



SYNTHESIS

Journal for Philosophy

ISSUE 5

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SYNTHESIS

Journal for Philosophy

5

Several Senses of Being Starting from Metaphysics $\Delta 7$

Edited by Giovanni Ventimiglia

December 2025

ISSN: 2785-3942

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A faithful betrayal? Traces of Plato in Avicenna's notion of truth

Abstract: This article proposes that Avicenna's concept of truth, which combines true and necessary being, shows a hitherto overlooked Platonic influence, which could have determined his departure from the Aristotelian notion of truth. Such an influence would be evidenced by some allusions to Plato's *Sophist* and *Timaeus* that cannot be inferred directly from Aristotelian texts. The way Avicenna discusses these passages in his analysis of the first notions of the intellect would imply that he was more acquainted with Platonic texts than usually acknowledged. The first section compares Plato's and Aristotle's texts on the many senses of being and particularly on the truth, to point out their common context and their differences. The second section examines three references to Plato in Avicenna's *Metaphysics* that are relevant to the latter's discussion on the primary notions of the intellect and to his position on truth. The last section analyzes Avicenna's notion of truth against the Platonic background, to show how his departure from Aristotle is consistent with the Aristotelian distinction of the senses of being.

Keywords: Aristotle, Modality, Primary Notions of the Intellect, Senses of Being

One aspect that sets apart Avicenna's *Metaphysics* concerns his analysis of the foundations of that science, including a critical assessment of Aristotle's determination – or lack thereof – of the subject and the first principles of *Metaphysics*. In a way, it predates Kant's criticism of Aristotle's account of the categories, because Aristotle's exposition lacks a principle to deduce the relation an hierarchy between the different categories, besides assigning a primacy to substance over accidents (Kritik der reinen Vernunft A 81; Kant 1973: 66–67; Kritik der reinen Vernunft B 107; Kant 1962: 93–94). However, Avicenna's criticism seems to be directed to Aristotle's oft repeated sentence “τὸ ὄν λέγεται πολλαχῶς”. Here as well, rather than explaining the relation of the senses

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to one another and to being in general, Aristotle simply enumerates those senses before starting their analysis (Aristotle 1957: Δ c. 7 1017a 7–b 9; *ibid.*: E c. 2–4 1026a 33–1028a 6). Moreover, the only passage of the *Metaphysics* that affirms that the many senses of being converge into one, the οὐσία (Aristotle 1957: Γ c. 2 1003a 33–b 18), there is no mention to the usual four senses. Instead, the primacy of οὐσία is asserted by indicating that all the different species or levels of being (including non-being) ultimately refer to the οὐσία. In another relevant passage to the many senses of being, at the beginning of *Physics* A, Aristotle sets up his criticism of Parmenides' position that "all [that is] is one (ἐν τὸ πᾶν)" under the assumption that being is said in many senses, without any further elaboration (Aristotle 1950: A c. 2–3 185a 20–187a 11). The fact that these elements, and an enquiry on their foundations, are never presented in a systematic manner in the extant writings of Aristotle induced Avicenna –as well as many other philosophers and commentators before him– to elaborate his own account of the subject of *Metaphysics*, its first principles and the relation between the many senses of being.

Among Avicenna's key departures from Aristotle there is one that takes place at the opening paragraph of *Metaph.* I c. 8, where he expands the notion of truth in a way that seems to counter Aristotle's distinction between truth and the modal sense of being (ἐνέργεια and δύναμις). The passage goes as follows¹:

As regards truth (*al-ḥaqq* ["realtà" o "verità", Lizzini]), one understands by it existence in external things absolutely (*fī 'l-a'yān muṭlaqan*), and one understands by it permanent existence (*dā'im*), and one understands by it the state of the verbal statement (*qawl*) or the belief (*'aqd*) indicating the state of the external thing, if it corresponds with it, such that we would say "This is a true statement" and "This is a true

¹ We've followed the translation of Michael M. Marmura (2005), indicating, when needed, the differences with the translations by Anawati (1978), Lizzini (2002) and Koutzarova (2007), as well as the relevant Arabic words used.

belief". The Necessary Existent would thus be the permanently true in itself [è vero per sé continuativamente, Lizzini], while the possible existent would be true through another and false in itself. Hence, all things other than One Necessary Existent are, in themselves, false. As for the truth by way of correspondence (*al-muṭābaqa*), it is similar to the veracious (*al-ṣādiq*), except that, as I reckon, it is "veracious" when considered in terms of its relation to the fact and "true" when the relation to the fact to it is considered. The statements most deserving of being true are those whose truth (*ṣidq*) is permanent (continuativa, Lizzini); and, of these, the most deserving [de l'être (vraie), Anawati] are those whose truth is primary, requiring no cause (Avicenna 2005: 38–39; cf. id. 1978: 123; id. 2002: 107; Lizzini 2023: 248).

As it is well known, given that for Aristotle a true statement depends on its coincidence with the thing that is its foundation, the thing itself is to be found in one the other senses –categorical, either accidental or proper, and modal being– rather than in true being (Lizzini 2023: 250–256. 258). Just as when he distinguishes the many senses of being, Aristotle only points out that there is a relation between true sentences and the things they present but does not elaborate on their connection any further. Nevertheless, the comprehensive analysis carried out by Plato in the *Sophist* of the broadest, most universal senses of the notion of being, and of the relation between thought and language as well, lends itself to a comparison with Aristotle's position, and casts some light into the aspects Aristotle does not elaborate upon. The first section of this article focuses on this comparison, to show how Aristotle is related to Plato when he distinguishes the many senses of being, particularly true being.

This comparison also evidences a certain degree of relation between Avicenna and Plato, which could help to explain the former's departure from Aristotle's concept of truth, among other divergences. As it becomes clear from the passage quoted above, Avicenna establishes a connection between truth and existence that contradicts their distinction in Aristotle, since they correspond to two different senses of being. However, such a connection is consistent with what Plato affirms

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in the *Sophist* regarding being and language. Although it is difficult to establish that Avicenna had direct knowledge of Plato's writings, when he discusses the primary notions of the intellect, the notion of "thing", and the distinction between the necessary existent and all other existents, there are three distinct allusions to the *Sophist* the *Timaeus* that could account for a greater acquaintance of Avicenna's with Plato. The second section enquires into these passages, to determine whether they could lead to infer a hitherto overlooked Platonic influence on Avicenna. The third section examines whether Avicenna's departure from Aristotle's notion of truth could account for that influence at a deeper level, one that would allow the Persian philosopher to contradict Aristotle, while remaining faithful to the principles the Aristotelian position is founded upon.

1. Traces of Plato's influence on Aristotle's conception of true being and how it is different to modal being

The main consequence of Plato's discussion about the possibility of conceiving "non-being", which takes place in the central part of the *Sophist*, is that "being" neither is nor cannot be conceived in only one sense, i.e. univocally. This implies that "being" is said of everything that is but, at the same time, that none of the things that exist is identical with "being" (Plato 1995: 242b-248e; id. 1985: 216-241; Seligman 1974: 22-32; Rosen 1999: 212-225; Notomi 1999: 211-230). As a corollary to this discussion, and as a first step into the new direction he intends to give to the inquiry on "being", Plato advances a definition of "being" as "to possess any sort of power (or capacity, cf. Fronterotta 2008) either to affect anything else or to be affected" (δύναμις εἶτ' εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν ἕτερον ὁτιοῦν πεφυκὸς εἶτ' εἰς τὸ παθεῖν, Plato 1995: 247c-248a; id. 1985: 234; Brisson 2008; Fronterotta 2008). From that first definition, Plato then presents several senses of "being", which he calls the "highest genera".

Although they are mutually exclusive –motion and rest, sameness and otherness–, they are related to their respective opposite and, in the case of sameness and otherness, take place at the same time in the same thing that already participates of motion and rest. Such plurality of senses of “being” not only allows Plato to prove that even contradictory or mutually exclusive things are able to exist, but also that “non-being” is also one of the senses of “being”, insofar it coincides with one of the “highest genera”, “otherness” (Plato 1995: 250a–252d. 254b–259d; id. 1985: 250–259. 273–298; Seligman 1974: 33–51. 58–63. 73–86; Rosen 1999: 229–290; Notomi 1999: 230–234. 240–246; Ambuel 2013; O’Brien 2019). The following section explores the relation between Plato’s solution and Aristotle critical position regarding the many senses of “being”.

1.1. Aristotle’s sentence on the many senses of being as a reformulation of Plato’s “highest genera” in a broader context

Plato’s solution regarding “non-being” belonging to the sphere of “being” rests upon two principles. First, that everything that is, is referred to “being”, while at the same time is not identical with it, i.e. it is capable of existing and being conceived, insofar it takes part of “being”, while at the same time it keeps its own determination, which makes it something other from “being” and any other thing that exists. Second, Plato realizes that it is impossible to define “being” according to a given quality or entity, as his predecessors did, but he rather conceives “being” as both the slightest and the most comprehensive notion, one that is to be found in everything and which does not exclude anything from its sphere, unless it contradicts itself. Although the first two “highest genera”, motion and rest (κίνησις καὶ στάσις) do exclude one another, they are both equally related to “being” and, consequently, none can prevail over the other or preclude its existence in absolute terms. The last two “highest genera”, “sameness” and “otherness” (τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ θάτερον), on the other

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hand, even if they are opposite, do not prevent their opposite to take place at the same time in the same thing and, above all, they are almost co-extensive with “being”, since all things, except themselves, take part of both at the same time. Moreover, these last two genera determine the terms of the relation between all beings, their “communication” (κοινωνία) with “being” and with all other things.

With regard to Aristotle’s criticism of this position, the greatest point of contention seems to be Plato’s choice of conceiving “being” and the other “highest genera” as “genera”, especially considering that for Aristotle genus and species will have a definite technical meaning. Deeming “being”, “sameness”, “otherness” and the rest to be mere “genera” implies that they should be conceived as any other thing, and that is incompatible with the universal character proper to those notions. However, it has been argued that Aristotle’s discussion on the principles of being (most notably in *Metaph.* B c. 3, cf. Aristotle 1957: 998a 20–999a 23) does not necessarily mean that he refutes Plato’s view altogether, but rather that he gives a critical assessment, which addresses some of the difficulties he encounters in that view (Berti 2009). Should one give Plato the benefit of the doubt and –given the highly abstract nature of his enquiry²– allow his broad use of “genus”, it becomes evident that he is interested in outlining the opposite operations that all things seem to share –motion and rest– and, on the other hand, the terms according to which these most universal operations relate to one another and to all other things. Moreover, these “highest genera” cannot be identical with “being”, because each possesses its own operation, one that distinguishes

² Cf. M. L. West’s observation in the introduction to his edition of Hesiod’s *Theogony* (1966: 31–32): “... like other Greeks, [Hesiod] uses the word ‘god’ for beings of very diverse kinds ... Lastly, things that we should call abstractions: Death, Sleep, Deceit, Sex, Strife, Battles, Lies, Victory, Power, etc. In Hesiod’s time it was not understood what abstractions are – no more was it in Plato’s. They must be something; they are invisible, imperishable, and have great influence over human affairs; they must be gods”.

each from the others, while at the same time allows their opposite to operate as well. Hence, even if motion, for instance, excludes rest absolutely from itself, it does not prevent rest to take place and to exist as well, and vice versa, because both motion and rest participate of “being”. Considering all genera together, they establish the framework according to which existence can take place, i.e. the terms according to which things constitute themselves and affect one another by their respective operations. However, Aristotle relegates this framework to the physical world, because he considers it not to be universal enough to be the foundation of all reality, including the things not affected by motion and rest. Consequently, he agrees with Plato’s framework only insofar it allows him to counter the position, held by Empedocles and other φυσικοί, that claims that physical bodies or their operations are the principles of physical reality (cf. Aristotle 2012: A c. 6 987b 21–988a 7; Steel 2012, 191–197).

Moreover, Aristotle does agree with Plato on the principle of that framework, namely that “being” is intrinsically plural. This intrinsic plurality does not consist in a division of being, as if it were a genus, but in the fact that “sameness” and “otherness” participate of “being”. He agrees on the framework of the mutually exclusive realities as well, on the condition that it is restricted to things subject to motion and abstract, mathematical entities, which depend on the former. Hence, the “highest genera” (at least the two mutually exclusive ones, motion and rest) would correspond to the sense of “being” Aristotle calls “categorical”, both accidental and proper (κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθ’ αὐτό, cf. Aristotle 1957: Δ c. 7 1017a 7–30; Owens 1978: 307–311). The other two senses, the modal one and truth and falsity, would transcend the categorical sense as a whole and qualify the things that take place in it, insofar they are capable of existing and are related to the intellect to be known as the thing they are. Just as “sameness” and “otherness”, both act and potency and “being” as true are co-extensive with “being” but, since they qualify

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“being” and are related to their opposite –act to potency, truth to falsity–, they cannot be identical with “being”. The following section compares Plato’s determination of truth and falsity with Aristotle’s position and outlines the relation between truth and modality.

1.2. Plato’s account of falsity and the terms of the distinction between “being” as existent and as intelligible

Once he has established that “being” implies a multiplicity that makes it possible for different, even mutually incompatible things to exist, i.e. the terms according to which “non-being” is compatible with “being”, Plato examines how is it possible to affirm falsity. In this section, the several allusions to grammar and language in general he used in the previous sections –his digression about the compatibility between genera, letters and words, for instance, especially in relation to grammar and dialectics (Plato 1995: 252e–254b; id. 1985: 262–273)– become relevant to examine the relation between being and language. First, he observes that a statement (λόγος) implies a combination (συνπλοκή) of two different kinds of words, nouns and verbs (ὀνόματα καὶ ῥήματα). On one hand, each of them has a different operation, nouns are related to things that perform actions, while verbs refer to the actions themselves. Those operations are complementary, and when a noun and a verb are “weaved together”, they form a statement, which “gives information about facts or events in the present or past or future”. On the other hand, insofar as they are words, they are not just uttered sounds, but signify something, i.e. they present something that is (δηλώματα). Thus, a statement does not simply put together two kinds of words but, by fitting them together (συναρμόττειν), presents the operation a thing performs and, consequently, becomes a λόγος σημαίνων (Plato 1995: 261d–262e; id. 1985: 303–308; Fronterotta 2013: 205–211). This leads to a second combination, namely between the statement and the thing it refers to. Here, the

difficulty Plato had found at the beginning of his analysis of “non-being”, that it is impossible to even formulate a statement about “non-being”, since every element of a statement refers to something that participates of “being” (Plato 1995: 238a–239c; 1985: 205–209), appears in a positive sense, because “non-being” is also part of “being”, insofar it corresponds to the genus of “otherness”. Therefore, the relation between the statement and the thing it refers to entails a qualification, “true” or “false”, which depends on whether the statement “states ... the things that are (or the facts) as they are” or “states ... things different from the things that are ... [namely] things that are-not as being” (Plato 1995: 262e–263d; id. 1985: 308–317).

Now, since it is possible to formulate false statements, they should also be present in the different ways human beings conceive reality, namely through thinking (διάνοια), judgement (δόξα) and appearing (φαντασία). Discourse (λόγος) is present in all these senses, taking place either in written or spoken sentences, which function as “a stream which flows from the mind through the lips with sound” (διὰ τοῦ στόματος ἰὸν μετὰ φθόγγου, Plato 1995: 263e; id. 1985: 318), or in the act of thinking, as an “inward dialogue carried on by the mind with itself without spoken sound” (ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς αὐτὴν διάλογος ἄνευ φωνῆς γιγνόμενος ... διάνοια, Plato 1995: *ibid.*; id. 1985: *ibid.*). Consequently, in the case of thinking (διάνοια), the dialogue the mind carries on with itself is bound to follow the rules of dialectic; hence, it should always be true. In the case of judgement (δόξα), the dialogue is further qualified by affirmation and negation, i.e. the critical apprehension is also informed by the conviction that one statement is true, and the opposite statement is false. When the dialogue does not concern the things as they are in themselves, i.e. considers them in simple and universal terms, but according to how they appear to the senses, judgement is accompanied by appearance (φαντασία). The fact that a discourse or enunciation is capable of being false shows that falsity can be present in all these modes of apprehending

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reality as well and, hence, it is clear where the sophist hides when presenting his deceptions (Plato 1995: 263e–264b; id. 1985: 318–320).

Even more so than in the previous section, Aristotle elaborates on the relation between λόγος –conceived as sentence, discourse and thinking in general– and truth in several places, most notably in *De interpretatione* c. 1–6 (Aristotle 1949: 16a 1–17a 37; id. 2002: 43–47) and in the analyses of true being in his *Metaphysics* (Aristotle 1957: Δ c. 7 1017a 31–35; E c. 4 1027b 18–34; Θ c. 10 1051a 34–1052a 11; 2006: 247–269). In the case of the structure of sentences, Aristotle follows the general scheme of Plato, while he also elaborates upon the way affirmative and negative sentences behave regarding truth and falsity³. Aristotle distinguishes between simple sentences (λόγοι), which are either affirmative (καταφάσεις) or negative (ἀποφάσεις), and statement-making sentences (λόγοι ἀποφαντικοί), the only ones “in which there is truth and falsity” (Aristotle 1957: c. 4 16b 26–17a 7; id. 2002: 45–46). Most notably, even though he generally agrees with Plato on the terms of the relation between things and discourse, Aristotle conceives it as a relation between the affections in the soul (παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς) and spoken and written expressions (φάσεις, i.e. nouns and verbs) and sentences. Unlike Plato, though, he distinguishes between thinking and mere imagination (φαντασία), because the latter “differs from assertion and denial”, whereas truth and falsity consist in “an interweaving of thoughts” (συμπλοκὴ νοημάτων), which, even if they are different from imagination, at least must be related to it (Aristotle 1963: Γ c. 8 432a 10–14; id. 2016: 65).

To complete his analysis in the *Sophist*, Plato examines two sentences, “Theaetetus sits” and “Theaetetus flies”, in order to establish how to ascertain the truth or falsity of that kind of sentences, which are not by themselves true or false (Plato 1995: 262e–263b; id. 1985: 309–317).

³ For instance, that truth and falsity can be found in both affirmative and negative sentences (Aristotle 1949: c. 9 18a 28–29) or some differences between universal and particular sentences (Aristotle 1949: c. 7–8 17a 38–18a 27).

As Fronterotta observes (2013: 212–219), the truth of the first sentence and the falsity of the second cannot be completely confirmed by the reader. As for the first, since we readers do not see whether Theaetetus sits or not, we must rely on what Plato says, namely that, at that moment during the dialogue, Theaetetus sits. As for the falsity of the second sentence, one must rely on the fact that Theaetetus' is part of the species "human being" and, consequently, it would be impossible for him to fly by himself. However, if one considers both sentences in universal terms, the falsity of "Theaetetus flies" is confirmed *a priori* by the fact that flying is not among the attributes that are compatible with human beings, whereas it is impossible to confirm *a priori* the truth of a sentence such as "Theaetetus sits", given that the connection between subject and predicate is not universal nor necessary, but particular and contingent. Moreover, although the truth of that kind of sentences is confirmed with the help of appearance (φαντασία), appearance alone is not enough to be the basis of a true universal sentence, because it is only *a posteriori* and, most of all, it is not a principle valid for all members of the species. On the other hand, neither the fact that "to sit" is an attribute compatible with all human beings –and, for that matter, with all animals that have hind legs– can be the foundation to assert the truth of such a sentence, insofar is an accidental activity, because human beings sit only temporarily. Since, as Aristotle affirms, truth and falsity are not present in things, but only in the intellect (Aristotle 1957: E c. 4, 1027a 25–27; Θ c. 10, 1051b 3–5), it follows that the truth of non-self-evident, i.e. contingent sentences must be founded on a principle that is present in things and common to all of them, i.e. as co-extensive with "being" as truth and falsity are, and just as intrinsically related to "being" as they are. As it turns out, given that "being" considered in the categorial sense is not as co-extensive as truth and falsity, but limited to things that belong to a genus or species, and is divided into *per se* and accidental categorial being (Aristotle 1957: Δ c. 7 1017a 22–24), only potency and act remains as

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the real basis to assert the truth and falsity of contingent sentences. Consequently, however related truth and modality are, they remain different senses of “being”.

2. Avicenna’s allusions to Plato in his analysis of the first notions of the intellect

The influence of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* on Avicenna’s *Book of the Cure* (*Kitāb aš-Šifā’*), and on his *Metaphysics* (*al-’Ilāhīyāt*) in particular, is evident both in the structure of the work and the subjects he deals with (Bertolacci 2006: 265–302; Menn 2013: 143–146)⁴. Such structure only reflects Avicenna’s own course of studies, which added some texts to the standard Muslim curriculum (Gutas 2014: 169–179; Reisman 2003). Regarding the *’Ilāhīyāt*, besides Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Themistius’ commentary on *Metaph. A* and Kindī’s *Inclusive Philosophy* (*al-Falsafa ad-dāhila*, Gutas 2014: 172), in his autobiography Avicenna points out the influence of Fārābī’s short treatise on the purpose of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, a text which helped him to understand Aristotle’s treatise (Gutas 2014: 269–288; Koutzarova 2009: 13–38). However, his attitude towards Aristotle was critical, and as he grew more independent in his thinking, this criticism became more incisive as well (Reisman 2013: 19–22; Gutas 2014: 323–334). On the other hand, although in his autobiography Avicenna suggests having read Plato’s *Sophist*, his criticism is even harsher, and he is ready to dismiss Platonical positions in favor of those of Aristotle, because he considers Aristotle’s thought, unlike Plato’s philosophy, to be “matured to the point of reaping”⁵.

⁴ Cf. Wisnovsky (2000) for a discussion on the influence of *kalām* in Avicenna’s notion of thing (*šay’iyya*), which gives a broader context to section 2.2. of this article.

⁵ Cf. Avicenna’s autobiography in Gutas 2014: 28 – 29: “Aristotle’s teacher [Plato] digressed from the due course and did not treat the subject adequately in what he wrote in the book which he called *The Sophist* [‘Sophistics’, *sūfistīqā*]. His digression was due to his

We propose not only that there are distinct traces of Avicenna's critical attitude towards Plato in some sections of the first treatise of his *Metaphysics*, but that those passages evidence, if not a direct knowledge of Plato's writings, a familiarity that has been hitherto overlooked. In this section, we focus on three passages of Avicenna's analysis of the primary conceptions of the intellect (*al-ma'ānī*, "begreifliche Strukturen", according to Koutzarova, 2009: 310), "thing" (*aš-šay'*), "existent" (*al-mawǧūd*) and "necessary" (*ad-ḍarūrī*) in particular. This discussion with Platonic positions would give a general context to his conception of truth, which in part would help to understand his departure from the Aristotelian position.

2.1. Being as capacity and the immediate character of the first notions

The first allusion appears at the beginning of the analysis of the first conceptions of the intellect, when Avicenna affirms that any attempt to explain a prior concept from a posterior notion falls into a circular demonstration:

[...] none of these things can be shown by a proof totally devoid of circularity or by the exposition of better known things. Hence, whoever attempts to place in them something as a [defining] constituent falters – as, for example, one who says: "It is of the existent's true nature to be either active or acted on". This, while inescapably the case, belongs to

confusion of Logic with Physics and Theology, [subjects] feebly distinguished by philosophers before the appearance of this great man [Aristotle]. Plato's inadequate treatment was due to the fact that the only way for the occurrence of sophistry which he understood was homonymy. It is proper, then, that the truth be told: if the extent of Plato's achievements in Philosophy is what came down to us of him, then his wares were paltry indeed and philosophy in his time had not matured to the point of reaping. Whoever affects allegiance to him, having at his disposal only the amount of knowledge about Plato that has been transmitted to us, does it either out of envy for Aristotle or out of a foolish notion that the prior in time is also in a discipline prior in rank. The truth, however, is the opposite".

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5; Avicenna 2005: 23; id. 1978: 107; id. 2002: 71; Koutzarova 2009: 312–313).

That “whoever” who claims that the nature of the existent is either to be active or acted on, i.e. is capable of exercising an action or to suffer the action of another, seems to be none other than the Stranger in Plato’s *Sophist*. And although Avicenna could have been indirectly acquainted with this definition of “existent”, the context in which it appears in Plato’s dialogue is relevant to the point Avicenna is trying to make. Since all primary conceptions are immediate, no other notion which depends on them can render them more intelligible. Hence, Plato’s definition of “being” as “capacity” (δύναμις) –which itself is a reaction to the positions that identify “being” with a certain reality, either material or immaterial– is bound to fail, because it falls into a circular proof. Even if Avicenna agrees with Plato in conceiving “existent” as one of the most universal conceptions, he disagrees with his definition of “being” as “capacity”, not because it is wrong, but because the terms of that definition, “activity” and “passivity”, are not as immediate as “being” and depend on it to be known. Moreover, to define “existent” or any other primary conception in the same way as we define all other entities, entails the risk of conceiving them as any other posterior, dependent and particular thing, not as the universal, immediate and independent conceptions they are, i.e. to conceive “existent” as completely identical to “thing”.

2.2. Plato’s analysis of false sentences as the point of departure of the distinction and affinity between “thing” (šay’) and “existent” (*mawğūd*)

The second allusion comes immediately after the previous one and allows Avicenna to determine how the notion of existent (*mawğūd*) is subject to “thing” (šay’), thus establishing a primacy of the latter over the former:

The case is similar with somebody's statement: "The thing is that about which it is valid [to give] an informative statement", for "is valid" (*yaṣihhu*) is less known than "the thing"; and "informative statement" is [likewise] less known than "the thing" ... in this and similar things there may be some art of directing attention (*tanbīh* [un certain rappel, Anawati]); but, in reality, if you say, "The thing is that about which it is valid [to give] an informative statement", it is as if you have said, "The thing is the thing about which it is valid [to give] an informative statement", because the meaning of "whatever" (*amr* [ce, Anawati; Sache, Koutzarova]), "that which" (*al-ladī* [dont, Anawati; dasjenige, welches, Koutzarova]), and "the thing" (*aš-šay'*) is one and the same. You would have then included "the thing" in the definition of "the thing". Still, we do not deny that through this [statement, *qawl*] and its like, despite its vitiating starting point, there occurs in some manner a directing of attention to the thing ... "The thing", or its equivalent, may be used in all languages to indicate some other meaning. For, to everything (*amr* [eine jede Sache, Koutzarova]) there is a reality (*haqīqah*) by virtue of which it is what it is ... It is that which we should perhaps call "proper existence" (*al-wuḡūdu l-hāṣṣ*), not intending by this the meaning given to affirmative existence (*al-wuḡūdu l-'iṭbātī* [behauptbare Daß-Sein, Koutzarova]); for the expression "existence" (*al-wuḡūd*) is also used to denote many meanings (*al-ma'ānī* [begreifliche Strukturen, Koutzarova]), one of which is the reality (*al-haqīqah* [vérité, Anawati; Wesen, Koutzarova]) a thing happens to have. Thus, [the reality] a thing happens to have is, as it were, its proper existence (*Metaph.* I c. 5; Avicenna 2005: 23–24; id. 1978: 107–108; id. 2002: 71–73; Koutzarova 2009: 313–315).

Here, Avicenna considers the negative result of the first section of the analysis of "being" in the *Sophist* –that it is impossible to conceive or enunciate absolute "non-being", because in that case something that is would be predicated of "non-being", hence one should admit a degree of being to "non-being"– in affirmative terms, namely that "being", or rather "thing", is conceived and enunciated of everything that is, i.e. of every "thing", even if in every case "thing" is predicated of another "thing". Although Avicenna admits that it might appear like another case of circular predication, "because the meaning of 'whatever', 'that which' and

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‘thing’ is one and the same”, he also points out that “thing” is the common name for everything that is “this something”, i.e. that possesses an intrinsic determination, a reality or truth (*al-ḥaqīqah*). In other words, the notion of “thing” stands for every concrete thing – “human being” or “horse”, for instance –, insofar each of them has its own name that refers to its intrinsic determination, by virtue of which each is what it is (“‘The thing’, or its equivalent, may be used in all languages to indicate some other meaning. For, to everything there is a reality by virtue of which it is what it is”).

However, since every one of them is a thing, just as any other, the notion of thing cannot be identified with any particular thing, nor can be an essential attribute of any, i.e. “thingness” (*ṣay’iyya*) cannot be considered as just another attribute of a thing, given that because of it things constitute as such. As Avicenna continues:

[...] It is evident that each thing has a reality proper to it (*ḥaqīqatun ḥāṣṣah*) – namely, its quiddity (*māhīyatuhū*). It is known that the reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) proper to each thing is something else than the existence that corresponds to what is affirmed (*al-’itbāt* [die Behauptung des Daß-Seins, Koutzarova). This is because, if you said, “The reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) of such a thing exists either in concrete things, or in the soul, or absolutely, being common to both”, this would have a meaning [that was] realized and understood; [whereas], if you were to say, “The reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) of such a thing is the reality of such a thing”, or “The reality of such a thing is a reality”, this would be superfluous, useless talk [une tautologie inutile, Anawati]. [Again], if you were to say, “The reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) of such a thing is a thing”, this, too, would not be a statement imparting knowledge of what is not known. Even less useful than this is for you to say, “Reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) is a thing”, unless by “thing” you mean “the existent”; for then it is as though you have said, “The reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) of such a thing is an existing reality” (*Metaph.* I c. 5; Avicenna 2005: 24–25; id. 1978: 108; id. 2002: 73; Koutzarova 2009: 315–316)

This is Avicenna's way of saying that "existent" is not a real predicate, insofar "existent" coincides with "thing", i.e. consists in the quiddity or intrinsic determination of every given thing, in its *al-ḥaqīqah*. In other words, "thingness", i.e. quiddity or *al-ḥaqīqah*, are the principle according to which all things constitute in each case as "this something" and, consequently, it is redundant to say, for instance, that "horseness" is the quiddity of a horse, and "humanity" the quiddity of a human being, but to say that "horseness" is a thing, i.e. it is something real, capable of existing, is not redundant, but adds something to our knowledge of "horseness". However, as a universal, no *ḥaqīqah* can exist as an independent, self-subsistent entity, just as Plato's forms; hence, considered according to the most extreme interpretation, the *ḥaqīqah* exists only in the intellect (*Metaph.* V c. 2; Avicenna 2004: 157; id. 1978: 240; id. 2002: 467), which is and is known as "this something" and "this something" only – "humanity" or "horseness", for instance. Moreover, since quiddities are only "this something", in themselves they are prior to universality, individuality and existence, all of which converge in them, as it is clear from this passage of *Metaph.* V:

The universal, then, inasmuch as it is a universal, is one thing; and, inasmuch as it is something to which universality attaches, it is [another] thing. The universal inasmuch as it is a universal is that which is denoted by one of [the above] definitions. If that [indicated thing] happens to be "human" or "horse", then there is another meaning other than the meaning of universality – namely [to take the latter example] "horseness". For the definition of "horseness" is not the definition of universality, nor is universality included in the definition of "horseness". For "horseness" has a definition that is not in need of the definition of universality, but is [something] to which universality accidentally occurs. For, in itself, it is nothing at all except "horseness"; for, in itself, it is neither one nor many and exists neither in concrete things nor in the soul, existing in none of these things either in potency or in act, such that [these] are included in "horseness". Rather, in terms of itself, it is only "horseness" ... Thus, "horseness" – on the condition

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that, in its definition, it corresponds to many things – becomes general; and, because it is taken with properties and accidents to which one points, it is specific (*ḥāṣṣah*). “Horseness”, however, is in itself only “horseness” (*Metaph.* V c. 1; Avicenna 2005: 149; id. 1978: 234; id. 2002: 445).

The notion of *ṣay'*, then, is prior to *mawḡūd*, because “thingness” is the same as quiddity (*ḥaqīqah*), i.e. the intrinsic determination that constitutes every thing as “this something”, and everything else that determines the way things are – their being only in the intellect because they are universal notions, their existing independently from the intellect because they are real, or their actual or merely potential existence – is posterior to it and occurs to it.

Once Avicenna establishes the primacy of *ṣay'* over *mawḡūd*, asserting that it is true that a thing is “that about which information is given”, he continues examining the possibility of affirming absolute “non-being”. Once again, his exposition follows Plato’s parallel passage in the *Sophist*:

If by the nonexistent is meant the nonexistent in external reality (*al-ma' dūm fī-l- 'a'yāni*), this would be possible; for it is possible for a thing that does not exist in external things to exist (*tābit* [soit établie, Anawati] in the mind (*ad-dihn*). But if [something] other than this is meant, this would be false and there would be no information about it at all. It would not be known except only as [something] conceived in the soul. [To the notion] that [the nonexistent] would be conceived in the soul as a concept that refers (*tushīr* [désignerait, Anawati]) to some external thing, [we say] “Certainly not!”. Regarding the informative statement (*al-ḥabar* [Aussagbarkeit, Koutzarova]), [the above analysis is correct] because information is always about something realized in the mind (*mutaḥaqqiq* [“vérifié”, Anawati; im Verstande Erfassten, Koutzarova]). No affirmative information about the absolutely nonexistent is [ever] given. If, moreover, information about it is given in the negative, then an existence in some respect is given in the mind (*Metaph.* I c. 5; Avicenna 2005: 25; id. 1978: 108–109; id. 2002: 75; Koutzarova 2009: 317–318).

First, he concedes that it is possible to call “nonexistent” something that admittedly exists only in the intellect, such as universal concepts. On the other hand, regarding absolute nonexistence, Avicenna refutes the possibility of both affirmative or negative statements about it, and any statement that refers to absolute nonexistence is regarded as a false statement, and accepted as such, as long as it is meant to be a mere statement, not related to external things. Just as Plato asserts in the *Sophist*, a statement implies the attribution of something that is, and no existent can be attributed to absolute “non-being”, otherwise the sentence would presuppose its existence, and here the contradiction is self-evident. Avicenna reformulates this interdiction by saying that “information is always about something realized [i.e. determined as a thing] in the mind”, but he also adds something which he will explain immediately after this passage, namely that no sentence regarding absolute “non-being” can be imagined –echoing Plato’s distinction between thinking, judgement and appearing– in the same way as sentences that refer to external things. Avicenna then turns his attention to what he considers the key notion regarding being:

[This is] because our saying “it” [il nostro dire “è”, Lizzini] entails a reference (*iṣārah* [désignation, Anawati; Hinweis, Koutzarova]), and a reference to the nonexistent that has no concept in any respect at all in the mind is impossible. For how can anything affirmative be said about the nonexistent when the meaning of our statement, “The nonexistent is such”, is that the description “such” is realized for the nonexistent (*ḥaṣīl lil- ma’dūm* [est acquis au non-existant, Anawati]), there being no difference between the realized (*al-ḥaṣīl* [das Verwirklichte, Koutzarova]) and the existent? It would be as though we have said, “This description exists for the nonexistent” (Avicenna 2005: 25; id. 1978: 109; id. 2002: 75–77; Koutzarova 2009: 318).

If the defining notion of *ṣay’* was quiddity or *al-ḥaqīqah*, what characterizes *mawǧūd* is the fact that there is no difference between

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existing and the realized (*al-ḥāṣil*). Thus, existence is not something extrinsically added to the thing, but is its realization, its subsisting independently from the mind, and this realization is known when it is indicated in a sentence such as “*a* is *b*”. Therefore, although regarding its *ḥaqīqah*, *šay’* is prior to *mawǧūd*, the opposite is true concerning the actual, individual determination of the existent, insofar it is realized, i.e. it exists and is known as an existent (Koutzarova 2009: 346–350).

Furthermore, Avicenna considers both *mawǧūd* and *šay’* (or *amr*) to be intrinsically related and concomitants (*mutalāzimāt*), even if they differ in their proper determinations: “Hence, you have now understood the way in which ‘the thing’ differs from what is understood by ‘the existent’ and ‘the realized’ and that, despite this difference, the two [that is, ‘the thing’ and ‘the existent’] are necessary concomitants” (Avicenna 2004: 27; id. 1978: 110; id. 2002: 79; Koutzarova 2009: 321; Druart 2001). In other words, insofar a thing is intrinsically related to *mawǧūd*, it possesses what Koutzarova (2009: 148–149) calls a “possibility to realization” (“Möglichkeit zur Verwirklichung, [*taḥṣīl*, *ṭubūt*]”), i.e. it is capable of independent existence, and when it is realized (*al-ḥāṣil*) it becomes one with all its external determinations. Once Avicenna has established this affinity, he introduces the different ways existence can take place, namely necessarily or by an external cause. Here, too, there is an allusion to Plato, this time even more clear.

2.3. Causality as the main distinction between necessary and contingent existence

Avicenna’s last reference to Plato, taken almost verbatim from the *Timaeus*, appears at the beginning of his analysis of necessary being (*Metaph.* I c. 6):

We thus say: The things that enter existence bear a [possible] twofold division in the mind. Among them there will be that which, when considered in itself, its existence would be not necessary. It is [moreover] clear that its existence would also not be impossible, since otherwise it would not enter existence. This thing is within the bound of possibility [dans le domaine du possible, Anawati]. There will also be among them that which, when considered in itself, its existence would be necessary. We thus say: That which in itself is a necessary existent has no cause, while that which in itself is a possible existent has a cause. Whatever is a necessary existent in itself is a necessary existent in all its aspects. The existence of the Necessary Existent cannot be equivalent [omologa, Lizzini] to the existence of another where each would equal the other as regards necessary existence, becoming [thereby] necessary commitants. The existence of the Necessary Existent cannot at all be a composite, [deriving] from multiplicity. The true nature of the Necessary Existent can in no manner be shared by another (Avicenna 2005: 29–30; id. 1978: 113; id. 2002: 85).

First, Avicenna establishes the terms to conceive the possible and the necessary existent based on the presupposition that they both are capable of existing. Their distinction, however, bears “a [possible] twofold division in the mind”. The possible existent is conceived as different from both the necessary and the impossible existent, but neither of them is to be included in its definition, as it would, if possible being was defined as “what does not exist by necessity nor is impossible for it to exist”. Instead, Avicenna defines possible being as that which does not contradict itself, but whose existence is not implied in its *ḥaqīqah*, because it depends on something else to exist. The fact that it does not contradict itself implies that it is formally a thing, because it is valid to formulate an informative statement about it, even if it is evident that it could not exist independently. On the other hand, in the case of the necessary existent, it already exists and has always existed, because, unlike possible existents, it does not entail a cause, whereas the latter exist as a result of a cause, i.e. they depend on something else that causes

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their *ḥaqīqah* to be realized (Bertolacci 2008: 39–50; Koutzarova 2009: 362–382). This is the same difference Plato affirms in the *Timaeus*:

That which [is always real] is apprehensible by thought with a rational account is the thing that is always unchangeably real; whereas that which is the object of belief together with unreasoning sensation is the thing that becomes and passes away, but never has real being. Again, all that becomes must needs become by the agency of some cause; for without a cause nothing can come to be (Plato 1902: 28a; id. 2014: 22).

There is an important difference between Avicenna and Plato on the way both the eternal and the possible beings are known. According to Plato, who puts in a real, physical context the distinction of the ways human beings conceive reality he had established in the *Sophist*, the eternal being is apprehended by an intellection that takes place through enunciation (“apprehensible by thought with a rational account”), while all things that are subject to generation and destruction are judged by a judgment that takes place through a perception without enunciation (“is the object of belief together with unreasoning sensation”). For Avicenna, in turn, the distinction between necessary and possible being takes place in the intellect, because their *ḥaqīqah* that is subject to causation is apprehended by the intellect prior to their existence, and it predetermines the way their existence will be realized. As he already stated while distinguishing *šay’* from *mawǧūd*, that realization is something that occurs to the thing, namely to its quiddity (*ḥaqīqah*), which exists insofar possesses a possibility to be realized (*taḥṣīl*). This distinction also regards their truth, as we will see in the following section.

3. Avicenna's manifold account of truth and his "faithful betrayal" of Aristotle

In the passage presented at the beginning of this paper, Avicenna distinguishes three senses of truth, namely that it exists absolutely in external things (*fī 'l-a'yān muṭlaquan*), that it signifies permanent existence, and that it is "the state of the verbal statement or of the belief indicating the state of the external thing, if it correspond with it", i.e. as a correspondence between the thing and the understanding. It is immediately apparent that he does not limit the notion of truth to Aristotle's assertion that truth belongs to the intellect. Instead, Avicenna's position seems to consider the existent as true being as well, insofar the thing that possesses a possibility to be realized, once he exists, has realized that possibility. Moreover, if that existence is permanent, so is the truth. Avicenna's betrayal of Aristotle's fourfold distinction of the senses of being would lie in that he identifies true being with the existent, insofar he considers them to be two facets of the same phenomenon, rather than two different, but co-extensive senses of being.

Furthermore, this threefold distinction of truth is consistent with his discrepancy with Plato's account of how the eternal being and the possible things are known, which we noted in section 2.3. Unlike Plato, for whom eternal and changeable being belong to different spheres of reality and, therefore, they are known by the intellect alone or by belief together with "unreasonable sensation" respectively, Avicenna considers that all things are conceived by the intellect –at least regarding the first principles, not the actual process of knowing, which also entails perception–, and the distinction between the possible and the necessary regards their being subject to causation or not, i.e. whether their quiddity (*ḥaqīqah*) depends on something else, as all other things do, or its existence is neither subject to causality nor to universality, because it

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consists on the absolute identity between existence and essence, *anniyya* (Metaph. VIII c. 4; Avicenna 2005: 273–278; id. 1985: 85–89; id. 2002: 781–793; D’Alverny 1959; Lizzini 2003: 112–113). Hence, insofar the necessary being does not depend on anything else but is “a necessary existent in all its aspects. The existence of the Necessary Existent cannot be equivalent to the existence of another ... cannot at all be a composite, [deriving] from multiplicity” (Metaph. I c. 6; Avicenna 2005: 30; 1978: 113; 2002: 85), it is also “permanently true in itself, while the possible existent would be true through another and false in itself” (Metaph. I c. 8; Avicenna 2005: 38; 1978: 123; 2002: 107).

Consequently, the first definition of true being, that it exists absolutely in external things, indicates both the absolute existence of the necessary being, which can only be one, and the concomitance of a quiddity (*ḥaqīqah*) and its existence (*mawǧūd*), i.e. the thing insofar it is realized (*al-ḥāṣil*). In the first case, the necessary being simply exists and its existence does not depend on anything else, and it is true by itself because its existence contains and exhibits everything it needs to be known (Lizzini 2023: 255–257). In the second case, the individual is the same thing as its quiddity, although delimited by the attributes that are present in it. This implies that the existent constitutes what the thing truly is, especially regarding possible beings, whose present, contingent truth changes as soon as their attributes do. On the other hand, given that the attributes that are compatible with the thing are predetermined by its quiddity, there is nothing in the existent that was not already expected to be there, because it was possible for all compatible attributes to take place in the thing at some point and, therefore, the existent does not contain anything beyond what could be conceived as possible, i.e. existence adds nothing to the possible, their only difference being in the actual relation between the thing and the attributes that inhere in it at the moment, which confirms the truth of it (Lizzini 2023: 257–258). Hence, recalling Plato’s example of Theaetetus sitting or flying,

Theaetetus' quiddity is compatible with being seated, but only the fact that he is sitting at a given moment, i.e. that he exists as a sitting human being, makes it true.

The second definition of truth, that signifies permanent existence, further emphasizes Avicenna's choice that true being is equivalent to the existent, especially in the case of the necessary being. Since it possesses everything it needs to exist, its existence is permanent and unchangeable, and, therefore, it is true by itself, i.e. all statements that regard the necessary being are true *a priori*. Something similar occurs with the quiddity and the essential attributes of possible beings. Even if they are false in themselves, i.e. their quiddity does not exist by itself, but by an extrinsic cause, which is ultimately the necessary being; at the same time, the relation between their quiddity and the essential attributes is also necessary, so the statements that regard the quiddity and its essential attributes are also true *a priori*, although they depend on the necessary being to be realized. This also regards sentences that state a contingent activity of a possible being, such as "Theaetetus sits". Given that the existence of the quiddity in relation to one of its possible activities confirms the truth of the statement, this sentence is also eternally true, considering all the circumstances that delimit its validity.

The third definition, which became the standard enunciation of truth as correspondence (*al-muṭābaqa*) of the thing and the intellect in the Latin West, reformulates Aristotle's notion of truth to determine the relation between the thing and the statement (*qawl*) that presents its quiddity or its proper operations, as well as the judgement or belief (*i'tiqād*) that derives from that statement. Most of all, it establishes an absolute primacy of the necessary existent concerning both truth and existence. In the first case, Avicenna rephrases Plato's sentence in the *Timaeus* about the difference between eternal and possible being. While the former "is always unchangeably real" (ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτ' ὄν), the latter not only exists in continual change, as it "becomes and passes away"

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(γγινόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον), but also, because of that, it never completely is what it is, “never has real being” (ὄντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὄν). Therefore, the possible depends on the necessary to exist and to be true as well, because its quiddity, by itself, is incapable of causing itself and all other attributes to occur to it, i.e. cannot realize itself, and, consequently, there can be no true sentence regarding it, unless something causes that quiddity to exist. Only when something is realized, i.e. when it exists, is actually true, and “it is valid to give an informative statement” about it.

While Avicenna’s definition of truth echoes Aristotle’s sentence, that “it is not because of our truly thinking you to be pale that you are pale, but it is rather because you are pale that we who say this speak the truth” (οὐ γὰρ διὰ τὸ ἡμᾶς οἶεσθαι ἀληθῶς σε λευκὸν εἶναι εἰ σὺ λευκός, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ σε εἶναι λευκὸν ἡμεῖς οἱ φάντες τοῦτο ἀληθεύομεν, Aristotle 1957: Θ c. 10 1051b 6–9; id. 2006: 14), it is formulated in more radical terms, insofar it presents the relation between the thing and its thinking as concomitant. According to Avicenna, a statement is not true, but truthful or veritable (*ṣādiq*), insofar it corresponds to the thing, whereas the thing is true with regard to the sentence that expresses it: “As for the truth by way of correspondence, it is similar to the veracious (*al- ṣādiq*), except that, as I reckon, it is ‘veracious’ (*ṣādiq*) when considered in terms of its relation to the fact and ‘true’ (*ḥaqq*) when the relation of the fact to it is considered” (Avicenna 2004: 38–39; id. 1978: 123; id. 2002: 107). However, concerning possible beings, this relation between the intellect and the thing presupposes the activity of the necessary existent that causes, directly or indirectly, the thing to be realized, hence, to exist⁶. Should this be

⁶ Cf. Lizzini (2023, 254–255): “Logical truth is syntactic: it always concerns things recognized as part of a whole; it always concerns the relationships that things establish among themselves (regardless of whether they are related to the quiddity of the thing, to mental existence, or to external existence) ... the foundation of Avicenna’s ontology is no longer to be found in the substance and unity of being, but instead in its internal and inescapable division and the consequent composition which recognizes in things an essence or quiddity and an existence. It is in this sense that the ontological background

another trace of Platonic influence in Avicenna, namely that the existent –conceived as the concomitance of the quiddity (*ḥaqīqah*) and its existence (*mawǧūd*)– implies a *κοινωνία* of the quiddities and their universal notions and their individuals, or a causal relation between existents, remains open for debate.

