

Title: Beyond Non-Being: Thomistic Metaphysics on Second Intentions, *Ens morale*, and *Ens artificiale*

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Abstract:

In Thomistic metaphysics, the domain of *ens rationis* pertains to a hazy region of “non-real” being, laying outside of the proper scientific subject of metaphysics. In addition to negations and privations, a very important domain of *entia rationis* pertains to that of *relationes rationis*, especially such *relationes* as play a role in human reasoning. Logic, studying these “non-real” relations, thus focuses on a unique, if hazy, realm of “non-being.” While this particular type of *ens rationis* receives the lion’s share of attention among Thomists, there is evidence that similar reflection should be given to two additional domains of experience, namely that of “moral being” and “artificial being” (i.e. the being of artifacts). This paper lays out the general metaphysical concerns pertaining to each of these domains, providing an outline of topics pertinent to a Thomistic discussion of the intentional existence involved in logic, moral realities, and artifacts.

“Ce qui me préoccupe le plus, c'est le problème de l'intentionnalité. Je m'indigne de ne trouver dans aucun ouvrage aristotélicien, ni ancien ni moderne, un théorie ensemble de *l'être intentionnel*... Depuis longtemps déjà, je remarque qu'on a oublié, dans les traités classiques d'ontologie, deux admirable chapitres: *de ente intentionali* et *de ente morali*.”

- Letter from Yves Simon to Jacques Maritain, 30 July, 1932¹

I.

Introduction. In numerous books and articles, John Deely has opined about the importance of *ens rationis* in human experience. Many of his remarks on this matter are enmeshed in his particular semiotic project, arguing on behalf of a harmony between the thought of John of St. Thomas (or, per Deely, John Poincot) and C.S. Peirce.² Deely’s somewhat

¹ Jacques Maritain and Yves Simon, *Correspondance*, vol. 1 *Les années françaises (1927-1940)*, ed. Florian Michel (Tours: CLD, 2008), 105.

² Among numerous writings, see in particular John Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding: The First Postmodern Survey of Philosophy from Ancient Times to the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) and John Deely, *Intentionality and Semiotics: A Story of Mutual Fecundation* (Scranton,

labyrinthine style can cause the reader to lose him or herself in the spiral of his semiotic reflections. Nonetheless, it is impossible for the reader to overlook Deely's repeated stress on the unique mode of being pertaining to relation as such (i.e. *relatio secundum esse*, whether predicamentally real or not).

Whatever the difficulties, I do believe that one can place Deely's main concerns (if not his whole doctrine) into dialogue with the language of what might be termed a classical Aristotelian and Thomistic metaphysic. This fact recently occurred to me during a thorough reading of his recently published second edition of Poinso's *Tractatus de signis*. At the very end of his editorial afterward, Deely comments, "Semiotic reveals itself from the outset in the transcendental guise of *ens ut verum*."³ This remark is, perhaps, a bit vague. Traditionally, the *transcendental* "true" pertains to the order of extramental reality, especially when one reads words such as *ens ut verum*. The expression itself seems to imply that we are speaking of extramental *ens*, though taken from the perspective of its knowability.⁴ From such a perspective, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2007).

³ John Poinso, *Tractatus de Signis: The Semiotic of John Poinso*, second ed., ed. and trans. John Deely and Ralph Austin Powell (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2013), 514.

⁴ As evidence of the difficulties involved in the question, merely note that Fr. Lawrence Dewan has doubted the *metaphysical* status of "truth" as a transcendental. See Lawrence Dewan, "Is Truth a Transcendental for St. Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* 2, no. 1 (2004): 1-20. For a standard defense of the distinction between "ontological" and "logical" truth, see John Wippel, "Truth in Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* 43, no.2 (Dec., 1989): 295-326. For an account giving a strong emphasis to ontological truth, see Joseph Pieper, *Living the Truth*, trans. Lothar Krauth and Stella Lange (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989).

It is helpful to recall the words of Fr. Gredt, who writes from the Poinso-centric perspective found in Deely's own writings. See Josephus Gredt, *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, 13th edition, ed. Eucharius Zenzen, vol. 2 (Barcelona: Herder, 1961), p.23: "Veritas autem stricte transcendentalis, si formaliter sumitur, enti, ut ens est, rationis tantum relationem superaddit ad intellectum, ad quem refertur. Ideo veritas

we are concerned with a matter of metaphysical import when we speak of *ens ut verum*. However, even a brief acquaintance with Peripatetic thought enables one to know well the ambiguities involved with truth and falsity. Strictly speaking, truth and falsity pertain to judgments affirming or denying one thing of another.⁵ For this reason, our most immediate notion of truth pertains not to the order of the unqualifiedly “mind-independent real”—at least according to a very strict Peripatetic perspective.

Now, there is a kind of ambiguity found in Aristotle’s “ontology”, as evidenced in his way of ascertaining just what type of “being” is the subject of the science of “being as being.” In books Δ and E of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle proposes a relatively familiar fourfold division of being.⁶ The first (and most important) division is that between being taken as *per accidens* (τὸ μὲν κατὰ συμβεβηκός) and being taken as *per se* (τὸ δὲ καθ’ αὐτό).⁷ The division is *not* into substance and accident. Instead, *per accidens* being is found in cases like “grey mare,” an accidental coincidence of two categories of being. There is a kind of *perseity within each* of the Aristotelian categories. That is, being is said *per se* in all of the categories. One can make a truly *per se* predication even of accidents—for instance: “Grey is a color.”⁸ However, he also states

transcendentalis, prout est proprietas realis, consistit in ente ut fundamento illius relationis rationis.”

⁵ Or, following Maritain, we should say that they affirm the unity of two objects in one and the same thing, taking *thing* in an appropriately broad enough sense that it can include “things” such as second intentions and moral essences. See note 34 below.

⁶ Cf. Franz Brentano, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, ed. and trans. Rolf George (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

⁷ Cf. Aquinas *In V Meta.* lect. 9, n.889 (Marietti, p.238). Setting aside scholastic language, the same general point is explained well in Aryeh Kosman, *The Activity of Being: An Essay on Aristotle’s Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

that that perseity also pertains to our speech about actuality (τὸ δ' ἐντελεχείᾳ) and potentiality (τὸ μὲν δυνάμει), as well being true (ἀληθές) and being false (ψεῦδος).

When we find Aquinas commenting on these matters, the division of being true and being false immediately brings to his pen discussions of *ens rationis*.⁹ Likewise, we can find him at times discussing the primary division of being as that between *ens rationis* and being in the ten categories.¹⁰ In this article, I wish to draw to the foreground three ways in which the domain of *ens rationis* presents perplexities within the tradition of Thomism.¹¹ As is well known, the traditional division of *ens rationis* presented by Aquinas is that of negations, privations, and

⁸ Thus, one realizes that the distinction between the *per se* and the *per accidens* does not equate to the distinction between substance and accident. Substance is that which exists *in se*, and accident is that which exists *in alio* (though we must set aside subtle discussions of the merely aptitudinal inherence of quantity in the case of Eucharistic matters as something to be discussed by the theologians). Indeed, predicamental relations exist *in alio* and *ad alio*, though non-predicamental ones exist only *ad alio*, at least according to the majority of Thomists and perhaps some Scotists. Thus, one will find scholastics after the time of Aquinas talking about the *innitas* of accidents and the unique *additas* of relation. However, that is a matter for broader historical studies.

⁹ See Aquinas, *In V Meta.*, lect.9, n.889 (Marietti, p.238); *In VI Meta.*, n.1233, 1241 (Marietti, p.311). But also recall the discussions at the end of book *theta*, to which Aquinas himself refers as pertaining to “being as the true and the false.” On this topic, see Kurt Pritzl, “Being True in Aristotle's Thinking,” *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 14 (1998): 177-201.

¹⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q.7 a.9 (Marietti, p.208): “Nam ens rationis dividitur contra ens divisum per decem praedicamenta ut patet V Metaph.”

¹¹ For ease of use, I am not going to enter into debates about the meaning of “Thomism.” I am operating on a conception that broadly related to Jacques Maritain’s thought, thus giving primacy to the commentatorial tradition dear to him—i.e. the Dominican tradition in which John of St. Thomas figures highly. However, even in this, I do draw on figures outside this tradition, most especially Hervaeus Natalis. On these matters, his thought is not far from the concerns of (e.g.) John of St. Thomas on matters pertaining to second intentional *entia rationis*.

relationes rationis or rationally relations.¹² However, it is arguable that we can find within later-day Thomism an awareness that a full ontology must in some way account not merely for aforementioned three types of *entia rationis*. From an Aristotelian vocabulary, one might say that a full account of “being as the true and the false” must explicitly face the kinds of “non-real” (or “non-physical”) being involved in moral and technical domains in addition to the logical *relationes rationis* that have perhaps received the most concentrated attention among Thomists.

I would have missed the import of Deely’s aforementioned, somewhat-ambiguous remark concerning *ens ut verum* had I not been sensitized to a cognate issue in the early fourteenth century in a work of Hervaeus Natalis, O.P., namely his *De secundis intentionibus*. This treatise represents what might be called an exercise in the “metaphysics of logic.”¹³ As John Doyle, the editor of a critical edition of the treatise, remarks on multiple occasions in his edition of the text,

¹² I will retain the Latin *relatio rationis* and *ens rationis*, though I acknowledge well the concerns expressed in Robert W Schmidt, “The Translation of Terms Like *Ens rationis*,” *Modern Schoolman* 41 (1963): 73-75. Deely would have us translate this as mind-dependent being, basing this recommendation on some good justifications. Nonetheless, this translation also can obscure matters a bit, given that even from Deely’s (and Poinsoot’s) own perspective, non-spiritual powers (e.g. the estimative sense) materially create *relationes rationis*. See John Deely, *Tractatus de Signis*, p. 65-76, 465-466 (Reiser *Log.* p.2, q.2 a.4, 301a1-306b45).

