



Essays in Metaphysics

Contents

Existence and Judgement

Substance and Subject

Substance and the Interiority of Being

Father Lonergan and the Idea of Being

St Thomas on Reflection and Judgment

*Desmond Connell is Professor Emeritus of General
Metaphysics at University College, Dublin.*

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Existence and Judgment

In the concluding paragraph of his book, *What is Existence?* Mr C.J.F. Williams makes the following claim: 'Logic, whose heart is the understanding of syntactic distinctions and relations, thus becomes the true heir of metaphysics, at least of that part of metaphysics which studies Being *qua* Being. *Esse* is not *percipi*, nor *percipere*. Nor is it to be identified with activity, or the occupancy of space and time. It is understood by understanding such notions as *proposition*, *predicable*, and *variable*'.¹

This claim amounts to the complete reduction of metaphysics to logic. Against it one must urge the consideration that propositions, predicables and variables are constituents of our human discourse about the world and that they presuppose the orientation of discourse towards the world as the primary object of discourse. Are we to say then that the world is merely the object of discourse? that it has no reality in itself prior to discourse? If we say that it is prior to discourse, it is because we acknowledge that it exists. But if the world is prior to discourse by reason of its existence, then whereas propositions, predicables and variables may enter into the manner in which we signify existence they cannot account for existence itself. Of itself logic is metaphysically neutral, but once it claims to absorb metaphysics it cannot avoid being absorbed itself in the metaphysics of idealism, and the judgment concerning its value belongs no longer to logic but to metaphysics.

It is the capacity of language to signify the existent precisely as existing that gives to language its intentional character and enables it to engage with a world that transcends it. Existence is at the limits of language and logic, not indeed in the sense that it is inexpressible in language, but in the sense that language is originally constituted as significant through its reference to the existent. Existence establishes a realm of absolute priority not itself constituted by signification, to which signification is intrinsically oriented. Thus existence is prior to signification, and the formal structures of signification considered by logic cannot be taken as accounting for the existence of the existent, as if existence could be absorbed in an internally sufficient order of signification. Signification creates an order that is essentially directed towards a prior order: that to which language is oriented in the order of signification is what existence establishes in the order of being. Signification is thus essentially

¹ C.J.F. Williams, *What Is Existence?* (Oxford, 1981) 325.

self-transcendent. And so the essence of signification does not consist in the internal order of its logical form, but in the relation whereby this logical form is ordered towards the signification of something prior, in the orientation which refers signification beyond itself.

Nor is speaking a simple and direct mirroring of reality. To make this supposition would be to forget that language signifies by means of abstract concepts which express our human insight into the object presented by the senses, a progressive and developing insight which can never capture the richness of the real in a fully penetrating intuition. In its logical form our language reflects the structures that our human way of knowing imposes with a view to expressing the real. And so, to claim that language in its structure directly mirrors the structure of the real would be to impose human logical structures on the real, to confuse the real with the logical, and to reduce reality to the measure of a human abstract understanding. What we signify in our language is the real, but the manner in which we signify it is intrinsically affected by the conditions inseparable from our human way of knowing. To suppose that metaphysical questions concerning the structure of the real can be answered by logic is a mistake involving not the mere confusion of category with category, but a distortion of the proper nature of language as such. For in its very orientation language is animated by a twofold transcendence: in so far as it signifies an order prior to itself, and in so far as language, in virtue of its historical and discursive mode, signifies this order as being beyond the capacity of its own limited mode of signification ever adequately to express. That is why metaphysics must distance itself from logic. The logician enjoys the clarity and self-confidence a man may experience in approaching the task for which he is adequately equipped, for in exploring the formal structures characteristic of the human way of knowing one is engaged in a fully proportionate human task. To expect such clarity or to assume a like self-confidence in the presence of the mystery of being would be misguided on the part of the metaphysician, whose task, though human in its mode of procedure, is more than human in the end towards which it aspires: the comprehension of being.

The fundamental thesis of Williams's book, for which he acknowledges his debt to Frege and Russell, is that 'exists' is not a first level predicable, that it may never be 'wrapped around' a proper name. Such strings of words as '*Je suis*' and 'Aristides exists' are not only ill formed but unintelligible. With a sprinkling of Wittgensteinian cold water Williams would awaken us from the spell of language in order to remind us that in the ordinary course of affairs we have no need for such assertions as 'Mr Bailly exists' (where Mr Bailly is Williams's grocer).² This, of course, is true. For if Williams has a grocer the very least we can take for granted about him is that he exists, although the banality of this fact in no way detracts from the importance either to himself

² Cf. *ibid.*, 73–80.

or to others of Mr Bailly's existence. What is banal as a fact, however, need not be devoid of deeper significance unless one identifies all intellectual penetration with the mere extension of the range of one's factual information. There are occasions that reveal hidden depths in what might otherwise have been passed over as trivial, and that is why assertions of existence, though seldom required, do nevertheless occur. Philosophy, in its preoccupation with the ultimates that form no part of the topic of everyday conversation, provides the most favourable context for assertions of existence. Williams is unimpressed and finds in this circumstance a reason for suspecting them rather than for taking them seriously.³ But it hardly becomes him to press this point against simple statements like '*Je suis*', when his own philosophy of existence compels him to create such oddities as 'It girlizes in Father's chair' in order to escape from the obvious implications of the normal 'there is a girl in Father's chair'.⁴ And what does 'girlizes' mean? According to its form it should mean a process of becoming; for example, 'something is giving birth to a girl', or 'something is turning into a girl'. In order to understand it as Williams intends we have to return to the proposition with which he began.

'When there is doubt, therefore, whether a given locution is intelligible, it is sensible to ask whether it is used outside philosophy, i.e. in ordinary language'.⁵ This criterion, which should give 'girlizes' short shrift, is used by Williams to outlaw the use of 'exists' as a first level predicable. The criterion, however, is not entirely clear. Are we to take strictly the equation between 'outside philosophy' and 'in ordinary language'? How should we treat the biblical statement that 'whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists'?⁶ And what of the *ego eimi* assertions of Christ in John VIII?⁷ Is John Clare violating intelligibility when he begins a poem with the words: 'I am—yet what I am, none cares or knows'?⁸ or Jorge Guillén with his 'Soy, más estoy'?⁹ If philosophical language is under suspicion, perhaps religious and poetic language must share the same fate. It is difficult to believe, however, that Agatha Christie is using anything other than ordinary language when she has the moribund Poirot reply to a query about his health: 'I exist, my friend, I still exist'.¹⁰ And what could be more ordinary than the commentary on current political affairs in a daily newspaper?

³ Cf. *ibid.*, 78–9.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 317.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 78–79.

⁶ *Hebrews*, XI, 6.

⁷ Cf. John, VIII, 28, 58. Cf. R.J. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (2 vols, London, 1971) vol. 1, appendix IV, 533–8.

⁸ *Selected Poems of John Clare*, ed. by E. Robinson and G. Summerfield (Oxford, 1967) 195. Cf. also 'Sonnet: I Am', *ibid.*, 196.

⁹ Jorge Guillén, *Más Allá*, I, stanza 15. I am grateful to Mr Martin Cunningham, of the Department of Spanish, University College Dublin, for bringing this poem to my attention. He would translate the quotation as follows: 'I am, more [than that] [here] I am [now]'.

¹⁰ *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case* (Fontana/Collins, 1977) 156.

Me: Fact? Now there's a very interesting word. A few days ago we were given as a 'fact' that Dessie O'Malley had a conclusive lead over Charlie—isn't that a fact?

Punter: Yes, but you didn't think so.

Me: Mine was only an opinion. Those pines there are facts. They exist. You can touch them. You can see them. I can ask you if you think they are healthy and will thrive and what will you tell me?

Punter: Well, I don't know a lot about maritime pines: they *seem* to be healthy.

Me: That is an opinion.¹¹

Here the existence of what can be touched and seen is presented as the paradigm of unassailable fact. The spontaneous conviction of the non-philosopher, untroubled by sceptical doubt, expresses an unreflecting insight into the nature of our knowledge of facts by tracing it to the apprehension of the *existence* of what is sensibly present. Existence is apprehended as a fact, but it is a fact of singular significance: everybody knows that in the absence of existence there would simply be no facts whatever. But precisely because this is so obvious we seldom have occasion to draw attention to it, at least in the course of ordinary conversation. But occasions do arise, not merely in the experience of the poets, when the affirmation of existence sheds all sense of triviality in the light of an anguished insight.

On the day of her death in 1794 the Princess of Monaco wrote as follows to her children's governess:

I have written you a word already and I am writing another to commend my children to you; when you receive this I shall be no more, but that the memory of me would make you take pity on my unfortunate children, that is the only feeling they can inspire.¹²

Writing to his wife, Lucile from the Luxembourg prison as he awaited his transfer to the Conciergerie, Camille Desmoulins has this to say:

I die thirty-four years old, but it is a remarkable thing that for five years I have crossed over so many precipices of the revolution without falling into them, and that I still exist, and I still rest my head calmly on the pillow of my too numerous writings, all of which

¹¹ John Healy, 'Sounding Off' in the *Irish Times*, 27 February 1982.

¹² 'Je vous ai déjà écrit un mot et je vous en écris encore un pour vous recommander mes enfants; quand vous recevrez celui-ci je ne serai plus, mais que mon souvenir vous fasse prendre en pitié mes malheureux enfants, ce n'est plus que le sentiment qu'ils peuvent inspirer.' Reproduced in E. Campardon, *Le tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris* (2 vols, Paris, 1866; reprinted Geneva, 1975) vol. 1, bk 2, ch. 3, 412.

nevertheless still breathe the same philanthropy, the same desire to make my fellow citizens happy and free, and which the tyrant's axe will not strike.¹³

Williams would not say that these assertions of existence are ill formed, but he would maintain that an examination of their deep logical structure reveals that they do not oblige us to use 'exists' as a first level predicable.¹⁴ If I understand him correctly, he would hold that when somebody says 'I still exist', he is saying that some man now answering to such-and-such a description is the same as one who *n* units of time ago answered to another, where the two descriptions are so related as to establish this identity, and that he himself is this man. As far as I can make out, the Princess of Monaco is saying that a description in continuity with the description that applies to her now but envisaging her position in twenty-four hours time (e.g. 'mother of the Grimaldi children imprisoned in the Conciergerie on July 27th 1794') will apply to nothing. Now I do not think that this is the kind of thing that either author intends to convey. Undoubtedly, Camille finds it incomprehensible that the man who took a prominent part in the assault on the Bastille and who subsequently contributed in a variety of ways to the course of the Revolution should now be in his desperate position. Parts of his letter express such complaints. In saying 'I' he is aware of his identity throughout his personal history. But what he finds remarkable when he says 'I still exist' is that notwithstanding the dangers he has faced, any of which might have put an end to his life, that personal reality to which he refers as 'I', and which cannot be fully captured by any series of descriptions because it transcends all descriptions, is here and now actually in being. He is not struck by the fact that someone now answers to a description that applies to someone to whom earlier descriptions apply, but by the fact that that individual exists at all. The Princess of Monaco is not talking about descriptions that will have no application, but about herself, and if descriptions will not apply it is because she will have ceased to exist. For an individual to exist is not the same thing as to answer a description: the individual is prior to all descriptions, and he owes that priority not to a capacity to be described but to his existence. Williams reverses this order by giving priority to the logical over the real.

¹³ 'Je meurs à 34 ans; mais c'est un phénomène que j'ai passé, depuis cinq ans, tant de précipices de la révolution, sans y tomber, et que j'existe encore, et j'appuie encore ma tête avec calme sur l'oreiller des mes écrits trop nombreux, mais qui respirent tous la même philanthropie, le même désir de rendre mes concitoyens heureux et libres, et que la hache des tyrans ne frappera pas !'—Camille Desmoulins (*Œuvres*, 10 vols, unaltered reprint 1980 by Kraus-Thomson, Munich. Reproduced from a copy of the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, vol. X) 170. Campardon also reproduces this text, *ibid.* (vol. 2, bk 2, ch. 3) 257. Instead of 'et que j'existe encore' he has 'et que j'existe', but this is probably a less reliable reading.

¹⁴ Cf. *What Is Existence?*, 141–5.

Such an attitude must render one incapable of appreciating the existential anguish expressed in the letters from which I have quoted.

No doubt Williams would reply to all this that my position entangles me inextricably in the strands of Plato's Beard.¹⁵ The struggle against such entanglement, however, is a fate reserved for those who, like himself, have accepted Russell's theory of names. According to this view, since all names refer, and since what is referred to cannot be a nonexistent object, I cannot say 'Camille no longer exists' and claim that I am using 'no longer exists' as a first level predicate. But, as Karel Lambert has observed, 'the philosophical foundations of the Russellian theory of nominative expressions are far from secure, and surely it is a point against it if it forces one to strain to make unintelligible sentences which on their face are not.'¹⁶

The examples we have seen suffice to challenge Williams's claim that such strings of words as '*Je suis*' and 'Aristides exists' are ill formed and unintelligible. On the contrary, they are used and found to be intelligible in a variety of contexts other than philosophical. But what do we know about anything in knowing that it exists?

One answer to this question is to say that we know that it exists, and if anybody claims not to have such knowledge that there is no way in which one could possibly lead him to it. The knowledge that things exist is absolutely primitive and irreducible: one has it or one knows nothing. Commenting on Aristotle's definition of the good as that which all things desire, St Thomas makes the point that the good is amongst the *prima*, the things that come first, which, consequently cannot be made known through anything prior to them, but only through what is subsequent, as causes are made known through their effects.¹⁷

But if the good is amongst the *prima quoad nos*, and that is surely the case, how can it depend on the *posteriora* in the order of our knowledge? Here we find a paradox. By reason of its imperfection—and the questions we raise bear witness to its imperfection—our initial knowledge of the good stands in need of development, of the clarification and elaboration we can achieve through consideration of the *posteriora*. At the same time, such consideration of the *posteriora* could in no way contribute towards our understanding of the

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 37–41, 108–111.

¹⁶ Review of C.J.F. Williams, *What Is Existence?* in *Philosophical Books* (vol. 24, no. 2, April, 1983). This review confines itself to making a strong attack on the basic thesis that 'exists' cannot function as a first level predicable, and claims that 'a glance at the technical literature on the logic of existence over the past three decades is bound to predispose one against some of Williams' key theses' (105).

¹⁷ 'Sed secundum rei veritatem bonum cum ente convertitur. Prima autem non possunt notificari per aliqua priora, sed notificantur per posteriora, sicut causae per proprios effectus. Cum autem bonum proprie sit motivum appetitus, describitur bonum per motum appetitus, sicut solet manifestari vis motiva per motum. Et ideo dicit quod philosophi bene enuntiaverunt, bonum est id quod omnia appetunt'—*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, I, lect. 1, n. 9.

good were it not already situated within a context established by the primitive awareness of the good. It is similar in the case of being. We know immediately, but in an unreflecting and unthematic way, what is meant by saying of something that it exists. But if we try to explain what is meant we run into difficulties and we turn to the *posteriora*: in order to illuminate the significance of existence we bring out the difference between reality and fantasy, or we show how the existent transcends the whole order of knowledge. And yet, if our primitive knowledge of existence did not precede our recognition of the status of fantasies, or what is meant by the order of knowledge as distinct from the order of being, we should have no means of drawing the contrast by which we seek to throw light on existence: such elaboration of our knowledge would be impossible if the primitive grasp of existence did not precede and sustain it.¹⁸ And so, although one answer to our question is to say that in knowing that something exists we know that it exists, another answer is to say that in knowing that something exists our knowledge by its very imperfection creates a desire to know more fully and perfectly what it is to exist, and that if one wishes to satisfy this desire as far as one can one must eventually engage in the task metaphysics recognises as its own. What do we know about a thing in knowing that it exists? No question is simpler, no question is more difficult, to answer.

One peculiar difficulty about this question is that it can never receive the kind of answer it seems to anticipate or expect. Normally when we ask about something what it is we look for a definable characteristic, or at least for a characteristic that lends itself somehow to description. Existence, however, is not a definable or describable characteristic because it makes no contribution towards determining what an existent is. Long before Kant drew attention to this, others had concluded that existence must resemble Aristotle's prime matter, which is neither quality nor quantity, nor any of the things by which being is determined.¹⁹ Is existence, then, like prime matter, completely indeterminate? In a certain sense, yes but, in a more profound sense, no. Existence can be said to be indeterminate in the sense that it contributes no determinate mode of being to the existent, and for that reason it has no place amongst the characteristics that constitute the content of the concept expressive of what a thing is. But this does not convert it into a kind of residue beyond our capacity to specify, left over after we have abstracted every determinate

¹⁸ Some Thomistic writers apply the same reasoning to our knowledge of God and claim that just as our knowledge of being and the good is developed in the light of the *posteriora* but at the same time presupposes the primitive knowledge of being and the good, so our knowledge of God is developed in the light of finite reality but presupposes a primitive and unthematic knowledge of God. With this I cannot agree. Being is *primum quoad nos* but God, though *primus in se* is not *primus quoad nos*.

¹⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Z, 3, 1029a. The assimilation of being to prime matter is presented as an objection in Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, obj. 9. For Kant, cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, division 2, bk II, ch. III, section 4.

characteristic: a kind of limiting case in an order of determinations progressing from the more determinate to the less determinate until one reaches existence at the point where determination has vanished. Existence is a real constituent of the existent, not an abstraction from it. Neither is it a kind of potential ground of the existent, receptive of determination as matter is receptive of form; for whereas matter is actuated by form, determinations have actuation only by existing.²⁰ Neither is it, as Heidegger's treatment suggests, the negation of determination.²¹ Negation, indeed enters into the manner in which we elaborate our knowledge of existence in so far as we grasp it as being not identical with any of the determinations of being; but to say that existence is itself the negation of determination would be to confuse what we know in knowing existence with the manner in which we come to know it. Existence is rather that to which every determination is relative precisely as a determination of something that is. The something that is is a *something* in virtue of its determinate character; it is a something *that is* in virtue of the existence it exercises in and through its determinate character. As irreducible to the order of determinations, existence transcends all determinations, not in being separate from them or in being their negation, but in being that towards which determination is ordered, because all determination is for the sake of being in some determinate way. This is what the metaphysician will mean when he says that existence is the act by which a being is constituted in itself as a being in the possession of its own determinate manner of being.

But if existence transcends all determinations, how is it known? It is known in and through the determinate things which it constitutes, not as determinate, but as existing. Here, of course we have the apparent fatuity that existence is the characteristic in virtue of which things exist, the *vis dormitiva qua dormiunt dormientes*. Something of the kind is surely inevitable when we are dealing with an ultimate which cannot be elucidated in terms of anything simpler. But although it is important to acknowledge this point in order to preclude misguided expectations, it does not amount to saying that we cannot add anything significant about existence. Existence is familiar to us from the dawn of reason, and although we have the greatest difficulty in explaining to ourselves or to others what we understand in knowing that something exists we have not the slightest difficulty in knowing it. That is why a newspaper correspondent can present an existential affirmation without feeling that he is concerned with anything other than the obvious.

At the origin of this knowledge of being is the concept of something that is. It is a difficult concept to explain, for in its complex structure—something that is—it bears the marks of a synthesis traceable to a judgment which

attributes to an object of experience (something) what is first understood about it (that it is). The judgment at the same time presupposes the concept of something that is and gives it actuality in our knowledge. It presupposes it as a concept in the making, in the process of its formation, and it gives it actuality by enabling it to express that which it envisages. In other words, the concept makes the judgment possible by supplying its terms; the judgment actualizes the concept through the synthesis it expresses, because this synthesis is not an extrinsic addition to the terms but an intrinsic requirement towards which the terms are ordered with a view to expressing their meaning. The mind, apprehending being in the object presented by the senses, affirms of the object that it exists and recognises it as something it understands precisely as something that is. For although the mind of its very nature is oriented towards the apprehension of something that is, it can find it and express it to itself only through its contact with the sensible object, the apprehension of which enables it to judge of something that it is. It is this genesis of the concept of something that is, through the experiential judgment, that creates difficulties about the apparently tautological character of our existential judgments. Once in possession of its primitive concept of something that is, however, the mind can take either of two directions. Sometimes it relives the experiential contact with the existent in direct existential judgments. At other times it makes use of its concept to conceive an object that may not, or does not, or even could not exist, and this it does by conceiving it after the manner of something that is. For to *conceive* of something as something that is is never the same thing as to know or to affirm that it exists. It is in this way that the concept of something that is provides the foundation for our capacity to conceive mental constructs, fictions and privations. The concept of something that is, indeed, always retains its intrinsic orientation towards the actually existing, but this character it can still retain in the conception of what does not exist in so far as that which does not exist is conceived by reference, however indirect, to that which does exist. Hence the paradox of the judgment in which we truly affirm that *there are* objects that *do not exist*.

Is the judgment, *this exists* a tautology? Professor Pears takes as his example the judgment, *this room exists*, and argues as follows:

Clearly there is something odd about this statement. For the subject-phrase 'This room' implies that this room exists by making a reference to it, and the verb 'exists' asserts its existence all over again. Thus the verb 'exists' is redundant. Of course not all uses of the word 'this' produce this result. But when, as in this case, it is used to refer to something in the speaker's environment, it does make the verb 'exist' redundant, and so the whole statement might be called a 'referential

²⁰ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9.

²¹ Cf. M.D. Philippe, *Une philosophie de l'être est-elle encore possible?* (5 fascicules, Paris, 1975) fasc. IV, 91-109, esp. 108-9.

tautology'. Now suppose that I say instead 'This room does not exist'; then this statement will be a referential contradiction since, like the affirmative version, it implies, simply by its reference, that this room exists, and then, unlike the affirmative version, it goes on to deny its existence with the verb 'does not exist', and this is a contradiction.²²

Père Winance finds Pears's analysis unacceptable. Taking the traditional notion of tautology as a proposition in which the predicate repeats what has been formally signified by the subject, he asks whether the judgment 'this exists' or 'this tiger exists' must be regarded as tautological. Does the reference undoubtedly involved in such judgments necessarily imply a tautology in thought so as to render the predicate redundant. He does not think so.

The grammatical subject of the proposition, the demonstrative *this*, undoubtedly envisages the object apprehended in space-time, present in person according to the manner in which it presents itself in all its materiality to the inspection of the mind on the alert to examine it thoroughly. If reason does not find in this presence the requisite basis for its judgment nothing will provide it with the guarantee of the truth of its affirmation. In last analysis it is the object present, the one designated by the demonstrative pronoun, whether as envisaged in itself or as situated in the concrete, which is the ground of the attribution. For sometimes it will ground the attribution in virtue of its essence as in the case of eidetic evidence; sometimes it will do so in virtue of its existence or its situation as in the case of factual evidence. Is it not precisely this kind of evidence that grounds the judgments 'this exists' or 'this is a tiger'? In an inclusive inspection, the mind is borne on the one hand towards the datum present in the perception indicated by the pronoun, on the other hand towards the objective knowledge of it that it has grasped, which is signified by the predicate. And it is solely on the basis of what the object proposes that it will judge. It is clear therefore that every true judgment implies a reference to an apprehended content which it is precisely the function of the predicate to express. And so we see how, according to the proposed explanation, no judgment is true without being a referential tautology. In other words, if it is true it must be considered as a tautology: a position difficult to maintain. Why then do we reject the tautology despite the reference? It is evident that if I say this is red as a result of an observation, I refer to a really red object. Nevertheless, does it follow that my judgment is

22 D.F. Pears, 'Is Existence a Predicate?' in *Philosophical Logic*, ed. by P. Strawson (Oxford, 1967) 98.

a tautology? Likewise, when I refer to an object as existing and I say that it exists, does it follow that I utter a tautology? No.²³

The fact that the object of reference must be red if I truly assert 'this is red', does not render the judgment a tautology. Likewise, the fact that the object of reference must exist if I truly assert 'this exists', does not render the judgment a tautology. There is, however, a difference between the two cases, not brought out by Winance's analysis, a difference that makes the essential point in Pears's claim. If I say 'this is red', the object to which I refer has to be red if the judgment is to be true, but it does not have to be red to sustain the possibility of any reference whatever. If I say 'this is not red' I make a mistake, but I am not involved in contradiction, unless, of course I say 'this red thing is not red'. But this is precisely the difficulty to which Pears draws attention in the case of the judgment of existence. If I am to refer to the object at all it has to exist to be able to sustain the reference, so that reference of its very nature implies existence in this kind of case. And to say 'this does not exist' is to utter a contradiction by denying the existence that the reference precisely as reference implies. I do not have to say 'this existent thing does not exist' for contradiction to arise. This, I take it, is what Pears wishes to convey when he speaks of a referential tautology.

