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6 (2017)

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The method for the discovery of the absolute transcendental properties of being in Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec's metaphysics

Key words: transcendentals, being, one, thing, realism, Albert Krąpiec

Introduction

The background of the development of the transcendental properties of being can be remotely and indirectly traced to the cradle of philosophy in Ionia, where wonder evoked a new way of thinking. Discussions on change and permanence, unity and plurality captured the minds and attention of those early philosophers. The outcome of this little spark was a myriad of more sophisticated and complex metaphysical investigations into the nature of being. The search for a single element that should account for the existence of things, by the Ionians, indicates that existence was considered to be a constant and that every created thing could be reduced to a unitary mode or cause. Parmenides took the discussion to a higher level, stating that the unity

of being is an infallible truth. But his idea of being fails to proffer solution to the diverse and changeable nature of things. For Plato, the Ionians would be mistaken to seek to reduce existing things to particular elements whereas it is the Good which is the highest idea that accounts for every being. Aristotle would oppose Plato's idea of the Good and the absolute existence of the ideas, by observing that there are no ideas *per se*, neither are there ideas outside of being because all conceivable properties, potentialities, and actualities are grounded in being which he explained with his theory of the categories.

These historical antecedents shaped the discussions of the subsequent eras, giving rise to different schools of thought

and orientation. Through Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism (including the contributions of some Arab philosophers) we witnessed in history an increasing development in the discovery of properties which belong to being as being. The proximate contributions to the development of the theory of the transcendental properties of being, however, took place at the University of Paris in the first half of the thirteenth century through Philip the Chancellor, Alexander of Hales and Albert the Great¹. But it was Thomas Aquinas who gave the theory of the transcendentals a decisive format. Since then many oth-

er philosophers have made their fair share of contributions to the discussion.² Some of these philosophers, however, treated the transcendentals as intellectual conceptions or simply as concepts, lacking connection with being. On the other hand, some others treat it as real metaphysical properties that determine the realism of our cognition. It is in the light of this realistic cognition that this paper focuses on the contributions of Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec to the discovery of the transcendental properties of being in the 20th century Lublin Philosophical School.

What are the transcendental properties?

The transcendentals are the essential and universal properties of being. They constitute the key by which we ascertain the reality, rationality, and finality of the world of persons, animals, plants and things. These properties include *ens*, *res*,

unum, *aliquid*, *verum*, *bonum* and *pulchrum* and are called transcendentals because they are trans-categorical properties, that is, they transcend the Aristotelian categories but do not signify a reality beyond them. Thomas de-

¹ J. A. Aertsen, *Mediaeval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, New York: E. J. Brill 1996, 25.

² J. A. Aertsen, *Mediaeval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, op. cit; T. Alvira, L. Clavell, T. Melendo, *Metaphysics*, Manila: Sinag-Tala Publishers, 1991; O. Blanchette, *Analogy and the Transcendental Properties of Being as the Key to Metaphysical Science*, "The Saint Anselm Journal" 2.2 (Spring, 2005); K. Dougherty, *Metaphysics: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Being*, New York: Graymoor Press, 1965; L. Elders, *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas in a Historical Perspective*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993; H. D. Gardeil, *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, transl. by J. A. Otto, Missouri: B. Herder Book Co., 1956; G. P. Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being*, (2nd edition), New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1963; J. B. Lotz, *Transcendentals*, "New Catholic Encyclopaedia", vol. 14, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967, 238-241; A. Maryniarczyk, *Veritas Sequitur Esse: Truth as a Consequence of the Existence of Things*, "Ad Fontes: Metaphysics Today" 6 (2009), 119-131; J. Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985; J. Saranyana, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, transl. by L. Supan and R. Asuncion, Manila: Sinag-Tala Publishers, 1996; W. A. Wallace, *The Elements of Philosophy, A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*, New York: Alba House, 1977; J. F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2000.

scribes these properties as the first conceptions of the intellect; considered from their extension, they are the *maxime communia*, common to all things. He says: “transcendentals surpass the categories because they run through all of them. They are not restricted to one of the categories but are common to them”³. These properties apply to whatever we know to exist and even to things that exist but are unknown. Nothing contingent escapes its scope and they even extend analogically to the Absolute. They are also not exclusive to any group of things; the transcendentals do not belong to any specificity or category of things. They belong to all things inasmuch as they exist. Existence is the factor or property that determines where the transcendental properties can be apprehended. In character, these properties are convertible with being; they add something conceptual to being; they are orderly derived based on their intelligibility and comprehensibility and are de-

rived from existing things and are consequent upon all things.

The transcendentals are generally divided into two parts: the absolute and relative. The absolute transcendentals are those properties we apprehend when we consider being in itself (*in se*). They include *ens*, *res*, and *unum*. The other set of transcendentals are called relative because they are derived when being is considered in relation to other (*in alio*). This means that they are ordered to the intellect, or will or both intellect and will. These orderings of being to these parts of the soul lead to a discovery of truth, good, and beauty. These relative transcendentals demonstrate that all human beings are united and connected intentionally with the world of persons and things as well as the Absolute by these two faculties, namely, intellect and will. *Aliquid* has some unique consideration in Albert Krąpiec's philosophy which warrants its treatment in this paper as an absolute transcendental property of being.

Method of discovery

The method of pursuing philosophical and metaphysical investigations is at the heart of Krąpiec's philosophy, generally as a science and particularly in the discovery of the transcendental properties

particularly. Krąpiec enumerates certain considerations for the choice of a method for this discovery:

a. The method has to be transcendental in nature⁴. This implies that it has to

³ J. A. Aertsen, *Mediaeval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, op. cit., 91.

⁴ The term “transcendental” here is based on a realist sense and it is quite distinct from the transcendental method as applied by Kant and some other subjectivist and idealistic philosophers. Transcendental in such (Kantian) sense is a form of epistemological idealism that, besides rejecting the empirical aspect of human cognition, claims to find a foundation for absolute truths immanent in the human mind or soul. This foundation is variously named “reason”, “the Ego”, “Absolute Spirit”, etc. and is often identified somehow with God. *Kant*, known for his critiques of reason – both pure and practical, holds that man's cognitive powers are incapable of attaining non-empirical objects. Even though these objects exist in his view, they transcend human cognition and are

capture the reality of being wherein lies the ‘wholeness’ of things. It cannot be abstractionist since abstraction captures only the essences of things, neither can it be a priori since such method loses touch with reality.

b. The results of this method must be expressed in existential judgments which lead to the formation of transcendental concepts. The range of predication of transcendental concepts (like one, true, and good) suitably extends to all things in a way universal concepts (like substance, human being, animal) do not.

c. The concepts should be applied and understood analogically. Analogy protects being in its uniqueness yet captures its point of convergence with other beings.