For some further thoughts on the later life (and death) of the standard threefold division, see the excellent, clear studies found in Daniel D. Novotný, *Ens Rationis from Suárez to Caramuel: A Study in Scholasticism of the Baroque Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003).

¹³ This interpretation of the *De secundis intentionibus* is supported by the brief but insightful remark made by Gyula Klima in “The Problem of Universals and the Subject Matter of Logic” in *The Metaphysics of Logic*, ed. Penelope Rush (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 173. Also, see Judith Dijs, “Hervaeus Natalis on the Proper Subject of Logic,” *Quaestio* 10, no. 1 (2010): 197–205. For her edition of the first two questions of the treatise, see Judith Dijs, “*De secundis intentionibus*, distinctiones I & II: Critical Edition with Introduction and Indices,” PhD diss., University of Leiden, 2012.

the core issue in Hervaeus's treatise *is not* that of "the metaphysics of knowledge." Instead, the text is above all concerned with explaining the relationship between the being that is proper to the science of metaphysics and the domain of being that Aristotle called "being as the true and the false."¹⁴ In addition to naming this division of being *ens rationis*, some 13th century figures would come to refer to it as *ens verum*.¹⁵ Hence, recalling Deely's remark about semiotics and *ens ut verum*, I thought of reading his words with an inflection that would turn my attention toward *ens rationis*. *Ens verum* sits on the very borders of "mind-independent" (i.e. *ens reale* or *ens naturae*¹⁶) and "mind-dependent" being (i.e. *ens rationis*)—a borderland quite dear to Deely's particular project. Returning to Hervaeus' treatise, I paid careful attention to how Hervaeus parses these two domains in order to situate the particular "entity" falling to logic as a demonstrative science. That is, I paid attention to the ultimately metaphysical tone of the *De secundis intentionibus*: "What exactly *are* second intentions and how are they founded on the extra-intellectual being that is investigated in metaphysics?"

I was pondering these matters when I ran across a profound statement by Yves Simon. Simon, generally very sober in style, interrupts his introductory discussion of intentional being in his *Introduction to Metaphysics of Knowledge* with a section entitled, "The Superabundance of Creation." The section deserves a full treatment all by itself, but the insight is easily summarized.

¹⁴ See John P. Doyle, *A Treatise of Master Hervaeus Natalis (d.1323) The Doctor Perspicacissimus On Second Intentions*, ed. and trans. John P. Doyle (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press: 2008), 41n15, 62n70, 81n99, 86n115, 100n145, 148n242, 157n255, 244n434.

¹⁵ For instance, see Robert Kilwardby, *De ortu scientiarum*, ed. Albert Judy (Oxford: The British Academy and PIMS, 1976), cap.58, n.580. Also, Scotus, *In Metaph.* 6, q.3. This topic leads us also into the language of *ens diminutum* inherited from certain medieval translations of Averroës's commentary on the *Metaphysics*. See Armand Maurer, "Ens Diminutum: A Note on its Origin and Meaning," *Mediaeval Studies* 12 (1950): 216-222.

¹⁶ The latter will be chosen as the preferred term for this article.

Simon opines that there is an analogical sense of *intentionality*, one that applies not only to cognition but also to the domains of technical and moral being as well.¹⁷ Reading this remark, I recalled a text from Aquinas where he presents a relatively unique fourfold division of knowledge,¹⁸ noting that we really should consider the broad and *unique* kinds of order that are known by the human intellect—(1) a speculative order that involves no human making or doing, (2) a rational / logical order that is “made”¹⁹ by the intellect in its activity, (3) the technical order made in physical reality (i.e. *practical-technical knowledge*), (4) the order made in the acts of the will (i.e. *practical-moral knowledge*).²⁰ In reading this text, one has the sense that each of these

¹⁷ See Yves R. Simon, *Introduction to Metaphysics of Knowledge*, trans. Vukan Kuic and Richard J. Thompson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 22-28.

¹⁸ See Aquinas, *In I Ethic.*, lect.1. Although Maurer notes well the unique character of this text, he overstates the Stoic influence in the background. It is *relatively* proximate (and *certainly* undeniable), but this sort of four-fold division has a *long* history up through the mid-thirteenth century. On this, see the excellent study by Weisheipl. James A. Weisheipl, “Classification of the Sciences in Medieval Thought,” *Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1965): 54-90. For Maurer’s remarks, see Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, 4th ed., ed. and trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: PIMS, 1986), 39n16, 95n4.

¹⁹ “Made” is used loosely here. See note 29 below.

²⁰ A detailed discussion of the cognition involved in these last two will be set aside—i.e. how they are understood directly with regarding to making / doing (i.e. the scholastic *practico-practical*) as opposed to the reflective knowledge of such realities (i.e. the scholastic *speculativo-practical*). It involves matters outside of our immediate metaphysical concerns in this paper. The clearest example is the distinction between the practico-practical command of prudence and the speculativo-practical manner of thinking in moral philosophy. Matters become much murkier in between these two extremes, leaving much room for work on action theory and practical cognition. One could do the same for the contrast between the practico-practical judgment involved in art in contrast to speculativo-practical thought undertaken in “the philosophy of making.” On the primary acts of prudence and art, see Aquinas, ST II-II q.47 a.8. Regarding the division of philosophy called “philosophy of making” (as opposed to

orders offers *a unique kind of being* for consideration—ones that are not reducible to *purely* speculative order.²¹

This paper seeks to tease out answers to some basic metaphysical distinctions regarding the unique ways that we use the term “being” when discussing logical, moral, and technical “beings.” To this end, I will use exemplary cases of other thinkers who have reflected upon these matters. Regarding logical being, I will summarize the program of Hervaeus Natalis’s *De secundis intentionibus*. This will show how one (generally Aristotelian, if not explicitly “Thomistic”²²) thinker answered the question, “How are logical beings (or logical notions) related to ‘physical’ being?” Regarding moral being, I will summarize remarks made by the early 20th-century Dominican, Fr. Léonard Lehu, whose discussions of *ens morale* answer metaphysical questions regarding the intentional being involved in moral human acts. Finally, I will only be able to make suggestions regarding the case of “technical” being, for I have found a thematic presentation of a kind of *ens artificiale* only in the work of Marie-Dominique Philippe, though, as we will see, it is implied in some of Maritain’s work concerning practical-technical cognition.

the more limited domain of aesthetics in the late-modern / contemporary sense), see M.-D. Philippe, “Situation de la philosophie de l’art dans la philosophie aristotélico-thomiste,” *Studia philosophica* 13 (1953): 99-112. See my remarks about Philippe in note 90 below.

²¹ However, as will be suggested, there is a sense in which, for instance, speculative metaphysics can retain its primacy.

²² His treatise is not written with any explicit references to Thomas. However, his position is very close to the treatment of *ens rationis* in Aquinas as well as in the later tradition of which John of St. Thomas was a part. The ambiguity regarding the relations between Aquinas and Hervaeus (a supporter of Thomas’s thought and canonization, though clearly an independent thinker) will take a great deal of research so as to explicate the matter in a responsible, detailed manner.

II.

Second Intentions. Among all of the kinds of “non-natural being,” the domain of logical relations is the one most strongly bolstered in Aquinas’s explicit vocabulary. However, as has been observed by a number of commentators, he does not often speak of second intentions as being the subject of logic. Indeed, the term “second intention” is not deployed as part of his technical vocabulary.²³ Nonetheless, there are a number of texts that support the claim that Aquinas holds that the domain of logic lies within that of *ens rationis*.²⁴

Schmidt and Phillippe have noted well the ambiguity in Aquinas’s use of the term *adinvenit* to describe the intellect’s relationship with second-intentional notions.²⁵ Schmidt understandably chooses to translate the word with the English “devise.” Logical relations are neither fabricated whole cloth, nor are they simply “pre-given” in reality. They have an intermediate status. They represent a unique order of being that arises precisely because of the

²³ On this point, see Robert W. Schmidt, *The Domain of Logic According to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 123-124n90. Lambertus Marie de Rijk, “A Study on the Medieval Intentionality Debate up to ca. 1350” in Geraldus Odonis, *Opera philosophica: Volume 2, De intentionibus*, ed. Lambertus Marie De Rijk (New York: Brill, 2005), 120-130. Giorgio Pini, *Categories and Logic in Duns Scotus: An Interpretation of Aristotle’s Categories in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 33. Indeed, Pini shows how one can (with no small justification) read Aquinas as saying that logic pertains to the acts of the intellect—language that comes across in the prologues to the commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics* and *On Interpretation*. One understands well why certain baroque scholastics, trying to maintain Aquinas’s language, would make it a science concerned with directing the *real* qualities in the intellect.

²⁴ While one could cite a number of texts to this end, Schmidt’s study remains excellent to this end. It is arguable that, by means of his implicit use of post-Aquinas scholastics, Schmidt makes Thomas *too clear* on these matters, though that is not a direct concern for this paper.

²⁵ Schmidt, *The Domain of Logic*, 168-174. M.-D. Phillippe, “Originalité de ‘l’ens rationis’ dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas,” *Angelicum* 52, no. 1975 (1975): 94-95n6.

intellect's own natural capacity for forming various types of relations such as *generality*, *universality*, *predication*, and *sylogisms*. These relations are “devised” in that which we know.²⁶

On this topic, much insight can be derived from the *De secundis intentionibus* of Hervaeus Natalis (1250/60-1323). Although he undertakes many sophisticated discussions in the treatise, the foundation of all of Hervaeus's remarks are rooted in an initial division that he proposes regarding the use of the word “intention.” This initial division virtually contains (i.e. as in a principle) much of what he treats at length in the treatise. It will be helpful to translate Hervaeus's division into a series of examples.