The question as to whether the judgment 'this exists' is tautological is difficult to answer.

On the one hand, it would seem that it cannot be a tautology because it asserts a fact about the world. To know that something exists in this direct way is to know something about the world on the basis of what is given

23 'Le sujet grammatical de la proposition, le démonstratif *ceci* vise sans aucun doute l'objet appréhendé dans l'espace-temps, présent en personne tel qu'il se présente dans toute sa matérialité au regard de l'esprit prêt à l'examiner à fond. Si la raison ne trouve pas dans cette présence de quoi fonder son jugement, rien ne lui garantira la vérité de son affirmation. En dernière analyse, c'est l'objet présent, celui-là qui est désigné par la démonstratif, qui est le fondement ultime de l'attribution, soit envisagé en lui-même, soit replacé dans le concret. Parfois, en effet, il fondera l'attribution en vertu de sa propre essence comme dans le cas des évidences eidétiques; parfois, il le fera en vertu de son existence ou de sa situation comme dans le cas d'évidences factuelles. N'est-ce pas précisément ce genre d'évidence qui fonde les jugements *ceci existe* ou *ceci est un tigre*? Dans un regard enveloppant, l'esprit se porte d'une part vers le donné présent dans la perception indiqué par le démonstratif, de l'autre, vers la connaissance objective qu'il en a prise signifiée par le prédicat. Et c'est uniquement sur ce que l'objet propose qu'il jugera. Il est donc clair que tout jugement vrai implique une référence à un contenu appréhendé que le prédicat a justement pour fonction d'exprimer. On voit donc comment, selon l'explication proposée, aucun jugement n'est vrai à moins d'être une tautologie référentielle. En d'autres termes, s'il est vrai, il faut le considérer comme une tautologie: position difficile à tenir. Pourquoi donc refusons-nous la tautologie malgré la référence? Il est évident que si je dis *ceci est rouge* à la suite d'une observation, je me réfère à un objet réellement rouge. Toutefois, s'ensuit-il que mon jugement est une tautologie? De même, quand je me réfère à un objet comme existant et que je dis qu'il existe, s'ensuit-il que j'énonce une tautologie? Non'—E. Winance, 'Le jugement et l'existant', *Revue thomiste*, vol. 75 (1975) 571-2.

immediately in perception, and the judgment asserting of the thing that it exists derives its truth not from the formal structure of the judgment but from the evidence provided by the presence of what is given in experience. Moreover, if we say that the judgment is tautological we must hold that the existence we affirm in the judgment is known prior to the judgment in and through the act of conceiving what is signified by 'this'. A concept, however, can never suffice for the knowledge of existence. I can conceive the will that would make me the sole heir to a fortune; I can conceive it as having been made and existing; but that cannot amount to the knowledge that it exists. This is the source of the flaw that St Thomas, Kant and others detect in the so-called Ontological Argument. That one might still have to conclude that God does not exist in spite of the fact that one has conceived him as existing, or included existence in the concept of God, is a fundamental contention of the Kantian critique. The judgment of existence expresses a synthesis that derives its sole justification from experience. Apart from the unique case of God, Descartes has no difficulty in conceding this point, as he makes clear in his comments on Caterus's example of the existent lion.²⁴ If, then, we leave aside the case of God, with which we are not here concerned, we find general agreement to the effect that the knowledge that something exists depends on a judgment and that this judgment has need of some justification other than the mere concept of its subject. No doubt the concept of that which exists originates in an experiential contact that justifies an affirmation of existence, but once the concept has been formed through this primitive judgment it can be employed to conceive as existing whatever one likes; but mere conceiving in this way does not amount to knowledge that it exists.

On the other hand, it seems that the judgment, 'this exists' must be a tautology. If I refer to something present in experience as 'this', it can only be because I know already that it exists, so that to go on to say that it exists is to utter a tautology. Furthermore, it is impossible to say of it 'this does not exist' without involving oneself in a referential contradiction.

Is the judgment, 'this does not exist' a referential contradiction? Perhaps not. At an examination the examiner might say to a student: 'This failure to answer my question shows how little you know about the subject'. A scientist might remark to his colleague in the course of an experiment: 'This lack of regularity is not what we expected'. In the first weeks of bereavement one may be deeply affected by perceiving the absence of familiar sounds long associated with particular moments of the day. In these ways our perception of the non-occurrence of events, of what Sartre calls the presence of an absence, can be as palpable as any perception. In cases of this kind we can refer

through 'this' to what does not exist, to what in the circumstances is perceived not to exist. The 'this' is perceived as a lack or privation in what is experienced in so far as something anticipated or familiar is found to be missing. It is true that 'this' primarily refers to something that exists and that our knowledge can get started only with something existing to which reference could be made through the use of 'this'. But that we can perceive the non-existent only against a background provided by something that exists, although it reveals a fundamental necessity to which our perception is subject, does not establish that the judgment, 'this exists' is a referential tautology. In the cases we have just seen, even when 'this' is used with reference to what is presented in experience, it does not necessarily imply that what is referred to exists.

All this, however, may seem to be little more than a quibble. The counter-examples we have seen derive their force from the fact that privations and negations are such that they can never properly be said to exist, because in themselves they have no positive content. We can in fact refer to them only through the realities of which they are privations or negations, and to say of them that they exist would be to speak improperly. But when we are dealing with things that may or may not exist, if we refer to such a thing, as given in experience, through the demonstrative 'this', the judgment of existence has all the appearances of a referential tautology. And certainly it is difficult to see how there could be any quibble about the judgment, 'I exist'.

What then are we to say of the argument that when one refers to something given in experience as 'this' one already knows that it exists, so that to go on to say that it exists is to utter a tautology? If this is so the judgment, 'this exists' is a referential tautology because 'this', in virtue of its referential role, anticipates what is thereafter affirmed as a predicate, namely 'exists'. This reasoning appears persuasive. It seems indeed to be the case that each time I refer by the use of the demonstrative to something given in experience I am already aware that it exists and that if I were not aware of its existence I could not begin to refer to it in this way.

Pears does not put the argument quite so explicitly. He argues that reference by means of 'this' to something present in the speaker's environment *implies* that it exists, so that to go on to say that it exists is to assert its existence all over again. But what does he mean by *implies*? It would seem that his argument at least requires that the implication involved in this kind of reference be equivalent to an *assertion* of existence, because otherwise predicating existence of the object referred to by 'this' would not amount to an *assertion of its existence all over again*. In other words, when 'this' is used to refer to an object of sensible experience it is equivalent to an assertion of that object's existence, and this is why it is tautological to say 'this exists'. The referential value of 'this' in 'this exists', therefore, has a dual aspect: its

²⁴ Cf. *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. by E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (2 vols, Cambridge, 1967-8) vol. 2, 20-1.

value precisely as referential pertains to it in the ordinary way, that is, in virtue of the logical role it exercises as subject of the judgment; but its value precisely as existential derives from the fact that it equivalently asserts the existence that the judgment then goes on to repeat in the predicate. Now either this assertion of existence which the existential value of 'this' contains equivalently is itself tautological or not. If it is, the same alternatives recur and we are launched on an infinite regress. Unless then one is prepared to say that the tautological character of 'this exists' involves an infinite regress, one has to concede that the existential value of 'this' accrues to it from a non-tautological assertion of the existence of the object referred to as 'this'. And so the tautology, in order to be a tautology, depends upon the non-tautological assertion of what the tautology itself asserts.

Must we, however, accept the alternatives of infinite regress and non-tautological predication of existence as presuppositions of the claim that 'this exists' is a tautology? Why has 'this' to be equivalent to an *assertion* of existence if 'this exists' is to be a tautology? Would it not be enough to say that 'this' is the equivalent not of an *assertion* of existence but of the *concept* of 'this as existent'? This way of escape, however, is not available. It is not enough that 'this' signify the object conceived as existent in the way, for example, that 'the red rose' signifies a conceived object under the determination 'red' and renders tautological the judgment 'the red rose is red'. For if 'this' merely signifies the object conceived as existent it does not suffice to render the judgment 'this exists' tautological, precisely because it cannot account for the properly existential value of 'this'. When the predicate signifies a determination, the subject of the judgment can anticipate the determination expressed by the predicate if the concept of the subject already contains that determination. But the subject of a tautological judgment of existence would have to do more than include existence in its concept.

Here we touch upon the crucial difference between the judgment of existence and judgments that merely attribute a determination to a subject. Just as one can say of Catus's existent lion that it is existent in the sense that it is conceived as existent, but that it by no means follows from this that it exists; just as one can say of Descartes's perfect being that it is existent in the sense that it is conceived as existent, but that it by no means follows from this that it exists; so too of 'this' one can say that if it merely signifies the object conceived as existent one can say that it is existent in the sense that it is conceived as existent, but that it by no means follows from this that it exists. The knowledge that something exists cannot be compressed into a single term signified by a concept but absolutely requires the synthesis of subject and predicate that constitutes a judgment. 'This exists' is known to be true not by the analysis of a concept but only through a synthesis justified by experience. If 'this exists' is to be a tautology then 'this' has to signify

the equivalent of a non-tautological judgment in which 'exists' is predicated of 'this'.

In order to establish that 'this exists' is a tautology, therefore, it is not sufficient that 'this' anticipate or precontain 'exists' as *part of a mere concept*; it is essential that it anticipate or precontain it as a *predicate affirmed of 'this'*. No mere act of conceiving, whatever the complexity of its content, is equivalent to a judgment of existence. 'This' cannot beget a tautological affirmation of 'exists' unless it signifies more than a concept, that is, unless it already signifies a judgment in which 'exists' is attributed to the object of reference. The object referred to by 'this' is known to exist only through the predication of existence, and the reference signified by 'this' is existential only in virtue of that predicate. One cannot then argue that 'this exists' is a tautology when the tautology presupposes a value for 'this' that could accrue to it only from the truth of the judgment 'this exists', and when, moreover, the truth of that judgment is a contingent truth based on what is given in experience. It is precisely the predication of existence as a truth of fact that accounts for the existential value of 'this', and it is the assumption that 'this' has an existential value that is required to constitute the tautology.

It seems to me, therefore, that Pears is mistaken in believing that the notion of referential tautology represents what is distinctive of the perceptually-based judgment of existence. 'This' derives its existential value neither from its conceptual content nor from the referential role it exercises precisely as subject of the judgment, but from the irreplaceable predicate, 'exists'. Why, then, does 'this exists' present the appearance of a referential tautology? This, I believe, arises out of our very familiarity with existence. 'This' is the linguistic device by which we refer to what is given directly in sensible experience, and we know immediately that what is given in this way is something that exists. Thus we are immediately aware that in designating an object as 'this' we are designating an object that exists, and that to say that it does not exist would either be to say that something that exists does not exist or else to misuse the term 'this' in the mistaken belief that something to which we attempted to refer was given in experience. To each one, also, his own existence is a matter of immediate evidence. By the term 'I' he refers to the subjective centre of his experience, of which he is immediately aware that it exists. For this reason it is impossible to say with serious intent 'I do not exist', because the evidence of the existence of the experiencing subject to which he refers in this way is overwhelming and immediate.

How do we know that what is sensibly present exists? By *how* I do not mean to ask what evidence we have for knowing that it exists, for I am satisfied that the evidence is provided by the sensible presence itself, but by what form of thought. In other words, is the act in which the existence of what is sensibly present is known an act of conceiving or an act of judging?

If it is an act of judging, and we have seen that this must be the case, then, whatever difficulties the linguistic expression of this judgment may present, there can be no doubt that it involves predicating existence of a subject and that it is this predication that underlies and sustains the existential reference inseparable from the proper use of 'this'. In that case, although the referential value of 'this' belongs to it precisely as subject of the judgment, the peculiar value attaching to its existential role derives from the predication of existence. It does not seem to me important then whether one says that the judgment, 'this exists' is not a tautology because the existential value of 'this' derives from the predicate of that judgment or that 'this exists' is a tautology because 'this' already signifies a judgment predicating existence. What does seem important is that existence could never be known except through the predication effected by a judgment, so that if the claim that 'this exists' is a tautology were to render redundant the predication of existence it would at the same time eliminate the existential value of 'this' and thereby render 'this exists' non-tautological.

We now return to a point made above that, where its knowledge of existence is concerned, the mind in its contact with the object given in sensible experience forms a concept that can be articulated fully only through the judgment that it makes possible. Conflict arises when the psychological movement which generates our existential awareness comes to be represented statically by the logical analysis which attempts to distinguish adequately subject from predicate and to express formally the relations between them. What seems in logical analysis to be a tautology is psychologically the apprehension of a fact. Logic inevitably treats concepts as static contents of signification; psychologically they are the living points of encounter between the mind and what it is seeking to express. The movement of the mind is swift and it enjoys an interiority that cannot be quite represented by the material exteriority inseparable from the juxtaposition of pieces of language. Where the logical approach prevails, the movement of the mind and its interiority may be overlooked. The evidence for the swift movement of the mind in its encounter with the existent is nevertheless still detectable in the embarrassment created for logical analysis of the existential judgment which can hardly be a tautology because it asserts a fact, and can hardly assert a fact if to deny it involves one in contradiction.

The swift movement of the mind is a *va-et-vient* between the concept and judgment. Presented by the senses with the object of experience, the mind utters a concept that can fully express what it envisages, namely, 'something that is', only through a judgment in which it affirms the existence of the object of its conception. This judgment employs only one concept, but it is a concept sufficiently complex to permit it to assume under different aspects the distinct roles of subject and predicate. Because the same concept

exercises the roles of subject and predicate, the logical analysis will inevitably incline to classify it as a tautology. But because the judgment is the means necessary to enable the concept to express fully what it envisages in its understanding of the object given in experience, this apparent tautology is the indispensable means of the mind's knowing the object not just as a something conceived as being but as a something that actually is. What the logician may regard as a tautology is the means by which we apprehend a fact. This judgment is not to be represented as affirming 'something that is is something that is', which would plainly be a pure tautology, but '*something* present under certain sensible determinations *exists*'. In other words, when the mind conceives its object as something that is, it knows its object as fulfilling the intention of this concept by its actual existence by means of the judgment, 'this exists', in which the full resources of the concept are brought into play under the dual role of subject and predicate: the object, presenting itself under its here and now sensible qualities and conceived as something determinate is referred to by the subject, 'this' and declared in the predicate actually to exist. The concept makes the judgment possible by supplying its terms and the judgment actualizes the concept through the synthesis it expresses.

Substance and Subject

In his article, 'The Common Assumptions of Existentialist Philosophy', William A. Shearson makes the following important observations:

The *second assumption* we wish to bring out, however—an assumption that is much more crucial for an understanding of the internal logic of existentialist thought—has been recognized by almost no one. This assumption, simply stated by *every* existentialist (not argued for because, once again, it is merely taken over and taken for granted from the post-Kantian tradition), is that the Self is not a substance but a lived relation to that which situates it; that this relation is and only could be an internal relation (because only two substances could be externally related); and this in turn means that that which situates the Self—which shall be called the situating Other—enters into the very ontological constitution of the Self.¹

The gradual elimination of substance in the course of the development of modern thought is one of the most fundamental implications of the rejection of the tradition of metaphysics deriving from Aristotle. It occurs in a variety of ways. In the first place, there is the claim that the notion of substance is meaningless because so lacking in determination as to represent nothing more than an undifferentiated 'I know not what'. This objection has its point if one fails to see that it is one thing to specify the role of a metaphysical principle in the light of the most universal consideration of being as such, and quite a different thing to determine its precise nature in the light of a particular consideration of this kind of being as distinct from that. In saying of substance that it is the first principle of the determination whereby anything can be as the being it is, one does not specify how this kind of being or this individual being is determined, nor need one imply that there is at one's disposal a deductive path leading from the metaphysical to the less universal level. No doubt, the objection raises the most serious epistemological issues concerning the possibility and nature of metaphysics as a form of knowledge, issues which manifest the dependence of the concept of substance upon acceptance of moderate realism.

¹ William A. Shearson, 'The Common Assumptions of Existentialist Philosophy', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XV (1975), no. 2, 137-8.

The second claim is that substance is redundant because reality is essentially process. To identify reality with process is to eliminate traditional metaphysics, which accepts that the principles of being are distinct from and more ultimate than the principles of becoming on the grounds that becoming is wholly relative to being. Of process we must at the same time say that it is, for it is real, and that it is not, because becoming is but *coming* to be, and thereby relative to being as means to end. It is thus impossible to regard process as ultimate without postulating as an absolute what is entirely relative because intermediate between non-being and being. This challenge to metaphysics exercises a powerful influence over the contemporary mind by reason of the preoccupation with change in every department of contemporary culture: science, philosophy, religion, politics and art. In defending his concept of substance the metaphysician must appear as a man born out of his time unless he can show it to be indispensable as the ultimate foundation of the reality of change. Yet, it is not with substance as foundation of change that he is directly concerned, but with substance as principle of being; and it is only on condition that he remembers this that he can remain a metaphysician and resist the temptation to abandon metaphysics for an infra-metaphysical philosophy.

The third claim, more immediately related to the points outlined by Shearson, is that substance cannot be reconciled with man's being when viewed, in the light of modern and contemporary philosophy, as essentially constituted by subjectivity. It is with this claim, and particularly with its origin in Cartesian philosophy, that I shall be concerned in what follows. It derives ultimately from the primacy in respect of philosophical method attributed by Descartes to the *cogito*, a primacy retained since his time, in however modified and subtle a manner, in the form of an interpretation of being from the standpoint of subjectivity. This contrasts with the traditional interpretation of being from the standpoint of being itself, whereby subjectivity is subordinated to being by means of an analogy which, whilst denying it the Cartesian primacy, provides for the uniqueness of its dignity.

This third claim questions the coherence of the concept of substance on the grounds that it is impossible to relate it to human consciousness. Unless one simply identifies substance with consciousness—and this, as we shall see, leads to its own difficulties—one must attribute priority to substance. Thus consciousness must be seen as emerging from a source other than consciousness itself which possesses none of the attributes distinctive of consciousness, and may even appear as the very contrary of consciousness. Consciousness is made relative to a preconscious principle, freedom to a source anterior to the exercise of freedom. And because all that is distinctive of man is constituted by consciousness and freedom, man seems, in what is ontologically ultimate, identified with a ground of being no different from

what is to be found at the sub-human level. Underlying his conscious life, creating for it an opaque obstacle in the way of the intentionality of consciousness, is an ontological 'I know not what' outside, if not even destructive of, the order defined by what is properly distinctive of him. The order of being, of what is as distinct from what is co-constituted by consciousness, takes on the appearance of an unknowable, deterministic, irrational *en soi*. Any attempt to derive consciousness from such a source can only end in its extinction.

Before offering comments on this opposition between substance and consciousness, I propose to outline the metaphysical concept of substance and to trace the manner in which the opposition to consciousness emerges from the Cartesian treatment of substance. My approach will necessarily be schematic but still, perhaps, valuable in helping to pose the problem in such a way as to bring out the enduring importance of the concept of substance.

Substance, in its properly metaphysical sense, emerges into view in response to questions about the being of that which is precisely as being.² The object with which these questions are concerned is not simply an idea or concept or meaning of being, to be clarified by analysis of the way in which we talk about being, or the way in which the notion of being makes possible and lights up our experience of beings. The object of these questions is the very being itself which we affirm in the existential judgment, the being which manifests itself universally, if analogically, in every object of experience. Such questions are posed with a view to determining the root causes or principles which are required to account for the being so affirmed. According to its metaphysical sense, then, substance is not a mere category of language or thought, a mere principle of linguistic organization or logical order, but a real principle, the radical intrinsic principle or cause of being in the things that are. This is what Aristotle calls *ousia*, a term which has suffered in being translated as *substantia*.³ The term substance almost inevitably simply identifies it with subject, hypokeimenon, thereby making substance essentially relative to such determination as process and change, quality and property; suggesting even that it be characterized as the immutable and static by contrast with change and dynamism, as the indeterminate as opposed to the qualified. Rather, the reverse is the case. For change and dynamism are relative to substance as becoming is relative to being. Moreover it is substance that lies at the origin of the dynamic tendencies whereby beings anticipate and strive after the fulfilment towards which they are oriented in virtue of the initial resources of being deriving from substance. Quality and property are likewise relative to substance as the source of the fundamental determination, which concentrates and assimilates all subsequent determination into a unity of being.

² The best recent treatment, historical and speculative, of the metaphysics of substance is to be found in M.-D. Philippe, *L'être. Recherche d'une philosophie première* (3 vols, Paris, 1972-4), vol. I, 199-467.

³ Cf. *Metaphysics*, Z, 17, 1041 a 9-10.

As source of the fundamental determination, substance is the origin of the basic resources which positively characterize a being, whilst at the same time determining it in the limited manner which divides it from every other, and concentrates these resources in the unity of an autonomous individual. It grounds that capacity for being-in-itself in virtue of which a being can stand forth as itself in the integrity of its own being. So understood, it is the intrinsic cause and principle of the being of that which is in respect of the determination whereby it can be in itself, distinct from every other, in the unity of an autonomous individual. Its proper effect is the radical determination which, while positively characterizing a being, divides it from all that is distinct from it. In and through substance a being has the capacity to be in itself, radically sufficient and complete in the integrity of its being. Substance, as it were, sets up the dividing boundary which distinguishes a being from others and gives it an identity—a selfhood. It is the source of the sufficiency which enables it to stand forth as itself instead of having to borrow its being from another after the manner of a mere qualification, and concentrates its resources in the unity of a self-identity.

If one might resort to metaphor and speak of the proper effect of substance in terms of movement, one might say that the first and most fundamental movement of a being is that movement whereby it constitutes itself in the possession of its identity over and against all others. In a sense this movement is divisive; more properly, however, it is for each being the positive issuing forth and entering into possession of the basic resources of its being, that exclusive possession in and through which it is able to stand forth as itself. This movement is the intrinsic causality of substance. No doubt, if we were to deal exhaustively with the subject we should have to say that this very movement itself is made possible only through the act of existence, for existence gives to substance the actuality which enables it to issue forth in the resources whereby a being is constituted as the being it is.

What is important to notice from our present point of view, however, is that it is the role of substance as constitutive of the selfhood of a being that makes it impossible to identify substance and activity. For, in the case of a finite being, activity, whether transitive or immanent, necessarily involves emergence from self and relation to the non-self in one way or another. In this broad sense, all finite activity has an intentional character. To identify substance and activity, therefore, would be to incorporate this relation to the other, this self-transcendence, into the self-constitution which is the role of substance. This ultimately would be to break down the defining limits which, in the case of a being of finite resources, it is the rôle of substance to establish and maintain; it would be to compromise the selfhood of the self and the otherness of the other. It would equally be to undermine the foundation of activity, which could no longer be an emergence from the self when there

was no self from which to emerge. No doubt, a being can experience itself only through its relation to others, but to say that it can be a self only on this condition is destructive of the foundation of the self.