Two distinguished aspects of one method meet these demands in Krąpiec’s philosophy namely, spontaneous cognition and metaphysical separation.

a. Spontaneous Cognition

Spontaneous cognition involves an instant and immediate affirmation of the

existence of some concrete object given to us in immediate sensory experience⁵. This kind of cognition, however, should not be mistaken for naïve cognition or prescientific cognition. The starting point of this experience is a contact with being. Every contact with being evokes a response and the response is such that one is struck by the fact of existence and responds appropriately. Krąpiec avoids dabbling into the specificity of how the senses and intellect cooperate in the exercise of their functions as the sources of our faculties for cognition. For him there is always an interaction between the intellect and the senses such that in every act of cognition there is “an indivisible cognitive function”⁶. The results of this stage of separation-based cognition are expressed in existential judgments. The question here is: “what are existential judgments?” They are the first, spontaneous, unreflective⁷ contact, leading to an apprehension of being as the first object of cognition⁸. When we say “A exists”, “A” is understood as any concrete

accessible only to autonomous practical reason only by an act of faith. His transcendentalism is based on a priori conditions of self-intuitions which enables one to form knowledge on the objects of human experience. For *Fichte*, the self or ego is the absolute principle of metaphysical truth and indeed all reality. Like Kant he also founded a metaphysical reality upon morality, one in which the “nonself” (that is, nature from the practical ego) is a necessary condition for moral striving. *Hegel* constructed the dialectical life of the Absolute Spirit through the history of finite consciousness and nature – a thought that leads to pantheism. Cf. J. E. Daly, *Transcendentalism*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol. 14, New York 1967, 236-237.

⁵ The notion of “sensory experience” should not be thought to suggest that there is an isolation of senses in human cognition with respect to the intellect. The intellect and senses are always involved in every cognitive human function. However in a bid to explain how each of them contributes to the cognitive activity, it may be necessary to explain what each does. M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline of the History of Being*, transl. by Theresa Sandok, New York: Peter Lang, 1991, 85.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Krąpiec uses the term “reflective” to characterize subjectivist methods in which the cognizing subject is both the point of departure for metaphysical investigation and the determinant of the existing object. In contrast, a spontaneous method entails an apprehension of reality without any imposition from the cognizing subject. See *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 7-10.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 90.

being whatsoever; by “exists” we affirm that this “A” is factual, that is, not a cognitive construct or a mentally created entity. Existential judgments, from a positive point of view, are simply the affirmation that something is real⁹.

A distinction should be made between existential judgments (EJ) and predicative judgments (PJ). Predicative statements contain “knowledge-generating” elements, while existential judgments have what could be considered “existence-affirmation elements”, for example:

PJ – A human being is a mortal or John is a married Pole.

EJ – John exists

The function of “married Pole” or “mortal” is to offer more insight into who John is or what a human being is. Such a feature is lacking in existential judgments. Still based on functionality, Krąpiec argues that we cannot reduce (EJ) to (PJ) on the grounds that in (EJ) there are no predicates¹⁰ because the nature of (EJ) is structurally and formally non-predicative. Neither can we attribute an existential meaning to a predicative judgment inferentially. For instance, if one says: “John runs”, it is possible to argue that because John runs, he exists since existence is contained in running. However, such thinking is flawed because it is not a formal expression of existence¹¹.

Secondly, existential judgments cannot be general; they refer to individual things, asserting their existence. State-

ments like: “All men are good” or “all trees exist” do not qualify as such. It has to be particular and should affirm the existence of the thing. Existential judgments can be direct (“John exists”) or indirect (“the soul exists”, “God exists”). They may also be vague (“something exists”) or clear (“Eve exists”). Direct existential judgments involve an apprehension through our sensitive-intellective cognitive apparatus: by seeing, feeling, smelling etc. These help us to affirm the being of something without knowing its content.

Another characteristic of existential judgments is that in (EJ), I do not affirm that it is “I” who cognizes, lest we fall into the Cartesian error. Reality strikes us with its edge while cognition is not cognition as such but an overpowering presence of the world. Existential judgments indeed form the basis for metaphysical separation¹².

b. Metaphysical separation

Metaphysical separation as a method for singling out the object of metaphysics and also for the discovery of the transcendental properties is a complex operation which consists of three basic stages.

First stage: This first stage is vital if metaphysics is to be termed “realistic”. Our cognition has to be determined by a concretely existing reality. Hence, as expressed in spontaneous separation we assert the existence of this John, this tree, this soul etc. All these are existential

⁹ *Ibidem*, 86-87.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 88-89.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 88.

¹² M. A. Krąpiec, A. M. Maryniarczyk, *Metaphysics in the Lublin Philosophical School*, “Ad Fontes: Metaphysics Today”, 6 (2009), 152.

judgments and they can be formed based on different kinds of beings:

- Material beings – this horse exists
- Necessary beings – God exists
- Natural beings – this oak tree exists
- Independent, substantial beings – John exists
- Non-independent, accidental beings – John’s nose exist

Despite that this list of the kinds of beings is not exhaustive¹³ and is open to more examples, one must be mindful that the list cannot contain anything that is not a concretely existing thing. For instance, one cannot include a contradictory being like a round-square or a centaur. We can only affirm the existence of what is real, of something that has content and an existence proportional to that content. Krapiec says: “In order to be, that is, to be something real, it is not necessary to be «precisely this» being, since other beings also exist. In order to be a being, it is not necessary to be a being of some one particular species, since other species also exist; it is not necessary to be a material being; since immaterial beings also exist; it is not necessary to be an independent being, since non-independent beings also exist; it is not necessary to be a necessary being, since non-necessary beings also exist; it is not necessary to be this here individual, since other individuals also exist. In order to be a real thing, it is necessary to be any determinate concrete content whatsoever as existing”¹⁴. This implies that existence is the basis of realness, of

being. We can only make existential judgments on concretely existing things. Existence is the fundamental condition for anything to be. We are already pre-empting our discussion on being as the first object of cognition, but this discussion is to help us consider the kinds of being that qualify to be affirmed in existential judgments.

Second stage: The first stage leads us into the second which involves “separation” in the proper sense of the word. Here we make a categorical apprehension of the essence and existence of the concrete thing by making a negative judgment (S is not P), affirming the non-identity of the thing’s essence and existence. We accomplish this task by comparing the existence affirmed in existential judgments with the concrete content of “this John”, such that when one says: “John exists”, we ask: “Is ‘exist’ the same as ‘John’?”. At this point, we discover that the affirmed existence cannot be identical with John or any other concrete content. We, therefore, negate, that is, cognitively separate that which in reality cannot be identified, namely: content and existence. Krapiec offers reasons for the non-identity of content and existence. Thus: “If the «exists» of the existential judgment were the same as «this here John» for example, then there would be no fact of existence apart from John, because existence, as being identical with John, would be exhausted in John. Just as there is no other being apart from this here John, so too there would

¹³ Within the realistic methodology of Albert Krapiec beings are reducible to four: substantial, accidental, relational and necessary.

¹⁴ M. A. Krapiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 92.

be no other existence apart from John's existence"¹⁵. The above quotation suggests that if we affirm the plurality of being (John exists, Eve exists, this tree exists etc.) then it follows that one created being cannot be "existence" or rather it cannot be existence *qua tale*. More still, given the fact of the "forfeitability" of the existence of contingent being, existence cannot be exhausted in a particular being. This explains why when one tree dies it does not lead to the death of other trees or when Adam dies it does not lead to the death of Eve. Each being has its own act of existence.

Third stage: The third stage involves a movement from the categorical apprehension of essence and existence to transcendental apprehension. Based on the fact that this John is real, we move from our understanding of John to arrive at

an understanding of all that is real based on analogy. We can, therefore, say that being is a concrete content determined by existence. And this is the proper object of metaphysics. It is at this stage that we arrive at a cognitive apprehension of the world that could be predicated on every real thing as existing, one, separate, true, good and perfect.

One obvious character of this detailed demonstration of the method for the discovery of the transcendental properties is its trans-categorical quality, moving from "this here being" to discover what applies to all existing things. It does not seek the particularities or peculiarities of species or genera. The above demonstration gives us the fiat of application to each of the properties, the first of which is being (*ens*).

