a gold mountain, and similarly it can construct an animal composed of a she-goat, a lion, and a serpent, which is the Chimera [of Greek mythology]. But in these constructions the imagination itself attains only that which is sensible or representable to sense. Yet internal sense does not attain the fact that objects so known have a condition relative to non-being, and from this relative condition are said to be constructed, fictive, or mind-dependent — which is formally to discriminate between being and non-being.

"The reason seems clear: internal sense cannot refer to anything except under a sensible rationale; but the fact that that which is represented to it as sensible happens to be opposed to physical being, does not pertain to internal sense to judge, because internal sense does not conceive of being under the rationale of being. The fact, however, of anything's being regarded as a constructed or fictive being formally consists in this, that it is known to have nothing of entitative reality in the physical world, and yet is attained or grasped on the pattern of a physical entity; otherwise, no discrimination is made between mind-independent being and constructed or fictive being, but only that is attained on whose pattern a mind-dependent being is formed. When this object is something sensible, there is no reason why it cannot be known by sense. But sense attains only that which is sensible in an object, whereas the condition relative to the non-being in whose place the object is surrogated and whence it fictively has being, does not pertain to sense. For this reason, sense does not differentiate a constructed being, under the formal rationale of being a construct, from a true being.

"But that sense is able to know fictive being materially is manifestly the case. Not, indeed, from the fact that even external sense can, for example, cognize a fictive color or appearance, because this color, even though it is the color [of a given object] only apparently, is nevertheless not a fictive being, but one true and physical, that is to say, it is something resulting from light. But that sense grasps mind-dependent beings is proved by this fact, that internal sense synthesizes many things which outside itself in no way are or can be. Sense therefore knows something which is in itself a constructed or fictive being, although the fiction itself sense does not apprehend, but only that which, in the fictive being, offers itself as sensible".

between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*, “being” (*ens*) and “nonbeing” (*nonens*), as St Thomas also expresses the contrast — can hardly be identified with the concrete physical object insofar as that object is a physically individual existent, or complex of individual existents, an *ens reale*. For “being as first known” is also the richest of all objectifications, embracing every particular intelligible object in the amplitude of analogy, albeit according to confused and largely undifferentiated or undistinguished awareness (such as the much *later* formation and critical establishment of a notion of “*ens commune*” or *ens in quantum ens* extending intelligibility beyond the order of material substances helps to dispel). Thus material entities as particular beings are experienced “factually” only because being has been previously grasped in a way that is very different from conceptualizations of the logical order. This is the meaning of the saying of Aquinas, “being is what first falls under human understanding” (“*primo in intellectu cadit ens*”).

This is also the resolution of Heidegger’s perplexity⁵⁴ as to “Why does Being get ‘conceived’ ‘proximally’ in terms of the present-at-hand *and not* in terms of the ready-to-hand, which indeed lies *closer* to us?” Environmental beings as ready-to-hand are precisely the objects of sense-perception structured and presented through *phantasiari*, the *species expressae* of internal sense according to the classification or ‘categories’ of what is to be sought (+), what is to be avoided (–), and what can be safely ignored (0). So the objective world of sense-perception is already a *fabric of relations* whose pattern is apprehended as being but whose texture is an interweave of *ens rationis* with *ens reale*. This interweave needs to be taken into account in the so-called epistemology of “ideogenesis” or “concept formation”, the “abstraction” by which properly intellectual concepts are formed on the basis of the *species expressae* or “phantasms” of internal sense being transformed, by the intellect’s own and proper activity, into *species impressae* for the formation this time (*species intelligibiles*) of properly *intellectual* concepts (*species expressae intellectae*).

Nor must the essential phases of this “abstraction” be elided or glided over. Let us enumerate the irreducibly distinct phases that

⁵⁴ Heidegger, 437.

must be recognized if the accustomed misleading truncations of the process are to be overcome:

1. The *species impressae* of external sense are formed in the sense organs of the animal by the action of the physical surroundings on the body of the animal.

2. These sensory stimuli specifying sensation are co-ordinated or synthesized by the *sensus communis* function of the nervous system, stimulating now the higher level or “interior senses” actively to form, in conformity with the needs and desires of the animal organism (i.e., according to its biological heritage and individual experience), the *species expressae* of *phantasiari*. These are the *species*, the “phantasms”, the mental representations of otherness (not at all the ‘self-representations’ which objects involve) that organize and present the environment under the categories of animal interaction (attraction +, repulsion –, or indifference 0, as we have seen).

3. The phantasms or *species expressae sensuum internorum*, in turn, further stimulate the ‘rational animal’ to add to the phantasms by its own activity (*intellectus agens*) the formal relation of self-identity, something which *phantasiari* on its own is incapable of doing⁵⁵.

4. The phantasms, presenting and organizing the objective world in relation to the organism, through the addition to themselves of the relation of self-identity, are thereby transformed from *species expressae phantasiandi* into rather *species impressae intelligibilis*.

5. In response to this now *species intelligibilis* as stimulus (the *species expressae phantasiandi* transformed by the intellect adding to the phantasm a *relatio formaliter rationis* of self-identity into a *species impressae intelligibilis*), the understanding itself (*intellectus possibilis*) now in first act responds by actively forming further the *species expressae intellectae*, and these are the *species* which present the objective world now (for the first time in biological evolution) under the guise of being, *ens primum cognitum*, whence arises through experience the formal contrast between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*, making possible the first intellectual judgment yielding the principle of contradiction,

⁵⁵ Cf. Poinset, *Tractatus de Signis*, First Preamble, Article 3, 64–76 (*Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, 301a1–306b35).

etc.⁵⁶, to say nothing of the first forms of cultural as superordinate to merely social organization of the animal group.

We are presented here with nothing less than the ontological framework for the scientific researches by which Jakob von Uexküll arrived at his breakthrough *Umweltstheorie*⁵⁷, a fundamental contribution to ‘epistemology’ (if you like), both cónoscopically and ideoscopically considered, which Sebeok had placed on the center-stage of semiotic development by the 20th century’s end⁵⁸, but which has been noticed among Thomists so far only by Josef Pieper⁵⁹ — a situation which I for one⁶⁰ am working to change. But at this point let us allow Poinset to frame the fundamental issue in his own words:

“that an object be real or fictive makes a difference only in the rationale of being, not in the rationale of object and something knowable. Whence it can well happen that something is an object simply speaking, and is simply not a real being. For the differences of things in physical existence and being are one thing, the differences of things as objects and knowable something else again — a point well made by Cajetan⁶¹. Whence it is that many things are the same in the ra-

⁵⁶ On the order of the primitive intellectual concepts, see Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, 355–357; and the further discussion below.

⁵⁷ Cf. J. von Uexküll, *Kompositionslehre der Natur. Biologie als undogmatische Naturwissenschaft*, ed. by T. von Uexküll, Frankfurt a. M.: Ullstein, 1899–1940; *A Stroll through the Worlds of Animals and Men*, trans. C. H. Schiller, in *Instinctive Behavior: The Development of a Modern Concept*, ed. by Claire H. Schiller, New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1957, 5–80; *The Theory of Meaning*, trans. by B. Stone, H. Weiner, in “Semiotica”, 1982, 1, 25–82.

⁵⁸ See esp. K. Kull, *Jakob von Uexküll: A Paradigm for Biology and Semiotics*, a Special Issue of “Semiotica”, 2001, 134–1/4; and note well Sebeok’s caveat (*Semiotics in the United States*, Bloomington, in Indiana University Press, 1991, 2) that ‘epistemology’ constitutes for semiotics no more than a “mid-most target”, precisely because study of the action of signs uncovers the path beyond the representative contents of consciousness to the objects represented as such — that is, as here mind-independent, there mind-dependent, and so on, in the unending spiral of semiosis.

⁵⁹ J. Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, London: Faber & Faber, 1952, 80–90.

⁶⁰ J. Deely, *The Thomistic Import of the Neo-Kantian Concept of Umwelt in Jakob von Uexküll*, “Angelicum”, 2005, forthcoming.

⁶¹ Cajetan (1507), *Commentarium in summam theologicam*, 1. p. q. 1. art. 3.

tionale of knowable which are not the same in the rationale of being, and similarly can many things coincide specifically in the rationale of knowable and not in the rationale of being, or conversely, as is discussed more fully in the last question of my treatment of the books of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*⁶².

Now notice that the *species expressae* of internal sense are formed by the animals themselves through memory, through imagination, and through estimation⁶³. By these *species* the environment objectified is presented in perception organized otherwise than it exists *either* in sensation *or* independently of awareness altogether. There is no *ens rationis* in sensation precisively distinguished from perception, as we will further see⁶⁴. For *entia rationis* arise only as added into sense perception to make the leap from, to elevate, mere environmental features impinging on organs of external sense and naturally organized as an incipient web of relations obtaining between proper and common sensibles (and so, as we will see, already sign-relations, already a semiotic web, in Sebeok's phrase) to the level of objects experienced as desirable, threatening, or neutral.