The word “intention” is, of course, quite equivocal. Duns Scotus himself presented an explicit account of this fact.²⁷ At the beginning of his treatise, Hervaeus wants to be clear that his focus is on the very object of knowledge.²⁸ He is not speaking of the moral sense of “intention” as involving the willing of an end to be achieved through a given means (or series of means). Likewise, he is not concerned with the way we speak of “intentions” *ex parte intellectus*—i.e. from the perspective of the knower. This point is quite important, given the general philosophical

²⁶ A lack of clarity on this point can make logical being appear to be a kind of demiurgy that is more akin to *ars* than a unique domain of being. See the insightful recent work of Federico Tedesco on this problem in Scholastic thought. See Federico Tedesco, “Può l'ente logico essere definito un artefatto mentale (e la disciplina che se ne occupa una tecnica scientifica)? La natura analogica e i limiti epistemici del modello demiurgico di matrice tomista” in *La dinamica della ricerca: Mozioni et rimozioni nella scienza*, ed. Luca S. Maugeri (Bologna: Pardes Edizioni, 2014), 53-78.

²⁷ See Pini, *Categories and Logic*, 30.

²⁸ I am outlining the remarks made by Hervaeus at the beginning of the very first question of the *De secundis intentionibus*. This perspective and division *dominates* the entire work and constantly provides an important vantage point for the Dominican author. These points are carefully parsed textually in Judith Dijs, “Hervaeus Natalis on the Proper Subject of Logic,” *Quaestio* 10, no. 1 (2010): 197–205.

vocabulary of “intentionality” post-Brentano and Husserl.²⁹ In his *De secundis intentionibus*, Hervaeus is not focusing on the intellect’s “intention,” as we may find in the language of Aquinas when he refers to the *intentio intellecta*, *conceptus*, or *verbum mentis*.³⁰

Instead, Hervaeus carefully focuses our gaze on the object of knowledge when asking, “What is a *first or second intention*?” He insists that we must consider the matter *ex parte obiecti*—from the perspective of the thing known. Hervaeus’s point is much akin to an issue raised by Maritain when he noted the great care that must be taken in parsing the relationship between the terms “thing” and “object.”³¹ Maritain’s primary concern³² was that we *must* be aware that

²⁹ The importance of not misunderstanding this point is well articulated in John P. Doyle “Hervaeus Natalis, O.P. (d. 1323) on Intentionality: Its Direction, Context, and Some Aftermath,” *The Modern Schoolman* 83, no. 2 (2006): 85–123.

³⁰ For a lengthy citation of texts related to this topic, see Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Gerald Phelan et al. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 411-441. Georg Koridze provides a very clear, correct, and careful reading of the treatise by Hervaeus in his 2004 dissertation. However, his evaluations are slightly misdirected by his framing of the overall interpretation offered in terms that are too close to the post-Brentano discussions of intentionality *ex parte intellectus*. See Georg Koridze, “Intentionale Grundlegung der philosophischen Logik : Studien zur Intentionalität des Denkens bei Hervaeus Natalis im Traktat ‘*De secundis intentionibus*,’” Dr. phil., diss., Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, 2004.

³¹ See Maritain, *Degrees*, 96-107, 127-136. John C. Cahalan, “The Problem of Thing and Object in Maritain,” *The Thomist* 59, no.1: 21-46. Also, see the wealth of texts from Aquinas found in L.-M. Régis, *Epistemology*, trans. Imelda Choquette Byrne (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 177-193. On the prehistory of the notion of object, see also Lawrence Dewan, “‘*Obiectum*’: Notes on the Intention of a Word” in *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 403-443.

³² In this, he follows in a long tradition going back to Hervaeus’s own time. Many of these subtleties bear the clear mark of Scotist discussions of objective existence, though one can find thinkers like Simon of Faversham, Henry of Ghent, and Godfrey of Fontaines (and Aquinas, as Régis’ text amply documents) using cognate terms on

calling something an “object” already presupposes that it is related to a knowing or appetitive power of some sort. At least when we begin by discussing extramental entities, we must carefully distinguish the *thing as a thing* from the *thing as an object*.³³

For Hervaeus, a similar dynamic is at play when he parses out two different senses that we can have for ostensibly concrete first-intentional notions such as “ox” and “ass.” From one perspective, we can speak concretely (or, materially). That is, we can say, “Ox is a first intention,” meaning thereby, “The nature of what it is to be an ox is a first intention.” Focusing our concern on the concrete thing known, we are primarily concerned with (in this particular

occasions.

³³ One can think rightly of the distinction between a material object and a formal object, which is at least related to this distinction. However, the vocabulary of *thing* and *object* seems clearer (perhaps more so than the term “metalogical entity” that one finds in Maritain and Simon occasionally). We find an important parallel (nearly identical in nomenclature if one reads *intention* and *object* as being roughly synonymous) in Da Prato’s defense of a generally Hervaean outlook. See Francisco Da Prato, “Tractatus de prima et secunda intentione,” ed. Burkhard Mojsisch, *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 5 (2000): p.169:455-459: “**Res autem ut res non concurrunt ad esse intentionem primam, neque materialiter neque formaliter, sed res intellecta concurrunt ad esse intentionem primam materialiter** et propter hoc ab Hervaeo res intellecta dicitur intellecta sive intentio prima materialiter” (emphasis added).

Technically, more discussion is needed to explain particular noetic subtleties among the various formal objects of sciences. On the distinction of the *ratio formalis obiecti ut res* from the *ratio formalis obiecti ut obiectum*), see the lucid passages in Jacques Maritain, *The Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Imelda C. Byrne (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 125-135. Although the vocabulary developed to solve particular issues regarding the nature of theological science, Maritain extends the application to matters pertaining to naturally knowable sciences. This language was used by many others in the Dominican tradition of Thomistic interpretation.

case) the given quiddity. Even though “to be an intention” implies more than *ens naturae*, a concrete concern with the quiddity of the ox is focused primarily on the known *thing*.³⁴

Nonetheless, the first *intention* is not merely a thing. It is a *known* thing, so we can also ask an important follow-up question: “By what is *ox* called an *intention*?” That is, we can abstractly ask, “What is the *intentionality* by which it is called an *intention*?”³⁵ The *white thing* is called *white* because of *whiteness*. So too, the *intended thing* is so called because of *intentionality*. To put it another way, whereas the concrete way of speaking focuses on the *thing* known, the abstract term *intentionality*,³⁶ focusing on that by which *something* is called an *intention*, shifts our focus to the *known* thing—the *thing as an object* (or, *the thing as an intention*).

It is important to grasp what is at stake. Hervaeus is interested in just what it is that makes an intention (*ex parte obiecti*) to be an intention. What is it about the object of knowledge that permits us to call it an object or an intention (whether first or second)? In short: it is the *relatio rationis* of the known thing to the intellect. The relation of known to knower is a relation

³⁴ Again, the interpretive remarks of Da Prato in the previous footnote help to clarify this matter.

³⁵ The use of the distinction of concrete and abstract senses *intentio* can be found in Radulphus Brito, though in an *entirely* different sense than that found in Hervaeus. For instance, see Jan Pinborg, “Radulphus Brito’s Sophism on Second Intentions,” *Vivarium* 13, no. 2 (1975), n.49 (p.141). Judith Dijs, “Intentions in the First Quarter of the Fourteenth Century: Hervaeus Natalis Versus Radulphus Brito,” in *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century*, ed. S. Brown, T. Dewender, and T. Kobusch (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 213-224.

³⁶ Remember, again: *ex parte obiecti*, not *ex parte intellectus*.

of the measure to that which it measures.³⁷ When we say that something *is an object* (or, closer to Hervaeus's terms, *is an intention*) we are implying that this one-way relation is established.³⁸

Thus, "to be an intention" or "to be an object" implies that we are considering things from the unique perspective that opens up when we "turn around," predicating a *relatio rationis* to the thing. This is why it is tempting to consider qualifiers like "known" to be nothing but an extrinsic denomination. From a perspective *completely* limited to *ens naturae*, it is indeed an extrinsic denomination. No notion such as *animal*, *rose*, etc. contains an explicit reference to *being known*. Solely from the perspective of *ens naturae*, this "accident" is nothing more than a kind of quasi-accident; however, once we consider the *object* from the perspective of *being an object of the intellect*, there is an entirely new domain of being (and, hence, of intelligibility) that opens up.³⁹ This kind of *ens rationis* is not *absolute* non-being, for it has an intelligibility

³⁷ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 5.15 (1021a29-1021b3). Pini is very sensitive to this topic as it applies to Scotus's thought concerning objective existence. See his excellent recent article Giorgio Pini, "Scotus on Objective Being," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofia medievale* 26 (2015): 337-367.

³⁸ On this, point, one sees a close continuity to Hervaeus's approach and that of Scotus early in the latter's career. The point is far from clear in Scotus, as contemporary disputes on the matter bear witness. See the text cited in the previous footnote for Pini's balanced reading of several passages in the *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*. Based on his reading of several important texts, one can see that "objective existence" (or to-be-an-object) means nothing other than being related to the knower with a *relatio rationis* arising from the initial act of intellection. On this, much insight can be gained from a careful comparison of Hervaeus, *De secundis intentionibus*, q.3 a.1 (esp. p.421:7-15) and the passages discussed in Pini's work on Scotus. See also the texts from Aquinas cited by Régis in the text mentioned in note 34 above.