With regard to Avicenna’s “faithful betrayal” of Aristotle, there seems to be evidence that, besides the Islamic philosophical and theological tradition Avicenna belongs to, Plato also plays a role in relating the two most comprehensive senses of being, modality and truth, to one another. It also seems consistent with an Aristotelian viewpoint to identify the existent with true being, since when something exists, it confirms not only that it is “this something” but also the relation it has with its attributes. Most of all, it reaffirms that the senses of being are different aspects of the same thing, *ουσία*.

of Avicenna’s theory of truth lies in relations, logical and ontological”.

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Ibn Rušd's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Δ7 with a focus on being true

Abstract: This paper examines Ibn Rušd's interpretation of the Aristotelian notion of being true (*mawğūd šādiq*) in his Long Commentary on *Metaphysics* Δ7. It takes as its point of departure the Arabic translation by Uṣṭāṭ, which introduces a twofold framework of being per accidens and being per se, subordinating being true to being per accidens and explaining it through a distinction between one-place and two-place cases. Ibn Rušd, drawing on al-Fārābī, further systematizes this reconfiguration by reducing the senses of being to being per se and being true, and correlating them epistemically: being true governs dialectical discourse, while being per se underpins demonstrative reasoning, especially in metaphysics. The paper concludes by reconstructing Ibn Rušd's critique of Ibn Sīnā, whom he accuses of conflating propositional and ontological senses of being. This confusion, according to Ibn Rušd, stems from a misreading of *mawğūd*—both semantically and morphologically—which leads Ibn Sīnā to treat being as an accidental addition to essence. Against this view, Ibn Rušd insists on the inseparability of essence and being, grounded in the logic of predication.

Keywords: Senses of Being, Being True, Aristotle, Ibn Rušd (Averroes), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), al-Fārābī

Among the major works of Arabic philosophy that shaped the course of medieval metaphysical thought in the Latin West, two stand out for their depth, complexity, and enduring influence:¹ Ibn Sīnā's *Ilāhiyyāt* ([*Science of*] *Divine Things*) of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (*Book of the Cure*) and Ibn Rušd's

¹ Acknowledgements: This study was carried out as part of the SNSF-funded project *Senses of Being: The Medieval Reception of Aristotle's Doctrine Starting from Metaphysics V.7 (1017a7–b9)* (Grant ID: 20074). I would like to express my deep gratitude to Marta Borgo, with whom I had the privilege of discussing the ideas developed in this paper over the course of many enriching conversations. I am also particularly grateful to Amos Bertolacci for his constructive feedback, which contributed significantly to improving the clarity and substance of the argument. Any remaining errors are, of course, my own.

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Tafsīr mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a (Long Commentary on [Aristotle's] *Metaphysics*).² While Ibn Sīnā's systematic elaboration of metaphysics as a science of being qua being provided scholastic thinkers with a foundational conceptual framework, it was Ibn Rušd's close engagement with the Aristotelian text—mediated through its Arabic translation and the tradition of late antique commentary—that ensured a direct transmission of Aristotelian metaphysics into the Latin tradition.³ His *Long*

² See Hasse (2020) and Di Giovanni (2014). See also Bertolacci (2009a), who considers Albertus Magnus as representing a new phase of the assimilation of Arabic metaphysics in the Latin tradition. In this phase, Ibn Rušd and Ibn Sīnā come to play equally important yet distinct roles, in distinction to the preceding phase in the Latin medieval tradition, where Ibn Rušd was regarded as the primary, almost exclusive, authority in metaphysics. For a comprehensive overview of Ibn Rušd's philosophy, see the section dedicated to him in *Philosophie in der islamischen Welt*, edited by Ulrich Rudolph (Endress et al. 2025). For an analysis of the Latin reception of *Metaphysics* Δ7 through Averroes' commentary with a particular attention to the role played by the mediation of the Arabic translation, see Borgo forthcoming.

³ As is well known, Ibn Rušd authored three distinct commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, traditionally referred to as the *Short Commentary* or the *Epitome* (*al-Ġawāmi'*), the *Middle Commentary* or the *Paraphrase* (*Talḥiṣ*), and the *Long Commentary* (*Tafsīr*). These commentaries differ significantly in their scope, method, chronology, and history of transmission. The *Short Commentary*, an abridged summary composed around 1161 and later revised—most notably around 1180 and again in the early 1190s—is extant in its original Arabic. It was translated into Hebrew in the first half of the thirteenth century and subsequently into Latin in the sixteenth century via the Hebrew version. The *Middle Commentary*, composed in Córdoba in 1174 and revised between ca. 1192–1194 and 1198, survives in full only in Hebrew translations, by Zerahya Ḥen (1284) and Qalonymos ben Qalonymos (1317), which were edited by Mauro Zonta (2011). A partial Latin version by Elijah b. Mošeh del Medigo (d. 1493) also exists. Long considered lost in Arabic, the text was rediscovered in a partial Arabic manuscript by Maroun Aouad in the Qarawiyyīn Library in Fās in 1997 (Ibn Rušd 2023). Notably, the *Middle Commentary* includes commentaries on Books K, M, and N, which are not covered in the *Long Commentary*. The *Long Commentary* (*Tafsīr mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*), composed most likely between 1192 and 1194, survives in Arabic and was translated into Latin in the thirteenth century, and into Hebrew in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For further details, see Endress et al. 2025; Ibn Rušd 2023, chap. 1; Ben Ahmed and Pasnau 2025; Bertolacci 2009b; Zonta 2011,

Commentary provided medieval Latin philosophers not only with direct access to Aristotle's text, but also with a sustained and philosophically rigorous interpretation that rearticulated central metaphysical concepts through the Arabic philosophical lexicon. The present paper focuses on one such concept—*being true* (*mawǧūd ṣādiq*)—as treated by Ibn Rušd in his *Long Commentary* on *Metaphysics* Δ7, tracing how his engagement with the Arabic translation and the broader logic of predication leads to a nuanced rethinking of Aristotelian ontology on this issue.

I. Introduction

According to Ibn Rušd, Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* Δ7 (1017a31–35), divides what he calls 'being true' (*mawǧūd ṣādiq*) into simple and composite cases:

T1: He [i.e., Aristotle, in the Arabic] wants [to say] here⁴ by *huwiyya* what signifies truth, either absolutely or compositionally [...], in the composite proposition like our saying 'Zayd is musical' or 'Zayd is not

chap. 3; Halper 2013, and 2025, chap. 5. These three commentaries, through their Latin and Hebrew translations, exerted a profound influence on metaphysical thought in both traditions. While some scholars interpret the progression from *Short* to *Long Commentary* as reflecting Ibn Rušd's increasing Aristotelianism (Druart 1994, 193–197), others argue that the differences reflect an intentional pedagogical strategy, calibrated to the needs of readers at various stages of philosophical training (Halper 2025, and for various positions concerning the chronology, Zonta 2011, 6–7). Halper suggests that the *Short Commentary* was aimed at beginners, the *Middle Commentary* at intermediate students, and the *Long Commentary* at advanced readers interested in engaging directly with Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic translation and reconstructing Averroes's interpretation from its phrasing. Halper also contends that this is not only the pedagogically intended order but likely also the chronological sequence in which the commentaries were composed (2025, 92).

⁴ Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Δ7 (1017a32–33) in Arabic, contained in Ibn Rušd 1938–1942, 555.10–12. See Appendix 1, II.

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musical', and concerning the absolute object of inquiry, like our saying 'whether Zayd is or is not'.⁵

This 'being true' is introduced after Aristotle discusses being *per accidens* (1017a8–22) and being *per se* (1017a22–30), and precedes being in potentiality or actuality (1017a35–b9).⁶

In a previous study co-authored with Marta Borgo and Davide Falessi, I examined the ninth-century Arabic translation of this passage by Uṣṭāṭ (Eustathius), the version that underlies Ibn Ruṣḍ's commentary. I argued that the Arabic translation reconfigures Aristotle's structure by syntactically and conceptually integrating the final two senses—being true and being in potentiality / actuality—into the framework of being *per accidens* and being *per se*, respectively. This is achieved through the use of conjunctions (*wa-*, *wa-ayḍan*) and shifts between singular and plural forms of the main term (*huwiyya[t]* vs. *huwiyyāt*), subtly recasting Aristotle's fourfold division into a more compressed twofold schema.⁷

This conceptual reconfiguration—where the fourfold Aristotelian division of the senses of being is restructured along a different axis—finds a partial and nuanced echo in Ibn Ruṣḍ's own metaphysical commentary. As Menn thoroughly explains, Ibn Ruṣḍ, strongly influenced by al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, does not merely reproduce Aristotle's taxonomy of being.

⁵ Ibn Ruṣḍ 1938–1942, 560.5–8;

يريد بالهويّة هاهنا ما يدلّ على الصدق إما مطلقاً وإما مركباً [...] أما في القضية المركبة مثل قولنا زيد هو موسيقوس أو زيد ليس بموسيقوس وفي المطلوب المطلق مثل قولنا هل زيد هو أم ليس هو.

⁶ Extant in the Arabic translation of Uṣṭāṭ respectively in Ibn Ruṣḍ 1938–1942, 552.3–u. (being *per accidens*), 555.1–8 (being *per se*) and 555.13–556.3 (being in potentiality or actuality, up to 1017b6).

⁷ Borgo et al. forthcoming. See also Bertolacci 2006, chapter 1. For a critical assessment of Uṣṭāṭ's translation of *Metaphysics* Δ as overly literal and inaccurate, see Halper 2025, chapter 3, III and chapter 5, especially 83; and n. 294 for further literature in this direction. I am grateful to Yehuda Halper for valuable indications on this issue and for sharing his work with me.

Rather, he offers a reinterpretation that consolidates the multiple senses of being into two overarching senses, thereby simplifying and reorienting the discussion in a distinctly Arabic philosophical idiom.⁸

The first of these is being *per se*, which Ibn Rušd identifies with essence (*ḡāt*) or thing (*šay'*). In this sense, being is subdivided, in line with Aristotle, according to the ten categories and is treated as a quasi-genus encompassing all that exists essentially. It is primarily articulated through two-place predications—assertions of the form 'S is P'—where the predicate is attributed to the subject in virtue of its essence.

The second is being true, which diverges more noticeably from the Aristotelian scheme. Unlike in Aristotle, where this sense appears as a marginalized entry in the list of senses of being, Ibn Rušd—again following al-Fārābī—elevates its significance and subdivides it into two forms: (1) absolute or simple being true, exemplified by one-place assertions such as 'S is', and (2) composite being true, exemplified by two-place assertions such as 'S is P'. These correspond respectively to affirmations of sheer existence and of specified existence within a predicative structure.

This twofold division is most explicitly articulated in Ibn Rušd's *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, where he criticizes Ibn Sīnā for failing to differentiate these two senses of being.⁹ The passage is central to understanding the complexity of Ibn Rušd's distinctions:

⁸ Al-Fārābī discusses being in potentiality or actuality in *Kitāb al-ḡurūf* §§93–94, and again briefly at the end of §240, where he treats it as a subdivision of his first principal sense of being, namely, being as having a quiddity (*māhiyya*) outside the soul. By contrast, being true, predicated of a concept in the mind, is more closely aligned with being *per accidens*. Menn has compellingly reconstructed both al-Fārābī's reduction of Aristotle's fourfold division of the senses of being into three and then two senses, and Ibn Rušd's reception and adaptation of this innovation, which becomes central to his metaphysics in opposition to that of Ibn Sīnā. See Menn 2008 and 2011.

⁹ For an insightful analysis of Ibn Rušd's criticisms against Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics, see Menn 2011.

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T2: In reality, that-it-is-ness in existents (*al-anniyya, fī al-ḥaqīqa, fī al-mawǧūdāt*) is a mental meaning (*ma'nā dīhnī*), namely a thing's being outside the soul just as it is in the soul, and what signifies it is equivalent (*murādīf*) with the true (*ṣādiq*), which is what is signified by the existential copula (*al-rābiṭa al-wuǧūdiyya*) in predicative propositions (*al-qadāya al-ḥamliyya*).¹⁰ For the utterance existence

¹⁰ With *al-rābiṭa al-wuǧūdiyya* (existential copula) those words are meant, usually from the root *w-ǧ-d* but also *k-w-n* and *ṣ-y-r*, that serve in propositional structures as the copula, linking the subject with the predicate. Concerning the translation of *wuǧūdī* and *wuǧūd*, Zimmermann notes that in some cases 'the normal renderings "existential" and "existence" would have been so misleading as to be positively wrong'. Hence, he borrows from the Greek, *hyparctic* for *wuǧūdī* and *hyparxis* for *wuǧūd* (Zimmermann 1981, lx, n. 1; see also Klinger 2019, 64, n. 12). Menn renders *al-rābiṭa al-wuǧūdiyya* as the 'hyparctic copula' (2012, 55.29), defining it as a non-modal copula, i.e., 'S is P', as opposed to modalized variants such as 'S is necessarily P' or 'S is possibly P' (n. 7). This interpretation reflects al-Fārābī's tripartite classification of modal propositions into necessary, possible, and *muṭlaqa* (absolute), the last of which are unconditioned by modality and therefore signify mere existence (*wuǧūd*) without qualification. As al-Fārābī notes, the absolute proposition 'may just as well be called *wuǧūdiyya*' (al-Fārābī 1988a, 109; 1988b, 117; 1988c, 35; cf. al-Fārābī 1988c, 1–2; 2024, §103). Indeed, the meaning of existence (*ma'nā al-wuǧūd*), which is understood by al-Fārābī as identical to the meaning of relation (*ma'nā al-irtibāt*), that in turn means that the predicate exists or is found for the subject (*an yūǧada al-maḥmūl li-l-mawdū'*), is either taken absolutely (*muṭlaqan*) or with a stipulation clarifying the quality of the existence of the predicate for the subject (*ṣarīṭa tubayyinū 'an kayfiyya wuǧūd al-maḥmūl li-l-mawdū'*), which is called mode or mood (*ǧiha*) (al-Fārābī 1988c, 1–2). Besides this indirect reference to *wuǧūdiyya*, al-Fārābī also directly talks about *al-kalim al-wuǧūdiyya, mawǧūd as rābiṭan li-l-maḥmūl ma'a al-mawdū'* or *al-wuǧūd al-rābiṭ* (e.g. al-Fārābī 2024, §82, 109.6–7, §101, 171.2, §103, 175.5; 1988a, 88.14–20; 1988c, 33ff). According to al-Fārābī, whom Ibn Ruṣd follows closely, the copulative 'is' contributes no ontological content and serves only to connect subject and predicate syntactically. It signifies no relation between two extra-mental entities but only a mental relation between a subject and a predicate within the structure of a proposition. It does not imply that one essence is attributed to another, but only that one term is said of another in discourse, with no ontological commitment (al-Fārābī 2024, §102—I am grateful to Seyedali Taghaviniasab for drawing my attention to this text.) Its role is comparable to that of a particle in Arabic grammar, fully dependent in its meaning on the

(*wuǧūd*) is said in two senses: one is what is signified by the true (*al-ṣādiq*), as in our saying ‘is the thing existent or is [it] not existent? (*hal al-ṣay’ mawǧūd am laysa bi-mawǧūd*)’ and ‘does such-and-such exist as such-and-such or does it not exist as such-and-such? (*hal kaḏā yūǧadu kaḏā aw lā yūǧadu kaḏā*)’; the other is what is treated as if it were a genus in existents (*al-mawǧūdāt*), as when the existent (*al-mawǧūd*) is divided into the ten categories, and into substance and accident.¹¹

terms it links. According to al-Fārābī: ‘the two essences are potentially enveloped in it [i.e. the copula] only insofar as they are conceptualized as having the connection of predicate to subject and subject to predicate—nothing more. Included in it is not the relation of one essence outside the soul to another, but the relation in the soul of one of the two terms as subject and the other as predicate. Nor is the essence of one of the two having that predicate attributed to it included, but only what we have said. Indeed, it includes a particular relation by which one of the two objects becomes an enunciative (*ḥabaran*) and the other an enunciated object posited (*muḥbaran ‘anhu mawḏū’*)—nothing more’. See al-Fārābī 2024, §102 and §101;

انه تنطوي فيه بالقوة ماهيتان اثنتان من حيث هما متصورتان لهما نسبة المحمول إلى الموضوع والموضوع إلى المحمول فقط لا غير، وانه ليس يتضمن إضافة ماهية خارج النفس إلى ماهية خارج النفس، بل إضافة في النفس أحد طرفيها الموضوع والآخر المحمول، ولا يتضمن أن تكون ماهية أحدهما أن يوصف بهذا المحمول، بل إنما يتضمن ما قلنا فقط، وانه إنما يتضمن إضافة ما بها يصير أحد الأمرين خبرا والآخر مخبرا عنه موضوعا لا غير.

For discussion, see Klinger 2024, chap. 3, and Lameer 1994, III.4. Both Klinger, Lameer and (apparently) Menn follow Zimmermann’s terminology in their translation (Klinger 2019; Lameer 1994, 55; cf. Zimmermann 1981, xl, n. 1). However, in the passage discussed here, Ibn Ruṣd understands *al-rābiṭa al-wuǧūdiyya* not simply as a [non-modal] copula but as denoting being true (*wuǧūd ṣādiq*) in both one-place (‘S is’) and two-place (‘S is P’) assertions (see also appendix 2, II–III). Hence, I avoid ‘hyparctic’ not to run the risk of reducing *mawǧūd*, *yūǧadu*, and similar forms to the hyparctic copula. As I discuss below, their semantic range depends on syntactic structure and epistemic context: they may function as mere connectors, as full existential predicates, or even as ontological expressions of a subject’s essence, in both one-place and two-place cases. I also avoid translating *kalima*, in Ibn Ruṣd’s commentary on this passage, as verb, since it would go against al-Fārābī’s attempt, first using this expression instead of the grammarians’ *fi’l*, to dissociate himself from grammatical terminology towards creating new logical terminology (al-Fārābī 2002, 45.13–14; and appendix 2).

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This interpretive model—emerging from the semantic shifts introduced by the Arabic translation and carried forward in Ibn Rušd’s systematization—will serve as the foundation for the analysis that follows. The rest of the paper explores how Ibn Rušd inherits, reshapes, and partially resists the inherited framework, particularly in relation to the semantic and logical implications of ‘being true’ within dialectical and demonstrative modes of reasoning. Through this examination, I aim to show how Ibn Rušd’s metaphysical thought constitutes both a continuation and a transformation of the Aristotelian tradition as mediated through the Arabic language.

II. Absolute and Composite Being: The Conflation of Being True and Being *Per Se*

A central feature of Ibn Rušd’s treatment of *mawǧūd ṣādiq*—that is, ‘being true’—is the structural division he establishes between what he terms absolute and composite cases of truth or reality.¹² This interpretive distinction does not arise solely from his own philosophical system but is already present, in embryonic form, in the ninth-century Arabic translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* Δ7 by Uṣṭāṭ. This translation plays a formative role in shaping Ibn Rušd’s reading of the text.

¹¹ Ibn Rušd 1930, §5, 302.1–8 (translation from Menn 2011, 55–56 with modifications);

فإن الإنية في الحقيقة في الموجودات هي معنى ذهني وهو كون الشيء خارج النفس على ما هو عليه في النفس، وما يدل عليه فهو مرادف للصادق وهي التي تدل عليه الرابطة الوجودية في القضايا الحملية، فإن لفظ الوجود يقال على معنيين: أحدهما ما يدل عليه الصادق، مثل قولنا: هل الشيء موجود أم ليس بموجود، وهل كنا يوجد كنا أو لا يوجد كنا، والثاني ما يتنزل من الموجودات منزلة الجنس، مثل قسمة الموجود إلى المقولات العشر وإلى الجوهر والعرض.

¹² For further analysis of the distinction between truth (*ṣidq*) and reality (*ḥaqq/ḥaqīqa*), see below.

Unlike the terse and elliptical style of the Greek original, Uṣṭāṭ's Arabic version expands the passage and includes clarificatory examples.¹³ Specifically, it provides two illustrative statements that serve to parse the logic of truth-claims: the first asserts that saying something 'is' indicates its *ḥaqīqa* (its reality); the second asserts that saying it 'is not' amounts to a statement of falsehood (*kidb*). These examples are not merely exegetical aids but contribute to a structural refinement of the Aristotelian concept: they effectively divide 'being true' into two grammatical and ontological cases—namely, one-place and two-place propositions, as set out in the following comparative table:

Translation of the Arabic translation	Standard English translation ¹⁴
<1.> And <i>huwiyya</i> also signifies the <i>anniyya</i> (that-it-is-ness) of a thing and its <i>ḥaqīqa</i> (reality);	<1.> Further, 'to be' and 'is' signify that [something] is true,
<1.1> for when we say that the thing is, we signify its reality,	
<1.2> whereas when we say that it is not, we signify that it is not real but it is rather false.	<2.> 'not to be' that is not true but false.

¹³ Halper recognized here a problematic change in word order (2010, 36). For my take on this point, see Borgo et al. forthcoming.

¹⁴ The English translation is from Borgo et al. forthcoming, that is based on Werner Jaeger's edition of the *Metaphysics* (1957). I take 'to be' as translating the Greek τὸ εἶναι, rather than an implicit τὸ ὄν, reflecting the beginning of Δ7, and 'is', the Greek τὸ ἔστιν. Accordingly, *huwiyya* and *anniyya* translate the two explicit terms respectively. Martini Bonadeo (2012, 307.25–26) and McGinnis and Reisman (2007, 362, 4–6) do the same. For further discussion, see Borgo et al. (forthcoming). On *anniyya* see Gutas and Endress (2002), I, 428–436, Afnan (1964), 94–97. For *huwiyya*, see Afnan (1964), 121–124; Frank (1956); and with a focus on Ibn Sīnā's *Ilāhiyyāt*, Bertolacci (2003).

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While Ibn Rušd will distance himself from Uṣṭāṭ's formulation—particularly in his effort to remedy metaphysical errors of his predecessors—he ultimately affirms the value of this bifurcation. His own distinction between absolute and composite forms of truth mirrors Uṣṭāṭ's division of being into one-place and two-place uses. And even though Aristotle's Greek text does not explicitly offer one-place examples in this context, both Ibn Rušd and al-Fārābī adopt a systematic classification that integrates both types of predication.¹⁵ Their shared framework allows for the subdivision of both being *per se* and being true into what we may call 'absolute' and 'composite' cases:¹⁶

	Absolute (one-place)	Composite (two-place)
Being <i>per se</i>	S is	S is P
Being true	S is	S is P

Accordingly, the resulting four senses can be listed and explained as follows:¹⁷

¹⁵ Menn 2008, 78, and 2011, 56. Menn notes, that 'nothing in Δ7 would suggest that when we ask "does S exist?" we are asking about being as truth: all of Aristotle's examples for being as truth (like his examples for being *per se*) are two-place assertions "S is P", and it is hard to see what it could mean to interpret a one-place assertion "S is", "S exists", as "S is true". Specifically in the section on being true, all the examples Aristotle gives are of two-place form, even though for the other senses, some examples might be seen as examples of one-place being. Anyway, Δ7 does not seem to take into account the distinction between one-place and two-place senses of 'to be'. See also Menn 2020, 199–201.

¹⁶ Menn 2008, 78.

¹⁷ Ibn Rušd 1938–1942, 2:739–742. See also, respectively, al-Fārābī 2024, §§92, 239–241 and §245, where he also includes existence along essence; §231; §§246–247; §§88–89, §95. Concerning the last, see Menn 2008, n. 33.

- Being^{per-se-1p}: ‘S is’ means that S is circumscribed by an essence outside the soul, or that S is an essence in actuality or in its final perfection.
- Being^{per-se-2p}: ‘S is P’ means that the essence of S or what constitutes it necessitates its being P and P being attributed to it, for example, asking whether every triangle is existent such that its angles equal two right angles.
- Being^{true-1p}: ‘S is’ means that S is a non-fictional concept in the soul, a concept of what belongs to the class of existing things in the world.
- Being^{true-2p}: ‘S is P’ means that the composition (or separation in negation) in the proposition corresponds to real combination (or separation) between S and P outside the soul, or that it reflects a relation of correspondence between intelligibles and extra-mental existents.

This fourfold classification allows Ibn Rušd to differentiate the logical forms and ontological statuses that the term *mawğūd* may assume. Importantly, it also shows how the Arabic translation influenced not only the semantic framing of the discussion but the philosophical logic underpinning Ibn Rušd’s commentary.

But Ibn Rušd does more than inherit this interpretive structure—he transforms it. By linking the truth-related senses of being to broader epistemological contexts, he introduces a new criterion for subsuming these distinctions. In dialectical discourse, where claims aim at plausibility rather than certainty, ‘being true’ tends to fall under being *per accidens*. In demonstrative science and metaphysics, where the focus lies on causal and essential structures, ‘being true’ aligns with being *per se*. In this way, ‘being true’ ceases to be a static sense of being. It becomes a cross-cutting epistemic distinction—one that overlaps with, and is ultimately determined by, the mode of reasoning in which the claim is

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situated. Ibn Rušd's philosophical intervention highlights the flexibility of Aristotelian concepts in their Arabic articulation and demonstrates how translation, commentary, and logical precision can converge in a refined metaphysical system.

III. The Scientific Context of Being and the Disagreement among the Commentators

As evident from the previous classification, the propositions 'S is' and 'S is P' can both fall under two overlapping types: the former may be interpreted as an instance of both being^{per-se-1p} and being^{true-1p}; the latter may exemplify both being^{per-se-2p} and being^{true-2p}.¹⁸ This raises the question: how can one discern which specific sense of being is at play in a given instance? The answer lies in the epistemic context in which the proposition is situated. Within the context of dialectic, being is to be considered as being^{true}, while within the context of demonstration, as being^{per-se}.¹⁹

Ibn Rušd foregrounds this logical model of syntax by making explicit the linguistic assumptions embedded in the Arabic translation of Aristotle.²⁰ In the first section of his commentary on Aristotle's text, he glosses the bare term *huwiyya* with 'the noun *huwiyya*', *anniyya* (that-it-

¹⁸ See Menn 2008, 82.

¹⁹ See below for Ibn Rušd. See also al-Fārābī 2024, §247: 'Dialectic does not rise above what are the generally accepted meanings of the existent. Therefore, it is sufficient for it to understand our asking "whether the human is existent"—that is, whether the human is one of the existents that are in the world [...]. For they call "not existent" what is only fancied in the soul without being outside the soul by way it is fancied, which is a false fancy and not an example of something outside the soul';

إنّ الجدل ليس يرتفع في معاني الموجود عن ما هو المشهور من معانيه. فلذلك يكتفي أن يفهم من قولنا «هل الإنسان موجود» أي هل الإنسان أحد الموجودات التي في العالم [...] فإنهم يسمون «غير موجود» ما كان قد يتوهم في النفس توهمًا فقط من غير أن يكون خارج النفس على ما يتوهم، وذلك هو الهوم الكاذب، وليس بمثال لشيء خارج النفس.

is-ness), and *ḥaqīqa* (reality) with ‘what is signified by our saying of a thing that it is *mawǧūd ṣādiq* (existent true)’. This semantic unpacking reorients the discussion from ontology (with terms like *ḥaqīqa* and *ḥaqq*) toward epistemology (with *ṣidq* and *ṣādiq*), eliminating the ambiguity—possibly deliberate in Uṣṭāṭ’s translation—between ontological reality (*ḥaqq*) and epistemic truth (*ṣādiq*).²¹

More significantly, Ibn Ruṣd emphasizes the necessity of distinguishing being^{true-1p} from being^{per-se-1p} to avoid metaphysical confusion. Here he introduces the disagreement among commentators with apparent neutrality. In his commentary on the passage, he reports that the question ‘Is the thing existent?’ was classified either as a question of accident or of genus. The division hinges on how the term *mawǧūd* is understood: if it signifies the true, it falls under accident; if it signifies what spans the ten categories, it belongs to genus:

T3: And thus, the commentators differed concerning the absolute object-of-inquiry—namely, our saying: ‘Is the thing existent?’ in the

²⁰ For a clear and concise exposition of the two different proposals for the syntax of predicative sentences, see Klinger 2024, 4–6.

²¹ Ibn Ruṣd frequently engages in terminological supplementation and substitution when commenting on the Arabic translation of *Metaphysics* Δ7, often aiming to stabilize or clarify its conceptual vocabulary. A notable example of this is his consistent pairing of the term *al-huwiyya*—employed in the translation by Uṣṭāṭ and possibly coined by him—with the more philosophically favorable term both to him and to al-Fārābī *al-mawǧūd*. While *al-huwiyya* (roughly: ‘is-ness’ or ‘being-ness’) appears in the Arabic translation to render various Greek terms such as τὸ ὄν and τὸ εἶναι, its abstract and somewhat rarefied character prompted Ibn Ruṣd to link it repeatedly with *al-mawǧūd*, a term more solidly anchored in the tradition of Arabic Aristotelianism. This substitution or coupling allows Ibn Ruṣd to clarify ambiguities in the source text and to bring terminological continuity across distinct semantic registers—linking grammatical, logical, and metaphysical levels of analysis. His intervention reflects a broader strategy of interpretive calibration: respecting the Arabic translation’s structure while subtly realigning its terminology with established conceptual norms (Afnan 1964, 94; Halper 2025, chapter 5). See also Appendix 2.

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second book of the *Topics*—whether it falls under questions of accident or questions of genus. For the one who understood from *mawǧūd* here the thing that encompasses the ten categories said that it falls under questions of genus (*maṭālib al-ǧins*). And the one who understood from the utterance *mawǧūd* here what is understood from [the utterance] true, said that it falls under questions of accident (*maṭlūbāt al-‘arad*).²²

In *Talḥiṣ kitāb al-ǧadal*, Ibn Rušd elaborates on this dispute.²³ He notes that the majority of commentators, including Alexander of Aphrodisias, take the expression ‘Is it existent?’ to mean ‘Is it true?’—i.e., whether what is in the mind corresponds to what is outside it. On this interpretation, the inquiry falls under accident. A minority, however, understand *mawǧūd* to refer to what has an essence and subsists through causes, and so place the inquiry under genus or definition. Although Ibn Rušd refrains from explicitly endorsing either view, his framing favors the first:

T4: As for the inquiry (*maṭlab*) ‘Is a thing existent in an unqualified sense?’, the commentators have differed regarding which of the four types of inquiries this belongs to [i.e. the inquiries into definitions, propria, genera and accidents]. But if, by our saying ‘Is such-and-such existent?’, we mean the same as when we say ‘Is it true?’—that is, that

²² Ibn Rušd 1938–1942. 561.8–13;

وإنك اختلف المفسرون في المطلوب المطلق وهو قولنا هل الشيء موجود في المقالة الثانية من كتاب
الجدل هل هو داخل في مطلوبات العرض أو في مطلوبات الجنس وذلك أنه من فهم من الموجود هاهنا
الشيء الذي يعم المقولات العشر قال هو داخل في مطالب الجنس ومن فهم من لفظ الموجود هاهنا ما
يفهم من الصادق قال هو داخل في مطلوبات العرض.

²³ Ibn Rušd’s account of this disagreement is often traced back to al-Fārābī’s *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, §246, where Alexander is explicitly mentioned. Menn (2011, 64) interprets this reference as pointing to Alexander’s commentary on the *Topics* (53, 2–10), while Butterworth connects it to 2. I (109a10–27) of that work, referring as well to Ibn Rušd’s *Talḥiṣ kitāb al-ǧadal*, the first two chapters of the second treatises on *mawāḍi‘ al-a‘rād*, (topics of accident) that are identical to the topics of absolute existence (*al-wuǧūd al-muṭlaq*). See Menn 2011, 64; al-Fārābī 2024, III, 414, n. 67, and Ibn Rušd 1979, 69–70 (cf. 1992, 530ff), respectively. McGinnis and Reisman link it with [Aristotle’s] *Topics* II, 1–2 (2007, 365, n. 64).

what is in the soul corresponds to what is outside the soul—then it undoubtedly falls under the partition of accident (*'arad*). And this is the most common understanding of what is indicated by our expression 'Is a thing existent or not?' This is also the view held by Alexander [of Aphrodisias]. Some have held that this inquiry falls under the heading of genus or definition, on the grounds that we may mean by 'existent' that which has an essence and the causes through which it subsists outside the mind. However, the first interpretation is the more common.²⁴

In the following passage, he reinforces this preference by appealing to Aristotle's argument, based on which he 'unified the topics for inquiries about unqualified existence with the topics for [inquiries about] accident [...] and dedicated to them a single treatise'.²⁵

T5:

[1] As for the inquiry (*maṭlab*) 'Is the predicate existent-only for the subject?' Aristotle explicitly states that it falls under the heading of accident.

[2] He classified it under accident even though, when a predicate is posited as existing for a subject, it is not thereby evident that it is an accident, nor that it is a genus, a definition, or a proprium. This is because, when it becomes clear that something exists for something else, the least that can be said of it is that it is an accident—if it is not one of the other three [i.e., genus, definition, or proprium]. Therefore, he considered its force as that of an accident [...]. Moreover, the

²⁴ Ibn Ruṣd 1992, 506.9–15;

وانما مطلب هل الشيء موجود باطلاق؟ فان المفسرين اختلفوا في اي صنف من اصناف هذه الاربعة المطالب يدخل. لكن اذا اردنا بقولنا: هل كذا موجود؟ مثل ما نريد بقولنا: هل هو صادق؟ وهو ان يكون ما في النفس فيه مطابقا لما خارج النفس، كان لا شك داخلا في باب العرض. وهذا هو الاشهر من مفهوم ما يدل عليه [و]النا هل الشيء موجود أم لا؟ وهذا هو الذي يذهب إليه الإسكندر. ورأى بعضهم ان هذا الطلب داخل في باب الجنس أو الحد، وذلك انه قد نعي بالموجود ما له ذات واسباب بها قوامه خارج النفس، الا ان الاول اشهر.

²⁵ Ibn Ruṣd 1992, 527.20–21;

انه (اي ارسطو) جعل مواضع مطالب الوجود المطلق ومواضع العرض واحدة باعيانها للعلة التي قلناها وافرد لها مقالة واحدة.

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definition, genus, and proprium each provide additional knowledge about the subject, whereas the accident here does not serve to give knowledge. What is sought in this case is merely that it exists, and for this reason, it has been counted among the existence-inquiries [*maṭālib al-wuḡūd*].²⁶

Yet this dialectical classification does not extend to the demonstrative context of metaphysics. In T6, Ibn Ruṣd turns against Ibn Sīnā's ontologization of *al-mawḡūd*. He criticizes the view that existence is something added to essence, calling it a 'grave error' that reduces *mawḡūd* to a shared accident across all categories:

T6: The claim that existence is something added to essence and that a thing does not subsist through it in its very substance is a grave error, because it entails that the term 'existent' refers to a common accident shared by the ten categories outside the mind.²⁷

²⁶ For the ambiguity between one-place and two-place being in this passage see below. Furthermore, Ibn Ruṣd's wording at the outset of this passage is ambiguous as well. In his formulation of the inquiry, Ibn Ruṣd writes: *hal al-maḥmūl mawḡūd li-l-mawḏū' faqat*, where the adverb *faqat* (only) might initially seem to qualify *al-mawḏū'* (the subject). However, such a reading is implausible. It is more coherent to take *faqat* as qualifying the predicate (*al-maḥmūl*), a reading confirmed by Ibn Ruṣd's own reiteration at the end of the passage, where he explicitly describes the predicate as *mawḡūd faqat* (existent only). See Ibn Ruṣd 1992, 506.2–9;

وأما مطلب هل المحمول موجود للموضوع فقط؟ فإن أرسطو يصرح أنه داخل في باب العرض، وإنما جعله داخلا في باب العرض مع أن المحمول اذا وضع انه موجود للموضوع لم يتبين منه انه عرض، ولا انه جنس، ولا حد، ولا خاصة، من قبل انه اذا تبين ان الشيء موجود لشيء فأقل ما يمكن ان يصدق عليه انه عرض ان لم يكن واحد من الثلاثة الباقية، فجعل قوته قوة العرض كالحال في المهمل الذي جعلت قوته قوة الجزئي. وايضا فان الحد والجنس والخاصة يعطي كل واحد منها في الموضوع معرفة زائدة، والعرض لم يوجد هنا معرفا وإنما الذي يطلب منه انه موجود فقط، ولذلك عد في مطالب الوجود.

²⁷ Ibn Ruṣd 1930, 304.13–16;

وأما قول القائل: إن الوجود أمر زائد على الماهية وليس يتقوم به الموجود في جوهره فقول مغلط جدا، لأن هذا يلزمه أن يكون اسم الموجود يدل على عرض مشترك للمقولات العشر خارج النفس.

To understand why Ibn Rušd classifies one-place being under the heading of accident in dialectical contexts—while at the same time rejecting Ibn Sīnā’s account of it as an accident—let us have another look at T5 to observe a significant shift. Ibn Rušd follows Aristotle in moving from one-place, in T5.1. to two-place being in T5.2: from ‘existent-only or S is’ to ‘exists for or S is P’. What initially appears as a standalone existential assertion (being^{true-1p}) is in fact, on closer analysis, an incomplete or indeterminate form of two-place predication (being^{true-2p}).²⁸ The proposition ‘S is’ belongs to the pre-scientific phase of inquiry, where the question is simply whether the concept corresponds to something real. It is only in the demonstrative phase—when predicates are linked to essences—that ‘S is’ can be expanded into ‘S is P’.

Accordingly, while Ibn Rušd corrects Uṣṭāṭ’s translation in the case of one-place being—section one of his commentary—by replacing *ḥaqq* (reality) with *ṣidq* (truth), he retains *ḥaqq* in the second section of his commentary dealing with two-place being. The shift is deliberate: one-place being concerns truth as belonging to the mental domain and finds no place in metaphysics (*ṣidq*); two-place being concerns *real* predication and concerns the extramental reality (*ḥaqq*). The terms track the move from dialectic to demonstration.

²⁸ Menn indicates that, even though Aristotle does not talk about one-place and two-place senses of ‘to be’, he seems to believe that these two senses of being are interconnected and can somehow infer from one to the other, i.e. if you understand a certain type of ‘X is’, this will correlate with a certain type of ‘S is P’, and vice versa. So when Aristotle divides up the senses of being (in either the one-place or the two-place sense), he is implicitly also dividing the other—even if he only speaks explicitly about one of the two (Menn 2020, 201–202). Both Uṣṭāṭ’s translation and Ibn Rušd’s commentary make this implicit link explicit in the Arabic tradition.

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IV. The Senses of Being and the Disagreement with Ibn Sīnā

As discussed in detail in secondary literature, Ibn Rušd sharply criticizes Ibn Sīnā.²⁹ One of his critiques concerns a double confusion in the interpretation of the term *mawǧūd*, the common equivalent of the Greek τὸ ὄν ('being' or 'existent'). Ibn Rušd charges Ibn Sīnā with a dual error—linguistic and metaphysical—that distorts the Aristotelian conception of being and its translation into Arabic. The disagreement is not merely terminological; it reflects a fundamental divergence in their metaphysical frameworks.

The first part of Ibn Sīnā's mistake, according to Ibn Rušd, lies in taking the Arabic word *mawǧūd* in its original lexical sense, i.e., as 'found' or 'perceived'. On this reading, *mawǧūd* or being inheres in the knower as something that appears to, or is grasped by, them. This interpretation reduces being *per se* to a subjective accident: it depends on perception or conceptual apprehension. As a result, being is not treated as a feature of things themselves, but as a function of human cognition; as if falling under the category of quality. Ibn Sīnā thus fails to consider *mawǧūd* as a quasi-genus said proportionally of all ten categories—as Ibn Rušd insists it should be:

²⁹ The relationship between Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rušd has been the focus of much scholarly discussion, especially in metaphysics. Stephen Menn and Amos Bertolacci examine Ibn Rušd's criticisms not merely as a two-way debate, but as a 'triangular' struggle where Ibn Rušd attempts to 'rescue' Aristotle from what he views as Ibn Sīnā's Neoplatonic or theological distortions, often utilizing al-Fārābī as a kind of filter to recover a more faithful Aristotelian position. Menn explains why Ibn Rušd criticizes Ibn Sīnā the way he does and demonstrates that Ibn Rušd's most famous criticisms of Ibn Sīnā—regarding the notions of being (*wuǧūd*) and unity (*waḥda*)—are actually a revival of Al-Fārābī's position (2011). Bertolacci argues that Ibn Rušd accuses Ibn Sīnā not just as wrong, but of abandoning the method of Aristotelian demonstrative project altogether. According to him, Ibn Sīnā 'started as if from himself' (*inceptit quasi a se*), creating a new philosophy instead of interpreting Aristotle faithfully (2023; see also 2006).

T7: Ibn Sīnā erred only because, when he saw that the term *mawǧūd* in Arabic signifies the true in speech, and that what signifies the true necessarily refers to an accident, and indeed, in reality, to a second-order intelligible, that is, a logical one, he thought that wherever the translators used it, they meant to signify this meaning. But this is not the case. Rather, what the translators intended by it was to signify what is signified by the term essence (*ḡāt*) or thing (*šayʿ*).³⁰

In other words, Ibn Sīnā conflates two distinct uses of *mawǧūd*: one that refers to truth in a propositional sense, and one that refers to the thing itself in an ontological sense. He mistakenly assumes that the translators used the term in the former sense only, overlooking the ontological commitments of Aristotelian metaphysics.

The second part of the error stems from the morphology of the Arabic word itself. *Mawǧūd* as a derived noun (*ism muštaqq*) misled Ibn Sīnā to take existence to be something that inhabits the thing—as if the infinitive *wuǧūd* inheres in a subject to make it *mawǧūd*. Derived nouns in Arabic often imply that the subject has acquired some attribute or undergone some change. Thus, like all derived nouns, *mawǧūd* appears to misleadingly imply that the thing is by or through some *wuǧūd* or existence added to it. In this case, *mawǧūd* becomes an external accident added to essence. As Ibn Rušd explains:

T8: Since the term *mawǧūd* in Arabic is one of the derived nouns (*asmāʾ muštaqqa*), and since derived nouns typically indicate accidents, it was imagined—when it was used in the sciences to refer to the essence of a thing—that it signified an accident inhering in it.³¹

³⁰ Ibn Rušd 1930, 371.9–15;

وإنما غلط ابن سينا أنه لما رأى اسم الموجود يدل على الصادق في كلام العرب، وكان الذي يدل على الصادق يدل على عرض، ولا بد، بل في الحقيقة على معقول من المعقولات التواني؛ أعني المنطقية ظن أنه حيث ما استعمله المترجمون إنما يدل على هذا المعنى وليس الأمر كذلك، بل إنما قصد به المترجمون أن يدل به على ما يدل عليه اسم الذات والشيء.

³¹ Ibn Rušd 1938–1942, 557.16–19;

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On this reading, existence becomes something external or superadded to essence—a property that a thing has rather than something that expresses what it is. This leads to the mistaken idea that essence and existence are separable, and that existence must be conferred upon an essence in order for it to be real. In Ibn Rušd's assessment, such a view is characteristic of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical model, in which the quiddity (or *māhiyya*) of a thing seems to be ontologically prior to its existence.

Ibn Rušd rejects both interpretations. In his view, existence is mistakenly treated in the first case as an epistemic and subjective attribute dependent on the mind; in the second, it becomes an ontological accident in the strict categorical sense subsumed under being *per se*; a contingent accident added to essence. But being *per se*, he insists, cannot be either. It must name what belongs to a thing in virtue of its essence—not something superadded to it, nor something dependent on the knower:

T9: He [i.e. Ibn Sīnā] confused the noun *mawǧūd* which signifies the [quasi-]genus [of the ten categories], and [the noun *mawǧūd*] which signifies the true (*al-ṣādiq*): That which signifies the true is an accident, whereas that which signifies the genus signifies each of the ten categories in a manner of proportionality, just as *huwiyya* is said.³²

Thus Ibn Sīnā, in Ibn Rušd's reconstruction, conflated the contexts of dialectic and demonstrative investigation. In contrast, Ibn Rušd

ان اسم الموجود في كلام العرب لما كان من الاسماء المشتقة وكانت الاسماء المشتقة انما تدل على الاعراض خيل اذا دل به في العلوم على ذات الشيء انه يدل على عرض فيه كما عرض ذلك لابن سينا.

³² Ibn Rušd 1938–1942, 1280.8–11 (Menn 2011, n. 19);

انه التبس عليه اسم الموجود الذي يدل على الجنس والذي يدل على الصادق فان الذي يدل على الصادق هو عرض والذي يدل على الجنس يدل على كل واحد من المقولات العشر دلالة تناسب كما يقال الهوية.

maintains a strict semantic distinction between *mawǧūd* as a term for being true and *mawǧūd* as a term for being *per se*. The former refers to the correspondence between propositions and reality; the latter refers to the intrinsic constitution of things as expressed through predication.

In contrast to Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rušd interprets the structure of being^{true} along two axes: the dialectical and the demonstrative.³³ In dialectic, ‘S is’ asserts truth in the minimal sense (being^{true-1p}), which he aligns with *per accidens* being. In demonstration and metaphysics, ‘S is P’ expresses a truth grounded in essence (being^{true-2p}), which corresponds to being^{per-se-2p}. Thus, while Ibn Rušd partially accepts the reinterpretation of Aristotle’s fourth sense of being implied by Uṣṭāṭ’s translation, he restricts its scope. Ibn Rušd’s account, in contrast to Ibn Sīnā’s, keeps essence and existence together not by conflation, but through a semantic and logical differentiation that traces back to the structure of predication itself.

³³ See Aristotle 1953, Θ10, Δ29, E4 and compare with Γ7.