⁶² Poincot, *Tractatus de Signis*, Book I, Question 4, 187/28–43 (*Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, 678b15–27): “quod obiectum esse reale vel rationis solum facit differentiam in ratione entis, non in ratione obiecti et cognoscibilis. Et stat bene, quod aliquid sit simpliciter obiectum, et simpliciter non sit ens. Aliae enim sunt differentiae rerum in esse rei et entis, aliae in ratione obiecti et cognoscibilis, ut bene advertit Caietanus 1. p. q. 1. art. 3. Et sic univoce conveniunt plura in ratione scibilis et non in ratione entis, vel e contra. Et similiter possunt convenire specificie in ratione scibilis et non in ratione entis, vel e converso, ut plenius dicitur quaest. ult. in libros Posteriorum”.

How fundamental this point is for semiotics can be gleaned from its constant recurrence in Poincot's *Treatise on Signs*. See, for example, the discussions in Question 4, 187/26–190/23 (*Artis*, 678b–679a29), and note 33 thereto, p. 187–190 (*Artis*, 818b24–820a10); in Book II, Question 1, 235/36–236/46 (*Artis*, 700a43–701a17), and Question 5, 270/37–271/21 (*Artis*, 715b37–716a26); etc.

⁶³ The textual analysis of St Thomas on this point can be found in J. Deely, *Animal Intelligence and Concept-Formation*, “The Thomist”, 1971, 1 (January), 43–93.

⁶⁴ See further discussion below; but the main reason for this, in summary is the absence of actively formed compositions (*species expressae*) on the side of the organism in external sense data, proper and common sensibles being mutually determinative under the environmental influences here and now playing upon the animal body.

The *species expressae* of internal sense organize and present the objective world of every higher animal, but they do not contain any actual intelligibility. They do not present and organize the objects of human understanding in what is species-specifically proper to them. They present a world of objects actually perceived but only potentially intelligible. "Abstraction" is the not entirely fortunate term chosen in the medieval milieu of (supposed) timeless essences to designate the process whereby human understanding actively manipulates the phantasms to transform them from sensible into intelligible forms⁶⁵.

Błędne rozumienie terminów *quo* i *quod* w dyskusjach o realizmie (cz. I)

Streszczenie

John Deely podejmuje analizę filozoficznych dyskusji nad realizmem, prowadzonych zwłaszcza na gruncie tomistycznym, w celu zażegnania nieporozumień powstałych na skutek nieudanych prób uchwycenia, przez tomistów okresu późnej nowożytności, decydującej różnicy między *gatunkiem* jako *impressa* albo *quo*, z jednej strony, i *gatunkiem* jako *expressa* albo *in quo*, z drugiej. Przeprowadzone refleksje, zdaniem autora, umożliwiają zrozumienie tego, że realizm może dostosować się do rzeczywistości jako społecznej konstrukcji bez utraty zdolności do wykazania, iż ludzki umysł jest otwarty na poznanie rzeczy samych w sobie przed i po części (choć nie do końca) niezależnie od społecznych konstrukcji.

Pierwszą część swoich rozważań autor poświęca następującym zagadnieniom. Rozpoczyna od namysłu nad specyficznymi formami impresyjnymi i ekspresyjnymi, czyli terminami, które nie posiadały swoich odpowiedników w filozofii nowożytnej. Koncentruje się tutaj na analizie nowożytnych i postmodernistycznych pojęciach *intencjonalności*. Następnie autor podejmuje problematykę związaną z rozumieniem *rzeczy i przedmiotu*, oraz z pojmowaniem

⁶⁵ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 84.4 ad 2: "ad secundum dicendum quod res materiales, secundum esse quod habent extra animam, possunt esse sensibles actu; non autem actu intelligibiles. unde non est simile de sensu et intellectu". — "the answer to the second objection is that material things, according to the existence they exercise independently of our minds, can be sensibles in act; yet they cannot be intelligibles in act. Whence intelligible objects do not stand in the same relation to the power of understanding as sensible things stand to the powers of sense".

specyficznych form przedmiotów i rzeczy. W zakresie jego analiz znajdują się tutaj: stanowisko Heideggera wobec św. Tomasza z Akwinu, wypowiedzi neotomistów, relacja rzeczywistości do konstrukcji społecznej, obraz świata w ludzkiej duszy, problem przejścia od tego, co zmysłowe, do tego, co inteligibilne w przedmiocie. Na zakończenie tej części autor zajmuje się kwestą aktualnej inteligibilności, skupiając się na problemach istoty istot w *ens reale* i znaczenia *ens rationis* w zakresie obiektywności.

John Deely

University of St Thomas, Houston

The Quo/Quod Fallacy in the Discussion of Realism (Part Two*)

6. Exposing the Quo/Quod Fallacy: from Untenable Dyad to a Necessary Triad

Now comes a very crucial point. The forms specificative of sense perception, through the addition to the *species impressae* of external sensation of the *species expressae* of imagination, memory, and estimation in or on the basis of which objects are experienced as desirable, undesirable, or neutral, are, respecting the intellect – understanding – not actually intelligible. They have to be made intelligible by the activity of the intellect itself, the *intellectus agens*, as St Thomas says. This means that what are *species expressae* for the three internal senses are taken over by the *intellectus agens* in such a way as to become *species impressae* respecting the *intellectus possibilis*.

In this change of role – this reversal wherein what *had been* an intentional form specificative *expressa* is turned to function *now* rather as a *species impressa*, a specificative *stimulus* rather than a quality already provenating its *terminus* – what had been “id in quo” for internal sense becomes rather “id quo” for the intellect. Just as what had been “id quo” for the external senses – namely, the *species impressae* from the environmental things and aspects proportioned to the bodily organs of outer sense – is incorporated into the response of the inner sense by the formation of *species expressae* or phantasms as the “id in

* The Part One of the article was published in *Człowiek w Kulturze* 19 (2007): 389-425.

quo" actually presenting objects evaluated perceptually as this or that, so now what had been "id in quo" respecting internal sense is *further ordered* respecting intellect to become simply "id quo" stimulating the formation of a yet higher level "id in quo", a level presenting no longer a *potentially* intelligible objective world (the animal Umwelt as transformed by the intellect actively introducing formal relations of self-identity into the sense-perceived objects) but now instead an *actually* intelligible objective world crying out to be investigated in its own being and according to the many ways in which being can be said. It will prove, this objective world of animal realism now perfused with the actual intelligibility of being, to be a realm for poets and novelists no less than for scientists and philosophers, a world in which inquisitors no less than astronomers will find their way and have their day.

The possible intellect responds to the stimulus ("id quo") provided by the agent intellect in appropriating and elevating the *species expressae* ("id in quo") of internal sense to function rather as *species impressae* ("id quo") for the possible intellect to respond to the semiotic animals surroundings in its own right through incorporating these "id quo"s into the fashioning of its own proper "id in quo" means for the presentation and awareness of objects finally as *actually* and not just *possibly* intelligible. But the actual accomplishment of this is realized *on the basis of* the irreducibly intellectual specifying forms fashioned and made by the possible intellect itself, those *species expressae* ("id in quo") which alone *present* the objects *previously* perceived and sensed *now* as *things able to be understood*.

In short, just as the *species expressa* of internal sense as "id in quo" depends upon the *species impressa* of outer sense as "id quo", so the *species expressa* of the intellect as "id in quo" depends upon the transformation by the intellects own activity of what *had been* "id in quo" for perception into a simple "id quo" for intellection.

The interpreted or completed object, then, as an object of actual experience, whether the animal apprehending be brute or rational, is never presented as such by a "quo" (a *species impressa*) but always further by an "in quo" (a *species expressa*). On the basis of an "in quo" alone does the object exist in awareness either as perceived only (from the *species expressa* of internal sense) or also as under-

standable (from the *species expressa* formed by the understanding itself taking the *species expressa* of internal sense as *species impressa* for the further purpose of *making intelligible* the objects of sense perception). In either the case of the brute or of the rational animal, of course, something of the “outer world is retained in the “inner world of apprehension, from the fact that the *species* of outer sense are a pure “id quo” incorporated, first, into the “id in quo” of perception (the *species expressae* of inner sense), and then further into the “id in quo” of intellection (the *species expressae* of human understanding in what is species-specifically differentiative of it). What is *species impressa* for sensation becomes part (but only part) of what is *species expressa* for perception; and what is *species expressa* for perception becomes *species impressa* for intellection, and thence part (but only part) of what is *species expressa* for the intellect in actually perceiving the per se sensible world as now actually intelligible in its own being as in some measure independent of whatever relations it may happen to have to me as an animal aware of it.

So the “relation to a knower essential to every object as such is precisely what is not essential to every thing as such, even though it is essential to every thing insofar as that thing becomes objectified or known (“being known and “being an object being but two ways of saying the same thing). The world “external to the knower as an animal organism becomes “internal to the knower through the *esse intentionale* of the *species impressae sensuum externorum* as the means by which things are known (“id quo”), and just this “externality is incorporated into the “internality proper to the universe of knowing at its higher levels of perception and understanding (“id in quo”). Hence the famous “quo”/quod distinction of Mortimer Adler¹ and of Neoscholasticism generally – „concepts are not that which (id quod) we know but that by which (quo) we know things – is revealed as the oversimplification that it is, contributing to the failure of even such greats as Jacques Maritain to see their way beyond the modern impasse of „realism vs. „idealism.