³⁹ On the quasi-accidental status of this relationship, see the text from Hervaeus cited in the previous note. Also, see Scotus, *In V Metaph.* q.11 n.43-44.

grounded in the nature of the intellect's manner of relating to reality.⁴⁰ The intellect, in its three operations, establishes various relationships—relationships that *are* all the various second intentions, each with their own unique properties. Thus, the first operation establishes the types of relationships ultimately ordained to definition—*genus, species, difference, etc.*; the second, those involved in the union of two known things—*enunciation, opposition, etc.*; the third, those involved in the relationship of two known things by means of some middle—*syllogism, figure, etc.*⁴¹

Whatever might be said about the relationship between lower order second intentions and higher order ones,⁴² one thing remains the same throughout the entire domain: the initial *relatio*

⁴⁰ The question of non-being looms large in such discussions. See Hervaeus, *De secundis intentionibus*, q.2 a.3. See also Franciscus de Prato, *Tractatus de ente rationis* in Giraldus Odonis, *De intentionibus*, ed. L.M. de Rijk, appendix G, n.53 (p.765:17-24): “Ad quartum dico quod, licet excellens doctor magister Herveus multum subtiliaverit se ad faciendum magnum tractum de secundis intentionibus, que sunt entia rationis, non propter hoc potest argui quod entia rationis non sint nichil formaliter, quia beatus Thomas, qui fuit excellentior eo, subtiliter et diffuse tractavit de peccato originali, veniali et mortali et disputavit etiam questiones de nichilo, et tamen secundum eummet et beatum Augustinum peccatum sive malum est formaliter nichil.”

⁴¹ Hervaeus takes for granted that all three acts of the intellect produce second intentions. This matter is not clear in some earlier authors (e.g. Scotus), though others did hold it without much debate (e.g. Simon of Faversham and Radulphus Brito). It is potentially implied in Aquinas, though the matter is far from clear. Schmidt's study adds clarity precisely by developing upon this vagueness. In Hervaeus, see *De secundis intentionibus*, q.3 a.4, though numerous locations bear witness to his thoughts on this matter. For important parallel considerations, see Ioannis a Sancta Thoma, *Ars logica seu de forma et materia ratiocinandi*, ed. Beatus Reiser (Turin: Marietti, 1930), p.2 q.2 a.2 and 4. Also, see Gredt, *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, vol. 1, *Logica et philosophia naturalis*, n.131 (p.125-126).

⁴² E.g. How intentions such as *genus* and *property* are “taken up” into complex enunciations. Likewise, how *simple notions* are considered *terms* when considered from the perspective of syllogistic reasoning; or how they

rationis of the known to the knower is implied. None of the relationships between *known* things is possible unless they are considered *as known*. Hence, the order of *logic* has its particular concern with what sorts of relations are naturally formed among *known things* from the perspective of *being known*. Purely from the perspective of *ens naturae*, none of this is “real” (or “predicamental” or “physical”). However, when considered *precisely qua known*,⁴³ the *thing* becomes an *object* (or, an *intention*). As such, it is capable of taking on many new properties that never will exist in “pure” *ens naturae* but that *do* play a central role in the human achievements of intellectual knowledge. This is a relational order that is “made”⁴⁴ (i.e., by the intellect in its activity of defining, enunciating / judging,⁴⁵ and reasoning). Hervaeus’s treatise could be

acquire *suppositio* insofar as they are involved in complexes formed by the second act of the intellect; also, how enunciations / judgments become *propositions* and *conclusions* in *sylogisms*. New properties attend to them in each of these varied roles, and it is important to isolate how the relations are constituted by each act of the intellect.

Hervaeus only provides a slim account regarding such matters. The highest level distinction is between the relation of intentionality (which remains in *all* higher-level second intentions) and the second intentions that are taken up into higher-level formations. For his model of this second case, he uses the physical example of the virtual presence of material elements in higher-level substances. See the whole of Hervaeus, *De secundis intentionibus*, q.3 a.4; esp. p.445:1-16.

⁴³ Hence, too, one understands the later tradition of mental language and natural signs, especially developed by nominalist philosophers and theologians. A major, important difference (among many) lies in the role of relation and the way that a relation arises from the very beginning of this process, namely, in the act of knowledge and the formation of the concept. A full study of Ockham on objective existence would provide great light on this important inter-scholae distinction. For some treatment of this, see Christian Rode, *Franciscus de Prato: Facetten seiner Philosophie im Blick auf Hervaeus Natalis und Wilhelm von Ockham* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005).

⁴⁴ However, see the remarks above in note 29.

⁴⁵ It is important to note that there is a distinction between the complex enunciation and the judgment expressly made. At times this distinction is only partially clear in Aquinas’s texts, as can be seen in the numerous

summarized then as saying: “To think of the intentional order, you must always remember that very first property of all intentions (i.e., *known things*)—the *relatio rationis* of the known thing to the knower.”⁴⁶ Hence, logic is a reflexive kind of knowledge, focusing on the relations established within this domain of made possible by the initial *ens rationis* that is the relation of the known to the knower.⁴⁷

Near the end of his treatise, Hervaeus finds himself up against the wall, so to speak. He must admit that there is an important division within the accepted domain of *ens rationis*.⁴⁸ In his opinion, the three acts of the intellect are naturally apt to form certain relations (i.e., second

texts found in Régis, *Epistemology*, 311-403. The topic received much attention in later Scholasticism. Remarks on this topic vis-à-vis Gregory of Rimini (but also in light of discussions of Scotus, as well as others) can be found in Muralt, “La doctrine médiévale de *l’esse objectivum*” in *L’enjeu de la philosophie médiévale: études thomistes, scotistes, occamiennes* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 127-167. Also, see Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to Logic*, trans. Imelda Choquette (London: Sheed & Ward, 1946), 84-98. Simon, *Introduction to Metaphysics of Knowledge*, 136-158.

⁴⁶ A sketch of the history to be considered regarding Hervaeus’s relation to later Dominicans can be found in Michael Tavuzzi, “Hervaeus Natalis and the Philosophical Logic of the Thomism of the Renaissance,” *Doctor Communis* 45 (1992): 134-152. Also, Michael Tavuzzi, *Prierias: The Life and Works of Silvestro Mazzolini Da Prierio (1456–1527)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 38, 45, 95-96. Likewise, consider the reading of Aquinas’s texts by M.-D. Philippe, whose interpretation concerning the foundation of second intentions quite close to that of Hervaeus. The texts of Aquinas are less clear than the later Dominican, for the issue was never a direct and detailed matter for Aquinas. See M.-D. Phillippe, “Originalité,” 100-106. Although logic is reductively speculative according to Aquinas, we should not forget the unique status of the object. These matters are given masterful textual treatment in Schmidt, *Domain*, 16-48.

⁴⁷ The reflex knowledge in this case is of the relations themselves, *entia rationis* known directly as though they were a kind of being. Hence, it certain later scholastics would say that that it is formed *ad instar entis*.

⁴⁸ See Hervaeus, *De secundis intentionibus*, q.5 a.2 and 3.

intentions) among known things. The things, insofar as they provide the foundation for being known—in other words, because they are potentially manifestive to the human intellect—can enter *as intentions* (though *not as things*) into these relational patterns.⁴⁹ In contrast to such second intentions, there are the *entia rationis* formed according to the pleasure of the person who institutes them. In this domain, Hervaeus includes customary and moral entities ranging from grammatical notions to political entities such as charters.⁵⁰ He says little else,⁵¹ but the reader is

⁴⁹ Hence, in a topic that will be mentioned again below, Aristotle's species of relation known as the measured to the measure (involving extrinsic formal causality) plays a very important role in more detailed metaphysical discussions of this topic as well as others. This "one-way" relation is precisely what gives enough grounding to prevent the order of logic from becoming one of pure extrinsic denomination.

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, q.5 a.2 (p.561:28-562:12). From a Thomistic perspective, one would benefit from considering how these matters shed light on the insightful remarks concerning the inventive nature of language discussed by Gilson late in his life. The inventive character of human language implies the involvement of free choice, thus bringing into play issues concerning moral being. See especially Étienne Gilson, "Language as a Human Achievement" in *Linguistics and Philosophy: An Essay on the Philosophical Constants of Language*, trans. John Lyon (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 44-62. To stress the point of my entire essay: the metaphysician is *deeply* interested in questions such as, "What is the being of a word?" If that "being" requires an articulation of *ens morale*, then such an investigation *must* be undertaken if we are not to confuse various uses of the term "being." Such discussions help the philosopher to avoid attributing to *ens naturae* (the primary concern of metaphysics as a science) that which pertains to various domains of intentional being. Using the traditional vocabulary: without such investigations, we risk confusing the domains of *ens rationis* and *ens naturae*—a very dangerous thing for the metaphysician to do. Aristotle claimed that Plato did this with his theory of forms. I would argue that extreme claims regarding social construction of reality do the same as well today. Who other than the metaphysician should address such claims and matters?

⁵¹ Though, he does note that there are also particular *entia rationis* such as the distinction in one and the same point considered as beginning of one line and the end of another. Likewise, there is (for example) the distinction between various Divine Attributes and that between different formalities in a given being. However, a

well aware at this point that what we have heretofore called *ens rationis* is a far-vaster domain than anticipated. The domain of “being” made possible by the intellectual life of man requires much more metaphysical reflection. To this end, let us consider several aspects pertaining to *ens morale*.

III.