Emergence from the self is evidently required where the activity is transitive, for here the agent produces an effect outside itself. Yet, it is no less evidently required in the case of immanent activity, even if, at first sight, its very immanence might seem to absolve the agent from the need to relate to the non-self. Immanent activity originates and terminates within the agent and in no way affects what is external to it. The agent must possess interiorly the required resources for such activity, and its activity consists precisely in the exploitation of these resources within itself. In the full and purest sense, immanent activity is confined to the sphere of consciousness: the activities of knowledge and love. But clearly, these activities, however profoundly immanent, necessarily involve a reference to what is external, and thereby bring us into the presence of the mystery of consciousness as ontological immanence and intentional transcendence. Knowledge, even of the self, can develop only in the light of being, which transcends the self, and a purely self-centred love would be the narcissistic destruction of love. Thus the object of immanent activity—from which immanent activity derives its determination and specification as essentially knowledge-of and love-of—transcends the self. But since the self must possess interiorly what is required for such activity, it must, as the necessary condition of its immanent activity, achieve an identity with the non-self if it is to become the source of acts which bear an essential relation to, receive their determination from, the non-self. As Aristotle put it: *anima est quodammodo omnia*.⁴ Putting the same point, St Thomas says: *ex hoc autem quod substantia aliqua sit intellectualis, comprehensiva est totius entis*.⁵ The doctrine of substance, then, makes it imperative to explain how that which is ontologically separate from others can nevertheless so assimilate them into the very well springs of its life and incorporate them into its own resources as to be able to account for an activity which at the same time issues forth from itself with all the spontaneity of its own life and receives from them its determination and specification. The Aristotelian tradition explains how the self assimilates the non-self for the purposes of knowledge through its theory of intentional likeness or species. One can say that it is the doctrine of substance which lies at the origin of the epistemological problem of the bridge, and that where the nature of substance and its relation to activity are misconceived the problem of the bridge will become the stumbling-block of the whole doctrine of substance.

St Thomas has entered profoundly into the question of the ontological status of activity in finite being. He sees finite substance as radically potential

4 *De anima*, III., 8, no 1, 431 b 21.

5 *Contra gentiles*, II, 98, *Hoc autem sic*.

in relation to existential act. Furthermore it stands at the origin of a being's capacity for the fulfilment it can achieve in its relations with others through activity, of its openness to perfectibility through such relations. Thus, in the finite being, substance is essentially oriented towards further enrichment in which it attains its finality. Activity, on the other hand, is itself final achievement—he calls it *actualitas*—not in any way oriented towards further enrichment, and, consequently, intrinsically free from potentiality. One cannot, therefore, identify substance and activity except where substance is free from potentiality, the case of pure act.⁶ When he asks whether in the creature the act of understanding can be identified with the act of existence itself, he makes the point that as the act of existence receives its determination from substance, so the immanent acts of understanding and love receive their determination from their objects. But, whereas in the finite being substance, as the determining principle of the act of existence, is finite, thereby rendering its being an exclusive possession, the object, as determining the acts of understanding and love, is all inclusive, because intellect and will are open to all that is, essentially free from the exclusiveness proper to finite substance.⁷ From this analysis it follows that if one identifies being and activity in the finite being one will either transfer the limitations and exclusiveness of substance to activity, thereby, in the case of knowledge, closing the knower in on himself in subjectivism, or else one will transfer the all-inclusiveness of the object of activity to substance, thereby tending towards a monistic absorption of the finite being in the totality of being, the absolute whole.⁸ It is interesting to observe how the two tendencies, towards subjectivism and monism, have in fact followed the Cartesian identification of substance and thought.

We come now to Descartes, with his claim that the soul is a substance whose essence is thought.⁹ Here we have the identification of substance and activity. By thought Descartes means consciousness.¹⁰ And so he has been praised for the discovery of subjectivity, because subjectivity is essentially constituted by consciousness.¹¹ But he has been blamed for retaining substance.¹² And this criticism has its point, for whereas subjectivity is essentially constituted by consciousness, the same cannot be said of substance.

6 Cf. *Summa theologiae*, Ia, 54, 2, corp., J. de Finance, 'Cogito cartésien et réflexion thomiste', *Archives de philosophie*, vol. XVI, cahier II, nos. 96–106; 102–14; *ibid.*, no. 120; 132–4; D. Connell, *The Vision in God* (Louvain-Paris, 1967) 66–9.

7 Cf. *Summa theologiae*, Ia, 54, 2, corp.

8 Cf. J. de Finance, 'Cogito cartésien', no. 120, 132–4.

9 On the substantiality of thought in Descartes, cf. M. Guérout, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons* (2 vols., Paris, 1953), vol. I, 63–76; J. de Finance, 'Cogito cartésien', nos. 107–20, 114–34.

10 Cf. J. de Finance, 'Cogito cartésien', no. 52, 58.

11 Cf. E. Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge* (The Hague, 1963), Med. I, §8, 58.

12 Cf. *ibid.*, Med. I, §10, 63–4.

Descartes's notion of substance is not the most subtle. It was inherited from a Scholasticism which had lost sight of the deepest Aristotelian insight into substance as principle and cause of being. For Descartes substance is not a principle or intrinsic cause of being, but rather the basic subject of attributes, and it is characterized by its manner of being, which is existence *par soi*.¹³ Substance exists *par soi* without dependence on any other being, except that it requires the sustaining influence of the *concursus* of God. It is the subject of modifications of various kinds, from which, however, it is not really distinct.¹⁴

The soul, then, is a substance whose essence is thought or consciousness. As a substance it possesses the sufficiency required to enable it to exist by itself, and this sufficiency is translated into terms of consciousness by the assertion that it possesses interiorly and by identity with itself all the resources required for thought. It is essentially a self-thinking thought, which finds within itself all that it requires for its thought.¹⁵ What then of the transcendence of thought? Here it is necessary to say that the soul is provided with innate ideas, determinations of its thought, which have a twofold reality. Formally, or in respect of their ontological status, they are modifications, not really distinct from the soul. Objectively, or in respect of their representative content, they refer to what is other than the self.¹⁶ Thus, even the innate idea of God, which suffices to open the self to what is beyond itself, is ontologically identical with the soul, even though it transcends the soul infinitely in virtue of its representative content.¹⁷ Thus Descartes has arrived at the position where the self contains by self-identity all the resources of thought: it is by entering into possession of these innate resources, by training the light of its own consciousness on that immanent treasure which is one with itself, that it knows all it can know. Such a mode of knowledge had traditionally been regarded as the exclusive prerogative of God, who alone contains by self-identity within himself the infinite fullness of being. For how could the very substance of the soul supply the determination of an act of knowledge which terminates in what is other than it unless we include within the determination proper to the soul's substance the determination proper to the other?

The distinction between the formal and objective reality of ideas translates the duality of aspects under which the thinking self manifests itself in the *cogito*, the duality of aspects represented on the one hand by the *cogito* and

13 Cf. *Meditationes, 2ae Responsiones* (ed. Adam-Tannery, 13 vols, Paris, 1897–1913), vol. VII, 161; *Principia*, I, art. 51, vol. VIII–1, 24.

14 The ontology of Descartes is well analysed in J. de Finance, 'Cogito cartésien', nos. 112–20, 119–34.

15 Cf. *ibid.*, no. 49, 54–5, no. 119, 130–2.

16 Cf. *Meditationes*, III, vol. VII, 40–1.

17 Cf. *ibid.*, vol. VII, 51.

on the other by the *sum*. The *sum* requires that the thinking self be regarded as substance and the innate ideas, in accordance with Descartes's ontology, as modifications. This is the aspect presented as formal reality. The *cogito* requires that the thinking self be regarded as consciousness and the innate ideas as objects of consciousness. This is the aspect presented as objective reality. But although these are but two aspects of one and the same thinking self, they contain the seeds of conflict. Formally, the ideas are subjective, and for this very reason it is necessary to establish their objective value for consciousness by means of an argument which depends on the disproportion between the objective reality of the idea of God and the formal reality of the self and its modifications (the causal proof for the existence of God).¹⁸ In other words, it is the formal reality of consciousness and its ideas which creates the problems for Cartesian philosophy, blocking the progress towards a pure philosophy of subjectivity. Ontological requirements seem to immure consciousness within itself, whereas transcendence is of the essence of consciousness. In this way substance is responsible for the opaqueness which impedes the intentionality of consciousness, requiring it to cross a bridge which does more to separate than to unite. Contemporary philosophers see in the Cartesian doctrine of substance a survival from the past which threatens the development of philosophy along the modern lines initiated by Descartes's discovery of subjectivity. Sartre, for example, will have nothing to do with it, for the attribution of being-in-itself in any form to consciousness is destructive of the transparency of consciousness implied in intentionality.¹⁹ One may, however, wonder whether the difficulty arises more from the identification of substance and consciousness than from the doctrine of substance as such. It is precisely when consciousness is identified with substance that the role of substance as constitutive of the self, marking off the individual conscious subject from the non-self, creates an obstacle to the transcendence of consciousness.

These difficulties come to the surface in the philosophy of Malebranche, and it is to his great credit that he tried seriously to deal with them. In his recent fine study, Alquié sees Malebranche's system as a philosophy of subjectivity and intentionality trying vainly to assert itself against the substantialism which he never abandoned.²⁰ Just as he clung to the being-in-itself of matter, in spite of his profession of philosophical scepticism about the proofs for its existence, and thereby resisted the conclusions which Berkeley adopted largely under his influence, so he clung to the being-in-itself of the soul in spite of his conception of consciousness, and thereby resisted the conclusions which would emerge only after the long historical

18 Cf. *ibid.*, vol. VII, 40–51.

19 Cf. *L'être et le néant*, Introduction, 21; J.S. Catalano, *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's 'Being and Nothingness'* (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London, 1974) 12–13, 34–5.

20 Cf. F. Alquié, *Le cartésianisme de Malebranche* (Paris, 1974) 204–5.

development of subjectivity through Kant and German Idealism. I am not proposing the anachronism of transporting him to a later century but he does represent in a way a point of transition where we can see some of the profoundest motives for the modern rejection of substance.

He accepts the main lines of Descartes's ontology, including the key assertion that the soul is a substance whose essence is thought.²¹ He reiterates with even greater emphasis the Cartesian opposition between soul and body, mind and matter, as two radically distinct and opposed substances, mutually exclusive in respect of their essential attributes and properties.²² In the light of this opposition, however, it becomes impossible to maintain that the innate idea of extension is, formally speaking, a modification of the soul. For a modification is not really distinct from the substance it modifies.²³ Thus, to say that the idea of extension is a modification of the soul is to say that the soul bears within itself, as identical with itself, the representation of matter, so that by knowing itself, by training its own light upon itself, it can arrive at an understanding of matter. Descartes had indicated how he might explain this by referring in the *Third Meditation* to the Scholastic notion of eminent perfection.²⁴ Since, in the order of ontological perfection, the soul exceeds matter, it contains eminently in its own reality whatever inferior degree of perfection is present in matter. This piece of ontology provides the basis for the assertion that the idea of matter, formally considered, is a modification. Probably it is Descartes Malebranche has in mind in the following passage, even though he mentions explicitly only the Scholastics and St Augustine:

There are people who make no difficulty about affirming that, since the soul is made for thinking, it has within itself, I mean to say in considering its own perfection, all it requires for that; for, indeed, since it is nobler than all the things it conceives distinctly, it can be said that it contains them somehow eminently, as Scholasticism puts it, that is to say, in a nobler and more exalted manner than they are in themselves. They claim that superior things contain in this way the perfections of inferiors; and so, being the noblest of the creatures that they know, they flatter themselves that they possess within themselves in a spiritual manner all there is in the visible world, and that they can, by modifying themselves in different ways, perceive all that the human mind is capable of perceiving. In a word, they will have it that the soul is the intelligible world which contains in it all that the material and sensible world contains.

21 Cf. *Recherche*, III, I, I, §1 (*Ceuvres complètes de Malebranche*, ed. Robinet, 21 tomes, Paris, 1958–70), t. I, 381–3.

22 Cf. *Entretiens sur la métaphysique*, I, §I–II, t. XII, 32–5; *Recherche*, II, I, V, §1, t. I, 215.

23 Cf. *Entretiens sur la métaphysique*, I, II, t. XII, 34; D. Connell, *The Vision in God*, 31–5.

24 Cf. *Meditationes*, III, vol. VII, 45.

But it seems to me that it is very rash to wish to uphold this conception. It is, if I am not mistaken, natural vanity, love of independence, the desire to be like God, universal being, who contains in himself all beings, that confuses our mind, and brings us to make ourselves through imagination the possessors of all things. *Dic quia tu tibi lumen non es*, says St Augustine; there is no one but God who is his own light to himself, and who in considering himself can see all the things he has made.²⁵

Scholastic writers had indeed examined a similar hypothesis in the course of their speculative treatment of angelic knowledge but, with rare exceptions, they had rejected it—St Thomas, Scotus and Suarez for once in agreement—because it would confuse the conditions intrinsic to finite and created knowledge with the creative knowledge of God.²⁶ Malebranche is clearly influenced by their arguments. He draws attention to the idea of being, in virtue of which the soul enjoys a vague knowledge of all things. Is this idea a modification of the soul? Does the soul, therefore, contain in its own substance the infinite resources of being? This would be to identify it with God.²⁷ Moreover, it is certain that the secondary qualities of matter are purely subjective, altogether lacking in objective reality, that they are mere modifications of the soul.²⁸ On what grounds, then, is it possible to differentiate between those ideas that are truly representative of external reality, that possess objective reality, and those that do not, if formally considered they are all modifications. Thus the Cartesian position is wide open to a sceptical subjectivism.

Malebranche's own solution is to separate the objective ideas from the subjective modifications, not merely, as Descartes had done, in respect of

25 'Il y a des personnes qui ne font point de difficulté d'assurer, que l'âme étant faite pour penser, elle a dans elle-même, je veux dire en considérant ses propres perfections, tout ce qu'il faut pour apercevoir les objets; parce qu'en effet étant plus noble que toutes les choses qu'elle conçoit distinctement, on peut dire qu'elle les contient en quelque sorte éminemment, comme parle l'Ecole, c'est-à-dire, d'une manière plus noble & plus relevée qu'elles ne sont en elles-mêmes. Ils prétendent que les choses supérieures comprennent en cette sorte les perfections des inférieures. Ainsi étant les plus nobles des créatures qu'ils connaissent, ils se flattent d'avoir dans eux-mêmes d'une manière spirituelle tout ce qui est dans le monde visible, & de pouvoir en se modifiant diversement apercevoir tout ce que l'esprit humain est capable de connaître. En un mot ils veulent que l'âme soit comme un monde intelligible, qui comprend en soi tout ce que comprend le monde matériel et sensible, & même infiniment davantage.

'Mais il me semble que c'est être bien hardi, que de vouloir soutenir cette pensée. C'est si je ne me trompe la vanité naturelle, l'amour de l'indépendance, & le désir de ressembler à celui qui comprend en soi tous les êtres, qui nous brouille l'esprit, & qui nous porte à nous imaginer que nous possédons ce que nous n'avons point. Ne dites pas que vous soyez à vous-mêmes votre lumière, dit saint Augustin, car il n'y a que Dieu qui soit à lui-même sa lumière, & qui puisse en se considérant voir tout ce qu'il a produit, & qu'il peut produire'—*Recherche*, III, II, V, t. I, 433–4.

26 Cf. D. Connell, *The Vision in God*, 201.

27 Cf. *Recherche*, III, II, V, t. I, 435; *ibid.*, III, II, VI, t. I, 440–1.

28 Cf. *Entretiens sur la métaphysique*, III, t. XII, 63–86.

objective reality, but in respect of formal reality as well. Formally, the objective ideas have their reality outside the soul. He takes his cue from the idea of being, which, as the all-inclusive idea, he identifies with God, and he places all other objective ideas in God.²⁹ Thus he revises fundamentally the *cogito*: consciousness does not consist essentially in a relation of self to self, but in a relation of self to God. Thereby consciousness becomes essentially intentional as consciousness of an object distinct from itself, for the essence of consciousness consists in this relation to the other-than-itself. At the same time, one cannot overlook the fact that Malebranche, even here, is clearly pre-Kantian. For him, consciousness is in no sense constitutive of its object, but purely receptive. He could not have introduced a constitutive or active consciousness without abandoning the Vision in God, and thereby, in his view, surrendering to subjectivism. The pure passivity of the understanding is a fundamental thesis of his philosophy which safeguards the basic realism of his thought.³⁰

Whatever one may think of the assertion that the object of consciousness is divine, Malebranche's conception of consciousness as intentional marks an advance on Descartes. Yet, he still maintains the thesis that consciousness is the essence of a substance, the substance of the soul. Here, I believe, we have an impossibility. For it asserts that, although the soul is a substance, and thereby radically complete in itself, its very essence is constituted by the active presence to it of a being utterly distinct from it. God becomes a kind of co-principle of the finite substance. To be consistent here it would seem to be necessary either to accept pantheism, the doctrine of the 'wretched Spinoza', against which Malebranche spent so much of his time in combat, or else to abandon substantialism and the ontological dimension.³¹ Be that as it may, one can see the beginning in Malebranche of that notion of the self, outlined above in the quotation from Shearson, as a lived relation to that which situates it. That such a conception is incompatible with the doctrine of substance has, however, not been recognized by Malebranche.

To Kant we owe the development of a philosophy which, at least as speculative, abandons all pretensions to come to terms with the ontological aspect of subjectivity. In Kant, however, the ontological—the thing-in-itself—is still not denied, but simply placed outside the range of speculative thought. Kant, therefore, retains the basis of Descartes's distinction between formal and objective reality whilst giving up the pursuit of the formal reality at the speculative level. One may say that from the speculative point of view the Kantian self is pure subject in the sense of ultimate principle of the unity of the consciousness of objects, but that from the practical point of view it takes

29 Cf. *Recherche*, III, II, VI, t. I, 437–42.

30 Cf. *Recherche*, I, I, §1, t. I, 43; D. Connell, 'La passivité de l'entendement selon Malebranche', *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 53 (1953), 543–65.

31 'Le misérable Spinoza . . .', *Méditations chrétiennes*, IX, §XII, t. X, 101.

on the ontological characteristics of substance in the sense of finite individual created by and subordinate to God. The limitations of subjectivity at the speculative level—expressed in terms of the phenomenality of objects and agnosticism regarding things-in-themselves—reflects Kant's deep convictions regarding the ontological substance-subject. This is brought out when he reminds us that the human intellect is not an archetypal intellect creative of its objects.³²

Hegel cannot accept the limitations of the Kantian subjectivity, which condemns knowledge to being partial knowledge and interprets metaphysics as the pretention to know a totality which can never be attained. Hegel tries to show that totality can be encompassed by knowledge. It is the role of the dialectical movement from substance—as creative of the chasm between knower and known—to overcome this limitation through the higher synthesis of subject, which reconciles the duality between knower and known and thereby enables the subject to embrace totality. Thus Hegel, too, finds a way of retaining both substance and subject, no longer in the dualistic Kantian form, but as unified after the manner of distinct stages in the dialectical process, substance representing a more abstract and incomplete view which is overcome in the richer reality of subject.³³

The Hegelian synthesis is challenged in Kierkegaard's return to the individual as freedom, revolting against the absorption of the individual in the absolute subject, and in Husserl's notion of intentionality, which overcomes the chasm between knower and known whilst eliminating the substantiality which creates the chasm.

We can now cast our minds back over the developments we have seen and ask why Descartes, despite his assertion that thought is the essence of the soul, felt nevertheless that even in the case of the soul thought and being are not entirely coincident but must remain in some way distinct aspects of one and the same reality as expressed in terms of the distinction between formal and objective reality. The fundamental reason for this distinction is that consciousness is transcendent, reaches out beyond itself in knowledge, and that this is why objective reality must be postulated. In the case of the soul and of its knowledge of itself the need for such a distinction does not arise, because the soul knows itself by its immediate presence to itself. But unless the objective reality of the ideas be conceded, the soul will remain immured within itself. And the key idea, ensuring transcendence, is the idea of God. Descartes sees that the perfect coincidence of thought and being in the case of the finite consciousness would be tantamount to subjectivism. The transcendence of consciousness is directed not merely towards objects

for consciousness but towards being, and, in the long run, being is not relative to my consciousness, but to God the creator. It is for this reason that God is the ultimate guarantor of the transcendence of consciousness. By his theory of representative ideas Descartes asserts both the immanence and the transcendence of thought. Thought is immanent because, ontologically, all that is required for thought is one with the substance of the soul—ontological immanence. At the same time thought is transcendent because its ideas are representative—representational transcendence. And yet, it is not quite true to say that, ontologically, all that is required for thought is one with the substance of the soul, because the most fundamental condition of the possibility of thought, as of being, in the case of the soul is distinct from it, namely, God. It is because the soul is finite that thought and being cannot perfectly coincide.

Lévinas has some interesting comments on the connection between the position of Descartes and that of contemporary existentialism:

The abandonment of transcendence as conditioned by the idea of the perfect leads to transcendence as characterised by intentionality. There we grasp a new trait of the phenomenological description which announces its irresistible evolution towards a philosophy of existence. The possibility for Cartesian idealism of reconciling in the human subject its finitude with the infinite in which the subject participates by thus emerging, in a certain way, from its finitude, depends on a radical distinction between the being of the subject and its ideas. Though Descartes has defined the thinking subject exclusively through thought, so that for him the self ceases to be if it ceases to think, the self is not purely and simply a thought. How, in fact, can the thinking substance have the idea of the infinite without being itself infinite if existing and thinking coincide? Through the idea of the perfect thought is rooted in the absolute, but the existence of a thought rooted in the absolute is *less* than the absolute, it is only a thought and no more than a thought.—or again, if through the idea of the perfect the existence of thought is founded in being, the fact of being founded is not identical with the fact of being, which goes on in a sphere where limitations exist. The condition of existence is distinct from existence itself. The one is infinite, the other is finite. The important thing is that finite existence in Descartes is not severed from the infinite, and that the link is assured through thought; that the thought, which constitutes the whole existence of the *cogito*, is nevertheless added to that existence which links it to the absolute.

The phenomenological conception of *intentionality* consists, essentially, in identifying thinking and existing. Consciousness does not

32 Cf. I. Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, Die Transzendente Aesthetik, §8, B 71–2.

33 An excellent treatment of the question in Hegel is to be found in N. Rotenstreich, *From Substance to Subject: Studies in Hegel* (The Hague, 1974).

possess thought as the essential attribute of a thing which thinks; it is, if one can say so, substantially thought. Its *œuvre d'être* consists in thinking. It is by referring to the Cartesian conception of thought which we have just analysed, where thought, open to the idea of the perfect, is in the finite being a surplus in respect of what is strictly its finite being, that the radical nature of the Husserlian notion of intentionality can be measured. When Husserl denies that one can say that consciousness exists first of all and then tends towards its object—he asserts, in reality, that the very *existing* of consciousness resides in thinking. Thought has no ontological condition; thought itself is ontology. Thus, Husserlian reservations regarding the Cartesian passage from the *cogito* to the idea of the 'thinking thing' do not flow only from the concern to avoid the 'naturalization' and 'reification' of consciousness. There is question also of disputing a reference in the ontological structure of consciousness to a foundation, to any kind of nucleus which would serve as a scaffolding for intention; there is question of not thinking of consciousness as a substantive.