¹ See especially, perhaps, M. J. Adler, *The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes*, New York: Holt, 1967.

It is incumbent to speak of the **“quo”/quod fallacy** in this regard, a fallacy rooted in a misreading (or perhaps just an under-reading) of the *Summa theologiae*, Question 85, Article 2, described by Maritain² as “the main text in which St Thomas shows that the *species intelligibiles* are not the object (*quod*) but the pure means (*quo*) of knowing. Maritain regards this text as “equally applicable to the concept, i.e., to the *species expressa* of the possible intellect, and to the *species impressa* of the possible intellect formed by the agent intellect in subordinating the phantasm (the *species expressae* of internal sense) to the role of stimulus (*species impressa*) regarding the possible intellect. But it remains that this is an erroneous reading, and one surprising for Maritain. For no one read Poinset together with Thomas as much as Maritain read both. Maritain was always growing, always moving on, always breaking new ground, and, at the same time, always looking back, always deepening his grasp of the Thomistic texts in view of the philosophical demands of the problems that came into his view.

His under-reading (or over-reading) of the *Summa* I.85.2c in point of the quo/quod distinction there essayed is not unrelated to (in fact is of a piece with) an earlier error later corrected³, clearly a consequence of not having read at the time, or at least not having read thoroughly, Poinset⁴, wherein Poinset shows the difference for cognition between a *species impressa* (“id quo”) and the *species expressa* (“id in quo”) respecting the thing known in and with the object of apprehension (“id quo”d).

Where at one time Maritain expressly equated the notion of so-called “formal sign with the *species* indifferently *impressa* or *expressa*”⁵, Poinset *always* expressly restricts (and explains the necessity for the

² J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite, or The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. from the 4th French ed. of original 1932 entry above, q.v., under the supervision of Gerald B. Phelan, New York: Scribners, 1959, 390.

³ J. Maritain, *Reflexions sur l'Intelligence et sur sa vie proper*, Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1924, *passim*; corrected in *Distinguish to Unite*, 120n3 *in finem*, and 394n3. Yet cf. 393n2, which, as it were, qualifies even the correction.

⁴ J. Poinset, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, Alcalá, Spain, 1632 (From R I: 249/839), Q. 22, Art. 2 (= *Tractatus de Signis*, subtitled *The Semiotic of John Poinset*, extracted from the *Artis Logicae Prima et Secunda Pars* of 1631/1632, Book 2, Question 2).

restriction of) the formal sign to the *species expressa*, indifferent only to the question of whether it be a *species expressa* of perception or of intellection, but *not indifferent at all* to the question of whether it be a *species impressa* or *species expressa*. Poinsot explains the difference between the *species impressa* as such – i.e., be it such from external sense respecting the higher internal senses, or from the internal senses under the formative influence of the intellect acting (*intellectus agens*) respecting the bringing to the level of first act the possible intellect – and the *species expressa* as such in terms of the difference precisely between an “id quo” of knowledge and an “id in quo”, both alike respecting the “id quod” or object known⁶:

⁵ J. Maritain, *Reflexions sur l'Intelligence*; we saw earlier a similar conflation or blurring at work in the writings on this point by one of Maritain's best students, Yves Simon.

⁶ J. Poinsot, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, 705a42b12 (= *Tractatus de Signis*, Book II, Question 2, 249/14250/6), then 705b3145 (= *Tractatus de Signis*, 250/2234): “St. Thomas calls the mental word an instrument by which the understanding knows something, not as if the concept were a known medium which is an instrument and external means, but as it is an internal medium or means in which the understanding understands within itself, and this is to be a formal sign. But ‘impressed’ specifier is the name for that form of specification by which the understanding formally understands, because it obtains on the side of the principle of the action of understanding; but that which keeps to the side of a principle of acting is called a form. And yet St. Thomas did not say that an impressed specifier formally signifies or represents, but that it is that principle by which the understanding formally understands; but it is one thing to be a formal sign, and another to be a principle ‘by which’ of understanding. ... a concept is not said to represent as something first ‘known’ in the mode of an extrinsic object, so that the qualification known would be an extrinsic denomination; a concept is said to represent as something intrinsic known, that is, as the terminus of the knowledge within the power. But because it is not the terminus in which the cognition finally stops, but one by whose mediation the power is borne to the knowing of an outside object, for this reason a concept has the being of a formal sign, because it is something intrinsic known. that is to say, because it is the intrinsic rationale of the knowing. Whence an instrumental sign is known as something which is known extrinsically and as a thing known, from the knowledge of which the significate is arrived at; but a concept is known as something which is known, not as is an extrinsic known thing, but as that within the understanding in which is contained the thing known. And so, by the essentially same cognition, concept and thing conceived are attained, but the cognition of the thing conceived is not arrived at from the cognition of the concept. And because the concept is that in which the thing or object is rendered proportioned

„D. Thomas vocat verbum [interiorem, i.e., *speciem expressam*] instrumentum, quo intellectus aliquid cognoscit, ... ut medium inter-

and immaterialized in the mode of a terminus, for this reason the concept itself is said to be known as something which, not as a thing separately known, but as constituting the object in the rationale of known terminus. But even though an instrumental sign can be attained with the signified by a single act of cognition, it remains true even then that it is from the known sign that the significate is arrived at, that the [instrumental] sign itself does not formally constitute the [signified] thing as known.

This text shows how unreliable is the treatment that Poinsoot's semiotic of concepts receives in the 2003 work of O'Callaghan (*Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press). Suffice to remark here that Poinsoot expressly holds *the opposite* of the view O'Callaghan reports him to hold (e.g., p. 217, text and note 46) in the matter of such analogy as Aquinas makes between mirror images and mental representations: the former is an image objectively, the latter only presuppositively and formally. Thus the image in a mirror is *itself objectively apprehended in its own right* and hence stands within a cognitive relation as *objective terminus* thereof. By contrast, the concept as a 'mental representation' stands within a cognitive relation *not at all as terminus quod* but as *fundament* of the relation ('terminus in quo') which *terminates* at the object represented.

As Poinsoot summarily puts the point O'Callaghan misses, "the first means-in-which" – that is, the mirror image – "makes a cognition mediate ... but the second means-in-which" – that is, the mental image – "does not constitute a mediate cognition, because it does not double the object known nor the cognition" (*Tractatus de Signis*, Book II, Question 1, 224/2934, *et alibi passim*).

Thus, a "medium in quo" external to the mind, such as a mirror image, when and to the extent it makes known another than itself, does so, to borrow Maritains words (*Distinguish to Unite*, 119), as "an object which, having, first, its proper value for us as an object, is found, besides, to signify another object"; by contrast, a "medium in quo" internal to the mind – any *species expressa*, thus; a "concept", whether perceptual or intellectual – is something that "makes known before being itself a known object", determining the aspect under which the object apprehended is perceived or conceived. In the older terminology (J. Poinsoot, *Tractatus de Signis*, 224/2934), the former "medium in quo" pertains to an *instrumental sign-vehicle*, a material reality which performs the sign-function only by itself being first objectified, that is, by *first terminating* an apprehensive relation, before being able to *further found* a sign-relation; whereas the latter "medium in quo" pertains rather to a *formal sign-vehicle*, a psychological state which exists by performing the sign-function. This *species expressa* becomes itself objectified, if at all, only by a reflexive act of intellection in self-awareness of knowing, never by a direct act terminating at an object. Thus the formal sign-vehicle, in contrast to an instrumental one, "does not double the object known nor the cognition" (J. Poinsoot, *Tractatus de Signis*, 224/3334).

num, in quo intellectus intelligit intra se, et hoc est esse signum formale. Species autem impressa dicitur id, quo formaliter intelligit intellectus, quia tenet se ex parte principii intellectionis; quod autem tenet se ex parte principii, vocatur forma. Et tamen non dixit D. Thomas, quod species impressa formaliter significat seu repraesentat, sed quod est id, quo formaliter intellectus intelligit; aliud est autem esse signum formale [scilicet, species expressa], aliud principium quo intelligendi [scilicet, species impressa]. ... conceptus autem est cognitum ... tamquam id, in quo continetur res cognita intra intellectum. Et sic eadem cognitione per se attingitur conceptus et res concepta, non ex cognitione eius devenitur in cognitionem rei conceptae. Et quia [species expressa] est id, in quo res seu obiectum redditur proportionatum et immaterializatum per modum termini, ideo dicitur ipse conceptus cognosci ut quod, non tamquam res seorsum cognita, sed tamquam constituens obiectum in ratione termini cogniti.”