Ens Morale—The Intentional Order of Goodness and Wickedness. It is no small matter to ask, “What is a border?” Were there never the customs or the commands of political prudence, there would never be *in our very experience* a kind of practical entity known as a “border.” When we speak of a “border,” we do not simply paste a practical idea on top of the physical order. When we say, “This stretch of land is the border between West Virginia and Maryland,” we are talking about the land—the grass and the stones. However, we are not talking about it according to its *ens naturae*. Our interaction with the land involves a kind of moral being.

In the contemporary Thomistic literature, Martin Rhonheimer is perhaps the strongest exponent of a view of practical-moral reason that emphasizes its creative role.⁵² There is no small controversy over his work and his treatment of practical reason.⁵³ Be that as it may, he has tapped into a theme that is much older than the discussions undertaken in contemporary journal

full discussion of such matters would involve a complex theory of distinctions of reason founded (or not founded) on reality. He does not undertake that in the treatise, though he is clear that such matters are of interest to the metaphysician. See *ibid*, q.5 a.3 (p.585:7-18).

⁵² In English translation, the best texts expressing this viewpoint are Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University, 2000). Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011).

⁵³ On this score, merely consider the back-and-forth discussions he has had with Jean Porter, Steven Jensen, Stephen Long, Stephen Brock, Lawrence Dewan, and Janet Smith.

literature. Indeed, to understand certain aspects of the questions posed by Rhonheimer, it is necessary to understand the little-known work of the early-twentieth century Dominican Léonard Lehu.⁵⁴ In two book-length works, Lehu discusses the question of practical reason and links this issue to that of *ens morale*.⁵⁵ Using a vocabulary that is clearly marked by the disputations of baroque scholasticism, Lehu nonetheless believes that his conclusions can be drawn from the works of the Angelic Doctor himself. In this brief exploratory article, we will focus our considerations on what can be found in his Latin manual of moral philosophy. Instead of becoming overly embedded in the broader narrative of inter-scholae polemics (e.g. as found in Lehu's *La raison: règle de la moralité d'après Saint Thomas*), the manual more directly addresses issues pertaining to *ens morale*. Happily, on this topic, the manual retains a sufficient level of technicality to engage our concerns.⁵⁶

Refusing to say that morality or *ens morale* is an *ens rationis*, a predicamental (i.e. real) relation, or a mere extrinsic denomination, Lehu chooses to refer to it using the late-scholastic notion of transcendental relation or *relatio secundum dici*,⁵⁷ namely the “relation” of the will to practical reason which provides the very formal specification of its act. The formal specification

⁵⁴ In an understated manner, Rhonheimer has admitted the *great* importance of Lehu's work for his thought. For a clear statement of this fact, see his remarks in Martin Rhonheimer, *Ethics of Procreation and the Defense of Human life: Contraception, Artificial Fertilization, and Abortion*, ed. William F. Murphy (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 11n16.

⁵⁵ See Leonard Lehu, *La raison: règle de la moralité d'après Saint Thomas* (Paris: LeCoffre, 1930). Also, Leonard Lehu, *Philosophia Moralis et Socialis* (Paris: LeCoffre, 1914), 72-166. One is not surprised to find similar positions in the Dominican manualists who are clearly in the background of Rhonheimer's thought, namely Benedict Merkelbach and Dominic Prümmer.

⁵⁶ Also, for a lucid summary of these issues see Joseph Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, ed. Eucharius Zenzen, vol. 2 (Barcelona: Herder, 1961), 372-379, 396-404.

of the will by the command of the practical intellect, something that at most can be called a *relatio secundum dici* (for this formal specification is an intrinsic cause of the will's very act), is the *primary* sense of "moral being."

Since we must be brief here, we can shed light on his position by considering a detailed response that he gives to the potential objection, "Properly speaking, the moral act does not have a relation to the moral rule but, instead, to the moral object." Lehu's response deserves full citation:

The moral act has a relation both to the object and to the moral rule, though not in the same manner. It has a relation to the object *morally understood*. Now, as regards the act *in esse moris* [i.e. *ens morale*], it is necessary to determine the matter in a way that is proportionally like that regarding an action *in esse physico* [i.e. *ens naturae*]. However, an act *in esse physico* is formally constituted through a real, transcendental relation to the object considered from the perspective of *esse physico*.⁵⁸ Therefore, an act *in esse morali* is formally constituted through a real, transcendental relation to the object considered from the perspective of *esse moris*. However, what is the object considered from the perspective of *esse moris*? It is the object inasmuch as it has a real, transcendental relation to the moral rule.

Therefore, if one wishes to express the matter adequately, one ought to say, "The good act is that which has a real, transcendental relation of agreement to the object which has a real transcendental relation to the moral rule." Whence, St. Thomas says, "Every act has its species from the object, and the human act which is called moral has its species from *the object related to the principle* (or rule) of human actions, which is reason" (ST I-II q.18 a.3).⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Of course, the term goes back at least as far as Boethius. The use of "transcendental" was applied to this because the kind of "quasi-relativity" involved was found in multiple categories. Clearly, Lehu's background is John of St. Thomas. For a very brief summary of his views concerning *relatio secundum esse* and *relatio secundum dici*, see Deely in Poinsett, *Tractatus*, 462-464.

⁵⁸ He cites back to n.45 on p.24-25 of the text. See his remarks near the end of this selection: "Finis quidem in se est aliquid extrinsecum actui, sed actus habet relationem realem transcendentalem ad suum finem et ipsa, utpote intrinseca actui, est proprium principium specificans actum. Sed cum ista relatione transcendentalis innotescat ex suo termino, id est ex fine, ideo brevitatis causa dicitur ex fine specificari actum."

But since all acts—whether *in esse physico* or *in esse morali*—in common are a transcendental relation to the [given] object, we can rightly omit it, just as St. Thomas often does,⁶⁰ thus defining morality based on the relation to the moral rule and saying that the good act is that which has conformity with the moral rule.⁶¹

The “moral rule” or the “rule of right reason” must always be read, “the rule of prudence.” Practical reason is concerned above all with an order that is to be *commanded*—the order of prudential reason. The rule and guide of practical reason is the virtuous man—led by all the moral virtues, connected in prudence.⁶² Directly stated: practical reason *orders*. Of course, a full account of these matters must face the daunting question of the nature of *right* (or virtuous, truly prudential) reason.⁶³ For this essay, we need merely to note the fact that the moral order opens up on a unique domain of being. Just as in *ens naturae* an action is transcendently relative to its end (and intelligible only by that reference), so too is an action in *ens morale* said to be transcendently relative to the practical reason that constitutes it and constitutes the very possibility of it having a *moral* species.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ At this point, Lehu goes on to remark, *ibid.*, p.83: “Nota, obiectum *relatum ad principum* (seu regulam) *actuum humanorum*. Hoc est quod dicitur obiectum *in esse morali* seu *in esse moris*. Cf. *De malo* q.2 a.6 ad 2: ‘Sicut actus in communi (*id est in actus physicus*) recipit speciem ab obiecto (*physico*), ita actus moralis recipit speciem ab obiecto morali.’”

⁶⁰ He notes, as is the case in some of the citations he made at length in a long list several pages earlier.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.82-3 (my translation).

⁶² Cf. Yves Simon, *The Definition of Moral Virtue*, ed. Vukan Kuic (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 125-131. We set aside the ultimate connection of all the virtues in charity, a primarily theological issue that does not need to overturn anything of what has been said here.

⁶³ This has been felt keenly by Rhonheimer among others.

⁶⁴ Hence too, the great insight expressed in Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to the Basic Problems of Moral Philosophy*, trans. Ornelia N. Borgerhoff (New York: Magi Books, 1990), 36: “What makes a man good, not

Thomist discussions of transcendental relativity generally take place with regard to beings in *ens naturae*. The soul is not a relation, but it is relative *secundum dici* to the body. Likewise, the lion is not a relation to its environment, but as regards the conditions of its existence, it is relative *secundum dici* to said environment.⁶⁵ A power is “relative” in this way to its specifying formal object. To say that *ens morale* is nothing other than a real, transcendental relation of conformity,⁶⁶ is the same as saying that a given “moral being” (e.g., a *temperate act*) is something unique but relative to certain conditions—namely being given its formal specification by the command of prudence, rectified by the relevant other moral virtues.⁶⁷ The

relatively but absolutely speaking? It is not external goods, not bodily or even intellectual goods... It is action as flowing from freedom, good action, which makes a man good absolutely speaking, action which is the supreme actualization of being. Here we have good as *moral value*; **we are in the order of formal causality**. The good as *moral value*. Here we are faced with a new order, the moral order; a new universe emerges and is revealed to us. If human action were simply a natural event, resulting from the interaction of a constellation of causes at work in the world, we would only need to consider the universe of nature. But human action is introduced into the world as a result of free choice, as something that depends not only on that whole which is the world, but on the absolute initiative—irreducible to factors interacting in the world—taken by another whole which is myself, my own person, so that I am responsible for the act in question. [He then refers to a number of his studies on the nature of freedom.]” (Emphasis added in bold.) Also, one should see the profound remarks in Jacques Maritain, *Freedom in the Modern World*, trans. Richard O’Sullivan (New York: Gordian Press, 1971), 79-80.

⁶⁵ See John Deely, *Intentionality and Semiotics* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2007), 137-142. Some interesting parallels to this point can be found in the insightful, if idiosyncratic, Michael Thompson, *Life and Action: Elementary Structures of Practice and Practical Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2008), 1- 82.

⁶⁶ Or non-conformity, in the case of evil action.

⁶⁷ However, one should be careful to note the role of the will in the activity of prudence. See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature*, vol. 2, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1949), 268-

moral act is relative to the *imperium* and *dictamen* of practical reason as its cause.⁶⁸ Given that it is a freely commanded act of practical reason, we are here confronted with something more than *ens naturae*, even though we certainly must presuppose the nature of the free human agent.