Being (*ens*): The First Object of Cognition

What is being (*ens*) and how do we arrive at the concept of being as being (*ens qua ens*)? When "being" is mentioned do we refer to being as *esse* which is the present participle of the verb "to be" or do we refer to being as *ens* which is a noun that signifies "something that is"? What do we mean by "exist"? Are we referring to existence in general or are referring to an act, which is a perfection of a being?

The importance of these questions cannot be overemphasized because there are lots of arguments regarding being as the first object of cognition, being as a transcendental and being as the subject of metaphysics; there is also the question of reconciling all these within the science of metaphysics. The word being (Gk. Τὸ ὄν, εἶναι; Lat. *ens, esse*)¹⁶ in a broad sense denotes that which actually exists,

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 92.

¹⁶ The specificity of *ens* and *esse* ought to be clarified here. Being (*ens*) is "that which is" or "that which has *esse*", and the principal element of a being (*ens*) is its act of being (*esse*). If essence (*essentia*) is that which makes a thing to be what it is (e.g., a man, a flower, a tree, a dog), the act of being (*esse*) is that which makes a thing to be. In this sense *esse* is referred to as '*actus essendi*'. Explaining certain features of the act of being (*esse*) as act, Alvira, Clavell and Melendo state: "a) Above all, *esse* is an act, that is, a perfection of all reality. The term 'act' is used in metaphysics to designate any perfection or property of a thing; therefore, it is not to be used exclusively to refer to actions or operations

but in a strict sense, it denotes the object of metaphysics¹⁷. Krąpiec defines being as the first object of cognition “*ens ut primum cognitum*”¹⁸. This definition is obviously an echo of Avicenna’s which Thomas Aquinas quotes in his *De Veritate*: “that which the intellect first conceives, as something most evident, and to which it reduces all concepts, is being, as Avicenna says in the beginning of his

metaphysics”¹⁹. This means that what is first known is being (*ens*) not (*esse*)²⁰. It shows that “what is” (*quod est*) and “to be” (*esse*) are different aspects of being²¹. While *esse* is not conceivable, *ens* is conceivable; *esse* is general, *ens* is concrete. Therefore, since the intellect can only grasp what is universal and general (*essentia*) but that from which *esse* is grasped is the concrete, the expression of

(the act of seeing or walking, for instance). In this sense, a white rose is a flower that has whiteness as an act which gives the rose a specific perfection. Similarly, that ‘is’ which is applied to things indicates a perfection as real as the perfection of ‘life’ in living things. In the case of *esse*, however, we are obviously dealing with a special perfection”. “b) *Esse* is a ‘universal’ act, that is, it belongs to all things. *Esse* is not exclusive to some particular kind of reality, since without *esse*, there would be nothing at all. Whenever we talk about anything, we have to acknowledge, first of all, that it is: the bird ‘is’, gold ‘is’, the clouds ‘are’”. “c) *Esse* is also a ‘total’ act: it encompasses all that a thing is. While other acts only refer to some part or aspects of being, *esse* is a perfection which includes everything that a thing has, without any exception. Thus, the ‘act of reading’ does not express the entirety of the perfection of the person reading, but *esse* is the act of each and of all the parts of a thing. If a tree ‘is’, then the whole tree ‘is’, with all its aspects and parts – its color, shape, life and growth – in short, everything in it shares in its *esse*. Thus, *esse* encompasses the totality of a thing. ‘*Esse* is a ‘constituent’ act, and the most radical or basic of all perfections because it is that by which things ‘are.’ As essence is that which makes a thing to be this or that (chair, lion, man), *esse* is that which makes things to be. This can be seen from various angles: “(i) *Esse* is the most common of all acts. What makes all things to be cannot reside in their principles of diversity (their essence), but precisely in that act whereby they are all alike, namely, the act of being”. “(ii) *Esse* is by nature prior to any other act. Any action or property presupposes a subsisting subject in which it inheres, but *esse* is presupposed by all actions and all subjects, for without it, nothing would be. Hence *esse* is not an act derived from what things are; rather it is precisely what makes them to be”. “(iii) We have to conclude, by exclusion, that *esse* is the constituent act. No physical or biological property of beings – their energy, molecular or atomic structure – can make things be, since all of these characteristics, in order to produce their effects, must, first of all, be”. “In short, *esse* is the first and innermost act of a being which confers on the subject, from within, all of its perfections. By analogy, just as the soul is the ‘form’ of the body by giving life to it, *esse* intrinsically ‘actualizes’ every single thing. The soul is the principle of life, but *esse* is the principle of entity or reality of all things”. See T. Alvira, L. Clavell, T. Melendo. *Metaphysics*. Manila: Sinag-Tala, 1991, 20–22; P. G. Horrigan, *The Act of Being: Esse As Actus Essendi*, Accessed on December 15, 2016. https://www.academia.edu/12765469/The_Act_of_Being_Esse_as_Actus_Essendi_.

- ¹⁷ A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality of the World of Persons and Things*, Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2016, 21.
- ¹⁸ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 90; cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *On the Realism of Metaphysics*, “Ad Fontes: Metaphysics Today”, 6 (2009), 117.
- ¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate* q. 1, a. 1: “Illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum, et in quod conceptiones omnes resolvit, est ens, ut Avicenna dicit in principio suae metaphysicae”.
- ²⁰ J. A. Aertsen, *Mediaeval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, op. cit., 187.
- ²¹ The nonidentity of “to be” and “quod est” can be seen in *De hebdomadibus* of Boethius: “diversum est esse et quod est”. cf. *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 3.

what is known takes a concrete form (*ens*). Hence we say that *ens* is that which has *esse*. Krąpiec is cognisant of a need for a reconciliation of the demands of generality and concreteness in the understanding of being. This reconciliation reflects in his definition of being as “that which as a concrete, individual essence exists”²². Being (*ens*) signifies the *concretum*, the thing which possesses an act of being (*esse*). It is *ens*, as the concrete thing possessing *esse*, that is referred to as the first object of cognition, the first transcendental property as well as the subject matter for metaphysics as a science²³.

Ens refers to existing things and it has the meaning of ‘realness’, since only real beings exist in the proper sense of the word. Here, we must clearly state what ‘realness’ entails by making a contradiction between a real being and a being of reason. A being of reason is being insofar as it exists only in the human mind, such as fictitious characters in a novel, or the imaginary characters that inhabit one’s fantasies²⁴. A real thing would refer to this John, this Eve, this tree, this dog, etc. and their individual act of existence (the existence of John, the existence of Eve, etc.). General forms such as man, animal, plant, etc. cannot be real in this sense because they belong to the world of the products of our intellect and they owe their existence to that of our intellect, and not by an existence

proportionate to their content. In the framework of this transcendental, therefore, we apprehend the most fundamental knowledge concerning the nature of objects. We become aware that the world of real things is made up of objects that possess some sort of determined content and an existence proportional to that content.

The question now is: how do we arrive at being (*ens*) which is first known by the intellect? Krąpiec says that we arrive at the concept of being as being by placing a cognitive accent on the existential aspect of an existential judgment²⁵. For example, John exists. It implies that my intellect is struck with the existence of John and indeed any concrete thing first, before I attain cognitive specificity of John, the concrete thing. One major point here is that at this stage we are not captivated by what a thing is, rather, we are captivated by the fact that it is. It is obvious that some may argue that one cannot conceive of the existence of a thing without the thing itself. Every real being comprises a content and an existence proportional to that content. How, then, can we apprehend the existence of John separately from his essence?