To say that the act of thinking is for the subject equivalent to the act of existing—and the Husserlian conception is precise on this point—is to modify the very notion of being. Thought is not only an essential attribute of being; to be is to think. Henceforth the transitive structure of thought characterizes the act of being. As thought is thought of something, the verb to be always has a direct complement: I *am* my pain, I *am* my past, I *am* my world. It is evident that in these formulas the verb to be does not play the role of copula. It does not express a relation of attribution, not even an attribution where the attribute would overlap the totality of the subject to the point of identification with it. What one wishes to express in underlining the word in these propositions (as is frequent in contemporary existentialist literature) is the transitive character of this verb, the analogy the word to be must have with the word to think. The act of existing is henceforth conceived as an intention. Certainly, for Husserl, the transitive character is not the only character of thought which henceforth determines existing. All the particular characters of theoretical life appear in Husserl as the structure of being. But it is the transitive character introduced into the notion of being which has permitted the preparation of the notion of existence as it is used since Heidegger, and in France since Sartre.³⁴

34 'L'abandon de la transcendance conditionnée par l'idée du parfait, ramène à la transcendance caractérisée par l'intentionnalité. Nous saisissons là un nouveau trait de la description phénoménologique qui annonce son évolution irrésistible vers une philosophie de l'existence. La possibilité pour l'idéalisme cartésien de concilier dans le sujet humain sa finitude avec l'infini auquel le sujet participe en sortant, ainsi, en quelque façon, de sa finitude, repose sur une distinction radicale

The issues raised by all that we have seen are fundamental, even if obscure. Is there an irreconcilable opposition between substance and subject so that it becomes necessary to decide which of the two should be retained? Or is there question rather of two incomplete but mutually complementary accounts of the human knowing subject which become irreconcilable only through faulty claims made within one or other account, or perhaps even within both?

Certainly, from the point of view of a philosophy of substance, it makes no sense to maintain that the being of the self consists in a relation, the relation of intentionality. Relation of itself is pure reference and can have no being except as dependent upon that which is referred and that to which it is referred. Through conscious activity the self is referred to the non-self, but the self has its own integrity distinct from the non-self, and cannot be dissolved into pure reference. The relation of intentionality pertains, indeed, to the essence of consciousness, and one can agree wholeheartedly with Husserl that it is erroneous to suppose that consciousness might exist first and then tend towards its object, for to be conscious-of is the essence of consciousness, and consciousness is ecstatic. But the doctrine of substance does not commit one to the view criticized by Husserl unless one identifies substance with consciousness and thereby makes consciousness essentially relation to self. Rather, the doctrine of substance makes it possible to explain how the self can be prior to consciousness without giving consciousness any priority in respect of its object. Consciousness is not what profoundly constitutes the being of the self but rather an activity distinct from, if rooted in and emerging from substance. As activity, consciousness is that in and through which a being achieves fulfilment, a self becomes more fully itself, for there is an ontological distance between the finite being and its end.

entre l'être du sujet et ses idées. Bien que Descartes ait défini la substance pensante exclusivement par la pensée et qu'en cessant de penser, le moi pour lui cesse d'être, le moi n'est pas purement et simplement une pensée. Comment, en effet, la substance pensante peut-elle avoir l'idée de l'infini sans être infinie elle-même si exister et penser coïncidaient? Par l'idée du parfait la pensée s'enracine dans l'absolu, mais l'existence d'une pensée enracinée dans l'absolu est *moins* que l'absolu, n'est qu'une pensée, pas plus qu'une pensée.—Ou encore si par l'idée du parfait l'existence de la pensée se fonde dans l'être, le fait d'être fondé ne s'identifie pas avec le fait d'être qui se joue au-dessus, dans une sphère où existent des limites. La condition de l'existence se distingue de l'existence elle-même. L'une est infinie, l'autre finie. L'important c'est que l'existence finie, n'est pas coupée chez Descartes de l'infini et que le lien est assuré par la pensée: que la pensée, qui constitue toute l'existence du cogito s'ajoute cependant à cette existence la rattachant à l'absolu. Par là, l'existence humaine, n'est pas pensée, mais une chose qui pense.

'La conception phénoménologique de l'intentionnalité consiste, essentiellement, à identifier penser et exister. La conscience n'a pas la pensée comme attribut essentiel d'une chose qui pense, elle est, si l'on peut dire, substantiellement pensée. Son *œuvre d'être* consiste à penser. C'est en se référant à la conception cartésienne de la pensée que nous venons d'analyser et où la pensée ouverte sur l'idée du parfait, est dans l'être fini un surplus par rapport à ce qui demeure strictement son être fini, que l'on peut mesurer le radicalisme de la notion husserlienne de l'intentionnalité. Quand Husserl nie que l'on puisse dire que la conscience existe d'abord et tend vers son objet ensuite—il affirme, en réalité, que l'*exister* même de la conscience réside dans le penser. La pensée n'a pas de condition ontologique; la pensée elle-même est l'ontologie. Les

From the point of view of a philosophy of subjectivity and intentionality, on the other hand, it makes no sense to say that the self is radically a substance, because this immediately severs the self from its world and poses the insoluble problem of the bridge. If the phenomenological evidence of the immediacy of transcendence is to be respected, it is impossible to accept the mediation required by the philosophy of substance. Consciousness manifests itself as always immediately and directly involved in its world, as co-constituted by the world in relation to which it is nothing but the pure relation of manifestation.

This conflict at once reveals how Descartes is burdened with the worst of both worlds. Identifying the essence of the soul with consciousness, he anticipates the philosophy of subjectivity and intentionality; but, retaining the doctrine of substance, he creates in a particularly acute form the problem of the bridge. But the problem of the bridge in Descartes arises in this precise form because, having identified consciousness with substance, he has made the subject essentially self-related and is thereby obliged to justify transcendence mediately through the self's awareness of itself. There is no reason to suppose that the same must happen in a different philosophy of substance. The basic claim of direct realism has always been that whatever the ontological mediation in terms of faculties, intentional species etc. required for knowledge, there is no mediation at the level of consciousness. The mediation required by the fact that ontologically the human knower is finite is no impediment to the immediacy of consciousness if the self-relatedness of substance is not imported into the other-relatedness of activity, but should rather be seen as the necessary pre-condition of this other-relatedness. The level of consciousness must not be simply identified with the level of being.

réserve husserliennes sur le passage cartésien du *cogito* à l'idée de la 'chose qui pense' ne découlent donc pas uniquement du souci d'éviter la 'naturalisation' et la 'réification' de la conscience. Il s'agit aussi, dans la structure ontologique de la conscience, de contester un renvoi à un fondement, à un noyau quelconque servant d'ossature à l'intention; de ne pas penser la conscience, comme un substantif.

'Dire que l'acte de penser équivaut, pour le sujet, à l'acte d'exister—et la conception husserlienne est précise sur ce point—c'est modifier la notion même de l'être. La pensée n'est pas seulement un attribut essentiel de l'être; être, c'est penser. Dès lors la structure transitive de la pensée caractérise l'acte d'être. Comme la pensée est pensée de quelque chose, le verbe être a toujours un complément direct: je *suis* ma douleur, je *suis* mon passé, je *suis* mon monde. Il est évident que, dans ces formules, le verbe être ne joue pas le rôle de copule. Il n'exprime pas un rapport d'attribution, pas même une attribution où l'attribut recouvrirait la totalité du sujet jusqu'à s'identifier avec lui. Ce que l'on veut exprimer en soulignant dans ces propositions le mot *est*, (comme cela est fréquent dans la littérature existentialiste contemporaine), c'est le caractère transitif de ce verbe, l'analogie que le verbe être doit présenter avec le verbe penser. L'acte d'exister se conçoit désormais comme une intention. Certes, pour Husserl, la transitivity n'est pas le seul caractère de la pensée qui désormais détermine l'exister. Toutes les particularités de la vie théorique—apparaissent chez Husserl comme structure de l'être. Mais c'est la transitivity introduite dans la notion de l'être, qui a permis de préparer la notion de l'existence telle qu'on l'emploie depuis Heidegger et, depuis Sartre, en France' E. Lévinas, *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris, 1967) 97-9.

The evidence for subjectivity is the immediately given phenomenological evidence, and the exploration of the subject-object relation is a task to be accomplished by the phenomenological analysis. The phenomenological analysis, however, so long as it remains purely phenomenological, never gets beyond the subject in its relation to objectivity or the object in its relation to subjectivity, and the whole philosophical enterprise is situated within the context established by this relation. Being itself can never be more than that which constitutes subject as subject and object as object in the subject-object correlation. The task of ontology begins with reflection on the judgment of existence, which manifests that subjectivity is not merely for objects in their objectivity but for objects in their being, that the ultimate dimension of objects is not objectivity but being—for they are not merely objects but, more radically, they are—that the necessary pre-condition of the relation between subject and object is the co-existence of the being which is subject and the being which is object. And the question of ontology is: what is the being of the things that are in their being? This is the question which, as we saw above, leads to the metaphysical disclosure of substance.

What, then, of the apparently irreconcilable opposition between substance and consciousness to which I referred at the outset? The difficulty against substance as the pre-conscious principle of consciousness may be nothing more than an assertion of the idealist position that consciousness is an absolute first principle, a position inherited from idealism by phenomenology, at least when the latter is accepted as being identical with first philosophy. This assumes, in however implicit a way, that what is distinct from consciousness is necessarily brute, unintelligible and undifferentiated.

The realist tradition finds no grounds for this opposition. Not alone is substance not undifferentiated, but, as the basic principle of being in the order of formal determination, it is the ultimate source of difference. If substance is an absolutely universal principle of being, it is one not by the exclusion of differences, but through the analogical comprehension of differences. To suppose that because substance has priority over consciousness it must be irreconcilable with consciousness is to overlook the fact that it is substance which determines a being in such wise as to orient it towards the exercise of consciousness as its proper end. Finite spiritual substance as such is indeed prior to consciousness, but it is not indifferent or opposed to it; rather it anticipates it as the end for the sake of which it determines being in this particular way. Thus the priority of substance is a priority in the order of the formal determination of being, but consciousness, as activity, has priority in the order of finality. Consciousness is act, but human consciousness is not pure act, but penetrated with determinations which derive ultimately from substance. If my consciousness is mine, it is because it is the conscious activity of my individual being, radically determined as

mine by substance; if it is human, exercised by multiplying and organizing a diversity of conscious acts—diverse not merely numerically but also in kind—in the direction of an ideal of understanding which remains ever distant, it is because it is the consciousness of an embodied mind, determined as such by substance; if it is exercised in the midst of a community of subjects, it is because the very diversity of conscious subjects is made possible by and grounded in the diversity of substance. In this way, substance radically pre-determines the ontological conditions out of which the human conscious subject emerges as an individual conscious subject endowed with a capacity for conscious activity of a determinate kind to be exercised in intersubjectivity. One cannot dispense with these ontological conditions without destroying the foundation of the distinctive conditions of human subjectivity precisely as such. If one retains these conditions which, in any case, are phenomenologically given, they must be incorporated into a subjectivity deprived of its radical principle of differentiation and be made thereby constitutive, not of human subjectivity, but of subjectivity as such. And so, the realist would maintain that subjectivity, far from requiring the rejection of substance, presupposes it as its ultimate foundation.

Substance and the Interiority of Being

I

A regrettable feature of much modern thought is the loss of a metaphysical sense of the interiority of being. This remark may well seem paradoxical in view of the fact that the modern emphasis on consciousness and subjectivity, with its recurrent solipsistic temptations, seems to stamp our age with the sense of interiority as its peculiar characteristic. This, though true as far as it goes, is not entirely free from ambiguity: the real difficulty is whether the modern tendency to identify interiority in the metaphysical sense with the interiority of consciousness does not in the long run so distort the data of the metaphysical question as to destroy the foundations of the interiority of being.

If interiority is simply identified with the interiority of consciousness, then whole regions of the being we call material must be devoid of interiority, unless one is prepared to envisage some form of panpsychism. And if consciousness itself is defined in terms of interiority it becomes sheer return upon itself. But, as contemporary writers since Husserl have emphasized, consciousness is essentially intentional, ecstatic, emergence from self, so that, unless interiority can be given a more ultimate foundation in the being of the self, it is in danger of becoming sheer ecstasis, accompanied perhaps by a sentiment of selfhood, but without any being-a-self to sustain it. Sartre is here more consistent than others.

Existentialism, in fact, is faced with the consequences of a deep conflict. On the one hand it protests against the reduction of the person to an instance of a type or essence, for the essence, by reason of its universality, seems incapable of doing justice to the unique interiority of each individual. At the same time—despite its emphasis on the originality of the person—precisely because it accounts for him in terms of consciousness it must protest against the solipsistic imprisonment of consciousness in a closed interiority, identify consciousness with intentionality or ecstasis, and thereby make the other, the exterior, constitutive of its being. By interpreting man's being as relation by opposition with substance, it accounts for his being in terms of a dynamic involvement with exteriority: man's being, rather than self-insistent or self-identical, is essentially self-transcendent.¹ This holds in its own way also for

¹ Cf. William A. Shearson, 'The Common Assumptions of Existentialist Philosophy', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. XV (1975), no. 2, pp. 131-47, esp. pp. 137-42.

Heidegger, who locates man's being in a relation to being, but in the sense of an openness to the meaning of being rather than in the sense of an original partaking in being which establishes the absolute character of his being in himself.²

The interiority of being, however, is prior to the interiority of consciousness, at least in the case of the consciousness of which we have direct experience. It has some kinship with the transcendental of those fundamental attributes that the mediaevals asserted to be convertible with being itself. The greater the richness of being, the greater the depth of interiority, for being is what is deepest within a thing, and in creating depth it establishes interiority. 'Now existence is more intimately and profoundly interior to things than anything else . . .'³ And if God is the creative cause of being, is He not thereby the source of interiority? For creation is to each thing the gift of what is most intimately its own, the act which alone can give the other its very otherness, the otherness in which it stands forth as itself. Perhaps it is because He dwells in this forgotten interiority that He has been so difficult to find. He dwells in consciousness only when consciousness freely admits Him; He cannot but dwell in that deeper interiority or it would not be at all. *Deus interior intimo meo*.⁴

What is interiority? It is curious that, having outlined the spatial and psychological meanings of the term 'intérieur', Lalande confines his remarks about a metaphysical sense to the term 'extérieur', which, he tells us, signifies 'what exists in itself (or outside us)'.⁵ I find this curious because 'what exists in itself' can be denominated 'exterior' only by reference to another—in this case consciousness—and no attempt is made to draw attention to the interiority expressed by the words 'in itself'. A much older lexicon informs us: 'What is interior or intrinsic pertains to the essence of a thing, and it is opposed to exterior or extrinsic. Thus one kind of form is interior or essential; another kind is exterior or qualitative . . .'⁶ Here interiority is traced back to essence or form. Nor is this a purely archaic and obsolete meaning, for the *Oxford English Dictionary* recognises a sense of 'interior' as signifying 'inner nature or being'.⁷

2 Cf. *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford, pp. 67–8 [Original German edition, p. 42].

3 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia, q.8, a.1, corp. (translation from *Summa theologiae*, translated by T. McDermott, London, 1964, vol. 2, p. 113).

4 Augustine, *Confessiones*, III, 6, 11.

5 'Passant de cette distinction psychologique à une distinction métaphysique, on appelle aussi extérieur (ou hors de nous) ce qui existe en soi . . .' A. Lalande, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 11th ed., Paris, 1972, p. 330, *Extérieur*, F.

6 'Internum seu intrinsecum est de rei essentia, & opponitur externo seu extrinseco. Sic forma alia est interna seu essentialis; alia externa seu qualitativa . . .' *Joh. Michaelii Lexicon philosophicum terminorum philosophis usitatorum* . . . , 2nd ed., 1662 (reprinted by Stern-Verlag Janssen & Co., Düsseldorf, 1966).

7 *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1933 (reprint, 1970), vol. 5, p. 398, Interior, B, 2.

Lalande is surely right in asserting that the fundamental meaning of interiority is derived from 'an intuitive spatial relation which is also expressed by the words *inside* and *outside*'.⁸ And so the term is borrowed from a spatial context where it is used to express the characteristic which distinguishes all that a surface contains from what it excludes. This may indeed be called the fundamental sense in that other meanings find here their starting-point; and yet what this fundamental sense expresses may turn out to be less fundamental in reality than what is expressed by the derivative meanings. Because what is contained may possess a unity which is attributable not simply to the containing surface but to an integrating principle which itself determines the limits of the surface—as, for example, what is 'in' a picture is not simply what the limits of the canvas contain but what the artistic conception determined—we can see that interiority may signify more than a mere spatial relation, and we grasp the possibility of analogical extensions of the term beyond a purely spatial context. We may even apply the term 'interior' in properly non-spatial contexts, as when we speak of what lies within and outside a certain legal competence or beyond the confines of a particular science. Whereas the notion of interiority in the purely spatial sense suggests a centripetal interiority, that which proceeds from a principle has a centrifugal character. And if we acknowledge a diversity of principles: principles of being, such as essence or form, principles of knowledge, principles of art, so much the greater will be the diversity in the meaning of interiority.

It is important for our purposes here to distinguish especially between the interiority of being and the interiority of consciousness. The interiority of being pertains to the unity which has for its principle the existing self: the interiority of consciousness pertains to the unity which has for its principle the knowing self. The two are no more simply identical than existing and knowing are simply identical. Undoubtedly they envelop each other, each including the other according to the proper mode of its own interiority. The interiority of being includes knowledge because it is the existing self that knows and gives thereby to knowledge the being that makes it real. The interiority of knowledge embraces being because in knowing the self returns to itself in a lived experience of self-identity wherein it recognises itself as distinct from all else that is present to it in the interiority of its knowing. From the standpoint of the being of the self all is exterior except for that which derives its being from the existence of the self. From the standpoint of the knowledge of the self all is interior, but in virtue of an interiority that proclaims the priority of being, a priority that requires us to recognise that to embrace whatever it may be in the interiority of knowledge is to relate oneself to its being and not absolutely to constitute it. This is the paradox

8 'Sens fondamental l'intérieur et l'extérieur sont une relation spatiale intuitive qui s'exprime par les mots *dedans*, et *dehors*'. Op. cit., p. 329, *Extérieur*, A.

expressed by Aristotle in his famous remark: 'the soul is in some sense all things.'⁹ The 'in some sense' signifies man's self-transcendence whereby the interiority of his being is perfected through a possession in the interiority of knowledge of all things, his own being as well as all that transcends it. Identify these two interiorities and the existing self must literally become all things or else be dissolved into the pure relation of intentionality which deprives it of its identity. With certain aspects of this dilemma I shall be concerned later. For the moment I shall be concerned with another consequence: to identify the interiority of being and the interiority of consciousness is to see the interiority of being as a property of consciousness and to be obliged to deprive material being of its own proper interiority, to interpret it in terms of sheer exteriority.

II

Two recently-published works, each in a different way, criticize this reduction of material being to sheer exteriority, and although I do not wish to associate the authors with the course of my own reflections, they will not object if I refer to the precise points on which we are agreed.

In his masterly account of the metaphysics of representationalism M. Roger Chambon recalls how the theme of the self-sufficient subject, separated from the world in the isolated possession of its representations, is closely linked with the reduction of nature to extension (what Chambon calls 'la désanimation de la nature') in Galileo and Descartes.¹⁰ Descartes grasped the basic assumption underlying the new physics, an assumption that continued to exercise its influence even when science considered itself to be guided by experiment and observation: the complete expulsion of soul from nature.¹¹ (Not merely, I should say, the expulsion of soul, but, even more radically, the expulsion of all form other than the geometrical). This 'désanimation de la nature' leaves no room in nature for subjectivity, which, consequently, must withdraw into its own isolation. This is the result of the new conception of natural things as lacking any genuinely interior dimension, as deprived of the inner centre out of which they are established in themselves, the source of spontaneity, of movement, of presence.¹² 'Henceforth there is no longer any inherence, any internal vigour, any power (whether in the form of activity in act or in the form of potentiality); there is no longer any real whole (either

⁹ *De anima*, III, 8, 431 b.

¹⁰ Cf. R. Chambon, *Le monde comme perception et réalité*, Paris, 1974, pp. 47 seq.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 55.

¹² 'Un univers désanimé est un univers intégralement déssubjectivé. La déssubjectivation n'est pas obtenue par le seul grattage des "projections" humaines, mais, plus radicalement par l'ablation entière de toute centration interne au sein des êtres naturels. La centration interne, comme foyer de station en soi, de spontanéité, de premier mouvement, d'adestance, disparaît de l'image, nettoyé, du monde.' *Ibid.*, p. 55. Cf. below, note 36 on the term 'adestance'.

at the level of the composite body, or at that of the atom), any "expressive" motion, any quality. In the so-called "inside" of a thing everything is as exterior as in the exteriority of the outside."¹³ Matter, reduced in this way to the sheer exteriority of extension has no principle of internal unity or cohesion, and it must disintegrate into its parts, into the parts of its parts, an endlessly scattered dust.¹⁴ Small wonder if matter, incapable of existing in itself on these terms, becomes in Kant, and especially in the subsequent Idealists, an ideal object dependent on mind for its unity and consistency.¹⁵

Undoubtedly Descartes himself, as well as his first disciples, stoutly maintained the substantial character of matter, but, in the light of Chambon's analysis, it becomes clear why his claim could not indefinitely survive. For substance, at least when it is understood metaphysically, is the first principle of the interiority of being, and to describe what has been deprived of interiority as a substance is nothing short of a contradiction in terms.

Mr. Roy Bhaskar is concerned not with Descartes but with Hume, and, in particular with Hume's account of the relation between cause and effect as a purely exterior relation between constantly concomitant events.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Hume's approach can be traced back through Malebranche to Descartes's elimination of form.¹⁷ For once bodies have been deprived of form they have been deprived of the dynamic structure of nature which orients them by means of natural tendency towards their natural activities, and then it becomes impossible to understand why they act in the determinate and intelligible ways discovered by science. Malebranche's occasionalism attempts to explain the laws of motion as a purely extrinsic imposition of regularities by God: there is no foundation in bodies themselves for the regularities expressed in scientific laws; these regularities are simply relations between events which occur because God in His wisdom has so willed.¹⁸ The Humean theory of causation goes beyond Malebranche by dispensing with God, and interprets causal laws as mere regularities governing the course of events.

Bhaskar's fundamental objection to Hume is that causal laws cannot, even in science, be reduced to the constant conjunction of events because such constant conjunctions are to be found only in experimentally closed conditions. In the open system of the world causal laws are still operative despite the

¹³ 'Dès lors, il n'est plus d'inhérence, plus de force interne, plus de puissance (ni comme activité en acte, ni comme potentialité); plus de totalité réelle (ni au niveau du corps composé, ni à celui de l'atome), plus de mouvement "expressif", plus de qualité. Dans le soi-disant "dedans" d'une chose tout est aussi extérieur que dans l'extériorité du dehors.' *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 58-62.

¹⁶ Cf. Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, Sussex, 1978, p. 18.

¹⁷ Cf. D. Connell, *The Vision in God: Malebranche's Scholastic Sources*, Louvain, 1967, pp. 35-41. On Hume's reading of Malebranche, cf. Richard H. Popkin, 'So Hume did read Berkeley', *Journal of Philosophy* [New York], vol. LXI, pp. 774-778.

