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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So the “relation to a knower essential to every object as such is precisely what is not essential to every thing as such, even though it is essential to every thing insofar as that thing becomes objectified or known (“being known and “being an object being but two ways of saying the same thing). The world “external to the knower as an animal organism becomes “internal to the knower through the *esse intentionale* of the *species impressae sensuum externorum* as the means by which things are known (“id quo”), and just this “externality is incorporated into the “internality proper to the universe of knowing at its higher levels of perception and understanding (“id in quo”). Hence the famous “quo”/quod distinction of Mortimer Adler<sup>1</sup> and of Neoscholasticism generally – „concepts are not that which (id quod) we know but that by which (quo) we know things – is revealed as the oversimplification that it is, contributing to the failure of even such greats as Jacques Maritain to see their way beyond the modern impasse of „realism vs. „idealism.

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

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

His under-reading (or over-reading) of the *Summa* I.85.2c in point of the quo/quod distinction there essayed is not unrelated to (in fact is of a piece with) an earlier error later corrected<sup>3</sup>, clearly a consequence of not having read at the time, or at least not having read thoroughly, Poincot<sup>4</sup>, wherein Poincot shows the difference for cognition between a *species impressa* (“id quo”) and the *species expressa* (“id in quo”) respecting the thing known in and with the object of apprehension (“id quo”d).

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

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

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

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

restriction of) the formal sign to the *species expressa*, indifferent only to the question of whether it be a *species expressa* of perception or of intellection, but *not indifferent at all* to the question of whether it be a *species impressa* or *species expressa*. Poincot explains the difference between the *species impressa* as such – i.e., be it such from external sense respecting the higher internal senses, or from the internal senses under the formative influence of the intellect acting (*intellectus agens*) respecting the bringing to the level of first act the possible intellect – and the *species expressa* as such in terms of the difference precisely between an “id quo” of knowledge and an “id in quo”, both alike respecting the “id quod” or object known<sup>6</sup>:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whence arises this summary difference between «quo» and «in quo» as far as concerns the *species*, the intentional or specifying form<sup>7</sup>:

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

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

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

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

Hence too, *mutatis mutandis*, in perception and intellection alike, inasmuch as both perception and intellection alike depend upon the formation by the animal of a *species expressa* (in contrast to the animal's sensation, for which alone suffice the environmental stimuli conveying from without the *species impressa* thanks to which proper and common sensibles initiate the process of objectification, transforming the surrounding physical environment into an objective world filled with species-specific meanings – an Umwelt, as the Thomistic thinker Josef Pieper put it<sup>8</sup> on the basis of what he learned from the experimental work in biology of Jakob von Uexküll<sup>9</sup>), the

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

difference in principle between objects and things, *de facto* identified at the level of external sensation, comes to a *de jure* fruition as the objects of experience are formed on the basis of and blossom further into signs, first of what the animal needs (both to flourish by attaining and to survive by avoiding), and then (for rational animals) signs of what the world is in its proper being and in its dependency upon a First Cause whose signature is existence (“*esse*”) wherever it may be found in act<sup>10</sup>:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With this trichotomy we are well underway, as will shortly appear, toward overcoming the post-Cartesian realism/idealism opposition, and not by coming to terms with Descartes and Kant, but rather by changing the terms in which what is convincing about Kant in particular comes to light, namely, the a-priori role of biological constitution (not at all of the understanding, as he himself mistakenly thought, for want of a distinction between sensation as not involving and perception as involving a *species expressa*, on the one hand, and between intellection and perception inasmuch as intellection or understanding transcends the *species expressa* on which perception in other animals is exclusively based<sup>11</sup>, although it perforce makes use of that *expressa* as *impressa* respecting the formation of its own proper *expressae*) in the formation of the Umwelt. Here let us summarize the point.