Krąpiec accepts that it is not possible for a being to exist without essence and existence at any instant²⁶ since the content is essentially ordered to existence

²² M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 90.

²³ It has to be noted that metaphysics studies being as being – *ens in quantum ens*. Therefore, the concretely existing thing is studied neither from a quantitative or qualitative perspective nor from material or immaterial point of view but simply as being.

²⁴ T. Alvira (et al.), *Metaphysics*, op. cit., 19.

²⁵ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 102.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 93.

while existence is the act realizing the content. However, it is possible, on the cognitive order to apprehend the existence of a concrete thing because “the perception of the real contents of an existing thing is constantly ‘suspended’ on the cognitive affirmation of its existence”²⁷. He likens the experience of the “firstness” of being with the experience of a child who cognizes the presence of the mother first before an identification of who she is. Secondly, he argues that that existence is not a content of being but its first act. It implies that it cannot be conceptualized since concepts refer only to content. Therefore, the proper act whereby we apprehend existence is the existential judgment which puts this act into perspective. Both Krapiec and Maritain share this view²⁸. He, therefore, concludes that affirming the existence of real beings is prior and primary in relation to the cognition of the content of reality²⁹. And this forms the base and point of departure in the determination of being as the object of metaphysics.

We can also give justification for the ‘firstness’ of being or offer reasons why being is the first concept of the intellect from an epistemological perspective. We discover that everything is knowable insofar as it is in act. We cannot know being in potency. Being is the basis of intelligibility and it gives us access to discover how things are in their nature.

The primacy of being is of utmost importance for metaphysics in general and for the theory of the transcendental

properties in particular. The reason is obvious: it is the chief, most basic and simplest concept in relation to really existing being. It makes possible the intelligibility of the other transcendentals and all other concepts are derivative in relation to it³⁰. We cannot understand true, good, thing, or beauty in separation from the concept of being as being. It is the first and fundamental key through which we open the doors to discover the secret of the truth about the nature of really existing objects that form the world that surrounds us. The discovery of *ens* based on the metaphysical analysis above leads us to make the following observations:

i. Being as being (existing) is the necessary condition for every concrete thing. Without existence we cannot conceive of intelligibility, amability or the beauty of being, since as earlier stated, all other transcendentals contain the fact of being. No being expresses itself without existence. It is the foundation of all metaphysical investigations.

ii. We discover that each being exists as an individual thing and has an individual existence proportional to its being. Individuality implies that we live in a pluralistic world where each being is unique and possesses an unrepeatable existence.

iii. Through metaphysical separation, we observe that essence and existence are not identical in any contingent being. Our world is, therefore, contingent and non-necessary. Our world owes the fact of its existence to a creative force

²⁷ *Ibidem*, 87.

²⁸ M. A. Krapiec, *Teoria Analogii Bytu (Theory of the Analogy of Being)*, 2nd ed., Lublin 1993, 98-107.

²⁹ M. A. Krapiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 90.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 102.

who causes but is uncaused – the Absolute, God.

iv. Transcendental being provides us with tools for distinguishing between what is real and what is a product of our intellect or intentional beings (*ens rationis*); between our world, the real world

and the hypothetical possible worlds. Through *ens*, we discover the primacy and priority in the order of being over the cognitive order because if something exists in the mind alone, without having existence, its realness is challenged on the grounds of lacking actuality.

Being and thing

As previously said in transcendental *ens*, our gaze toward reality apprehends being as the first object of our cognition. Whereas at the level of *ens* we affirm that to be real do not entail to be a particular being of some species that has a particular nature, transcendental *res* indicates that existence will be empty without a *concretum*. This *concretum*, which is being's content, is determinate in nature and is the source of activity, the subject of experiences and the bearer of corresponding laws³¹.

Aquinas introduced “thing” as a transcendental property in his *Commentary on Metaphysics IV* in connection with Aristotle's first argument for the convertibility of “being” and “one”. Aristotle argues that “one man”, “being man” and “man” signify the same thing because that which is undivided in itself and that which has an essence and a quiddity by reason of that essence are the same. Aquinas appropriated the concept of “man” and gave it a transcendental twist,

arriving at a conclusion that “*res*, *ens*, and *unum* – signify absolutely the same but according to diverse concepts (*rationes*)³². While the *ratio* of *res* is taken from the essence or quiddity, the *ratio* of *ens* is taken from the act of being. They do not signify something that is really different; they signify the same *concretum*, which is called “*res*” when it is viewed from its essence and “*ens*” when it is viewed from its *esse* or actuality³³. This argument leads to the discovery that real beings are not something general or indefinite, for every real being shows its own existence through a strictly determined essence. This property, which is universal and necessary for every real being, is what is expressed by *res*³⁴.

Krąpiec makes a subtle distinction between *res* and *essentia*. He says: “every object is commonly called a thing by reason of its self-identical and internally non-contradictory content, without defining specifically what that content is. Essence on the other hand... is a content,

³¹ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 109.

³² *Sententia Metaphysicae*, lib. 4 l. 2 n. 6. “Unde ista tria res, ens unum, significant omnino idem, sed secundum diversas rationes”. Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals...*, op. cit., 193.

³³ *Ibidem*, 193-194.

³⁴ A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality...*, op. cit., 33.

a thing, insofar as it is the object of definitional apprehensions”³⁵. It is clear that this description of essence as “the object of definitional apprehensions” is Aristotelian in nature³⁶. Thus the question “What (who) is John?” leads to the definition of John (man) as “a rational animal”. Here, we apprehend the essence of John based on “rationality” and “animality;” we arrive at a knowledge of what makes John a human being. By such definition and classification, we gain knowledge of his essence which determines the genus and species John belongs to. On the other hand, to perceive of John as *res* implies that I recognize or apprehend that John, as a being, is a *concretum* that has existence irrespective of his nature. The interest of being as thing is not whether John is a being of a kind, rather it is the question of whether he is “something” at all. It is on this basis that we can speak of the essence of a human being, or the essence of a square or the essence of a virtue. We do not speak of the “thing” of a human being or a square or a virtue. While what makes John a specific thing belongs to the categorical, what makes him a ‘thing’ at all is on the transcendental. In the history of philosophy, however, there are certain interpretations of reality that could be termed “the essentialization of being”. This is a tendency to reduce being to essences whereby universal essences are absoluti-

zed instead of individuated essences. The origin of such interpretation is arguably traced to a misunderstanding of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. The ambiguity of thought regarding the meaning of substance in Aristotelian philosophy formed a base for the essentialist interpretation. For Aristotle being is substance but in his explanation of substance we have first substance - τὸδε τί (tode ti, the individual subject), second substance - τὰ καθόλου (ta katholou, the universal) and third substance - τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι (to ti en einai, the definitional object) and possibly a fourth one - ὑποκείμενον (hupo keimenon, a subject or substratum)³⁷. Such ambiguity of thought could have led philosophers like Avicenna (of course, with neo-Platonic influence) to forget the individual concrete thing and focus metaphysical enquiry on essence qua essence. Avicenna, in his interpretation of “substance” in Aristotelian metaphysics argued that since substance (*ousia*) refers to “nature”, metaphysics therefore concerns itself with the study of nature. However, the nature referred to here is not the nature of an individual being; rather it is a kind of nature he calls tertiary (third) nature, *natura tertia*. This sort of nature is totally detached from the existing concrete thing and assumes the form of a Platonic idea. The *natura tertia* is also known as *universale metaphysicum*³⁸. John Duns Scotus, follo-

³⁵ M. A. Krapiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 117.