¹⁸ Cf. N. Malebranche, *Entretiens sur la métaphysique*, VIII, 10-11; *ibid.*, XIII, 8-9.

fact that the events to which Hume reduces the relata of causal conjunctions may not be, and for the most part are not, constantly conjoined by reason of the intervention of the various influences that have been artificially eliminated in experimental conditions.¹⁹ A causal law, then, cannot be reduced to a constant conjunction of events and must be seen as a tendency in bodies to act in determinate ways which has its origin in the natures of the bodies concerned.²⁰ In this way Bhaskar denies that causal laws are relations between events: they are tendencies towards activity founded in the intrinsic natures of bodies. 'The importance of taxa in science may be expressed by saying that what is non-accidentally true of a thing is true of a thing in virtue of its essential nature. A thing acts, or at least tends to act, the way it is. It should be stressed that the difference between a thing which has the power or tends to behave in a certain way and one which does not is not a difference between what they will do, since it is contingent upon the flux of conditions whether the power is ever manifested or the tendency exercised.'²¹

Both authors, each in his own way, point in the direction which leads metaphysical thought to acknowledge the reality of substance as principle and intrinsic cause of the being of what is precisely as being. Especially interesting is Chambon's remark: 'What has no unity in itself "is" not.'²² For to the metaphysician substance is precisely the principle of being which grounds in each being its unity and interiority.

III

Bergson is perhaps the philosopher who more than any other combined a deep sense of the interiority of the real with an implacable opposition to substance.²³ For Bergson substance cannot be principle of unity and interiority because it cannot be immanent within that which possesses its reality in continuous successive change. This is because he sees substance as absolutely immobile, like the being of Parmenides, something wholly exterior to that which consists in duration.²⁴ Bergson associates the notions of immobility and exteriority, and sees them at work in the procedures of the spatializing practical intellect, which approaches reality from outside in its attempt to control nature.²⁵ It is, by contrast, the special merit of intuition to be able to

19 Cf. R. Bhaskar, op. cit., p. 33.

20 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 49 seq., 202, 205.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

22 'Ce qui est privé d'unité en soi, n'"est" pas.' *Le monde comme perception et réalité*, p. 58. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

23 Cf. *La pensée et le mouvant*, 79th ed., Paris, 1969, pp. 162 seq., 177 seq.

24 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 163.

25 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 30, 33 seq., 84 seq., 166, 181, 211 seq.

penetrate to the real through sympathetic identification with duration.²⁶ Thus he vindicates the interiority of the real in opposition to scientific philosophy, in opposition to that movement deriving from Descartes's reduction of the real to extension, by making duration itself the principle of interiority. It is for this reason above all that he must insist upon the indivisibility of change, even though he finds it necessary to acknowledge a qualitative multiplicity in the reality of internal duration.²⁷ If change, as duration, is to be principle of interiority it cannot itself be affected by the divisibility which makes for exteriority.²⁸ Bergson, however, did not present the indivisibility of duration as a conclusion, but as a principle directly grasped in intuition. This is brought out in his well-known example of the melody.²⁹

I have nothing but profound respect for Bergson's conviction concerning interiority, but I am unhappy when he traces it to continuous successive duration as to its first principle, chiefly because I am convinced that the duration of an ever-changing reality can no more serve ultimately to ground interiority than can extension. The spatial representation of change, so consistently criticized by Bergson, does correspond to something intrinsic to continuous successive change, and far from involving necessarily a distortion of the reality of change, it has its justification within it. It is true that a melody is not an aggregate of notes as represented simultaneously on a music-sheet, but it is equally true that if the melody did not involve a certain exteriority in its successive development it could never lend itself to this precise kind of symbolic representation. There is, for example, a sense in which one can speak of and represent symbolically the statement and development of themes in a symphony in which it would be impossible to speak of the statement and development of the inspiration out of which it originated in the art of the composer: the symphony incorporates a successive multiplicity of parts in a way which one could not consider to be applicable to his inspiration.

The point I am making has frequently been made before: the unity of a melody consists in its being, not indivisible, but undivided.³⁰ If a musical piece were indivisible the members of the orchestra would never be able to distinguish in it the appropriate moments for their entrances and exits.

26 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 85, 95, 181, 213-4.

27 'Qu'est-ce que la durée au-dedans de nous? Une multiplicité qualitative, sans ressemblance avec le nombre; un développement organique qui n'est pourtant pas une quantité croissante; une hétérogénéité pure au sein de laquelle il n'y a pas de qualités distinctes. Bref, les moments de la durée interne ne sont pas extérieures les uns aux autres.' *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, 120th ed., Paris, 1967.

28 'Nous nous représenterons tout changement, tout mouvement, comme absolument indivisibles.' *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 158.

29 Cf. *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 164.

30 Cf. J. Maritain, *Redeeming the Time*, translated by H.L. Binse, London, 1943, p. 67; J. de Boer, 'A Critique of Continuity, Infinity, and Allied Concepts in the Natural Philosophy of Bergson and Russell', in *The Return to Reason*, ed. by John Wild, Chicago, 1953, pp. 111-13.

Granted, then, that change as undivided is a unity pervading a multiplicity of parts, it cannot possess the perfect interiority intended by Bergson when he describes it as indivisible.

In his example, however, Bergson is speaking not so much about the reality itself as about the melody in the consciousness of the hearer, and he seems not to distinguish sufficiently between the interiority of change itself and the interiority of consciousness of change. When the melody has ended the audience applauds. Why? Not to congratulate the melody that has passed away, but the enduring realities that made its passage possible through the established habits of their art, the qualities of their chosen instruments, their co-ordinated grasp of an interpretation which has envisaged the melody in its wholeness and directed their behaviour throughout the performance. The melody is not a reality subsisting in itself but proceeds from a multiplicity of co-ordinated sources, and any adequate account of its reality would call for a highly complex explanation which, in the case of the musicians and their instruments, returns us to the question of substance. Yet, because the hearer can abstract from all this he can attend to the melody as if its reality were separate; but in this case he must recognise that the unity it now possesses precisely as heard is the unity of his own consciousness concentrated through selective attention upon the music in the exercise of perception, anticipation and memory. The mode of being of the music itself is not identical with its mode of being precisely as heard. To speak of a melody is to envisage it as a whole. But it does not exist as a whole except through the hearer's retention and anticipation throughout the process of its becoming. To be whole is to be complete, but in the moment of its completion the melody has passed through all its stages and disappeared. It is the hearer who saves it from the pure flux of its passage through the unity of his own subjectivity, concentrated through his attention upon its becoming. And if the hearer's own duration is to be interpreted after the manner of the melody, what takes the place of the hearer in his case?³¹ There is here a twofold temptation. The first is to confuse the unity of change with the unity of consciousness and to conceive all reality according to the model of the unity of consciousness.³² The second is to forget that the unity of consciousness itself refers us back to the more ultimate unity of the being of the conscious subject. I am far from satisfied that Bergson avoided these temptations.

³¹ 'Mais la vérité est qu'il n'y a ni un substratum rigide immuable ni des états distincts qui y passent comme des acteurs sur une scène. Il y a simplement la mélodie continue de notre vie intérieure,—une mélodie qui se poursuit et poursuivra, indivisible, du commencement à la fin de notre existence consciente. Notre personnalité est cela même.' *La pensée et le mouvant*, p. 166.

IV

The basic metaphysical issue in the background of Bergson's philosophy is the reconciliation of being and becoming. Like Parmenides he sees them as opposed and irreconcilable, and although he opts for becoming, his view of being as static and immobile is not essentially different from that of Parmenides. There is no reason to suppose that Bergson had Parmenides in mind. Much closer to him was the scientific philosophy described by Chambon, and especially 'what Alain, as a good Cartesian, curiously called the idea of existence ("curiously" because "the idea of existence" seems rather to be its negation).'³³ Chambon illustrates his point by quoting the words of Alain: 'And this idea consists in this, that no material thing as such has an interior and proper nature, but, on the contrary, every material thing is absolutely dissolved into its parts, and into the parts of its parts, each of them having no property but the modifications it receives from its neighbours, and gradually from all.'³⁴ And further: 'The thing taken in itself, a bare existence, amounts to this that none of its parts is ever anything in itself, but, on the contrary, the whole of the thing is exterior, so that the smallest part is what it is only through the flux, the friction, the pressure of other things.'³⁵

This is the reduction of being to what Chambon calls scientific objectivity, and which he defines as follows: 'Objectivity defined in the scientific sense is the refined and residual objectivity of the "objectivity postulate", of objects devoid of projects, of the "univers-grand-objet", that which radically excludes every dimension of interiority, of animation, of presence at the heart of nature, and institutes the pure reign of things, the world of mechanism and chance.'³⁶ 'A pure object (Alain's bare existence) is strictly identical with the

³² 'La conscience que nous avons de notre propre personne, dans son continuel écoulement, nous introduit à l'intérieur d'une réalité sur le modèle de laquelle nous devons nous représenter les autres.' *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³³ 'C'est ce qu'Alain, en bon cartésien, appelait curieusement l'idée de l'existence ("curieusement", car cette "idée de l'existence" paraît plutôt en être la négation) . . .' *Le monde comme perception et réalité*, p. 56.

³⁴ 'Et cette idée consiste en ceci, qu'aucune chose matérielle, comme telle, n'a une nature intérieure et propre, mais qu'au contraire toute chose matérielle est absolument dissoute en ses parties et en les parties, de ses parties, chacune d'elles n'ayant propriété que les modifications qu'elle reçoit des voisines et, de proche en proche, de toutes.' Cf. Alain, *pseud.* (Chartier, A.), *Les passions et la sagesse*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade [1960], p. 944. Chambon's quotation contains slight modifications of the text. Cf. *Le monde comme perception et réalité*, p. 56. I give the original text.

³⁵ 'La chose réduite à elle, ou l'existence nue, c'est que jamais aucune de ses parties n'est quelque chose en soi, mais qu'au contraire tout de la chose est extérieure, de façon que la plus petite partie n'est à chaque moment ce qu'elle est, que par le flux, le frottement, la pression de toutes les autres choses.' *Les passions et la sagesse*, p. 944.

³⁶ 'L'objectivité précisée dans le sens scientifique, c'est toujours l'objectivité épurée et résiduelle du "postulat d'objectivité", des objets sans projets, de l'univers-grand-objet, celle qui exclut radicalement toute dimension d'intériorité, d'animation, d'adestance, du sein de la nature, et institue le pur règne des choses, le monde de la mécanique et du hasard.' *Le monde comme*

spatio-temporal extension of "its" parts, external to one another.³⁷ Matter, associated in this way with the idea of bare existence is 'purely actual, wholly inert and exterior, without any internal possibility of individualizing local centredness, of spontaneous motion from within, of presence in the sense of presence-to.'³⁸

I may be pardoned these lengthy quotations because they present a constellation of ideas which associates existence and actuality with exteriority and immobility and which consequently may throw light upon the question of being as it presents itself in the philosophy of Bergson. Certainly with any such interpretation of being it would be imperative to reject the primacy of being in favour of the becoming or duration in which Bergson finds anew interiority and spontaneity. From the properly metaphysical point of view, however, it remains always necessary to safeguard the priority of being. Being and becoming are not identical because, as Parmenides saw, nothing changes precisely in so far as it is. To be, precisely as such, is to be beyond becoming because becoming is coming to be. But that the actuality of being precisely as such does not reduce it to the exteriority and inertia of Cartesian matter is sufficiently indicated by Aristotle's conclusions concerning pure act as the interiority of the life of perfect intelligence. I agree entirely with Chambon's point when he describes Alain's idea of existence as rather its negation.

If nothing changes precisely in so far as it is, it may still be open to change, not in so far as it is, but in virtue of an orientation towards what it is capable of being. Being, as Aristotle discovered, has many meanings; it embraces the potential as well as the actual. Here we have a fundamental reason why Aquinas concluded that in every finite being existence is necessarily other than essence. For no finite being is immutable, exempt from openness to change. If it changes, this cannot be in so far as it is, but only to the extent that, being *what* it is, it is never fully what it can be, but in

perception et réalité, 'h. 40. I have translated both here and above (cf. note 12) the word "adestance" as presence. It has a richer meaning for Chambon, which he explains as follows: "L'adestance est présence actuelle au double sens du terme, présence dans le jour du moment, présence 'en acte', actuellement opérante. L'adestance est irréductible à la seule recension de ce qui fut, effectivement et factuellement, présenté. La présence, vécue au présent (non repensée au 'parfait') est une présence irriguée de 'puissance'. Par puissance, il faut entendre ici, non seulement la 'potentialité', au sens aristotélicien, mais aussi la force pleinement actuelle, par laquelle, précisément, du possible se trouve présentement, et selon un certain *tempo*, actualisé. L'adestant habite la scène de l'actualité, mais, étant, par principe, non intégralement actualisé, il est impossible de faire figurer le tout de sa réalité sur cette scène comme quelque chose qui y serait circonscriptible." Ibid., p. 33.

37 'Tout objet pur (l'existence "nue" [!] d'Alain) est rigoureusement identique à l'étalement spatio-temporel de "ses" parties extérieures les unes aux autres.' Ibid., p. 59.

38 'Le naturalisme matérialiste ... est l'inversion du monisme "métaphysique" ... Mais dans les deux cas, dans les deux thèses adverses, la matière est entendue et posée de même façon: selon l'idée de "l'existence nue", purement actuelle, toute d'inertie et d'extériorité, sans possibilité interne de centration locale individualisante, de mouvement endogène spontané, de présence au sens de l'adestance.' Ibid., p. 63.

various ways is capable of being other. Since its essence opens it out to the possibility of change we cannot simply identify its essence with its existence without having to say that it changes in so far as it is.³⁹ This is where the role of substance in the composition of finite being manifests a crucial aspect of its importance. For substance is essence, *ousia*, in the most fundamental sense. For the metaphysician, it is substance or essence as really other than the act of existence that ultimately founds the very possibility of change and process in being. This is not, as is so often assumed, because it is required in order to supply the relative permanence demanded by the continuity of change, but more radically still because being primarily is act, beyond the possibility of change, and can admit it only through the composition of the act of being with a mode, an *ousia*, that establishes the distinct identity of the composite and opens it out to the horizons of its becoming. It is through substance that being can admit within itself the flux of change; it is from substance that it derives the interiority of its identity, its selfhood, throughout the phases of its becoming.

No doubt, certain fluctuations in the notion of substance, entirely legitimate when properly understood, have been responsible for confusions that have given rise to difficulty. Sometimes substance is taken to signify the individual in the concrete entirety of its reality. In this sense substance is itself the constantly changing individual, and all its changes are intrinsic to it. Far from being immobile, substance in this sense endures in perpetual flux. Sometimes substance is taken to signify the species or genus to which the individual belongs. This is the universal, which enjoys the immutability of a concept which abstracts from the *hic et nunc*.⁴⁰ Metaphysically, however, substance is the cause and principle which enables a being to be through the fundamental identity it establishes, giving it the selfhood in which it stands forth in itself and as itself in the midst of the changes in which its being is accomplished.⁴¹ To say of it in this sense that it does not change is to acknowledge it as source and principle; but to say that it is exterior to change is to forget that it is a principle of being that incorporates the potentiality which orients a being towards what it can be, creating the distance traversed through change and activity.

These three senses, though distinct, are nevertheless interrelated and complementary. If the individual is a substance that is because, possessing in virtue of its substantial principle the intrinsic unity of a distinct identity in being, it is thereby rendered capable of standing forth in itself as itself, and

39 The essential point in these reflections is present, at least implicitly, in the argument of Aquinas that no finite substance can be identical with the act of being because finite substance necessarily includes potentiality. Cf. *Summa theologiae*, I a, q. 54, a. 1.

40 These two senses are distinguished by Aristotle in *Categories*, V, 1 b.

41 'Since a substance, then, is a principle and a cause, let us proceed from here.' Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. by H. G. Apostle, Bloomington, 1966, VII, 17, 1041 a.

of appropriating to itself the resources of its being and activity. If we speak of the species as substance that is because it signifies the individual indeterminately according to the abstract mode of conceptual knowledge and in the light of the fundamental determination in being which is the proper effect of the substantial principle. The mediaevals showed the subtlety of their realism when they distinguished between essence and quiddity.⁴² The essence or substance is the metaphysical principle which lies at the origin of being: the quiddity is the determination which is the proper effect of essence, in so far as it is expressed through the indirect approach of an abstracting intelligence, in touch with reality by means of the senses. However determinately we succeed in identifying what something is, we are not justified in claiming to have laid bare its essence: essence always retains for our knowledge an interior richness and mystery which we are invited to explore but can never claim to have exhausted. Too many caricatures of substance have mistaken the sketch for the content. Essence or substance is that hidden intrinsic origin out of which a being emerges in possession of its being and maintains itself as itself throughout the vicissitudes of its development.

V

The account of substance I have just outlined has frequently been criticized as cosmological, third-personal, ontic in the Heideggerian sense, and quite foreign to the allegedly more ultimate treatment of the question of being which seeks the meaning of being through a phenomenology of our human presence to being in consciousness. Man is not a substance, it is said, but an intentional relation to the world, a clearing for the manifestation of being. I shall not delay to quarrel with the term 'cosmological', which betrays a complete failure to grasp the distinction between the properly metaphysical preoccupation with the question of being as such and the cosmological enquiry into the principles of being as sensible and changing. Nevertheless the reason for the confusion and the reproach is to be found in the metaphysical insistence that consciousness is subordinate to being, not merely through its intentional openness to being, but more radically in that the very interiority of consciousness is subordinate to the interiority of being: the knowing subject intentionally related to being is more radically the existing subject for whom consciousness is his proper activity. The phenomenological question remains

⁴² In using the distinction between essence and quiddity I have followed a line of thought developed by L. B. Geiger, but without wishing to commit him to the details of my conclusions. I refer especially to two deeply perceptive articles, 'Philosophies de l'essence et philosophies de l'existence' and 'De l'unité de l'être', both reprinted in *Philosophie et spiritualité*, 2 vols, Paris, 1963, vol. 1, pp. 53-86. I would draw attention particularly to the subtle presentation of the nature of the Concept, pp. 60 seq.

at the level of intentional activity; the metaphysical question penetrates to the being of the existing subject.

The disagreement to which I have just referred is vast in its implications and there can be no question of discussing it here at length. The rejection of the substantial character of man's reality, however, has frequently been summed up in the claim that man is identical with his history, and I shall devote the remainder of this article to the task of bringing out the importance of substance for the interiority of man's historical being.

'A person is what he does, he is his expression, he is his life, he is his history. He exists nowhere else. The basic identity of a person and his history is universally true . . .'⁴³ In this way a recent writer expresses the view which has come to be so widely accepted not merely in philosophy but also in theology, a kind of twentieth century *vérité de La Palice*. And yet it is highly questionable.

The claim that a person is his history has a certain validity in the sense that his history is the actuality in which he lives the uniqueness of his personal being and attains the degree of separateness that sets him finally apart from every other. Already in the maternity ward twins are established each in his own personal being, even if in the eye of the beholder there is little to distinguish them other than the quite impersonal circumstances of their separate spatial positions. Seventy years later, however close and constant the harmony that has united them, each has affirmed his personal being throughout a history of his own incommunicable shaping. Clearly, whoever would wish to know about either of these two will concentrate upon his history, the actuality in which his uniqueness may be discerned. To suggest that what radically constitutes him in his personal being is anterior to his history looks, at least superficially, like returning to the maternity ward in order to view him merely as a spatially separate instance of the abstraction 'man'. This is the abuse roundly condemned as essentialism.

Essentialism, indeed, regards the individual as a concrete instantiation of an abstraction because, having given priority to the logical over the real, it has confused the abstract conceptual expression of the quiddity formed by the process of abstraction with the substantial essence, the ultimate source of determination in being, and thereby lost sight of the mysterious richness of essence which lies at the intrinsic origin of the concretely existing subject. Those who accept the fundamental principle of essentialism by attributing priority to the order of knowledge, and have in consequence confused ways of being with abstract ways of knowing, can return to the concrete only by eliminating essence, identifying being with activity, and presenting their view as existential. To say that what most fundamentally constitutes a man in his

⁴³ Marsh, T., 'Soteriology Today', *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 46 (1979), no. 3, p. 146.

personal being is anterior to his history bears none of the implications of essentialism for a metaphysics which, starting with the priority of being over knowledge, has learned to subject the products of abstraction to the measure of being, and, concerning itself with an enquiry into the principles of being, understands by anteriority something more ultimate than chronological precedence.

It is obviously true that to someone who asks about a particular person one says very little if one explains that he is a man. That, like being itself, belongs to the taken-for-granted presuppositions of the question, although none the less important in itself for that reason. (One says something indispensable, for example, if, wishing to talk about Nero, one begins by explaining that Nero is one's pet dog.) An account of a particular person will turn to his career. Undoubtedly he was a man, and this can be taken for granted; it raises no issues peculiar to his case precisely because, incapable of intuitive penetration of his singular essence, we express it inadequately in the abstract quiddity which delimits the basic determinations universally predicable of all men. We overlook the fact that his essence is not simply the ultimate principle of such determinations, but the intrinsic cause of his being, the principle of that selfhood through which he subsists in the possession of such determinations, the source of the interiority which founds the in-itselfness of his being, and penetrates not merely his essential determinations but the whole process of his life and activity as well, ensuring the unity and integration of his entire reality. What is essential to the human person as such does nothing in our eyes to distinguish one individual from another, and yet for each person his essence is the ground of all that renders him unique because it is the intrinsic cause of the being which establishes him in himself according to the basic determinations through which he emerges as himself with a personal task to be undertaken under the direction of the freedom he enjoys precisely as a person. It may perhaps be difficult to accept that for each person his essence is the ground of all that renders him unique, but only, I believe, if one has identified the essence with the abstract quiddity and failed to appreciate that in the order of being the essence is the intrinsic cause and principle of individual being, determined according to a mode of being which, though common to many, has reality only as individual. Individuality is not a determination amongst others capable of lending itself to quidditative expression, but the primordial condition of the orientation of essence to being.

A person's history proceeds from the inner resources of his personal being: it is what he makes of these resources in the circumstances in which he finds himself as a person present with others and before God, with a personal destiny to pursue through his relations with them in the world that brings them together. My history is integral to, it intertwines with, a network of ever-wider histories, of family, local community, nation and people and race. What

makes my history mine, unique and personal, is that I enter into and actualize it through my activity. If I am simply identical with my history nothing can prevent my being absorbed in the wider whole which is immanent in my activity and constitutive of it. Unless there is a self metaphysically prior to activity there is no principle to integrate this activity into the unity of the distinct and separate personal whole I call myself. It is in the exercise of my freedom that I am aware of my responsibility, that it is I myself who choose and must answer, if only to myself, for the choice I make. Freedom is released in the encounter of self with self, in that achievement of self-presence in which a person discovers his being as his own, present indeed to the world, but utterly distinct in its separation from all that is other, inalienably his own. This is the being that establishes him in himself and gives the character of indisputable reality to his whole life's experience, the being that sets him somehow apart, creating the distance he overcomes in going out to the other. Freedom is active self-possession in the control a person exercises over his decisions, but it is not self-creation. His being is always already there, placed in his hands, but not by his own decision: he did not give himself existence, nor does he at any moment give himself existence. His existence is the condition of the possibility of his choosing, not its outcome. Existence is more ultimate than freedom.