Whence arises this summary difference between «quo» and «in quo» as far as concerns the *species*, the intentional or specifying form⁷:

When one contrasts O’Callaghan’s remarks on Poinset with the actual analysis found in Poinset’s own texts, the impression is hard to avoid that we are reading an author more concerned to include a reference than to get the reference right. This at least would explain the otherwise inexplicable ignorance on O’Callaghan’s part of the texts authored by Poinset’s most distinguished student in the matter of interpreting the thought of Aquinas, Jacques Maritain – bearing on the thing/object and sensation/perception distinctions that are central to the matter of understanding distinctively “Thomistic” realism.

We are dealing here neither with points marginal to the thesis of O’Callaghan’s book, nor with figures marginal to the Thomistic tradition. To get Poinset wrong, while passing silently over the relevant discussions in Maritain’s work which draw on Poinset in order to understand the realism of St Thomas, undermines the credibility of O’Callaghan’s central claim to be presenting “Thomistic realism” – in relation to the late modern “linguistic turn” or to anything else. As a guide to 20th century analytic literature, O’Callaghan proves far more reliable than as a guide to the original Latin literature of Thomism. As an English-speaking representative of Neothomism, O’Callaghan’s work blithely presupposes the terms of the quo/quod fallacy as permeating the late modern discussion of “realism” in Neothomistic circles, which gets us nowhere in semiotic terms.

⁷ J. Poinset, *Tractatus de Signis*, Book II, Question 2, 245/17246/4 (= *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, 703b42704a1). Maritain says the same (*Distinguish to Unite*, 393): “The concept is not a pure means in the sense of a principle or fertilizing seed, like the

„*Species expressa* semper est imago viva et producitur per actionem vitalem a potentia, cui deservit, ut per eam cognoscat. Sed *species impressae* sunt, quae ab una potentia [sive intra sive extra animalem] ad aliam imprimuntur et ad cognitionem formationemque idoli movent aliam potentiam. – An expressed specifier (or expressed form of specification) is always a living image produced through a vital action by the power which it serves in order that the power might know by means of it. But impressed forms of specification are specifiers that are impressed by one power on another and move that other power to cognition and the formation of an icon.”

Hence too, *mutatis mutandis*, in perception and intellection alike, inasmuch as both perception and intellection alike depend upon the formation by the animal of a *species expressa* (in contrast to the animal's sensation, for which alone suffice the environmental stimuli conveying from without the *species impressa* thanks to which proper and common sensibles initiate the process of objectification, transforming the surrounding physical environment into an objective world filled with species-specific meanings – an *Umwelt*, as the Thomistic thinker Josef Pieper put it⁸ on the basis of what he learned from the experimental work in biology of Jakob von Uexküll⁹), the

presentative [rather: *specifying*] form which is received (*species impressa*); it is a pure means as *term* or fruit (*species expressa*, presentative [or *specifying*] form which is uttered)". But he then goes on, as we saw above, unwittingly to diminish the force of the crucial distinction between "quo" and "in quo". Poinset, on this particular, *does exactly the opposite* (*Tractatus de Signis*, II.2, 243/1222; = *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, 702b45703a9): "Sicut enim, ut obiectum esset praesens et unitum potentiae in ratione principii concurrentis ad formandam cognitionem, oportuit ponere speciem impressam, ita ut praesens sit in ratione termini, ad quem tendit cognitio, oportet aliam similitudinem seu speciem ponere, si res sit absens. Vel secundo oportet ponere conceptum intra potentiam, ut res cognita seu obiecta reddatur proportionata et conformis ipsi potentiae". – "For just as it was necessary to posit an impressed specification or form in order for the object to be present and united to a cognitive power in the rationale of a principle concurring in the forming of the powers cognition, so must another similitude or specifier be posited in order for the object to be present in the rationale of the terminus toward which knowledge tends, if the thing objectified is absent. In the second place, it is necessary to posit the concept within the power in order for the things known or objects to be rendered proportioned and conformed to the power itself".

difference in principle between objects and things, *de facto* identified at the level of external sensation, comes to a *de jure* fruition as the objects of experience are formed on the basis of and blossom further into signs, first of what the animal needs (both to flourish by attaining and to survive by avoiding), and then (for rational animals) signs of what the world is in its proper being and in its dependency upon a First Cause whose signature is existence (“*esse*”) wherever it may be found in act¹⁰:

„For just as an object cannot terminate the sense of sight unless it be bathed in light, so neither can an object be attained by [the inter-

⁸ J. Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, London: Faber & Faber, original ed. trans. Alexander Dru. Introduction by T. S. Eliot; new English trans. by Gerald Malsbary with an introduction by Roger Scruton, South Bend, IN: St Augustines Press, 1998.

⁹ See esp. Jakob von Uexküll: *A Paradigm for Biology and Semiotics*, a Special Issue of *Semiotica* 1341/4.

¹⁰ J. Poinset, *Tractatus de Signis*, Book II, Question 2, 243/22244/28 (= *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*, 703a943): “Sicut enim obiectum non potest terminare visionem externam, nisi luce visibili perfundatur, ita nec obiectum potest ab [sensu interiori memoriae, imaginationis, et aestimativae; nec ab] intellectu attingi, nisi a sensibilitate sit denudatum et luce spirituali, quae est immaterialitas [*relatively so* in casu sensus interni] seu abstractio [*strictly immaterial* in casu intellectus humani] affectum et formatum. Immaterialis autem lux non invenitur extra [potentiam phantasiandi seu etiam] potentiam intellectivam; ergo oportet, quod intra ipsam illuminetur obiectum et formetur illa spiritualitate [mediatum in casu sensuum internorum, completum seu penitus in casu intellectus seu rationis], ut attingatur; et hoc formatum in esse obiecti est verbum seu conceptus [ly ‘expressed from of specification’, id est], quod non est ipsa cognitio, ut supra ex D. Thoma diximus et infra quaest. 4. dicetur, quia tenet se ex parte obiecti seu termini cogniti, eiusque officium non est reddere formaliter cognoscentem, ut cognitio est tendentia ad obiectum, sed reddere obiectum praesens per modum termini cogniti. Nec antecedit cognitionem sicut species impressa, quia formatur per cognitionem, nec [rursus dissimile ad ly ‘impressed form of specification] datur ut principium cognitionis, sed ut terminus. Nec propterea oportet, quod tale verbum seu species cognoscatur ut quod [id quod], sicut cognoscitur imago exterior, ut in ea res repraesentata attingatur, quia cum repraesentet intra [sensum internum ut etiam] intellectum et ut forma informans illum, non repraesentat obiective et prius cognitum, sed formaliter et ut ratio cognoscendi [id est, ut ratio ipsa obiecti praesentandi in modo ipso interpretato, sive ut quid attractivum, ut quid repugnantem, vel ut quid indifferens (in casu phantasiandi), seu ut verum vel fictum (et aequaliter correcte vel incorrecte, in casu intellectionis)].”

nal sense of memory, imagination, and estimation; nor by] the intellect unless it be stripped of the conditions of external sensation and affected and formed by the spiritual light which is immateriality [*secundum quid* in the case of internal sense] or abstraction [*penitus immateriale* in the case of human understanding]. But an immaterial light is not found outside the [the perceptive or] intellective power; therefore must the object of needs be illuminated and formed by that spirituality [mediate in the case of internal sense, complete in the case of intellection] in order to be apprehensively attained; and this being formed in the being of object is the word or concept [the *species expressa*, that is], which is not the same as the very cognition itself, because the concept stands on the side of the object or terminus of the cognition, and its function is not to render the animal formally knowing as cognition is a tendency toward an object, but to render rather the object present after the manner of the terminus cognized or known. Nor does it antecede the cognition, as does the *species impressa*, because it is formed within the cognition itself; nor [again unlike the *species impressa*] does it exist as an initiating principle of the cognition, but as the terminus of the cognition. Nor on this account must it be said that the word or *species expressa* is cognized as that which is known [id quod], as if it were a question of cognizing an image in external sensation in order to attain apprehensively the thing represented therein, for the reason that, since the *species expressa* represents within [the internal sense or] the intellect and as a form informing that very power, it does not represent objectively and as itself already cognized, but formally and as the rationale of the cognizing [that is, as the very reason for the objects being presented interpreted in the manner that it is presented, either as desirable, repugnant, or ignorable (in the case of internal sense), or as true or fictive (and in either case rightly or wrongly, in the case of understanding)].”

Perhaps enough has been said by now to reveal just why the celebrated Neothomistic “quo/quod distinction” as a response to or rebuttal of idealist claims regarding knowledge is not just a simplification but an *oversimplification*, and as such a veritable fallacy, as I have shown and emphasized. Necessary to explain the case of ob-

jects not necessarily identified in fact with things is a trichotomy rather of “quo”/in quo/quod.”

With this trichotomy we are well underway, as will shortly appear, toward overcoming the post-Cartesian realism/idealism opposition, and not by coming to terms with Descartes and Kant, but rather by changing the terms in which what is convincing about Kant in particular comes to light, namely, the a-priori role of biological constitution (not at all of the understanding, as he himself mistakenly thought, for want of a distinction between sensation as not involving and perception as involving a *species expressa*, on the one hand, and between intellection and perception inasmuch as intellection or understanding transcends the *species expressa* on which perception in other animals is exclusively based¹¹, although it perforce makes use of that *expressa* as *impressa* respecting the formation of its own proper *expressae*) in the formation of the Umwelt. Here let us summarize the point.