³⁶ In *Metaphysics* (Z, 1029b14) Aristotle talks of “*to ti ên einai*” which is translated as essence in English. Its Latin equivalent is *essentia* and it denotes “that which makes a thing what it is”. A more succinct definition of essence by Aristotle states: “the essence of each thing is what it is said to be in virtue of itself”.

³⁷ For a detailed explanation of Aristotle’s idea of substance, see S. M. Cohen, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy”, First Published, Oct 8, 2000, Revised June 15, 2016.

³⁸ M. A. Krapiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 74.

wing Avicenna's idea upheld the *natura tertia*, that is, the third nature as the object of metaphysical and philosophical investigations. He went even further to construct a pyramid or hierarchy of natures which has the *haecceitas* (from *haec*, referring to "this" individual thing) as its apex while being (a general nature, devoid of determination) is at the bottom. What this implies is that the universals or natures are epistemologically and ontically prior to particulars. Krąpiec rejects such essentialist/abstract conception of being as being or being as thing³⁹. Being as thing places emphasis on the concrete determinate content of an existing object without a specificity of what the object consists in.

How can one discover transcendental *res*? The first step toward this discovery is a direct contact with being through which the existential and essential components of being are ascertained. When the cognitive accent is placed on the essential aspect, the concept of thing is apprehended. For instance, my encounter with John or a red rose leads to an existential judgment: "John exists" or "this red rose exists". From this existential judgment, we ask: "What is it that exists?" We discover that it is "John" or "this red rose". We see that John and the red rose are determinate in content; if it is not the case, they would be nothing (because a "human being" as such or a "plant" as such is non-existent), rather since they are determinate, they are some "thing". At this point, we are operating at a categorical level. The third level, the transcendental level, involves an

analogical extension of what we have discovered in "this John" and "this red rose" to all things. We discover that "everything that is a being (that is, which exists) is always determined in content as to its essence, that is, it is a thing".

Another aspect of vital importance in the study of the transcendentals is that they help us discover the rationality of the world which is based on the first metaphysical principles. Being as *res* helps us to discover the principle of identity. Explaining the principle of identity, Krąpiec engaged in an analysis of the statement: "Every being is what it is". Here, we are faced with a subject (every being) and a second part (what it is) which designates the nature of the existing being represented by the subject. It is by this nature, which is definite and determinate, that the thing may be cognitively defined. In the principle of identity, therefore, we affirm and conclude that the subject and predicate "are two sides" of one and the same being. That is why the designate of the subject (every being) and of the predicate (is what it is) is the same individual, concrete reality. Krąpiec arrives at his own statement of the principle thus: "Whatever exists is the same as that which in its content is existing as determinate and definite"⁴⁰. The unity of essence and existence in each being is a relative unity. It is relative because there is no absolute identity of essence and existence in any non-necessary being – whether they are intentional beings, substantial beings, accidental beings or actual beings. It is only in the Absolute Being that the compound of essence and

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 74-75.

⁴⁰ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 111.

existence disappears. Such a being is accepted in metaphysics as the chief, necessary, and sufficient reason of all reality. It is a self-intelligible being, a subsistent being – the Absolute, called in religion “God”⁴¹.

The indispensability of transcendental *res* is of paramount importance for Krapiec because in the experience of *ens* we apprehend existence but this apprehension and experience of existence is incommunicable without “thing” and this accounts for its more frequent use than the concept of being in metaphysics. Some cognitive consequences necessarily flow from *res* and the principle of identity. Some of them include:

i. In grasping the essences of things we know things in their nature. This refers to Thomistic realism as against conceptualism or phenomenalism, a theory which holds that we know representations while things themselves remain out of reach. Therefore, what we know about anything does not proceed from concepts or ideas in our mind but is given to us by things themselves through cognition. The reason why a ball is red or round is not that we see it as such but because it is such⁴².

ii. Whatever exists has an identity and this identity flows from the nature of the thing. A thing is what it is irrespective of whether it is discovered or not and its identity is not given to it by its ‘discoverer’. Appellations are simply signs by

which a thing can be known and not an imposition of identity on a thing.

iii. The analogical-understanding of being-thing allows us to extend this understanding to every form of real existence and to distinguish it from abstractions, idea, and constructs of the intellect. For indeed the transcendental thing makes us aware that the individuality of real objects cannot be reduced to any sort of general essences.

From transcendental *ens* and *res* one can establish three necessary conditions for the realness of each being: firstly, each real being must have a content, that is, it must be determinate; secondly, each real being must have an existence which actualizes the concrete determinate content; and thirdly, there must be a real relation between the existence and content, that is they cannot be separate in a being. Without any of them, the being cannot exist. These three elements are vital for determining the realness of any kind of being. Neither of them can constitute a being without the other. Krapiec offers reasons for the importance of these elements thus: “Reality is not just concrete determinate content, since in every ontic instance this content is really different; it is also not just existence, since, as proportional to content, existence is also really different in every ontic instance; and, finally, it is not just the relation of existence to content, since this relation, apprehended generally, is the universal concept of relatedness, and ap-

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 112.

⁴² Such was the thought of Protagoras, John Locke, Kant and Fichte. According to Locke, we know only our ideas, while reality is beyond the scope of our cognition; for Kant reality is hidden and inaccessible; for Fichte only consciousness exists.

prehended concretely, is also really different in every ontic instance”⁴³. The above quotation indicates that when being, realness, existence or essence is mentioned, we are not making reference to a universal being existing absolutely in

itself or a reality of a supernatural character for these three elements in each individual thing are different. Simply put, we cannot think of reality without the individual concrete thing.

Being and One

The world and all within it are internally composed of various parts. Nevertheless, each existing thing in our world exists as a unity. For example, in John or in Eve, although we can discern various parts (hands, feet, eyes, internal organs etc.), these parts form an organic whole or unity⁴⁴. Elders throws more light to this by saying that what is composite does not exist as long as its parts are separated, but exists after they are together and make up a composite being⁴⁵. This truth concerning the being of real things as undivided in itself is unveiled by transcendental one (*unum*).

In the history of metaphysical cognition, the discovery of transcendental unity is traced to the problem of unity and plurality which preoccupied philosophers from the start. The Ionians or the philosophers of nature adopted a materialistic mode in the various principles (fire, water, air) which they identified as the *archê*, that is, the principle from

which everything is made. Thus, they had a non-composition-based conception of being. The Pythagoreans, Parmenides, and Plato, on the other hand, clung to an idealistic version of the non-composition-based conception of being⁴⁶. In Aristotelian metaphysics, we witness a composition-based conception of being, which, however, is essential in nature. Aristotle criticized his predecessors on the grounds that they failed to realize that there are various modes of unity and being one. In Book X of the *Metaphysics*, he remarks that “one” can mean a “continuum”, a “whole”, or can refer to “things having one definition (a generality), or an “individual”⁴⁷. This implies that his predecessors mistook one mode of being one for another. Thus, Aristotle concludes that the one is not itself a separate being, but an attribute of something else. His reason is that even though the one is a universal concept, no universal is a substance. Con-

⁴³ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 94.

⁴⁴ A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality...*, op. cit., 47.

⁴⁵ L. Elders, *The Metaphysics of Being...*, op. cit., 87.