'When we live with people whom we believe to be possessed of high moral or intellectual qualities, who have done brave deeds or said wise things, our ordinary daily intercourse with them has a wonderful charm, as we feel that there is in them a great reserve of superior power.'⁴⁴ A man is not just what he does, but the source, the abundant source, of what he does. Deeper than the deed lies the disposition, deeper than the disposition the being it enhances or distorts, and deepest of all the act of being whereby he stands forth as himself in the possession of the resources that constitute his endowment, given or acquired. It is not indeed essential to know much of a man to respect him as a person.⁴⁵ The Samaritan is praised because his compassion embraced

44 A. Vonier, *The Collected Works of Abbot Vonier*, 3 vols., London, 1952, vol. 1, p. 158.

45 'As a matter of fact, although the call that brings forth radical love is usually mediated by knowledge of certain qualities or acts, we find that we can and do respond to those who are known to us only as human beings in a situation, without seeing them act or having knowledge of their qualities. For instance, suppose I come upon a traffic accident and see only someone lying crumpled on the ground, or suppose I hear about some person, otherwise unknown to me, who is suffering or in danger. My response can be love of the other as a radical end without knowledge or concern about his qualities. I do not know whether he is morally good or evil, a savant or a boor. I can, without any such knowledge, respond to him as a person, as someone who is of inestimable value for himself and in himself. As a consequence, my radical love issues in radical love for him, for and in himself, and so in acts to help him. If the situation in which I come upon a person or about which I hear is a joyful one, I can find myself rejoicing over the other's well-being, with a joy which is for him, for himself and in himself as a person. To say that I have to have some experience of his qualities in order to love him, is a completely arbitrary, a priori limitation put upon love to make it fit an assumed definition.' J. Toner, *The Experience of Love*, Washington-Cleveland, 1968, pp. 103-4.

a person lying by the roadside, about whose history he knew nothing except what a glance could deduce from his condition. It was not with a history that the Samaritan was concerned,—the fact that the victim was clearly a Jew did not weigh with him—but with the person, whatever his history might have been. In loving a person one does not love a history: one may always say 'I love you in spite of what you have done', but love is never justified in saying 'I shall love you until . . .' When one looks on the still features of a departed friend one does not simply mourn the end of a history but the loss of a presence.

No man is just what he does. Undoubtedly, unless he acts he cannot develop or mature, he produces nothing from the stuff of which he is made, he does not reveal himself. Yet to find oneself on terms of intimacy with a person such as the one described in the quotation above is to appreciate that one is in the presence of unfathomed resources which, however manifested by the contingency of circumstances, still hold reserves on which one could draw did the occasion arise. He is the one on whom one can count, to whom one can always turn, who will not be found wanting. And yet, he is especially the one whose actions cannot be calculated in advance, as if to know him was to have passed beyond the point where wonder has ceased. All this one knows from what he has done, but what he has done has no more converted into action without remainder all that he is than the works of the great artist can exhaust the genius that gave them birth. Deep within him is the silent actuation of the being from which all proceeds, the being that establishes the presence of his incomparable uniqueness. 'One comes to know a man only through friendship.'⁴⁶ One comes to know him only by awakening to that presence, by drawing close in the presence that establishes the proximity of his being. To say that a man is his history, that he is his expression, that he is what he does, is to destroy the wonder of his being, to stretch him out on a surface without depth. This is the exteriorization of personal being, comparable with the exteriorization of matter in the Cartesianism we considered above. Nor is this surprising, for it was Descartes who first proposed the reduction of spiritual substance to activity when he identified the essence of the soul with thought.

In a moment of discouragement a man may indulge the wish that he was somebody else, somebody whose good fortune or personal qualities he envies or admires. The real object of his wish is that he could be himself being the other, for unless he could remain himself in being the other the fulfilment of his wish would make no difference apart from his own suppression. The other, after all, is already there, and if he is not to enjoy the advantages of being the other he leaves the other as he is and merely eliminates himself.

⁴⁶ ' . . . nemo nisi per amicitiam cognoscitur . . . ' Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus*, LXXI, 5-6.

But the wish to be himself being the other is evidently insincere because it is a wish to possess the inalienable centre of being and source of activity which constitutes the other as irreducibly other, which makes it impossible that the other should be except as the separate and distinct person he is. No doubt, a man may wish he possessed all that the other possesses with the exception of this principle of uniqueness and interiority: he may wish he had done the kind of things the other has done, acquired such qualities as he admires in the other, made for himself a similar history. But here the wish is confined to imitation. If he cannot possess identically the other's possessions it is because they are what they are through the immanence within them of the other's personal being.

There is one way in which one may in a sense be and live in one's own immanence the being of another, and that is through the union of love. But in creatures the union accomplished in love is a union that is realised and lived in the duality of their separate being. I can be the other in my love, but not in the root and origin of my being. In loving another I do not cease to be myself, nor do I suppress the other's originality. Love is the perfection of unity in an existential duality. Christian faith confesses that in God the Persons are simply one in being, the infinite being of the Godhead, and distinct in the relations that constitute them as Persons. In creatures being is a limited and divided endowment: it creates the primordial separation that can never be eliminated even though in the person it is open to compensation in the secondary order of knowledge and love.⁴⁷ Within each is the metaphysical ground of the limitation that creates separation, a separation that could be eliminated only at the cost of destruction. To be myself is to be my limited and uniquely separate self. Even in my love I do not cease to be myself any more than the other ceases to be the other. Rather my going out to the other enables me to be more fully myself. Reflection on this profoundly mysterious capacity for love is one of the approaches that convince the metaphysician that the principle determining the creature's being, namely substance, can never be identical with the activity of his love.⁴⁸

Substance is the interior principle out of which anything articulates its own determinate being in the concentration and separateness which constitute

⁴⁷ To describe the order of knowledge and love in the creature as secondary is to say that metaphysically they pertain to the order of accident as distinct from substance. This may seem to imply a reduction of their metaphysical value. On the contrary, it is but a recognition of the richness of knowledge and love which is such that they could not be simply identical with the being of the creature. The creature's being is finite, but knowledge and love, by reason of their all-inclusiveness, have a certain infinity. Cf. 'Substance and Subject', above, pp. 25-42, esp. 28 ff. Moreover, knowledge and love, as the proper activities of the person, for the sake of which the person exists, have priority in the order of finality.

⁴⁸ Cf. M.-D. Philippe, *L'Être: Recherche d'une philosophie première*, 2 vols, Paris, 1972, vol. 1, pp. 400-2.

a self. Like the inspiration in which is the thought that guides a fundamental expression destined for a ceaseless unfolding and growth that will remain ever faithful to itself, substance brings each time to being a new and unprecedented articulation, a new self, destined to accomplish in the energy of its being the wealth of activity in which it will remain ever faithful to itself. It is the interior origin from which proceeds, by which is established, the patrimony in which subsists a self, no more identifiable apart from the self it constitutes than the inspiration apart from its substantial expression. It is the origin of identity, the origin out of which anything proceeds as itself. It lies at the source of the interiority of being.

Father Lonergan and the Idea of Being

I

A basic theme in the philosophy of Father Bernard Lonergan is his identification of the idea of being with God.

By an 'idea' is meant the content of an act of understanding; hence the idea of being is the content of the act that understands being; as being is unrestricted, so the act must be unrestricted. The idea of being, then, is the divine essence *qua species intelligibilis* of divine understanding.¹

In *Insight* Father Lonergan distinguishes between ideas and concepts. Concepts proceed from acts of understanding, and, since an idea is the content of an act of understanding, it is prior to the concepts which proceed from this act. Moreover, ideas would seem to be richer than concepts, for the one content of an act of understanding is expressed in a multiplicity, in some cases even in an infinity, of concepts.²

Since being is unrestricted, the act of understanding being and the content of this act, the idea of being, must likewise be unrestricted: 'Knowledge of what being is cannot be had in anything less than an act of understanding everything about everything'.³ The act of understanding being, one might perhaps add, would be the intelligible source of what could only be expressed in the totality of all possible concepts; it would afford an a priori knowledge of everything about everything. This is impossible in the case of man.

If the idea of being is beyond man's capacity one cannot attribute to him the concept of being, for such a concept would have to express the content of the all-inclusive act of understanding.

In '*Insight: Preface to a Discussion*' Father Lonergan develops his view in the light of the metaphysics of St Thomas. God alone is *ens per essentiam*, but in this life he is not an immediate object of our knowledge. At present we can have immediate knowledge only of *entia per participationem*. We cannot, therefore, acquire our intellectual knowledge of being by abstracting the essence of being from the immediate objects of our present knowledge. 'No

1 'Cognitive Structure', in *Collection* (London 1967), p. 231, note 1.

2 Cf. *Insight* (London 1957), pp. 14, 647.

3 *Insight*, p. 643.

being by participation can yield us a knowledge of the essence of being, because no being by participation has the essence of being; and what is true of essence, equally is true of quiddity, nature, species, and form'.⁴

This fact, Father Lonergan contends, raises a problem, since it is precisely the apprehension of essence that differentiates intellect from sense. For if in this life we do not grasp the essence of being, we have to explain how 'we can have any intellectual notion, any intellectual concept, any intellectual knowledge of being'.⁵ More precisely still 'how is it that we have precisely such an intellectual notion of being that (1) we can conceive the *ens per essentiam* and (2) we can pronounce the only beings that we do know directly to be merely *entia per participationem*?'⁶

But, not merely do we not grasp the essence of God, it is only rarely, imperfectly, doubtfully that we know material essences. And so, if intellect is to be characterized by knowledge of essence, it is necessary to conceive knowledge as a dynamic process which aims at knowledge of essence as an end, as 'the objective of a natural desire'.⁷ According to St Thomas, this natural desire reaches out to include even God.

By such reasoning I was led in *Insight* to affirm that our natural intellectual desire to know was a natural intellectual desire to know being. The desire, precisely because it is intelligent, is a notion. But the notion is not any innate idea or concept or knowledge. It is a desire for ideas, for concepts, for knowledge but, of itself, it is merely discontented ignorance without ideas, without concepts, without knowledge.⁸

For what might be called a static concept of being, therefore, Father Lonergan substitutes a dynamic notion. Like Malebranche, he identifies the idea of being with God, but whereas Malebranche believed that we have the idea of being and that consequently we must see all things in God, Father Lonergan denies that we know God immediately in this life and that consequently we can have the idea of being. All that Malebranche included in his idea of being Father Lonergan includes in his notion, but whereas for Malebranche the content of the idea is the object of actual, though confused, knowledge, for Father Lonergan the notion of itself is empty of content, it is blind. Father Lonergan's notion, therefore, is not the presentation of a content or contents, but rather their anticipation; it is the urge of the mind towards the search for contents and ultimately for the immediate knowledge of God. For both Malebranche and Father Lonergan all our knowledge is grounded in

4 'Insight: Preface to a Discussion', in *Collection*, p. 156.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 157.

8 Ibid. Cf. *Insight*, pp. 520-1.

the vision of God, but whereas for Malebranche this vision is already possessed for Father Lonergan it is as yet only anticipated.

For the idea or concept of being, therefore, Father Lonergan substitutes a dynamic notion of being, which is nothing other than the pure desire to know. It is not a grasp of what being is but the natural orientation of the mind towards the knowledge of being. Since we cannot know at present what being is, we must be content to define being indirectly by saying that it is the objective of the pure desire to know.⁹ Whatever we know or ever will know in consequence of the fulfilment of this desire is being.¹⁰ Thus we can form the heuristic notion of being as whatever is to be known through those intellectual operations whereby the pure desire to know moves towards fulfilment, namely, intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation.¹¹

Insight is an extensive and painstaking study of the dynamic process of knowledge and of the conclusions that follow from it for a determination of the object of knowledge. The dynamic process of knowledge manifests itself as a three-level structure composed of sensible presentation, intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. Sensible presentation stimulates intelligent inquiry through questions of the form *quid est?* and achieves its object in the intelligent grasp or insight from which proceed concepts—acts of defining, supposing, considering.¹² But the question *an est?* arises, only to achieve its object through reasonable reflection by the affirmation of a virtually unconditioned in judgment.¹³ The 'yes' to the question for reflection is the affirmation of being.¹⁴ In judgment our knowledge attains a complete increment and being is to be known by the totality of true judgments.¹⁵ Thus, the pure desire to know is structured; through questions for intelligence and questions for reflection it proceeds from the sensibly given through intelligent grasp and reasonable reflection to affirmations, in the totality of which it would achieve its full realisation. Constitutive of the pure desire to know is the intention of being, and so the relationship to being is immediate in the notion of being, but only mediate in the activities of knowing, that is, in so far as these activities achieve the goal of the desire.¹⁶

One important conclusion from the analysis of this structure is the isomorphism of knowing and being, in which Father Lonergan grounds his metaphysics. If we cannot know directly what being is we cannot base a metaphysics upon a grasp of what being is. But since being is what is to be

9 Cf. *Insight*, p. 348.

10 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 356.

11 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 642.

12 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 271-5.

13 Cf. *ibid.*

14 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 357.

15 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 350.

16 Cf. 'Cognitive Structure', in *Collection*, pp. 235-6.

known through the exercise of the pure desire to know, the isomorphism between the structure of knowledge and the structure of being offers indirectly a mode of access to the traditional metaphysical problems. 'For knowledge and known, if they are not an identity, at least stand in some correspondence and, as the known is reached only through knowing, structural features of the one are bound to be reflected in the other.'¹⁷

II

The foregoing brief sketch will be sufficient to enable us to pose some questions to which Father Lonergan's position gives rise. The fundamental issue concerns the order of priority between being and knowledge, *ens* and *verum*, *esse* and *intelligere*.

A first point, then, is that intelligibility is not extrinsic but intrinsic to being. By intelligibility is meant what is to be known by understanding. By the intrinsic intelligibility of being is meant that being is precisely what is so known or, in negative terms, that being is neither beyond the intelligible nor apart from it nor different from it.

Now if by being one means the objective of the pure desire to know, the goal of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, the object of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, then one must affirm the intrinsic intelligibility of being. For one defines being by its intelligibility; one claims that being is precisely what is known by understanding correctly; one denies that being is anything apart from the intelligible or beyond it or different from it, for one's definition implies that being is known completely when there are no further questions to be answered.¹⁸

Moreover, since we define being by its relation to intelligence, necessarily our ultimate is not being but intelligence.¹⁹

The term 'the intelligibility of being' is ambiguous. It may refer to the relationship of being to intellect by reason of which being is the object of the intellect. But it may also refer to the content which being offers to the intellect as object of intellect. If we identify these two, as Father Lonergan seems to do in the texts just quoted, then we shall imply that the intelligibility of being, in the sense of the content which being offers to the intellect as object of intellect, is the intelligibility of being, in the sense of the relationship by

¹⁷ *Insight*, p. 115. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 497, 525.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 677.

reason of which being is capable of being understood. In other words, what we understand about being is first and foremost its relationship to our knowledge; what formally constitutes being *quoad nos*, that in terms of which it is defined, is its relationship to the intellect as its object.

Whatever the intrinsic merits of this view, there can be little doubt that it contradicts the teaching of St Thomas.

Dicendum quod, cum dicitur quod ens non potest apprehendi sine ratione veri, hoc potest dupliciter intelligi. Uno modo, ita quod non apprehendatur ens, nisi ratio veri assequatur apprehensionem entis. Et sic locutio habet veritatem. Alio modo posset sic intelligi, quod ens non posset apprehendi, nisi apprehenderetur ratio veri. Et hoc falsum est. Sed verum non potest apprehendi, nisi apprehendatur ratio entis: quia ens cadit in ratione veri. Et est simile sicut si comparemus intelligibile ad ens. Non enim potest intelligi ens, quin ens sit intelligibile; sed tamen potest intelligi ens, ita quod non intelligatur eius intelligibilitas. Et similiter ens intellectum est verum: non tamen intelligendo ens, intelligitur verum.²⁰

Being cannot be understood unless it be related to the intellect as its object; but it is not this relationship to the intellect which is first understood about being.

Father Lonergan maintains that we do not know what being is, but he has no doubt that we do or can know what understanding is.

The last phrase has the ring of a slogan and, happily enough, it sums up the positive content of this work. *Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.*²¹

But if we cannot know what being is on the grounds that the essence, or quiddity, or nature, or species, or form of being is not to be found in the beings of our experience, can we understand what understanding is? And if we say that we can, are we supposing that the essence of understanding is to be found in us? Exactly the same relationship obtains between *ens per participationem* and *ens per essentiam* as obtains between *intelligere per participationem* and *intelligere per se subsistens*.²² Now, if we are reduced to such silence on the question of being as can be broken only through the

²⁰ *Summa theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 3, ad 3.

²¹ *Insight*, p. xxviii.

²² Cf. St Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14; a. 4; q. 54, a. 1; q. 79, a. 4.

indirect method of defining being through its relation to intelligence, are we not in the greatest danger of talking nonsense about *intelligere* when the conditions which impose silence in the one case are equally present in the other? And if our talk about understanding should turn out to be nonsense, such nonsense must affect what we say about being by reason of the dependence of being upon understanding for its definition. This would be the rejection of the possibility of metaphysics. In other words, if Father Lonergan's argument is valid metaphysics must be rejected, but if it is invalid it is no more impossible for us to understand what being is than to understand what understanding is. He seems to require more of an understanding of being than satisfies him when he seeks his understanding of understanding. Certainly we cannot know what being is if this would involve an exhaustive a priori understanding of being. But this would be to make an exorbitant demand upon human intelligence with respect to any object but the objects of pure rational construction, such as mathematical objects, or artefacts.²³

To me, at least, it seems that the real basis of Father Lonergan's objection is that a relationship of the mind to being must be a priori discoverable as the condition of the possibility of knowledge if realism is to be justified by the application of a transcendental method. In these circumstances knowledge cannot be grounded in an intuition of being, for such an intuition would demand an a priori, or innate, idea of being, and this, as the example of Malebranche shows, would necessarily involve ontologism. Father Lonergan's rejection of the intuition of being penetrates much deeper than his oft-repeated criticism of knowledge as looking would suggest. Consequently he must be content with something less than an idea of being and has recourse to his notion, which is the mind's dynamic orientation towards the knowledge of being. Thus he secures the advantages of ontologism whilst shedding its absurdities.

The trouble, however, is that this orientation, this anticipation, has the vision of God as its ultimate objective and fulfilment, and whatever else is known through the exercise of this dynamism can manifest its being only in so far as it enters into a movement which is to culminate in the vision of God. But, if it is only in the vision of God that we can understand being, it is only in the vision of God that the being-dimension of the beings we know can be manifested. To say that being is the objective of the pure desire to know and at the same time to say that for the present we can know this objective purely as objective is to say that we cannot know being as that in which this objective is attained. What meaning, then, can the affirmation of being have for us, who do not yet enjoy the vision of God? If we have no understanding of being how can we know what we are affirming when we affirm being?

23 According to Father Lonergan 'the precise nature of the act of understanding is to be seen most clearly in mathematical examples' (*Insight*, p. x).

As has been seen, our own unrestricted desire to know defines for us what we must mean when we speak of being; in the light of that notion we can settle by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation what in fact is and what in fact is not . . .²⁴

But if what we understand by being is defined through our own unrestricted desire to know, what can we understand by a phrase like 'what in fact is and what in fact is not'? Father Lonergan clearly intends a distinction between what is and what is not with respect to being itself. But how can this make sense without some understanding of what being is in itself? If being can be understood only as that which satisfies the dynamic desire to know, the distinction between what is and what is not can be understood only as a distinction between what satisfies and what fails to satisfy the desire to know. To understand this as a distinction between what is and what is not with respect to being itself, it would be necessary to grasp either what being is in itself or what it is that constitutes the ultimate destination of the pure desire to know.

Whenever we seek to find the significance of any use we make of the term being we are referred back to intelligence, its dynamism and its structure. Being is defined as the objective of the pure desire to know.²⁵ The unity of being is the unity of the intention which tends dynamically towards the unrestricted objective of the pure desire.²⁶ The structure of being is isomorphic with the structure of intelligence.²⁷ We are told that what is involved is isomorphism, not identity; but Father Lonergan does not seem to have the resources to distinguish between an object posited by the 'yes' of affirmation because it satisfies the desire of intelligence and an object which has being in itself, between the 'yes' of affirmation and the being of the object affirmed, to prevent the absorption of *esse* in *esse verum*. It is difficult to maintain that being is the object of affirmation unless one has some understanding of being as the ultimate, the absolute, in relation to which alone *esse verum* can be understood. As St Thomas puts it, *ens* precedes *verum* in the order of our understanding. If one reverses this order, it is difficult to see what a being can be for us other than that which is constituted as an object of knowledge through conformity with the structure of intelligent and rational consciousness. No doubt, it is claimed that to know such an object is precisely to know

24 Ibid., pp. 678–679. Father Lonergan tells us that 'by judgment being is known and in judgment what is known is known as being' (Ibid., p. 357). As this occurs in the chapter where being is defined as 'the objective of the pure desire to know' (p. 348), when he says that in judgment what is known is known as being, presumably he means that it is known as a fulfilment of the pure desire to know. One feels, however, that although he defines being through its relation to knowledge, he constantly uses the term being in an absolute sense. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 638–9.

25 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 348.

26 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 371.

27 Cf. *ibid.* pp. 497, 525.

being. But this is so only because being is defined as the objective of the pure desire to know. This simply means that being is whatever is attained by the exercise of the mind's dynamic tendency. But being is given no proper intelligible content which would enable one to say that it is more than a mere object for consciousness. Unless being is grasped as absolute, idealism seems inevitable. What is it that enables one to claim that 'objective' (in the phrase 'objective of the pure desire to know') means more than merely what is constituted by the imposition on data of the structures of consciousness? What proper intelligibility has 'objective' unless it derives it from being?

These objections can be summed up by asking whether, at least in realism, it is possible to have a purely heuristic notion of being. A heuristic notion gives rise to a second order definition. It identifies what is to be known as still unknown. It defines what is to be known through what is other than it, but so related to it as to manifest the conditions which open the way to a first order definition. We can frame heuristic notions of this or that kind of being because we can frame second order definitions of this kind. But can we frame a heuristic notion of being? To do so we should have to find what is better known than being, define being through its relationship to it, and proceed from there towards a determination of what being is properly in itself.

A heuristic notion, therefore, presupposes a known context within which the nature of the unknown can be determined. The notion of being, however, can presuppose no known context; rather is it that within which all contexts emerge and are grounded. Can a heuristic notion open the mind towards something that transcends what is proper to the context in which the heuristic notion is grounded? Can it anticipate the jumping out of its own skin? Knowledge is the skin of the heuristic notion of being when being is understood to be 'whatever is to be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably'.²⁸ Can the being whose notion is determined by the context of knowledge ever be more than a being known, an *intelligi*, unless the notion of knowledge has already been determined by a relationship to being?

In answer one might say that for Father Lonergan there is a sense in which the notion of knowledge has already been determined by a relationship to being, because the heuristic notion is not ultimate but is founded in the pure notion of being. Since the pure notion of being is the pure desire to know, the relationship to being is constitutive of this notion because being is the objective of the pure desire to know. Unfortunately, however, being as objective of the pure desire is known only as objective and not in what properly constitutes it as being.

At the level of the heuristic notion, what is said to be better known than being, to constitute the context of the heuristic notion, is the desire to know with its dynamic structure. It should follow, then, from the nature of a

²⁸ Ibid., p. 642.

heuristic notion that we shall know being properly by determining the objective of the pure desire. But this we cannot do. Within the heuristic notion is the unrestricted dynamic openness of the pure notion, so that the heuristic notion can never come closer to a determination of the nature of being than the pure notion to its fulfilment. The heuristic notion must pursue a quarry that always outstrips it until the heuristic notion and the pure notion together reach their destination in the vision of God. Our knowledge of being is radically dynamic, and this dynamic character remains until, if ever, we reach the stage when we know everything about everything or encounter the intelligence which does know everything about everything. Until that stage is reached we shall not know what being is. In this case, although we may, in accordance with the heuristic notion, understand all that we know and all that remains to be known as being, the term being must remain empty of a proper content. One wonders, in fact, how it could ever have entered into the mind of man to entertain such a notion at all. To say that we know beings is merely to say that we know objects of knowledge, that what makes them more than mere objects of knowledge, namely, their being, necessarily escapes us, is inconceivable to us in its own proper nature, so that we seem to be postulating an inconceivable dimension in the objects of our knowledge. We cannot know beings in their being if we cannot understand, however imperfectly, what being is apart from its being that which constitutes them as objects of our knowledge. To retain the being which is more than object of knowledge seems to be hankering after the *impensable au-delà de la pensée*.