6.1. Question 85, Article 2 and the Quo/Quod Fallacy: Ending a Long Misunderstanding

With Article 2 of Question 85 in the First Part of the *Summa*, St Thomas asks us whether the intelligible specifying forms ‘abstracted’ from the phantasms are related to our intellect as that which is understood; and Maritain, along with Mortimer Adler and most or all of the Neothomists¹², interprets this question as applying equally to the

¹¹ See J. Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding. The first postmodern survey of philosophy from ancient times to the turn of the 20th century*, Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2001, esp. 553570.

¹² For many years, it was Mortimer Adler who most egregiously illustrated in his writings the quo/quod fallacy. In 2003 this crown passed to John O’Callaghan with his attempt to accommodate Neothomism to the “linguistic turn” of contemporary analytic philosophy (on a much lesser scale, D. Braine, “The Active and Potential Intellects: Aquinas as a Philosopher in His Own Right”, in Haldane ed. 2002, 1835, illustrates the same). Cf. J. Deely, “The literal, the metaphorical, and the price of semiotics: an essay on philosophy of language and the doctrine of signs”, Special Issue on Metaphor Guest-edited by Frank Neussel, *Semiotica* 161.1/4, 974, for details of the difficulties in the way of any such accommodation, which come down to this:

species impressa formed by the agent intellect and to the *species expressa* formed by the possible intellect.

But this is not the case, and amounts again to an oversimplification. The reason is that the *species impressa* functions as the "id quo" simply by which a stimulus originating with the physical environment is conveyed intentionally into the formation of the intellectual concept *along with* the material *entia rationis* necessary to the structure of perception for any animal, while the *species expressa* functions rather as the "id in quo" on the basis of which the per se sensible environment along with and within the perceptible world of interpreted objects for the first time appears rather in the guise of something able to be understood according to its being, according to what it actually is *both within and* independently of objectification.

Hence it will not do simply to argue¹³ that "the expression *in quo*" is one "which in no way destroys or diminishes the force of the word *quo* as applied to the concept, but only makes it more precise, and signifies that the act of understanding indivisibly includes, at once and by the same token, both the concept signifying and the object signified." This will not do, because the "object signified" on the basis of the *species expressa* of internal sense, by comparison with the thing stimulating the external sense and originating the *species impressa* which is the *quo* – pure *quo* – of sensation, is only *partially* 'the same', for and inasmuch as the object known in perception is not simply the physical source in itself of the stimulus of external sense but is that source as incorporated into the needs and interests of the organism perceiving that it be evaluated as indicating some threat (-) or desirable element (+) or something that need elicit no concern at the moment (0).

while the thought of St Thomas, though itself pre-semiotic, is yet in the line of and compatible with the development of semiotics, late modern linguistic philosophy cannot survive analysis from the semiotic point of view, exactly as and for the reason Todorov projected ("The Birth of Occidental Semiotics", trans. by D. Swabey, J. Mullen, in *The Sign*, ed. R. W. Bailey, L. Matejka, and P. Steiner, Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1978, 40).

¹³ J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 393.

In other words, “the concept signifying” in sense perception is not signifying *ens reale simpliciter*, but rather *ens reale secundum quid*, namely, as included in the concept *as an expression – species expressa – both* of something of the physical environment *and* of what that something means or could mean in relation to the organism perceiving. This requires that the organism itself add something of its own in its own formation of the *species* in response (*expressa*) to the *species* received (*impressa*) from external sense. It is this “something more, something added”, that is at issue in the transition from *quo* to *in quo*.

Let me cite here, in support of my above remarks¹⁴, the text of St Thomas: *Summa contra gentiles* Book I, chap. 43. The first paragraph

¹⁴ T. Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia*, ed. R. P. Pauli, M. Pession, in *Quaestiones disputatae*, Vol. II, 9th ed. rev. by P. Bazzi, M. Calcaterra, T. S. Centi, E. Odetto, P. M. Pession, Turin: Marietti, 1953: *De potentia* 9.5c is also worth consulting on this point, where Thomas clearly distinguishes the form (i.e., *species impressa*), which is the “intelligendi principium” and “non sicut intelligendi terminus”, from the “primo et per se intellectum, quod intellectus in seipso concipit de re intellecta”, which is the “*verbum interius*”, which in itself, as we are seeing, is an “in quo” *per se*, but which becomes a “quo” only *secundum quid*: on the one side (as recounted earlier), through incorporating the *species impressa sensuum externorum ut relicta et praesens in phantasmatis ex quo intellectus agens format speciem impressam intellectus possibilis*; and, on the other side (as Thomas explains in the text we are considering), respecting the *verbum exterior*, i.e., the exaptation of language in the root sense (T. A. Sebeok, “Communication, Language, and Speech. Evolutionary Considerations”, in Sebeok, *I Think I Am A Verb. More Contributions to the Doctrine of Signs*, New York: Plenum Press, 1986, 1016; “Toward a Natural History of Language”, in *The World & I*, October 1986, 462469; “Language: How Primary a Modeling System?”, in *Semiotics 1987*, ed. John Deely, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988, 1527; “Toward a Natural History of Language”, *Semiotica* 65, 343358; J. Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, ch. 1) to constitute linguistic communication as species-specifically human: “non enim vox exterior significat ipsum intellectum [the understanding itself], aut formam ipsius intelligibilem [the *species intelligibilis impressa*], aut ipsum intelligere [the act of understanding], sed *conceptum intellectus quo mediante* [italics added; where “quo” mediante means not a window through which is viewed the object but the *species expressa seu intellecta* on the basis of which provenates the cognitive relation terminating at the thing as object known in this or that perspective – i.e., as “specified] significat rem: ut cum dico, homo vel homo est animal. – “for the spoken word does not signify the intellect itself, or the intelligible form itself, or the act of understanding; the spoken word signifies the conception of the

of my citation reads like the common (mis)interpretation of Aquinas: *Summa theologiae* I.85.2c, under discussion. But the next paragraph goes on to explain exactly the points on which the first paragraph remains silent but presupposes, in the sense that, absent a grasp of the presupposed (silent) points, the paragraph opening reduces to an oversimplification that falsifies the matter-at-issue. To the opening paragraph, I add my own emphasis in the form of bold face type. To the follow-up clarification I insert my glosses in italics between square brackets. Here is the text from SCG 1.43¹⁵:

intellect by means of which the spoken word signifies what it is that is understood, the object understood: as when I say man or man is an animal. (Compare, in J. Poinsot, *Tractatus de Signis*, Appendix A, "On the Signification of Language: Whether vocal expressions primarily signify concepts or things, 344350; = J. Poinsot, *Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*: "Utrum voces significant per prius conceptus an res, 104b31108a33.)

Then occurs one of those astonishing continuations so common in St Thomas (which make him always new to read): "Et quantum ad hoc non differt utrum intellectus intelligat se, vel intelligat aliud a se. Sicut enim cum intelligit aliud a se, format conceptum illius rei quae voce significatur, ita cum intelligit se ipsum, format conceptum sui, quod voce etiam potest exprimere ("And as far as concerns this matter of the signification of spoken words, it matters not a whit whether the intellect understands itself or something other than itself: just as when it understands something other than itself it forms a concept of that thing which is signified by the voice, so when it understands itself it does so by forming a concept of itself, which can also be expressed by a spoken word ,). How could the *esse intentionale* doctrine that the knower becomes what it knows more strikingly be expressed than in this continuation? See extended discussion of this point as regards the "intentional life of the human being in J. Deely, *The Tradition via Heidegger*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971.

¹⁵ T. Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* I, ch. 43: "Account must be taken of the fact that an exterior thing understood by us does not exist in our understanding according to its proper nature, but there must needs be a form specificative of that thing in our understanding, through which specification **the actual understanding** comes about. Existing in act through a formal specification of this sort the understanding understands the thing itself as if through its proper form; yet not in suchwise that the very act of understanding would be an action passing into the thing understood, as heat passes into a heated thing. The actual understanding remains within the very one understanding and **has a relation to the thing which is understood, based on the fact that the aforementioned specificative form is a formal similitude of that very thing** [rather than of something else].

"Account must further be taken of the fact that the [*possible*] understanding specifically formed by a thing [*namely, the form of specification impressed by the*

„Considerandum est quod res exterior intellecta a nobis, in intellectu nostro non existit secundum propriam naturam; sed oportet quod species ejus sit in intellectu nostro, per quam fit **intellectus in actu**. Existens autem in actu, per huiusmodi speciem, sicut per propriam formam, intelligit rem ipsam; non autem ita quod ipsum intelligere sit actio transiens in rem intellectam, sicut calefactio transit in calefactum, sed manet in ipso intelligente, et **habet relationem ad rem quae intelligitur, ex eo quod species** praedicta, quae est principium intellectualis operationis ut forma, **est similitudo illius**.