⁴⁶ The Pythagoreans taught that number is the essence of things; Parmenides, who was from the school of Pythagoras, taught the absolute unity of being (εἷς ἕστιν); while for Plato “the (numerical) One was the principle of the essence of things. He put the One above the world of ideas and above every being. This Platonic idea will reach its climax in the Neo-Platonic concept of the one, especially in Plotinus’ philosophy wherein the one has absolute priority over being.

⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X, 1, 1052 a 15; 1052 a 35.

sequently, the one must always belong to some particular thing and is to be identified with the essence of the category in which it is found⁴⁸. Thomas Aquinas also sees the Parmenidean-Platonic view of the one as a “product of confusion”. According to him: “Some philosophers failed to distinguish between unity which is convertible with being, and unity which is the principle of number (...) The above options, then, were based on the supposition that the one which is convertible with being is the same with that which is the principle of number, and that there is no plurality but number that is a species of quantity. Now this is clearly false”⁴⁹.

This confusion of which Aquinas here speaks stems from a failure to grasp the true nature of metaphysical unity, which consists in the absence of division, as well as from not having seen that there is a division which transcends the order of quantity. To this division, then, is opposed a unity which likewise transcends the order⁵⁰. Krąpiec shows a deep understanding of this discussion. In his view, “numerical unity cannot be regarded as the transcendental unity, just as the quantitative side of being cannot be identified with the whole of being, and especially (cannot be identified with) the factor that constitutes beingness itself”⁵¹. Krąpiec identifies a shift in the

Thomistic approach to the unity of being from the Aristotelian. Granted that they both share in a composition-based conception of being they differ with regard to what constitutes the foundation of such conception of being. In his discussion with the Pythagoreans and Plato, Aristotle maintained that “one” is an expression of non-contradictory being, indivisible into being and non-being and it is a universal and necessary property of what is real. However, for Aristotle, the foundation for the unity of being is in the “form”. This kind of unity is known as “essential unity” which is contradistinguished from “existential unity” which Thomas Aquinas acknowledged as the foundation of the unity of being. Krąpiec gives reason for this Thomistic shift in these words: “(...) non-division under the form aspect still does not constitute the real being itself. For indeed the fact that something is non-contradictory, and even that a thing is in itself (in its content) defined and determined in detail by one form that demarcates precisely this content-essential unity, still does not make anything real. Being is real only due to actual existence, insofar as actual existence is «joined» with the proportional content of a thing”⁵². This implies that for Krąpiec formal undividedness does not constitute a real being. Aristotle, in Krąpiec’s assessment, was

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X, 1, 1053 b 19.

⁴⁹ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q. 9, a. 7 co. “Fuerunt ergo aliqui inter philosophos qui non distinxerunt inter unum quod convertitur cum ente, et unum quod est principium numeri. (...) Hae igitur opiniones processerunt, supposito quod idem sit unum quod convertitur cum ente et quod est principium numeri, et quod non sit aliqua multitudo nisi numerus qui est species quantitatis. Quod quidem patet esse falsum”.

⁵⁰ H. D. Gardeil, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., 130.

⁵¹ A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and the Finality...*, op. cit., 50; cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Metafizyka*, 153.

⁵² A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality...*, op. cit., 51; cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Metafizyka*, 155.

yet to grasp the proper role of existence in being which led to the suggestion that the undividedness of form determines unity⁵³. The being of a concrete matter is rather determined by existence. Consequently, only undividedness in the aspect of existence determines ontic unity. Being is due to existence; an existing being is one because its ontic act, its existence, is not divided since in one being there is only one act of existence. Thus, the "Lublin philosopher" concludes that transcendental unity is "being existing as not divided"⁵⁴.

This emphasis on the existential aspect of being does not imply that Krąpiec disregards the formal aspect of being. Rather, he considers the formal undividedness of being as a necessary 'co-factor' in the existential aspect. This inclusion of the formal aspect, no doubt, springs from the fact that one can hardly talk of an existence without form. Thus, while Aristotle considers form as the primary factor for the undividedness of being, Krąpiec insists it is secondary on the basis that if *Metaphysics* discusses real beings, and existence characterizes realness, then the form is dependent on existence: "A being exists when one content is organized by form, which is real only «under» one actual existence. The unity of being is a result of existential undividedness (just one act of existence), the co-factor of which is essential undividedness (one form). The re-

alness, however, of formal undividedness (content) is dependent upon existence"⁵⁵. Thus, this one and indivisible act of existence, that integrates and unites various elements, is primarily the foundation for the existential unity of being. Existential unity constitutes the most profound characteristic of the being of things.

Transcendental *unum* has at its foundation the principle of non-contradiction. In the logical order, the principle is formulated thus: "it is impossible to affirm and at the same time deny the same predicate of the same subject"⁵⁶. If the reverse is the case, then we are faced with a contradiction. A contradiction is an identification of being and non-being in the same aspect. There cannot be tree and non-tree, John and non-John existing at the same time. Such a situation is absurd for Krąpiec since the content of the predicate completely destroys the content of the subject. Thus, the principle of non-contradiction expresses the absolute irreducibility of being to non-being, wherever and whatever this being is⁵⁷. We can deduce some cognitive consequences from transcendental *unum*:

i. On the ontic level, non-being is non-existent. There is no non-being in the world of persons, animals, plants and things. Also, objects contradictory in themselves are ontically and logically excluded in the real world. Hence we cannot cognize a real squared-circle, a centaur.

⁵³ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 130.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 130-131.

⁵⁶ U. Viglino, *Principle of Contradiction*, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, New York 1967, 277-278.

⁵⁷ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 119.

ii. While skeptics like Gorgias would say that nothing exists; if it exists it cannot be known and if it can be known it cannot be communicated, the principle of contradiction renders such argument absurd. It is obviously a contradiction to say nothing exists when in fact Gorgias or the skeptic himself/herself exists.

iii. Transcendental *unum* affirms the internal, undivided unity of each concrete thing in being. It also affirms that the factor responsible for this undividedness is the act of existence, which is always individual, undivided and unrepeatably.

Being and separateness

Every being has a definite content and is undivided in itself. In cognitive apprehension of reality, we also discover that whatever is undivided in itself is, at the same time, distinct or separate from every other concrete being. In other words, “whatever is one is something determinate in itself, existing, and, at the same time, not identical with any other being and unity”⁵⁸. Transcendental separateness, therefore, expresses this pluralism of persons, animals, plants and things we experience sensibly and cognize spontaneously. As we experience “John”, “Eve”, “orange”, “tree”, we experience a pluralism as well as discover sovereignty within this pluralism.

It is important to explain the inclusion of *aliquid* or “separateness” to the absolute transcendentals in this article. As earlier stated, being (*ens*) can be either considered absolutely or in relation to the other. Most authors, even Thomas, demonstrate that *aliquid* is a relative transcendental property of being, that is,

we can only affirm that a being is “something” in relation to another thing. Paul Horrigan in his article writes: “with the notion of transcendental something (*aliquid*), we are considering being (*ens*), not in itself, either positively (with *res*) or negatively (with *unum*), but in relation to others in its distinction among other beings (*entia*). In view of the distinction among other beings (*entia*) we can affirm that each of these beings (*entia*) is “something”⁵⁹. Aertsen explains the relative nature of separateness in Thomas’ metaphysics in his work *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*. In his explanation, the background for the discussion of *aliquid* was the problem of plurality. Boethius had proposed that the principle of plurality is otherness⁶⁰. Thomas adopts but reinterprets it and states that the cause of plurality is the search for the cause of division. Aertsen exposes the argument of Thomas thus: “Now being (*ens*) cannot be divided from being except non-being. Thomas conc-

⁵⁸ M. A. Krápiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 133.