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

With Article 2 of Question 85 in the First Part of the *Summa*, St Thomas asks us whether the intelligible specifying forms ‘abstracted’ from the phantasms are related to our intellect as that which is understood; and Maritain, along with Mortimer Adler and most or all of the Neothomists<sup>12</sup>, interprets this question as applying equally to the

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

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

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

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

Hence it will not do simply to argue<sup>13</sup> that “the expression *in quo*” is one “which in no way destroys or diminishes the force of the word *quo* as applied to the concept, but only makes it more precise, and signifies that the act of understanding indivisibly includes, at once and by the same token, both the concept signifying and the object signified.” This will not do, because the “object signified” on the basis of the *species expressa* of internal sense, by comparison with the thing stimulating the external sense and originating the *species impressa* which is the *quo* – pure *quo* – of sensation, is only *partially* ‘the same’, for and inasmuch as the object known in perception is not simply the physical source in itself of the stimulus of external sense but is that source as *incorporated into the needs and interests of the organism perceiving that it be evaluated as indicating some threat (-) or desirable element (+) or something that need elicit no concern at the moment (0).*

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

<sup>13</sup> J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 393.

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

Let me cite here, in support of my above remarks<sup>14</sup>, the text of St Thomas: *Summa contra gentiles* Book I, chap. 43. The first paragraph

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

of my citation reads like the common (mis)interpretation of Aquinas: *Summa theologiae* I.85.2c, under discussion. But the next paragraph goes on to explain exactly the points on which the first paragraph remains silent but presupposes, in the sense that, absent a grasp of the presupposed (silent) points, the paragraph opening reduces to an oversimplification that falsifies the matter-at-issue. To the opening paragraph, I add my own emphasis in the form of bold face type. To the follow-up clarification I insert my glosses in italics between square brackets. Here is the text from SCG 1.43<sup>15</sup>:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Despite having recognized the limitation at work in Thomas’ own writings on the question<sup>16</sup>, Maritain then himself also fails to **shift the**

<sup>16</sup> J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite*, 389n4, cited above.

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

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

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

In this very act of comparison, the understanding grasps (again for the first time) *distinction* in a conceptual form. Just so, in the course of experience, being and nonbeing, *ens reale* and *ens rationis*, create each other formally and correlatively as elements of experience<sup>18</sup>. They are

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

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

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

not absolutes, they are correlates<sup>19</sup>; and, as in experience so correla-

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

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

ted, they provide the basis of all further distinctions of understanding. This new grasp, in turn, enables yet another new grasp, grasp in judgment of the first principle of intelligible discourse, which – in its turn – provides the ground of endless further judgments (“infinite semiosis”) of a logical kind. This first principle of intelligible discourse is exactly as Aquinas described it<sup>20</sup>, and is called (see the humor in this) by some *the principle of contradiction* and by others *the principle of non-contradiction*. But at least both and all agree on exactly what is the content of this principle: that it is not possible to both be and not be at the same time in the same respect, “*impossibile est esse et non esse simul.*”

As the direct outcome of the judgment that being (*ens reale*) is not non-being (*ens rationis*), the principle of contradiction participates in the non-alternative, therefore necessary, character of that prior judgment. Understanding, unable, on the inward side<sup>21</sup>, to affirm and deny the same thing under the same aspect, has manifested to it by the senses likewise that entities are one way or another but not both in a given aspect, giving rise to the notion of „being undivided or unity. But what is experimentally undivided in itself is given, in and by that very experience, as divided from others. So arises (intellectual) grasp of *plurality*, of many beings each of which is itself one<sup>22</sup>.

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

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

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

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

physical environment and universe – with a subjectivity and intersubjectivity of its own<sup>23</sup>, become possible as well.

We have then seven primitive elements upon which the experience of the physical universe or world as actually intelligible rests, as on a foundation: being, non-being, distinction, contradiction, unity, plurality, identity. Only with these foundation stones in place does „truth as conformity become a possibility in discourse – or even a question<sup>24</sup>. The sequence of these elements, being the same for all animals possessed of reason in its necessary features, is what lays the ground of possibility for intersubjective agreement in the linguistically communicable results of judgments as well. We have here, so to speak, the intellectual infrastructure of cultural reality in its difference from the purely social world of animal communities.