Practical knowledge creates new relations in the physical world.⁶⁹ It constitutes a new domain of reality, relative to the dictate of prudence (or, imprudence) which measures it, giving the will (and by derivation, the subsequently commanded acts) their formal specification.⁷⁰

350. Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan and Lewis Galantieri (New York; Pantheon, 1948), 40-42, 47-61. The virtues create a kind of affective resonance that then will be used by prudence, which presupposes rectification by the other virtues. See the insightful reflections on this point in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Le sens du mystère et le clair-obscur intellectuel* (Paris: Desclé de Brouwer, 1934), 64-70. Also, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "Du caractère métaphysique de la Théologie morale de saint Thomas, en particulier dans ses rapports avec la prudence et la conscience," *Revue Thomiste* 30 (1925): 341-355.

⁶⁸ This is the core of the assertion made by Lehu in the aforementioned text *La raison: règle de la moralité d'après Saint Thomas*. It is at the heart of Rhonheimer's deep respect for Lehu's thought on these matters. Understanding Lehu's argument vis-à-vis other proponents of natural law theories would do much to clear up conflicts today concerning the import and meaning of Rhonheimer's work as well as the meaning of "law" in relation to reason and to human nature.

⁶⁹ Hence, all of the world is perfused with *practical signs* that subtly influence the actions of others who can indeed see aspects of reality *qua chosen*. On practical signs, one can gain much from reading Jacques Maritain, *Redeeming the Time*, trans. Harry Lorin Binsse (Geoffrey Bles: Centenary Press, 1953), 191-224, 268-276. In particular, see the texts he quotes at length in the latter part of the aforementioned text. These are taken from Aquinas's (and, especially, John of St. Thomas's) discussion of the practical signification in the sacraments.

⁷⁰ Here, we see that there is a kind of measure-to-measured relationship between practical reason and the human act. However, we should stay with Lehu's claim that the morality of the act derives from a transcendental (or *secundum dici*) relation. In the command, the practical intellect *is informing the will*. The fact that this is a new domain of reality is implied in the claim that it is a *relatio secundum dici*. The moral order must be *constituted by practical reason* before we can talk about any relations that follow upon its being constituted (even if they quickly

Of course, a full treatment of this matter would need to discuss a number of subtle matters. For example, Lehu (clearly following John of St. Thomas on this mark⁷¹) distinguishes the various ways that morality (or *ens morale*) pertains to the external act (in contradistinction to the rectitude of the will commanded by the *imperium*).⁷² He remarks that it is only when we speak of the external act *precisely as an effect of the interior act of will* that we say that it is (*as effect*) only denominatively good or bad.⁷³ He draws upon the notion of instrumental causality to explain how this kind of extrinsic denomination is not purely extrinsic, as would be the case with and necessarily follow). One understands well why Rhonheimer finds this transcendental relation to be a kind of *Deus ex machina*, and he rightly calls attention to what is necessary for understanding the implication aright: In the domain of practical reason, we are faced with a new kind of reality, a new perspective that is only understandable from the perspective of the acting person (because we are concerned with *human acts*). Even if Rhonheimer is generally dismissive of the language of *relatio secundum dici* as applied to this matter, I would argue that there is greater similarity than dissimilarity between his project and that of Lehu's tradition of Thomism. He seems to dismiss it as a "legalistic" solution, when in fact it was a groping for the proper metaphysical terminology. See Martin Rhonheimer, "The Perspective of the Acting Person and the Nature of Practical Reason" in *The Perspective of the Acting Person*, ed. William F. Murphy (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2008), 212-213.

⁷¹ See John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 5 (Paris: Vivès, 1885), disp.8 a.1 and 2. However, all of disputations 8-10 provide a number of salient points.

⁷² He distinguishes this from considering the human act *secundum se absolute* (e.g. to steal or to give alms). Likewise, he remarks that even when we view the exterior act as an effect of the interior act, we can consider it as something in the nature of things. The point being discussed by us in this essay pertains *only* to a consideration of the effect *as an effect* of the commanded will. This is a perspective that is not purely that of *ens naturae* but, instead, implies the causality that establishes *ens morale*. See Lehu, *Philosophia moralis*, 155-156. His remarks are based upon Aquinas, ST I-II q.20, a.1 and 2, as well as Cajetan's commentary on the text.

⁷³ See *ibid.* For a perspective that wishes to emphasize the morality of the external act very strongly (more strongly than Lehu et al.), see the insightful essays in Robert Sokolowski, *Moral Action: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), esp. 1-77 and 143-190.

saying, “The elephant is seen.” In this case, nothing is intrinsically posited in the subject. The relation of the seen to the seer is only a *relatio rationis*.⁷⁴ However, the intelligibility *in the act caused by practical reason is intrinsic to the action*, though only by reference to the *moral source from which it arises*. One must “look at” the act *as being caused by practical-moral reason*. As an effect, it is traversed by an intelligibility that is derived from its cause.⁷⁵ It involves a kind of intentional existence that is moral in character.

By means of the notion of instrumental causality, one can articulate how a known and willed end becomes present in the means—no matter how poor (and even indifferent) those means may be. Without going into all of the details (which strictly speaking are matters of moral philosophy⁷⁶), it is metaphysically proper to explain how moral activity creates a new order in the world. Human agency is thus seen as a unique source of being—namely the kind of *ens morale* that is a *practical analogate* to the intentional existence that enables scientific ordering and exploration by speculative human knowledge (i.e., that involving second intentions).

⁷⁴ Though, recall the remarks above concerning Hervaeus Natalis’s treatment of the relation of intentionality, attempting to back it away from pure extrinsic denomination. A fuller discussion of extrinsic denomination would help to clarify these matters. The denomination is extrinsic when we consider the elephant purely in terms of *ens naturae* and not in its involvement in sensuo-visual intentionality and the extrinsic formal causality by which the *sense of sight* is specified by the *seen*.

⁷⁵ Lehu believes that such denomination fits the case described by John of St. Thomas in *Ars Logica*, p.2 q.14 a.5: “Denominationes istae aliquid intrinsece ponunt, dependenter tamen ab aliquot extrinseco non terminante tantum, sed etiam denominante vel ab denominationem concurrente; ideo dicuntur aliquando denominari ab aliquot extrinseco non formaliter sed originative; originatur enim et pendet denominatio illius modi intrinseci ab aliquot extrinseco.”

⁷⁶ And arguably the disciplines of sociology, political theory, economics, anthropology, and history.

Without having plumbed to the depths all of the issues arising in Lehu's work,⁷⁷ we have found at least two important points that metaphysics can bring to bear on the question of moral being. First, it is a truly metaphysical task to place *ens morale* in its proper "ontological space." It is neither absolute non-being, nor a privation, nor an *ens rationis*, nor physical being. Instead, it is a kind of intentional being pertaining to the commanded will and to things insofar as they are involved in the warp and woof of moral-practical cognition and activity. While moral philosophy must discuss these matters at much greater length (i.e., according to the unique properties of human acts, morally considered), it is also possible (and salutary) for the metaphysician to situate them in their own particular order vis-à-vis *ens naturae*. Second, one can see how the metaphysical notions of instrumental and final causality can aid in explaining this unique mode of intentional being—namely, one that creates moral intelligibilities in the physical world. The metaphysician must explain how it is that those values are there—even if they are there *in alio esse* in comparison with *purely* physical being.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ See Lehu, *Philosophia moralis*, 72-163. This entire section, "*De actibus humanis moraliter consideratis*," deserves being translated as a source regarding the state of Roman Thomism at the turn of the 20th century. It is a surprisingly excellent philosophical text in a pedagogical manual. The same goes for the works of Austin Woodbury on these and other matters.

⁷⁸ Here, we can see the importance of an insight like that expressed in Gyula Klima, "Three Myths of Intentionality Versus Some Medieval Philosophers," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 21, no.3 (2013), 360: "For Aquinas, intentionality or aboutness is the property of any form of information carried by anything about anything." Klima's insights show very clearly that the notion of intentionality must be seen in very broad metaphysical terms, not solely psychologistic categories. On the discussion of language of *alio esse*, see Jacques Maritain, "Language and the Theory of Sign" in *Frontiers in Semiotics*, ed. John Deely et al. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 51-62.

IV.

Ens Artificiale: The Being of Artifacts. We come now to the domain of being that is perhaps least treated philosophically by those within the Thomistic tradition. This is not to say that matters pertaining to *ars* as a virtue of the practical intellect are untreated. The well-known studies of Maritain provide a firm foundation for a kind of “critique” of factitive reason.⁷⁹ His focus on aesthetic aspects of fine art do not prevent his words from being applied to all products of practical-technical knowledge:

The activity of art always begins *after* [a moment of contemplation], because it is a creative activity and because, in itself, it does not ask that the mind *be formed* by an object to be known, but that it *form* an object to proffer into being.⁸⁰

Or, to view the matter from another perspective:

The craftsman’s creative *idea* is in no way a *concept*, for it is neither cognitive nor representative, it is only generative; it does not tend to make our mind conformed to things, but to make a thing conformed to our mind.⁸¹

From a purely philosophical perspective, this question does not find a great deal of discussion among Thomists. The role of practical reason in *constituting* the intelligibility involved in the *factibile* has not found an exponent equaling Rhonheimer’s vigor concerning the cognate matters in moral-practical thought. Discussions of exemplarity most frequently arises in

⁷⁹ The most well-known being Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (Cleveland: Meridian, 1955). Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism in Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1962). Jacques Maritain and Raïssa Maritain, *The Situation of Poetry*, trans. Marshall Suther (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955).