Needless to say, I do not question Father Lonergan's realist intentions. He defines being through its relation to intelligence, but he makes it abundantly clear that this definition does not manifest the nature of being itself by reason of the fact that it is no more than a second order definition. My difficulty is that if our situation were as he describes it we should never be able to know that his definition is of the second order. How, then, do we know this? Only, it seems to me, because all our knowledge presupposes, not simply a natural tendency towards being, but an actual apprehension of being in which we enjoy, however imperfectly, some understanding of being in itself. This intuition of being is the foundation of the non-transcendental Thomism of St Thomas. It is also, it seems to me, the explicitly rejected implicit presupposition of the transcendental Thomism of Father Lonergan.

It remains to consider the argument by which Father Lonergan seeks to prove that we have no idea of being.

Since we do not encounter *ens per essentiam*, it follows that our intellectual knowledge of being cannot result from abstraction of essence. 'No being by participation can yield us a knowledge of the essence of being, because no being by participation has the essence of being; and what is true of essence, equally is true of quiddity, nature, species, and form.'²⁹

If Father Lonergan is here drawing attention to the fact that our intellectual knowledge of being cannot be accounted for in the same way as our knowledge of essences, by the abstraction of a univocal concept, I accept his point. Apart from the fact that our concept of being is not the concept of an essence, there is no such thing, either in this world or the next, as the essence of being. Despite appearances, I find it hard to accept that he would refer to God, or *ens per essentiam*, as the essence of being. Evidently, too, we do not directly encounter *ens per essentiam*. But we must not suppose that the relationship of participation puts *ens per participationem* outside the order of *ens*. In fact, St Thomas asserts that, properly speaking, *entia per participationem* constitute the order of *ens* and that if any being is outside this order it is God.

... sed secundum rei veritatem, Causa prima est supra ens, inquantum est ipsum esse infinitum. Ens autem dicitur id quod finite participat esse et hoc est proportionatum intellectui nostro, cuius obiectum est 'quod quid est' ut dicitur in *III de Anima*. Unde illud solum est capabile ab intellectu nostro quod habet quidditatem participantem esse; sed Dei quidditas est ipsum esse, unde est supra intellectum.³⁰

St Thomas here argues that, precisely because the object of our intellect is essence, knowledge of *ens* is proportionate to it, because *ens* is that which participates in *esse* in a finite way, namely, according to the mode determined by an essence. Consequently, the mode of our knowledge by abstraction, so far from putting being beyond the reach of our understanding, is our way of approach to the apprehension of being. *Quoad nos*, being is *ens*, and *ens* is that which participates in *esse* according to the finite measure of an essence. *Esse*, the act and perfection of being, is mediated to us through the finite participations which are essences. Our apprehension of being through essence is an approach which envisages *esse* as the act of being to which primacy belongs, but which we do not grasp in its subsistent purity. *In se*, being is *esse*, for God is he whose essence is identical with *esse*, and to grasp *esse* in God would also be to grasp the various ways in which *esse* can be participated in through the determinate modes of finite essence. The mystery of being *quoad nos*, of our knowledge of being, is centred, not in an essence which our abstractive intelligence fails to discover in the objects which it encounters,

²⁹ 'Insight: Preface to a Discussion', in *Collection*, p. 156.

³⁰ *In lib. De causis*, 1. 6, n. 175.

but in an act to which every essence we abstract is intrinsically related and which proclaims its dependence upon a cause in which the infinite perfection and purity of this act subsists.

For, if from a horse I abstract essence, what I abstract is the essence, not of being, but of horse; if from a man I abstract essence, what I abstract is the essence, not of being, but of man; and the same holds for every other immediate object of our present knowledge.³¹

The point is that in order to know being it is not necessary to abstract the essence of being, for the apprehension of any essence through abstraction is itself the beginning of a knowledge of being. Being is known implicitly in the abstraction of any essence because essence is never known absolutely but always as essence-of. In the abstraction of any essence we know being implicitly as that which possesses these essential determinations, and that which has essence is always a something that is or can be. This is why the apprehension of any essence demands to be completed by judgment, for that which is manifested in essence is not known properly until essence is attributed to that to which it belongs. To hold otherwise would be to fall into phenomenalist essentialism.³²

Abstraction of essence, then, is not simply for knowledge of essence, but for knowledge of being in and through essence. It is because being, not essence, is the terminus of the act of knowledge that affirmation is demanded.

But do we not say that the object of the human intellect is essence? We do; but we must understand carefully what we mean. We say that the object of vision is colour. But just as vision does not, properly speaking, know *color* but *coloratum*, even though it is formally under the aspect of colour that it grasps its object, so, properly speaking, intellect does not know essence, but being, even though it is formally through essence that it grasps being.³³ There is a difference between the two cases. *Color* is to *coloratum* as accident is to substance, but essence is to being as formal determination is to that which subsists in and through this formal determination. Substance is implicitly grasped by vision, but vision can never render explicit its implicit because its formal object remains superficial to substance. Being is implicitly known by intellectual apprehension, but intellect can render its implicit explicit because its formal object is that which determines being as such, penetrates to the foundations of being. To be at the level of the apprehension of essence is to be at the level of the apprehension of that whose proper act is *esse*, which is wholly towards *esse*, and which cannot be known without manifesting its

³¹ 'Insight: Preface to a Discussion', in *Collection*, pp. 155-6.

³² Cf. J. Maritain, *Les degrés du savoir*, 5th ed. (Paris 1946), pp. 187-95.

³³ Cf. St Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 45, a. 4, ad 1.

relationship to *esse* in *ens*. Needless to say, I am not suggesting that every judgment manifests explicitly the metaphysical composition of finite being. What I do say is that every judgment goes beyond essence to *ens*, and it can do so because apprehension itself is already implicitly apprehension of *ens*, of that to which essence belongs; and that to which essence belongs is always a something which is or can be, a something whose proper act is *esse*. To be able to apprehend essence is to be proportionate to a knowledge of being. Because the formal object of vision is colour, vision can never know colour as accident, because to know colour as accident is to know it explicitly as related to substance. Vision knows an accident, but not as accident. Intellect knows essence and knows it as such, which it cannot do without knowing its relation to being.

Judgment, then, is the affirmation of the being which is apprehended in the light of essence. Affirmation does not have to penetrate to a deeper level than apprehension, as vision would have to do to know substance, but perfects the knowledge of apprehension by rendering explicit what is implicitly grasped, namely, the reference of the essence, as *modus essendi*, to being. The object of judgment is not *esse* precisely as metaphysical act of being, but *ens in actu*, expressed in the light of the determination formally grasped in apprehension.

It is clear, then, that a certain concept of being is implicitly present in the apprehension through abstraction of any essence and renders possible the judgment as the affirmation of being. Being is that which has essence, not in the sense that there is some one essence which can be identified as the essence of being, and which could supply the answer to the question: what is being? but in the sense that being is that which is formally determined by essence and manifests itself to us in and through its formal determination.

Does this mean that the question: 'what is being?' is nonsensical? I do not think so. But the answer is not to be found in the positing of an essence, but in recognising that being is always more than essence, that *ens est id cuius actus est esse*, that *essentia dicitur secundum quod per eam et in ea ens habet esse*. *Esse* here is not the mere contingent fact of being realized, for even when *esse* is contingent it derives its contingency from the essence to which it is proportionate, and it is always that which most formally constitutes a being precisely as such. For this reason, essence fulfils its function with respect to being only through total reference to *esse* in *ens*.

And so the question: *quid est?* is not uniform. There is the *quid est?* which presupposes the apprehension of being, which tends towards a more determinate knowledge of essence, and there is the *quid est?* which questions being itself, and which is answered, not through a determinate knowledge of essence but by relating essence to *esse* in *ens*.

St Thomas on Reflection and Judgment¹

At the centre of the thomistic epistemological debate one finds a text from *De veritate*, 1, 9, which seems to contain a brief statement of the line St Thomas would have followed in working towards a solution of the critical problem. In his celebrated and influential article on the text, Father Charles Boyer says that it expresses in brief a definitive criteriology.² Father Bernard Lonergan sees it as outlining the critical programme.³

Essentially, Boyer interprets the text to mean that truth is attained in the act of judgment in virtue of a process of reflection which is constitutive of the judgment as such, and, consequently, is involved in every judgment whether reflex or direct.⁴ He derives strong support for his argument from a comparison between the *De veritate* and other texts, which he regards as parallel.⁵ His interpretation, however, presents the difficulty of seeming to make every judgment dependent on a reflection which would penetrate to the very nature of the intellect so as to manifest it as made to conform to things. This claim seems to be not only excessive, in that it lacks a genuine foundation in the text, but also subversive of realism, in that it subordinates our certitude regarding being as first principle of knowledge to a certitude regarding the self as oriented to being. One may continue to admire the ingenuity of those writers who, accepting Boyer's interpretation, still contrive to preserve their realism intact. In this article, however, I propose what seems a better alternative: to examine the text anew with a view to deciding whether Boyer has interpreted it well.

Before examining the *De veritate*, we shall consider the texts which Boyer considers to be exactly parallel. This parallelism is important in the

1 This article originated as a paper to commemorate the seventh centenary of the death of St Thomas, and was presented during 1974, substantially in its present form, to the Philosophy Society, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, and to the Irish Philosophical Society. By a happy coincidence, the year 1974 saw the fiftieth anniversary of the article by Charles Boyer, 'Le sens d'un texte de Saint Thomas: "De Veritate, q. 1, a. 9,"' *Gregorianum*, t. 5 (1924), pp. 424-43. In quoting from this article, I have used the English version, published as an Appendix in P. Hoenen, *Reality and Judgment according to St Thomas*, translated by H. Tiblier (Chicago, 1952), pp. 295-309. References in the following footnotes beginning with *Greg.* are to the original French text; references beginning *Reality and Judgment* are to the English translation.

2 Cf. *Greg.*, p. 425; *Reality and Judgment*, p. 295.

3 Cf. B. Lonergan, *Verbum. Word and Idea in Aquinas* (London, 1968), p. 75.

4 Cf. *Greg.*, pp. 426-7; *Reality and Judgment*, p. 297.

5 Cf. *Greg.*, pp. 428-33; *Reality and Judgment*, pp. 298-302.

development of his argument, and if it can be shown not to obtain the way will be clear for a different interpretation.

The two texts are in *Summa theologiae*, 1a, 16, 2, and in the *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, VI, 4 (1235–1236). Chronologically, the *De veritate* is early: q. 1 was composed in 1256.⁶ Both the *Summa theologiae* and the *Metaphysics* are late: the *Summa theologiae* not earlier than 1265 and the *Metaphysics* around 1270.⁷

Both texts deal with the manner in which truth is attained by the intellect, and in each a comparison is made between intellect and sense. Intellect attains truth as something it knows; at the level of sense truth is found, but not as something known. In developing the comparison, St Thomas distinguishes between the two intellectual acts of simple apprehension and judgment. What occurs at the level of sense can be compared to what happens at the level of intellect in simple apprehension. But the intellect goes beyond simple apprehension in the act of judging. This is what is proper to intellect, and it is in judgment alone that truth is present as something known. These texts, therefore, make it clear that there is nothing in sense corresponding to the intellectual judgment, and this is the essential point on which Boyer relies in the use he makes of their teaching.

The act of simple apprehension is said to be simple, not precisely by reason of the simplicity of its object (the example given in the *Metaphysics*—mortal rational animal—is complex), but because it does not possess the distinctive complexity of the act of judgment: composing or dividing, combining or separating, affirming or denying. Judgment is not the simple grasp of an object; it is the saying of something (signified by the predicate) about something (signified by the subject). In judgment one attributes to something what one has grasped about it. In saying something about it one is not simply entertaining an object of thought. Rather, having reflected upon the content of simple apprehension, one constructs a discourse in the form of a judgment in which one attributes the content of the apprehension to that to which it belongs. This discourse is a proclamation of truth because it represents the thing as it is. It is a proclamation made with awareness of its truth because one attributes the content of apprehension to something in the knowledge that it belongs to it in reality.

The text of the *Summa theologiae* describes the originality of the judgment by comparison with simple apprehension. The text of the *Metaphysics* brings out the point that the transition from simple apprehension to judgment requires the mediation of reflection.

6 Cf. I.T. Eschmann, 'A Catalogue of St Thomas's Works,' in E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas* (London, 1961), pp. 381–437. The date of the *De veritate* is discussed in pp. 390–1.

7 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 387, 404. The date of the *Metaphysics* cannot be accurately determined. It is certainly late, but it may have been begun before 1270.

The two texts read as follows:

Truth, as we have said, is, in its primary significance, in the intellect. Now since a thing is true as having the form proper to its own nature, it must follow that the mind, in the act of knowing, is true as having the likeness of the thing known, which is the form of the intellect in the act of knowing. Accordingly truth is defined as conformity between intellect and thing. Hence to know that conformity is to know truth. Sense however does not know that conformity in any way; for although sight possesses the likeness of the visible thing, it does not know the correspondence between the thing and what it apprehends about it. Intellect can know its own conformity to the thing known; yet it does not grasp that conformity in the mere act of knowing the essence of a thing. But when the intellect judges that the thing corresponds to the form of the thing which it apprehends, then for the first time it knows and affirms truth. This it does in the act of joining or separating concepts in judgment; for in every proposition some form signified by the predicate is either joined to some thing signified by the subject or separated from it. Hence it may easily be allowed that sense is true about a thing, or intellect in knowing essences; but not that it knows or affirms truth. The same applies to verbal expressions, compound or non-compound. Truth, then, can be present in sense, or in intellect knowing a meaning, as in a thing that is true; but not as the object known is in the knower, which is implied by the word 'truth'; for the perfection of the intellect is truth as known. Therefore properly speaking truth is in the intellect in its function of affirming and denying one reality of another; and not in sense, nor in intellect knowing the meaning.⁸

8 'Dicendum quod verum, sicut dictum est, secundum sui primam rationem est in intellectu. Cum autem omnis res sit vera secundum quod habet propriam formam suae naturae, necesse est quod intellectus, in quantum est cognoscens, sit verus in quantum habet similitudinem rei cognitae, quae est forma ejus in quantum est cognoscens. Et propter hoc per conformitatem intellectus et rei veritas definitur. Unde conformitatem istam cognoscere est cognoscere veritatem. Hanc autem nullo modo sensus cognoscit; licet enim visus habeat similitudinem visibilis, non tamen cognoscit comparationem quae est inter rem visam et id quod ipse apprehendit de ea. Intellectus autem conformitatem sui ad rem intelligibilem cognoscere potest; sed tamen non apprehendit eam secundum quod cognoscit de aliquo *quod quid est*. Sed quando judicat rem ita se habere sicut est forma quam de re apprehendit, tunc primo cognoscit et dicit verum. Et hoc facit componendo et dividendo; nam in omni propositione aliquam formam significatam per praedicatum, vel applicat alicui rei significatae per subjectum, vel removel ab ea. Et ideo bene invenitur quod sensus est verus de aliqua re, vel intellectus cognoscens *quod quid est*. Sed non quod cognoscat aut dicat verum. Et similiter est de vocibus complexis aut incomplexis. Veritas quidem igitur potest esse in sensu, vel in intellectu cognoscente *quod quid est* ut in quadam re vera; non autem ut cognitum in cognoscente, quod importat nomen veri; perfectio enim intellectus est verum ut cognitum. Et ideo proprie loquendo veritas est in intellectu cognoscente *quod quid est*. Summa

1235. But even though in sensory perception there can be a likeness of the thing known, nevertheless it does not belong to the senses to know the formality of this likeness but only to the intellect. Hence even though the senses can be true in relation to sensible objects, they still cannot know the truth, but only the intellect can do this. And this is why it is said that truth and falsity are in the mind.

1236. And although the intellect has within itself a likeness of the things known according as it forms concepts of incomplex things, it does not for that reason make a judgment about this likeness. This occurs only when it combines or separates. For when the intellect forms a concept of mortal rational animal, it has within itself a likeness of man; but it does not for that reason know that it has this likeness, since it does not judge that 'Man is a mortal rational animal.' There is truth and falsity, then, only in this second operation of the intellect, according to which it not only possesses a likeness of the thing known but also reflects on this likeness by knowing it and by making a judgment about it. Hence it is evident from this that truth is not found in things but only in the mind, and that it depends upon combination and separation.⁹

The process envisaged in these two texts would seem to be as follows:

- 1) In simple apprehension the intellect grasps a form, or quiddity, or essence, and thereby it is said to have a likeness of the thing.
- 2) It does not yet know that it has the likeness of the thing because it has not yet judged: it has not yet referred the content of its apprehension to the thing.
- 3) It reflects upon its act of simple apprehension and grasps the relation of the form, or quiddity, or essence to the thing. In other words, it grasps it as the form, or quiddity, or essence of the thing.

theologiae, 1a, 16, 2. Text and translation are quoted from *Summa theologiae*, vol. 4, edited and translated by T. Gornall (London-New York, 1964).

⁹ '1235.—Licet autem in cognitione sensitiva possit esse similitudo rei cognitae, non tamen rationem huius similitudinis cognoscere ad sensum pertinet, sed solum ad intellectum. Et ideo, licet sensus de sensibili possit esse verus, tamen sensus veritatem non cognoscit, sed solum intellectus: et propter hoc dicitur quod verum et falsum sunt in mente.

'1236.—Intellectus autem habet apud se similitudinem rei intellectae, secundum quod rationes incomplexorum concipit; non tamen propter hoc ipsam similitudinem diiudicat, sed solum cum componit vel dividit. Cum enim intellectus concipit hoc quod est animal rationale mortale, apud se similitudinem hominis habet; sed non propter hoc cognoscit se hanc similitudinem habere, quia non iudicat hominem esse animal rationale et mortale: et ideo in hac sola secunda operatione intellectus est veritas et falsitas, secundum quam non solum intellectus habet similitudinem rei intellectae, sed etiam super ipsam similitudinem reflectitur, cognoscendo et diiudicando ipsam. Ex his igitur patet, quod veritas non est in rebus, sed solum in mente, et etiam in compositione et divisione.' In *VI Met.*, lect. 4. The text is quoted from the Marietti edition (Turin, 1950). The translation is quoted from *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, translated by J. P. Rowan (Chicago, 1961), 2 vols.

- 4) It pronounces its judgment, e.g. 'man is a rational mortal animal.'
- 5) In this judgment it knows its conformity to the thing in that it attributes to the thing what it has grasped about it and does so in the knowledge that what it has grasped really belongs to the thing. This is the direct knowledge of truth.

It is important to notice that to possess the likeness of the thing and to know the essence or quiddity of the thing are one and the same. To know the likeness of the thing as the likeness of the thing is simply to grasp what the likeness contains as the quiddity of the thing. The intellect grasps it as the quiddity of the thing because in simple apprehension it already grasps it implicitly as quiddity of the thing: *in quadam comparatione ad rem: quia apprehendit eam ut huius rei quidditatem*.¹⁰ In reflection it makes this explicit, and affirms it in judgment by means of the composition. To say that it knows the likeness as likeness of the thing is simply to say that it reflects on the content of simple apprehension and grasps it explicitly as quiddity of the thing. There is no question of knowing a likeness and then having to discover whether the likeness is exact. To know a likeness is to know a quiddity, and to know a quiddity is implicitly to know it as quiddity-of.

We must turn now to the *De veritate*. It is important to notice in the first place that the question asked in *De veritate*, 1, 9, which Boyer relates directly to *Summa theologiae*, 1a, 16, 2, is not the same as the question asked in this latter text. The question in the *Summa theologiae* is: 'whether truth is in intellect when it composes and divides?' The question in *De veritate*, 1, 9, is: 'whether truth is in sense?' For the question in *Summa theologiae*, 1a, 16, 2, we must refer, not to *De veritate*, 1, 9, but to *De veritate*, 1, 3, which reads as follows:

Just as the true is found primarily in the intellect rather than in things, so also is it found primarily in an act of the intellect joining and separating, rather than in an act by which it forms the quiddities of things. For the nature of the true consists in a conformity of thing and intellect. Nothing becomes conformed with itself, but conformity requires distinct terms. Consequently, the nature of truth is first

¹⁰ 'Cum aliquod incomplexum vel dicitur vel intelligitur, ipsum quidem incomplexum, quantum est de se, non est rei aequatum nec rei inaequale: cum aequalitas et inaequalitas secundum comparationem dicantur; incomplexum autem, quantum est de se, non continet aliquam comparationem vel applicationem ad rem. Unde de se nec verum nec falsum dici potest: sed tantum complexum, in quo designatur comparatio incomplexi ad rem per notam compositionis aut divisionis. Intellectus tamen incomplexus, intelligendo quod quid est, apprehendit quidditatem rei in quadam comparatione ad rem: quia apprehendit eam ut huius rei quidditatem.' *Summa contra gentiles*, 1, 59. The text is quoted from the Marietti edition (Turin, 1961). In this text St Thomas maintains that simple apprehension at the same time does not contain and yet does in some manner contain a reference to the thing. This is what I interpret by means of the term *implicit*.

found in the intellect when the intellect begins to possess something proper to itself, not possessed by the thing outside the soul, yet corresponding to it, so that between the two—intellect and thing—a conformity may be found. In forming the quiddities of things, the intellect merely has a likeness of a thing existing outside the soul, as a sense has a likeness when it receives the species of a sensible thing. But when the intellect begins to judge about the thing it has apprehended, then its judgment is something proper to itself—not something found outside in the thing. And the judgment is said to be true when it conforms to the external reality. Moreover, the intellect judges about the thing it has apprehended at the moment when it says that something is or is not. This is the role of ‘the intellect composing and dividing.’

For these reasons, the Philosopher says that composition and division are in the intellect and not in things. Moreover, this is why truth is found primarily in the joining and separating by the intellect, and only secondarily in its formation of the quiddities of things or definitions, for a definition is called true or false because of a true or false combination. For it may happen that a definition will be applied to something to which it does not belong, as when the definition of a circle is assigned to a triangle. Sometimes, too, the parts of a definition cannot be reconciled, as happens when one defines a thing as ‘animal entirely without the power of sensing.’ The judgment implied in such a definition—‘some animal is incapable of sensing’—is false only because of its relation to a judgment, as a thing is said to be true because of its relation to intellect . . . ¹¹

This text answers a question similar to that posed in *Summa theologiae*, 1a, 16, 2, and refers to the Aristotelian text which is the subject of the commentary in *Metaphysics*, VI, 4. It gives the same answer: truth resides only in the judgment. But it gives a different reason for the answer. Both the *Summa theologiae* and the *Metaphysics* argue that truth resides only in judgment because it is only there that truth is known. The present text, however, argues that it is in judgment alone that the intellect takes the

initiative by constructing something proper to itself which is not in the thing, and that it is only for this reason that comparison is possible and the nature of *adaequatio* realised. Nor is this article built—like the other two texts—around a comparison between intellect and sense. St Thomas does say briefly that there is something in sense corresponding to simple apprehension, but he does not say that there is nothing in sense corresponding to judgment. The importance of this point will shortly become apparent.