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Appendix 1. Metaphysics $\Delta 7$ (1017a31–35) in the translation of Uṣṭāṭ³⁴

I	1. And <i>huwiyya</i> also signifies the <i>anniyya</i> (that-it-is-ness) of a thing and its <i>ḥaqīqa</i> (reality);	1. وَأَيْضًا الْهُوِيَّةُ تَدُلُّ عَلَى أَتْيَةِ الشَّيْءِ وَحَقِيقَتِهِ
	1.1. for when we say that the thing is, we signify its reality,	1.1. فَإِنَّهُ إِذَا قُلْنَا إِنَّ الشَّيْءَ دَلَّلْنَا عَلَى حَقِيقَتِهِ
	1.2. whereas when we say that it is not, we signify that it is not real but it is rather false.	1.2. وَإِذَا قُلْنَا إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ دَلَّلْنَا عَلَى أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِحَقٍّ بَلْ هُوَ كَذِبٌ
II	2. The same goes for affirmative and negative [proposition]	2. وَكَذَلِكَ فِي الْمَوْجِبَةِ وَالْمُسَالِبَةِ
	3. like our saying that Socrates is musical, since that is real	3. كَقَوْلِنَا إِنَّ سُقْرَاطَ مُوسِيقِيٍّ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ حَقٌّ
	4. and our saying that Socrates is not white, while that is not real.	4. وَقَوْلِنَا إِنَّ سُقْرَاطَ لَيْسَ هُوَ أَيْضَ وَذَلِكَ لَيْسَ بِحَقٍّ
III	5. And like our saying that the diagonal is equal with the side [of the square] is false.	5. وَكَقَوْلِنَا إِنَّ خَطَّ الْقَطْرِ مُسَاوٍ لِحَطِّ الصِّلَعِ كَذِبٌ

³⁴ For the Arabic original, see Ibn Ruṣd 1938–1942, 555.8–13. For translations into European languages, see McGinnis and Reisman 2007, 362.4–9 (English) and Martini 2012, 307.25–30 (Italian).

Appendix 2. Ibn Rušd's Commentary of Aristotle's text as contained in appendix 1³⁵

I	He wants [to say] that the noun <i>huwiyya</i> also signifies what is signified by our saying of a thing that it is existent true;	يُرِيدُ وَإِسْمُ الْهُويَّةِ أَيْضاً يَدُلُّ عَلَى مَا يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ قَوْلُنَا فِي الشَّيْءِ إِنَّهُ مَوْجُودٌ صَادِقٌ
	for when we say of a thing that it is, we thereby signify that it is true;	فَإِنَّا إِذَا قُلْنَا فِي الشَّيْءِ إِنَّهُ دَلَّلْنَا بِذَلِكَ عَلَى أَنَّهُ صَادِقٌ
	and when we say of it that it is not, we thereby signify that it is not existent, that is, [it] is false.	وَإِذَا قُلْنَا فِيهِ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ دَلَّلْنَا فِيهِ عَلَى أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِمَوْجُودٍ أَيْ كَاذِبٌ
II	He wants [to say] here by <i>huwiyya</i> what signifies truth, either simply/absolutely, or compositely.	يُرِيدُ بِالْهُويَّةِ هَاهُنَا مَا يَدُلُّ عَلَى الصِّدْقِ إِثْمًا مُطْلَقًا وَإِثْمًا مُرَكَّبًا
	I mean by the singular and the composite object-of-inquiry,	أَعْنِي بِالْمَطْلُوبِ الْمَفْرَدِ وَالْمُرَكَّبِ،
	in the composite proposition, like our saying 'Zayd is musical' or 'Zayd is not musical',	أَمَّا فِي الْقَضِيَّةِ الْمُرَكَّبَةِ مِثْلَ قَوْلِنَا زَيْدٌ هُوَ مُوسِيقُوسٌ أَوْ زَيْدٌ لَيْسَ بِمُوسِيقُوسٍ
	and concerning the absolute object of inquiry, like our saying 'whether Zayd is or is not'.	وَفِي الْمَطْلُوبِ الْمُطْلَقِ مِثْلَ قَوْلِنَا هَلْ زَيْدٌ هُوَ أَمْ لَيْسَ هُوَ
	The existential word [derived from <i>w-ğ-d</i>] ³⁶ as well is used in both objects-of-	وَكَذَلِكَ الْكَلِمَةُ الْوُجُودِيَّةُ تُسْتَعْمَلُ فِي الْمَطْلُوبَيْنِ جَمِيعًا أَعْنِي

³⁵ For the Arabic original of the three sections commenting the corresponding sections in appendix 1, see respectively, Ibn Rušd 1938–1942, 559.pu.–560.2 (I); 560.5–561.13 (II); 561.15–562.1 (III). For translations into European languages, see, respectively, McGinnis and Reisman 2007, 364.15–18 (I), 364.21–365.12 (II), 365.14–19 (III) for English, and Martini 2012, 309.31–34 (I), 309.36–310.15 and 310.19–27 (II); 310.28–32 (III) for Italian. Aristotle's words within Ibn Rušd's commentary are underlined.

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inquiry, I mean,	
the absolute [object-of-inquiry] like our saying ‘whether Zayd is existent’,	المُطْلَقُ مِثْلَ قَوْلِنَا هَلْ زَيْدٌ مُوْجُودٌ
and in the composite [object-of-inquiry], like our saying ‘whether Zayd is musical’	وَفِي الْمُرْكَبِ مِثْلَ قَوْلِنَا هَلْ زَيْدٌ يُوجَدُ مُوسِيقُوسٌ
and in general, the noun ‘ <i>al-mawğūd</i> ’ and ‘ <i>al-huwa</i> ’ here in both places signify the true - not the genus - I mean the copula <i>huwa</i> and the copula <i>yūğadu</i>	وَبِالْجُمْلَةِ فَاسْمُ الْمَوْجُودِ وَالْهُوَ هَاهُنَا فِي الْمَوْضِعَيْنِ إِنَّمَا يَدُلُّانِ عَلَى الصَّادِقِ - لَا عَلَى الْجَنْسِ - أَعْنِي رِبَاطُ هُوَ وَرِبَاطُ يُوجَدُ
For ‘ <i>huwa</i> ’ signifies in the case of the first saying what is used in the absolute proposition, and in the second, what is used in the composite proposition.	فَهُوَ إِنَّمَا دَلَّ فِي الْقَوْلِ الْأَوَّلِ عَلَى الَّذِي يُسْتَعْمَلُ فِي الْقَضِيَّةِ الْمُطْلَقَةِ وَفِي الثَّانِي عَلَى الَّذِي يُسْتَعْمَلُ فِي الْقَضِيَّةِ الْمُرْكَبَةِ
And this is what he indicated by saying ‘<2> And likewise in the affirmative and the negative [proposition] <3> as our saying that Socrates is musical, for that is real’,	وَهُوَ الَّذِي دَلَّ عَلَيْهِ بِقَوْلِهِ وَكَذَلِكَ فِي الْمَوْجِبَةِ وَالسَّالِبَةِ كَقَوْلِنَا إِنَّ سُقْرَاطَ مُوسِيقُوسٍ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ حَقٌّ
What he wants [to say] is that likewise, in the affirmative, when we indicate existence through affirmation, in which the copula appears, we also indicate that it is real—for example our saying Socrates is musical.	يُرِيدُ وَكَذَلِكَ فِي الْمَوْجِبَةِ إِذَا دَلَّلْنَا عَلَى الْوُجُودِ بِالْإِجَابِ الَّذِي فِيهِ زَابِطَةٌ دَلَّلْنَا عَلَى أَنَّهُ حَقٌّ مِثْلَ قَوْلِنَا سُقْرَاطُ مُوسِيقُوسٌ
And when we indicate it by negation, we indicate that it is not real—for example, when we indicate of Zayd that he is not white, this indicates that our	وَإِذَا دَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِ بِالسَّلْبِ دَلَّلْنَا عَلَى أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِحَقٍّ مِثْلَ دَلَّائِنَا عَلَى زَيْدٍ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ أَبْيَضَ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ دَلَالَةٌ عَلَى أَنَّ قَوْلَنَا فِيهِ إِنَّهُ أَبْيَضٌ لَيْسَ

³⁶ See above n. 10.

	<p>saying of him that he is white is not real.</p>	<p>بِحَقِّ</p>
	<p>And this is what he wanted [to say] by his saying ‘<4> and our saying that Socrates is not white, and that is not real’. He wants [to say], that our saying that Socrates is not white indicates that our saying of him that he is white is not true.</p>	<p>وَهَذَا هُوَ الَّذِي أَرَادَ بِقَوْلِهِ وَقَوْلُنَا إِنَّ سُقْرَاطَ لَيْسَ بِأَبْيَضٍ وَذَلِكَ لَيْسَ بِحَقٍّ يُرِيدُ وَقَوْلُنَا إِنَّ سُقْرَاطَ لَيْسَ بِأَبْيَضٍ يَدُلُّ عَلَى أَنَّ قَوْلَنَا فِيهِ إِنَّهُ أَبْيَضٌ لَيْسَ بِحَقٍّ</p>
	<p>But you should know, in general, that the noun <i>huwiyya</i> which signifies the essence of a thing is different from the <i>huwiyya</i> that signifies the true. And likewise, the noun <i>mawḡūd</i> that signifies the essence of a thing is different from the <i>mawḡūd</i> that signifies what is true.</p>	<p>وَلَا كُنْ يَتَّبِعِي أَنْ تَعْلَمَ بِالْجُمْلَةِ أَنَّ اسْمَ الْهُوِيَّةِ الَّتِي تَدُلُّ عَلَى ذَاتِ الشَّيْءِ غَيْرُ اسْمِ الْهُوِيَّةِ الَّتِي تَدُلُّ عَلَى الصَّادِقِ وَكَذَلِكَ اسْمُ الْمَوْجُودِ الَّذِي يَدُلُّ عَلَى ذَاتِ الشَّيْءِ هُوَ غَيْرُ الْمَوْجُودِ الَّذِي يَدُلُّ عَلَى الصَّادِقِ</p>
	<p>And thus, the commentators differed concerning the absolute object-of-inquiry—namely, our saying: ‘Is the thing existent?’ in the second book of the <i>Topics</i>—whether it falls under questions of accident or questions of genus.</p>	<p>وَلِذَلِكَ اخْتَلَفَ الْمُتَسَرُّونَ فِي الْمَطْلُوبِ الْمَطْلُوبِ وَهُوَ قَوْلُنَا هَلِ الشَّيْءُ مَوْجُودٌ فِي الْمَقَالَةِ الثَّانِيَةِ مِنْ كِتَابِ الْجَدَلِ هَلْ هُوَ دَاخِلٌ فِي مَطْلُوبَاتِ الْعَرَضِ أَوْ فِي مَطْلُوبَاتِ الْجِنْسِ</p>
	<p>For the one who understood from <i>mawḡūd</i> here the thing that encompasses the ten categories said that it falls under questions of genus. And the one who understood from the term <i>mawḡūd</i> here what is understood from [the term] true, said that it falls under questions of accident.</p>	<p>وَذَلِكَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ فَهَمَ مِنَ الْمَوْجُودِ هَاهُنَا الشَّيْءَ الَّذِي يُعَمُّ الْمُتَوَلَّاتِ الْعَشْرَ قَالَ هُوَ دَاخِلٌ فِي مَطَالِبِ الْجِنْسِ وَمَنْ فَهَمَ مِنْ لَفْظِ الْمَوْجُودِ هَاهُنَا مَا يُفْهَمُ مِنَ الصَّادِقِ قَالَ هُوَ دَاخِلٌ فِي مَطْلُوبِ الْعَرَضِ</p>
III	<p>...is another example he used for this purpose. What he wants [to say] is:</p>	<p>هُوَ مِثَالٌ آخَرَ اسْتَعْمَلَهُ فِي هَذَا الْمَعْنَى يُرِيدُ أَنَّهُ</p>

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<p>when we say that the diagonal is not equal to the side of the square, and that is true, then our saying this signifies that its being equal is false.</p>	<p>إِذَا قُلْنَا إِنَّ الظُّرَّ لَيْسَ هُوَ مُشَارِكًا لِضَلَعِ المُرْبَعِ وَكَانَ حَقًّا كَانَ قَوْلُنَا ذَلِكَ دَلَالَةً عَلَى أَنَّ كَوْنَهُ مُشَارِكًا كَذِبٌ</p>
<p>And what he intended by this was to distinguish between the expression <i>huwiyya</i> which signifies the copulative connection in the mind and the <i>huwiyya</i> that indicates the essence which is outside the mind.</p>	<p>وَأَمَّا أَرَادَ بِهَذَا أَنْ يُفَرِّقَ بَيْنَ لَفْظَةِ الْهُوِيَّةِ الدَّالَّةِ عَلَى الرِّبَاطِ فِي الذَّهْنِ وَالدَّالَّةِ عَلَى الدَّاتِ الَّتِي خَارِجَ الذَّهْنِ</p>

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Sic est. (Propositional) truth as being in Aquinas: sources and influences

Abstract: This essay follows two paths. Although both lie within the historico-philosophical field, the first follows a more philosophical perspective and the second a more philological one. The first path leads to this discovery: in Aquinas truth, which is conceived in terms of propositional truth in contrast to what some Thomists still hold, is a mode of being. The second path, on the other hand, leads to the discovery that his doctrine of propositional truth as being has precise ancient sources and very interesting influences ranging from the 13th to the 20th century.

Keywords: Propositional Truth, Being, Thomas Aquinas, Hugolin of Orvieto, Jean Buridan, Franz Brentano

Introduction

The ideal philosophical starting point for the philosophico-historical research of which we are about to present the first results is the distinction between predication and assertion, considered to be one of Gottlob Frege's strong points.

A famous and important passage in his *Sense and Reference* points out that the step from a predication to an assertion involves a move to a higher level:

By combining subject and predicate, one reaches only a thought, never passes from sense to reference, never from a thought to its truth value. One moves at the same level but never advances from one level to the next (Frege 1977: 63).

In other words, predication, i.e. the combination of subject and predicate, is a simple thought: for there to be assertion, it is necessary

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for that predication, i.e. the proposition containing it, to be asserted as true.

The same thought is explained by Frege using the distinction between question and answer. A question contains the same thought as the corresponding positive answer, only in the question that thought, expressed by the same combination of subject and predicate, is put in doubt, i.e. it is not asserted. In the positive answer, on the other hand, the same thought, i.e. the same predication, is asserted as true. It is worth re-reading Frege's own words here:

In a word-question we utter an incomplete sentence which only obtains a true sense through the completion for which we ask. Word-questions are accordingly left out of consideration here. Sentence-questions are a different matter. We expect to hear 'yes' or 'no'. The answer 'yes' means the same as an indicative sentence, for in it the thought that was already completely contained in the interrogative sentence is laid down as true. So, a sentence-question can be formed from every indicative sentence. An exclamation cannot be regarded as a communication on this account, since no corresponding sentence-question can be formed. An interrogative sentence and an indicative one contain the same thought; but the indicative contains something else as well, namely, the assertion. (Frege 1956: 294–295)

As can be seen, the positive answer 'yes' to a question liberates, as it were, the assertive force contained in the indicative sentence. Two things are clear in the text. The first is that assertion is already implicitly contained in the indicative form of a proposition that contains predication. The second is that, in any case, mere predication, albeit in the indicative, is not identical with assertion. As we read earlier, assertion is on a higher level than predication, since assertion consists in saying of a proposition, not of an object, that it is true or, in other words, 'it is true that p' or 'it is the case that p'. This is why Frege felt the need to invent a specific logical sign for the assertion that it is $\vdash p$. It is the opposite of the logical operator of negation $\neg p$, which is transcribed in the written language in

terms of 'it is not the case that p', where p, as is well known, is a proposition (See: Frege 1977).

The prevalent view in contemporary philosophy is that the distinction between assertion and predication was introduced by Frege, to the extent that this distinction is known as the 'Frege point' (Geach 1965). Yet, Susanne Bobzien has shown that Frege was deeply influenced by (even 'plagiarized') stoic logic, as presented by Carl Prantl's *Geschichte der Logik im Abendland* (1855) and that many of his logical theses find unequivocal parallels in the Stoa's logical doctrines (Bobzien 2021). Furthermore, a few authors, including Anthony Kenny (1963), Giorgio Pini (2004), Gyula Klima (2004), and I myself (Ventimiglia 2020, 2022, 2023) have pointed out that the distinction mentioned above between assertion and predication, explicitly made by Frege, was known by various medieval Latin authors such as Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Jean Buridan.

In this article, I am not going to deal with the distinction between predication and assertion in Thomas Aquinas in general, but, within this broader topic, I will address the dialectic of question and answer and the significance of 'yes' as the locus in which assertion best emerges. By analysing Thomas Aquinas' texts on this specific topic, in particular two important pages of his Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, its sources and influences, we will trace the ontological prehistory of Frege's 'yes'. We shall discover how precisely that 'yes', synonymous with 'it is true that p', has a very important ontological value in Aquinas and the tradition that depends on him, which is absent in Frege, so much so that it can be affirmed not only that in the Aristotelian tradition one of the two modes of being is being as truth, but also that truth means being true - a theory that Frege would have considered philosophically and logically meaningless.

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Objectual truth?

In one of the most accredited contemporary books on the notion of truth, namely that of Wolfgang Künné (2003) Aquinas's theory of truth is classified as 'non-propositional truth' or 'objectual truth', in contrast to most contemporary (analytic) philosophical theories, which would defend a notion of truth as 'propositional truth'. Künné recalls how the theory of 'objectual truth', or in other words truth as a property of things, was considered 'thoroughly useless and almost senseless' by Leibniz - who himself used to treat scholastic philosophy charitably - and 'mistaken', ça va sans dire, by Kant. Only Hegel (surprisingly, as he was the champion of idealism) would have attempted to revive it, arguing that the adjective 'true' is said first and foremost and in the proper sense of things (a true state, a true work of art, a true friend). Heidegger on his turn was a sworn enemy of 'propositional truth'. Contemporary analytic philosophers, on the other hand, sworn enemies of Heidegger, would almost all be for the theory of 'propositional truth'.

Künné does no more than take up with regard to Thomas what many Thomists have been repeating for years, in polemic with Kantianism and Idealism: truth would be objective for Thomas, it would be the 'truth of things', as the title of Joseph Pieper's well-known book (Pieper 1947) sounds, and would not, therefore, be a property of concepts, and even less so of propositions.

In fact, theories of truth as a property of things existed in the 13th century. For instance, Albertus Magnus argued that truth is first and foremost a property of things and gave some examples of 'true' being said of things: true gold, true man. Before him, Roger Bacon had explained the notion of truth being in the mind very well in terms of '*passio enuntiationis*', distinguishing it from truth as '*passio rei*', yet he considers such '*passio enuntiationis*' as *ens diminutum* (diminished truth): truth is primarily in things and of things (see: Ventimiglia 2020: 157-166).

Where does Thomas Aquinas stand? Instead of giving the word to the Thomists, one should give the word to him.

As I have shown elsewhere (Ventimiglia 2020: 166-181), in the first question of the *De veritate*, immediately after the famous article where he lists all the transcendentals and clarifies the definition of truth as ‘the *adaequatio* of intellect and being’ in which ‘the perfect notion of truth consists’, Thomas asks: ‘is truth primarily in the intellect rather than in things?’. He replies to the question with a decided positive answer:

Since the true is said of many according to prior and posterior, it must be said first of that in which the complete notion of truth is first found [...]. The Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* VI that good and evil are in things, but the true and false are in the mind. The thing is called true only insofar as it is adequated to intellect. So, the true is primarily in intellect and secondarily in things.¹

It is important to stress that what is at issue here is not just the truth (or the true) that is in the soul, the logical truth as against the truth that exists in the reality of things outside the soul and is transcendental and ontological, as Roger and Albert have maintained. What is at issue is truth (or the true) tout court: the transcendental truth that he had referred to in the first article of the *De veritate*, where he listed it as among the transcendentals, is nothing other than the truth understood analogically (‘according to prior and posterior’), which is primarily in intellect and

¹ ‘Et ideo, cum verum dicatur per prius et posterius de pluribus, oportet quod de illo per prius dicatur in quo primo invenitur completa ratio veritatis [...]. Et quia bonum, sicut dictum est, dicit ordinem entis ad appetitum, verum autem dicit ordinem ad intellectum; inde est quod philosophus dicit in VI *Metaphys.*, quod bonum et malum sunt in rebus, verum autem et falsum sunt in mente. Res autem non dicitur vera nisi secundum quod est intellectui adaequata; unde per posterius invenitur verum in rebus, per prius autem in intellectu’. (Thomas de Aquino 1972-1976: q. 1, a. 2). In this as in the other cases, of Thomas Aquinas’ works I have used the available English translations listed in the References. However, they have been slightly changed where I deemed it necessary. Italics are always mine.

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secondarily in things. And again, ‘the complete notion of truth is first found in intellect’.

In the following *quaestio*, Thomas asks more specifically: ‘Is truth only in the intellect composing and dividing?’. And his reply shines with clarity:

It should be said that just as the true is first in intellect and secondarily in things, so too it is first found in the act of intellect composing and dividing rather than in the act of intellect forming the quiddities of things. The notion of the true consists in the *adaequatio* of thing and intellect (...). But when it begins to judge the thing apprehended, then that judgment of intellect is something proper to it not found outside in things, and when it is adequated to that which is outside in the thing, it is called a true judgment (*iudicium verum*). The intellect judges the thing apprehended when it says that it is or is not, which is the intellect composing and dividing. Hence the Philosopher also says in *Metaphysics* VI, 4 that ‘composition and division are in the intellect and not in things’. And thence it is that truth is first found in composition and in division of intellect.²

² ‘Dicendum, quod sicut verum per prius invenitur in intellectu quam in rebus, ita etiam per prius invenitur in actu intellectus componentis et dividētis quam in actu intellectus quidditatem 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 quidditatem rerum, non habet nisi similitudinem rei existentis extra animam, sicut et sensus in quantum accipit speciem 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; tunc autem iudicat intellectus de re apprehensa quando dicit aliquid esse vel non esse, quod est intellectus componentis et dividētis; unde dicit etiam philosophus in 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’ (Thomas de Aquino 1972–1976: q. 1, a. 3).

From this passage it is clear that truth is first and foremost and in a proper sense not a property of things but a property of propositions, a '*passio enuntiationis*' according to Roger Bacon's expression. And not of just any propositions but, properly speaking, of judgements. We call true first and foremost and in the proper sense a judgement: what you say is true.

What about the true object, the 'true gold', of which his teacher Albert the Great spoke? In his commentary on *Perihermeneias*, Thomas considers this thesis but dismisses it in these terms:

However, certain things are said to be true or false by reference to our understanding, not essentially or formally, but effectively, in so far as they are born to form a true or false assay/assess of themselves; and according to this gold is called true or false.³

What is true or false, therefore, properly speaking, Thomas notes, is not the gold, but the judgement of those who value or assay it as gold or not gold.

However, one might ask at this point how it is possible that propositional truth can be convertible with being. For transcendental being is said of everything, whereas the human intellect clearly cannot make judgements about everything existing at all times, and less so about things past and future, since both things, i.e. things and human intellect, are contingent. This is where the divine intellect comes into play according to Thomas. Indeed, every being has a veridical relation to the divine intellect and this is why every being is true, according to Thomas. He himself writes this in various works. Hence Thomas says that:

³ 'Dicuntur tamen res aliquae verae vel falsae per comparisonem ad intellectum nostrum, non essentialiter vel formaliter, sed effective, in quantum scilicet natae sunt facere de se veram vel falsam existimationem; et secundum hoc dicitur aurum verum vel falsum' (Thomas de Aquino 1989: lib. 1 l. 3 n. 7).

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Truth is found first and properly in the divine intellect, secondarily and properly in the human intellect, secondarily and improperly in things.⁴

Now, can it be said that truth remains propositional even when referring to the relation of all things to the divine intellect? No and yes. Certainly, the divine intellect knows things not propositionally but immediately, yet the being of things is created by a *dictum* uttered by God himself in the act of creation: 'God said: Be light made and light was made'. And that 'dictum' is the divine Word through which all things were created. Thomas notes this in a very interesting text:

God made all things by His Word, which is the intelligibility of things made by Him. Hence, we read in John (1:3): 'All things were made by Him.' In agreement with this, Moses, describing the origin of the universe, uses such a manner of speech for the single works: 'God said: Be light made and light was made... God said: Let there be a firmament made' (Gen. 1:1-3), and so of the rest, All of which the Psalmist includes, saying: 'He spoke and they were made' (Ps. 148:5), for to speak is to produce a word. Thus, therefore, one must understand that God spoke and they were made because He produced the Word by which He produced things in being as by their perfect intelligibility.⁵

⁴ 'Est ergo veritas in intellectu divino quidem primo et proprie; in intellectu vero humano proprie quidem sed secundario; in rebus autem improprie et secundario, quia non nisi per respectum ad alteram duarum veritatum [...]. Veritas autem quae dicitur de rebus in comparatione ad intellectum humanum, est rebus quodammodo accidentalis, quia posito quod intellectus humanus non esset nec esse posset, adhuc res in sua essentia permaneret [...]. Sic ergo res aliqua principalius dicitur vera in ordine ad veritatem intellectus divini quam in ordine ad veritatem intellectus humani' (Thomas de Aquino 1972-1976: q. 1, a. 4). See also: Thomas de Aquino 1989: lib. 1, l. 3 n. 8: 'Et quia omnia etiam naturalia comparantur ad intellectum divinum, sicut artificata ad artem, consequens est ut quaelibet res dicatur esse vera secundum quod habet propriam formam, secundum quam imitatur artem divinam. Nam falsum aurum est verum aurichalcum. Et hoc modo ens et verum convertuntur, quia quaelibet res naturalis per suam formam arti divinae conformatur. Unde philosophus in I physicae, formam nominat quoddam divinum'.

However, beyond these theological and scriptural implications, it seems clear that Thomas' theory of truth is not far, contrary to what Künne and many Thomists still believe, from contemporary theories of 'propositional truth'. Of course, this does not mean that there are no fundamental differences. There are certainly some and, indeed, they make Thomas' theory philosophically very interesting both in itself and in relation to contemporary debates. This is what we are now going to explore.

Aquinas: sic est

First of all, already from the passage from *De veritate* quoted above, we see that 'true', said of a judgement, means something like 'adequate' to reality. What does it mean, however? Following Aristotle, Thomas explains that in the *adaequatio* 'the intellect judges the thing apprehended when it says that it is or is not' (*tunc autem iudicat intellectus de re apprehensa quando dicit aliquid esse vel non esse*).

The passage echoes an adage by Aristotle: 'to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true' (Aristotle 1928²: Γ 7.27). The adage, however, is as well-known as it is obscure. For what is the thing apprehended, what is the *aliquid*, of which the intellect says that it is or

⁵ 'Quicumque autem facit aliquid per intellectum, operatur per rationem rerum factarum quam apud se habet: domus enim quae est in materia, fit ab aedificatore per rationem domus quam habet in mente. Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus res in esse produxit, non naturali necessitate, sed quasi per intellectum et voluntatem agens. Fecit igitur Deus omnia per verbum suum, quod est ratio rerum factarum ab ipso. Hinc est quod dicitur Ioan. 1-3: *omnia per ipsum facta sunt*. Cui consonat quod Moyses, mundi originem describens, in singulis operibus tali utitur modo loquendi, *dixit Deus, fiat lux, et facta est lux; dixit Deus, fiat firmamentum*; et sic de aliis. Quae omnia Psalmista comprehendit, dicens, *dixit, et facta sunt*: dicere enim est verbum producere. Sic ergo intelligendum est quod *Deus dixit et facta sunt*, quia verbum produxit, per quod res in esse produxit, sicut per earum rationem perfectam' (Thomas de Aquino 1918–1930: lib. 4 cap. 13 n. 7).

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is not? The reality or the thing said, that is, the proposition? Traditionalist Thomists would have no doubt: it is the reality, the *res*, they would answer. Thomas, however, did not think like the Thomists. For in the Commentary to the fifth book of the *Metaphysics* he expressly makes a statement on this question:

Then he gives another sense in which the term *being* is used, inasmuch as the terms *being* and *is* signify the composition of a proposition, which the intellect makes when it combines and separates. He says that *being* signifies the truth of a thing, or *as another translation better expresses it, being* signifies that some statement is true. Thus, the truth of a thing can be said to determine the truth of a proposition after the manner of a cause; for by reason of the fact that a thing is or is not, a discourse is *true* or *false*. For when we say that something is, we signify that a proposition is *true*; and when we say that something is not, we signify that it is not true. And this applies both to affirmation and to negation. It applies to affirmation, as when we say *that Socrates is white because this is true*; and to negation, as when we say that Socrates is not white, because *this is true, namely, that he is not white*. And in a similar way we say that the diagonal of a square is *not incommensurable* [read: commensurable] with a side, because this is false, i.e., its *not being* [non] incommensurable [read: commensurable].⁶

⁶ 'Deinde cum dicit amplius autem ponit alium modum entis, secundum quod esse et est, significant compositionem propositionis, quam facit intellectus componens et dividens. Unde dicit, quod esse significat veritatem rei. Vel sicut alia translatio melius habet *quod esse significat* quia aliquod dictum est verum. Unde veritas propositionis potest dici veritas rei per causam. Nam ex eo quod res est vel non est, oratio vera vel falsa est. Cum enim dicimus aliquid esse, significamus propositionem esse veram. Et cum dicimus non esse, significamus non esse veram; et hoc sive in affirmando, sive in negando. In affirmando quidem, sicut dicimus quod Socrates est albus, quia hoc verum est. In negando vero, ut Socrates non est albus, quia hoc est verum, scilicet ipsum esse non album. Et similiter dicimus, quod non est diameter incommensurabilis lateri quadrati, quia hoc est falsum, scilicet non esse ipsum non commensurabilem' (Thomas de Aquino 1964: V, l. 9. It is evident that the term 'incommensurable' does not make sense here, although it is reported in the Latin translations of Aristotle's text and even in the same text by Aristotle. The first to notice the incongruity was Alexander of Aphrodisias.

The reason why Thomas prefers the *alia translatio*, i.e. Moerbeke's, consists precisely in the fact that in the old *translatio* the being as truth seemed to be the truth of the thing, as if the thing itself were true, whereas in Moerbeke's translation the being as truth is the truth of the proposition and the subject, of which it is said to be true, is *aliquid dictum*, i.e., as is evident immediately afterwards, the proposition. It is very important, then, to notice that Thomas here begins to assimilate, albeit still unclearly, the expression 'is true' with the expression 'est': being as truth means that a statement is true: 'when we say that something is, we signify that a proposition is true; and when we say that something is not, we signify that it is not true', and afterwards: 'as when we say that Socrates is white because this is true'.

From these passages we begin to understand that the 'is' of the copula 'is' in the expression 'is white' has to do with 'is true'. It is as if within the 'is' of the copula there were also implied an 'is' said of the whole proposition, which means 'is true' referred to the entire proposition. In other words, to say, in the indicative, 'Socrates is white' is not only to link being white to Socrates, but also to say that the whole proposition 'Socrates is white' is, that is, 'is true'. This interpretation is confirmed precisely by Thomas' Commentary on Book VI of the *Metaphysics*, which is, in my opinion, one of the most interesting and original of Thomas' entire theory of truth:

He says, then, that 'in one sense being means what is true,' i.e., it signifies nothing else than truth; *for when we ask if man is an animal, we answer is (est), by which it is meant that this proposition is true.* And in the same way non-being signifies in a sense what is false; for when one answers 'is not' (*non est*) it is meant that the statement made is false. Now this being which means what is true, and non-being which means what is false, depend on combination and separation; *for simple terms signify neither truth nor falsity*, whereas complex terms have truth and falsity through affirmation or negation. And here affirmation

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is called combination because it signifies that a predicate belongs to a subject, whereas negation is called separation because it signifies that a predicate does not belong to a subject.⁷

To better understand Thomas' answer, we must first start with the meaning of an answer formed by a single word, as described in Aristotle's *Perihermeneias* and the medieval commentaries. For Aristotle in that work had excluded the possibility for a single word, whether noun or verb, to be true or false. Only *complexa*, i.e. propositions, and not *incomplexa*, i.e. individual terms, can be true or false.

Exceptions, however, are single terms used as answers to questions. For example, Thomas says that if the question is asked 'who teaches in the schools?' and the answer is 'the teacher', the answer is capable of being true or false, despite being a single term, because in fact it implies 'teaches', so that the complete answer would sound 'he who teaches in the schools is the teacher'⁸.

⁷ 'Dicit ergo quod ens quoddam dicitur quasi uerum, id est quod nichil aliud significat nisi ueritatem ; cum enim interrogamus si homo est animal, respondetur 'est', per quod significatur propositionem premissam esse ueram. Et eodem modo non ens significat quasi falsum ; cum enim respondetur 'non est', significatur quod proposita oratio sit falsa. Hoc igitur ens, quod dicitur quasi uerum, et non ens, quod dicitur quasi falsum, consistit circa compositionem et diuisionem ; uoces enim incomplexae neque uerum neque falsum significant, set uoces complexae per affirmationem aut negationem ueritatem aut falsitatem habent. Dicitur autem hic affirmatio compositio quia significat predicatum inesse subiecto, negatio uero dicitur hic diuisio quia significat predicatum a subiecto remoueri' (Thomas de Aquino 1964: VI, l. 4 [corrected on the basis of a provisional critical text. I thank Marta Borgo for sending me the provisional text of the critical edition]).

⁸ 'Introduxit autem hoc, quia simplex nomen vel uerbum, quando respondetur ad interrogationem, uidetur uerum vel falsum significare: quod est proprium enunciationis. Sed hoc non competit nomini vel uerbo, nisi secundum quod intelligitur coniunctum cum alia parte proposita in interrogatione. Ut si quaerenti, quis legit in scholis? Respondeatur, magister, subintelligitur, ibi legit' (Thomas de Aquino 1989: lib. 1, l. 8 n. 17).

Petrus de Ybernia, young Thomas' teacher in Naples, gives a similar example in his commentary on the same Aristotelian work. If the question 'what is the highest good in life?' were answered by a single word, e.g. 'honesty', this single word would still be able to be true or false, since, again, it would imply a whole proposition, i.e. 'the highest good in life is honesty' (Petrus de Ybernia 1996: I, l. VII, 3b, 87).⁹

Now, going back to Thomas's 'est' answer given to the question 'is man an animal?', one might note, first of all, something similar: the answer of a single word merely implies the whole sentence, i.e. 'man is an animal', except that for practical reasons the whole sentence is omitted and, in an affirmative answer, the 'est' of the copula is simply repeated (or denied with the 'non est' in a negative answer).

This is true but, according to the text of Thomas, it is not the entire story. For that 'est' is not only the repetition of the copula but is more. As we read in the text of Thomas, that 'est' means that 'this proposition is true'. The 'est', then, is not only the repetition of the copula that binds the subject to the predicate but is (also) a verb that is predicated of the entire proposition (subject, copula and predicate) and is equivalent to 'p is true'. Something like: 'that man is an animal is true' or 'it is true that man is an animal' (or to stay with the example of his Commentary on Book V quoted above: 'it is true that Socrates is white' ('as when we say that Socrates is white because this is true'))¹⁰.

The really interesting thing is that in Latin 'est' as an answer to a question is synonymous with 'sic est', which is equivalent to the 'si' (yes) of some Romance languages (Italian, Spanish, Catalan and Portuguese). In fact, as we will see more clearly later, the expressions 'est', 'sic est' and 'verum est' are synonymous. Now, 'si' (yes) is in fact no other than an

⁹ The translation of the text, in this as in other cases where there is no translation, is mine.

¹⁰ Thomas does not seem to address the difference between the predicate of a proposition (p is true) and the logical operator (it is true that p). On the subject see Mulligan 2010.

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expression referring to the whole proposition. This becomes clear in the case of the question and answer game. Let us imagine, following the example of Thomas, the following discussion:

- Peter states: 'man is an animal',
- Paula asks: 'is man (really) an animal?',
- Peter replies: 'Yes (indeed)' – in Latin 'est' – which means: 'man is (really) an animal' i.e. 'that man is an animal is true' or 'yes, it is true that man is an animal'.

Here is found the reason for the deep connection between the truth and being in Thomas: truth is always a true being and for this reason, Thomas notes, the verb to be cannot be omitted.

As Thomas remarks in his Commentary on the *Perihermeneias*:

When 'man' or 'white' is said, if nothing else is added, it is not yet true or false; but later, when 'to be' or 'not to be' is added, it becomes true or false.¹¹

Which verb to be? The one used, in Latin, in answers to questions that ask for a 'yes' or 'no' answer. In fact, 'yes' is equivalent to 'est' referring to the whole proposition.

Returning to our dialogue and to the example of Thomas, it is interesting to note that Paula's question (is man an animal?), i.e. the questioning of Peter's first proposition in the indicative (man is an animal) forces Peter to reveal his intentions: was he serious or was he joking, does he really think man is an animal or was he speaking ironically? In short, the answer to the question forces the speaker, Peter, either to

¹¹ 'Cum homo vel album dicitur, si nihil aliud addatur: non enim verum adhuc vel falsum est; sed postea quando additur esse vel non esse, fit verum vel falsum' (Thomas de Aquino 1989: lib. 1, l. 3 n. 12).

make explicit the assertive force naturally and implicitly contained in the copula or to refute it.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the baptismal form in the Creed, as well as the marriage formulas, are constructed in the form of questions and answers, in which a 'yes' is required, that is, a 'sic est'. It is the 'yes' given to a proposition: - 'Is Jesus the son of God?', - 'yes, it is true that Jesus is the son of God'. It is indeed correct, therefore, that the form of the indicative implicitly already contains the assertion and it would be redundant each time to repeat: 'it is true that (or it is the case that) Jesus is the son of God'. If you affirm it in the indicative, it is assumed that you hold that proposition to be true. The question, however, forces you to disclose, beyond and within the 'is' of the copula, the 'is' equivalent to 'it is true that' or 'it is the case that', or to refute it: I was joking, 'it is actually not true that Jesus is the son of God'.

Let us consider another example taken from contemporary times. Let us imagine the following dialogue:

- Peter states: Donald Trump is in love with Xi Jinping's wife.
- Paula asks: Is Trump really in love with Xi Jinping's wife?
- Peter replies: Yes indeed he is really in love with Xi Jinping's wife.

What would have happened if Peter had simply repeated his first statement in the indicative, omitting the yes? In my opinion, his reply would have sounded a little arrogant and certainly unkind to Paula. Why? Because Paula's question was not so much or directly about Trump but about Peter's statement and its veracity. Therefore, simply reiterating the initial statement in the indicative would not have met Paula's requirements. This means that Paula's question and the 'yes' or 'no' of Peter's reply move the discourse to another level: at the beginning of talking about Trump, after the question demanding the answer 'yes' or 'no' the discourse shifts to Peter and his dictum. Of course, it is clear that

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Paula's ultimate demand is to know whether Trump is really in love with Xi Jinping's wife, but to get to know this, one must first know whether Peter's dictum is a joke or not. At this point, the time has come to understand the meaning of the adverb 'really' that we have repeated so far several times.

Aquinas: truth as being true

Considering now the veridical 'est' in the overall context of Thomas' ontology, I note that there are at this point at least three 'est': the 'est' of 'Socrates est', the 'est' of 'Socrates est homo' or 'Socrates est albus' and, finally, the 'est' as answer to a question, i.e. the 'sic est', which is equivalent to saying something like 'it is the case that p' or 'it is true that p'. Is there a relationship between these three 'est'?

Klima and I myself have shown that not only in the case of 'Socrates is/exists' (*Socrates est*) but also in the case of the copula 'Socrates is a man' or 'Socrates is wise,' the existential sense is not lost at all. In fact, for some medieval authors such as William of Sherwood and, indeed, Thomas Aquinas, the 'est' of the copula is still a kind of predicate, specified by the adjective, that follows it, so that the sense would be as follows: 'Socrates exists humanly' and 'Socrates exists wisely' (Klima 1996, 2002; Ventimiglia 2020: 52-55).

Nuchelmans (1992: 19) demonstrated that Thomas, dealing with propositions called 'de tertio adiacente,' considers the 'est' of the copula, for the first time in the history of logic, not the third element, but the second, and the predicate the third¹². Hence, in 'man is white', the second element is the 'est', as if it were the predicate, whereas 'white' is the third element, which plays the role of specifying the 'est'. This means that even in the propositions in which 'est' is grammatically a copula, it still remains

¹² Nuchelmans shows that this new interpretation of Aquinas will be found later in Walter Burleigh and William of Ockham.

a predicate (and vice versa: 'est' as a predicate is always also a copula, since for Socrates to be, namely to exist, is for him, Aristotelically speaking, to be a man, namely to exist 'humanly').

Could the same be said of the est of 'sic est'? It seems so. This est means, in fact, the *existence* of the relation between the propositional content and reality, the *adaequatio*.

I dare the hypothesis of considering therefore 'truth' and 'true' as an adverb, precisely the Latin adverb 'vere', to be joined to the verb 'est' understood as veridical 'sic est'. Why 'vere'? Because in English the adverbs 'verily' or 'truly' will not fit in this case, since they connote rather 'sincerity' or 'truthfulness' (See: Mulligan 2010: 576). The English adverb would be rather 'really', where the veridical sense is missing. In Italian, instead, the adverb 'veramente' would perfectly fit.

Hence, we can rewrite the dialogue above in these terms:

- Peter states: 'man is an animal'
- Paula asks: 'is man *vere* ('veramente', 'really') an animal?'
- Peter replies 'Yes indeed, man is *vere* ('veramente', 'really') an animal', i.e. 'that man is an animal is true' or 'it is true that man is an animal'. In the terms we are proposing this would mean: 'that man is an animal exists *vere* ('veramente', 'really')'.

The last sentence means: there exists the relation of adequacy between that proposition and reality. Thus, even though it is true that the 'est' is not a *passio entis* but a *passio mentis*, indeed precisely a *passio enuntiationis*, or a *passio iudicii*, still this 'passio' expresses the *existence* of a relation between the *dictum* of that enunciation and reality.

Does this mean that at this point the distinction between being as act of being and being as truth, which Thomas often speaks about, implodes? Not at all! While all beings, substances as well as deprivations of substance, can be considered as true beings (because true

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propositions can be formulated about all of them, including the proposition ‘non-being is non-being’), not all beings can be considered as real beings, as having act of being¹³.

¹³ ‘Et sicut est de praedictis, ita etiam et ens multipliciter dicitur. Sed tamen omne ens dicitur per respectum ad unum primum. Sed hoc primum non est finis vel efficiens sicut in praemissis exemplis, sed subiectum. Alia enim dicuntur entia vel esse, quia per se habent esse sicut substantiae, quae principaliter et prius entia dicuntur. Alia vero quia sunt passionis sive proprietates substantiae, sicut per se accidentia uniuscuiusque substantiae. Quaedam autem dicuntur entia, quia sunt via ad substantiam, sicut generationes et motus. Alia autem entia dicuntur, quia sunt corruptiones substantiae. Corruptio enim est via ad non esse, sicut generatio via ad substantiam. Et quia corruptio terminatur ad privationem, sicut generatio ad formam, convenienter ipsae etiam privationes formarum substantialium esse dicuntur. Et iterum qualitates vel accidentia quaedam dicuntur entia, quia sunt activa vel generativa substantiae, vel eorum quae secundum aliquam habitudinem praedictarum ad substantiam dicuntur, vel secundum quamcumque aliam. Item *negationes eorum quae ad substantiam habitudinem habent, vel etiam ipsius substantiae esse dicuntur. Unde dicimus quod non ens est non ens. Quod non diceretur nisi negationi aliquo modo esse competeret*’ (Thomas de Aquino, 1964: IV, l. 1).

‘Deinde cum dicit amplius autem ponit alium modum entis, secundum quod esse et est, significant compositionem propositionis, quam facit intellectus componens et dividens. Unde dicit, quod esse significat veritatem rei. Vel sicut alia translatio melius habet *quod esse significat* quia aliquod dictum est verum. Unde veritas propositionis potest dici veritas rei per causam. Nam ex eo quod res est vel non est, oratio vera vel falsa est. Cum enim dicimus aliquid esse, significamus propositionem esse veram. Et cum dicimus non esse, significamus non esse veram; et hoc sive in affirmando, sive in negando. In affirmando quidem, sicut dicimus quod Socrates est albus, quia hoc verum est. In negando vero, ut Socrates non est albus, quia hoc est verum, scilicet ipsum esse non album. Et similiter dicimus, quod non est diameter incommensurabilis lateri quadrati, quia hoc est falsum, scilicet non esse ipsum non commensurabilem. Sciendum est autem quod iste secundus modus comparatur ad primum, sicut effectus ad causam. Ex hoc enim quod aliquid in rerum natura est, sequitur veritas et falsitas in propositione, quam intellectus significat per hoc verbum est prout est verbalis copula. Sed, quia aliquid, quod est in se non ens, intellectus considerat ut quoddam ens, sicut negationem et huiusmodi, ideo quandoque dicitur esse de aliquo hoc secundo modo, et non primo. Dicitur enim, quod caecitas est secundo modo, ex eo quod vera est propositio, qua dicitur aliquid esse caecum; non tamen dicitur quod sit primo modo vera. Nam caecitas non habet aliquod esse in rebus, sed magis est privatio alicuius esse. Accidit autem unicuique rei quod

Thus, the distinction between being as act of being and being as truth is important, not least because it makes it possible to distinguish the realms of what exists (also) in reality and what can only exist in the mind. However, the case of the truth-relation between a proposition (even that containing non-being, precisely) and reality is different: such a relation is not a being of reason, otherwise truth would really be subjective. Such a relation either exists or it does not: if it exists, then the proposition is true, if it does not exist, then the proposition is false. Of course, then the next question is what makes that proposition true, i.e. how reality actually is, so that propositions containing 'non-beings' or privations or mathematical entities or fictitious entities can be asserted as true. And here comes the temptation of all 'third realm' ontologies from Plato to Frege to Meinong and contemporary Meinongians. But this is another story, i.e. it is a question that concerns the ontological structure - Platonic or Aristotelian - of the world, not the existence or non-existence of the relation between propositions and reality.

Aquinas's sources

What are the sources of the above Aquinas's texts, according to which being as truth is expressed by 'est' as the answer to a question?

Certainly, there are clear texts in both Ammonius and Boethius concerning the possibility for a single word to be true or false, despite the fact that it is not explicitly a proposition: these are the words used in response to questions. For example, Ammonius notes, 'having been asked 'What is Socrates doing', we respond that '(He is) walking' (*ambulat*), we

aliquid de ipsa vere affirmetur intellectu vel voce. Nam res non refertur ad scientiam, sed e converso. Esse vero quod in sui natura unaquaeque res habet, est substantiale. Et ideo, cum dicitur, Socrates est, si ille est primo modo accipiatur, est de praedicato substantiali. Nam ens est superius ad unumquodque entium, sicut animal ad hominem. Si autem accipiatur secundo modo, est de praedicato accidentali' (Thomas de Aquino 1964: V Met. l. 9).