Of course, this is not to discount studies such as those of Gilson, Eco, and others. However, for our purposes, much is gained from the fact that Maritain stresses the unique role of factitive reasoning in distinction from speculative cognition.

⁸⁰ Maritain, *Situation*, 50.

⁸¹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 100.

discussions of the Divine Ideas and the metaphysics of creation, not the details of human making—though the latter constitutes an immense domain in human experience.⁸²

The aforementioned texts of Maritain give some direction regarding these matters. However, a full and detailed appraisal of the unique role of *ars* in fabricating a new order of being would shed great light on these matters. Just as awareness of the unique domain of *ens morale* helps to give due place to the intelligible notions *constituted by right reason*⁸³ *in human action* (i.e. the various species of *prudence*⁸⁴), so too an awareness of a kind of *ens artificiale* gives place to the entire world of artifacts are constituted by *right reason in human making* (i.e. the various kinds of *ars*). Although the distinction of art and nature is well known to any reader of the Aristotelian *Physics*, a detailed metaphysical discussion of the status of such a mode of being would do much to add to the broad domain of intentional existence that often is shrugged off as a mere kind of non-being (or, at best, accidental⁸⁵ being). Even if they *are per accidens*

⁸² Even when scholastic thinkers are undertaking a discussion of things like extrinsic formal (or exemplar) causality, the theological sources pertaining to Divine Ideas are close at hand. One senses this well in the ostensibly philosophical reflections of Suárez's 25th metaphysical disputation. In John of St. Thomas's discussion of extrinsic formal causality in *Cursus Philosophicus, Phil. Nat.*, p.1, q.11, a.3, the presentation is more philosophical (though clearly having some of the same sources in the background). However, it lacks the detailed consideration that one finds, for instance, in his *Cursus Theologicus*, vol.3, q.15 disp.1. See also Gregory Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

⁸³ And "wrong" reason, as we all know far too well.

⁸⁴ It is important to recall that, for Thomas, prudence is diversified as regards the ends (e.g. personal, familial, civil, military) that intrinsically modify the formal aspect of the virtue in question. See Aquinas, *ST II-II* q.47, a.11 and 12, q.50.

⁸⁵ As, for instance, can be seen in Kosman, *The Activity of Being*, 87-121. As a study in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Kosman is right to note the *per accidens* nature of (e.g.) a threshold. However, one should not

being from the perspective of *ens naturae*, a robust metaphysics should be able, at least, to relate them to that domain, which does include the actuality and potentiality of the human intellect and will considered as particular natures with unique relationships to *ens in commune* and *bonum in commune*. This need not lead metaphysics to become a kind of esthetics as well as an ontology. Its concern would be with the *factibile* only *insofar as it is related to ens naturae*.⁸⁶

In an article devoted to matters pertaining to *ens rationis*, Marie-Dominique Philippe⁸⁷ makes a series of remarks that are helpful concerning these matters.⁸⁸ He contrasts *ens rationis* in the purely logical sense to what he terms *ens artificiale*. Clearly, his remarks on this matter bear the mark of his more extended reflections on the nature of artistic activity and the being of artifacts.⁸⁹ For our purposes, I merely wish to draw attention to the fact that this so-called *ens* overlook that *as an artifact* the threshold has a kind of “artificial perseity.” Although I would alter several points, see the insightful remarks to this end in Emmanuel Doronzo, *Tractatus dogmaticus de sacramentis in genere* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1946), 38.

⁸⁶ For remarks on this, see Hervaeus Natalis’s remarks *De secundis intentionibus* q.5 a.4. concerning how the metaphysician can reflect on second intentions. All of q.5 is concerned with how second intentions, which are only *entia rationis*, can be related to the subject of metaphysics without shattering the unity of its subject and formal perspective on the objects investigated therein. Hervaeus points to the discussions of separate, universal forms as the particular way that Aristotle was most vexed in the *Metaphysics* to discuss this matter. Hervaeus notes that this was due to Aristotle’s particular context vis-à-vis Plato. Many other discussions of uses of “being” are possible in order to make clear what is and is not proper to metaphysics as a science.

⁸⁷ Sadly, after his passing, Fr. Philippe has been accused of particular sins against chastity, seemingly consensual (and non-consummated). The matter is not wholly clear, but it should be stated that the citation of his work on *ens rationis* and *ens artificiale* do not constitute an endorsement of his moral character.

⁸⁸ See full citation of this article in note 49 above.

⁸⁹ Further researches into this matter should take into account the lengthy reflections Philippe has undertaken on the topic. In the article cited, Philippe references M.-D. Philippe, *L’activité artistique: philosophie du*

artificiale presents us with a very important domain of intentional being. Philippe's own words express the matter with great clarity:

If *ens artificiale* possesses a real form (a form of expression), this form is a relation of order. That which the artist can make are such new forms, new relations of order *that express something new* or that enable us to use the riches of natural realities in a new way (i.e. by means of tools).⁹⁰ *These new relations are the fruit of human art*. Certainly, *ens rationis* is itself also a relation, though a "relation of reason," and not a real form.⁹¹ This relation of reason implies a purely objective order that the intellect discovers, starting from the known reality.⁹² This purely objective order⁹³ is not the fruit of an *art*, for it is not an artificial work and not a work enacted by the will (emphasis added).⁹⁴

As noted in the previous section, Lehu utilized the vocabulary of *relationes secundum dici* to explain *ens morale*. Moral being, according to Lehu, must first and foremost refer to the "relation" of the will to its formal specification, given to it by practical reason. This *ens morale*

faire, vol. 1 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1969), 386ff. The most recent edition of his works on practical-technical reason have been published as M.-D. Philippe, *Philosophie de l'art*, vol. 1 and 2 (Paris: Éditions universitaires, 1991-1994). Also, see the article cited above, M.-D. Philippe, "Situation de la philosophie de l'art dans la philosophie aristotélico-thomiste." Indeed, Philippe believed that in the order of learning, our engagement with work of this sort is primary. See M.-D. Philippe, *Retracing Reality: A Philosophical Itinerary*, trans. Brothers of St. John (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 17-22. Philippe's insight appears to be in line with normal Peripatetic practice. Consider merely how Aristotle uses such examples in the speculative investigations in the *Physics*. On the use of artistic knowledge in our conceptualization of speculative affairs, see the insightful remarks in Vincent Edward Smith, *The General Science of Nature* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1958), 60-61.

⁹⁰ He cites here Aquinas, *De potentia* q.6 a.3.

⁹¹ He cites here *In III Phys*, lect.1 n.280 on relation as *debilissimum esse*, an expression used by Aquinas in other locations as well (noting why some mistakenly hold that there is no such category as real relation).

⁹² Hence, Philippe is distinguishing second intentions from *ens artificiale*.

⁹³ i.e. That of second intentions, which he is reserving for *ens rationis* strictly speaking.

⁹⁴ Philippe, "Originalité," 108-109 (my translation). He goes on with remarks that pertain more to *ens rationis* considered strictly as second intentions, for such is the focus of his article.

is not an *ens rationis*; even the external reality, at least when it is considered precisely *as an effect* of the imperated act of the will, participates in this formal specification (and hence in *ens morale*). “Spread out” over many physical beings, these physical effects are marked with *relationes rationis* (loosely speaking) that presuppose the command of moral-practical reason (i.e. prudence or imprudence) if we are to understand the formality that gives them unity. When *ens naturae* is contrasted to *ens rationis* in a strict sense, the only kinds of “non-natural” (or “non-physical”) being that seem possible are privations, negations, and logical *relationes rationis*. They alone appear to offer the only true clusters of intelligibility outside of *ens naturae* into which all other “being” seems to be congregated. The remaining portion of the domain of the so-called *ens rationis* appears to be cluttered with golden mountains and chimeras.⁹⁵

One understandably wants moral being to be something not “simply made up.” However, even second intentions are not such pure fabrications. They presuppose the natural aptitude of the intellect to relate objects to each other in various ways—an important point that remains quite operative in Philippe’s brief words cited above. The same goes for the relations created by practical reason. In the case of moral-practical reason, it is a matter of practical reason being rectified in line with the ultimate moral end to be pursued by human agents. In case of technical-practical reason, it is about practical reason being rectified in line with the good of the thing to be made. The good hammer and the good symphony both conform to their own rule. The true artist acts with *recta ratio factibilium*.

⁹⁵ Though, as Yves Simon has sagely noted, centaurs and chimera (and, by extension, the golden mountain) are not the best examples of *entia rationis* without foundation in reality. See Yves Simon in “The Real and the Ideal in Nature” in *The Great Dialogue of Nature and Space*, ed. Gerard J. Dalcourt (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1970), 105. When one reads baroque disputes about *entia rationis*, one understandably suspects that the whole domain is on its way toward shrinking into nothingness, at least in a number of authors. On this, see Novotný’s aforementioned *Ens Rationis from Suárez to Caramuel*.

As with the domain of moral realities, in technical-practical reason, we are concerned with an order of intelligibility *to be made*. In order to avoid confusing the character of practical cognition with that of speculative cognition, it is important that we emphasize that point. If moral philosophy still retains some aspect of the practical character of its object (i.e. human actions to chosen or avoided), so too must knowledge of technical realities *qua technical*⁹⁶ retain some aspect of the fact that we know these artifacts either so as to utilize or make them. Even to consider the nature of a hammer is to know it in light of certain human ends and activities. It is to know it in a kind of speculatively-technical way.⁹⁷ Practical cognition is a unique mode of knowing, not wholly reducible to the warp-and-woof of speculative cognition's proceedings, for the latter is concerned with discovering the order of *ens naturae* as it exists independent of human cognition or praxis.⁹⁸ However, it does fall to the metaphysician to discuss the ways that

⁹⁶ Or, using older scholastic vocabulary, one could say "poetic" as well (though the potential equivocation is perhaps dangerous).