Ulterius autem considerandum est quod intellectus [*possibilis*] per speciem rei formatus [*scil. species impressa ex phantasmato ab intellectu agente*] intelligendo format in seipso quamdam intentionem rei intellectae [*scil. species expressa*], quae est ratio ipsius, quam significat diffinitio. Et hoc quidem necessarium est, eo quod intellectus intelligit indifferenter rem absentem et praesentem; in quo cum intellectu imaginatio convenit. Sed intellectus hoc amplius habet [*scil.*

intellects own activity], in actually understanding forms within itself a certain intention of the thing understood [*namely, an expressed specificative form*] which is the rationale of that thing which a definition signifies. And this further posit is necessary from the fact that the understanding understands indifferently present and absent things, in which imagination has something in common with understanding. But the understanding has further [*comparatively, that is, to internal sense or to sense-perception generally speaking*] the ability also to understand a thing as separated from the material conditions without which the thing in nature cannot exist. And this could not be unless the understanding were to form for itself the aforementioned further [*expressed*] specification. Yet this understood or “intellected [*expressed*]” intention, since it is a quasi terminus of the intelligible operation, is other than the intelligible specifying form [*impressed by the intellects own acting*] which the intellect made to be actually intelligible, for the intelligible [*impressed*] specification is required as the principle of the intelligible operation, even though both specifications [*both the one impressed by the intellect acting on the phantasm and the expressed by the possible intellect*] are a formal similitude of the thing understood. For from the fact that this intelligible specifying form, which is stimulative of the understanding and the principle of the understanding, is a similitude of the exterior thing [*insofar as it is expressed by the interior senses on the basis of the specifications impressed upon the external senses*] it follows that the understanding forms an intention similar to that very thing; because as a thing is, so does it act. And from the fact that the understood intention is a likeness of some thing, it follows that the understanding by forming this intention understands that specific thing [rather than anything other].

comparative ad sensus interiorum seu phantasiari generaliter loquendo], quod etiam intelligit rem ut separatam a conditionibus materialibus, sine quibus in rerum natura non existit; et hoc non posset esse, nisi intellectus intentionem sibi praedictam [*expressam*] formaret. Haec autem intentio intellecta [*expressa*], quum sit quasi terminus intelligibilis operationis, est aliud a specie intelligibili [*impressa ab intellectu agente*], quae facit intellectum in actu, quam [*impressam*] oportet considerari ut intelligibilis operationis principium, licet utrumque [*et impressam ab intellectu agente et expressam ab intellectu possibile*] sit rei intellectae similitudo. Per hoc enim, quod species intelligibilis, quae est forma intellectus et intelligendi principium, est similitudo rei exterioris [*inquantum est expressa ab sensibus interioribus ex speciebus impressis supra sensus exteriores*], sequitur quod intellectus intentionem formet illi rei similem; quia quale est unumquodque, talia operatur. Et ex hoc quod intentio intellecta est similis alicui rei, sequitur quod intellectus, formando hujusmodi intentionem, rem illam intelligat.»

Whence to insist simply that the expression «in quo» in no way «destroys or diminishes the force of the word quo» is to miss a crucial point and to beg the question. For the *quo* as *species impressa* simply conveys iconically the otherness of its source, whereas the *in quo* normally and necessarily (by virtue of its function to engender a *perception* and not merely to duplicate a *sensation*) adds to that iconicity “relations of reason (*entia rationis*), whether only materially (as in the perception of brute animals rendering the cognized environment meaningful *for them*) or also formally (as in the intellection of rational animals rendering the perceived environment something able to be understood in terms of being, both *reale* and *rationis*). And it is as *terminus* of the relations *founded in* (provenating from) the *species expressae* that the object perceived exists, which includes but does not reduce to the relations to the source which provenate from the *species impressae* as sensory stimulus.

Despite having recognized the limitation at work in Thomas' own writings on the question¹⁶, Maritain then himself also fails to **shift the**

¹⁶ J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 389n4, cited above.

emphasis needed to account for those aspects of reality which are socially constructed and as such involve *ens reale* without reducing thereto, **from** (in Maritain's own terms) "the relation between the extramental thing and the presentative form [*species impressa*] thanks to which the thing is made object" **to** "the relation between the presentative form [*species expressa*] and the object itself taken as such."

6.2. *What the Intellect Acting ("Intellectus Agens") Enables the Possible Intellect ("Intellectus Possibilis") To See in Objects Perceived*

So the initial or primitive human awareness of the objective world not simply in terms of animal interaction (+, -, 0) but now also in terms of actual being gives a whole new dimension to the experience of "this" and "what is not this" as a difference in being, a difference in what is and what is not *recognized*, which involves the ability to distinguish *ens rationis* as such ("formally") – comparative non-being to the *ens reale* of that which is or seems to be so. The *ens reale* of the sensible environment becomes entangled with *relationes rationis* in order to exist as a structured or meaningful world of objects for the animal, an Umwelt; and *this is what the rational animal awakens to*¹⁷ as the initial contrast between being (*ens reale*) and nonbeing (*ens rationis*), between something of objectivity that does (*ens rationis*) and that does not (*ens reale*) reduce to our experience of it.

In this very act of comparison, the understanding grasps (again for the first time) *distinction* in a conceptual form. Just so, in the course of experience, being and nonbeing, *ens reale* and *ens rationis*, create each other formally and correlatively as elements of experience¹⁸. They are

¹⁷ From the first of many sleeps, as we might say (for "il est pour l'homme plusieurs dormir" – J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 2).

¹⁸ Cf. *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 5.311: "the real ... is a conception which we must first have had when we discovered that there was an unreal, an illusion; that is, when we first corrected ourselves. Now the distinction for which alone this fact logically called, was between an *ens* relative to private inward determinations, to the negations belonging to idiosyncrasy, and an *ens* such as would stand in the long run."

You can see here that Peirce has one foot on the trail, but then, exactly like the Neothomists (e.g., B. Ashley, "Change and Process", in *The Problem of Evolution*,

not absolutes, they are correlates¹⁹; and, as in experience so correla-

ed. J. N. Deely, R. J. Nogar, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 1973, 265294), his other foot he leaves on the path to psychologism which so bedeviled the logic and philosophy of his time. For the discovery of the unreal need hardly consist in the discovery of illusion. It consists even more fundamentally in the discovery of things that have no subjective reality *per se* while are yet far from "private inward determinations, negations belonging to idiosyncrasy." The boundary between Texas and Oklahoma or between Dubuque, Iowa, and East Dubuque, Illinois, or the Presidency of the United States have no reality apart from the enculturated social experience of semiotic animals, yet they can hardly be said to reduce to 'private inward determinations' or 'negations belonging to idiosyncrasy', unless we extend "private" and "idiosyncratic" well beyond individuality as such. The unreal is what cannot be photographed or perceived as such by sense yet is nonetheless public and determinative of human life. Anyone who has ever had to flee the police knows just how real is the unreal boundary between Texas and Oklahoma. There are, of course, "private inward determinations" and "negations belonging to idiosyncrasy", as when I declare myself King of France and proceed to act accordingly. But even these private and idiosyncratic determinations, as giving rise to relations within an Umwelt, can, in the Lifeworld, become far from private and idiosyncratic, as when Napoleon decided he would be Emperor of France (or even had he – privately and idiosyncratically – decided at the time to be the next King instead) and so introduced into the Umwelt around him energetic interpretants that he soon so became. *Ens rationis* does not belong to the inner world and *ens reale* to the outer. To the inner world belong the *species expressae*, both those of *phantasari* and those of *intelligere*, which comprise the Innenwelt on the basis of which exists as public in principle the objective world or Umwelt; and it is this objective, public world comprising the interweave of *entia rationis* and *entia realia* as equally objective that is the world of animal experience. Introducing into the human Innenwelt intellectual concepts along with and superordinate to phantasms makes only this difference, but it is huge: that it becomes possible for the animal using signs now to recognize also that there are signs, relations in their difference from and contrast to related things which sometimes terminate at mind-independent objectivities and sometimes rather at mind-dependent objectivities, normally at admixtures of both. At this moment the generically animal Umwelt becomes the species-specifically human Lebenswelt, opened by the notion of being as such to the explorations of subjectivity without which there would be no science, as well as to the flights of fancy which depict even better objective worlds, such as 'utopias.'

¹⁹ See J. Deely, "Editorial AfterWord" and critical apparatus to *Tractatus de Signis: The Semiotic of John Poinsett*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, 482485, the "Editorial AfterWord" discussion of the problem of translating the Latin expressions *ens reale* and *ens rationis* in the context of the developing doctrine of signs as Poinsett grounds it in the notion of irreducibly triadic relations indifferent to the *ens reale/ens rationis* distinction.

ted, they provide the basis of all further distinctions of understanding. This new grasp, in turn, enables yet another new grasp, grasp in judgment of the first principle of intelligible discourse, which – in its turn – provides the ground of endless further judgments (“infinite semiosis”) of a logical kind. This first principle of intelligible discourse is exactly as Aquinas described it²⁰, and is called (see the humor in this) by some *the principle of contradiction* and by others *the principle of non-contradiction*. But at least both and all agree on exactly what is the content of this principle: that it is not possible to both be and not be at the same time in the same respect, “*impossibile est esse et non esse simul.*”

As the direct outcome of the judgment that being (*ens reale*) is not non-being (*ens rationis*), the principle of contradiction participates in the non-alternative, therefore necessary, character of that prior judgment. Understanding, unable, on the inward side²¹, to affirm and deny the same thing under the same aspect, has manifested to it by the senses likewise that entities are one way or another but not both in a given aspect, giving rise to the notion of „being undivided or unity. But what is experimentally undivided in itself is given, in and by that very experience, as divided from others. So arises (intellectual) grasp of *plurality*, of many beings each of which is itself one²².