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indicate something true or false' (Ammonius 2013: 83)¹⁴. Boethius argues something similar:

If someone says in a question 'is Socrates disputing?' and another replies 'he is disputing' (*disputat*), his reply 'he is disputing' (*disputat*) can have the meaning of a sentence signifying truth or falsity if it is joined to the complete question (Boethius 2010: 76)¹⁵

However, the most evident and probable source is first of all Boethius' Commentary on *Perihermeneias*:

Or whenever someone replies in just a simple word to a question, in this case too the simple word seems to establish truth or falsity. But this is wrong since the listener's reply is joined to the whole complex of the questioner's statement. For example, if someone replies '(it) is' to the question 'is the world an animal (living being)?' this one word seems to contain truth or falsity. But that is wrong, for it is not one; but if you

¹⁴ 'Quoniam enim enuntiamus vel ab aliquo interrogati et respondentes ad interrogationem vel etiam nullo interrogante ipsi eligentes exprimere nostrum intellectum, qui autem nomen vel verbum dicit secundum nullum modorum horum enuntiat, manifestum quod altera utique sint haec ab enuntiatione. Quod quidem igitur dicentes per se nomina aut verba, nullo nos interrogante non enuntiamus, saepe dictum est. At vero (l. 6) neque per haec ad interrogationem respondentes nos contingit dicere aliquid verum neque falsum, quamvis hoc suspicetur utique aliquis; aliquo enim interrogante "quod nomen huic?" dicentes "Socrates" significamus aliquid verum vel falsum, et interrogati "quid facit Socrates?" et respondentes quia "ambulat" significamus aliquid verum vel falsum; sed quod quidem diximus in expositione eorum quae dicebantur de verbo, connexio interrogationis ad responsionem perfectam enuntiationem operans verum vel falsum significat, neque de nomine secundum veritatem neque de verbo facta interrogatione, sed horum quidem alterum expetente, non tamen secundum haec allata (Ammonius 1995: cap. 5, p. 145, 95 – p. 146, 17).

¹⁵ 'Si enim quis dicat interrogans "Socratesne disputat"? alius respondeat "disputat", hoc quod respondit "disputat" si cum tota interrogatione iungatur, potest habere intellectum verum falsumve significantis orationis' (Boethius 1877: lib. II, cap. 5, p. 113, l. 25).

look at the real force of the reply it is as if he had said ‘the world is an animal’ (Boethius 2010: 40)¹⁶

Again, the context of discourse is the Aristotelian rule against considering singular terms as true or false. It seems, however, that the answer ‘est’, which could be correctly translated as ‘yes’, hence a single term, given to the question ‘is the world a living being?’ can be declared true or false. Boethius, however, tries hard to remain faithful to Aristotle’s text, making it clear that in fact behind that ‘est’ actually lies the whole sentence, if one considers the true assertive force hidden in that ‘est’: if he had said ‘the world is a living being’.

Thomas Aquinas was familiar with both the commentaries of Ammonius and Boethius cited above, and it is not difficult to assume that especially the latter text of Boethius, where ‘est’ is mentioned as a positive answer to a question, forms the background to the page quoted above from Thomas’ Commentary on the 6th book of the *Metaphysics*. There are, however, two fundamental differences: whereas Boethius denies that the single word ‘est’ alone is capable of being true or false and regards it as nothing more than a kind of placeholder for an entire proposition, Thomas, on the other hand, regards ‘est’ alone as capable of being true or false. Moreover, and this is a decisive point, Boethius’ ‘est’ seems to be the simple repetition of the copula, Thomas’ one, on the other hand, is another ‘est’, different from the copula, which has the entire proposition as its subject. It is equivalent, as we have seen, to ‘p is

¹⁶ ‘Vel quotiens interrogante alio respondet alius uno tantum sermone, videtur quoque tunc simplex sermo veritatem mendacium que perficere. quod perfalsum est. audientis namque responsio ad totum ordinem superioris enuntiationis adiungitur: ut si quis interroganti mundusne animal sit, est responderit, videtur haec una particula veritatem vel mendacium continere, sed falso. non enim una est, sed ad vim ipsius responsionis intuenti tale est ac si diceret mundus animal est’ (Boethius, 1877 : 48). I thank Dario Affronti for bringing this text to my attention.

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true' or 'that p is true', i.e., to stay with Boethius' example, 'that the world is a living being is', or 'it is (true) that the world is a living being'.

Now, on which text, in turn, did the quoted passage from Boethius depend? The background to everything is clearly Aristotle's *Perihermeneias*, yet there is also a page from Diogenes Laërtius' *Lives of the Philosophers*, in which the doctrine of the Stoics is expounded, which seems to be Boethius' source. Is this possible? Could Boethius have known that doctrine and that page, at least indirectly? Perhaps. As Ebbesen (2004: 108) noted, the presence of Stoic philosophy in the Middle Ages is a mystery. To the question: 'Where were the Stoics in the late Middle Ages? The short answer is: everywhere and nowhere'. Be that as it may, here is the page mentioned:

Propositions differ from questions, inquiries, imperatives, oaths, prayers, hypotheses, vocatives, and quasi-propositions. For a proposition is what we affirm when we speak, and is either true or false. A question is a thing that is complete in itself, like a proposition, but requiring an answer, for example, 'Is it day?' This is neither true nor false; hence 'It is day' is a proposition, while 'Is it day?' is a question. An inquiry is a thing to which one cannot reply with a gesture, as one can nod 'yes' to a question; instead it requires an answer in words, 'He lives in such and such a place. (Diogenes Laertius 2018: 66)

The page is indeed philosophically rich and interesting. A first intriguing element is the list of expressive discourses as distinguished from the declarative one, here called 'proposition' (but perhaps it would have been better to translate it as 'utterance' or 'judgement'), the only one whose true or false is predicated. Whereas Aristotle had only mentioned prayer, the list here also includes questions, inquiries, imperatives, oaths, prayers, hypotheses, vocations, and quasi-propositions.

Interesting for our purposes are two aspects. The first is that the question and the proposition (or utterance) have the same content, which, however, is unasserted in the question and asserted in the

proposition. Only in the latter case, therefore, is the content susceptible of being true or false. The second very interesting aspect is the difference between question and inquiry: the question requires a 'yes' (or 'no') answer, the inquiry on the other hand requires a more articulate answer.

In fact, the text, especially in this last reference to the 'yes' given to a question, which reveals the assertive force of the proposition, seems to be the source of Boethius' discourse and, after him, perhaps through him, of Thomas'. Remaining with the example cited here, one could imagine, again, a dialogue between Peter and Paula:

- Peter states: It is day
- Paula asks: Is it day?
- Peter answers: Yes, it is day.

Again, we can clearly see that the 'yes' has the task of revealing the assertive force contained in the first proposition. In a way, one could say that only in the dialogue and in the question-and-answer game does the assertive force contained in the indicative proposition emerge (or is refuted in the case of lie, joke, irony, etc.).

Susanne Bobzien (2021), quoted above, has shown that the text of Diogenes Laërtius, later also mentioned in the footnote of Karl Prantl's *Geschichte der Logik*, was very probably the source of the famous page by Gottlob Frege quoted at the beginning of this essay. In other words, Frege would have literally plagiarised the doctrine of the Stoics in this (and other) points.

However, one thing should seem clear: both in the case of Diogenes Laërtius' page and Frege's one the ontological connotation of being as truth, present in Thomas' text, is completely missing.

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Influences

What happened about truth as being true after Thomas?

Hugolin of Orvieto

There is a nice text that certainly confirms the relationship between ‘est’ as ‘sic est’ and being true. Here it is:

In this manner, ‘to be’ is opposed to ‘not to be’, which is false. [This is in line with] *Metaphysics* $\Delta 7$ and $E 4$, whether the significates or the parts of them are something or nothing. So, ‘The-Antichrist-can-sin’ is considered a being. Indeed, it is the case in reality that the Antichrist can sin. Since we affirm ‘it is the case that’, even though the Antichrist is nothing and his sinning is nothing, we use nonetheless the verb ‘to be’. In this way, even though true complexly significables may not be any essence, nevertheless, it is the case that, *ex parte rei*, the Antichrist can sin, and it is not the case that the Antichrist cannot sin. First conclusion: taking in this second sense of ‘being’ or ‘to be’, we do not use only ‘would be’, but also ‘is’ (*est*), and this whole ‘it is the case that’ (*sic est*) and ‘it is true that it is so’ (*verum est sic esse*) (Hugolinus 1980: I, prologus, q. 1, a. 2, ed. Eckermann: 75, 231–9) ¹⁷.

Although taken out of the context of the commentaries on the *Perihermeneias* or the *Metaphysics*, this page by Hugolinus from Orvieto, a fourteenth-century author, bears witness to the use of connecting the

¹⁷ ‘Isto modo “esse” opponitur “non esse”, quod est falsum: 5 et 6 *Metaphysicae*, sive illa significata vel partes sint aliquid sive non. Sic “Antichristum posse peccare” est ens. Nam sic est in re, quod Antichristus potest peccare; et quia dicimus “sic est”, ideo quamvis Antichristus nihil sit nec peccare eius sit aliquid, tamen utimur verbo essendi. Et isto modo vera complexa significabilia, licet non sint aliquae essentiae, tamen sic est ex parte rei, quod A potest peccare, et non sic est, quod A non potest peccare. Conclusio prima: capiendo secundo modo, “ens” vel “esse” non solum utimur “esset”, sed “est” et hoc toto “sic est” vel hoc toto “verum est sic esse” ’ (Hugolinus 1980: I, prologus, q. 1, a. 2, ed. Eckermann: 75, 231–9). I thank Davide Falessi for bringing this text to my attention.

‘est’, the ‘sic est’, i.e. the ‘yes’ – it is even no coincidence that in some Romance languages ‘yes’ is pronounced ‘si’ and derives directly from ‘sic est’ – and the ‘verum est’, which we have seen at work in the text of Thomas. Of course, we are not dealing here with a text directly influenced by Thomas, but only with the testimony of a linguistic and philosophical connection typical of the medieval philosophical context.

The connection shows not only that ‘est’ means in this context ‘sic est’ and this in turn ‘it is true that it is so (sic est)’ but also, vice versa, that ‘it is true that it is so (sic est)’ is synonymous with ‘sic est’ and this in turn with ‘it is’: the true has to do with being.

Jean Buridan

After Hugolinus there is a text that, in my opinion, is clearly influenced by Thomas. It is Buridan’s Commentary on the 6th book of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, where we read:

But even beyond all these meanings, Aristotle says that still this name ‘ens’ sometimes means the same thing as ‘true’, and ‘non ens’ the same thing as ‘false’, whether it is found in an affirmative proposition or a negative one. And this is because, if one were to put the negation before a proposition, we answer that it is as it says (*ita est sicut dicitur*) and that ‘being’ means that it says the true, and if it says the false, we say that it is not so *ut* it says. And it is also evident that ‘being’ in this sense can be divided into *per se* and *per accidens*, because in this way ‘being’ is nothing other than ‘true’, and ‘true’ is nothing other than a true proposition.¹⁸

¹⁸ ‘Sed adhuc preter omnes istas acceptiones dicit Aristoteles quod adhuc hoc nomen ‘ens’ aliquando significat idem quod ‘verum’, et ‘non-ens’ idem quod ‘falsum’, sive hoc sit in propositione affirmativa sive negativa. Et hoc est quia si aliquis preponeret propositioni negationem, respondemus quod ita est sicut dicitur et illud esse significat, quod dicit verum, et si dicit falsum, dicimus quod non est ita. Et adhuc manifestum est quod ens sic acceptum posset dividi in *per se* et in *per accidens*, quia sic ens non est aliud quam verum, nec verum quam propositio vera. Et sic propositiones vere, sive sunt affirmative sive

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The text recalls both Thomas and Boethius. Buridanus notes that if the answer is ‘ita est’ (as it is said), then this ‘esse’ means the same as ‘it is true’; if the answer is ‘non est ita’, then this ‘non esse’ means the same as ‘is not true’.

The text seems to me to be very similar to that of Thomas: the truth is to be true and for this reason it is expressed with the verb to be, precisely that which is used in the affirmative answer ‘(sic or ita) est’ given to a question, and the answer is equivalent to saying ‘it is true’. Buridan adds that just as being is no other than truth, and truth is no other than true proposition, then true propositions, like being, can be divided into propositions true *per se* and propositions true *per accidens*.

There is another parallel text by Buridano on the subject that is even clearer and more interesting, taken from a still unpublished commentary of his on Metaphysics (which Iacopo Costa, whom I thank here for the transcription, is currently working on):

‘This is the third way of distinguishing being (ens), and Aristotle says that in the third way ‘to be’ (esse) or ‘being’ (ens) is understood as signifying the true, and non-being (non-ens) or not to be (non-esse) signifies nothing else than being false (falsum). Hence, the Greeks used to say that a true proposition ‘is’ and a false proposition ‘is not,’ and so this usage was more common among the Greeks than among us. Hence, when it is asked: ‘Is man an animal?’, it is answered ‘it is so’ nor ‘that is the case’ or ‘yes’ (quod sic); if it is false, you say ‘it is not so’ nor ‘that is not the case’ or ‘no’ (dices quod non est ita). And thus, ‘to be so’ (esse ita) and ‘to be not so’ (non esse ita) are said of a proposition’ (Buridanus s.d.: 516. Expositio littere)¹⁹.

negative, bene dividuntur in propositiones per se et in propositiones per accidens, ut apparet 2 primo Priorum’ (Buridanus 2008: q. 22 a, par. 611, p. 642).

¹⁹ ‘Amplius esse et est... Hic est tertius modus distinguendi ens et dicit Aristoteles quod tertio modo ‘esse’ uel ‘ens’ accipitur ut significat uerum et non-ens uel ^[12rb] non-esse significat idem quod falsum. Vnde greci propositionem ueram dicebant esse, propositionem falsam non esse, et sic ille modus erat magis usitatus apud grecos quam

Apart from the oft-reported semantic relationship between ‘yes’ and ‘sic est’, Buridano shows that he is well aware that such a veridical use of ‘est’ is a peculiarity of ancient Greek and connects it precisely with sharp insight to the Latin ‘sic est’, i.e. the positive answer to a ‘yes or not’ question. On the so-called veridical sense of being in ancient Greek, Charles Kahn (2003: 331–370) has famously written exemplary pages. Among other things, he clarified that veridical being in ancient Greek is always used in a dialogue context and thus refers to something that is said beforehand, so that ‘it is so’ implies ‘it is so ... as you say’ (See also: Antonelli & Sauer 2014: XLIX–LV).

Franz Brentano

Finally, among the authors influenced by Thomas on this point, we cannot fail to mention Franz Brentano (See Sauer 2013). Commenting on the very page of the 6th book of the *Metaphysics* also commented on by Thomas centuries earlier, he takes up and develops Thomas’ reflections, so much so that his page could be considered a genuine commentary on Thomas’ Commentary. He correctly notes, first of all, that being as truth cannot be the copula that connects the predicate to the subject, since Aristotle declares that even the negative judgement is said to possess being as truth. So, which ‘being’ is it?

We are concerned with a being which is predicated of the entire, fully articulated judgment. Let us suppose somebody wanted to demonstrate to someone else that the sum of the angles in a triangle is equal to two right angles, and that he requires as a starting point of the proof the assumption that the exterior angles are equal to the opposing interior

apud nos. Vnde quando queritur: ‘homo est animal?’, respondetur quod sic; si sit falsa, dices quod non est ita. Et sic esse ita et esse non ita de propositione dicuntur’ (Buridanus s.d.: 516. *Expositio littere*).

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angles. The question now is whether this is or is not [the case] , i.e., is it true or is it false? It is! i.e., it is true (...) The 'is' was used like a predicative determination of the judgment which was described as true. The judgment in turn occupied the position of the subject: (the judgment) 'a is b' is (true). (Brentano 1975: 23).

What could such 'is' mean in the sense of 'it is true'? Brentano shows no doubt about this: "The "is" declares a given judgment to be in agreement with reality" (Brentano 1975: 23).

Brentano, however, seems at the same time to downplay the ontological value of this 'is', distinguishing it from a real attribute, namely what he calls the 'energy of being'. His reflection deserves, in conclusion, to be quoted in full:

It is also certain that the 'to be' of the copula does not designate an actualization [Energie] of being, a real attribute, since we make affirmative statements concerning negations and privations, purely fictitious relations and other altogether arbitrary mental constructions, as Aristotle points out in the above quoted passage from *Met. IV.2*: 'hence we say that non-being is a non-being'. We also say such things as 'every magnitude is equal to itself though we can certainly not find a relation (*pros ti*) like equality in the nature of things. Or we say 'centaurs are mythological monsters, Jupiter is a false God,' etc. It stands to reason that we do not concede any kind of reality by making these affirmations. Here, too, the 'is' designates nothing but 'it is true'. (Brentano 1975: 24).

Here it seems to me that Thomas and Brentano differ. For it is indeed correct that 'is' means nothing but 'it is true', but it is also certain that such 'it is true' and such 'is' still has to do with existence, i.e. the existence of the agreement, as he himself noted, between proposition and reality. Even though some items of the proposition may be non-existent objects, this does not preclude the existence of the relation, i.e. the agreement, between that proposition and reality or, as we would say today, the state of affairs, however one wishes to interpret and analyse it. Even if non-

being certainly does not exist, certainly the proposition ‘non-being is non-being’, as Aristotle and Thomas say, ‘is’, i.e. really or ‘vere’ ‘exists’ indeed, since it is true that ‘non-being is non-being’.

Conclusion

In *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante distinguishes three so-called vulgar or vernacular idioms that were spoken in his time, in addition to Latin. The text deserves to be re-read:

However, all that remains in Europe beyond these is occupied by a third language, although it now appears in three forms: for some say ‘oc’, others ‘oil’, and others ‘si’ in affirming, for example, the Spaniards, the French, and the Italians. A sign that the vernaculars of these three peoples originate from one and the same language is evident, because they seem to name many things with the same words, such as God, heaven, love, sea, earth, it is, he lives, he dies, he loves, and almost all other things. Indeed, those who say ‘oc’ occupy the western part of southern Europe, starting from the borders of the Genoese. Those who say ‘si’ occupy the eastern part from these borders, namely up to that promontory of Italy where the Adriatic Sea begins, and Sicily. But those who say ‘oil’ are in a way northern with respect to these: for to the east they have the Germans, and to the west and north they are bordered by the English Channel and the mountains of Aragon; to the south, they are enclosed by the Provençals and the slope of the Apennines (Dante Alighieri 1990: 1, 8, 6-7).²⁰

²⁰ ‘Istorum vero proferentes oc meridionalis Europe tenent partem occidentalem, a Ianuensium finibus incipientes. Qui autem sī dicunt a predictis finibus orientalem tenent, videlicet usque ad promuntorium illud Ytalie qua sinus Adriatici maris incipit, et Siciliam. Sed loquentes oil quodam modo septentrionales sunt respectu istorum: nam ab oriente Alamannos habent et ab occidente et settentrione anglico mari vallati sunt et montibus Aragonie terminati; a meridie quoque Provincialibus et Apenini devexione clauduntur’ (Dante Alighieri 1990: 1, 8, 6-7).

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As can be seen, Dante lists the three languages on the basis of the way they express 'yes': oc, oil, sì.

'Oc' is still said to mean 'yes' in the 'Occitan' language spoken mainly in the south of France; 'oil' has turned into the French 'oui', while 'si' is used as it is known in Italian, Spanish, Catalan, while in Portuguese it is expressed as 'sim'.

We know that this 'si' comes from the Latin 'sic est' and I hope it is now clear, by the end of this article, that 'sic est' or simply 'est' means something like 'it is true that p' or 'that p is true'. And vice versa 'it is true that p' and 'that p is true' have to do with 'est'. This means that in these languages the link between true and being is present in the same linguistic roots. Completely different is the case with 'yes' or 'ja', which derive from Proto-Germanic languages and have nothing to do with the verb 'to be'. Thus, Southern European languages can exhibit a greater philosophical interest than English or German. And perhaps one can understand why it never occurred to English or German philosophers, despite the fact that they were called Frege, Russell or Quine, to consider 'true' as 'being true' in the way that Thomas Aquinas and Buridan did. And perhaps one can even understand the exception represented by the German philosopher Franz Brentano, who knew and appreciated Latin.

Consider, for example, Frege, mentioned at the beginning of this article. His aversion to both the verb 'to be' in its meaning of 'to exist' and in its simple function as a copula is well known. The verb 'exist' would be a pure linguistic invention comparable to the 'it' of 'it is raining':

Like the 'it' in 'it is raining', the 'exist' in 'Men exist' is to be understood as a mere auxiliary. As language, feeling at a loss for a grammatical subject, invented 'it', so here, feeling at a loss for a grammatical predicate, it has invented 'exist'. (Frege 1979: 62).

The copula 'is', then, would make no sense at all and could, indeed should, be safely eliminated, unlike what – according to Frege – the philosophers would have done:

Language has availed itself of a different resource. The copula, i.e. the mere form of a predicate without content, was excellently suited for forming a concept without content. In the sentence 'The sky is blue' the predicate is 'is blue', but strictly the content of the predicate lies in the word 'blue'. Leave this out and what remains - 'The sky is' - is a predicate without content. In this way we form a quasi-concept-'being'-without content, since its extension is unlimited. This makes it possible to say: men = men that have being; 'There are men' is the same as 'Some men are' or 'Something that has being is a man'. Thus, here the real content of what is predicated does not lie in 'has being' but in the form of the particular judgement. Faced with an impasse, language has simply created the word 'being' in order to enable the form of the particular judgement to be employed. When philosophers speak of 'absolute being', that is really an apotheosis of the copula. (Frege 1979: 63-64)

It seems to me that Frege has, instead, made an apotheosis of the absence of being. The aim of this article was, on the contrary, to show how the copula, in those languages that have it, should not be eliminated, because it has to do with being true and, ultimately, with being, precisely as the 'yes' as a positive answer to a question has to do – in those fortunate languages that express it with 'sì' – with 'sic est.'

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**La nozione di accidente tra *ens secundum accidens* e *secundum se*.
Letture medievali di *Metaph. V.7* (c. 1240-1290)**

Abstract: In Latin, as in Greek, it is less than clear how the first sense of being listed by Aristotle in *Metaph. V.7* (being *per accidens*) and the third one (being as true) must be situated with respect to the second sense (being *per se*). Broadly speaking, in order to make sense of Aristotle's fourfold division, readers are supposed to take disjointly the notions of accident and accidental being on the one side, the notions of truth (and falsity) and that of accidental (*qua mental*) being on the other side. This paper aims at making a substantial historical and doctrinal contribution to the reconstruction of the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* from 1240 to 1290, especially by giving as detailed an idea as possible of the interpretative options developed about the distinction between "being *per accidens*" and "being *per se*" as presented by Aristotle in chapter V.7, 1017a7-27. In addition to already known readings, such as Aquinas', Albert the Great's and Siger of Brabant's ones, a series of still unedited authors are passed in review. This overview allows us to fill a gap in the reconstruction of the influence of Aristotle on medieval ontology, not only insofar it draws attention to the reception of a chapter of the *Metaphysics* often overlooked by scholars, but also insofar as hitherto unexplored texts make possible a more precise contextualisation of already well-known commentaries.

Keywords: Accidental being, Being per se, Accident, Unity, Essence

Aristotele dedica il settimo capitolo di *Metaph. V* ai sensi dell'essere (τὸ ὄν/εἶναι). Come per il resto del libro V, recepito fin dall'antichità quale vero e proprio dizionario filosofico, non è chiaro se tale capitolo sia un semplice elenco di quattro significati o se presupponga una struttura più articolata. Come in particolare il primo senso dell'essere (1017a8-22: essere/ente per accidente) e il terzo (1017a31-35: essere/è come vero), si rapportino al secondo (1017a22-30: essere/ente per sé, detto cioè secondo le figure delle categorie, comprese le nove accidentali) non è evidente. Se da un lato molti lettori latini medievali di Aristotele

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considerano l'essere come vero uno dei tre modi dell'essere/ente per sé (EpS), sulla scorta di *Metaph.* VI.4 essi lo riconducono dall'altro all'essere per accidente¹. L'accezione di 'accidente' che entra in gioco nei differenti casi non è tuttavia la stessa. La quadripartizione originale di *Metaph.* V.7 può in effetti essere salvaguardata soltanto se si distingue la nozione categoriale di accidente quale determinazione non-sostanziale ma reale (EpS) sia dall'essere per accidente' inteso come modo di essere (EpA), sia da quella di accidente inteso come 'esistente solo come intenzione', nella mente². In queste pagine intendo portare un contributo storico-dottrinale alla ricostruzione della ricezione medievale di *Metaph.* V.7, e in particolare della distinzione aristotelica tra EpA ed EpS quale essa emerge dalle linee 1017a7-27 del capitolo³. Senza pretese di esaustività, mi soffermerò sull'interpretazione che di questa distinzione hanno dato commentatori attivi tra gli anni 1240 e 1290 circa⁴: Riccardo Rufo di

¹ Trego (2023).

² Menn (2012: 58).

³ Come si evince dall'[Appendice](#), i commentatori del XIII secolo si soffermano soprattutto sui due primi sensi dell'essere individuati da Aristotele in *Metaph.* V.7 e sul loro rapporto. La domanda se l'accidente sia EpA o EpS, tra le più frequenti, va al cuore del problema che intendo affrontare in questo studio. Non esaminerò in questo contesto le questioni che per i nostri autori sono più direttamente connesse alla sola nozione di EpS, in particolare a proposito del numero e dell'esaustività delle categorie (e della loro deducibilità) o del significato dei nomi accidentali. Entrambi questi temi sono stati del resto già esplorati, anche sulla base di commenti ad altre opere di Aristotele, in particolare da Ebbesen (1986); Doolan (2019); Pini (2002) e Pini (2005).

⁴ Prendendo spunto da Donati (2014) e Ebbesen (2014), intendo così delimitare la tradizione latina di commento a *Metafisica* V.7 precedente a Duns Scoto. I suoi *Notabilia* e le sue *Quaestiones* sono elaborati a più riprese tra la fine del XIII e l'inizio del XIV secolo e segnano l'inizio di una nuova fase nella storia dell'assimilazione della *Metafisica* come opera e della pratica della metafisica come scienza (Pini 2014: 359-360; 367). Quanto al capitolo V.7, Scoto ne affronta i contenuti da una prospettiva che, pur ancorata nella tradizione esegetica precedente, se ne distacca sensibilmente quanto a nuclei di interesse (soprattutto l'EpS e l'uso della copula) e a interpretazioni fornite. Mi è dunque sembrato coerente farne uno spartiacque, escludendolo dal quadro che mi appresto a

Cornovaglia⁵, Adamo di Bocfeld⁶, Ruggero Bacone⁷, Tommaso di York⁸, Alberto Magno⁹, l'anonimo di Lipsia¹⁰, Tommaso d'Aquino¹¹, Sigieri di Brabante¹², Riccardo di Clive¹³, l'anonimo di Zimmermann¹⁴, Pietro di

tracciare.

⁵ Di Rufo ho esaminato lo *Scriptum super Metaph.* (ed. Wood 2022), la cui datazione è controversa: fine degli anni '40 a Oxford secondo Noone; 1237-1238 a Parigi secondo Wood (2022: 27-28, 62); cfr. Donati (2003: 33-35).

⁶ I commenti aristotelici di Adamo di Bocfeld risalgono agli anni 1240 e attestano dell'insegnamento oxoniense di Adamo alla facoltà delle arti (Donati 2014: 138-141); Wood (2022: 45-54, 68) è di diverso avviso. Nel seguito, le citazioni dell'*Expositio* di Adamo sono tratte dal ms. Roma, Convento di Santa Maria sopra Minerva, no. sign. [Z.1.15], 55r-141v (Cali 2010: 78 [A.3.]).

⁷ I commenti aristotelici di Bacone risalgono all'epoca del suo insegnamento parigino alla facoltà delle arti (1230-1240ca.). Sull'autenticità delle *Questiones supra libros prime philosophiae Aristotelis* (*Metaph.* I, II, V-X), vedi Donati (2013: 153-154, 158-161).

⁸ Il *Sapientiale* è un'opera di metafisica che Tommaso di York compone da teologo, negli anni 1253-1260 (Retucci 2010: 135-136, 142-143), parafrasando a tratti (anche) Aristotele. *Metaph.* V.7 è ripreso in *Sapientiale*, III.2 (ed. Punzi 2020: 18.22-19.46)

⁹ Il commento alla *Metaph.* di Alberto Magno risale a 'non molto dopo' il 1263 (ed. Geyer 1960: VIIIa). Bertolacci lo situa tra il 1264 e il 1267 (2011: 262).

¹⁰ L'anonimo di Lipsia commenta la *Metafisica* verosimilmente all'inizio degli anni 1270 (2009 [ed. Fioravanti]: 177); Ebbesen (2014: 278).

¹¹ Tommaso d'Aquino commenta la *Metafisica* tra il 1271 e il 1273, come parte integrante della sua missione di teologo (Gauthier 1996: 498).

¹² Il commento alla *Metafisica* di Sigieri di Brabante è anteriore al 1277 e, almeno in parte, posteriore al 1274 (Ebbesen 2014, 278). Farò riferimento alle *reportationes* di Cambridge (ed. Maurer 1983) e München (ed. Dunphy 1981).

¹³ Il commento alla *Metafisica* di Riccardo di Clive risale agli anni 1270. Conservato in due versioni, simili ma per gran parte irriducibili, è verosimilmente derivato da note di corso: Cambridge, Peterhouse 152, 322ra-351rb (C) e Worcester, Cathedral and Chapter Library, Q.13, 116ra-155rb (W). Testimonianza del dibattito filosofico inglese, le questioni di Clive risentono l'influenza del 'clima filosofico della facoltà delle arti di Parigi negli anni immediatamente prima la condanna del 1277' (Donati 2014: 142-143; 2012: 423-424; Andrews-Noone 1994: 24-25).

¹⁴ Contenute nel ms. Cambridge, Peterhouse 152, 1r-49v (C), le questioni sulla *Metafisica* dell'Anonimo di Zimmermann sono posteriori al 1277 (Ebbesen 2014: 278-279).

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Alvernia¹⁵, l'anonimo vaticano¹⁶. Il mio approccio sarà prevalentemente tipologico. Nel presentare le differenti opzioni e nell'associare per (dis)somiglianza differenti autori, non seguirò pertanto un ordine cronologico e non esaminerò la questione dei loro eventuali rapporti di dipendenza. Questa panoramica consentirà di colmare una lacuna nella ricostruzione dell'influenza di Aristotele sull'ontologia medievale, non solo attraverso lo studio della ricezione di un capitolo della *Metafisica* e di una dottrina spesso trascurati dagli specialisti di filosofia medievale, ma anche grazie alla valorizzazione di testi latini finora raramente esplorati, ma di fatto utili a contestualizzare più accuratamente commenti già ampiamente studiati¹⁷.

¹⁵ Databili tra la fine degli anni Settanta e l'inizio degli anni Ottanta del XIII secolo (Ebbesen 2014: 279-280), le questioni sulla *Metafisica* di Pietro di Alvernia sono attestate in differenti versioni (Lanza-Toste 2015: 430-436). I testi qui citati sono tratti dai ms. Vat. Lat. 845, 136ra-271vb (V); Ottob. lat. 1145, 1ra-50vb (O), entrambi appartenenti alla tradizione universitaria.

¹⁶ Conservate nel ms. Vat. lat. 2173, 130ra-131vb (V¹), le cinque questioni su *Metaph.* V.7, che qui considero anonime e potenzialmente risalenti ad uno stesso autore, fanno parte di un commento miscelaneo, verosimilmente assemblato nel primo quarto del XIV secolo da un 'appassionato delle dispute del suo tempo', maestro o studente in arti, 'adepto dell'aristotelismo' ma 'disdegnoso della teologia' (Gauthier 1947-1948: 203). Altre questioni di questo commento sono state attribuite ad Enrico di Bruxelles (Grabmann 1944; Ermatinger 1980) e Pietro di Alvernia (Lanza-Toste 2015: 432). – Pur nell'impossibilità di datarle con precisione, a causa dell'assenza di elementi contrari dirimenti e sulla base del tipo di approccio al capitolo e della gamma di temi trattati, affianco queste questioni all'esegesi pre-scotista.

¹⁷ Ventimiglia (2020) ha per primo conferito al tema dei sensi dell'essere un posto di rilievo nell'ontologia medievale, sottolineandone l'irriducibilità alla più nota questione dell'analogia dell'essere (Donati 2014; cfr. Ashworth 2008). Senza negare l'importanza di quest'ultima dottrina per i commentatori medievali di Aristotele, questo studio si iscrive nel solco delle ricerche di Ventimiglia e intende valorizzare la dottrina dei sensi dell'essere in quanto tale e dal basso, per così dire, cioè a partire dai testi. Al fine di osservare come nasce e si sviluppa il dibattito su questo tema, cerco in questo contesto di 'restituire ai grandi maestri la compagnia dei loro modesti collaboratori e precursori' (Chénu 1932: 11). È per questo che non riserverò ad esempio un'attenzione particolare al

Il mio studio si articola in tre parti. Dopo aver comparato l'Aristotele greco e l'Aristotele latino nella sua multiformità (I), considererò dapprima le soluzioni fornite dai commentatori menzionati a tre questioni di esegesi aristotelica (II). Passerò poi a discutere i loro commenti da un punto di vista dottrinale (III), nel tentativo di valorizzare il loro contributo personale alla discussione sui sensi dell'essere.

I. Dall'Aristotele greco all'Aristotele latino

1. Stabilire quale sia l'interpretazione 'più corretta' di *Metaph.* V.7 esula dalle finalità di queste pagine. Prenderò le mosse dal testo di Aristotele, col solo fine di fornire il contesto della distinzione tra *to on kath'hauto* et *to on kata sumbebēkos*, la cui ricezione latina sarà studiata nel seguito. Se per molti interpreti contemporanei lo Stagirita discute in questo capitolo dei possibili usi in ambito proposizionale del verbo 'essere', che taluni prendono in senso esistenziale altri in senso copulativo, per i lettori medievali esso verte su differenti *modi* di essere e dunque *tipi* di enti, primi fra tutti appunto l'EpA e l'EpS.

Quanto al primo dei due, Aristotele lo introduce attraverso degli esempi, il cui ruolo e la cui connessione con le parti più concettuali della sezione sono poco chiari. Egli fornisce una prima serie di esempi di come sia detto l'EpA¹⁸: (1) il giusto è musico; (2a) l'uomo è musico; (2b) il musico è uomo. Prosegue poi paragonando questi tre casi a quando si dice che il musico costruisce (3); e spiega che lo si dice in virtù del fatto che (3a) *accade* al costruttore di essere (anche) musico e (3b) *accade* al musico di

commento dell'Aquinate, già esaminato dettagliatamente da Doolan (2023) e dallo stesso Ventimiglia (2020). Mio più modesto obiettivo sarà di situarlo più precisamente tra altri commenti di filosofi e teologi dell'epoca.

¹⁸ 'Τὸ ὃν λέγεται τὸ μὲν κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς τὸ δὲ καθ'αὐτό, κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς μὲν, οἷον [1] τὸν δίκαιον μουσικὸν εἶναι φάμεν καὶ [2a] τὸν ἄνθρωπον μουσικὸν καὶ [2b] τὸν μουσικὸν ἄνθρωπον' (Aristoteles, *Metaph.*, 1017a7-10).

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essere (anche) costruttore¹⁹. In questi casi, infatti, dire “X è Y” significa che X accade ad Y, ossia che accade ad Y di essere X²⁰. Gli esempi (1) e (2a-b) sono quindi ricondotti a questo caso generale. Nel ribadirli, però, Aristotele ne varia l'ordine e li modifica. Dopo (2a-b), egli introduce dapprima (1*a) il bianco è musico; (1*b) il musico è bianco²¹; quindi procede alla loro generalizzazione, sostituendo *einai* con *sumbebekenai* alla luce della corrispondenza precedentemente stabilita²².

Aristotele sembra così individuare due casi in cui X è detto essere accidentalmente Y: (i) quando entrambe le determinazioni X e Y accadono ad uno stesso soggetto; (ii) quando una determinazione accidentale accade a ciò che è, i.e. la sostanza. Non è del tutto chiaro con quale scopo l'esempio (2b), il musico è uomo, sia richiamato esplicitamente in coda a questa distinzione²³, se come terzo caso (2b=iii), alternativo ai due precedenti, oppure come semplice esemplificazione del caso (2b=ii*). Sembra un elemento in favore di questa opzione il fatto che lo Stagirita propone un ulteriore esempio²⁴: (4) il non-bianco è. Quest'ultimo è infatti introdotto verosimilmente come sottotipo di (ii): ciò di cui il non-bianco è accidente, quello è. Il riepilogo²⁵ che segue sembra tuttavia più coerente con l'idea della distinzione di un terzo caso possibile (iii=2b). Aristotele vi elenca infatti tre situazioni in cui le cose

¹⁹ ‘παραπλησίως λέγοντες [3] ὥσπερ εἶπεν τὸν μουσικὸν οἰκοδομεῖν ὅτι [3a] συμβέβηκε τῷ οἰκοδόμῳ μουσικῷ εἶναι ἢ [3b] τῷ μουσικῷ οἰκοδόμῳ’ (1017a10-12).

²⁰ ‘(τὸ γὰρ τόδε εἶναι τόδε σημαίνει τὸ συμβεβηκέναι τῷδε τόδε)’ (1017a12-13).

²¹ ‘οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν εἰρημένων· [2a] τὸν γὰρ ἄνθρωπον ὅταν μουσικὸν λέγωμεν καὶ [2b] τὸν μουσικὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἢ [1*a] τὸν λευκὸν μουσικὸν ἢ [1*b] τοῦτον λευκόν’ (1017a14-15).

²² ‘τὸ μὲν ὅτι [i] ἄμφω τῷ αὐτῷ συμβεβήκασιν, τὸ δ’ ὅτι [ii] τῷ ὄντι συμβέβηκε’ (1017a15-16).

²³ ‘[ii*/iii=2b] τὸ δὲ μουσικὸν ἄνθρωπον ὅτι τοῦτῳ τὸ μουσικὸν συμβέβηκεν’ (1017a17-18).

²⁴ ‘(οὕτω δὲ λέγεται καὶ [4] τὸ μὴ λευκὸν εἶναι, ὅτι ᾧ συμβέβηκεν, ἐκεῖνο ἔστιν)’ (1017a18-19).

²⁵ ‘τὰ μὲν οὖν κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς εἶναι λεγόμενα οὕτω λέγεται ἢ [α] διότι τῷ αὐτῷ ὄντι ἄμφω ὑπάρχει, ἢ [β] ὅτι ὄντι ἐκείνῳ ὑπάρχει, ἢ [γ] ὅτι αὐτὸ ἔστιν ᾧ ὑπάρχει οὗ αὐτὸ κατηγορεῖται’ (1017a19-22)

sono dette essere *kata sumbebēkos*: quando (α) due determinazioni appartengono ad una stessa cosa che è; o quando (β) una determinazione appartiene a ciò che è; o ancora quando (γ) ciò che è, è ciò cui appartiene come accidente quella determinazione di cui è esso stesso predicato. Il verbo *subebekenai* non ricorre in questo riepilogo, in cui il termine-chiave è piuttosto *huparchein*.

È a questo punto che Aristotele passa a trattare delle cose che sono dette essere *per se*: tutte quelle che sono significate dalle figure delle categorie, sì che i significati di EpS sono tanti quanti le categorie²⁶. Dopo essere stati utilizzati negli esempi del *secundum accidens*, gli accidenti sono così reintrodotti come casi del *secundum se* a pieno titolo.

2. I lettori latini della seconda metà del XIII secolo hanno accesso a tre versioni differenti di questo testo. Due di esse – l'*Anonyma sive Media* e la revisione che ne fa Guglielmo di Moerbeke – sono tradotte direttamente dal greco. La terza, attribuita a Michele Scoto, deriva invece dall'arabo e circola quale parte integrante del commento alla *Metafisica* di Averroè²⁷. Mi limiterò a qualche osservazione puntuale sulle modifiche che le righe 1017a7-27 subiscono in queste traduzioni, in vista della discussione sui commenti che si basano, a seconda dei casi, su una o più di esse.

La traduzione arabo-latina si apre *in medias res* sull'EpA. Seguono gli esempi (1)-(3), introdotti però in un modo tale che tanto il ruolo di (3), quanto più generalmente il rapporto dei differenti esempi tra di loro risultano modificati rispetto al greco²⁸:

²⁶ 'καθ' αὐτὰ δὲ εἶναι λέγεται ὅσαπερ σημαίνει τὰ σχήματα τῆς κατηγορίας· ὅσαχῶς γὰρ λέγεται, τοσαυταχῶς τὸ εἶναι σημαίνει. ἐπεὶ οὖν τῶν κατηγορουμένων τὰ μὲν τί ἐστι σημαίνει, τὰ δὲ ποιόν, τὰ δὲ ποσόν [...] τὰ δὲ ποτέ, ἐκάστῳ τούτων τὸ εἶναι ταῦτο σημαίνει' (1017a22-27).

²⁷ Per un quadro d'insieme sulle traduzioni latine della *Metafisica*, vedi Borgo (2014).

²⁸ Averroes (1971: 125.2-126.4, modificato; corsivi miei).

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Ens dicitur quodam modo accidentali *verbi gratia* quod [1] iustus est musicus, et quod [2a] homo est musicus. Et similiter dicitur quod [2a] musicus est homo, *verbi gratia* quod [3*] homo musicus aedificat.

Sotto entrambi questi aspetti, la *Media* e la *Moerbekana* riproducono invece il greco più letteralmente²⁹:

‘Secundum accidens quidem, ut [1] iustum musicum esse dicimus et [2a] hominem musicum et [2b] musicum hominem, *similiter* dicentes ut [3] musicum edificare’.

Tradotta *verbatim* dall’anonimo e ripresa senza modifiche sostanziali da Moerbeke³⁰, anche la spiegazione dell’equivalenza tra ‘essere accidentalmente qualcosa’ e ‘accadere a qualcosa’ (1017a12-13), viene trasformata da Scoto, la cui resa contribuisce a rendere ambiguo il ruolo dell’esempio (3) stesso: ‘Accidit igitur hoc quia est et quia hoc accidit ei’ (Averroes 1971: 126.5-6). Quanto alla generalizzazione delle righe 1017a15-19, la traduzione arabo-latina parafrasa l’originale e lo riduce ad una distinzione di due soli casi (i-ii), cui non fanno seguito né l’esempio (2b), né l’esempio (4)³¹. Entrambi figurano invece nelle versioni greco-latine, quest’ultimo però sostanzialmente modificato: vi si allude all’essere del bianco, non del non-bianco. Il lettore è così indotto a leggere la ripresa di (2b) non come esempio finalizzato a introdurre un caso (iii) a parte, ma piuttosto come esempio del caso (ii)³²:

²⁹ Aristoteles Latinus (1976: 94.10-12, corsivi miei); cfr. Aristoteles Latinus (1995: 102.297-299).

³⁰ ‘[H]oc enim esse hoc significat accidere huic hoc’ (Aristoteles Latinus 1976: 94.13-14; cfr. Aristoteles Latinus 1995: 102.300-301); cfr. *supra*, nota 20.

³¹ Averroes (1971: 126.8-10): ‘Ista enim dicuntur modo accidentali uno modo [i] quia utraque accidunt eidem enti, alio modo [ii] quia accidit enti ut esset illa’.

³² Vedi anche Aristoteles Latinus (1995: 103.303-306).

[i=] hoc quidem quia ambo eidem acciderunt,
[ii=] illud vero quia enti accidit hoc
[2b=] aliud vero musicum hominem, quia huic musicum accidit
[4=] similiter autem dicitur et album esse, quia cui accidit, illud est
(Aristoteles Latinus 1976: 94.16-19)

Nonostante questa asimmetria nella generalizzazione, il riepilogo (1017a19-22) consta di tre casi nelle tre traduzioni latine come in greco. Mentre le due traduzioni greco-latine calcano il greco, iterando per tre volte il verbo *inesse* per *huparchein*, Scoto parafrasa l'originale greco, soprattutto in corrispondenza di (β), ove figura l'espressione non-aristotelica 'quiddità dell'ente'. Si noti infine che, tanto nella *Media* quanto nell'arabo-latina in (γ) è evocata l'identità tra soggetto e accidente³³.

3. L'esegesi medievale di *Metaph.* V.7 è fortemente influenzata dal(la versione latina del) commento di Averroè a questo stesso capitolo e al capitolo sui sensi dell'uno, che lo precede. È pertanto fondamentale richiamarne alcuni punti salienti prima di trattare della ricezione latina della dottrina aristotelica dei sensi dell'essere.

Secondo Averroè, in *Metaph.* V.7, sono introdotti differenti 'modi dell'ente', nozione che egli prende in senso ampio, tra i modi di essere, di dire o di intendere l'essere: dapprima i 'modi dell'ente che è per accidente', quindi quelli di 'ciò che è essenzialmente'³⁴. Seguendo Aristotele, Averroè riconduce il numero dei modi del *per se* a quello delle categorie e il fatto che gli accidenti possano essere considerati EpS non viene problematizzato. Quanto all'EpA, il Commentatore ne individua due

³³ 'Et entia quae dicuntur modo accidentali secundum hoc dicuntur: [α] aut quia utraque sunt eiusdem entis, [β] aut quia est quidditas entis, [γ] aut quia est cum eo cuius est et de quo dicitur idem' (Averroes 1971: 126.11-13); '[...] [β] aut quia enti illud inest, [γ] aut quia idem cui inest de quo id predicatur' (Aristoteles Latinus 1976: 94.19-21); '[...] [γ] aut quia IPSUM EST cui inest de quo IPSUM predicatur' (Aristoteles Latinus 1995: 103.306-309).

³⁴ Averroes (1971: 127.17, 21, 33; 130.66-67).

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modi. Il primo di essi (EpA¹) è ricondotto all'esempio (1) di Aristotele, che egli riformula però quantificandolo universalmente: "ogni musico è giusto". Secondo Averroè, dire che il giusto è accidentalmente musico equivale ad affermare che ciò che è giusto e ciò che è musico sono accidentalmente identici. Tale identità è, più precisamente, doppiamente accidentale: due accidenti *accadono* reciprocamente l'uno all'altro e, allo stesso tempo, *accadono* contemporaneamente ad uno stesso soggetto³⁵.

Il secondo modo dell'EpA (EpA²) è invece ricondotto agli esempi (2a-b), che Averroè ripropone nella forma 'ogni musico è uomo', dopo averne fornito due possibili spiegazioni: diciamo che l'uomo è musico o viceversa, 'o perché musico accade a uomo, che è come un genere' (127.24-25); oppure perché tanto la musica quanto l'umanità accadono l'una all'altra in quanto sono insieme in uno stesso uomo particolare. A differenza di EpA¹, però, in EpA² le determinazioni coinvolte non ineriscono allo stesso modo nel loro soggetto comune, bensì l'una per accidente, mentre l'altra 'essenzialmente' (127.28-29). Averroè riconosce in qualche modo una priorità a EpA¹ rispetto a EpA². Considera infatti che la generalizzazione corrispondente ai punti (i)-(ii) si riferisca ai soli esempi (1*a-b), e non al caso dell'uomo musico (2a-b)³⁶.