We come now to *De veritate*, 1, 9, which reads as follows:

Truth is in both intellect and sense, but not in the same way in each. It is in the intellect as a result of the act of intellect and as known by the intellect. It follows the operation of the intellect inasmuch as the judgment of the intellect on the thing is conformed to the thing. But it is known by the intellect inasmuch as the intellect reflects upon its act; not only inasmuch as it knows its act, but inasmuch as it knows the relationship [proportion] of its act to the thing, which relationship cannot be known unless the nature of the act be [first] known; and this cannot be known unless [at the same time] there is known the nature of the active principle, which is the intellect itself, whose nature is to be conformed to things; hence the intellect knows truth inasmuch as it reflects upon itself.

Truth is in sense, however, as a result of its act, namely, when the judgment of sense attains the thing as it is. For if sense judges truly of things, it does not know the truth whereby it judges truly. For even though sense knows that it senses, it does not know its nature, nor, consequently, the nature of its act, not its relation to things, nor, therefore, its truth.

This is because the things which have the greatest perfection in reality, like intellectual substances, return to their essences in a complete return. In knowing something outside themselves they proceed, as it were, out of themselves, but inasmuch as they know that they know, they begin to return to themselves; for the act of knowledge is

¹¹ ‘Dicendum, quod sicut verum per prius invenitur in intellectu quam in rebus, ita etiam per prius invenitur in actu intellectus componentis et dividensis quam in actu intellectus quidditates rerum formantis.

Veri enim ratio consistit in adaequatione rei et intellectus; idem autem non adaequatur sibi ipsi, sed aequalitas diversorum est; unde ibi primo invenitur ratio veritatis in intellectu ubi primo intellectus incipit aliquid proprium habere quod res extra animam non habet, sed aliquid ei correspondens, inter quae adaequatio attendi potest.

Intellectus autem formans quidditates, non habet nisi similitudinem rei existentis extra animam, sicut et sensus in quantum accipit speciem rei sensibilis; sed quando incipit iudicare de re apprehensa, tunc ipsum iudicium intellectus est quoddam proprium ei, quod non invenitur extra in re. Sed quando adaequatur ei quod est extra in re, dicitur iudicium verum esse.

Tunc autem iudicat intellectus de re apprehensa quando dicit quod aliquid est vel non est, quod est intellectus componentis et dividensis; unde et Philosophus dicit VI *Metaph.*, quod compositio et divisio est in intellectu, et non in rebus. Et inde est quod veritas per prius invenitur in compositione et divisione intellectus. Secundario autem dicitur verum et per posterius in intellectu formante definitiones; unde definitio dicitur vera vel falsa, ratione compositionis verae vel falsae, ut quando scilicet dicitur esse definitio eius cuius non est, sicut si definitio circuli assignetur triangulo; vel etiam quando partes definitionis non possunt componi ad invicem, ut si dicatur definitio alicuius rei animalis insensibilis, haec enim compositio quae implicatur, scilicet quod aliquid animal est insensibile, est falsa. Et definitio non dicitur vera vel falsa nisi per ordinem ad compositionem, sicut et res dicitur vera per ordinem ad intellectum.’ *De veritate*, 1, 3. The text is quoted from the Marietti edition (Turin, 1964). The translation is quoted from *Truth*, translated by R.W. Mulligan, J.V. McGlynn and R.W. Schmidt (Chicago, 1952–4), 3 vols.

intermediate between knower and known. This return reaches completion insofar as they know their own essences; and so it is said in the *De causis* that each one who knows his own essence returns to his essence by a complete return.

Sense, which of all things is what is nearest the intellectual substance, begins to return to its essence, because not only does it know the sensible thing but it even knows that it senses. Its return does not reach completion, however, because sense does not know its essence. Avicenna explains this by saying that sense knows only through a bodily organ. It is not possible for an organ to be intermediate between the sense power and itself.

Natural insensible powers do not in any way return to themselves because they do not know that they act, as fire does not know that it gives heat.¹²

Having shown already in a. 3 that truth, properly speaking, is in intellect only when it judges, St Thomas might have answered the present question as to whether truth is in sense by pointing out that sense is incapable of judgment and that, consequently, it can possess truth only in the imperfect manner in which intellect possesses it at the level of simple apprehension. This is his argument in *Summa theologiae*, 1a, 16, 2 and in *Metaphysics*, VI, 4. It is not, however, his argument here. Rather, he argues that truth is found in both intellect and sense as a result of an act of judgment, but that it is present in intellect in a manner inaccessible to sense because truth can be known by the intellect in virtue of its capacity for perfect reflection, whereas sense lacks this kind of capacity and, consequently, does not possess

¹² 'Dicendum, quod veritas est in intellectu et in sensu, licet non eodem modo.

In intellectu enim est sicut consequens actum intellectus, et sicut cognita per intellectum. Consequitur namque intellectus operationem, secundum quod iudicium intellectus est de re secundum quod est. Cognoscitur autem ab intellectu secundum quod intellectus reflectitur supra actum suum, non solum secundum quod cognoscit actum suum, sed secundum quod cognoscit proportionem eius ad rem; quod quidem cognosci non potest nisi cognita natura ipsius actus; quae cognosci non potest, nisi cognoscatur natura principii activi, quod est ipse intellectus, in cuius natura est ut rebus conformetur; unde secundum hoc cognoscit veritatem intellectus quod supra se-ipsam reflectitur.

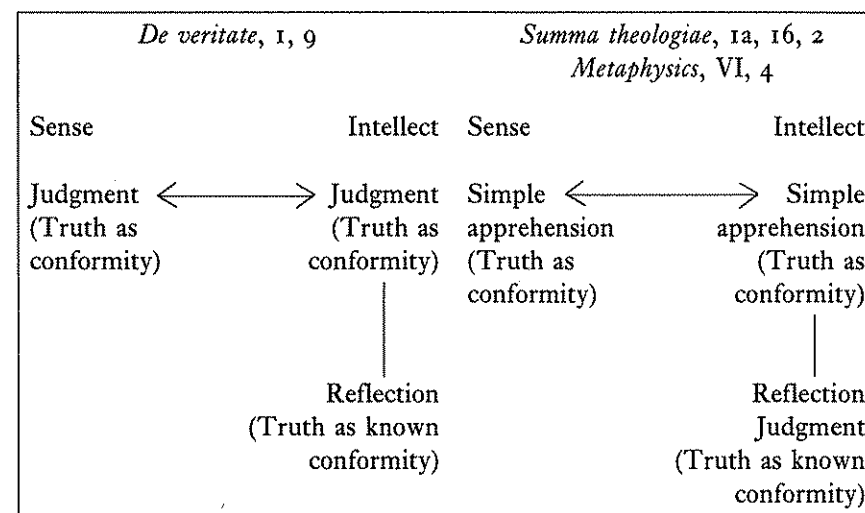
Sed veritas est in sensu sicut consequens actum eius; dum scilicet iudicium sensus est de re, secundum quod est; sed tamen non est in sensu sicut cognita a sensu: si enim sensus vere iudicat de rebus, non tamen cognoscit veritatem, qua vere iudicat: quamvis enim sensus cognoscat se sentire, non tamen cognoscit naturam suam, et per consequens nec naturam sui actus, nec proportionem eius ad res, et ita nec veritatem eius.

Cuius est ratio, quia illa quae sunt perfectissima in entibus, ut substantiae intellectuales, redeunt ad essentiam suam reditioe completa: in hoc enim quod cognoscunt aliquid extra se positum, quodammodo extra se procedunt; secundum vero quod cognoscunt se cognoscere, iam ad se redire incipiunt, quia actus cognitionis est medius inter cognoscentem et cognitum. Sed reditus iste completur secundum quod cognoscunt essentias proprias: unde dicitur in lib. *de Causis*, quod omnis sciens essentiam suam, est rediens ad essentiam suam reditioe completa.

Sensus autem, qui inter ceteros est propinquior intellectuali substantiae, redire quidem incipit ad essentiam suam, quia non solum cognoscit sensibile, sed etiam cognoscit se sentire;

truth as something known. It would seem, then, that in the sense in which the *De veritate* understands the term 'truth as known conformity' truth is not present in the intellectual judgment but must await the reflection which is subsequent to judgment. This is in harmony with the difference we saw already between, on the one hand, *De veritate*, 1, 3, and on the other hand, *Summa theologiae*, 1a, 16, 2 and *Metaphysics*, VI, 4: that whereas the latter two texts argue that truth is in judgment because it is only there that it is present as something known, *De veritate*, 1, 3 argues that truth is in judgment because it is only there that the intellect has something proper to itself, not possessed by the thing.

In other words, when one compares the *De veritate* with the later texts, one finds that in these later texts the parallel between intellect and sense has shifted, as it were, one stage, and the level at which truth is possessed as known conformity has shifted accordingly. This can be illustrated in the following diagram:



There is one way of bringing all these texts into harmony, and that is to say that the judgment of the *De veritate* is not a judgment in the proper

non tamen completur eius reditio, quia sensus non cognoscit essentiam suam. Cuius hanc rationem Avicenna assignat, quia sensus nihil cognoscit nisi per organum corporale. Non est autem possibile ut organum medium cadat inter potentiam sensitivam et seipsum.

Sed potentiae naturales insensibiles nullo modo redeunt supra seipsas, quia non cognoscunt se agere, sicut ignis non cognoscit se calefacere.' *De veritate*, 1, 9. The text is quoted from the Marietti edition. I have translated the text myself, except for those parts which are quoted in *Reality and Judgment*, pp. 295, 302, and which I have incorporated into the translation. The interpolations in square brackets are made in *Reality and Judgment* with a view, presumably, to bringing out clearly points of importance in Boyer's interpretation. The whole of the first paragraph of the translated text except for the first sentence is, therefore, taken from *Reality and Judgment*; the rest of the translation is mine.

sense, but that it should be understood to mean the same thing as the simple apprehension of the other texts. In this case the reflection of the *De veritate* will have for its object the act of simple apprehension and will be prior, not subsequent, to judgment in the proper sense. Thus the reflection of the *De veritate* can be identified with the reflection of the later texts. This is the contention which Boyer seeks to justify, by analysing the *De veritate* text itself, and by appealing to the parallelism with the other texts. No doubt, if one creates a parallelism between the texts by interpreting the judgment of the *De veritate* as if it meant simple apprehension one will have a perfect harmony between them; but one can scarcely argue from this harmony for such an interpretation without begging the question. And so Boyer's argument consists essentially in his analysis of the *De veritate* text itself.

He points out that the text is constructed around a comparison between intellect and sense: both intellect and sense are said to judge, and the language used to describe the act of judgment in the two cases is the same. Sense, however, cannot be said, in the proper sense, to judge. Consequently the sense judgment must be reducible to simple apprehension, and so the intellectual act corresponding to it cannot be a judgment in the proper sense, but must be identified with simple apprehension. 'To describe the act of the intellect which precedes reflection, St Thomas uses the same expressions he uses to describe the act of the sense . . . Now the act of the sense is certainly not a judgment properly so-called. If it is called a judgment, it is certainly by simple analogy, to signify that it places in the senses a representation of the sensible object: and for this reason the matter of a true judgment. The act of the intellect which corresponds to it, so much so that it is defined by the same formula, is not then a judgment in the proper sense, but the act by means of which the intellect has a representation of an intelligible as matter of a true judgment. This act is the simple apprehension.'¹³

In other words, when, in the third sentence of the text, St Thomas says that truth 'follows the operation of the intellect inasmuch as the judgment of the intellect on the thing is conformed to the thing,' he does not really mean a judgment, but the act which he always carefully distinguishes from it, simple apprehension. This is because he compares it to the sense judgment, which is certainly not a judgment, but a simple apprehension. Boyer does not entertain the possibility that when St Thomas speaks of the sense judgment he means a judgment as distinct from simple apprehension. And yet, this is precisely what St Thomas proceeds to do in the second next article, where he finds a distinction between simple apprehension and judgment at the level of sense, a distinction which mirrors the distinction at the intellectual level.

The following are the relevant sections of *De veritate*, I, 11:

¹³ *Reality and Judgment*, p. 300. Cf. *Greg.*, p. 43.

Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it begins in sense; second, it is completed in the intellect. As a consequence, sense is found to be in some way an intermediary between the intellect and things: for, with reference to things, it is, as it were, an intellect, and with reference to intellect, it is, as it were, a thing. Hence, truth or falsity is said to be in sense in two respects. The first is in the relation of sense to intellect. In this respect, the sense is said to be true or false as a thing is, namely, insofar as it causes a true or false judgment in the intellect. The second respect is in the relation of sense to things. In this, truth and falsity are said to be in sense as they are said to be in the intellect, namely, insofar as the sense judges that what is, is or is not.

Hence, if we speak of a sense in the first meaning, in a way there is falsity in sense, and in a way there is not. For sense, in itself, is a thing; and it also passes judgment on other things. If, in its relation to the intellect, it is considered as a thing, then there is no falsity in sense, for a sense reveals its state to the intellect exactly as it is affected . . . On the other hand, if sense is considered in its relation to the intellect as representing some other thing, it may be called false in view of the fact that it sometimes represents a thing to the intellect other than it actually is. For, in that case, as we said about things, it is such as to cause a false judgment in the intellect—but not necessarily, since the intellect judges on what is presented by sense just as it judges about things. Thus, in its relation to the intellect, sense always produces a true judgment in the intellect with respect to its own condition, but not always with respect to the condition of things.

If sense is considered in its relation to things, however, then there are truth and falsity in sense in the manner in which these are in the intellect. For truth and falsity are found primarily and principally in the judgment of the intellect as it associates and dissociates, and in the formation of quiddities, only in their relation to the judgment following upon this formation. Hence, truth and falsity are properly said to be in sense inasmuch as it judges about sensible objects, but inasmuch as it apprehends a sensible object, there is not properly truth or falsity, except in the relation of this apprehension to the judgment, insofar as a judgment of this or that sort naturally follows upon a particular apprehension . . .¹⁴

¹⁴ 'Dicendum, quod cognitio nostra quae a rebus initium sumit, hoc ordine progreditur, ut primo incipiat in sensu, secundo perficiatur in intellectu; ut sic sensus inveniatur quodammodo medius inter intellectum et res: est enim rebus comparatus, quasi intellectus; et intellectui comparatus, quasi res quaedam: et ideo in sensu dicitur esse veritas vel falsitas *dupliciter*.

Uno modo secundum ordinem sensus ad intellectum; et sic dicitur esse sensus falsus vel verus sicut res; in quantum videlicet, faciunt veram existimationem in intellectu, vel falsam.

Alio modo secundum ordinem sensus ad res; et sic dicitur esse veritas vel falsitas in sensu, sicut et in intellectu; in quantum iudicat scilicet esse quod est, vel non esse quod non est.

St Thomas here considers sense in two ways: in so far as it resembles a thing and in so far as it resembles an intellect. Clearly, it is the second way which is relevant if we wish to relate this text to *De veritate*, I, 9, where a parallel is drawn between intellect and sense. When sense is considered in so far as it resembles an intellect, a distinction is made between simple apprehension and judgment corresponding to the parallel distinction at the level of intellect. And just as truth and falsity are found primarily and principally in judgment at the level of intellect, so also truth and falsity are found primarily and principally in judgment at the level of sense. This teaching raises questions concerning the possible development of St Thomas's teaching, or, at least, of his language, regarding the sense judgment, into which I do not propose to enter here. It is perhaps significant that in the text of the *Summa theologiae* corresponding to *De veritate*, I, 11, he makes no reference to a distinction between simple apprehension and judgment, but uses the expression 'apprehendit vel iudicat' as though to signify that they were interchangeable. Boyer may perhaps have imported this later clarification into the earlier text, where the context excludes it, and this concealed confusion may perhaps explain why his argument has appeared so plausible. The close examination of the text, however, shows it to be without foundation.

Once it has been established that the act corresponding in *De veritate*, I, 9 to the sense judgment is the intellectual judgment, it becomes clear that the reflection of which it speaks, unlike the reflection of *Metaphysics*, VI, 4, has the direct judgment for its object, and must, therefore, presuppose the direct judgment. This, in any case, should have been clear from the fact that it is a reflection in which the intellect is said to discover its nature as made to be conformed to things, to being. But it could not possibly discover this before it had attained a knowledge of being, which is attained only in judgment. To say that the intellect could discover that it is made for being before

Si ergo loquamur de sensu secundum primum modum, sic in sensu quodammodo est falsitas, et quodammodo non est falsitas: sensus enim et est res quaedam in se, et est indicativus alterius rei.

Si ergo comparatur ad intellectum prout est res quaedam, sic nullo modo est falsitas in sensu intellectui comparato: quia secundum quod sensus disponitur, secundum hoc dispositionem suam intellectui demonstrat . . .

Si autem comparatur ad intellectum secundum quod est repraesentativum alterius rei, cum quandoque repraesentet ei aliter rem quam sit, secundum hoc sensus falsus dicitur, in quantum natus est facere falsam existimationem in intellectu, quamvis non necessario faciat, sicut et de rebus dictum est: quia intellectus sicut iudicat de rebus, ita et de his quae a sensibus offeruntur.

Sic ergo intellectui comparatus semper facit veram existimationem in intellectu de dispositione propria, sed non de dispositione rerum.

Si autem consideretur sensus secundum quod comparatur ad res, tunc in sensu est falsitas et veritas per modum quo est in intellectu.

In intellectu autem primo et principaliter inveniuntur falsitas et veritas in iudicio componentis et dividensis; sed in formatione quidditatum non nisi per ordinem ad iudicium

its first affirmation of being would be to require that it know its orientation to being as the necessary condition of its knowledge of being. This is St Thomas on his head, however acceptable it may be to certain trends in contemporary thomism.

What, then, is the nature of this reflection, and what does it achieve?

The text begins by pointing out that truth is in the intellect as a result of its act and as known by the intellect. We can now say that the act involved here is a direct judgment in which the intellect knows the truth in the sense of knowing and asserting something to be as it is. It knows, for example, that man is a rational animal. To know that man is a rational animal in the judgment which declares: 'man is a rational animal' is to know the truth. To know the truth in this direct way, however, is one thing. To know what knowing the truth is, what it is to know the truth, is another thing, and this is the object of the reflection whereby the intellect returns to its judgment to discover the nature of its act precisely as a declaration of truth, a declaration about something that it is, or that it is in a certain way.

The text goes on to say that truth is known by the intellect according as it reflects on its act, not merely inasmuch as it knows its act, but inasmuch as it knows the relation of its act to the thing. This, at first sight, is a curious distinction. The act involved is an act of judgment, and there seems to be no way of knowing it apart from its relation to the thing. Hence, when St Thomas says that it reflects on its act inasmuch as it knows the relation of its act to the thing, he means more by relation (*proportio*) than the mere fact of being related to the thing, but the intrinsic orientation of its act, precisely as an act of judging, to the thing. This is obviously something it cannot know without having grasped (*nisi cognita*) the nature of its act, and this in turn involves a knowledge of itself as intrinsically oriented to being.¹⁵ In other words, beginning with a true judgment, it discovers in the affirmation its own intrinsic orientation to things and the very nature of truth as conformity to things. Its judgment is, as it were, the empirical event in which, through reflection, it reads its own inner nature and the nature of truth.

Interpreted in this way, the text makes sense within the context of St Thomas's well-known procedure from objects to acts, and from acts to nature.

quod ex formatione praedicta consequitur: unde et in sensu proprie veritas et falsitas dicitur secundum hoc quod iudicat de sensibilibus; sed secundum hoc quod sensibile apprehendit, non est ibi veritas et falsitas proprie sed solum secundum ordinem ad iudicium quod ex formatione praedicta consequitur; prout scilicet ex apprehensione tali natum est sequi tale iudicium.' *De veritate*, I, 11. The text is quoted from the Marietti edition, the translation from *Truth*, as in note (11) above.

- 15 Boyer draws particular attention to the past tense of 'nisi cognita' to emphasise that 'the knowledge of the nature of the act is then prior to the knowledge of the conformity of the act with its object.' *Reality and Judgment*, p. 304; *Greg.*, p. 435. The crucial question, however, is to decide what is meant in the *De veritate* by 'the knowledge of the conformity of the act with its object.' Is it, as Boyer maintains, a knowledge constitutive of judgment as such? Or is it, as the context seems to show, a knowledge which necessarily presupposes a direct judgment?

Secondly, the reflection of the *De veritate* has nothing directly to do with the question of the verification of the direct judgment. This interpretation is sometimes suggested. The text is supposed to answer the question: how does the intellect know that the likeness it possesses in simple apprehension is truly the likeness of the thing so that its judgment may be assured? And since the intellect cannot look at the thing in itself in order to compare it with the likeness it possesses, it can secure verification only by turning back on itself, there to find the orientation to being which is the basis of the truth of every judgment.¹⁶

This approach, however, poses a false problem, which it does little to dispel. The question is not: how does the intellect know that the likeness it possesses in simple apprehension is a good likeness of what it is supposed to represent? This is a Cartesian problem. There is no way in which the concept of rational animal could fail to represent rational animal. The only question is: to what does the nature rational animal belong? The answer to this is that it belongs to man, who is implicitly grasped in the apprehension of rational animal as the subject whose nature it is. It is true that the intellect may err either by composing concepts in such a way as to construct a pseudo-quiddity (an animal entirely without the power of sensing) or by attributing a quiddity to the wrong subject (when the definition of a circle is assigned to a square).¹⁷ But there are quiddities and judgments constituting the first principles of knowledge, which cannot be subject to error, and all others must receive their verification by means of a resolution to these principles.¹⁸

The *De veritate* text, however, is not concerned with such questions. It is concerned with a true judgment, a judgment in which the intellect has made its affirmation because it has grasped that what it expresses in the predicate is actual in the subject, and in that precise sense has grasped the likeness as likeness of the thing. It reflects on this, not merely as a fact, but as the expression of its own inmost nature. It is not because it grasps its own inmost nature as oriented to being that it knows its judgment to be an affirmation of being, but because it grasps its judgment as an affirmation of being that it knows its orientation to being and that this constitutes the basic law of its nature, the foundation of truth. In reflecting on its affirmation of being it grasps the fundamental constitutive law of the mind that subjectivity is not

16 Cf. Greg., pp. 435-6; *Reality and Judgment*, pp. 305-6. See the remarks in L.M. Regis, *Epistemology* (New York, 1959), p. 353; A Etcheverry, *L'homme dans le monde* (Paris-Bruges, 1963), p. 242.

17 Cf. *De veritate*, I, 3, above.

18 Cf. J. de Finance, 'Cogito cartésien et réflexion thomiste,' *Archives de philosophie*, vol. XVI, cahier II (Paris, 1946), nos 137-43, pp. 153-60. The author goes on immediately to speak of *De veritate*, I, 9 (ibid., nos 144-6, pp. 162-4). Although he accepts the essence of Boyer's interpretation, he is clearly embarrassed by the difficulties it raises for St Thomas's doctrine of the priority of object in relation to act in the order of knowledge. His suggestions are among the more subtle for dealing with this problem.

merely for objects which it constitutes spontaneously for itself, but for being, which is given to it as the object to which it must conform.

The reflection of the *De veritate* is not, as such, a philosophical reflection.¹⁹ Everybody accomplishes it, and this is clear from the fact that everybody has that awareness of the nature of truth which enables him to speak of knowing the truth and understanding that in order to discover the truth he has to find out how things really are. It can, however, be deepened by philosophical reflection. But here, as elsewhere, philosophy is not an escape into a new and unfamiliar world, but a deeper penetration of that which is already familiar at the level of prephilosophical experience.

19 Here I would agree with Boyer rather than with Lonergan. Cf. Greg., pp. 426-7; *Reality and Judgment*, p. 297; B. Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 75.