⁵⁹ P. Horrigan, *Transcendental Aliquid*, in: [https://www.academia.edu/17557904/Transcendental Aliquid](https://www.academia.edu/17557904/Transcendental_Aliquid). Accessed on 15 January, 2017.

⁶⁰ Cf. J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals...*, op. cit., 222; Thomas Aquinas, *De Trinitate*, 4.1.

cludes that this being is not divided from that being except insofar as in this being there is included the negation of that being. From this conclusion it becomes clear that division implies not only an affirmation and a negation but also a relation of one being to another being⁶¹. Various philosophers follow this line of thought. The question here is: “what can account for a classification of *aliquid* as an absolute transcendental (if actually Krąpiec did)?” Can we offer rational justification for such claim?.

The first point I would like to make here regarding Mieczysław Krąpiec work is that it should not be considered to be a commentary of Thomas Aquinas' metaphysics because Krąpiec devoted his time to building a methodology for doing realistic philosophy and was not simply commenting on Thomas Aquinas. Secondly, Krąpiec's classification of *aliquid* is not obviously stated in his *Metaphysics*, however, he is said to have interpreted *aliquid* as an absolute transcendental property. I will present his stance in his *Metaphysics* and compare his text with that of Aertsen to make a brief discussion. After which I will briefly state his supposed argument for *aliquid* as an absolute transcendental. In his own words, Krąpiec says: “separateness ‘endows’ unity with a new relation, namely, division from other beings. Other beings in relation to a being-unity (a concretely existing thing) are “not-this-being;” hence, in a derivative sense – with respect to the originally apprehended being – they are “not-being”⁶². The similarities in Krąpiec's

explanation and Aertsen's interpretation of Thomas (presented above) are quite obvious: they both identify separateness as an affirmation of division; they both seem to agree that what *aliquid* adds to being, thing and unity is a relation and they accept that *aliquid* deals with being, in other words, plurality. I stated earlier that the division of the transcendentals is based on a consideration of being in itself (*in se*) or in relation to something else (*in alio*). When being is considered in itself, we can hardly apprehend a plurality; we could apprehend a relation (but that will simply be a relation between essence and existence or matter and form in a being). This internal composition within a being is what accounts for its undividedness, such that we can say that it is one (*unum*). But this unity, at the same time, points to its distinctness from another – we apprehend a relation as well as plurality – thereby making *aliquid*, using the description of Oliva Blanchette, “the flip side of speaking of being as one”⁶³. At this level we consider being not in itself but in relation to another. Therefore it would appear contradictory to argue for plurality of beings when being is considered *in se*. The explanation given for Krąpiec's inclusion of *aliquid* among the absolute transcendentals, however, is that beings exist in plurality but this plurality is not founded on a relation as such. Plurality is rather a consequence of ontic separateness which we can only cognitively apprehend in relation to other beings, but does not depend on this so-called “relation”. This is be-

⁶¹ J. A. Aertsen, *Mediaeval Philosophy and the Transcendentals...*, op. cit., 222.

⁶² M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 134.

⁶³ O. Blanchette, *Analogy and the Transcendental Properties of Being...*, op. cit.

cause what accounts for the separateness of a being is its act of existence⁶⁴. Every being consist of an act and a determinate content and it is so not in reference to another; it is as such, an individual. But when viewed cognitively, by apprehending different pairs of acts and contents, we make a judgment of separateness. This judgment is based on the fact that no pair of essence and existence is repeatable. Therefore, Krąpiec would seem to suggest that the ontic reality takes precedence over the cognitive reality, both of which in this case are non-contradictory.

This explanation, however, may certainly raise some questions particularly the difference between one (*unum*) and separateness (*aliquid*). The greatest challenge making a judgement of separateness by considering being absolutely (*in se*) is how to explain separateness without the “other” because the only option in the consideration of being per se is absolute *non-ens* and that is what *unum* fulfils as a transcendental property. This supposed step by Krąpiec certainly opens the door for more discussions.

How do we discover that things are separate in existence? As in the case of the previous transcendentals, we can discover that beings exist as separate and sovereign entities through metaphysical separation with the following steps.

a. The concept of separateness is expressed first in a judgment of ontic differences, that is, in a judgment affirming the plurality of beings. We conclude that whatever is determinate in itself and is

also proportionally existing is a being. Thus, each of the followings is being⁶⁵:

- a concrete human being
insofar as he or she exists
- a concrete horse
insofar as it exists
- a concrete tree
insofar as it exists
- a concrete atom
insofar as it exists
- a concrete X
insofar as it exists

We discover here that each of these things exists as sovereign, with a single act of existence. A look at them conceptually shows that each of them is one, that is undivided in itself and divided in relation to the other.

b. In the second stage, we make an analysis of the content of these judgments. In this analysis, we assert that concrete beings are not identical with one another: John is not Eve; this red rose is not that blue cherry but another thing – *aliquid*.

c. We arrive at the assertion that everything that is real exists as something sovereign and autonomous. This general conclusion is made on the basis of analogy in the existence of individual beings. These three steps help us to discover another principle, another law in things – the principle of excluded middle. The principle of excluded middle is a correlate to the law of contradiction and both of them are correlates to the law of identity. While transcendental thing and unity form the foundation for singling out the law of identity and law of contradiction respectively, transcendental

⁶⁴ See A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality...*, op. cit., 70.

⁶⁵ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 133.

separateness is the foundation for singling out the principle or law of excluded middle. The earliest formulation goes back to Aristotle who avers: "(...) there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories, but of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate (...) To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and what is not that it is not, is true"⁶⁶.

The law, therefore, states that "There is nothing between being and non-being"⁶⁷. H. J. Dulac explains the principle in these words: "It is false to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is; and it is true to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not. If anyone says something is, he either says something true or something false. If he is saying something true, the thing is; if he is saying something false, the thing is not. The same applies if he says

something is not. Either the affirmation or the negation is true. The man who holds to an intermediate between contradictions does not grant that one must say of a being that it is or is not, nor of a nonbeing that it is or is not"⁶⁸. In the logical realm, it implies that taking a middle stance between contradictions is fallacious. If one is afraid of affirming or denying in the face of two contradictions to avoid error, one falls even deeper into error because in the order of being there is no middle state between being and non-being. The law is also known as the law (or principle) of the excluded third, in Latin, *principium tertii exclusi*. Yet another Latin designation for this law is *tertium non datur*. From transcendental separateness, we discover that things are bearers of this law because each thing is sovereign, and is not identical with another, non-repeatable and as such middle states are non-existent.

Cognitive Consequences

Having attained a discovery of the transcendental property of separateness (*aliud quid*) and a subsequent discovery of the law of excluded middle, we may conclude that:

i. Real beings always exist as sovereign and autonomous individuals. Sets, classes and genera are cognitive constructs. These classes are artificial and as such one can fall into a hasty generalization if the individuality and sovereignty of the members of the classes are

not considered. Therefore, realistic cognition is always analogical cognition.

ii. Ontic separateness and the multiplicity resulting from it makes crystal clear the pluralistic structure of the world. Our world is a set of various sovereign beings; however these sovereign beings are not extremely isolated from each other. There is a connection of intelligibility and contingency since we can know things and a composed being does not owe its existence to itself. Isola-

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV, 6, 1011b25.