Quanto all'esempio (3) -'l'uomo musico edifica' nella versione di Aristotele corrispondente-, rimane completamente fuori dal quadro tracciato da Averroè. Egli gli conferisce tuttavia un ruolo importante nel commento a *Metaph.* V.6 (t. 7), nella discussione sui modi dell'uno. Il Commentatore vi rimanda implicitamente all'inizio del suo commento al t. 13, affermando che 'l'ente si dice di ciò di cui si dice l'uno, e che l'uno si

³⁵ Averroes (1971: 127.18-20).

³⁶ 'Sed unum istorum inest per accidens subiecto [...] et aliud essentialiter, e contra dispositioni in primo modo, scilicet in quo dicimus quod musicus est albus. Hoc igitur quod dixit; ista enim dicuntur modo accidentali, etc., est exemplum ad dicendum quod musicus est albus, non ad dicendum quod homo est musicus' (127.28-32). Quanto al riepilogo finale (1017a19-22), Averroè lo riduce a due casi, considerando (β) e (γ) come due declinazioni di EpA² (127.33-128.39).

dice di ciò che è uno per sé e uno per accidente' (126.14-15). In effetti, la trattazione sui sensi dell'uno si rivela utile a comprendere quella sui sensi dell'EpA. Averroè menziona il costruttore musico come esempio del primo modo di unità accidentale e si sofferma su che cosa lo differenzi dal caso dell'uomo musico³⁷. In questo contesto tre punti emersi nella distinzione dell'EpA sono più chiaramente esplicitati. Innanzitutto, ritroviamo la nozione di identità: navigatore/costruttore e musico formano un'unità accidentale in quanto *accidentalmente identici* l'uno all'altro, e questo in virtù dell'*identità* del loro soggetto comune, in cui entrambi ineriscono contemporaneamente *qua* accidenti. Inoltre, intervengono qui gli stessi criteri già visti per spiegare la differenza tra EpA¹ e EpA²: mentre nel primo caso di unità accidentale (costruttore musico) sono coinvolte soltanto 'differenze accidentali di quell'essenza di cui [esse] sono predicate' (105.15-17), nel secondo caso di unità accidentale (uomo musico) l'unità riguarda determinazioni essenziali e accidentali al contempo. Anche in questo contesto, dell'esempio dell'uomo musico Averroè fornisce due spiegazioni possibili, distinguendo il livello dell'uomo come universale da quello degli individui (105.27-106.32). Infine, anche in questo contesto Averroè sottolinea l'irriducibilità del caso dell'uomo musico a quello del musico costruttore: mentre l'unità accidentale di quest'ultimo è fondata sul fatto che entrambe le determinazioni 'esistono in un unico particolare e allo stesso modo, e hanno la medesima natura', cioè di accidente, nel caso dell'uomo musico due di queste tre condizioni non sono rispettate (106.41).

Assente nel commento al t. 13, nel commento al t. 7 ricorre un termine-chiave: *congregatum*. Averroè lo usa per denotare delle unità, connotandone la derivazione dall'integrazione di più parti e la

³⁷ Averroes (1971: 106.33 e 39-42). La versione del testo di Aristotele commentata da Averroè è sensibilmente diversa e drasticamente più breve del testo greco corrispondente (1015b17-27): 'Per accidens sicut navigator et musicus [...] quia accidit navigatori musicum' (Averroes 1971: 104.3-5).

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composizione³⁸. Tale nozione è rilevante ai fini del nostro percorso, nella misura in cui permette di riconoscere a ciò che è, ed è uno e identico per accidente, uno statuto extramentale. Uno, identico o EpA non è in questa prospettiva la proposizione in cui figuri la copula 'est', né uno o più accidenti significati dai termini che fungono da predicato o da soggetto in essa, bensì un ente concreto composto da una sostanza particolare cui tale accidente inerisce (o tali accidenti ineriscono) *qua* accidente/i particolare/i.

II. Questioni esegetiche

Esaminerò nel seguito tre questioni di interpretazione aristotelica. Sarà innanzitutto discusso il ruolo svolto dalle linee 1017a8-22, sull'EpA, nel contesto più ampio del capitolo V.7; in particolare come si rapportino alla sezione sull'EpS, la cui estensione sarà meglio precisata (§1). Seguirà una sezione su quanti e quali tipi di EpA (e di EpS) siano individuati da Aristotele attraverso i suoi esempi (§2). A tal proposito, saranno approfonditi la funzione conferita dai vari commentatori all'esempio del musico costruttore (3) e il rapporto da loro istituito tra la generalizzazione (i-ii-[iii]) e il riepilogo (α - β - γ) che concludono la sezione aristotelica sull'EpA. Mi soffermerò brevemente, infine, sulle interpretazioni che più globalmente vengono date nel XIII secolo della distinzione tra EpA e EpS da una parte, e tra modi dell'EpA dall'altra (§3). Per quanto non esclusivamente, è prevalentemente ai commenti letterali che farò riferimento in questa sezione.

1. Indipendentemente dalla traduzione latina a cui hanno accesso, i commentatori esaminati convergono nel considerare l'EpA come

³⁸ '[S]i essent differentiae substantiales eius de quo praedicantur, tunc congregatum ex eis esset unum essentialiter [...] Deinde dedit modum secundum quem congregatum ex istis est unum per accidens' (Averroes 1971: 105.17-19; 25-26).

specificamente contrapposto all'EpS. Questa distinzione non è tuttavia unanimemente considerata esaustiva e questo perché essi dividono il testo in modi differenti. Non lo è per quanti considerano V.7 quadripartito e i quattro sensi giustapposti³⁹. Ritengono che lo sia (e che le ulteriori distinzioni servano dunque a introdurre differenti tipi di EpA da una parte e di EpS dall'altra), quanti considerano che V.7 si articoli in due macro-sezioni. L'ente come vero e l'ente come atto e potenza risultano in quest'ottica modi dell'EpS, assieme all'essere secondo le categorie. È questa la struttura che secondo Riccardo Rufo di Cornovaglia emerge dall'Aristotele arabo-latino. Lo stesso schema di lettura è adottato anche da Adamo di Bocfeld⁴⁰, nonostante abbia accesso anche alla *Media*, e da Tommaso d'Aquino⁴¹, che può ormai comparare quest'ultima anche alla *Moerbekana*⁴². Questa stessa partizione si trova anche nel *Sapientiale* di Tommaso di York (Thomas Eboracensis 2020: 18.22-19.46), dove il contenuto di V.7 è riportato tra i *sermones sapientium*, a sostegno tuttavia di quella che è considerata *una* delle possibili classificazioni dei modi dell'essere.

Le questioni su V.7 di Ruggero Bacone sembrano presupporre una considerazione simile circa l'eshaustività della contrapposizione tra EpA e EpS. Per ogni candidato al titolo di *ente* che individua, infatti, dopo aver appurato che sia *qualche cosa*, Bacone si chiede sistematicamente se sia EpA oppure EpS⁴³. Egli sembra tuttavia concepire il rapporto tra l'EpS da una parte e l'ente come vero e l'ente come atto/potenza dall'altra in un modo incompatibile con la macro-bipartizione evocata sopra. Considera

³⁹ Questa sembra la ricostruzione di Averroè, che connette però EpS e ente come atto/potenza (1971: 133.126-128). Cfr. Albertus Magnus (1960: 234).

⁴⁰ '[...] Distinguit modos entis per se, et distinguit tres, quorum primus est quod ens dicitur communiter de omnibus X predicamentis' (Adamus Bucfeldus, *Exp. Metaph.*-R: 88rb).

⁴¹ Thomas de Aquino (1964: §885, §889, §897).

⁴² Reilly (1988: 562)

⁴³ Rogerus Bacon (1930: e.g. 117.11-12, 26-27; 119.5-6, 30).

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infatti i due ultimi sensi dell'essere 'universali e comuni ai modi di essere per sé o per accidente' (123.25-26; cfr. 131.14-132.9), suggerendo così una macro-bipartizione differente di V.7, se non una sua tripartizione⁴⁴. Una struttura parzialmente simile emerge anche da una sorta di appendice, *De sufficientia modorum entis*, alle questioni su V.7 di Riccardo di Clive⁴⁵. È in questo caso l'ente come atto/potenza a dividere trasversalmente gli altri tre: l'ente come vero è allora contrapposto a EpA ed EpS, che dividono esaustivamente il solo ente extramentale.

2. Riccardo di Clive suddivide ulteriormente ciascuno dei modi dell'essere extramentale. Distingue così due modi in cui si dice l'EpA, a seconda che siano coinvolti due accidenti inerenti in una stessa sostanza o uno soltanto, con la relativa sostanza. Individua inoltre otto modi differenti in cui quest'ultimo caso può declinarsi, 'come appare nel capitolo sull'uno'. Quanto all'EpS o 'reale', ne distingue dieci modi 'come le categorie sono dieci' (Qq. *Metaph.*-C: 341va; cfr. W: 130vb). Mentre la suddivisione dell'EpS è comunemente ammessa dai suoi contemporanei, in quanti modi si dica l'EpA è oggetto di discussione, anche per ragioni intrinseche alle traduzioni latine.

La bipartizione dell'EpA è adottata soprattutto dagli autori inglesi, ma va più generalmente ricondotta all'Aristotele arabo-latino e all'interpretazione che di V.6-7 dà il Commentatore. Rufo contrappone ad esempio il caso 'bianco è dolce', in cui due accidenti sono predicati l'uno dell'altro (EpA¹), al caso 'uomo è musico', in cui un accidente viene predicato *accidentalmente* di un soggetto o viceversa (EpA²). Come Averroè, Rufo⁴⁶ riconduce l'esempio esplicativo (3), del musico

⁴⁴ '[O]mnis modus entis aut est modus entis per se aut per accidens, aut modus entis communis ad ens per se et per accidens' (Rogerus Bacon 1930: 131.34-36).

⁴⁵ 'Et sic accipitur sufficientia modorum in generali: ens aut est ens actu aut potentia, et sic quartus modus [...] aut in anima, et sic tertius; aut in re extra: aut per se, et sic secundus, aut per accidens, et sic primus' (Richardus de Clive, Qq. *Metaph.*-W: 131ra).

⁴⁶ Rufus (2022: 594.30-45).

costruttore, a EpA¹. Egli legge inoltre la generalizzazione (i)-(ii) e il riepilogo (α)-(γ) di Aristotele alla luce della distinzione tra EpA¹ e EpA². I punti (i-ii) vengono così interpretati come enunciazione delle *due* cause di EpA¹ (poi riepilogate in [α]); la distinzione tra (β) e (γ) come enunciazione delle *due* cause dell'EpA². Si noti che questa bipartizione dell'EpA è talvolta associata, sulla scorta di Averroè, all'idea che EpA¹ sia *per accidens* a maggior titolo di EpA². Attraverso l'uso della formula "accidens impertinens" nella descrizione di EpA¹, ad esempio, Rufo porta l'attenzione sul fatto che l'accidentalità concerne qui non soltanto il rapporto tra accidente e soggetto, come nell'EpA², ma anche il rapporto reciproco tra i due accidenti coinvolti. Essi sono infatti non mutualmente implicantesi e non necessari rispetto al loro comune soggetto. Questa stessa differenza tra EpA¹ ed EpA² viene messa in luce da Tommaso di York attraverso la contrapposizione tra 'ente accidentalmente per accidente' ed 'per accidente soltanto' (Thomas Eboracensis 2020: 18.3-29). Riguardo quest'ultimo, Tommaso sottolinea anche che il soggetto cui l'accidente è detto inerire non è il suo soggetto appropriato, cioè prossimo⁴⁷.

Anche secondo Adamo di Bocfeld Aristotele distingue due modi di EpA, che egli caratterizza in termini simili a Rufo⁴⁸. A differenza di Rufo,

⁴⁷ Su questo punto alcuni autori successivi, meno strettamente dipendenti da Averroè, non concordano. Pietro d'Alvernia e l'anonimo vaticano, ad esempio, considerano il composto formato da una sostanza e un proprio EpA². Pur riconoscendo all'accidente necessario uno statuto di perseità rispetto al soggetto di cui viene predicato, essi attribuiscono infatti alla loro unione statuto di EpA in virtù della differenza delle loro rispettive essenze. A differenziare EpA² da EpA¹ è, dalla loro prospettiva, il rapporto causale che intercorre tra soggetto e accidente: 'Et tale ens adhuc duobus modis dicitur. Quoddam enim est ens quod est aggregatum ex talibus duobus quorum unum ordinem essentialem habet ad aliud [...]. Alio modo dicitur ens secundum accidens quod aggregatum est ex pluribus nullum ordinem essentialem habentibus ad se inuicem' (Petrus de Alvernia, Qq. *Metaph.*-V: 224va; O: 31vb).

⁴⁸ 'Distinguit duos modos entis per accidens, quorum primus est cum duo accidentia impertinentia [EpA¹] sic se habent ad inuicem quod unum dicitur de altero et e

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tuttavia, Adamo interpreta l'Aristotele arabo-latino alla luce della *Media*. Questo rende la sua ricostruzione originale sotto tre rispetti. Innanzitutto, Adamo ritiene che entrambi i modi dell'EpA possano essere chiariti attraverso l'esempio (3) del musico costruttore. Egli ritiene infatti la proposizione 'l'uomo musico costruisce' al contempo 'per accidente rispetto a musico quanto al primo modo [di EpA] e rispetto a uomo quanto al secondo modo'⁴⁹. Come a colui che edifica, l'essere musico non pertiene in quanto costruttore, così accade per il suo essere uomo rispetto all'edificare: non si tratta del suo soggetto proprio⁵⁰. Adamo sottolinea ulteriormente la convergenza di EpA¹ ed EpA², seguendo la *Media* anziché l'arabo-latina in corrispondenza delle linee 1017a12-13, e stabilisce così in entrambi i casi una equivalenza tra esse, *accidere* ed *inesse*⁵¹. Differente è anche la sua interpretazione della generalizzazione e del riepilogo di Aristotele, che egli cerca di armonizzare, leggendoli in parallelo. Diversamente da Averroè e Rufo, infatti, Adamo considera che, (i) *uno modo* e (ii) *alio modo* (1971: 126.9) vadano intesi in senso stretto, cioè rispettivamente in riferimento a EpA¹ e EpA², non soltanto al primo di essi. Inoltre, pur non proponendo strettamente una scansione in tre punti, Adamo prende il riepilogo (α)-(γ) come spiegazione delle cause di

conuerso [...] ISTA ENIM YDEMPITITAS, sicut dicit Commentator, EST PER ACCIDENS, QUIA ACCIDIT UNUM ALTERO ET AMBO UNI SUBIECTO QUOD DEFERT IUSTITIAM ET MUSCICAM. Secundo, [...] dat secundum modum et est quod aliquod accidens dicitur de aliqua substantia ut de subiecto non proprio illi accidenti aut e conuerso' (Adamus Bucfeldus, *Exp. Metaph.*-R: 88ra).

⁴⁹ '[...] dicere quod homo muscicus edificat est propositio per accidens respectu muscici quantum ad primum modum et respectu hominis quantum ad secundum modum. Accidit enim hedificatori cui per se conuenit edificare quod sit muscicus et similiter muscico quod sit hedificator; similiter etiam intelligendum quod, licet hedificator non sit nisi homo, tamen hedificator per se hedificat et homo per accidens' (Adamus Bucfeldus, *Exp. Metaph.*-R: 88ra).

⁵⁰ Cfr. Albertus Magnus (1960: 234.10-13, 19-21).

⁵¹ Vedi sopra, p. 112, con la nota 30.

entrambi i tipi di EpA⁵². In questo quadro, EpA², esemplificato attraverso l'uomo musicista (2a-b), risulta più coerentemente integrato di quanto non lo fosse nel commento di Averroè.

Alberto Magno commenta la *Media*. Al cambiamento di testo di base corrisponde un significativo cambiamento di interpretazione. Senza nascondere la sua esitazione, Alberto propende infatti per una tripartizione dell'EpA⁵³. Dopo aver infatti considerato insieme i casi (2a-b) come esempi di EpA², Alberto considera (2b) anche a parte (=EpA³), sulla scorta delle linee 1017a17-18, omesse nella traduzione arabo-latina (ma già tenute in conto da Adamo): si dice che (iii) 'musicista è uomo', per significare che il soggetto cui accade di essere musicista è un uomo. Come già per Adamo, dunque, anche per Alberto i punti (i)-(ii), ora anche con (iii), vanno interpretati alla luce di (α)-(γ). Anzi, spingendosi oltre Adamo, Alberto li legge strettamente in parallelo. Tutti i tipi di EpA sono così ricondotti all'esempio (3), del musicista costruttore, e più generalmente alla formula *hoc accidere huic* (1017a12-13). Questa tripartizione viene ribadita da Tommaso d'Aquino. Ancora più che in Alberto –che sulla scorta di Averroè non ignora la potenziale problematicità degli esempi (2a) e (2b)⁵⁴–, l'approccio dell'Aquiniano si caratterizza per la sua tendenza alla generalizzazione dei casi prospettati da Aristotele. I tre tipi di EpA sono così ridotti ad altrettante configurazioni di predicazione, a seconda cioè che un accidente sia predicato di un altro accidente o di un soggetto, oppure un soggetto di un accidente. Valorizzando l'esempio (3),

⁵² 'Consequenter, cum dicit *Et entia que dicuntur*, quasi concludendo secundum aliam translationem recoligit causas utriusque modi entis per accidens et sunt due [...], quarum prima est quia diuersa accidentia [...] accidunt eidem substantie [...]. Secunda est quod subiectum non proprium cui dicitur inesse accidens [...] est quidditas et substantia et idem substantialiter cum homine particulari de quo proprie dicitur *musicista*' (*Exp. Metaph.*-R: 88rb).

⁵³ 'Secundum autem accidens dupliciter vel forte melius tripliciter [...]' (Albertus Magnus 1960: 233.66-234.14).

⁵⁴ Albertus Magnus (1960: 233.69-74).

SYNTHESIS

Tommaso assimila queste tre situazioni, in particolare equipara EpA¹ e EpA³: che sia ‘bianco’ o ‘uomo’ ad essere predicato di ‘musicò’, questo avviene perché entrambi si predicano di fatto del soggetto cui ‘musicò’ stesso inerisce, e.g. Socrate.

3. Posto che in *Metaph.* V.7 Aristotele distingue differenti modi dell'essere, e dell'EpA e dell'EpS in particolare, due linee di interpretazione del capitolo, l'una ontologica e l'altra linguistica, si intersecano nella tradizione e anche in uno stesso autore. L'ambiguità è insita nel testo stesso di Aristotele, in cui le due dimensioni convivono, specialmente negli esempi, relativi a cose che sono ma anche a come si *dice* che siano. La nozione stessa di *modus*, che ricorre fin dal Commentatore, non sfugge a tale ambiguità. Lo spettro delle interpretazioni possibili emerge piuttosto chiaramente dalle questioni di Bacone, che passa in rassegna una serie di possibili candidati al titolo di EpA e EpS: le realtà extramentali composte di sostanza e accidente, i termini che le significano, le proposizioni che le descrivono, e queste sia *ex parte vocis* sia *a parte rei significate*. Questa molteplicità di opzioni è chiara anche a Rufo. Di fronte all'esempio dell'EpA in forma proposizionale, ‘bianco è musicò’, si chiede infatti se l'accidentalità porti sulla proposizione in quanto tale –*ratione compositionis*– oppure sulla natura dei termini che la compongono *qua* realtà extramentali⁵⁵. Mentre Riccardo di Clive non fa alcun riferimento alla dimensione proposizionale nella sua rassegna dei *modi entis*, prettamente realista, Alberto Magno sembra invece prendere la distinzione tra EpA e EpS come una distinzione di tipi di predicazione⁵⁶. Nel commento dell'Aquinate invece le due linee interpretative convivono.

III. Questioni Dottrinali

⁵⁵ Rufus (2022: 597.117-598.125).

⁵⁶ Albertus Magnus (1960: 234.22-25).

Approfondirò in questa ultima sezione alcune delle tesi elaborate dai commentatori medievali a partire dalla lettura di Aristotele. Seguirò tre filoni tematici principali, in alcuni casi ispirati dalle questioni esplicitamente sollevate dai commentatori latini del XIII secolo. Dopo aver esaminato come essi giustificano il fatto che gli accidenti cadano sotto l'EpS (§1), passerò a ricostruire cosa pensino significhi concretamente EpA (§2). Terminerò analizzando se e come, nel commentare V.7, gli autori medievali aggiungano alla dottrina aristotelica nuovi sensi dell'essere (§3).

1. Che gli accidenti non ricadano, in quanto tali, sotto l'Esse-pA (e che un accidente non sia, in quanto tale, *un Ens-pA*), è una tesi universalmente condivisa nel XIII secolo. Aristotele lo afferma, nella misura in cui menziona le categorie accidentali sotto l'EpS. Il criterio di distinzione tra accidente ed EpA rimane tuttavia implicito in *Metaph.* V.7. La quasi totalità degli autori si sofferma dunque su di esso, cosa che comporta a monte un approfondimento della nozione di EpS. Mentre Aristotele l'associa genericamente alle categorie, Rufo precisa, ad esempio, l'estensione di questo senso dell'essere, sotto il quale fa ricadere tanto i generi e le specie delle dieci categorie, quanto gli individui⁵⁷: 'qualunque (...) genere di predicamento e la cosa esistente sotto qualunque genere'. Egli esclude dunque che *per se* vada qui preso restrittivamente nel senso di 'ciò che non è detto di un sostrato'⁵⁸ e giustifica l'inclusione a pieno titolo delle nove categorie accidentali sotto l'EpS da due prospettive differenti. Da una parte, Rufo suddivide ulteriormente l'EpS in ciò che è *per se* e lo è primariamente e ciò che è *per se*, ma non primariamente. Pur ammettendo che lo statuto ontologico dell'accidente sia differente da quello della sostanza, può così concedere che, preso nell'ambito della sua

⁵⁷ Rufus (2022: 595.57-59).

⁵⁸ Cfr. Aristoteles, *Anal. Post.* 73b5-10.

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categoria, qualunque accidente rientri a pieno titolo sotto l'EpS⁵⁹. D'altra parte, sulla scorta di Averroè, Rufo analizza il significato dei nomi che designano gli accidenti. Essi significano propriamente l'accidente e solo secondariamente la sostanza, ad indicare che qualunque accidente per sua stessa natura esiste nella sostanza, ma non si riduce ad essa quanto ad essenza e perseità⁶⁰. La priorità della sostanza rispetto all'accidente viene così circoscritta alla dimensione dell'esistenza concreta. Rufo sembra pertanto interpretare il *secundum se* di *Metaph.* V.7 alla luce del primo senso di *secundum se* in *Metaph.* V.18: 'la forma e l'essenza di ciascuna cosa' (1022a25-26).

Questa stessa nozione è sottesa alla formula "ente secondo l'essenza", con cui Tommaso di York indica il primo senso dell'EpS⁶¹, e alla precisazione con cui Tommaso d'Aquino apre la sua parafrasi di V.7. Dopo aver annunciato la divisione generale del capitolo, infatti, l'Aquinate porta l'attenzione sull'irriducibilità della macro-distinzione tra EpS ed EpA alla distinzione tra sostanza e accidente, che ricade in quanto tale interamente sotto l'EpS. Mentre infatti alla distinzione tra EpS ed EpA corrisponde una distinzione tra modi di predicazione, la contrapposizione tra sostanza e accidente coglie secondo l'Aquinate una differenza tra *nature* e presuppone una considerazione assoluta tanto delle sostanze quanto degli accidenti in quanto tali⁶².

La nozione di accidente quale EpS in virtù della sua propria natura viene rielaborata dall'anonimo di Lipsia. Definendo l'EpA in opposizione ad esso, infatti, egli porta l'attenzione sul fatto che 'per sé' non è soltanto ciò la cui sussistenza non dipenda da altro, ma anche ciò che non risulta dall'aggregazione di essenze differenti⁶³. Mentre l'accidente, a differenza

⁵⁹ Rufus 2022: 598.146-599.150).

⁶⁰ Rufus (2022: 595.57-65).

⁶¹ Thomas Eboracensis (2020: 18.33-35).

⁶² Thomas de Aquino (1964: §885).

⁶³ '[D]ico quod <accide>ns dicitur ens per se primo modo, quia non sic aggregat diversas essentias et habet sic oppositionem ad ens quod aggregat in se diversas essentias, ut

della sostanza, non è per sé al primo modo, esso lo è a pieno titolo in quest'ultimo senso. Questa tesi è condivisa anche dell'anonimo di Zimmermann, che definisce l'EpS come 'ciò che comporta un'essenza soltanto, sia che tale essenza sia assoluta, sia che abbia un'entità che viene detta in riferimento ad altro⁶⁴. Oltre ad insistere sulla stretta connessione tra essere per sé ed avere un'unica essenza semplice, cioè non derivante da aggregazione⁶⁵, alcuni commentatori fanno entrare nel quadro una terza nozione: è per sé ciò che 'è in', ossia appartiene ad una categoria determinata. Pietro di Alvernia articola in modo particolarmente chiaro questi tre concetti tra di loro: posto che la vera essenza di una cosa è ciò per cui tale cosa veramente è ciò che è, qualunque cosa rientri in una certa categoria, anche accidentale, sarà un'essenza distinta di per sé⁶⁶. Si noti che per Pietro la semplicità quanto all'essenza non implica una semplicità ontologica assoluta. Come vedremo meglio in seguito, egli ritiene che tutto ciò che cade sotto un

homo albus non est accidens, sed bene est ens per accidens [...] (Anon. Lipsiensis 2009: 333.7-17, modificato).

⁶⁴ [...] dicitur ens secundum se quod importat tantum essentiam unam, siue essentia illa sit absoluta siue habeat entitatem ad aliud dictam, ut homo est ens secundum se quia importat essentiam et entitatem absolutam, albedo autem ens secundum se quia tantum importat essentiam unam quamvis sit ad aliud dicta. Ens secundum accidens modo opposito dicitur quod aggregat in se essentias diuersas [...] (Anon. Zimmermanni, *Qq. Metaph.*-C: 24vb).

⁶⁵ 'Dico quod accidens est ens secundum se. [...] Illud quod habet unam essentiam simplicem et non est compositum ex talibus que sunt diuersarum essentiarum est unum secundum se' (Anon. Vat., *Qq. Metaph.*-V¹: 130ra).

⁶⁶ [...] quidquid est in predicamento est aliqua essentia secundum se distincta; essentia autem est id per quod quidlibet est id quod est; uera essentia est illud per quod aliquid uere est id quod est' (Petrus de Alvernia, *Qq. Metaph.*-O: 25ra; V: 209rb); 'Vno modo dicitur accidens quod diuiditur contra substantiam et habet sub se contenta nouem genera accidentium in que diuiditur; et tale accidens est ens per se. Eius enim est aliquod quod quid est et aliqua essentia determinata et ipsum est unum ens' (Petrus de Alvernia, *Qq. Metaph.*-O: 31vb; V: 224va).

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genere sia di fatto composto⁶⁷: un'essenza cui sopravviene l'esse, distinto dall'essenza stessa.

La nozione di 'essere in una categoria' è centrale in Bacone e Riccardo di Clive. Per entrambi, l'appartenenza o meno ad un unico genere costituisce infatti il criterio distintivo tra EpS e EpA⁶⁸. Bacone caratterizza l'EpA come ciò che, pur essendo riconducibile ad una certa categoria, è irriducibile ad essa, nel senso che non le appartiene in senso stretto. Egli equipara la distinzione tra EpS e EpA a quella tra ente 'in genere' e 'extra genus', e intende quest'ultimo nel senso di 'afferente a più di una categoria contemporaneamente', in contrapposizione a 'appartenente ad una categoria soltanto'⁶⁹. Clive fa dipendere 'l'essere in un genere' di una certa cosa dall'essere espresso nella sua definizione, cioè dalla sua quiddità⁷⁰. Ritene dunque che 'ciò che è in un genere deve nominare una sola essenza'⁷¹ e lo identifica con l'EpS. Egli rileva tuttavia una tensione tra due nozioni di genere. Mentre l'appartenenza ad un genere *logico* (quale sua specie, differenza o individuo) caratterizza esclusivamente l'EpS, Clive riconosce che anche gli EpA appartengano ad un genere *reale* e che vi appartengano 'per attribuzione', verosimilmente alla sostanza⁷². Data la concisione dei testi conservati, è difficile stabilire

⁶⁷ Vedi sotto, nota 93.

⁶⁸ Questo emerge dal modo stesso in cui questi autori formulano le questioni su *Metaph.* V.7: 'Utrum illud esse sit in genere [...] in uno genere uel duobus' (Richardus de Clive, *Qq. Metaph.*-C: 341ra; W: 130va); Rogerus Bacon (1930:120.10-11; 123.28).

⁶⁹ Rogerus Bacon (1930: 117.19-24).

⁷⁰ '[...] res non est in genere quantum ad quodcumque esse, set quantum ad esse quod indicat diffinitio' (Richardus de Clive, *Qq. Metaph.*-W: 130va); 'cum res ponatur in genere <secundum> suum quidditativum, entitas uero accidentis et substantie quidditativa est alia et alia, et per illud esse habet res poni in genere' (C: 341ra).

⁷¹ '[...] illud quod est in genere unam essentiam debet nominare' (Richardus de Clive, *Qq. Metaph.*-C: 341ra).

⁷² '[...] concreta [...], loquendo de genere logicali non sunt in genere, loquendo tamen de genere reali sunt in genere [...]. Vnde uoco esse in genere logico contineri sub eo tamquam species uel differentie' (Richardus de Clive, *Qq. Metaph.*-C: 341ra; cfr. W: 130va);

con certezza che cosa egli voglia significare con questa contrapposizione tra logico e reale. Si noti tuttavia come questa asimmetria tra dimensione logica ed ontologica sia uno ‘strumento concettuale del tutto originale’⁷³ nel panorama dei commenti a V.7, volto in particolare a sostenere l’idea che, come l’EpS, anche l’EpA sia reale, cioè sussistente nella realtà extramentale.

L’obiezione che nell’essere indicato dalla definizione di un accidente rientri la sostanza e che dunque l’accidente non sia un ente, e *a fortiori* EpS, non è ignorata da Clive. Come mostrato da Donati in altri contesti (2014: 172-174), tuttavia, Riccardo sostiene l’irriducibilità non soltanto dell’essere all’essere sostanziale, ma anche dell’essenza degli accidenti alla loro inerenza nella sostanza (*inesse*). Questa stessa tesi, cui allude anche Sigieri⁷⁴, è ribadita con forza da Clive nella discussione sui sensi dell’essere. A suo vedere, mentre da una prospettiva ontologica l’esse degli accidenti precede il loro *inesse*, da un punto di vista epistemologico l’ordine è capovolto. La menzione della sostanza nella definizione non va dunque presa come un riferimento ad una parte costitutiva dell’accidente, ma come un sostegno alla conoscenza della sua essenza, ‘*diminuta*’ nel senso che non può esistere da sé e pertanto non può essere conosciuta in quanto tale⁷⁵.

2. Concordi nel negare che ‘accidente’ e ‘EpA’ si equivalgano, i commentatori non sono sempre espliciti su che cosa concretamente sia

‘Aristoteles non dicit quod accidentia non sunt entia, [...] sunt entia quia entis [...], quia sunt entia per attributionem’ (Qq. *Metaph.*-C: 341rb; cfr. W: 130vb).

⁷³ Amerini (2002: 490), a proposito della distinzione tra *quod quid est loycum/reale* usata in Qq. *Metaph.* VII-W ‘per risolvere la questione dell’identità tra una realtà e la sua essenza’. Amerini è però scettico circa l’attribuzione a Clive di questa parte del commento.

⁷⁴ Sigerus de Brabantia (1983, 236.16-20 [q. 21]).

⁷⁵ ‘[...] *inesse accidentis prius est quam esse quantum ad fieri cognitionis nostre. Tamen primum esse accidentis precedit inesse naturaliter; secundum eius esse est inesse*’ (Richardus de Clive, Qq. *Metaph.*-W: 130vb; cfr. C: 341rb-va).

SYNTHESIS

EpA, questione che peraltro non trova una risposta univoca. Che esso comporti una composizione è comunemente ammesso⁷⁶, sulla scorta dagli esempi aristotelici. Circa il livello a cui situare tale composizione, si profilano sostanzialmente due opzioni⁷⁷. Da una parte l'EpA viene ricondotto fondamentalmente alla sfera della predicazione. La *complexio* in questione è allora quella dei termini attraverso la copula. Dall'altra l'EpA viene ricondotto alla sfera extramentale e attribuito ai composti accidentali, quale modo di essere specifico di ciò che riunisce in sé una pluralità di EpS. Mi soffermerò principalmente su questa seconda opzione, che si delinea più nettamente nei testi presi in esame. Anche nei casi in cui l'interpretazione linguistico-proposizionale abbia un certo peso, in effetti, essa non sembra mai essere completamente scindibile da questa controparte realista.

La concezione dell'EpA come composto accidentale sussistente nella realtà extramentale presuppone due elementi emersi in precedenza. Tale nozione viene sviluppata in contrapposizione all'EpS inteso come dotato di un'unica essenza e appartenente ad una determinata categoria. Essa va inoltre riconnessa a quella di unità accidentale secondo la sostanza, quale emerge soprattutto dal commento di Averroè a *Metaph.* V.6, ove il termine *congregatum* ricorre per descriverne la complessità. Presenterò nel seguito tre versioni di questa concezione dell'EpA, che si differenziano per l'intensità dell'accento posto sulla componente realista. Nel commento a *Metaph.* V.7 dell'anonimo vaticano, il lessico dell'aggregare (*-grego*) ricorre con una certa frequenza. L'accidente non viene qui considerato in opposizione alla sostanza, bensì in assoluto, quale EpS e parte costitutiva dell'EpA. Quest'ultimo è in particolare descritto come ciò che 'aggrega ed include due enti [per sé]' aventi 'essenze e nature differenti, una delle quali accade all'altra'⁷⁸. Descrizioni

⁷⁶ Vedi Sigerus de Brabantia (1981: 299.12-15; 1983: 235.13-236.16).

⁷⁷ Duns Scotus (2018: 59.485-492) menziona entrambe le opzioni interpretative.

simili dell'EpA si trovano anche negli anonimi di Lipsia⁷⁹ e di Zimmermann⁸⁰. Aggiungendo la specificazione 'in atto', quest'ultimo fa risaltare la concretezza dell'aggregato in questione. Alcune precisazioni apportate dagli anonimi del Vaticano e di Lipsia circa la natura composta di tale unità, vanno nella stessa direzione. Entrambi presentano l'EpA come un caso specifico di 'addizione di un ente ad un altro ente'⁸¹. L'anonimo di Lipsia paragona in particolare l'EpA al composto ilemorfico, in virtù del fatto che anch'esso riunisce in sé un principio potenziale e un principio attuale rispetto all'essere. Egli rileva tuttavia una differenza fondamentale tra i due tipi di aggregazione. Soltanto dall'unione della forma alla materia deriva al composto l'essere assoluto (*esse simpliciter*) e si origina dunque un EpS, unitario quanto all'essenza. Questo è dovuto al fatto che, a differenza della sostanza e degli accidenti, la materia e la forma sono riconducibili ad uno stesso genere massimo. Dall'unione dell'accidente alla sostanza derivano invece degli aggregati 'le cui essenze non sono di un solo genere' e che non cadono sotto una stessa categoria⁸².

⁷⁸ '[...] quando aliquid aggregat et includit duo que habent diuersas essentias et naturas, quarum una accidit alteri, dicitur ens secundum accidens.' (Anon. Vat., *Qq. Metaph.*-V¹: 130ra).

⁷⁹ Vedi sopra, nota 63.

⁸⁰ 'Ens secundum accidens dicitur quod aggregat in se essentias diuersas *in actu* quarum una alii accidit uel ambo accidunt tertio' (Anon. Zimmermanni, *Qq. Metaph.*-C: 24vb).

⁸¹ Anon. Lipsiensis (2009: 331.10); Anon. Vat.: 'ens per accidens [...] alio modo potest accipi secundum quod dicit ens additum enti, sicut homo albus [...]' (*Qq. Metaph.*-V¹: 147vb).

⁸² Anon. Lipsiensis (2009: 331.8-14; 332.9-22). Cfr. Anon. Vat.: '[...] illud quod est compositum ex talibus quorum utrumque est ens secundum se et ex hiis potest fieri una essentia et una natura, tunc illud est ens secundum se, sicut uidemus de composito ex materia et forma. [...] Set si sunt aliqua duo quorum utrumque est ens secundum se et ex hiis non sit aptum natum fieri aliquod unum essentialiter [...] non oportet quod ex hiis compositum sit ens secundum se, set erit ens secundum accidens. Et tale est ens aggregatum ex subiecto et accidente' (*Qq. Metaph.*-V¹: 130ra-b).

SYNTHESIS

Da una prospettiva differente, nel commento vaticano l'aggregato di enti diversi per essenza viene più circostanziatamente situato rispetto ad altri casi di EpA. Da una parte, rispetto all'ente mentale, che condivide con l'aggregato il fatto di non essere per sé, ma se ne distingue per come si debba intendere la sua accidentalità: in riferimento alla sua natura, puramente intenzionale⁸³. Se ne deduce la dimensione extra-mentale dei composti quali 'uomo musico'. D'altra parte, l'aggregato viene confrontato con altri casi di giustapposizioni di enti ed eventi. L'accento è allora posto sul rapporto causale che intercorre tra di essi. In questo modo, l'anonomo contrappone i composti di sostanza e accidente (necessario o no) a ciò che è fortuito⁸⁴, ma parimente reale.

Rufo e Bacone, ma soprattutto Riccardo di Clive, enfatizzano ulteriormente questa dimensione dell'EpA. Oltre a caratterizzarlo come 'essere dell'aggregato', infatti, quest'ultimo lo descrive anche come 'cosa concreta', che 'significa e assembla in sé essenze diverse', e come 'ente reale'. Ad assicurarne tale statuto ontologico sono, secondo Clive, proprio le sue parti compositive, che appartenendo a pieno titolo ad una categoria, permettono all'EpA stesso di essere ricondotto ad un genere o all'altro⁸⁵. In questo quadro, ciò che è EpA diviene dunque ciò che

⁸³ '[...] ens secundum animam [...] est ens, set secundum accidens, [...] quod non est secundum se, quia est in anima, et est secundum accidens pro tanto quia non habet esse extra animam; non est tamen ens secundum accidens sicut hic accipitur ens secundum accidens pro aggregato ex diuersis naturis et essentiis' (Anon. Vat., *Qq. Metaph.*-V^l: 130rb).

⁸⁴ '[...] ens per accidens dupliciter consideratur. Vno modo quod non habet de<terminatam> causam sue essentie et entitatis; et tale dicitur casuale et fortuitum. Alio modo [...] quod includit in se aliqua diuersarum essentiarum et naturarum [...] quorum unum alteri accidit et inheret' (Anon. Vat., *Qq. Metaph.*-V^l: 130ra).

⁸⁵ '[...] ex homine et albo resultet quoddam esse quod non est substantie nec accidentis, set aggregati [...]. Tale ens nominans tale aggregatum non est in genere eo quod illud quod est in genere est ens per se. [...] Illud quod est in genere unam essentiam debet nominare; set tale duas essencias nominat; ideo non debet dici in genere. Verum tamen est quod est ens reale [...]. Per accidens habet esse in genere [...] substantie per substantiam et per accidens in predicamento qualitatis uel quantitatis' (Richardus de

appartiene accidentalmente ad un genere. Ad esempio, uomo musico, appartiene alla sostanza per via dell'essere uomo e alla qualità per via dell'essere musico; e se proprio si dovesse ridurlo ad un genere soltanto, esso va ricondotto piuttosto alla qualità⁸⁶. Si noti che in Clive non mancano riferimenti alla dimensione linguistica. Egli afferma ad esempio che le cose o l'ente *nominano* un aggregato o un'essenza. Tuttavia, le proposizioni in quanto tali non entrano mai in gioco.

A tal proposito, Bacone, che abbraccia una posizione fortemente riduzionista, è invece più esplicito. Egli affronta infatti la questione del che cosa sia EpA in tre momenti distinti: dapprima dal punto di vista della realtà extramentale, cioè soffermandosi sui differenti tipi possibili di *collatio* di enti per sé; quindi dal punto di vista proposizionale, *a parte vocis* e *a parte rei*; infine in relazione ai termini apposti gli uni agli altri *sine ratione predicandi*. Bacone ammette così che anche gli enunciati possano essere EpA, qualora i termini che vi figurano si rapportino accidentalmente l'uno all'altro⁸⁷. Ritiene tuttavia che tale accidentalità non possa in ultima analisi che essere giustificata *a parte rei*, in virtù del fatto che non esiste alcuna essenza comune tra le realtà extramentali cui i termini coinvolti si riferiscono. Questa sembra essere la linea anche di Rufo, che esclude due candidati al ruolo di EpA: da una parte la proposizione, e.g. 'musico è bianco'; dall'altra i referenti di soggetto e predicato, ossia gli enti per sé designati da tali termini, che sono semplici accidenti. L'EpA è così ridotto da Rufo alla '*compositio congregata ex talibus extremis*', l'uno dei quali viene predicato dell'altro

Clive, Qq. *Metaph.*-C: 340vb-341ra); 'concretum non est in genere directe. [...] Res [...] est in genere [...] quantum ad esse quod indicat diffinitio; et quia aggregatum habet duplex esse indicatum per diffinitionem, ideo in uno genere non est' (Qq. *Metaph.*-W: 130va).

⁸⁶ 'Sed si debet poni sub uno genere [...], debet ipsum poni sub genere qualitatis' (Richardus de Clive, Qq. *Metaph.*-C: 341ra).

⁸⁷ Rogerus Bacon (1930: 117.9-11, 118.1, 119.3-8, 120.30, 122.29-123.17).

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accidentalmente. Ciò che viene così significato è in ultima analisi una ‘composizione del soggetto’ e il suo essere ‘uno per accidente’⁸⁸.

Tra quanti identificano EpA e aggregati extramentali merita una menzione anche Tommaso d'Aquino, nonostante nel suo commento egli si focalizzi sull'analisi di proposizioni. In questo contesto egli oppone infatti l'EpA all'accidente considerato in astrazione dal suo soggetto di inerenza (EpS) e lo equipara ad un ‘tutto’, termine con cui non designa una proposizione contenente una predicazione accidentale, bensì l'oggetto extramentale che essa descrive⁸⁹. Mentre uomo e bianchezza sono rispettivamente EpS, e precisamente una sostanza e un accidente, comparati l'uno all'altro essi concorrono a formare un solo ente concreto, un EpA appunto, che viene significato qualora si dica che ‘un uomo è bianco’. Questa pur timida valorizzazione della dimensione extramentale trova riscontro in quanto l'Aquinate afferma parlando del rapporto tra l'EpS e l'ente come vero, che egli considera come un tipo di EpS. L'ente come vero è allora indicato quale effetto avente l'EpS detto secondo le categorie come causa. Allo stesso modo, la composizione significata dalla copula rimanda ad una composizione ontologica: quella dell'EpA, che si compone in ultima analisi di EpS.

3. Terminerò questa carrellata portando l'attenzione su un fenomeno comune a molti dei commenti considerati: la complessificazione della dottrina dei sensi dell'essere, quale conseguenza della reinterpretazione di *Metaph.* V.7 alla luce di nozioni ontologiche non aristoteliche. Essa si traduce in una moltiplicazione dei sensi di essere, che nessuno degli

⁸⁸ Rufus (2022: 598.128-134).

⁸⁹ La questione è filologica prima che dottrinale. Seguo qui il ms. Napoli, BN VIII.F.16, 44ra, che tramanda il testo dettato da Tommaso stesso: ‘unde hoc totum, homo albus, est ens per accidens’; diversamente Thomas de Aquino (1964: §885), ma si vedano altri luoghi in cui ‘totum’ designa il concreto (§§894, 1312, 1458, 1650, 2443). Cfr. Petrus de Alvernia: ‘[...] dicitur ens secundum accidens quod causatur ex coniunctione plurium entium per se cuius ens est hoc totum: albus musicus’ (Qq. *Metaph.*-V: 224va; O: 31vb).

autori considerati riorganizza però in modo organico. Una prima estensione riguarda i modi dell'EpS, nella loro opposizione all'EpA. Accanto ai significati di *per se* come 'non in qualcosa d'altro' e di 'avente un'essenza distinta da qualunque altra essenza', infatti, l'anonimo del Vaticano⁹⁰ e Riccardo di Clive⁹¹ menzionano anche il senso di *per se* come 'incausato', che non si può applicare né all'accidente né alla sostanza, ma soltanto al primo principio. Rufo sottolinea che quest'ultimo non è preso in considerazione dal Filosofo in *Metaph.* V.7, capitolo dedicato soltanto agli enti causati, che cadono tutti sotto le categorie. Della causa prima, Aristotele tratterebbe piuttosto nei capitoli V.1-2 e 6⁹².

Questa stessa tripartizione dell'EpS figura anche in Pietro di Alvernia, che la innesta sulla distinzione non-aristotelica tra essere ed essenza. Egli contrappone così il primo principio, la cui essenza coincide con il suo esse, a tutto ciò che cade sotto un genere e, in quanto tale, è un ente composto: un'essenza cui sopravviene l'esse⁹³, che può declinarsi ulteriormente in 'essere per se' o 'in altro'. È su quest'ultima distinzione che Pietro fonda la contrapposizione tra sostanza e accidenti, a seconda cioè che alle essenze (comunque non identiche al loro rispettivo esse) sopravvenga l'uno o l'altro esse. La difficoltà di situare questa distinzione

⁹⁰ '[...] aliquid dicitur ens secundum se tripliciter. Vno modo [...] ex se habens esse et non ab alio; et sic solum unum ens secundum se, scilicet causa prima. Alio modo [...] quod est per se existens et non in alio [...]. Tertio modo [...] quod habet essentiam distinctam a quacumque essentia alia [...]' (Anon. Vat., *Qq. Metaph.*-V¹: 130ra).

⁹¹ '[...] aliquid dicitur ens per se quod non dependet ab alio nec secundum esse nec secundum conservacionem [...]. Alio modo dicitur per se ens [...] quia suum esse non dependet ab alio in quo sit sicut in subiecto [...]. Tertio modo dicitur per se quod opponitur ei quod est ens per accidens et sic sunt decem predicamenta encia per se, et ens per accidens dicitur quando aliquid in se includit duo, quorum unum accidit alteri [...]' (Richardus de Clive, *Qq. Metaph.*-C: 341va; cfr. W: 130vb).

⁹² Rufus (2022: 601.205-210).

⁹³ 'Aliqua autem est substantia cui non conuenit esse ita quod sua essentia sit suum esse et talis substantia potest esse in genere. Aliquam enim compositionem habet, puta essentiae et esse' (Petrus de Alvernia, *Qq. Metaph.*-V¹: 209va; cfr. O: 25ra).