⁹⁷ From a very different tradition, consider the remarks found in John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995): "I know it sounds odd to say that the fact that this is a screwdriver is a species of mental fact, that is ontologically subjective even though epistemically objective; but this consequence follows from the observer-relative character of all functional attributions. Furthermore, since all assignment of function is ultimately on brute facts, this feature of the taxonomy refers back to the existence of brute facts in our first level."

A physicist can consider a hammer *qua physical*. However, only someone interested in practical ends knows the hammer *qua hammer* (or, more broadly, *qua humanly usable*). The example is self-consciously chosen. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), H.69ff. As related to the Thomist perspective of this article, consult See John Deely, *The Tradition via Heidegger: An Essay on the Meaning of Being in the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971).

formal exemplarity, instrumental causality, relation, practical signification, and other metaphysical topics explain the very *being* of artifacts.⁹⁹

V.

Conclusion: The Frontiers of Being and Non-Being. We have already covered much ground in this brief essay, so my closing remarks will attempt to draw these reflections together. The issues addressed in each of the sections above show that there are unique nuances within various domains of being. Inasmuch as things are objects of cognition, we can consider all of the second intentional, intellect-dependent relations naturally formed by the intellect in its three intellectual operations. Knowledge of these logical relations is rightly classed as being “reflexive.” It is a second-hand sort of knowledge that takes as its object the various kinds of relations which are a kind of non-being when compared to predicamental relations (or, so-called “real relations”). Formed *ad instar entis*, these non-beings are known as though they were mind-independent beings—the domain of being where speculative cognition begins.

⁹⁸ This remark refers to speculative cognition in its purest sense. It should not be read as prejudicing against the *speculatively practical* knowledge that is had by the moral philosopher and the “philosopher of art” (whose objects are practical but reflected upon in a speculative manner). See Appendix VII in Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*.

⁹⁹ For an example of some very promising (and historically well-informed) reflections on the importance of discussing the category of *habitus* as a grounding for artifacts, see Mark K. Spencer, “The Category of *Habitus*: Accidents, Artifacts, and Human Nature,” *The Thomist* 79 (2015): 113-154. Several other recent articles have discussed aspects of these issues. See Michael Rota, “Substance and Artifact in Thomas Aquinas,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 21, no.3 (July 2004): 241-259. Anna Marmodoro and Ben Page, “Aquinas on Forms, Substances and Artifacts,” *Vivarium* 54 (2016): 1-21. Without denigrating these works, I believe that important light could be shed upon the question of the being of artifacts if one undertakes an explicit reflection on the nature of practical-technical intellection—especially as regards the unique kind of intentionality that is involved in *ens artificiale*.

In practical cognition, we *introduce* an order *into reality*, though it can only be grasped from the perspective of a counseling, judging, and commanding agent. It is understandable that certain later-day Thomists were hesitant to follow thinkers like Vasquez in classing this in the domain of *ens rationis*. The order of *ens morale* is not purely fabricated in the way that chimaerae are—but, then again, neither are second intentions.¹⁰⁰ Leaning on the language of *relationes secundum dici*, they account for this unique domain of being (i.e. the one pertaining to acts measured by practical reason) without collapsing moral being into a mere *relatio rationis* or into some sort of purely “physical” or intellect-independent being. The same sorts of issues could be attributed to the case of *ens artificiale*, though more research needs to be devoted to this topic. In all of these cases, though, order is speculatively grasped only in a reflexive manner—by a kind of “second look” that acknowledges our knowledge of reality and involvement in it.¹⁰¹

To say all of this is merely to begin the considerations that are needed to provide a unified discourse within which all of these senses of *ens* can be given their correct place. It would be a dereliction of the duty on the part of metaphysics were the science of *ens inquantum est ens* not to consider these domains of “being.” Even in his “rejection” of “being as the true and the false” from his discussions in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle still *did* have several things to say. To say that something is *not* directly attributable the subject of a science does not preclude you

¹⁰⁰ For an extreme case concerning this point, see the Scotist John Punch’s so-called “potentialism” see, Novotný, *Ens rationis*, 107-108, 144-146, 251n21.

¹⁰¹ See the sage remarks of Maritain regarding this in the moral domain in Maritain, *An Introduction to the Basic Problems of Moral Philosophy*, 52: “Moral philosophy is a reflective knowledge, no doubt not in the same sense as logic, but after all a knowledge of the second look. It presupposes the natural knowledge enclosed within common moral experience, within the moral experience of the man who is not a philosopher; the moral philosopher then views this experience critically, to justify and explain its perceptions and judgments.”

from discussing that matter if it has a relation to that subject.¹⁰² What is important is that one carefully articulates the nature of that relationship—or, of those *relationships*, if we are talking about the ontological status of *second intentions*, *ens morale*, and *ens artificiale*.

Aspects of this problem led some latter-day scholastics to become enmeshed in discussions of “supertranscendental” notions—i.e. notions that applied as much to *ens rationis* as they did to *ens reale*.¹⁰³ These matters cannot be addressed here in detail.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, from our considerations in this article, it seems important to say that a great deal of work still needs to be done so as to clarify the use of *ens* and *esse* in these other “non-real” domains—for in human life, they are *domains that are quite real*, so to speak. They are of no small importance in human life—indeed, we find ourselves surrounded more frequently by technical and moral realities than we do by objects of *purely* speculative knowledge.¹⁰⁵

I suspect that such detailed investigations will help to clarify Thomistic disputes in numerous ways. Such detailed discussions are likely to be a bit disorienting, for *ens naturae* remains the regnant perspective for Aristotelian metaphysics, making all of these other domains appear as though they were non-being—and so they are, at least from one perspective, albeit a very important perspective (indeed, a perspective whose paths conduct us to the First Cause).

¹⁰² See the remarks in footnote 89.

¹⁰³ Many of John Doyle’s works have touched on this topic. For an introduction, see John P. Doyle, “Between Transcendental and Transcendental,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 50, no.4 (Jun. 1997): 783-815.

¹⁰⁴ Needless to say, the basic form of supertranscendentalism cannot hold for a Thomist. Generally speaking, there is a covert univocity of being implied in any explicit claims regarding supertranscendental attributes and scientific perspectives. On this, see the lucid discussion in Philip-Neri Reese, “Supertranscendentality and Metaphysics: An Aporia in the Thought of John Duns Scotus,” *ACPQ* 90, no.3 (Summer, 2016): 539-561.

¹⁰⁵ Merely glancing around my office area, I see many things that are not simply “given” in the natural order—books, bills, my cell phone, my keys, my wallet, a coaster, etc.

However, from what we have discussed in this essay, it should be quite obvious that such “non-being” is not an unimportant matter. As was stated by Maritain in a quotation beloved to John Deely: “*Now the paths of non-being—once one has, by a kind of inverted intuition, become conscious of it and of its formidable role in reality—are as difficult as those of being.*”¹⁰⁶

Difficulty is no cause for despair. If potency is understandable only in relation to act, and non-being in relation to being, the science of *ens inquantum est ens* should well be able to provide a robust and organized elucidation not only of *ens naturae* but also the broad domain of “*ens rationis*”—whether we call it by that name or some other combination of names that help to add precision to the inherited tradition concerning intentional existence.

Hoping to have looked both backwards a bit (considering some past ponderings on these matters) and forward (toward a new domain of questions), I believe it appropriate to end with the words of Yves Simon, who arguably intuited the whole scope of what we have discussed in this essay:

Our understanding of the concept of intentional being will, therefore, include analogically these three distinct cases: the presence of the object in the soul that knows it, the efficiency of the principal agent present in its instrument [i.e. the efficiency and extrinsic formality and finality involved], and the goodness that bestows dignity upon even the humblest of means [i.e. the presence of the end in the means]. Investigating this analogical concept of intentional being seems to us to hold great promise of progress in metaphysics. What we are more aware of are things in their primary, natural existence; the range of their secondary, intentional existence is a magical territory. Little explored, it is bound to hold some marvelous surprises for us.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Jacques Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1966), 32.

¹⁰⁷ Simon, *Introduction*, 28. Perhaps, too, insofar as *entia rationis* are involved throughout reality—e.g. formed (but not known) by animals in their internal senses; also, in the “communication” of plants—such investigations can provide a robust framework for discussing many things indeed. One understands why John Deely has been so enchanted by his semiotic vision for philosophy. In addition, the entire domain of human culture and our own interaction with the non-human world—so often discussed in terms of “social construction”—could be

articulated better if moral, technical, and second-intentional being were each given adequate scope of discussion. Given the importance of this topic in light of numerous cultural upheavals, it is not a matter to be taken lightly. For interesting, though idiosyncratic reflections on this matter, see Ralph Austin Powell, *Freely Chosen Reality* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983).

Finally, though it is not primarily a concern for philosophy directly, the Catholic philosopher would be remiss were it not noted that such discussions are important for giving full scope to the way that supernatural mysteries are treated, such as the instrumental causality and practical signification involved in the sacraments. See Aquinas, *ST III* q.62, a.3 and 4. Likewise, see the complete works on sacramental theology by Doronzo, cited above. On the unique status of the ontology of the Sacraments, see the insightful remarks in Anscar Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Bethesda, MD: Zaccheus Press, 2004), 23-29. One will find pertinent remarks in late scholastic accounts of the sacraments, often including the relational mode of being pertaining to practical signs (a topic that can also be found in non-Catholic scholastics of early modernity in discussing matters such as contracts).

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