At this stage, finally, tautological judgment (a judgment true by virtue of logical form alone) and the recognition of *identity* (“every being is what it is”) becomes possible. Only then does the recognition of an “outside world” as such, that is, a world apart from our subjectivity and beyond our Umwelt (i.e., independently existing in respect of our being as knowers), a ‘world’, in short – namely, the

²⁰ T. Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Book IV, lect. 6, n. 605.

²¹ In words we can say anything; but Aquinas thought like Aristotle on this point (Aristotle, *Organon*, 76b2427): “demonstration is addressed not to the spoken word but to the discourse within the soul, and though we can always raise objections to the spoken word, to the inward discourse we cannot always object.” Often you can actually see someone say what they clearly do not think, just to preserve their position (or pride) in an argument.

²² See the reply to the 15th objection in Q. 9, art. 7, of his *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia*, where Aquinas provides a near-complete summary exposition of this discussion.

physical environment and universe – with a subjectivity and intersubjectivity of its own²³, become possible as well.

We have then seven primitive elements upon which the experience of the physical universe or world as actually intelligible rests, as on a foundation: being, non-being, distinction, contradiction, unity, plurality, identity. Only with these foundation stones in place does „truth as conformity become a possibility in discourse – or even a question²⁴. The sequence of these elements, being the same for all animals possessed of reason in its necessary features, is what lays the ground of possibility for intersubjective agreement in the linguistically communicable results of judgments as well. We have here, so to speak, the intellectual infrastructure of cultural reality in its difference from the purely social world of animal communities.

Idealism in the modern sense (that the mind knows only what the mind itself makes) is precluded in the setting of such an analysis “by

²³ It may not be premature to note that this recognition sets the human use of signs (or “anthroposemiosis”) apart in principle from the use of signs brute animals make (“zoösemiosis”) as such. As it might be said, and as Jacques Maritain did say: “In its most perfect function, which is not to manufacture ideas but to judge, the understanding seizes upon existence exercised by things.”

²⁴ The basis for the prior possibility of such conformity being something else again, as Heidegger (“On the Essence of Truth”, trans. by R. F. C. Hull, A. Crick, in *Existence and Being*, ed. W. Brock, Chicago: Gateway, 1949, 292-324) was first to point out, in an essay all the more important for coming in the wake of Kant’s elaborate explanation of why any such conformity could be no more than a mere appearance, a “phenomenon” in the invidious sense Kant so well managed to attach to the final ontological impoverishment of that term. It is – to answer Heidegger’s later question (*ibid.*) – the basis for the prior possibility of truth as correspondence or “conformity”, then, that semiosis establishes through but beyond, as we have seen, “animal realism”. See the discussions in J. Deely, *The Impact on Philosophy of Semiotics. The Quasi-Error of the External World, with a Dialogue between a Semiotist and a Realist*, South Bend, IN: St. Augustines Press, 2003; “The Semiosis of Angels”, *The Thomist* 68.2 (April): 205258; “The Thomistic Import” of the Neo-Kantian Concept of Umwelt in Jakob von Uexküll, *Angelicum*, 2005, forthcoming; S. Petrilli, “Responsibility of Power and the Power of Responsibility: From the Semiotic to the Semioethic Animal, Withalm and Wallmannsberger, Eds., *Macht der Zeichen, Zeichen der Macht/Signs of Power, Power of Signs*, Festschrift für Jeff Bernard; =Trans-Studien zur Veraenderung der Welt 3; Wien: Lit. Verlag, 2004, 103-119; and J. Deely, S. Petrilli, A. Ponzio, *The Semiotic Animal*, Ottawa, Canada: Legas Publishing, 2005.

the fact that the knowing subject is discovered” – or, more exactly, discovers itself – “only within a world of change subject to the law of contradiction”²⁵. This „law of contradiction itself, moreover, along with the transcendentals and other logical concepts, as Strasser well says²⁶, “such as ‘something’, ‘identity’, ‘non-identity’, ‘agreement’, ‘disagreement’, ‘characteristic’, ‘relation’, and ‘connection’, is rooted “in our concrete dealings with beings”, what I prefer to call “animal realism”. Over and above this (again Strasser), “The elementary rules of logic owe their compelling force to our habitual knowledge about the identity, unity, inner indivision of being and its difference from other beings. In other words, the logical evidences are based upon, or, rather, arise out of, a certain experience of being as being.”

6.3. *From Per Se Sensible to Per Se Intelligible: the Heart of the Matter*

But notice in all this the crucial role of the *entia rationis*, the relation of identity in particular: “every being is what it is.” Every animal lives in a world of objects structured both according to the physical nature of the environment and also according to the needs and desires of the animal. The physically same item of the environment may be evaluated as object oppositely by animals of diverse species, neither being “wrong”; and diverse species even *sense* diverse aspects of the same environment as their species-specific basis for further organizing that environment into an objective habitat which suits their needs. So the objective world of direct perceptual experience, unlike the relations given in and by external sense at its foundation and core where the *entia rationis* as yet have no purchase²⁷, is an irreducible mixture of mind-dependent and mind-indepen-

²⁵ B. Ashley, “Change and Process”, 291292.

²⁶ S. Strasser, *Phenomenology and the Human Sciences. A Contribution to a New Scientific Ideal*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1963, 263. Cf. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Book V, lect. 11, n. 912. And see the diagram of Aquinas notion of the implicit content of the *primum cognitum* in Chapter 15 of J. Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding*, 648.

²⁷ Animals which learn from experience do so de facto only with the assistance of relations of reason, materially only in the case of brute animals, formally as well in the

dent being, woven together in the web of experience by *relationes* indifferently *reales et rationis* (and here let me say what I have elsewhere²⁸ justified: that *entia rationis* are *nothing but* relations with their termini) so far as the animal in its animality is concerned. What is important for the animal as animal is the cycle of day and night and of the seasons, not whether this cycle results from the sun moving round the earth or the earth moving round the sun.

If we bear in mind that the “agent intellect” (that is, the intellect *by its own activity*) forms the intelligible *species impressa* for the possible intellect not directly from the stimulation of external sense (which is prior to the material formation of *entia rationis*) but directly from the material provided by the phantasms (i.e., the *species expressae* jointly produced by memory, imagination, and estimation, which are interpretive of the environment and not merely selective respecting it – and which, as interpretive, while including the pure *quo* of the *species impressae* of external sense revealing irreducibly aspects of the physical reality, the *ens reale* of the situation, *add* to that manifestation the *in quo* without which the animal would not be able to “make sense” of its surroundings in order to get on with life), we see at once that while the world of perceived and experienced objects

case of rational animals; but the external senses upon which these animals rely respond only selectively rather than interpretively to the stimuli from their surroundings, whence the network of relations among common and proper sensibles in each case is naturally determined even though it obtains only in cognition, and leaves no room for those “relations of reason” – “neque sensus externus relationes rationis format, quis caret isto modo cognoscendi”, scil., per modum interpretationis in formatione specierum expressarum – which necessarily enter in in order for the data of external sense to be interpretively organized on the basis of the subjective, i.e., biological, nature of the cognizing organism according to the perceptual categories of interaction, +, , 0, as we have earlier considered. Exactly here, in the connection between proper and common sensibles, does the modern distinction of “epistemology” from “ontology” break down, as it comes a-cropper also over the singularity of ontological relation in general, as I have so many times elsewhere discussed, e.g., J. Deely, “Evolution, semiosis, and ethics: rethinking the context of natural law”, in *Contemporary Perspectives on Natural Law*, ed. A. M. González, Aldershot, England: Ashgate, volume in preparation, Chapters 8 and 11.