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di essenza ed esse rispetto ai sensi di essere individuati da Aristotele è amplificata dal fatto che Pietro attribuisce un esse all'essenza stessa (*esse essentiae*), distinguendolo dall'esse *in actu sive in effectu* e specificandone l'indipendenza da quest'ultimo: mentre un'essenza può essere compresa a prescindere dal fatto che si colga il suo *esse in actu*, questo non è possibile senza che si colga il suo *esse essentiae*⁹⁴.

Questa terminologia non-aristotelica ricorre anche nell'anonimo di Lipsia, a proposito della differenza tra EpA ed EpS. Dovendo infatti giustificare come sia possibile riconoscere anche all'accidente lo statuto di EpS e al contempo spiegare come esso concorra a formare un'unità con la sostanza in cui inerisce, l'anonimo distingue tra due prospettive ontologiche: mentre l'unità (accidentale) si espleta a livello dell'esse *in effectu*, che tanto per l'accidente quanto per la sostanza discende dall'essenza di quest'ultima, a livello del loro *esse essentiae* sostanza e accidente sono due enti a tutti gli effetti distinti⁹⁵. Non è questa l'unica innovazione concettuale dell'anonimo di Lipsia rispetto al Filosofo. Egli introduce nella discussione sui sensi dell'essere anche la nozione di *entitas*, in particolare per definire l'EpA: 'ogni aggregato di due [cose], delle quali l'una accade all'altra, oppure entrambe accadono ad una terza, quell'[aggregato] è un accidente *secundum entitatem*', cioè dalla prospettiva dell'esistenza concreta⁹⁶ e della sussistenza nella realtà extramentale⁹⁷. Il senso di accidentale come dipendente dalla sostanza, escluso nella discussione sull'EpS, rientra così nel quadro, ma per parlare del solo essere *qua* estrinseco rispetto all'essenza. Questa nozione di *entitas* ricorre anche nell'anonimo di Zimmermann, che ne fa tuttavia un uso leggermente differente, distinguendo un'entità assoluta da un'entità detta in relazione ad altro. Mentre la prima è da lui associata all'essenza

⁹⁴ Petrus de Alvernia (1955: 164-165).

⁹⁵ Anon. Lipsiensis (2009: 320.32-43).

⁹⁶ Anon. Lipsiensis (2009: 332.9-11).

⁹⁷ Cfr. Sigerus de Brabantia (1981: 299.20).

delle sostanze, la seconda è associata all'essenza degli accidenti. Anche per l'anonimo di Zimmermann, tuttavia, questa differenza a livello dell'entità non incide sull'essenza *qua* tale, che appartiene ugualmente e indipendentemente alla sostanza e agli accidenti considerati di per sé stessi⁹⁸.

Una menzione merita infine la distinzione che Pietro di Alvernia traccia tra 'ente' ed 'essere', come termini che non designano cose realmente distinte, bensì una stessa realtà ma significata in modi differenti. Mentre dal primo viene connotata una disposizione, uno stato, il secondo descrive invece un'azione nel suo divenire. Introdotta per spiegare in che cosa l'essenza differisca dall' *esse essentiae*⁹⁹, questa distinzione struttura un interessante passo in cui Pietro afferma che, comunque sia significato, l'essere non si predica secondo una stessa *ratio* dell'EpS e dell'EpA, bensì secondo l'anteriore e il posteriore¹⁰⁰. Così facendo Pietro stabilisce una connessione diretta tra la dottrina dei sensi dell'essere e quella dell'analogia dell'essere. Si potrebbe vedere un'anticipazione di queste affermazioni in Rufo, che oltre a distinguere un senso primario e uno secondario di EpS¹⁰¹ (ammettendo così che la sostanza lo sia a più buon diritto degli accidenti), considera che 'ente' si predichi propriamente solo di ciò che sta in una categoria, dunque in modo meno ampio di 'essere'. È così che quest'ultimo può dirsi, per estensione, anche del vero. Anche in questo caso, la prospettiva di lettura dei sensi dell'essere è quella dell'analogia dell'essere.

⁹⁸ Testo citato sopra, nota 64.

⁹⁹ Petrus de Alvernia (1955: 164-165).

¹⁰⁰ 'Est enim intelligendum quod, sicut ens non dicitur per unam rationem de ente per se et de ente per accidens, set secundum prius et posterius [...], similiter et esse non secundum unam rationem, set secundum prius et posterius dicitur de esse secundum se et de esse secundum accidens' (Petrus de Alvernia, *Qq. Metaph.*-V: 209ra; O: 25ra). Cfr. Ashworth (2008: 55-77).

¹⁰¹ Rufus (2022: 600.191-195); cfr. Wood (2022: 8, 124-126).

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IV. Conclusioni

Da questa rassegna emerge una sostanziale convergenza degli autori considerati almeno su alcuni punti-chiave. Con Aristotele, essi contano l'EpA e l'EpS tra i sensi principali o 'modi' dell'essere: modi di significarlo, di dirlo e descriverlo, ma anche e più fondamentalmente modi in cui gli enti si presentano e configurano concretamente. Concordi nel ritenere che il significato che Aristotele conferisce a *per/secundum se et per/secundum accidens* in questo capitolo non è lo stesso con cui usa queste espressioni in altri contesti, tutti gli autori considerati ritengono che, per capire la dottrina dei sensi dell'essere, sia necessario non appiattare la nozione di 'essere per accidente' su quella di 'essere un accidente', al fine di poter contare gli accidenti tra gli EpS.

Divisione più generale di quella in tipi di enti che risulta dalla distinzione delle categorie, quella in EpS ed EpA è per la quasi totalità dei nostri autori una bipartizione che porta in ultima analisi sul mondo extramentale: tanto gli aggregati come uomo musicista e costruttore bianco, quanto uomo, bianchezza/bianco, musicalità/musicista sono infatti prima di tutto degli enti reali. Tuttavia, se in molti chiariscono come la struttura dell'EpA sia portata alla superficie dal nostro linguaggio, attraverso l'unione di un soggetto e di un predicato accidentale per mezzo della copula, come la realtà extramentale si rispecchi nelle predicazioni nel caso dell'EpS è lasciato nel vago nella gran parte dei commenti considerati.

Tra i punti di disaccordo individuati tra i nostri autori, alcuni sono la diretta conseguenza del fatto che nel XIII secolo circolano più versioni del testo di Aristotele. Da testi commentati differenti scaturiscono infatti differenti interpretazioni. L'imporsi progressivo di altre traduzioni rispetto all'arabo-latina, in particolare, non è un fattore privo di conseguenze nell'evoluzione che l'interpretazione di *Metaph.* V.7

conosce. Lo abbiamo visto ad esempio con Adamo di Bocfeld e Alberto Magno circa il numero di modi di EpA che possono essere individuati. Lo stesso si può dire del commento di Averroè, la cui influenza è particolarmente forte e diretta nel caso di alcuni autori, ma non di altri, con un impatto evidente sulle loro interpretazioni.

Col tempo, inoltre, nozioni di essere estranee a quelle elencate da Aristotele in *Metaph.* V.7 trovano spazio nei commenti al capitolo, soprattutto in quelli per questioni. Per via dell'accostamento tra EpS e la nozione di natura/essenza, ad esempio, la distinzione tra essere ed essenza si insinua nel dibattito, ampliando il quadro aristotelico e rendendolo più complesso.

Un punto di interesse storico-letterario più generale mi pare infine affiorare da questa ricostruzione della ricezione latina medievale di *Metaph.* V.7 negli anni 1240-1290: l'importanza di contestualizzare i differenti commenti, reintroducendoli nel dialogo di lungo corso (con il Filosofo, il Commentatore, i loro rispettivi traduttori, la tradizione esegetica e i contemporanei più o meno illustri), ma per la gran parte implicito, da cui hanno origine. Solo così si riesce ad apprezzare il contributo originale che i lettori latini medievali di Aristotele apportano alla comprensione e alla trasformazione di *Metaph.* V.7, senza il quale la questione dei sensi dell'essere da meramente esegetica non avrebbe potuto diventare a pieno titolo filosofica¹⁰².

¹⁰² Le ricerche che hanno portato alla stesura di questo articolo sono state condotte grazie ad un finanziamento del Fondo nazionale svizzero per la ricerca scientifica (SNSF), nell'ambito del progetto "Senses of Being. The Medieval Reception of Aristotle's Doctrine starting from *Metaphysics* V7 (1017a7-b9). Grant ID: 200740. – Desidero ringraziare Fabrizio Amerini per le sue utili osservazioni su una precedente versione di questo lavoro.

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A nominalist account of the senses of being
William of Ockham on being *per accidens* and being *per se*

Abstract: William of Ockham maintains that being *per accidens* and being *per se*, two senses of being listed by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* V 7, 1017a 7-30, must be understood as two different types of modal propositions, and not as two different real beings. The latter interpretation of *Metaphysics* V 7, proper to authors such as Duns Scotus, may be described as a ‘realist account’ of being *per accidens* and being *per se*, and is the polemical target of two arguments Ockham formulates in his *Summa logicae* and his *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*. This paper will first examine Ockham’s arguments against the realist account (*pars destruens*), and then his nominalist account of being *per accidens* and being *per se* as modal propositions (*pars construens*).

Keywords: William of Ockham, *Metaphysics* V 7, Senses of being, Nominalism

*Introduction*¹

This article is devoted to the ontological status of being *per accidens* and being *per se*, two opposed senses of being listed by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* V 7 1017a 7-30.

By ‘ontological status’ I mean the place that an item occupies within a given ontology, such as the Aristotelian one. By ‘item’ I mean an entity which may be any kind of possible entity, such as a real being or a proposition considered as a mental or linguistic entity². By ‘place’ I mean

¹ The results of the present research were made possible thanks to funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation. Project: *Senses of Being. The Medieval Reception of Aristotle’s Doctrine starting from Metaphysics V 7 (1017 a7–b9)*; Grant ID: 200740.

² For the difference between contemporary and medieval definitions of ‘proposition’ see Brower-Toland (2023: 115–116): ‘in its contemporary sense, the concept of a proposition is a functional notion and refers to those entities (whatever their nature) that play certain theoretical roles – e.g., fundamental truthbearer, object of propositional attitudes, semantic content of sentences, etc. So understood, the contemporary notion of a

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the class of the ontology – taken as broadly or narrowly as one wishes, and not necessarily an Aristotelian category – to which the item belongs. An item is an item, that is, something included in the ontology, if and only if it is in a class, which may also be constituted by that item alone. To investigate the ontological status of something, therefore, is to examine the position that an item occupies within a given ontology.

For an inquiry to qualify as an investigation of ontological status, there must be something whose status is genuinely in question. This is, for example, the case for being *per accidens* and *per se* within the Aristotelian ontology: talking about ontological status in the case of *Metaphysics* V 7 1017a 7-30 signifies assuming an interpretation of this text in which being *per accidens* and being *per se* are items whose ontological status is not clear³.

The ontological status of being *per accidens* and *per se* is, indeed, not clearly defined by Aristotle. Therefore, as a preliminary step, I will consider the Aristotelian account of being *per accidens* and *per se*. With this explanation of Aristotle's text, my aim is not so much to resolve the problems in *Metaphysics* V 7, as to formulate them clearly, pointing out

proposition is to be distinguished from that which medieval philosophers associate with the corresponding Latin cognate (*propositio*). For medievals, the term '*propositio*' most closely corresponds to our own notion of a token sentence (whether spoken, written, or mental).' See also Brower-Toland (2023: 125, n. 2): 'the term '*propositio*' comes from the Latin verb '*propono*', which means to propose or to say. Thus, *propositiones* are just things that propose or say something, which medievals take to be token sentences.' By using the term 'proposition' hereafter I will refer to the medieval use described by Brower-Toland.

³ Note that this chapter of book V of the *Metaphysics* could be also understood as presenting a list of uses of the word 'being' in ancient Greek, without making any statements about the ontological status of items. Within this interpretation, to establish the ontological status of two uses of the word 'being' is of course senseless. However, the interpretation of *Metaphysics* V 7 as a classification of items seems to be the medieval interpretation of *Metaphysics* V 7 (shared also by many modern commentators). Since this is a study on William of Ockham, I will therefore adopt this reading of *Metaphysics* V 7, without discussing other possible interpretations.

the ambiguity of this text as basis of the medieval accounts. The explanation of *Metaphysics* V 7 will lead to the formulation of the following questions, which are nothing other than the questions concerning the ontological status of being *per accidens* and being *per se*: which kind of items are being *per accidens* and *per se*? Do being *per accidens* and being *per se* belong to the realm of reality, or are they mental/linguistic entities?

These questions underpin a debate in the 14th century, which I think can be understood as a dispute between a *realist* and a *nominalist* position regarding being *per accidens* and being *per se*. As has already been shown⁴, realism and nominalism are labels that apply not only to metaphysical positions related to the well-known dispute on universals, but also to other areas of medieval ontology, such as the status of relations or of indivisibles within continuous quantities. The main thesis of this paper is thus the following: the ontological status of being *per accidens* and being *per se* is the object of a dispute between realists and nominalists, similar to the dispute concerning the ontological status of universals, relations or indivisibles⁵.

In particular, I will consider here one of the most prominent nominalist accounts of being *per se* and *per accidens* in the 14th century,

⁴ See, for example, Normore (1987), 203: 'it is precisely the assumption that mediaeval nominalism was, fundamentally, a position about universals which I wish to question here. I claim that mediaeval nominalism was only incidentally connected with the problem of universals and that, once that is seen, both the philosophical terrain of the Middle Ages and some of our contemporary metaphysics vocabulary look somewhat different'. See also Zupko (1993) for the relationship between medieval nominalism and the notion of continuity.

⁵ It is not possible in this paper to present in detail all the realist and nominalist authors who comment on *Metaphysics* V 7; consequently, it is not possible to provide a full explanation of the realist and nominalist debate. The aim here is to present in detail only Ockham's nominalist position. For a thorough study of the realist/nominalist opposition regarding the status of being *per accidens* and being *per se*, I refer the reader to my PhD thesis, '*On the Several Senses of Being in Late Medieval Philosophy: A Study on the Medieval Latin Reception of Metaphysics V 7*', where I present the dispute in much greater detail.

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namely William of Ockham's account⁶. Ockham argues against the hypothesis that being *per accidens* is a real being distinct from being *per se* (a position I define as realist) and instead proposes the interpretation that being *per accidens* and being *per se* are two different types of propositions (a position I define as nominalist). More specifically, Ockham understands *per se* and *per accidens* as propositions involving the modal operators '*per accidens*' and '*per se*'.

The structure of the paper is as follows: after briefly presenting the ambiguity of *Metaphysics* V 7 (1017a 7–30) and the debate between the realist and the nominalist account of being *per accidens* and *per se* originating from the issues of Aristotle's text and the polemical target of Ockham, namely the realist position, I will outline the *pars destruens* of Ockham's account and explain the arguments Ockham sets forth against it. I will then present the *pars construens* of Ockham's account, namely being *per accidens* and *per se* as modal propositions.

1. Aristotle's account and the nominalist/realist debate

Metaphysics V 7 begins with an opposition between being *per accidens* and being *per se*, an opposition confirmed not only by the pair '*per accidens/per se*', but also by the couple '*μὲν/δὲ*', '*quidem/uero*'⁷, 'from one side/from the other side'. The opposition between being *per accidens* and being *per se* seems to correspond directly to the distinction Aristotle presents in *Metaphysics* V 6 between unity *per accidens* and unity *per se*, given that Aristotle usually associates the notion of unity and that of being.

⁶ For a general overview of Ockham's nominalism, see, for example, Adams (1987) and Panaccio (2023).

⁷ When I quote the Latin translation of the *Metaphysics*, I will refer to Moerbecke's version. I will not consider here the other Latin translations available at the time of Ockham.

Being *per accidens* is illustrated with propositions as examples. In 1017a 8-10, Aristotle enumerates the ways in which accidental being is expressed, identifying three types of propositions: (a) accident + accident ('the just is musical'); (b) substance + accident ('the man is musical'); (c) accident + substance ('the musical is a man'). Aristotle connects these propositions with what corresponds to them at the level of reality, that is, with what they denote. Summarising his account, Aristotle states as follows:

For when we say the man is musical and the musical is a man, or the white is musical or the musical is white, [we say] the last two [i.e., case (a) 'accident + accident'] because both happen to the same thing [i.e., a substance]; [we say] the first [i.e., case (b) 'substance + accident'] because [the accident] happens to that which is [i.e., a substance]; while [we say] the musical is a man [i.e., case (c) 'accident + substance'] because 'musical' happens to this [i.e., a man]. [Aristotle, *Metaphysics* V 7, 1017a 15-18, ed. W. Jaeger, transl. Mine⁸]

A proposition of the form (a), i.e., an accident as predicate term said of an accident as subject term, can be formulated because, on the level of reality, both those accidents belong to or inhere in a third thing not named in the proposition, a thing that 'is' or 'exists'. A proposition of the form (b), i.e., an accident as predicate term said of a substance as subject term, can be formulated because the accident belongs to or inheres in the substance. Finally, a proposition of the form (c), i.e., a substance as predicate term said of an accident as subject term, can be formulated because, once again, it is always the accident that belongs to or inheres in the substance, even if the proposition has the accident as subject term.

All in all, Aristotle seems to outline two levels: one pertaining to propositions, expressed in Greek with 'we say' ('φάμεν' / 'λέγωμεν' - 'dicimus'), and another pertaining to the reality, i.e., the real inherence of

⁸ All existing English translations of this chapter of the *Metaphysics* are not literal. Therefore, I have decided to provide my own translation from the Greek.

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an accident, expressed with the Greek verbs ‘to happen’ (‘συμβεβήκασιν/συμβέβηκεν’ – ‘*acciderunt/accidit*’) and ‘to inhere’ (‘ὑπάρχει’ – ‘*insunt*’). One level is said to be related to the other as follows: for example, one says that ‘a man is white’ *because* (‘ὅτι’ – ‘*quia*’) the accident ‘white’ inheres in the substance ‘man’. In other words, accidental propositions are formed on the basis of accidental real inferences in reality.

Even if the relationship between the two levels, namely, propositions and the reality denoted by those propositions, is clear, what remains unclear is the level at which being *per accidens* should be placed. Being *per accidens* must belong either to the level of propositions (a mental or linguistic item) or to that of real and accidental inherence (a real item). Where, then, should being *per accidens* be situated? Or, to put it more precisely, what is the ontological status of a being *per accidens*?

Being *per accidens* could be understood as expressing the accidental copula involved in propositions, whereby every accidental proposition will be an instance of being *per accidens*⁹. In this case, being *per accidens* would be an accidental proposition, ‘a man is white’, expressing the accidental (predicational) inherence of a predicate in a subject.

In favour of this reading there are the examples provided by Aristotle in 1017a 7-22. These examples seem clearly to be examples of propositions with an implicit copula, which are then further related to the real inherence as denotation of those propositions, and this could suggest that being *per accidens* should be on the level of propositions, and not on the level of real inherence.

Alternatively, being *per accidens* could be understood as something in reality. It is not clear, however, how to interpret being *per accidens* as a real being, that is, either as the accidental inherence where there are two distinct things (e.g., white and man) and one inheres in the other or

⁹ For this interpretation, see for example Ross (1924: 305).

as an aggregate, some third thing, resulting from these two things and distinct from them ('white man').

Some interpretations present being *per accidens* as an accidental inherence, without any commitment to the existence of a third thing distinct from the components¹⁰. Others state that being *per accidens* is the aggregate expressing the real inherence of an accident in a substance, a 'kooky object'¹¹, such as 'white man'¹².

An argument in favour of the reading of being *per accidens* as kooky object expressing a real accidental inherence is the parallel one can set forth between unity *per accidens* and being *per accidens*: being *per accidens* as 'white man' is an accidental aggregate or a unity *per accidens* that signifies the inherence of an accident in a substance. Moreover, the examples presented by Aristotle can also suggest a parallelism between the notion of 'being' and that of 'unity'. Both in Greek and Latin, some of the examples that open *Metaphysics* V 7 (1017a 9-10) are presented in the following form: 'τὸν ἄνθρωπον μουσικόν' – '*hominem musicum*'; 'τὸν μουσικόν ἄνθρωπον' – '*musicum hominem*'. There are two terms without a copula linking them, as the verb 'to be' is implicit, expressed through the construction 'φάμεν...εἶναι' – '*dicimus...esse*'. Since *Metaphysics* V 7 is the chapter dedicated to the notion of being, in parallel with the notion of unity in *Metaphysics* V 6, it is understandable that an example like τὸν ἄνθρωπον μουσικόν, *hominem musicum* can be interpreted not as a proposition (as they actually are), but as an accidental aggregate expressing the accidental inherence of an accident in a substance.

Since being *per se* is defined on the basis of being *per accidens* (and vice versa), it shares the same ambiguity: it is unclear whether an example of being *per se* is a mental/linguistic entity or a real entity.

¹⁰ For this interpretation, see for example Kosman (2013: 32): being *per accidens* is 'the result of the co-incidence of two beings.'

¹¹ For the notion of 'kooky object' see Cohen (2008).

¹² For this interpretation, see for example Yu (2003: 7): being *per accidens* is 'an accidental composite of two beings.'

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Aristotle clearly states that being *per se* is said to be divided according to the categories. It seems thus difficult to assert that being *per se* is related to propositions, such as an essential proposition. In what sense, indeed, an essential proposition such as ‘a man is rational’ is what is divided into the categories? Ross, for example, argues that being *per se* is that essential proposition whose subject and predicate terms belong to the same category, e.g. ‘a man is an animal’¹³. This, however, seems to lack textual evidence and, furthermore, it seems that Aristotle also lists examples of accidental propositions among being *per se*, as Buchanan points out:

[...] as Ross admits, Aristotle’s examples (‘the man is walking’, etc.) are against it (i.e., Ross’ interpretation), being examples of accidental predication.¹⁴

Others claim that being *per se* is not an essential predication, but it expresses the 1-place being involved in predications, thereby a proposition such ‘a man exists’ will be an example of being *per se*¹⁵. However, still there is no textual evidence of this point and it still remains unclear how being *per se*, understood as being involved in a proposition, is connected to the categorial articulation.

One might argue that being *per se* is a mental or linguistic item, but not a proposition: being *per se* could be a simple term, as opposed to the complex term that would constitute a being *per accidens*¹⁶. In this way, it becomes clear how being *per se* is divided into categories and opposed

¹³ See Ross (1924: 305).

¹⁴ Buchanan, (1962: 12, n. 11). See also Bäck (2000: 71), Weiner (2015: 7): ‘it is worth asking why Ross’s interpretation (that Aristotle refers to the distinction between essential and accidental predication) appears to be convincing although there is no direct textual evidence for it.’ Finally see Menn (2021: 206).

¹⁵ See, for example, Owen, (1965: 260–261).

¹⁶ See, for example, Buchanan, (1962:12): ‘being or to be taken by itself seems to mean the whole predicate [...] taken by itself in isolation from the propositions.’

to being *per accidens*, but still there is no textual evidence in *Metaphysics* V 7 that being *per se* is a simple term.

Finally, being *per se* can be understood, at the level of reality, as a simple entity belonging to a category, in contrast to being *per accidens* as a being resulting from the accidental aggregation of simple beings¹⁷. This represents the parallel solution, at the level of reality, to the interpretation of being *per se* as a simple term. In this way, too, being *per se* appears to stand in opposition to being *per accidens* and to be divided among the categories. However, as with the parallel solution of being *per se* as simple term, there is no textual evidence to support this interpretation either.

In summary, Aristotle's text does not clarify what is the ontological status of being *per accidens* and being *per se* as items: they seem both to be either mental/linguistic items or real ones. The text thus presents an ambiguity regarding the status of these senses of being, which lies at the heart of the realist-nominalist debate surrounding *Metaphysics* V 7, 1017a 7-30.

Any realist account can be roughly defined as follows: given an entity whose ontological status is arguable within a given ontology, a realist account is defined as one which asserts that that entity belongs to the ontology as a real being – thus, as part of extra-mental reality, distinct from other real entities, and irreducible to other real beings. In the case of being *per se* and being *per accidens*, the debatable entity is being *per accidens*.

Realists understand being *per accidens* as a real being, but neither as a substance nor as an accident; otherwise, it would be included in one of the categories and thus not opposed to being *per se* as what is divided into the categories. Hence there must be a being that is a real one, but not included in the categorial framework. This implies that the categories are not sufficient to delimitate all that exists as real: being *per accidens* is a real being which does not belong to any category. Therefore, a realist

¹⁷ See, for example, Yu (2003:7).

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expands the Aristotelian ontology to admit a being beyond the categorial framework: a real composite of substance and accident, which, in itself, as a composite, is neither substance nor accident.

A clear example of realist account is Duns Scotus's account of being *per accidens* and *per se*. Distinguishing the senses of '*per accidens*' in the *Ordinatio*, Scotus claims as follows:

I say that in one way '*per accidens*' is used by the metaphysician, in another way by the logician. Indeed, the metaphysician calls 'being *per accidens*' what includes in itself things of different genera, as it is clear in *Metaphysics* V, chapter on being [*Metaphysics* V 7] and chapter on unity [*Metaphysics* V 6]. By contrast, the logician calls a 'proposition *per accidens*' that proposition whose subject does not include the *ratio* for the inherence of the predicate [...] (Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d. 1, p. II, q. unica, 100, 8-13, ed. *Commissio scotista*, transl. mine)¹⁸

Scotus distinguishes different senses of '*per accidens*'. First, '*per accidens*' can be understood as applied to a being that is an aggregate made up of different things. This is the *metaphysical* sense of '*per accidens*'. In contrast, there is also a *logical* sense of '*per accidens*' related not to beings, but to propositions. A proposition where the inherence of the predicate in a subject is not included in the *ratio*, namely the ground of the inherence of the predicate in the subject. Hence, the inherence of the accident in the subject is not grounded in the nature of the subject. For example, in the proposition 'a man is white', the inherence of 'white' in 'man' is not an essential inherence, for 'white' is not grounded in the nature of 'man'. Therefore, according to Scotus, the proposition *per accidens*, expressing the logical sense of '*per accidens*', is not the sense of '*per accidens*' Aristotle presents in *Metaphysics* V 7: according to Scotus,

¹⁸ 'Dico quod alio modo loquitur de "per accidens" metaphysicus, alio modo logicus: metaphysicus enim dicit "ens per accidens" quod includit in se res diversorum generum, sicut patet V *Metaphysicae* cap. "De ente" et "De uno"; logicus vero dicit propositionem esse per accidens cuius subiectum non includit rationem inhaerentiae praedicati [...]'

this chapter of the *Metaphysics* deals with beings, not with propositions.

Being *per accidens* as an aggregate made up of beings is opposed to being *per se* as simple being, belonging to one of the ten categories. Hence, not only substances, but also accidents are beings *per se*. An accident like ‘white’ is a simple being which belongs to the category of quality, as Scotus himself claims:

The accident by itself is a *per se* being, according to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* V 7, – so it is *per se* in a genus. (Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, l. IV, d. 12, p. I, q. 1, 311, 257, ed. *Commisio scotista*, transl. mine)¹⁹

Even if an accident does not have an autonomous existence, because it exists insofar as it inheres in a substance, it is nonetheless a being *per se* as what belongs *per se* to a category. Therefore, an accident is not a being *per accidens* in the realist account: a being *per accidens* is an accidental aggregate that does not belong to any category; an accident is a being *per se*, a simple being belonging to one of the ten categories.

The nominalist account rules out the possibility that a being *per accidens* could be a being distinct from a being *per se*: there is no such thing as an aggregate separate from its components. The only beings are simple beings belonging to the categories. When Aristotle speaks of being *per accidens* and being *per se* in *Metaphysics* V 7, he is referring to entities at the level of language, not of being itself. William of Ockham is the foremost exponent of this position. His account comprises a *pars destruens*, aimed at refuting the realist reading, and a *pars construens*, concerned with the determination of propositions *per accidens* and *per se*. This will be the subject of the next two paragraphs.

¹⁹ ‘Accidens autem secundum se est ens per se, secundum Philosophum V Metaphysicae cap. “De ente”, – unde et per se est in genere.’

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2. *Pars destruens*

The realist account of being *per accidens* and being *per se*, as described above in the case of Duns Scotus, is rejected by William of Ockham with two arguments, presented in two different works, the *Summa logicae* and the *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*.

Let us start with the argument in the *Summa logicae*. In chapter 31 of the first part of the *Summa*, Ockham discusses the notion of ‘being’, and, quoting the distinction between being *per accidens* and *per se* in *Metaphysics* V 7, he formulates an argument against the realist account based on the notion of *exhaustiveness of the substance-accident distinction* as follows:

That some thing is not a being *per se* and another thing a being *per accidens* is clear, for no thing is unless it is a substance or an accident. But both substance and accident are beings *per se*. This notwithstanding, something is predicated of something *per se*, and something *per accidens*. (William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, §38, 108, 49-53, ed. P. Boehner, G. Gál and S. Brown, transl. mine)²⁰

The argument is based on the assumption that the categorical framework should fully encompass everything that is a real being. The very nature of the categories, and the necessity of their introduction, rests on the idea that they must entirely account for everything that exists. For if there are beings that do not fall within the categories, what purpose would the categories serve? How is it possible to determine in what sense a real being that is not included in the categories is a being?

²⁰ ‘Quod enim aliqua res non sit ens per se et aliqua per accidens patet, quia nulla res est quin sit substantia vel accidens; sed tam substantia quam accidens est ens per se; igitur etc. Hoc tamen non obstante aliquid praedicatur de aliquo per se et aliquid per accidens.’

Ockham is strict on this point: everything that exists is included in one of the categories, is either a substance or an accident; *tertium non datur*²¹. If this is true, then being *per accidens*, if it is a real being as the realists claim, must necessarily be either a substance or an accident. However, substances and accidents are beings *per se*, according to the realists. Therefore, the distinction '*per accidens-per se*' as applied to real beings is meaningless, because everything that exists is always and only a being *per se*, that is, either a substance or an accident. The distinction '*per accidens-per se*' can be applied to account for types of propositions, which can be either *per accidens* or *per se*. As we shall see, according to Ockham, Aristotle's distinction between being *per accidens* and being *per se* in *Metaphysics* V 7 is nothing else but the distinction between propositions *per accidens* and *per se*.

Nevertheless, the assumption that substance and accident are sufficient to account for reality is explicitly denied by Scotus. Ockham is supposed to demonstrate that there are only substances and accidents, and this cannot serve as a premise of the argument; thus, Ockham's argument, as it stands, is very weak, as it appears to be question-begging.

An Ockhamist response might be that it is not possible to deny this assumption without risking the undermining of the entire categorial framework: if the categories do not encompass all of reality, then what categories are they? Yet this remains an assumption on Ockham's part, and it is not as self-evident as he seems implicitly to suggest.

²¹ This argument is often presented by Ockham as the basis for the refutation of a nominalist position. For example, it can be found in the rejection of the indivisible in continuous quantity as a real being (see, for example, in the *Tractatus de quantitate*). A similar argument is also found in other authors, such as Hervaeus Natalis, *De secundis intentionibus*, d. 2, q. 3, 63, 189, 10-12, ed. J. Djs: 'illud quod dividitur contra ens divisum in decem praedicamenta non est substantia nec accidens. Sed quod non est substantia nec accidens non dicit aliquam entitatem realem. Ergo etc.'

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The second argument, presented in the *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*, is more articulated.

The argument is a *reductio ad absurdum*, showing that it is not possible to admit a distinction between a being *per accidens*, as aggregate, and a being *per se*, as simple being.

Realists such as Scotus maintain that even though being *per accidens* is an aggregate made up of simple beings – that is, of beings *per se* – this does not imply that being *per accidens* is reducible to being *per se*. According to a realist, an aggregate as a whole is ontologically a distinct item from the parts that compose it. The fact that being *per accidens* is not ontologically reducible to being *per se* is what makes them two distinct items, which is basically what underpins the realist account.

Against this, Ockham provides his *reductio ad absurdum* as follows:

And if it is said that a being *per se* differs from an accidental aggregate, but that Socrates is a being *per se* and the white Socrates is an accidental aggregate and that therefore Socrates differs from the white Socrates, then it must be replied that understood literally (*de virtute sermonis*), the following is simply false: ‘The white Socrates is an accidental aggregate’; for, it implies ‘Socrates is an accidental aggregate.’ (William of Ockham, *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*, 3, §1, 58 97-101, ed. E. Moody, transl. E.-H.W. Klunge, partially modified)²²

According to Ockham, the aggregate ‘white Socrates’ is reducible to the simple being ‘Socrates’, that is, to the individual, which by itself already contains the totality of the accidental properties inhering in it, so also its being white. To reject the distinction, the *reductio ad absurdum* is the

²² ‘Et si dicatur quod ens per se differt ab aggregato per accidens, sed Sortes est ens per se et Sortes albus est aggregatum per accidens, ergo Sortes differt a Sorte albo, dicendum est quod de virtute sermonis haec est simpliciter falsa “Sortes albus est aggregatum per accidens”, quia infert istam “Sortes est aggregatum per accidens”’.

inference ‘the white Socrates is an accidental aggregate; therefore, Socrates is an accidental aggregate’. By analysing the inference from the proposition p ‘The white Socrates is an accidental aggregate’ to the proposition p^1 ‘Socrates is an accidental aggregate’, Ockham shows the absurd that the inference from p to p^1 is valid, where p^1 is clearly false.

Ockham begins with the exposition of the following principle:

For to go from a determinable taken together with a determination that neither takes away (*non distrahente*) nor diminishes (*diminuente*) [to the determinable by itself] is always to employ a formally valid inference. So, for instance, ‘A white man is running, therefore a man is running’ is formally valid (*formalis consequentia*); and so in all other cases. (William of Ockham, *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*, 3, §1, 58, 103-105, ed. E. Moody, transl. E.-H.W. Klunge)²³

Ockham defines the conditions under which it is possible to have a valid inference when, in passing from the antecedent to the consequent, the predicate term remains unchanged, e.g., ‘running’, but a determination of the subject term is present in the antecedent and removed in the subject term of the consequent, e.g. ‘white man’ in the antecedent, and ‘man’ in the consequent. Such inferences often constitute fallacies *secundum quid et simpliciter*, that is, illicit inferences from a proposition with a term having a determination (*secundum quid*) to another proposition with the same term without that determination (*simpliciter*)²⁴. Similarly, the inference from p to p^1 could (erroneously) be considered a case of a *fallacy*

²³ ‘Quia semper a determinabili sumpto cum determinatione non distrahente nec diminuente, est formalis consequentia; sicut formaliter sequitur “homo albus currit, ergo homo currit”, et sic de omnibus aliis.’

²⁴ Note that Ockham presents a similar example of the inference from p to p^1 in the section of the *Summa logicae* dedicated to the fallacy *secundum quid et simpliciter* as follows: ‘patet quod talia argumenta non peccant per fallaciam secundum quid et simpliciter “homo albus est aggregatum per accidens, igitur homo est aggregatum per accidens”’. (William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, III-4, c. 13, 834, 109-111, ed. P. Boehner, G. Gál and S. Brown).

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secundum quid et simpliciter. To clarify why the inference from p to p^1 is valid, Ockham considers in detail which kind of determination produces a fallacy. Indeed, an inference is an instance of a fallacy *secundum quid et simpliciter* on the basis of the nature of the determination that is removed in the consequent. Ockham identifies two types of determinations that, if eliminated in the consequent, result in an invalid inference: a determination ‘that takes away’ (*determinatio distrahens*) and a determination that ‘diminishes’ (*determinatio diminuens*).

A determination ‘that takes away’ is a determination that takes something away from the term to which it is applied. In other words, it is a determination that is entirely or partially incompatible with the thing to which it is added. For instance, if ‘dead man’ is used in the inference ‘Socrates is a dead man, therefore Socrates is a man’, there is a fallacy *secundum quid et simpliciter*²⁵.

A determination that ‘diminishes’ is a determination that diminishes the term to which it is added, in the sense that it applies only to a part of the thing to which it is added. For example, ‘white (having white teeth)’ in the inference ‘The Ethiopian is white having white teeth, therefore the Ethiopian is white’²⁶. In this case, the determination ‘white’ refers only to a part of the subject and cannot be extended to the whole subject.

If the inference does not involve one of these two types of determinations, when the determination is removed there is no fallacy *secundum quid et simpliciter*. For example, in the inference ‘A white man is running, therefore a man is running’, the determination ‘white’ is neither a determination that takes away from the subject, because ‘white’ is not incompatible in any way with ‘man’, nor a determination that diminishes the subject, because a man, as a whole, is white. Therefore,

²⁵ For this example, see William of Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum*, d. 2, q. 7, 244, 19 – 245 15, ed. S. Brown and G. Gál.

²⁶ For this example, see William of Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum*, d. 2, q. 7, 245 16 – 25, ed. S. Brown and G. Gál.

the inference is valid, and Ockham calls it a *consequentia formalis*. A *consequentia formalis* is a valid inference due to the syntactic/formal structure of the proposition. In the case of 'A white man is running, therefore a man is running', there is an alteration of a term in the proposition, first with a determination and then without it. Removing a determination, if it is neither *distrahens* nor *diminuens*, is purely a syntactic operation because what the determination adds to the subject is already included in the subject itself: the removal of such a determination is, in other words, a mere syntactic alteration of terms in two propositions, given that 'white man' and 'man' are equivalent.

If the inference 'A white man is running, therefore a man is running' is valid, there is no reason to assume that the inference from p to p^1 , i.e., 'The white Socrates is an accidental aggregate, therefore Socrates is an accidental aggregate', is not valid. Indeed, according to Ockham, in the case of the inference from p to p^1 the determination 'white' applied to Socrates is neither a determination that takes away nor a determination that diminishes. 'White' applied to 'Socrates' is not incompatible with him and does not apply only to a part of him, but to whole Socrates. Therefore, Ockham concludes as follows:

But white is not a determination that takes away or diminishes; therefore this is formally valid: 'The white Socrates is an accidental aggregate, therefore Socrates is an accidental aggregate.' The consequent is false, and therefore the antecedent is false as well. (William of Ockham, *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*, 3, §1, 58 105-108, ed. E. Moody, transl. E.-H.W. Klunge)²⁷

Since the nature of the determination 'white' applied to 'Socrates' is not one of those determinations that, if removed in an inference, generates a fallacy, there is no issue with the inference from p to p^1 . Now, everyone,

²⁷ 'Sed albus non est determinatio distrahens neque diminuens, ergo formaliter sequitur "Sortes albus est aggregatum per accidens, ergo Sortes est aggregatum per accidens"; consequens est falsum, ergo et antecedens.'

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particularly the realists, agrees that Socrates is a being *per se*, a simple being, and not an accidental aggregate. Therefore, the proposition p^1 , 'Socrates is an accidental aggregate', is false. But if p^1 is false, then p must also be false if the inference from p to p^1 is valid. This follows from the semantics of material implication.

Ockham's argument shows that there is no real being in ontology that exists as an accidental aggregate distinct from the simple being that falls under one of the categories: a being *per accidens*, understood as an accidental aggregate with its own ontological status distinct from being *per se*, does not exist. If the accidental aggregate is admitted within the Aristotelian ontology, it leads to the absurd conclusion that a simple being, e.g., Socrates, could be said to be an accidental aggregate. This conclusion, however, cannot be accepted; so too must the accidental aggregate be rejected as a real being distinct from the simple one.

Nevertheless, this argument as well appears to involve a certain circularity. Ockham states that, in the case of 'white Socrates', 'white' is not a *distragens* determination, that is, not a determination that takes something away, precisely because he assumes that there is no distinction between being *per accidens* and being *per se*. Yet this distinction is exactly what Ockham needs to prove. For a realist, 'white', when added to 'Socrates', produces a being *per accidens* which is other than the being *per se*. Hence, a realist such as Scotus could object that Ockham's argument is invalid, because 'white', in the case of 'white man', is in some sense *distragens*, since 'white' is bound up with the *per accidens* condition. Indeed, the aggregate would cease to be a being *per accidens* if its accidental determination were removed: for the aggregate 'white Socrates', 'white' is a determination that cannot be withdrawn without compromising its nature. Therefore, it would not be possible to move from 'man' to 'white man' without a transition from being *per se* to being *per accidens*. To claim that 'white' is not a *distragens*, as Ockham does, conceals the implicit assumption that there is no distinction

between being *per accidens* and being *per se*, but this is precisely what Ockham must demonstrate, and cannot simply assume.

Finally, Ockham concludes his rejection by clarifying how one should understand the proposition *p*, 'A white Socrates is an accidental aggregate', and the term 'A white Socrates' when they occur, for example, in authorities as follows:

Nevertheless, if some such proposition is found in an author, it must be glossed thus: 'A white Socrates is an accidental aggregate' – that is, this whole, 'A white Socrates', signifies an accidental aggregate; and thus it has either simple or material supposition, although not when taken literally. (William of Ockham, *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*, 3, §1, 58 108-112, ed. E. Moody, transl. E.-H.W. Klunge)²⁸

In Ockham's supposition theory²⁹, a term has simple supposition if it refers to a mental entity, a concept. For example, the term 'animal' in a proposition like 'animal is the genus of human being' does not refer to any real entity, but to a concept in the mind. Thus, 'animal' in 'animal is the genus of human being' has simple supposition. A term has material supposition if it refers to itself. For example, in the proposition 'man has three letters', the term 'man' stands for the word 'man' itself, and neither for a concept nor for an individual. Therefore, it has material supposition. The last of the three types of supposition in Ockham's account is personal supposition, that is, when a term stands for what it signifies, namely the entity it denotes. For example, in the sentence 'this man is white', 'man' stands for the individual human being.

²⁸ "Tamen si inveniatur aliqua talis propositio in aliquo auctore, debet sic glossari: "Sortes albus est aggregatum per accidens", hoc est, hoc totum "Sortes albus" significat unum aggregatum per accidens, et ita tunc quamvis non de virtute sermonis habet suppositionem simplicem vel materialem."

²⁹ For Ockham's supposition theory, see, among others, Matthews (1964), Adams (1976) and Concoran (1978). For an overview on the supposition theory in medieval logic, see, among others, Dutilh Novaes (2007).

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Ockham asserts that ‘a white Socrates’, and any similar expression that realists might consider referring to a real entity, cannot have personal supposition; it cannot stand for any individual or property of individuals. Rather, it has either simple or material supposition. It does indeed signify an aggregate, but either a mental being or a complex term, not a real being.

All in all, according to Ockham, being *per accidens* as an accidental aggregate cannot be admitted into ontology as a real entity with its own status because (1) it is not included in any category (the argument of the *Summa logicae*); (2) it is reducible to being *per se* (the argument from the *Expositio in librum Porphyrii de praedicabilibus*). Therefore, the distinction between being *per accidens* and being *per se* cannot, as realists would have it, be a distinction between real beings.

It is, however, possible, according to Ockham, to account for the distinction of ‘*per accidens/per se*’ of *Metaphysics* V 7 as distinction of propositions or of *modes of predication*, not of beings. This is Ockham’s positive account, which is a nominalist one, and will be the object of the following paragraph.

3. *Pars construens*

In chapter 31 of the first part of the *Summa Logicae*, where Ockham provides his theory on the meanings of the term ‘*ens*’, he offers the following interpretation of *Metaphysics* V 7, 1017a 7-30:

Furthermore, it should be known that according to the Philosopher, *Metaphysics* V, “being is predicated in one way *per accidens*, in another *per se*.” This distinction is not to be understood as meaning that one being is *per se* and another being *per accidens*. Rather, he shows there a diverse mode of predication of one thing of another by the verb ‘is’. This is quite clear from the example given by the Philosopher, for he says that we say ‘a musician is *per accidens* just’, and similarly ‘a musician is *per accidens* a man’ and we say that a musician

builds something *per accidens*. From which it is clear that he only speaks of a diverse mode of predication of something of something, because something is said of something *per se*, and something is said of something *per accidens*. (William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. I, §38, 107, 38 – 108,48, ed. P. Boehner, G. Gál and S. Brown, transl. mine)³⁰

Ockham clearly rejects (for arguments presented above in the *Pars destruens*) that the distinction between *per accidens* and *per se* in *Metaphysics* V 7 1017a 7–30 refers to a distinction between real beings, as claimed by the realists. On the contrary, the distinction expresses different ways of predicating one term of another through the use of the copula ‘is’. In support of this thesis, Ockham quotes one of the examples presented by Aristotle himself: ‘a musician is a man’. This is a strong point in favour of his interpretation, since these examples are listed in the very text of *Metaphysics* V 7, 1017a7–30.

The example quoted by Ockham, i.e. ‘a musician is a man’, is a proposition, and to make it even clearer that ‘*per accidens*’ must be applied to the proposition, not to a being, Ockham alters the copula within the proposition to include ‘*secundum accidens*’ making explicit in the accidental inherence of the predicate in the subject, repositing Aristotle’s example as ‘a musician is *per accidens* a man’. The distinction in *Metaphysics* V 7, 1017a7–30 is therefore a distinction between propositions: a proposition *per accidens* and a proposition *per se*. Ockham clearly defines the meaning of the modal operators ‘*per accidens*’ and ‘*per se*’, the two senses in which propositions involving ‘*per accidens*’ and ‘*per se*’ can be understood, and their truth-conditions. This

³⁰ ‘Uterius sciendum est quod secundum Philosophum, V Metaphysicae: “Ens dicitur hoc quidem secundum accidens, illud vero secundum se”. Quae distinctio non est intelligenda quod aliquod ens sit *per se*, aliud *per accidens*, sed ostendit ibi diversum modum praedicandi unius de reliquo mediante hoc verbo “est”. Quod satis claret per exempla Philosophi, quia dicit quod dicimus “musicum secundum accidens est iustum”, et similiter “musicum secundum accidens est homo”, et musicum dicimus aedificare secundum accidens. Ex quo patet quod non loquitur nisi de diverso modo praedicandi alicuius de aliquo, quia aliquid dicitur de aliquo *per se* et aliquid dicitur de aliquo *per accidens*.’

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will be the object of this *pars construens*. For to define what propositions *per accidens* and *per se* are in Ockham's thought is nothing other than to define what being *per accidens* and *per se* are, since being *per accidens* and *per se* are precisely these types of propositions.

In particular, Ockham thinks that '*per accidens*' and '*per se*' are *modes*, and being *per accidens* and being *per se* are thus *modal propositions* whose modal operator is '*per accidens*' and '*per se*' respectively.