⁶⁷ M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline...*, op. cit., 135.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

tionism is, therefore, flawed. Pluralism of beings is not an illusion as monism claims since we experience things of different classes and can see that they are composed in their structure. The arguments of monism are therefore flawed.

iii. Transcendental separateness and the principle of excluded middle help us to avoid the tendencies to generalize and unify things arbitrarily. Hence, we become aware of the limits of all generalizations and univocal formulations, for knowledge about this thing is not iden-

tical with knowledge about another being, since this being is not that being. This does not imply that generalization is impossible, rather it opens us to the analogical character of the existence of beings and our cognition of beings.

iv. We reject all absurd assertions that middle states exist because there is no middle between being and non-being (for example the assertion that a human embryo is a transitional state between a human and non-human), truth and false, good and evil etc.⁶⁹.

Conclusion

The exposition of the philosophical interpretation which Krapiec offers to the absolute transcendental properties of being indicates that he always refers to the structural or rather, constitutive elements in the derivation of the transcendentals: essence and existence. Through essence and existence, and the relation between them we apprehend the realness of each being. There would be no other way, in Krapiec's view, to arrive at any of the transcendentals properties save for an analysis of our spontaneous cognition and through metaphysical separation. Through metaphysical separation, demonstrated in this article, we have seen that to be being means to be determinate, one and undivided, sovereign and unrepeatable. These correspond with *res*, *unum*, and *aliquid*. While these are the main focus of this paper, it does not exclude the fact that to be being is to be intelligible, good and beautiful.

The discovery of the transcendental properties helps us to discover the foundation of the rational order of our world which are based on the first metaphysical principles, which are indemonstrable truths upon which demonstrable truths are built. Through these principles, we affirm that the rational and cognitive order is grounded in being. A distortion of the ontic order invariably means a distortion of the cognitive order. This implies that things have value in themselves, reality is simply an open book to be read and interpreted; it acts on the cognizing person and is also acted upon. It is not "nothing" to be imposed some meaning or an indeterminate substance to be determined by the cognizing subject. Our world is a communicating world; we know because it communicates and it engages us in a never-ending communication.

⁶⁹ A. Maryniarczyk, *Rationality and Finality*, op. cit., 72.

Summary

The need to preserve a realistic cognition of the world is imperative for realistic philosophy in the face of idealism, subjectivism and relativism. This paper captures the effort of a philosopher who is “faithful to reality” through his works. The [absolute] transcendental properties of being are real properties of real beings; they are neither empty concepts nor constructions of the mind detached from the existing being. They form the foundation for the rationality of the world without which nothing is knowable.

There is also a method proper to the discovery of these properties. This method which is known as metaphysical separation demonstrates that realistic cognition is not naïve cognition; it enables us to discover that whatever exists is a determinate content with proportional existence, undivided in itself and divided from others, as well as a vehicle of truth, good and beauty. It is precisely in this sense that something is being, thing, one, something, truth, good and beauty.

Metoda odkrywania absolutnych własności transcendentalnych bytu w metafizyce Mieczysława Alberta Krąpca

Słowa kluczowe: transcendentalia, istnienie, jedność, byt, realizm, Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec

Potrzeba zachowania realistycznego poznania świata jest konieczna dla filozofii realistycznej w obliczu idealizmu, subiektywizmu i relatywizmu. Niniejszy artykuł ukazuje wysiłek filozofa, który jest „wierny rzeczywistości”. Transcendentalne właściwości bytu są prawdziwymi właściwościami rzeczywistych istot; nie są ani pustymi ideami, ani konstrukcjami umysłu oderwanymi od istoty. Stanowią one podstawę racjonalności świata, bez której nic nie jest możliwe

do poznania. Istnieje również metoda odpowiednia do odkrycia tych właściwości. Ta metoda to separacja metafizyczna, która dowodzi, że poznanie realistyczne nie jest naiwnym poznaniem, albowiem separacja pozwala nam odkryć, że cokolwiek co istnieje, jest determinowaną treścią o konkretnym istnieniu, niepodzielną w sobie i różną od innych, jak również jest nośnikiem prawdy, dobra i piękna

Tłum. Karolina Ćwik

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w której analizuje dorobek prof. Wiktora Wąsika, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem jego koncepcji historii filozofii polskiej, a także wpływu arystotelizmu na kształtowanie się polskiej myśli filozoficznej. Uczestniczy w konferencjach, publikował m.in. w „Ateneum Kapłańskim” i „Studiach Pelplińskich”.

Tomasz Pawlikowski – dr hab., prof. Wyższej Szkoły Edukacji Zdrowotnej i Nauk Społecznych w Łodzi, absolwent ATK, doktor UW. Autor czterech książek o tematyce filozoficznej. Ostatnią była monografia *Prawda następstwem istnienia. Problem prawdy w interpretacji św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, Wydawnictwo (Lublin 2013). Ponadto autor jednej książki historycznej, kilkudziesięciu artykułów naukowych, 127 haseł w Powszechnej Encyklopedii Filozofii i 32 w Encyklopedii Filozofii Polskiej, a także ponad 20 pomniejszych publikacji (hasła w Encyklopedii Katolickiej, Wielkiej Encyklopedii PWN, recenzje).

Mateusz Penczek – dr, absolwent psychologii i filozofii na Wydziale Filozoficznym UJ. Stopień doktora nauk humanistycznych w zakresie filozofii uzyskał w 2010 r. na Wydziale Filozoficznym UJ na podstawie rozprawy „Wola i intelekt w filozofii Tomasza z Akwinu”. Adiunkt w Zakładzie Pedagogiki Specjalnej w Instytucie Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach.

Ewa Agnieszka Pichola – mgr, absolwentka Wydziału Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej UKSW. Obecnie doktorantka, kontynuuje badania w Instytucie Filozofii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Przygotowuje rozprawę, w której analizuje dorobek Dietricha von Hildebranda z perspektywy obecności wątków modernistycznych w pismach niemieckiego fenomenologa. Interesuje się zagadnieniami z pogranicza metafizyki i psychologii, a dokładnie filozoficznych podstaw koncepcji psychologicznych i antropologicznych aspektów prawdy. Publikuje, uczestniczy w konferencjach, tłumaczy w j. angielskim.

Jan Pociąg – inż., magister teologii. Obronił rozprawę doktorską w Instytucie Filozofii UJ na temat związków filozofii ks. prof. Tadeusza Wojciechowskiego z odkryciami fizyki i biologii dwudziestego wieku (2017). Autor artykułu „Piotra Semenki próba odnowy filozofii klasycznej” (RT 5(2016)). Uczestnik X Międzynarodowego Kongresu Ontologicznego w San Sebastian (2012), gdzie wygłosił referat „The Wave-Corpuscle Duality of Matter and the Nature of the Universe”. Jego zainteresowania naukowe skupiają się wokół

aktualizacji tomizmu w oparciu o współczesny obraz świata opracowany przez nauki przyrodnicze. Jest członkiem Sodalicji Świętej Jadwigi Królowej.

Michał Zembrzuski – dr, adiunkt w Katedrze Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej Wydziału Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej UKSW. Pracę doktorską poświęcił tematyce zmysłów wewnętrznych w koncepcji św. Tomasza z Akwinu. Interesuje się problematyką epistemologiczną w starożytności i średniowieczu, a szczególnie problematyką pamięci i teorią intelektu możliwościowego i czynnego. Jest współredaktorem książek w serii „Opera Philosophorum Medii Aevii”. W jej ramach w 2012 opublikował autorską monografię zatytułowaną: *Tomasz z Akwinu. Komentarz „O pamięci i przypominaniu”*.