²⁸ Notably J. Deely, “Evolution, semiosis, and ethics: rethinking the context of natural law.”

necessarily contains materially elements of *entia rationis*, and indeed “hangs together” experientially and objectively (as opposed to merely physically) *because of* these *relationes rationis* (the animal organism could not otherwise so much as orientate itself in space to find its way home!), perceptual awareness as sensory does not and cannot directly reveal the difference between the *entia rationis* and the *entia realia* in the constitution of the Umwelt. Perceptual awareness in its sensory dimension relies unwittingly on the functional equivalence, described above, of mind-dependent and mind-independent relations for purposes of action and interaction. But the point is so fundamental, yet so little considered or generally understood, that it bears repeating here²⁹:

„quod obiectum esse reale vel rationis solum facit differentiam in ratione entis, non in ratione obiecti et cognoscibilis. Et stat bene, quod aliquid sit simpliciter obiectum, et simpliciter non sit ens. Aliae enim sunt differentiae rerum in esse rei et entis, aliae in ratione obiecti et cognoscibilis, ut bene advertit Caietanus 1. p. q. 1. art. 3. Et sic univoce conveniunt plura in ratione scibilis et non in ratione entis, vel e contra. Et similiter possunt convenire specificice in ratione scibilis et non in ratione entis, vel e converso Ratio enim scibilis

²⁹ J. Poinsot, *Tractatus de Signis*, Book I, Question 4, “In What Way Are Objects Divided into Stimulative and Terminative”, 187/28190/3 (*Artis Logicae Secunda Pars*: “Qualiter dividatur obiectum in motivum et terminativum”, 678b15679a6): “whether an object is mind-independent or mind-dependent makes a difference only in the rationale of being, not in the rationale of object and knowable thing. Something can well be an object simply and not be a being simply. For the differences of things in physical existence and being are one matter, differences in the rationale of an object and cognizable thing quite another, as Cajetan well notes in his Commentary on the *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 1, art. 3. And so many things coincide univocally in the rationale of the knowable, and not in rationale of [entitative] being, or conversely. And similarly can many things coincide specifically in the rationale of the knowable and not in the rationale of being, or conversely For the rationale of the knowable only bespeaks the necessary connection of truth, which connection coincides univocally with any other necessary connection whatever in the rationale of the true, even if they would not coincide in rationale of being. And when it is said that an object perfects a power, the response is that even a mind-dependent being perfects, not by reason of itself formally, but by reason of its fundament and of the mind-independent being on whose pattern it is conceived.”

solum dicit connexionem necessariam veritatis, quae univoce in ratione veri convenit cum quacumque alia necessaria connexione, etiamsi in ratione entis non convenient. Et cum dicitur, quod obiectum perficit potentiam, respondetur, quod etiam ens rationis perficit, non ratione sui formaliter sed ratione sui fundamenti et entis realis, ad cuius instar concipitur.”

So it would almost seem as though all that the “agency of intellect” need add to the phantasms in order for the sensible world to be presented to the possible intellect under the guise of being – that is to say, as actually and not merely potentially intelligible – is the formal relation of reason of self-identity, even if its initial formation belongs to the preconscious, that is to say, even if its actual formation is prior to the formal recognition of the relation as such (i.e., as ‘ens rationis’): an objective world seen in relation to itself would be a world in which experience of the difference between aspects of objectivity which do (*entia rationis*) and aspects of objectivity which do not (*entia realia*) reduce to our experience of the objects would open the way to investigating the intrinsic structure of the objects presented, not according merely to the way that they *appear* to be (+, -, 0: the “phenomena”) but according to the way that they *are* in their intrinsic subjective and intersubjective structures of existence – which, we have already noted, is the “essence of the idea of essence” so far as concerns the knowability of finite being.

In responding to the phantasms as *species impressa* respecting the formation by the possible intellect of its proper *species expressa*, the awareness of being is not only “first” in a temporal sense but – note this well – *accompanies every awareness distinctively intellectual throughout, thus permeating even sense perception in the human case.* “Every being is what it is”, therefore, is, in any case we choose to investigate, either an *ens reale*, an *ens rationis*, or a mixture of the two that can be sorted out incorrectly or correctly, according to the circumstances of the individual case.

But the brute animal has no rationale available to it under which to thematize such inquiries; only the rational animal, aware of being, can *further* formally identify this or that being as *rationis*, this or that being as *realis*, and learn from mistakes in particular cases. And only

the semiotic animal, able to know that there are signs because able to know relations in their difference from what is related, is thus able to know being.

For the brute animals, while they can indeed learn from mistakes, their mistakes do not occur in the order of what is true and false, but only in the order of what works and what does not. From the beginning of animal life until its end, what matters is the cycle of day and night and of the seasons; that the cause of this cycle is the motion of the earth relative to the sun rather than of the sun relative to the earth matters not a wit for the brute animals, and for the rational animals it matters only to the extent that their possibility of caring about the truth is brought actually to the fore, which is certainly not in every case.

Hence the *cri de coeur* Maritain utters³⁰ with his *Peasant of the Garonne*: "Whoever does not love the truth is not a human being!" The ability to be concerned with the truth is unique to the rational animal, predicated on the species-specifically human awareness of the objective world under the guise of being, transforming from the outset the animal Umwelt of objects ready-to-hand into an objective 'life-world' of things present-at-hand, able to be investigated for what they are.

7. The World of Things in Principle Knowable As They Are

This lifeworld of things knowable as they are differs from the lifeworld of every animal other than human, because, as we have had passing occasion to note, the world of things as known or Umwelt is first of all a world of objects in relation to the animal and nothing more. Only in the case of the human animal does the Umwelt become a lifeworld or Lebenswelt, because only thanks to the intellects own activity, *intellectus agens*, in introducing relations formally knowable as such in their difference from the objects or things related, does the objective world become a world of things knowable as

³⁰ J. Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, 1968, 85.

they are – not only an admixture of *ens reale* and *ens rationis* but an admixture in which the separate threads can be sorted to reveal “what is in which way”, or “things as they are.”

Human animals do not differ from other animals in being dependent upon signs for the whole extent of their knowledge of objects³¹, but they do differ from the other animals, as Maritain was the first to say³², in *knowing that there are signs*, precisely because – as has only just come to be realized in any general way³³, thanks to the spread of semiotics – signs *consist* in relations (though only relations of a certain type, namely, as Poinset first noted and Peirce more recently, irreducibly *triadic* relations in contradistinction to dyadic relations of cause and effect) and hence cannot be perceived by sense, internal or external, but grasped in their distinctive positive being only by the understanding in its difference from sense³⁴.

Given the privileged role of the doctrine of signs as Poinset developed it in overcoming the pernicious limitations of treating concepts as means “quo” rather than “in quo” as is proper to them in their signifying function, it is worth considering defining the human animal precisely in terms not simply of its highest power as the “rational animal”, but now rather in terms of the most distinctive activity of that power in its capacity to arrange relationships so as to sort out the true from the false, what is from what appears to be, and, in general, “being” from “nonbeing”. The study of how this is possible for human animals, and uniquely possible, is precisely the study of the action of signs, and the knowledge that results from that action is the doctrine of signs, as Poinset, Locke, Peirce, and Sebeok all termed it – in a word “semiotics”.

³¹ “The sign is relevant to the whole extent of knowledge”, Maritain remarked (*Frontiers in Semiotics*, eds. J. N. Deely, B. Williams, F. E. Kruse, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, 51), because “it is a universal instrument” in the universe of knowledge comparable to “motion in the world of physical nature.”

³² *Ibid.*, 53.

³³ See J. Deely, “A Sign is What?”, *Sign Systems Studies* 29.2, 705743.

³⁴ J. Deely, *What Distinguishes Human Understanding?*, South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2002.

So, since the action of signs is semiosis, and the knowledge resulting from the study of that action is semiotics, then the only animal capable of such study is well defined as the *semiotic animal*, the only animal which not only uses signs but knows that there are signs, and as a consequence has that responsibility for truth which Maritain from his heart saw as the distinctiveness of being human. It is not a power so much as it is a way of acting, and that is what our proposed new definition takes into account as its point of advantage over the traditional definition.

The definition of the human being as the semiotic animal, it may thus be said³⁵, best aligns the traditional thinking on realism with the observation of Cardinal Ratzinger (1970) that „the undivided sway of thinking in terms of substance is ended; relation is discovered as an equally valid primordial mode of reality”.

Błędne rozumienie terminów *quo* i *quod* w dyskusjach o realizmie (cz. II)

Streszczenie

John Deely podejmuje analizę filozoficznych dyskusji na temat realizmu, prowadzonych zwłaszcza na gruncie tomistycznym, w celu zażegnania nieporozumień powstałych na skutek nieudanych prób uchwycenia, przez tomistów okresu późnej nowożytności, decydującej różnicy między *gatunkiem* jako *impressa* albo *quo*, z jednej strony, i *gatunkiem* jako *expressa* albo *in quo*, z drugiej. Przeprowadzone refleksje, zdaniem autora, umożliwiają zrozumienie tego, że realizm może dostosować się do rzeczywistości jako społecznej konstrukcji bez utraty zdolności do wykazania, iż ludzki umysł jest otwarty na poznanie rzeczy samych w sobie przed i po części (choć nie całkiem zupełnie) niezależnie od społecznych konstrukcji.

Drugą część swoich rozważań autor poświęca następującym zagadnieniom. Rozpoczyna od analizy Kwestii 85, Art. 2, *Sumy teologicznej* św. Tomasza z Akwinu w perspektywie sporu wokół dyzjunkcji „quo-quod”.

³⁵ See note 24 above.

Następnie podejmuje problematykę związaną z rozumieniem intelektu czynnego (*Intellectus Agens*) i biernego (*Intellectus Possibilis*). Na zakończenie rozstrzyga problem zależności intelektualnego rozumienia od zmysłowego odczuwania.