Ockham clarifies this point in the *Expositio super libros Elenchorum* as follows:

Indeed, as it is said about a whole proposition that is true, false, necessary, possible, impossible, in the same way it is said about the whole proposition that is either *per se* or *per accidens*. Therefore, every proposition like 'every man is an animal is *per se* true', 'every white man is a man is *per accidens* true', and the same for other cases, must be distinguished according to a compound sense or a divided sense. (William of Ockham, *Expositio super libros Elenchorum*, l. I, c. 3, § 6, 37, 106 – 38, 117, ed. F. Del Punta, transl. mine)³¹

Ockham has a broad notion of 'mode' that encompasses not only the four standard modes, i.e., necessary, possible, impossible, and contingent, but also epistemic operators, deontological operators, and even 'true' and 'false'³². Similarly, '*per accidens*' and '*per se*' are modal operators that

³¹ 'Nam sicut dicitur de aliqua propositione tota quod est vera, vel falsa, vel necessaria, vel possibilis, vel impossibilis, ita dicitur de tota propositione quod est *per se* vel *per accidens*. Et ideo omnes tales propositiones "omnem hominem esse animal est *per se* verum", "omnem hominem album esse hominem [est *per se* verum]", "omnem hominem esse album] est *per accidens* verum" et sic de aliis, sunt distinguendae secundum compositionem et divisionem.'

³² According to Ockham, the modes are not only the four standard modes, as he claims in his *Summa logicae*, p. II, §1, 242 42-43: 'ideo generalius loquendo potest dici quod plures sunt modi facientes propositiones modales quam illi quatuor.'

modify the proposition and seem to be related to the modal operator 'true': a proposition is true either *per se* or *per accidens*.

It is therefore necessary to define what a proposition *per se* and a proposition *per accidens* are in Ockham, and then to consider in what sense there is a compound sense and a divided sense of these modal operators³³.

There are two main senses of a proposition *per se* that Ockham illustrates in *Summa logicae*, p. III-2, §7. A general (*large*) sense according to which a proposition is said to be *per se* when either the subject is a part of the definition of the predicate, or the predicate is part of the definition of the subject. For example, 'every man is an animal' is an example in which the predicate is contained in the definition of the subject³⁴. Conversely, the proposition 'every triangle has three angles' exemplifies the case in which the subject is contained in the definition of the predicate. By contrast, strictly speaking (*stricte*), a proposition is said to be *per se* when, given all the conditions proper to what is *large per se*, it is also absolutely necessary, that is, it cannot be false and could not have been false (*simpliciter necessaria, ita quod nec potuit nec potest esse falsa*)³⁵. Hence, a proposition *stricte per se* is a proposition *large per se* with the further addition that it must be absolutely or *simpliciter* necessary. For example, the proposition 'a man is an animal' is a *per se* predication, generally speaking or *large*, but not strictly speaking because it can be false, according to Ockham, as it would be if no man existed. On the contrary, the proposition 'every man can be an animal' is a *per se* proposition strictly speaking or *stricte* because it is necessary, and its truth does not require the existence of human beings³⁶. Ockham

³³ For Ockham on the nature of propositions as mental entities ('token mental representations playing the proposition role'), see Brower-Toland (2023).

³⁴ See William of Ockham *Summa Logicae*, p. III.2, §7, 515, 25 – 516, 31, ed. P. Boehner, G. Gál and S. Brown.

³⁵ See William of Ockham *Summa Logicae*, p. III.2, §7, 516, 31-44, ed. P. Boehner, G. Gál and S. Brown.

³⁶ See *ibidem*.

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does not clarify whether the being *per se* of *Metaphysics* V 7, understood as a proposition *per se*, should be taken in a broad (*large*) or strict (*stricte*) sense. However, it is possible that the idea is to consider every proposition *per se* as an instance of being *per se*. If this is true, Ockham interprets being *per se* as a proposition *per se* understood in the broad sense (*large*).

On the other hand, a predication *per accidens* is when the predicate is not contained in the definition of the subject and subject is not contained in the definition of the predicate. It is thus like a contingent proposition that can either be or not be, just like an accident can either inhere or does not inhere in a subject. There is no distinction in this case between a *large* and a *stricte per accidens* proposition and all the possible examples of this type of proposition are those listed in *Metaphysics* V 7 1017a 8-10.

Having clarified what a proposition *per se* and *per accidens* are in Ockham, let us now consider in which sense they admit a compound and divided sense. Concerning the compound sense, Ockham affirms as follows:

In the compound sense it means that the whole proposition is either *per se* or *per accidens*. (*Expositio super libros Elencorum*, l. I, c. 3, § 6, 38, 118-119, ed. F. Del Punta, transl. mine)³⁷

A modal proposition '*per se*' or '*per accidens*' is taken in the compound sense if the modal operator refers to the entire proposition considered as a whole. On the contrary, a modal proposition '*per se*' or '*per accidens*' is taken in the divided sense if the modal operator is internal to the proposition and modifies the predication of the predicate said of the subject. Ockham states as follows:

³⁷ 'In sensu compositionis denotatur quod talis tota propositio sit *per se* vel *per accidens*.'

In the divided sense it does not mean that the whole proposition is either *per se* or *per accidens*, but it means that the proposition in which the predicate is said about the same thing for which the subject stands for is such and such, i.e. either *per se* or *per accidens*. In the divided sense of those propositions is expressed by a proposition in which the predicate is said on the subject in that way. (*Expositio super libros Elencorum*, l. I, c. 3, § 6, 38, 119-124, ed. F. Del Punta, transl. mine)³⁸

The divided sense of a modal operator indicates not that the modal operator refers to the whole proposition, but that in a given proposition the predicate is said of a subject according to that modal operator.

To sum up, in the divided sense, the modal operator modifies the way in which the predicate and the subject stand for something. In the compound sense, the modal operator applies to a proposition taken as whole, without saying anything about the predication. Consequently, there are two forms in which propositions with the modal operator *per se* and *per accidens* can be understood, as is the case with other modal operators as well:

- *Compound sense*³⁹

³⁸ 'In sensu divisionis non denotatur quod tota propositio sit per se vel per accidens, sed tantum denotatur quod propositio in qua praedicatur praedicatum de illo pro quo subiectum supponit sit talis, quia sensus divisionis talis propositionis exprimitur per propositionem in qua praedicatur praedicatum de subiecto cum tali modo.'

³⁹ Note that when addressing the difference between the modal proposition 'per accidens' and 'per se' in the *Expositio super libros Elencorum*, Ockham considers only the compound and divided sense, without discussing the distinction between modal propositions *cum dicto* and one *sine dicto* (for this distinction, see, for example, William of Ockham, *Summa logicae*, p. II, § 9, ed. P. Boehner, G. Gál and S. Brown). A *cum dicto* proposition is one where the modal operator is external to the categorical proposition (e.g., 'It is necessary that every man is an animal'); a *sine dicto* proposition is one where the modal operator is internal to the proposition (e.g., 'Every man is necessarily an animal'). A *sine dicto* proposition is always equivalent to a proposition in the divided sense. A *cum dicto* proposition can be taken in either the compound or divided sense, so disambiguation is necessary. A possible reason why Ockham perhaps does not present the *cum dicto/sine*

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Proposition+ *per se* / *per accidens*

For example : ‘*omnem hominem album esse hominem est per se*’⁴⁰

- *Divided sense*

S + *per se* / *per accidens* + P

For example : ‘*omnis homo albus est per se homo*’⁴¹

Considering the compound and divided sense, it is important to also outline the truth conditions, because a proposition with a modal operator can be true in the compound sense and false in the divided sense, or vice versa.

For example, consider a proposition like ‘every animal is bipedal’, and then introduce the modal operator ‘*per accidens*’. In the compound sense, the proposition is false because it is not true that every animal is bipedal *per accidens*. In the divided sense, the proposition can be true if the predicate ‘bipedal’ stands for all and only those animals whose being bipedal is *per accidens*. For instance, if ‘every animal’ and ‘bipedal’ both stand for ‘dogs’, since dogs are *per se* quadrupeds, but they can be bipeds *per accidens* (for example, if they lose two legs), then the proposition is true in the divided sense.

In other words, the truth conditions of the divided sense require an analysis of what the terms stand for, as Ockham clarifies when discussing the semantics of the proposition ‘*omnis homo albus est per se homo*’:

dicto distinction for the modal operators ‘*per accidens*’ and ‘*per se*’ is that the *sine dicto* form is usually expressed using adverbs/adjectives, and, while this is possible for alethic operators (such as ‘necessary’ or ‘necessarily’), no other forms exist for ‘*per accidens*’ and ‘*per se*’.

⁴⁰ See William of Ockham, *Expositio super libros Elencorum*, l. I, c. 3, § 6, 38, 124-125, ed. F. Del Punta.

⁴¹ See William of Ockham, *Expositio super libros Elencorum*, l. I, c. 3, § 6, 38, 125-126, ed. F. Del Punta.

In order to have this proposition true is not required that this proposition is *per se* 'every white man is a man', but it is sufficient that each of these propositions is *per se*: 'this is a man', 'that is a man', showing that all of these stands for the same thing for which the subject stands. (William of Ockham, *Expositio super libros Elencorum*, l. I, c. 3, § 6, 38, 126-129, ed. Del Punta, transl. mine)⁴²

The proposition *per se/per accidens* taken in the divided sense is not considered as a whole, but what is considered is the predication of terms and, therefore, the supposition of the terms implied in it. In Ockham's example, if every individual instance of 'white man', identified case by case with demonstratives such as 'this' or 'that', stands for the same entity as the term 'man' supposes, then the proposition is true *per se*. Thus, while the truth conditions for a modal proposition *per se* or *per accidens* in the compound sense are based on the *properties of the proposition taken as a whole*, the truth conditions for a modal proposition *per se* or *per accidens* in the divided sense require a verification of *the supposition of the terms involved in the proposition*, ensuring that the subject term and the predicate term stand for the same meaning.

We have thereby defined the meaning, the senses, and the truth-conditions of the modal propositions '*per accidens*' and '*per se*', and, consequently, what, according to Ockham, are being *per accidens* and being *per se*.

4. Conclusions

The debate between nominalism and realism often arises from issues in commenting on a text⁴³. The case of being *per accidens* and being *per se* is no exception. Starting from the ambiguity of *Metaphysics* V 7 1017a 7-30, the field of dispute is defined between two different positions: one

⁴² 'Ad veritatem istius non requiritur quod haec sit *per se* "omnis homo albus est homo", sed sufficit quod quaelibet talis sit *per se* "iste est homo" et "ille est homo", demonstrando omnes illos pro quibus supponit subiectum.'

⁴³ Add Footnote: For this point, see De Libera (1996), 35-38.

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asserting that being *per accidens* and being *per se* are real beings, and the other claiming that they define modes of predication instantiated in propositions. In this paper, I have analysed this latter interpretation, which I have defined ‘nominalist’, as proposed by William of Ockham, as well as the arguments he provided against the former interpretation, which I have defined as ‘realist’.

Nominalism is described, first and foremost, by the claim that items which some (realists) believe to be real beings are instead mental or linguistic entities, such as concepts, terms or propositions. A nominalist position is thus typically defined by *parsimony* in admitting real beings. Having a parsimonious ontology concerning real beings, however, is not the result of a mere application of the ‘Ockham’s razor’. As already observed⁴⁴, *both nominalists and realists* are of course reluctant to admit unnecessary real beings. The question is, more properly, the following: which real beings are necessary? In answering this question, Ockham often demonstrates that a certain phenomenon, which realists explain by introducing a real being that they deem necessary for the explanation of that phenomenon, can be perfectly explained without admitting such a being.

Therefore, those who (1) reduce the number of real beings showing that they are not necessary to account for the phenomena and (2) claim that these items are actually mental/linguistic entities are usually labelled as nominalists.

Nevertheless, (1) and (2) are not fully sufficient to define when a certain account is nominalist or not. It is also true that Ockham’s stance on being *per se* and being *per accidens* is nominalist because he does not regard being *per se* and being *per accidens* as real beings but as modal propositions, following (2). Ockham’s account, however, is not nominalist because being *per se* and being *per accidens* as real beings are *unnecessary*: it is not a matter of parsimony in admitting real beings or

⁴⁴ See Maurer (1978: 429) and Spade (1999: 102)

not. Rather, in explaining the distinction between being *per accidens* and *per se* in *Metaphysics* V 7, Ockham aims to show that positing a real being such as being *per accidens* is in contradiction with the fundamental distinction of the Aristotelian ontology: ‘everything is either substance or accident’. Moreover, the realist account also entails the absurd conclusion that a being *per se* (e.g., Socrates) can also be a being *per accidens* (an accidental aggregate)⁴⁵.

Being *per se* and being *per accidens* as real beings are not unnecessary, but *inadmissible* within Aristotelian ontology. Therefore, the distinction between being *per accidens* and *per se* must not be a distinction between real beings but between propositions: *per se* and *per accidens* define modes of predication, and instances of being *per se* and being *per accidens* are modal propositions.

In other words, to use Scotus’s distinction between different senses of ‘*per accidens*’, namely ‘*per accidens*’ in the metaphysical sense (e.g., ‘a white man’) and ‘*per accidens*’ in the logical sense (e.g., ‘a man is white’), Ockham accepts only the latter sense as valid for commenting on *Metaphysics* V 7 and demonstrates that a metaphysical sense of ‘*per accidens*’, and by extension of ‘*per se*’, cannot be admitted.

As we have seen, Ockham offers two arguments to reject the realist account. The first argument, based on the exhaustiveness of the substance/accident distinction, shows that since a being *per accidens* can be neither a substance nor an accident, it must therefore be nothing. This argument relies on a strict limitation of Aristotelian ontology and appears to beg the question. For what a realist in fact maintains is that

⁴⁵ This strategy of argumentation belongs to what Spade (1999: 102-103) calls a ‘second line of attack’ of Ockham’s rejection of realism: ‘Ockham has two main lines of attack against other people’s ontologies. One proceeds by arguing that the reasons others give for postulating certain entities are not good reasons, that everything that can be done with such entities can be done without them [...] The second main line of attack is different. It argues that certain other people’s ontological theories not only postulate unnecessary entities but lead to plain falsehood – either to self-contradiction or, at least, to claims that contradict established facts.’

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Aristotelian ontology allows for more than merely substances and accidents. One cannot simply assert that there are only substances and accidents, as Ockham does, otherwise one commits a question-begging argument.

The second argument focuses on the distinction between being *per accidens* and being *per se* and takes the form of a *reductio ad absurdum* based on the following inference: “The white Socrates is an accidental aggregate; therefore, Socrates is an accidental aggregate.” The absurdity lies in the consequent, namely that Socrates is an accidental aggregate. Indeed, Socrates is a *per se* being, a simple being. However, Ockham shows that this absurdity follows from the realist assumption that ‘white Socrates’ is a *per accidens* aggregate, as the realists maintain.

This argument is structured around the analysis of the kind of distinction applied to a term in an inference, that is, from one proposition to another in which at least one term has an additional determination not present in the antecedent. For Ockham, ‘white’ is a determination that produces no fallacy when added to the term Socrates. Nevertheless, the realist would reject the validity of this inference, because for the realist the determination ‘white’ somehow changes the subject, introducing a shift from a simple being or being *per se* (Socrates) to an aggregate *per accidens* (white Socrates). To assume that ‘white’, if removed from ‘white Socrates’, is not a determination that takes something away from Socrates, as Ockham does, is based on the idea that Socrates is not different from ‘white Socrates’. But this is precisely what Ockham must prove against the realist account. This argument, therefore, is also a form of question-begging argument.

Ockham claims that terms such as ‘white man’ do not denote any real being (they have no personal supposition), but only concepts or words (having only simple or material supposition). With regard to *Metaphysics* V 7, Ockham states that Aristotle is not speaking of beings, but of propositions *per se* and *per accidens*, that is, of modal propositions, which

have different senses (divided and composite) and different truth conditions.

In conclusion, both Ockham and a realist like Scotus accept that there are beings belonging to one of the Aristotelian categories and one could also call them 'beings *per se*'. The main question is the status of being *per accidens*. While Scotus maintains that there are also beings *per accidens*, i.e., things composed of beings *per se* (for example, a white man as a third thing composed of two *per se* beings, 'whiteness' and 'man'), Ockham holds that there are no such beings *per accidens*. According to Ockham, there are at most only combinations of beings *per se* with no unity whatsoever, without introducing any third being beyond the parts involved (for example, a white man consists of two *per se* beings and not one being *per accidens*). Therefore, according to Ockham, when Aristotle speaks of being *per accidens* (and being *per se*), he is, rather, referring to propositions.

Note, however, that being *per accidens* and *per se* are not removed from the Aristotelian ontology by Ockham's arguments. Being *per accidens* and being *per se*, understood as propositions, have a certain ontological status: they are items (in particular, propositions), *but not real beings*. *Per accidens* and *per se* describe modes of predication instantiated in modal propositions, for which Ockham defines also the truth conditions, distinguishing between the compound and divided sense. Real beings described as *per accidens* or *per se* cannot be admitted; however, propositions *per se* or *per accidens* are certainly admissible and provide, without positing unacceptable real beings, an interpretation of *Metaphysics* V 7.

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John Buridan on the *ens per se*
**(In *Metaph.* V 7: MS Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek,
516)***

Abstract: This contribution will focus on an unpublished and barely known text by John Buridan, namely one of the two *Metaphysics* commentaries preserved in MS Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, 516. I have chosen to focus on this text because it provides more material than Buridan's other commentaries on *Metaphysics* concerning the notion of being *per se*, that is one of the four senses of being described by Aristotle in chapter 7 of *Metaphysics* V (Δ). I will proceed as follows. First, I will shortly present the different *Metaphysics* commentaries attributed to Buridan. Next, I will study the notion of being *per se*, as it emerges in the first Darmstadt version. Finally, I will compare the positions of this text with those of a commentary on the *Metaphysics*, the *lectura erfordiensis*, also by Buridan. A selection of unedited texts will be published as an appendix.

Keywords: John Buridan, Nominalism, *Metaphysics* commentaries, Ontology, *Per se/per accidens* distinction, Being

1. Introduction

It is well known that several commentaries of John Buridan's on the *Metaphysics* have come down to us.¹ The relationships between these

* The results of this research were made possible by funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF). Project: *Senses of Being. The Medieval Reception of Aristotle's doctrine starting from Metaphysics V 7 (1017 a7-b9)*; Grant ID: 20074. I would like to thank the participants in the workshop held in Luzern on June 10 and 11, 2024, in particular Ana Maria Mora Marquez, for her helpful remarks. I would also like to thank Davide Falessi, who reviewed the final version of my contribution and provided valuable advice.

¹ For an introduction to the metaphysics of John Buridan, see Kok (2014).

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different texts have not yet been clarified: this will require a long and meticulous study.

The literary form, as well as the number of questions and the number of commented sections vary from one version to another. Consequently, not all versions offer materials on chapter 7 of Book V. The so-called *ultima lectura*, that is the version who has been printed in the 16th c.,² skips the chapter on the senses of being. Yet, the chapter is commented in the other extant commentaries, that is in the *reportatio* of MS Paris, BnF lat. 16131, in the two commentaries of the Darmstadt MS, Darmstadt, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, 516,³ and in the *lectura erfordiensis*.⁴

First, let's take into account the Paris and Darmstadt versions.⁵ As noted by Christoph Flüeler, MS Paris, BnF lat. 1613,1 is the original *reportatio*, i.e. the notebook used to record the contents of one of Buridan's series of lectures on *Metaphysics*. It contains a collection of *quaestiones* on Books I-IX (fol. 2-122) and the *expositio litterae* of Books I-XII (fol. 124-214); these two stages originally formed a single unit, but the questions and the literal explanation were recorded in distinct sets of notebooks, so that they are now separated.⁶ This text is undeniably an invaluable witness, but also poses considerable reading problems, due to the fact that the *reportator*, as it is easy to imagine, was constrained to write very quickly. One finds here no questions on V 7, but the *expositio litterae* is extant (fol. 157vb-158rb). The Darmstadt manuscript preserves

² Preserved in five MSS: Carpentras, Bibl. Inguimbertaine 292; Paris, BnF lat. 14716; Salamanca, Univ. 1882; Venezia, Marc. VI 204a; Wien, Dominikanerbibl. 187/153. This version is the source of the 1518 edition by Badius Ascensius.

³ See Flüeler (1997) and Flüeler (1999).

⁴ The *lectura erfordiensis* has been recently edited by L. M. de Rijk: Johannes Buridanus (2008).

⁵ I'm currently writing a study on the textual problems posed by the Paris and Darmstadt versions. Here, I'll confine myself to the essentials.

⁶ See above, note 3.

two distinct commentaries on the *Metaphysics* of John Buridan. Each of these commentaries includes a literal explanation (*sententia*) and questions, and, as in the Paris manuscript, the literal explanations are separated from the questions. Here's how the contents are structured⁷:

- *Sententia lib. Metaph.*, Books I-VIII, incomplete, *expl. ex abrupto* (fol. 1ra-32vb);
- *Questiones sup. lib. Metaph.*, Books I-X, XII, incomplete (fol. 33ra-102[104]rb);
- *Sententia lib. Metaph.*, Books I-VII, incomplete, *expl. ex abrupto* (fol. 105[108]ra-128[131]va);
- *Questiones sup. lib. Metaph.*, Books I-VI, incomplete, *expl. ex abrupto* (fol. 133[136]ra-167[170]rb).

The first commentary consists of 1) and 2), the second of 3) and 4).

The *incipits* and *explicit*s that can be found in various places in the manuscript inform us that the first commentary was written under Buridan's own supervision⁸; the second commentary appears to be a *reportatio*, and as Christoph Flüeler rightly points out⁹, it could be, as in the case of the Paris manuscript, the notebooks originally used to collect the lessons' notes. It should also be noted that, given the differences

⁷ There is a discrepancy between the modern folio numbering (top right of the *recto*) and the old numbering (top left of the *verso*); that is why, starting on fol. 56, I will indicate both (the second in square brackets). It should also be noted that some folios have been left blank (43[44]r-45[44]v; 53[53]r-64[66v]; 102[104]v-104[107]v; 125[128]v; 127[130]ra, partially; 128[131]vb-132[135]v; 163[166]v, partially; 167[170]v). According to the notes in the manuscript, they were intended to contain missing sections of the commentaries.

⁸ For example: fol. 1r, upper margin (beginning of the *compilatio*, literal commentary): 'Sententia magistri Iohannis Buridani supra librum methaficice [sic] compile ante ipsum'; fol. 33r, upper margin (beginning of the *compilatio*, questions): 'Questiones libri methaficice compile ante magistrum Iohannem Buridan'.

⁹ Flüeler (1997: 91).

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between them, the Paris and Darmstadt *reportationes* depend on two distinct cycles of lessons on *Metaphysics*.

Last, we have the *lectura erfordiensis*, entirely made up of questions. Here, question 22a is about the senses of being.

To summarize what all the surviving commentaries on the *Metaphysics* of Buridan can offer about Book V, chapter 7:

Version:	<i>Expositio litterae</i> of V 7:	Questions on V 7:
Paris, BnF lat. 16131	fol. 157vb-158rb	—
Darmstadt (<i>compilatio</i>)	fol. 12ra-rb	qu. V 5, fol. 69[71]va-vb
Darmstadt (<i>reportatio</i>)	fol. 118[121]vb-119[122]ra	qu. V 6, fol. 161[164]rb-vb
ultima lectura	(no <i>exp. litt.</i> in this version) ¹⁰	—
lectura erfordiensis	(no <i>exp. litt.</i> in this version)	qu. 22a

An additional element is worth noting: the three questions preserved by the two Darmstadt versions and by the *lectura erfordiensis* concern the same subject, i.e. the validity of the division of being into being *per se* and being *per accidens*. This indicates that, of all the problems raised by the Aristotelian division of the senses of being, this is the one Buridan considered most important¹¹.

¹⁰ After having finished this article, I discovered in one of the witnesses of the *ultima lectura*, that is in MS Carpentras Inguimbertaine 292, an (unknown?) *expositio litterae*. It is located before the questions that constitute the *ultima lectura*, and its relationship to them is not yet clear. The explanation of V 7, which is fairly succinct, can be found on fol. 10rb-va. Its study cannot be included in this survey.

¹¹ Unfortunately, based on our current knowledge, it is impossible to establish the relative chronology of these versions, which will be the task of a detailed study.

I'll leave aside the Paris and Darmstadt *reportationes*, and concentrate on the Darmstadt *compilatio*, which is certainly more accomplished than the other versions.

2. Six possible understandings of the *ens per se*

In the *expositio litterae* of the *compilatio*, Buridan focuses above all on the *ens per se*.

In *Metaphysics* V 7, Aristotle declares that 'all things which signify the figures of predication are said to be in their own right [καθ' αὐτὰ]¹²'. As we shall see, the interpretation of this statement is problematic in relation to the *Posterior Analytics*, where Aristotle seems to use 'being *per se*' in a rather different sense. In the *expositio litterae* of the *compilatio*, Buridan gives six possible understandings of the *ens per se* as being signifying the ten categories. As far as I know, he is the only Latin commentator to devote so much attention to this sense of being¹³.

To begin with, I will explain what these possible understandings are.

(a) First, Aristotle's statement concerns true propositions, and means that any proposition that attributes being to one of the categories is true *per se*. So, propositions as 'substance is being', 'being qualified is being' etc. are true propositions *per se*. Buridan adds: 'tamen non sequitur quod ista sit uera: 'esse quale est ens' etc.'¹⁴; according to my comprehension of the text, we need to understand that it is false to state 'being qualified is being *per se*' (hence I think that the *etc.* replaces *per se*).

¹² *Metaph.* V 7, 1017a22-23. English translation in Aristotle (1993²: 40). Greek text edited in Aristotle (1924): καθ' αὐτὰ δὲ εἶναι λέγεται ὅσα περ σημαίνει τὰ σχήματα τῆς κατηγορίας. In the Latin translation commented by Buridan, that is the *Moerbekana*, edited in Aristoteles Latinus (1995: 103): 'Secundum se uero esse dicuntur quaecumque significant figuras predicationis'.

¹³ The *lectura erfordiensis* is less rich in this respect: see § 4. below.

¹⁴ Latin text below, 194.

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Indeed, a quality (as being white or tall) is not a being *per se*, if we intend being *per se* as something endowed with autonomous existence. Thus, the propositions that assert that the categories are beings are true *per se*; those that assert that categories are beings *per se* are not necessarily true: indeed, the proposition ‘Socrates is a being *per se*’ is true, because it attributes being *per se* to a substance; on the contrary, ‘to be white is a being *per se*’ is obviously false.

(b) The second understanding, on the other hand, considers the possibility of attributing being *secundum se* to each category. This does not mean that the categories other than substance have an independent existence; it means that the substance, of which the categories are predicated, is *secundum se*. Then a proposition as ‘being qualified is being *secundum se*’ can only be understood as ‘the substance, which is qualified, is being *secundum se*’; or ‘the quality, being in a substance, is in a being *secundum se*’. Buridan concludes: ‘since in this way, all the categories are taken [to mean] the substance’¹⁵.

(c) The third understanding is based on the following passage of Aristotle’s *Categories*:

Of things that are said, some involve combination while others are said without combination. Examples of those involving combination are ‘man runs’, ‘man wins’; and of those without combination ‘man’, ‘ox’, ‘runs’, ‘wins.’¹⁶

Buridan concludes that the identification of being *per se* with being said according to categories means that each category can be considered

¹⁵ Latin text below, 194.

¹⁶ *Cat.*, 2, 1a16–19. English translation in Aristotle (1963: 3). In the translation by Boethius, quoted by Buridan, edited in *Aristoteles Latinus* (1961: 5): ‘Eorum quae dicuntur alia quidem secundum complexionem dicuntur, alia vero sine complexione. Et ea quae secundum complexionem dicuntur sunt ut homo currit, homo vincit; ea vero quae sine complexione, ut homo bos, currit, vincit.’

separately (*solitarie*, rendering Aristotle's *sine complexione*) from the whole constituted by the substance and the accidents, the subject and the attributes. In this case, as in the two previous cases, being *per se* does not seem to refer to anything real, but only to categories, each considered in itself (quantity in itself, relation in itself, etc.). Here we can underline Buridan's exegetical prudence, as he writes: 'to state that the ten categories are [here in V 7] understood without combination would be in line [sonaret] to what is said in the Categories';¹⁷ and avoids using terms such as *concordat* or *consonat*.

(d) So far, Buridan has set out possible understandings of being *per se*, without taking a position for one in particular; he probably considered them all coherent. But he refutes the fourth understanding, which seems very close to the third but departs from it by asserting that each category signifies formally (*formaliter*) something (namely a *res*) that it is not the task of the other categories to signify formally. This is false, Buridan states, because 'the ten categories can supposit for the same thing' ('decem predicamenta possunt supponere pro eadem re'): so, 'man', 'runs' and 'wearing shoes' formally stand for Socrates, who is running and is wearing shoes. Buridan seems thus to suggest that one cannot think of a category that refers from a formal point of view to anything other than a substance endowed with attributes, even if we can conceptually isolate the attributes.¹⁸

(e) The fifth understanding is related to Averroes reading of *Metaphysics* X: 'On the other hand, that the one in some sense signifies the same as being, is clear in virtue of the fact that it follows the categories in the same number of ways and that it is in none of them'.¹⁹

¹⁷ See below, 195.

¹⁸ Buridan seems to be implicitly referring to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII (Z) 2, 1028a32-25.

¹⁹ *Metaph.*, X 2, 1054a13-15. English translation in Aristotle (2018: 6). Greek text edited in Aristotle (1924): ὅτι δὲ τὰ αὐτὰ σημαίνει πως τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ὄν, δῆλον τῷ τε παρακολουθεῖν ἰσαχῶς ταῖς κατηγορίαις καὶ μὴ εἶναι ἐν μηδεμίᾳ.

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Averroes comments: ‘the essences and quiddities of the categories are different,’²⁰ and they do not share anything common, as if one or being were as a genus [to them], indeed if it were so, then this term “one” wouldn’t signify what it signifies in the category of substance or of quality or of quantity by its primary meaning and immediately, but it would signify the same way as the term “genus” signify the species by means of something common,’²¹ that is something common to the individuals composing the species, i.e. the specific difference. Buridan finds here a possible explanation of the Aristotelian assertion that being *secundum se* corresponds to being divided into categories: ‘being divided *secundum se* in the categories’ means ‘being divided immediately in the categories’; in fact, the passage from being to the ten categories is not achieved by adding a third element to being,²² unlike the passage from genus to species, which is achieved by means of specific difference.

(f) According to the sixth and last understanding, true propositions *per se* can be given in each category; this is the case when superior attributes are predicated of inferior attributes: this can be exemplified by propositions such as ‘paternity is a relation’ or ‘human beings are substances’, i.e. cases in which (superior) genera are predicated of (inferior) species. Buridan will develop this understanding in the question devoted to the distinction between being *per se* and being *per accidens*.²³

²⁰ That is to say, irreducible one to each other.

²¹ Averroes, *In Metaph.* X 8 (ed. Venetiis 1562, fol. 257vG-H): ‘Deinde dixit: ‘Et quia essentiae eorum etc., id est et quia essentiae et quidditates praedicamentorum sunt diuersae, et non est in eis aliquid commune, ita quod unum et ens sint tanquam genus, quoniam si ita esset, tunc hoc nomen unum non significaret illud quod significat in predicamento substantiae aut qualitatis aut quantitatis prima significatione et sine medio, sed significaret quemadmodum hoc nomen genus significat species mediante aliquo communi’.

²² Buridan specifies: ‘sine differentiis diuresis’: see below, 195.

²³ See § 3. below. The same reading is adopted by Ross in Aristotle (1924: 306-308).

The point that seems to have particularly preoccupied Buridan is the following: how can we admit that the nine categories other than substance are *per se*? This point is explored in greater depth in Buridan's only question devoted to V 7: qu. 5 on Book V, which will be the topic of the next section.

3. On the relevance of the division of being in being *per se* and *per accidens*

The question Buridan devotes to V 7 will spread more light on this problem. The question asks whether the distinction between *ens secundum se* and *ens secundum accidens* is a valid distinction ('*utrum sit bona diuisio entis in ens secundum se et in ens secundum accidens*');²⁴ it treats the same topic as the question in the *lectura erfordiensis*, but the way the problem is dealt with is not the same in both texts.

Like the *expositio litterae*, the question also takes into account several possible readings of the distinction. Of these many exegetical options, the one Buridan discusses in the greatest detail is to read the distinction as a distinction of propositions. Thus, he considers the propositions *tertio adiacens*.²⁵ Since any negative proposition can be reduced to an affirmative proposition (insofar as 'Socrates is not white' is equivalent to 'Socrates is non-white'), Buridan limits himself to affirmative propositions in their simplest form, i.e. 'S is P'. In an affirmative proposition such as 'S is P', the relationship between subject S and predicate P is either necessary or contingent. In the first case, the proposition is true because the terms that make it up, in the order in

²⁴ Latin text below, 196-200.

²⁵ See below, 197. The text of the MS must be corrected here, as it has *secundo adiacens* instead of *tertio adiacens*. The pertinence of the correction is obvious from the rest of the reasoning. It should also be noted that Buridan, in the *expositio litterae*, proposes to reduce *secundo adiacente* propositions to *tertio adiacente* propositions, as 'homo est' is equivalent to 'homo est ens': below, 194.

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which they are found, are linked in a necessary way: this is the case of propositions such as ‘*homo est animal*’: here, the terms stand for the same object (‘*homo*’ and ‘*animal*’ being co-extensive, if ‘*animal*’ is attributed to ‘*homo*’) and they stand necessarily for the same object, hence the proposition is true *per se*. In the second case, the proposition is true because its terms stand for the same object, however, the link between them is not necessary: this is the case of propositions such as ‘*Coriscus est musicus*’: here, the terms stand for the same object (since this individual and this musician are the same being), but they do not stand necessarily for the same object, since it’s possible that Coriscus wasn’t a musician; hence the proposition is true *per accidens*. Buridan concludes that, when Aristotle divides being into being *per se* and being *per accidens*, he means to divide true propositions *per se* and true propositions *per accidens*:

Now, an affirmative proposition is sometimes said to be true *per se*, sometimes *per accidens*. Example of the first case: when the terms, by virtue of their meaning, determine that the proposition is true; but it is true *per accidens* when the terms refer to the same object, but nevertheless do not determine, by virtue of their meaning, that they refer to the same object. And taking being in this sense, Aristotle divides it into *per se* and *per accidens*, and so the distinction only means that, among affirmative propositions in which the predicate is attributed to the subject by means of this verb ‘is’, some are true *per se*, others *per accidens*.²⁶

If we go back to the *expositio litterae* and we compare it with these lines, here Buridan seems to explore the conditions that allow to read the distinction *per se/per accidens* as a distinction of propositions.

As announced above, Buridan insists on the relationship between chapter 7 of Book V and the section devoted to the *per se* in the *Posterior Analytics* (I 73a35-b5). Here in qu. 5, he states, about the fact that being

²⁶ Latin text below, 197.

per accidens refers to affirmative propositions that are accidentally true:

This is evident in Aristotle's examples: indeed, 'man to be an animal' posits being *per se*, 'Coriscus to be musician' posits being *per accidens*, and this [distinction] of propositions is also found in Book I of the *Posterior Analytics*. And since every affirmative true proposition is either true *per se* or *per accidens*, hence this division is good: being is said either *per se*, or *per accidens*. And here in Book V he has explained, of the two members of the division, only the being *per accidens*,²⁷ because the first one [i.e. being *per se*] had been treated in Book I of the *Posterior Analytics*. Then, when he states that being *secundum se* is divided in the ten categories [1017a22-30], he doesn't take being *secundum se* as *secundum se* is divided against the being *per accidens* that he had just explained [1017a8-22], but he takes [*secundum se*] as taken with no combination [*solitarie*], and I take 'being' as the term to which is truly attributed the term 'being' there [in the *Posterior Analytics*].²⁸

In these few lines, there are two points to note. First, Buridan considers that, here in *Metaphysics* V 7, Aristotle discussed extensively only the *ens per accidens*, because he already explained the *ens per se* in the *Posterior Analytics*: whatever one thinks of this explanation, it may be seen as a sign of the trouble caused by the brevity of the lines devoted to being *per se*. Second point, and more meaningful: Buridan suggests that the first two senses of the being of V 7 represent a somehow 'asymmetrical' division; in fact, being *per accidens* refers here to propositions, whereas being *per se* does not; on the contrary, he sees a more coherent opposition between, on the one hand, being *per accidens* of *Metaphysics* V 7 and being *per se* of the *Posterior Analytics*, and, on the other hand,

²⁷ The section on being *per se* is, in fact, extremely short in *Metaphysics* V 7 (1017a22-30), while that on being *per accidens* is slightly more detailed (1017a8-22).

²⁸ Latin text below, 197-198.

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between being *per se* of *Metaphysics* V 7 and being *secundum complexionem* of the *Categories*:

1) <i>Ens per accidens</i> (<i>Metaph.</i> V 7)	<i>Ens per se</i> (<i>Anal. post.</i> I 4)
2) <i>Ens per se</i> (<i>Metaph.</i> V 7) = <i>incomplexum</i> (<i>Cat.</i> 2)	<i>Secundum complexionem</i> (<i>Cat.</i> 2)

Let's recall that, of the different understandings of being *per se* that Buridan distinguished in the *expositio litterae*, the third, (c), identified being *per se* with the *incomplexum* of the *Categories*. So, in the first case, the opposition is between substance, which exists in itself, and accidents, which exist in something else, i.e. in substance; while in the second case, the opposition is between isolated terms, which necessarily refer to one of the ten categories, and terms that have been joined to other terms, to form a proposition.

In the last part of the solution, Buridan suggests other possible interpretations of the *ens per se/per accidens* distinction. First: *sine connotatione* (as opposed to *cum connotatione*). This is a division – a suitable division, states Buridan – of terms. So, Buridan is thinking here to the distinction of terms such as ‘homo’ and ‘pater’: ‘homo’ means the species without any further connotation, the term is limited to signifying the category of the substance; ‘pater’ means the species with a supplementary connotation, since it doesn't only mean the species ‘homo’ but it means the species with the addition of another category, in our case, the relation:

[Being] absolutely signifies that which it denotes without connotation, and then is said to be *per accidens* that which does not signify absolutely that which it denotes, but it connotes the being in question by a foreign disposition, since among the terms to which ‘being’ is attributed, some are not connotative, like those in the category of substance, others are connotative, and these terms are or are said to

be *per accidens*, and dividing being in this way is equivalent to dividing substantial and accidental terms, and, as it concerns terms, it is a good division.²⁹

This is a distinction of terms based on the fact that the terms mean either the category of substance or the other nine categories. Note that according to this division, a term like *currit* (term considered *sine complexione* of Cat. 2) could not be considered as a term *per se*, since it adds the supplementary category of action; while above, Buridan considered the possibility of taking terms *sine complexione* of the *Categories* as cases of being *per se*. This does not indicate any contradiction in Buridan's thinking; on the contrary, it shows that he understood the extent to which the text of *Metaphysics* V 7 was open to a variety of readings.

Moreover: the distinction can be intended as a distinction between necessary and contingent. This is not only a division of propositions and terms, but a distinction of real beings or facts. So, in the case of 'homo est animal' the link between the subject and the predicate is necessary, so that the proposition is necessary and the corresponding reality has the same necessity; but in the case of 'Sortes currit', the link is contingent, and the fact signified by the proposition is contingent:

In another way, being *per se* expresses what is necessarily, so that non-being is naturally incompatible with it, and being *per accidens* expresses what is contingent. This diction of being could suffice not only as a division of terms, but also insofar as it says or signifies everything else, since this division would only be that of necessary being and contingent being.³⁰

²⁹ Latin text below, 198-199.

³⁰ Latin text below, 199.

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Furthermore, the distinction *per se/per accidens* is a distinction concerning causality. The source of this position is to be found, again, in the *Posterior Analytics*. Aristotle states:

Again, in another way what holds of something because of itself holds of it in itself, and what does not hold because of itself is incidental. E.g. if there was lightning while he was walking, that was incidental: it was not because of his walking that there was lightning—that, we say, was incidental. But what holds because of itself holds in itself—e.g. if something died while being sacrificed, it died *in* the sacrifice since it died because of being sacrificed, and it was not incidental that it died while being sacrificed.³¹

Here, we can talk about two events being linked *per se* or *per accidens*. However, Buridan enriches the text with metaphysical considerations on causality. The fact that someone is walking and lightning are coincident *per accidens*, though each of these events has his own set of causes *per se* (being in shape for the former, meteorological conditions for the latter). So every possible being, or every possible event, is the result of *per se* causes, with exceptions he wishes to point out here: absolutely ultimate causes have no *per se* causes other than themselves, in this respect, these beings are beings *per se*. Then if we take the chain of efficient and final causes, then we see that from this point of view only God is *per se*, in that he is not dependent on any efficient or final cause. If, on the other hand, we take the totality of material beings, then we see

³¹ *An. post.*, I 4, 73b11-16. English Translation in Aristotle (1984: 118-119). Text of the Latin translation by James of Venice, revised by William of Moerbeke, edited in Aristoteles Latinus (1968: 289-290): 'Item alio modo quod quidem propter ipsum inest unicuique *per se*, quod autem non propter ipsum *accidens*, ut si ambulante coruscavit, *accidens* est; non enim propter id quod ambulat coruscavit, sed quod accidit dicimus hoc. Si vero propter ipsum, *per se*, ut si aliquid interfectum interiit, et secundum interfectionem, quoniam propterea quod interfectum est, sed non quod accidat interfectum interire'.

that prime matter is *per se*, since it has no material cause; on this respect, separate intelligences, insofar as they are immaterial, are also *per se*.

If [being] depends on another cause, it is not said *per se*. And this would be said not only of being but of every other attribute. And so if something is said to be without an efficient or final cause, then only God is said to be *per se* since all other entities fall, through God, within the genus of such causes; if something is said to be *per se* because of the absence of material cause, then prime matter and intelligences are said to be *per se*, and so material form is not *per se*; if something is said to be because of the absence of formal cause, then final causes, which do not themselves depend on other formal causes, are said to be *per se*.³²

Note again that this argument implies that a being that is not *per se* from the standpoint of efficient cause, such as an angel, can be considered *per se* from the standpoint of material cause.

4. The *lectura erfordiensis*

As we said, the *lectura erfordiensis* also devotes a question to the division of being into *per se* and *per accidens*. It deals with the same subject as the one we have just examined: ‘*utrum ens bene dividitur in ens secundum se et in ens secundum accidens*’.³³ This text is slightly less extensive than the Darmstadt *compilatio*; however, the method of the *lectura erfordiensis* is similar to that of the Darmstadt *compilatio* in that it is an enumeration of different meanings of being *per se*. Buridan comes to the same conclusion here: the distinction between being *per se* and being *per accidens* is an adequate division.

Here are the different senses of being *secundum se* that Buridan retains here. (i) The copula: in this case, the Aristotelian distinction is a

³² Latin text below, 199.

³³ Johannes Buridanus (2008: 139).

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distinction of propositions.³⁴ (ii) The terms taken *solitarie*, or *sine complexione* of the *Categories*.³⁵ (iii) The absolute term ‘without connotation’, which corresponds to the category of substance.³⁶ (iv) The substance: in this case, Aristotle would be dividing substances and accidents.³⁷ (v) Being that does not depend on a cause per se.³⁸ (vi) Being as true: this last meaning seems reducible to the first, because it corresponds to the distinction between propositions that are true per se or true *per accidens*.³⁹

As we can see, the *lectura erfordiensis* contains no remarkable innovations compared to the Darmstadt version. As in the latter, Buridan devotes more attention to the relationship between being per se and propositions, which is not surprising from a nominalist.

Conclusions

There’s one thing that strikes the reader about the material I’ve presented. Buridan seems to have wanted to list as many interpretations of *Metaphysics* V 7’s distinctions as possible. This confirms something we have already observed in our research group devoted to Medieval interpretations of this Aristotelian chapter: the account of *Metaphysics* V 7 has somehow puzzled readers, who have more or less explicitly pointed out a gap between this text and other sections of the Aristotelian corpus, first and foremost the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Categories*.

One element seems clear to me: Buridan likely pursues the nominalist line of reading, in that he favors the possibility that the

³⁴ Johannes Buridanus (2008: 141).

³⁵ Johannes Buridanus (2008: 141).

³⁶ Johannes Buridanus (2008: 141-142).

³⁷ Johannes Buridanus (2008: 142).

³⁸ Johannes Buridanus (2008: 142).

³⁹ Johannes Buridanus (2008: 142).

division between *ens per se* and *ens per accidens* is above all a division of terms or propositions.

Editions

Below are two excerpts from the Darmstadt *compilatio*, i.e. the *expositio litterae* of V 7 (fol. 12ra-rb) and qu. V 5 (fol. 69[71]va-vb). The manuscript is of good quality, with only a few minor errors requiring correction.

The hooked brackets <...> include the words I have integrated into the text. I have used the following abbreviations in the critical apparatus: *coni.*: *conieci*; *corr.*: *correctio* etc.; *del.*: *deleuit*; *iter.*: *iterauit*; *sup. u.*: *supra uersum*; *uid.*: *uidetur*.

<Expositio littere>⁴⁰

Ens dicitur hoc quidem... Hic est 2^m capitulum istius tractatus de isto termino 'ens' et diuiditur in quatuor secundum quod ponit quatuor acceptiones entis. Secunda ibi: *Secundum se uero ...* Tertia: *Amplius esse...* Quarta ibi: *Amplius...*

Primo dicit quod ens dicitur esse per se et per accidens et diuidit ens per accidens quia esse secundum accidens dicitur uel quia predicatum accidit subiecto uel subiectum predicato uel ambo possunt accidere tertio, ut ista est per accidens primo⁴¹ modo: 'homo est musicus'; etiam 'musicum est homo'⁴² per accidens, quia subiectum accidit predicato; etiam 'musicum est album' per accidens, quia ambo accidunt tertio, scilicet homini, quia accidit homini quod sit albus et accidit sibi quod sit musicus. Et sciendum quod iste modus distinguendi nec plus nec minus est sicut erat de uno. Et ratio huius est quia, ut credo, ibi distinguitur ens

⁴⁰ *Da*, fol. 12ra-rb.

⁴¹ primo] *ut praem. et del.*

⁴² homo] *sup. u.*

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secundum quod accipitur ab hoc uerbo 'est' tertio adiacente. Vnde Commentator in X huius: hoc nomen 'ens' omnibus modis suis deriuatur ab hoc uerbo 'est'. Vnde potest capi secundum adiacens et sic sumitur simpliciter; aliquando sumitur tertium adiacens et sic est cum additione; unde si dicam 'homo est' potest resolui in istam: 'homo est ens'; et si dicatur 'homo est albus' potest resolui in hanc 'homo est ens albus'. Et sic apparet quod Aristoteles distinguit hic hoc nomen 'ens' ut est tertium adiacens. Vnde quando dicit 'per accidens', sensus est quod propositio in qua predicatur hoc uerbum 'est' tertium adiacens potest esse per accidens uel per se, per accidens, ut 'homo est albus', per se, quando superius predicatur de inferiori uel quando passio predicatur de subiecto. Vnde rationale est quod sic distinguitur ens per accidens sicut unum per accidens. Vnde hoc uerbum 'est' tertium adiacens affirmatiue sumptum designat ydemptitatem eorum pro quibus supponit, sicut quando dicitur 'homo est animal', idem est dicere sicut quod 'homo' et 'animal' sunt unum uel quod homo est idem animali.