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

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

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

the fact that the knowing subject is discovered” – or, more exactly, discovers itself – “only within a world of change subject to the law of contradiction”<sup>25</sup>. This „law of contradiction itself, moreover, along with the transcendentals and other logical concepts, as Strasser well says<sup>26</sup>, “such as ‘something’, ‘identity’, ‘non-identity’, ‘agreement’, ‘disagreement’, ‘characteristic’, ‘relation’, and ‘connection’, is rooted “in our concrete dealings with beings”, what I prefer to call “animal realism”. Over and above this (again Strasser), “The elementary rules of logic owe their compelling force to our habitual knowledge about the identity, unity, inner indivision of being and its difference from other beings. In other words, the logical evidences are based upon, or, rather, arise out of, a certain experience of being as being.”

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

But notice in all this the crucial role of the *entia rationis*, the relation of identity in particular: “every being is what it is.” Every animal lives in a world of objects structured both according to the physical nature of the environment and also according to the needs and desires of the animal. The physically same item of the environment may be evaluated as object oppositely by animals of diverse species, neither being “wrong”; and diverse species even *sense* diverse aspects of the same environment as their species-specific basis for further organizing that environment into an objective habitat which suits their needs. So the objective world of direct perceptual experience, unlike the relations given in and by external sense at its foundation and core where the *entia rationis* as yet have no purchase<sup>27</sup>, is an irreducible mixture of mind-dependent and mind-indepen-

<sup>25</sup> B. Ashley, “Change and Process”, 291292.

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

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

dent being, woven together in the web of experience by *relationes* indifferently *reales et rationis* (and here let me say what I have elsewhere<sup>28</sup> justified: that *entia rationis* are *nothing but* relations with their termini) so far as the animal in its animality is concerned. What is important for the animal as animal is the cycle of day and night and of the seasons, not whether this cycle results from the sun moving round the earth or the earth moving round the sun.

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

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

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

necessarily contains materially elements of *entia rationis*, and indeed “hangs together” experientially and objectively (as opposed to merely physically) *because of* these *relationes rationis* (the animal organism could not otherwise so much as orientate itself in space to find its way home!), perceptual awareness as sensory does not and cannot directly reveal the difference between the *entia rationis* and the *entia realia* in the constitution of the Umwelt. Perceptual awareness in its sensory dimension relies unwittingly on the functional equivalence, described above, of mind-dependent and mind-independent relations for purposes of action and interaction. But the point is so fundamental, yet so little considered or generally understood, that it bears repeating here<sup>29</sup>:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hence the *cri de coeur* Maritain utters<sup>30</sup> with his *Peasant of the Garonne*: “Whoever does not love the truth is not a human being!” The ability to be concerned with the truth is unique to the rational animal, predicated on the species-specifically human awareness of the objective world under the guise of being, transforming from the outset the animal Umwelt of objects ready-to-hand into an objective ‘life-world’ of things present-at-hand, able to be investigated for what they are.

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

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

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<sup>30</sup> J. Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, 1968, 85.

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

Human animals do not differ from other animals in being dependent upon signs for the whole extent of their knowledge of objects<sup>31</sup>, but they do differ from the other animals, as Maritain was the first to say<sup>32</sup>, in *knowing that there are signs*, precisely because – as has only just come to be realized in any general way<sup>33</sup>, thanks to the spread of semiotics – signs *consist* in relations (though only relations of a certain type, namely, as Poinset first noted and Peirce more recently, irreducibly *triadic* relations in contradistinction to dyadic relations of cause and effect) and hence cannot be perceived by sense, internal or external, but grasped in their distinctive positive being only by the understanding in its difference from sense<sup>34</sup>.

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

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

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

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

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

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

The definition of the human being as the semiotic animal, it may thus be said<sup>35</sup>, best aligns the traditional thinking on realism with the observation of Cardinal Ratzinger (1970) that „the undivided sway of thinking in terms of substance is ended; relation is discovered as an equally valid primordial mode of reality”.

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

### Streszczenie

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

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

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<sup>35</sup> See note 24 above.