Secundum se uero ... Hic ponit secundum modum accipiendi 'ens' et 'est' ut⁴³ dicitur de decem predicamentis, et dicit quod ens secundum se diuiditur uel distinguitur in decem predicamenta et potest istud intelligi multis modis. <a> Vno modo quia omnis propositio est per se uera in qua hoc nomen 'ens' dicitur de aliquo decem predicamentorum: ista enim est per se uera: 'substantia est ens', 'quale est ens' etc.; tamen non sequitur quod ista sit uera: 'esse quale est ens' etc.

 Secundo modo exponitur quod hoc nomen 'ens' de quolibet decem predicamentorum potest uerificari cum hac modificatione 'secundum se': ut 'substantia est secundum se ens', et 'quale secundum se est ens' etc., quia sic omnia ista predicamenta sumuntur pro substantia.

<c> Tertio modo potest exponi quod ista predicamenta dicuntur secundum se esse, id est solitarie⁴⁴, accipiendo illam solitudinem pro

⁴³ ut] *dub.*, *ex corr.* ?

⁴⁴ solitarie] *re, dub., praem. et del.*

incomplexione, et sic est dicere quod ista decem predicamenta sunt incomplexa, et sonaret illi quod habetur in Predicamentis, scilicet quia ‘eorum que sunt quedam sine⁴⁵ complexione dicuntur, quedam cum complexione dicuntur’, et diuidit ea que sine complexione dicuntur in decem predicamentis.

<d> Alio modo quidam exposuerunt istam partem quod predicamenta dicuntur entia secundum se quia quodlibet predicamentum significat formaliter aliquod aliud ens ab illo quod significat aliud predicamentum, et intelligebant quod predicamenta significant diuersas res et unum significat aliam rem quam non significat aliud. — Set ista opinio est falsa, quamuis multi illam credebant esse ueram, immo decem predicamenta possunt supponere pro eadem re.

<e> Alio modo exponitur quod ens secundum se diuiditur in decem predicamentis, id est quod ens secundum se immediate sine differentiis diuersis diuiditur in decem predicamenta, et istam tenet Commentator X huius, commento VIII.

<f> Vltimo modo potest exponi quod in quolibet predicamento inueniuntur propositiones uere per se, scilicet ubi superiora predicantur de suis inferioribus. Igitur etc.

Nichil enim ... Hic aliquis cauillaret quod aliqua sunt predicamenta de quibus non dicitur hoc nomen ‘ens’, ut ‘homo secat’ etc. Respondet Aristoteles ad hoc quod non refert dicere ‘homo secat’ et ‘homo est secans’ etc.

Amplius esse et est ... Hic est tertius modus distinguendi ens et dicit Aristoteles quod tertio modo ‘esse’ uel ‘ens’ accipitur ut significat uerum et non-ens uel ^[12rb] non-esse significat idem quod falsum. Vnde greci propositionem ueram dicebant esse, propositionem falsam non esse, et sic ille modus erat magis usitatus apud grecos quam apud nos. Vnde quando queritur: ‘homo est animal?’, respondetur quod sic; si sit falsa,

⁴⁵ sine] sunt *praem. et del.*

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dices quod non est ita. Et sic esse ita et esse non ita de propositione dicuntur.

*Amplius esse significat ... Hic ponit*⁴⁶ *quartum modum ens distinguendi et est quod aliquid dicitur ens in actu, aliquid in potentia ens. In actu est de quo uerificatur hoc uerbum 'est' et ens in potentia de quo uerificatur hoc uerbum 'potest esse' et ita est de uerbo tertio adiacente. Igitur etc.*

<Questio V 5>⁴⁷

Quinto queritur utrum sit bona diuisio entis in ens secundum se et in ens secundum accidens. Arguitur primo quod non.

<1> Quia membra diuisionis non euacuant totum diuisum, quia Aristoteles ponit alia membra preter ista. Igitur etc.

<2> Secundo uidetur quod nullum sit ens per accidens, et sic diuisio non erit bona, quia omne de quo dicitur ens est inferius sibi uel essentielle; si sit inferius, tunc per se dicitur ens, non per accidens, quia predicatio superius de inferiori est per se; si essentielle, tunc est predicatio conuertibilis de conuertibili et sic est per se.

<3> Etiam ens dicitur de quolibet per suam essentiam et sic omne ens est per se.

<4> Et confirmatur quia si esset aliquod per accidens, hoc esset sicut musicus iustus; set nullum istorum est ens per accidens quia illud non est aliud quam Coriscus uel musicus; igitur etc. Etiam, si esset tale, tunc illud esset agregatum ex diuersis entibus uel predicatis, quod est falsum, quia mundus est agregatus ex multis entis et tamen non est ens per accidens quia de ente per accidens non est scientia, set de mundo est scientia.

⁴⁶ ponit] po^m praem. et del.

⁴⁷ Da, fol. 69[71]va-vb.

<5> Iterum, uel tu dicis aliquod ens esse per accidens quia est contingenter uel quia habet esse ab alio et per aliud; nullo modo potest dici; igitur nullum est tale. Maior patet sufficienti diuisione. Minor probatur: non primo modo quia tunc omnis homo esset ens per accidens quia quemlibet istorum contingit non esse, quod est falsum quia Aristoteles diuidit ens secundum se in decem predicamenta, modo Sortes, Plato pertinent ad predicamentum substantie; nec potest dici secundo modo quia tunc omnia entia essent per accidens preter Deum, quod est falsum.

<6> Ultimo, ens sufficienter diuiditur in substantiam et accidens et accidens diuiditur in nouem predicamenta, et tamen quodlibet istorum dicitur ens secundum se. Igitur etc.

Oppositum patet in littera.

Possumus hic dicere quod hoc nomen 'ens' sumitur ab 'esse' et ideo quot modis dicitur esse, tot modis dicitur ens. Vnde secundum hoc esse⁴⁸ illud potest dici quod dicitur de aliquo mediante hoc uerbo 'est', et ideo illud uerbum 'est' aliquando sumitur tertio⁴⁹ adiacens, et sic illud in propositione affirmatiua significat quod sit idem pro quo termini supponunt et sic significat propositionem esse ueram; et quando negatur tunc e conuerso significat et per consequens significat quod propositio affirmatiua non sit uera. Modo illa affirmatiua aliquando dicitur uera per se, aliquando per accidens. Exemplum primi: quando termini per suam significationem determinant sibi quod sit uera; set tunc est uera per accidens quando supponunt pro eodem, set tamen per suam significationem non determinant sibi quod supponant pro eodem. Et isto modo sumendo ens, Aristoteles diuidit ens in ens per se et in per accidens, et sic diuisio non erat nisi quod propositionum affirmatiuarum in quibus predicatum dicitur de subiecto mediante hoc uerbo 'est', alia dicitur uera per se, alia per accidens. Et hoc apparet per exempla

⁴⁸ esse] omne uid.

⁴⁹ tertio coni.] secundo

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Aristotelis, quia 'hominem esse animal' ponit ens per se,⁵⁰ 'Coriscum esse musicum' ponit ens per accidens, et ista etiam est posita de propositionibus in I Posteriorum. Et quia omnis propositio affirmatiua uera est uera uel per se uel per accidens, ideo est ista diuisio bona: ens dicitur aliud per se, aliud per accidens. Et de ista diuisione terminorum⁵¹ non declarauit in isto V nisi ens per accidens, quia de primo satis dictum fuit in I Posteriorum. Et ideo quando dicit quod ens secundum se diuiditur in decem predicamentis, non sumit ens secundum se prout opponitur secundum se illi per accidens de quo determinauerat iam, set sumit sic quia est acceptum solitarie, et ibi accipio 'ens' pro termino de quo uere predicatur ille terminus 'ens'.

Vel illi termini possunt sumi [^{69[71]vb}] incomplexo uel complexo. Si primo modo, tunc accipitur secundum se; si secundo modo, tunc non dicuntur secundum⁵² se. Et isto modo intendit Aristoteles quando dicit quod ens secundum se diuiditur in decem predicamenta et illud concordat⁵³ ei quod dicebat in Predicamentis, quia 'eorum que sunt alia secundum complexionem dicuntur, alia sine complexione'; et postea diuidit secundum membrum in substantiam quale etc., quia illa que dicuntur primo modo non ponuntur proprie in predicamento nisi ratione⁵⁴ partium solum.

Notandum quod aliter dicitur ens secundum se preter istos modos. Vno modo quia simpliciter significat illud pro quo supponit sine connotatione et tunc illud dicitur ens per accidens quod significat non simpliciter illud pro quo supponit, set connotat circa illum dispositionem alienam, quia terminorum de quibus dicitur hoc nomen 'ens', quidam sunt non connotatiui, ut termini de predicamento substantie, alii sunt

⁵⁰ per se coni.] per accidens

⁵¹ terminorum] tⁱr^(um) uel Aristoteles?

⁵² secundum] iter.

⁵³ concordat] conca praem. et del.

⁵⁴ ratione] ex corr.

connotatiui, et isti sunt siue dicuntur per accidens, et sic diuidere ens non est <nisi> diuidere ens in terminos substantiales et in accidentales, et talis diuisio est bona de terminis.

Alio modo ens per se solet dici quod de necessitate est, ita quod ex natura sua repugnat sibi non esse, et ens per accidens quod contingenter est. Et isto modo diuisio entis in per se et per accidens esset sufficiens, non solum prout ens sumitur pro terminis, set etiam prout dicitur siue significat quecumque alia, quia ista diuisio non esset nisi in necessarium et contingens in essendo.

Alio modo potest dici secundum Linconiensem⁵⁵ I Posteriorum quia per se causam cum participatione⁵⁶ excludit, id est: si sic aliquid est non per aliam causam, ita dicitur esse per se, si sic est per aliam causam, non dicitur esse per se. Et non solum diceretur de esse set de quibuscumque attributis alteri. Et tunc si aliquid dicitur esse per carentiam cause efficientis uel finalis, tunc solus Deus dicitur esse per se quia omnia alia sunt propter illum in genere talium causarum; si aliquid dicitur per se per pruiuationem cause materialis, tunc materia prima dicitur per se et intelligentie et sic forma materialis non dicitur per se; si aliquid dicitur per priuationem cause formalis, tunc cause finales que ultra non informantur aliis formis dicuntur esse per se⁵⁷.

Adhuc Aristoteles aliquando uidetur sumere esse per se quia istum terminum dicitur esse per se qui est subiectum finale de quo alia dicuntur et ipsum non dicitur de alio et isto modo prime substantie dicuntur per se. — Aliquando ens sumitur pro uero ita quod propositionem ueram dicimus ens et falsam non-ens. — Modo iterum uerum diuiditur in uerum per se et per accidens et sic isto modo diuideretur ens et sic quocumque modo sumitur hoc nomen 'ens' diuisibile est in per se et per accidens.

⁵⁵ Linconiensem *coni.*] *lin^e uid.*

⁵⁶ cum participatione *coni.*] *cumpartic ipē sic*

⁵⁷ esse per se *coni.*] *uniuersaliter ideo*

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Ad rationes. Ad primam. Aristoteles ponit etc., dico quod ista non est sic alia acceptio quin sibi conueniat predicta diuisio, et sic diuisio est sufficiens.

Ad aliam dico quod multipliciter est ens per accidens. Et cum dicitur: omne de quo dicitur hoc nomen 'ens' etc., dico quod hoc nomen 'ens' non est uniuocum nec dicitur de omnibus de quibus dicitur secundum unam rationem. Et ideo dico quod secundum unam acceptionem dicitur per se et secundum aliam per accidens. Et quando dicitur: superius etc., concedo, et ideo concedo quod ista est per se: 'hominem esse musicum est per accidens', quia ens per accidens est superius ad hoc quod est hominem esse musicum; tamen ista non est propositio per se: 'homo est musicus', et ideo dicitur ens per accidens.

Ad aliam. Ens dicitur de quolibet per suam essentiam: potest dici quod uerum est, tale quale est, et ideo ista 'homo est musicus' per suam significationem dicitur ens per accidens. — Vel potest dici quod refert sumere hoc nomen 'ens' pro entitate propositionis uel pro ueritate. Si sumatur primo modo, tunc quolibet propositio est ita bene ens per se sicut homo; si secundo modo, sic non est uerum et sic sumitur hic.

Ad aliam dico quod non, set sic esset dicere 'Coriscus est musicus'; unde hoc uerbum 'est' significat quod sic idem pro quo termini supponunt et accidit quod sit ita.

Ad aliam. Vel hoc esset etc. Forte istis modis potest sumi ens per accidens, tamen non est iste modus de quo loquitur Aristoteles in principio capituli et isto modo intendit Aristoteles in VI quod de ente per accidens non est scientia.

Ad aliam. Ens sufficienter etc., nego, nisi sumatur pro termino incomplexo quia est diuisio terminorum incomplexorum in decem predicamentis, et ideo bene est ens per se et per accidens etc.

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SYNTHESIS – Journal for Philosophy
Issue 5 (2025)

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Non-conceptual pattern, manner or procedure?

Abstract: One source of misunderstanding about modeling non-conceptual mental content in Kant's philosophy of mind and perception consists in the conventional functionalist reading that the apprehension of the power of imagination, both in the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, stands as the relevant cognitive apparatus for creating a mental content without any concepts. I clarify that 'sensible intuitions' and 'reflective intuitions' in the *first* and *third* Critiques signify two distinct stages of the phenomenal consciousness and cannot be justified by the same 'procedure' of mind. Sensible intuitions of different types are world-directed if they are justified by the 'way and manner' of perceiving objects through the representation of space as the relevant cognitive pattern, although they can appear with phenomenological different patterns given by nature or the mind itself. Reflective intuitions are, by contrast, non-world-directed but only satisfy the state of mind. Respectively, I conclude that Kant establishes a stronger phenomenal conservatism than his contemporary commentators have argued for because the relevant cognitive pattern is independent of the emergence of objects.

Keywords: Content of Cognition, Power of Imagination, Cognitive Pattern, Representation of Space, Explanatory Value, Phenomenal Conservatism

1. Kant, Phenomenal Consciousness and Non-Conceptual Content Revisited

Kant's theory of experience refers to a 'stage of the empirical' knowledge and phenomenal consciousness (OP, 21: 90),¹ according to which

¹ All references to Kant's works are from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (1992ff.). KrV = *Critique of Pure Reason* (2009), followed by A/B reference; KpV = *Critique of Practical Reason* (2015); KU = *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (2002); EEKU = *First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgement* (2002); Anth = *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (2007); Prol = *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics* (2002); MAN = *Metaphysical foundations of natural science* (2002); ÜE = *On a discovery*

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representations can be referring, i.e., world-directed if they are justified not only by pure concepts of understanding (categories), but also by pure forms of intuitions (space and time) in order to be ‘antecedently well-founded information’ (KrV, A60/B85) and be accorded with a cognitive pattern. Kant calls this kind of phenomenal consciousness ‘doctrinal experience (*experientia doctorinalis*)’ because its representational content, i.e., singular representation (sensible intuition) entails as well the principles of such perceptual experience.² The data, properties and conjectures given by or derived from other stages of the empirical knowledge including ‘perception (*animadversio*), observation (*observatio*), [and] experiment’, as Kant classifies, are of less significance for evaluating the world-directedness of representations, because they provide either only a raw or anticipatory pattern for experience itself (perception) or disparate properties with no initial pattern at all (observation and experiment).³ They relate thus to no objects of the outer world but only to the state of mind of the human subject and can be evaluated as

whereby any new critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one (2002); FM = What real progress has metaphysics made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff? (2002); VT = On a recently prominent tone of superiority in philosophy (2002); DfS = The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures (1992); NG = Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy (1992); GUGR = Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space (1992); MSI = On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World (1992); MS = The Metaphysics of Morals (1996); Log = Jäsche Logic (1992); V-Lo/Blomberg = Lectures on Logic (1992); V-Met/Mron, V-Met/Arnoldt = Lectures on Metaphysics (1997); V-Anth/Fried = Lectures on Anthropology (2012); ÜGTP = On the use of teleological principles in philosophy (2007); Br = Correspondence (1999); OP = Opus Postumum (1993); and to *Gesammelte Werke* (1900ff., Bd. XIVff.). HN = *Handschriftlicher Nachlass*; followed by the volume and page number.

² Cf. KrV, A56/B80, A59/B83ff., A72/B97, A77/B102; Prol, 4: 266; FM, 20: 337, where ‘content of cognition’ is tantamount to ‘sensible intuitions’ and ‘singular representations’.

³ Cf. KrV, B160, B218, A183/B226, FM, 20: 274-5, ÜE, 8: 217, that ‘perception’ is the ‘empirical consciousness’ of appearances and can be transformed into ‘experience’ if justified by pure forms of sensibility and understanding.

unstructured stuff of mind. Consequently, only sensible intuitions stand as the relevant candidate to raise the question whether representations could refer to the objects of the outer world without concepts.⁴ Notably, Kant holds that particular objects of the outer world cannot be represented by concepts without the role of sensible intuitions because concepts are ‘universal’ by nature and ‘common’ to different objects (Log, 9: 91), and the series of their determination can never be completed without disregarding the ‘specific differences’ contained in those particular objects (Log, 9: 97). Consequently, ‘no lowest concept (*conceptus infimus*)’ can be found that directly relate to particular objects. As we will see in the next section in more details (2.), this genuine doctrine is the main line of argument that Kant raises against both unstructured, sheer receptivity of our sensibility instituted by empiricist school of thought and inefficiency of general constraints of mind instituted by rationalist school of thought, on the one hand, and against contemporary, conceptualist readings, for instance of Ginsborg (2013) and McDowell (1994), who reject the autonomy of sensible intuitions, even in some weak sense.

In non-conceptualism camp which constitutes the main interest of this article, one source of misunderstanding about coupling Kantian ‘content of cognition’ with non-conceptual mental content in the contemporary philosophy of mind and perception consists in the

⁴ Different variations of non-conceptual mental content can be found in Gunther (2003), Speaks (2005), Schmidt (2015) and Hanna (2011). As I read it, the problem is whether *there are* representations that could be referring without concepts (as to their ‘autonomous’ constitutions) or whether *representations* could be referring without concepts (as to their ‘incompatibility’ with concepts) according to one and the same *logical* structure and in one and the same cognition. Arguments for and against non-conceptual content emerge either positively from properties contained in identified instances, or negatively from the inefficiency of conceptual constraints of mind for explaining those instances. In any case, a positive explanatory value for explaining the ‘way’, how identified instances are constituted, is required.

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conviction that the *same* power of imagination in the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* and in *Critique of the Power of Judgement* stands as the relevant cognitive apparatus for creating a (cognitive) pattern by apprehending the manifold contained in sensible intuitions without the role of pure concepts of understanding,⁵ and by forming and maintaining the representation of the beautiful without concepts, in one way or another.⁶ Hanna's (2020, 2011: 334) and Rohs' (2001) functionalist readings about the 'lower level' intuitive 'spontaneity' of the power of imagination are of such kind.⁷ Neither of the advocates of the latter conviction has clarified, however, why judgments of cognition and taste should have two different objects, namely 'sensible intuitions' and 'reflective intuitions' if the manifold of the perceptual experience is combined by the same power.

Kant himself holds that the power of imagination *per se* contains certain 'procedures' of the mind capable of providing only a 'new direction' (V-Anth/Fried, 25: 514f.) by joining the manifold in a given representation in the *background* of an already existing pattern of

⁵ Cf. Hanna (2011, 2022), Allais (2009), Rohs (2001).

⁶ Cf. Aquila (1979), Heidemann (2019), Ginsborg (2015), Allison (2001). In *Synthesis and Binding*, Allais revised her standpoint in that synthesis is a 'conceptually-governed' operation of mind and 'comes at a higher level' (2017: 27-29).

⁷ According to functionalism, 'what makes something a mental state of a particular type does not depend on its internal constitution, but rather on the way it functions, or the role it plays, in the system of which it is a part' (Levin 2023) and entails in some sense a claim about 'physical realizations of these mental functions' (Schlicht & Newen, 2015: 88). Both Rohs and Hanna argue from the Fregean standpoint and consider only the first premise, so that both 'non-sensible senses' (Rohs 2001: 222) and 'rogue objects' yielded by the 'intuitive spontaneity' of the power of imagination amount to abstract, strongly non-existing objects. Also, Schellenberg argues that the standard reading of Kant's *first Critique* is 'to analyze mental states in terms of the capacities by means of which they were brought about' (2019: 117) and Brook argues that 'we can recognize intuitions only after acts of synthesis, not as they come to us' (1994: 125). Functionalist readings can also be found in the conceptualist reading of De Bruijn's (2022).

sensible intuitions, (in the A-Deduction of the *first Critique*) with or (in the B-Deduction of the *first Critique*) without concepts, and of forming a presumptive natural pattern for tasteful representations derived from ‘observation’ (in the *third Critique*), without at the same time being capable of justifying the ‘way and manner’ of perceiving objects, namely whether the apprehended representations contain a perceptual world-directed ‘pattern’.⁸ The Imagination is, therefore, a power of mind that yields *by itself* no content whatsoever, and its procedures would be a mere play if not restricted to some pattern that signifies a kind of phenomenal consciousness.⁹

The aim of this article is to differentiate among three representational aspects of sensible intuitions, namely their (1) phenomenological different ‘patterns’ given by nature or the mind itself, (2) spatially justified ‘way and manner’ of perceiving them and (3) the relevant mental ‘procedures’ of mind for exposing them, and to argue that Kant establishes a stronger phenomenal conservatism with regard to the structure, namely spatiality of sensible intuitions than his contemporary non-conceptualist and conceptualist commentators have argued for in that sensible intuitions contain a non-conceptual cognitive pattern *a priori*, namely three-dimensionality of the representation of space, standing as a world-directed conscious hyphen between concepts of understanding and objects of the outer world. To this effect, world-directedness of representations, namely representing something ‘*outside us*, signifies only existence (*Existenz*) in space’ (Prol, 4:337) or ‘the existence (*Dasein*) of objects in space outside me’ (KrV, B275). Furthermore, given the spatial structure *a priori* of sensible intuitions,

⁸ The same diagnosis can also be found in Dunlop who prefers ‘primitive representation of objects’ in the sense of a pattern given by nature and in contrast to ‘conceptual representation’ of sensible intuitions, on the one hand, and to ‘raw and brute input’ of sensations, on the other hand (2017: 47f., 65).

⁹ Cf. KrV, A239/B298, that concepts would be ‘a mere play’ of imagination or understanding if not restricted to sensible intuitions.

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Kant can be considered as a phenomenal conservative with regard to objects of the outer world, for phenomenal conservatism is an internalist theory of epistemic justification that holds that ‘the way things *seem* or *appear* to be is a source of justification for believing that things are actually so’ (Moretti 2015). Neither in his pre-critical nor in his critical writings does Kant raise any doubt about the significance of objects of the outer world. The novelty of transcendental idealism consists, by contrast, in providing an explanatory value for those objects, namely for appearances. In what follows, I am going to argue for two claims:

(1) Kant argues in favor of non-conceptuality of sensible intuitions of different causal histories and of different phenomenological patterns given by nature or the mind itself because he provides an elastic, unilateral explanatory value for sensible intuitions of *any* (empirical, semi-empirical and pure) types by establishing the ‘representation of space’ as a cognitive pattern that provides the ‘way and manner’ of justification standing in the background of the ‘procedure(s)’ of the power of imagination.¹⁰ World-directedness of representations can only be justified by this ‘way and manner’, which is indeed non-conceptual, and not by sub-structural patterns of appearances themselves or by some ‘procedures’ of mind in terms of a set of ‘method[s] for representing a multitude’ (KrV, A140/B179). Transcendental idealism creates, therefore, no double standard about the content of cognition by discriminating among sensible intuitions of different types or by incorporating reflective intuitions into the latter types. As Kant makes no distinction between phenomenal consciousness and access

¹⁰ Except Hanna, almost any mainstream reading about the nature of Kant’s ‘content of cognition’ in both non-conceptualist and conceptualist camps agrees that the relevant class of sensible intuitions should refer only to empirical ones. Cf. McLearn (2016a, 2016b), Allais (2009, 2015, 2017), Tolley (2022) in the non-conceptualist camp, but also Ginsborg (2013), Allison (1983/2004) and McDowell (1994) in the conceptualist camp. For naturalistic tendencies in the latter readings, cf. Zammito (2008).

consciousness,¹¹ this cognitive pattern is valid both propositionally and non-propositionally.

(2) His argument directs at the possibility, i.e., the soundness of the structure of sensible intuitions of any types as extended mental entities,¹² namely as *spatial* representations, not at the actuality and, consequently, not at the correctness or accuracy conditions of sensible intuitions, and creates, therefore, no implications as to the metaphysics of properties or of capacities of mind.¹³ The representation of the beautiful is, by contrast, no mental entity but an appearance emerging to the 'self' because it rests on the fulfillment conditions of the capacities of mind. To this effect, I advocate a representationalism and argue against functionalism including Hanna's naïve realism and against phenomenalism including Allais's relationalism, McLear's enactivism and Tolley's semantic phenomenalism, who, in one way or another, argue in favor of metaphysical determinacy of the referents of singular

¹¹ Phenomenal consciousness is 'experience' and access consciousness is the availability of information 'for use' as 'a premise to reasoning' (Ned Block 1995). On this issue, I agree with both Indregard (2018) and Longuenesse (2023) that Kant makes no distinction between phenomenal consciousness (sensible intuitions) and access consciousness (active role of the capacity of sensibility in virtue of conscious representations). However, I do not agree with them that phenomenal consciousness should include representations of the inner sense in the broad sense, including all sensory information in the sense of state consciousness. It is not only for the reason that sensible intuitions are 'objective perceptions' (KrV, B376f.), but also for the reason that sensible intuitions in some cases are propositional cognitions (cf. Prol, 4: 281, §7).

¹² Cf. Brook that sensible intuitions are 'theoretical entities' and no sense-data (1994: 125). However, I do not agree with him that sensible intuitions are 'unprocessed' without synthesis in the first place (1994: 276, note 15).

¹³ Cf. Log, 9: 36, that the distinction between 'intuitions' and 'concepts' is a 'logical', and the distinction between 'receptivity' and 'spontaneity' or 'the lower faculty' and 'the higher faculty' is a 'metaphysical' mode of explanation.

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representations.¹⁴ My phenomenal conservatism is yet compatible with the ‘qualified phenomenalism’ that ‘allows that there may be aspects or properties of objects that they possess independently of how we represent them’ (Stang 2023), and is also compatible with Falkenstein’s ‘non-sensationist intuitionism’, that ‘a certain output of the cognitive system is already given in an input that is not a sensation’ (1995: 9).

2. Sensible Intuitions and Cognitive Pattern

Kant’s primary objective for reconciling the cluster of concepts ‘content of cognition’, ‘singular representations’ and ‘sensible intuitions’ pertains to the inefficiency of general constraints of mind instituted by both empiricist and rationalist schools of thought for representing the primitive mind-independent matters of fact through the truth of reason associated typically with logical principles of identity and contradiction and ontological principle of sufficient reason.¹⁵ Without neglecting the status and significance of materially existing objects, the transcendental idealism argues that the ‘general sign of truth cannot possibly be provided’ by general constraints of mind because ‘facts’ are ‘objects for concepts’ if they are already structured and well-founded, namely if objects correspond to sensible ‘intuitions’ (KU, 5: 468). In other words, if matters of fact are ‘material (objective) truth of the cognition’ and ‘truth concerns precisely this content’ (KrV, A59/B83f.), then their

¹⁴ Cf. Pereira (2021) for various versions of phenomenalism, both in historical context and in contemporary Kant scholarship. Cf. Allais that perceiving appearances stands in a relation to ‘its affecting objects’ (2009: 413; 2015: 207ff), McLearn that ‘perceptual consciousness’ is partially constituted by ‘acquainting a subject with her environment’ (2016a; 2016b: 195) and Tolley that we can only refer to representations as ‘mind-dependent objects’ in the Fregean ‘de re’ sense, nevertheless they depend on something real = x (2022).

¹⁵ Cf. Beck (1978: 80–100), for a full review of these distinctions between matters of fact and truth of reason.

representational objects themselves should be an ‘antecedently well-founded information’ (KrV, A60/B85) and be borne on certain self-contained *truth condition(s)*, not merely compounded of sheer receptivity of sensations without an initial justification. Kant represents the latter standpoint not only from the worst-case scenario that ‘appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity’ (KrV, B123), but indeed from the fact that we are initially in possession of certain positive cognitions, including geometrical figures and indiscernibles as showpieces of singular representations that can be represented with ‘clarity’, i.e., ‘consciousness of one’s representations that suffices for the distinction of one object from another’ non-inferentially (Anth, 7: 138, §6).¹⁶

Representing, for instance, *this* or *that* carnival mask is tantamount to saying that this type of object has certain set of features coordinated by its partial representations that is not ‘common’ to other objects and so discriminates it from other objects with other sets of features.¹⁷ As a ‘kind’, such a representation is not restricted to the tokens of its type (containing probably also extra properties) but is a self-contained representation bearing a structure-preserving mapping between the tokens of the same type, i.e. an isomorphy.¹⁸ This isomorphy applies not only to tokens of sensible intuitions of one peculiar type, but, as we will

¹⁶ Kant continues to state that ‘but that consciousness by means of which the composition of representations also becomes clear is called distinctness’ and is satisfied by concepts.

¹⁷ Cf. also KrV, A32/B47; Logic, 9: 91, that concepts relate to objects through features ‘common’ to many objects.

¹⁸ Falkenstein (1995: 11, 110, 136, 247) and Onof & Schulting (2015: 36 and note) prefer the ‘topology’ over ‘isomorphy’ for explaining the spatial structure of intuitions. As I will clarify, the spatial structure can be separated from the patterns of objects. Then, the structurality itself does not entail (and contain) the actuality and existence (or the data of) representations, but not vice versa.

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see, also to sensible intuitions of any type as spatial representations.¹⁹ It entails as well that a singular representation is not produced by reflection or some other activity of mind but rests upon the disposition of our sensibility governed by the spatiality,²⁰ and relates thereby ‘directly to’ objects (KrV, A320/B377).²¹ To this extent, sensible intuitions are at least in some weak sense object-dependent because representing an object merely through common features would not represent an extended object.²²

Kant registers four types of sensible intuitions with different phenomenological sub-structural ‘patterns’ (*Muster*) as to their causal history,²³ and distinguishes them *altogether* from other non-world-directed representations. Sensible intuitions are (i) empirical, ordinary and abundant if they supervene upon sensations, conditioned by the fact that the latter sensory data are arbitrary (*zufällig*). The representational object of empirical sensible intuitions is undetermined, and its

¹⁹ Since the spatial structure itself does not contain the data of appearances, it cannot be bijective, i.e., a 1-1 onto mapping.

²⁰ Cf. A22/B37, that ‘sensibility’ is the ‘property of our mind’. Cf. also Anth, 7:141, that ‘sensibility’ is itself a ‘fundamental capacity’ (*Grundvermögen*) of representation and cannot be reduced to other capacities of mind. The same line of thought can also be found in Crusius who considers the ‘sensibility’ as a power of representation distinct from ‘the active fundamental power’ of mind (1747: §86), which is, in contrast to Kant’s position, in contact with the ‘actual existence’ of objects (1747: §64, §434). Both Kant and Crusius criticize thereby Wolff’s single and active, fundamental power of representation (*vis representativa*) (cf. Wolff 1972: §547; 1983: §§600, 765) for perceiving objects and as a higher-order theory of consciousness.

²¹ Cf. Anth, 7: 141, note, that the sensibility is not restricted to bodily sense organs.

²² Cf. Ginsborg (2013) and McDowell (1994) who reject the autonomy of intuitions even in some weak sense. For example, Ginsborg argues that ‘to speak of sensibility in isolation from understanding is to speak counterfactually’ (2013: 218).

²³ Kant speaks of ‘pattern’ not only of the constitution of objects, but also of ideas and concepts (cf. KrV, B161; Anth, 7: 173, 224; KU, 5: 232f.), which are, however, non-world-directed by themselves.

counterpart could be true.²⁴ By contrast, sensible intuitions are (ii) pure but finite if the representational object is 'generated in the mind completely *a priori*' by pure, i.e., schematic construction of mind (KrV, A240/B299). While empirical intuitions contain a raw pattern given by nature, the emergence of a geometrical figure does not 'borrow a *pattern* for it from any experience' (KrV, A713/B741, emphasis added), even though it is 'an *appearance* present to the senses' (KrV, A240/B299, emphasis added). The representation of a dog, for instance, as a <four-footed, mammal, of excellent sense of smell> animal is an empirical intuition because it might contain other properties than those mentioned above, whereas the representation of a triangle is a pure intuition because it can emerge, be generated and be synthesized without any (sensory) data.²⁵ In addition, a geometrical figure can apply to the actual and existing objects of the world through the technical construction, by carrying out on some kind of 'material' (ÜE, 8: 192, note), via the voluntary action of the will, without its 'content' being thereby affected (EEKU, 20: 198; KpV, 5: 31). Another difference is that the represented objects of pure geometrical figures are also valid propositionally, 'are always intuitive' and have 'apodictic' certainty (Prol, 4: 281, §7).²⁶

Furthermore, sensible intuitions are (iii) semi-empirical if a body contains counterparts that are (conceptually) exactly equal in magnitude and similar in quality to one another, but contain 'a difference in outer relation' (Prol, 4: 285-6).²⁷ Indiscernibles, i.e., incongruent counterparts and snails are among such instances.²⁸ The pattern of semi-empirical intuitions can be borrowed from nature or be generated by thought

²⁴ Cf. Prol, 4: 281.

²⁵ Cf. KpV, 5: 31; EEKU, 20: 230, note; KU, 5: 177-8.

²⁶ Cf. also Prol, 4: 283, 287.

²⁷ Cf. GUGR, 2: 382; NG, 2: 171, 180, 202; Dfs, 2: 61-60.

²⁸ Cf. MAN, 4: 483f.

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experiment,²⁹ but it is the orientation and the ‘opposed directions’ that constitute such objects (KrV, A282/B338), which is a mental ‘action of the creative cause producing the counterpart’ (GUGR, 2: 382).

Despite all differences in patterns, all latter types can be represented according to the ‘way and manner (*die Art und Weise; die Art, wie*)’ of positing their partial representations next to each other provided by the (three-dimensional) representation of space as the relevant cognitive pattern. Since all objects of the senses contain a composite, representing those objects contains certain relations among their parts, and these relations cannot be reduced to those and other objects themselves in an empirical regress as their relevant condition.³⁰ Consequently, we cannot perceive the boundaries of the world by perceiving appearances themselves. But since we are actually able to represent the objects (of the outer world), the whole of these relations themselves and its relevant cognitive ability precede, as Kant argues, the representations of objects as a condition of mind and ‘as an all-encompassing *receptacle* containing nothing except places of things’ in mind (V-Met/Mron, 29: 830; emphasis added), which makes our initial contact with appearances of the world and relating our representations to ‘something external’ possible (KrV, A28/B44).³¹ Unlike his predecessors, neither does Kant restrict the representation of particular objects to a number of one-off cases identified against the general constraints of mind,³² nor does he reject that an initial object of the senses could be unstructured and of no

²⁹ Cf. GUGR, 2: 382.

³⁰ Cf. KrV, A519-522/B547-550.

³¹ Cf. A23/B38, I. For the notion of ‘way and manner’, cf. also KrV, A44/B61, B67-68, B306; V-Met/Arnoldt, 29: 974ff.

³² As Kant himself points out (ÜE, 8: 245-246), Locke’s, Reusch’s and Crusius’ identifications of knowledge of coexistence and of relations, synthetic clarity, and metaphysical propositions, including hypothetical knowledge, provide at the same time no specific explanatory value for them.

significance for cognition,³³ or that the physical distinction would necessarily entail consciousness of objects.³⁴ Transcendental, i.e., formal idealism leaves open whether the outer objects of sensible intuitions actually exist.³⁵ It advocates, by contrast, the thesis that any particular object can be the object of cognition if it is justified by the ‘way and manner’ of perceiving them irrespective of the mode of its emergence.³⁶

Thereupon, Kant concludes that the pure representation *a priori* of (iv) space is itself a type of sensible intuition if we can represent the extension, i.e., ‘mere relations, of places in one intuition’ and display it as an ‘image’ and as a ‘formal intuition’ that is ‘the essential property of our sensibility’ (Prol, 4: 287). As Kant emphasizes, the representation of space is an ‘essentially single’ representation (KrV, A25/B39), and the ‘first datum’ of mind *a priori* (KpV, 5: 42),³⁷ because we are able to represent the ‘way and manner’ of juxtapositioning even without ‘an actual object of the senses or sensation in the mind’ (KrV, A21/B35). Yet and most importantly, Kant adds that this ‘way and manner’ emerges ‘without spontaneity’ (KrV, 67–69, 157, note), either of the power of imagination or of the understanding.³⁸ He concludes that it is a self-contained and self-standing mental entity, namely an ‘individual representation’ (KrV, B136,

³³ This includes any acquaintances given to one’s mind even ‘through immediate experience’ and corresponds to what Kant calls ‘historical cognition (*cognitio ex datis*)’, which is an unstructured cognition, in contrast to ‘rational cognition (*cognitio ex principiis*)’, which is a structured cognition (KrV, A836/B864). For different degrees of cognition weaker than rational cognition, cf. Log, 9: 64–65.

³⁴ Cf. DfS 2: 59 and KU, 5: 464, that physical differentiation by non-human animals does not entail that they ‘see’ and ‘act’ according to representations.

³⁵ Cf. KrV, B274f. (Refutation of Idealism), A491/B519f., Prol, 4: 337.

³⁶ Cf. Prol, 4: 337, that ‘outside us, signifies only existence in space’. Cf. also KrV, A23/B38.

³⁷ Cf. also HN, 17: 615.

³⁸ Even though an ‘object of the sense’ contains ‘a composite’ (ÜE, 8: 2019–210, note), all combination is ‘an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation’, i.e., of the understanding (KrV, B130, §15).

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note), that provides an explanatory value for sensible intuitions of any types.³⁹ And to distinguish the pure representation of space as ‘a given infinite magnitude’ (KrV, A25/B41) from finite, pure geometrical figures, he indicates that:

Space is something so *uniform*, and so indeterminate with respect to *all specific properties*, that certainly no one will look for a stock of natural laws within it. By contrast, that which determines space into the figure of a circle, a cone, or a sphere is the understanding, insofar as it contains the basis for the unity of the construction of these figures. The *mere universal form of intuition called space* is therefore certainly the *substratum* of all intuitions determinable upon *particular objects*, and, admittedly, the condition for the possibility and *variety of those intuitions* lies in this space; but the unity of the objects is determined solely through the understanding (Prol, 4:321-2; emphasis added).⁴⁰

Kant does not design a theory for objects proper. He does not reject their existence, either. He only dedicates his theory of experience to the bounds of content of cognition independent of empirical consciousness, i.e., to the well-grounded manner of perceiving the appearances outside the experience itself that enables our contact with objects whatsoever. In Kant’s account, the ‘way and manner’ that provides an explanatory value for perceiving objects is the form of those objects. This form is, however, not phenomenal in the sense of the mode of emergence of objects, but mental in the sense of their justification, ‘so far as’ it is in

³⁹ For an extensive review of the problem about KrV, B160-61 and its relevant note, cf. Onof & Schulting (2015).

⁴⁰ The role of understanding here and in regulation of judgments of taste (cf. footnote 54 and the relevant text) does not entail the application of concepts, but is a ‘metacognitive’ function, a kind of ‘desire for unity’ that ‘goes beyond whatever is necessary for ordinary cognition’ (Guyer, 2006: 182-3). Another difference between geometrical figures and the representation of space is that the first can apply to actual objects of the world (cf. ÜE, 8: 192, note), whereas the second cannot.

mind and can 'be known by reason' (VT, 8: 404) and can behave towards different patterns elastically. To this effect, what in this article I take to be the 'cognitive pattern' refers to 'the way and manner' of perceiving objects for justifying the possibility of those objects, without neglecting at the same the very 'data of appearances'.⁴¹

Therefore, where Kant takes the 'content of cognition' into consideration, he refers to 'the represented object with the *properties* that *sensible intuition* attributes to it' (KrV, A44/B62; emphasis added), irrespective of whether this content is empirical and irrespective of its mode of emergence. Merely being conscious of some representation will not certify it as the content of cognition, but if the representation is constituted spatially, i.e., mapped with spatial properties that can parallel the appearances elastically.

Just to be clear about the 'data of appearances', Kant differentiates the 'content of cognition' from a set of unstructured representations. He excludes, in the first place, sensations (sensory content) from representational objects because they are, albeit conscious, non-referring and 'has only the 2nd position' for cognitions (V-Lo/Blomberg, 24: 44). He also demarcates the stuff (*Stoff*) of the mind from the content of cognition. Stuff of mind partly refers to representations capable of being ordered and justified by pure forms of cognition and be certified as the 'proper material' for cognition (KrV, BXXXIX), but partly to the 'unsought extensive undeveloped' material brought about by the activity of the power of imagination (KU, 5:317). In the second sense, stuff of mind is a 'raw material' typically of sensations and impressions (KrV, A1, B1), and since it is of a *posteriori* status, it can be imbricated with what Kant calls 'data' of mind as 'something conditioned' and of 'a posteriori' status in mind (KrV, A512/B540), in so far as it amounts to representations grasped from experiences through sense organs and stand outside the space of

⁴¹ I prefer the 'cognitive pattern' over the 'cognitive map' because the latter is associated with and is relative to context-dependency and the empirical, spatial environment.

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(formal) justification.⁴² Finally, he also excludes the ‘real content’ (*wirklicher Inhalt*) or ‘contents’ (*Gehalt*) of representations that relates to their ‘physical’ status and ‘intensity’ in space and time (KrV, A723/B751), which can be measured and estimated as an amount.

3. Sensible Intuitions, Reflective Intuitions and Imagination

Obviously, the most significant kind of representation to be distinguished from sensible intuitions is ‘reflective intuitions’ (Anth, 7: 239, B.), or, as Kant mentions this in the *third Critique*, ‘reflected perception’ (KU, 5:191).⁴³ Reflective intuitions are the object of judgments of taste and the result of joining the manifold contained in a given representation together through the power of imagination ‘in a mere contemplation’ (KU, 5: 209, 204), i.e., without considering the causal history of the manifold, the arrangement and constitution of its partial representation, and the availability of some concept of the object as the cause of its emergence, namely ‘without a sensation of the senses or a concept’ (KU, 5: 280–81). Such an intuition can eventually be expected to be felt with pleasure if the free play of imagination comes into harmony with the faculty of understanding without applying its concepts, namely if the

⁴² An unanimous referee suggests that such treatment of ‘stuff of mind’ is puzzling and should be elaborated in more details because it is *highly relevant to the discussion of non-conceptual content in perception* and in *discussing the expression of aesthetic ideas by the genius*. It is yet a *contradicto in adjecto* because ‘stuff of mind’ signifies unstructured materials by nature and definition. I will return to this point in the coming paragraphs.

⁴³ Thanks to an unanimous referee who acknowledges that Kant deploys ‘reflected perception’ (KU, 5: 191) as a suggestive term in the *third Critique* for ‘reflective intuitions’ (Anth, 7: 239, B.) in *Anthropology*, and that the latter term appears only once in *Anthropology*, which is, however, also applicable to the ‘reflected perception’ itself. For the sake of comparison with ‘sensible intuitions’, I prefer yet ‘reflective intuitions’ over ‘reflected perception’ to emphasize, as Kant holds it and we will see in the following lines, that even one and the same empirical intuition can be the representational object of both sensible and reflective intuitions, namely of objects of the outer world and taste.

animation of the latter cognitive faculties is conducted in ‘the mere form of purposiveness in the representation’ of an object by the reflective power of judgment (KU, 5: 221, §11, emphasis added; cf. KU, 5: 220, §11; 5: 192). Being so, the representation of the beautiful is a ‘positive’ and self-standing ‘phenomenon’ and a ‘preserving’ state of mind (KU, 5: 269; KU, 5: 170; EEKU, 20: 231), and its emergence is the effect of actualization of certain *fulfillment conditions*, i.e., the ‘disposition of the cognitive faculties’ (KU, 5: 238-9). Even though the initial representational object to be felt with pleasure is an empirical intuition (cf. EEKU, 20: 224, 228, 289), and to this extent might overlap with the representational object of sensible intuitions, Kant emphasizes that it is the phenomenal ‘form of surfaces [*Oberfläche*]’ (KU, 5: 375) and the ‘shape [*Gestalt*]’ of objects (KU, 5: 230) that can be formed and maintained as a tasteful representation and surpasses to this extent both the spatial cognitive pattern and natural pattern of sensible intuitions.⁴⁴

For instance, by expressing that <Rembrandt’s *Storm on Sea of Galilee* is beautiful> I am not apprehending the sensory properties such as <of oil-on-canvas, dark clouds moving, disciples terrifyingly responding> contained in the representational object <Rembrandt’s *Storm on Sea of Galilee*> in the background of its initial pattern given in the empirical intuition and do not relate them, consequently, to the

⁴⁴ Cf. Zuckert (2006), Zinkin (2006), Guyer (1997), Aquila (1979)), Carroll (2014) and Allison (2001), who in one way or another equate the properties of the initial representation of an object to be perceived as beautiful with the spatial or spatial-temporal manifold contained in empirical intuitions. By contrast, Kant considers that the representational object in judgments of taste amounts only to the ‘mere form’ of purposiveness in the representation, i.e., without the availability of any concept as a cause (KU, 5: 221f., 228f.). To this point, I agree with Lehman that the ‘mere form’ is an alternative to (natural) ‘phenomenal form’ (2017: 249), conditioned by the fact that the latter notion is understood in the sense of ‘sensible phenomenal form’ because, as I will argue, ‘reflective intuitions’ have also a ‘phenomenal form’, albeit non-sensible. Cf. also Guyer that such a representation has an ‘internally opaque content’ (1997: 105).

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constitution of that object standing in front of me.⁴⁵ Instead, I am evaluating that (1) the representational object has or might have some properties that can be discovered by observation and that (2) I try to pair those properties together by the power of imagination to become conscious of an object as beautiful, namely to feel it with pleasure. As a result, <Rembrandt's *Storm on Sea of Galilee* is beautiful> means that <Rembrandt's *Storm on Sea of Galilee*, which contents me with myself, is beautiful> where the 'feeling of pleasure' assigns the 'content' of this judgment (KU, 5: 281).⁴⁶ Kant emphasize that such a judgment is an 'evaluation' (*Beurteilung*), i.e., a judgment according to 'self-satisfaction and charm' (HN, 15: 461; my translation), and no proposition, i.e. a primary bearer of truth-value dependent on *truth conditions* of sensibility and understanding, and directs only at 'ideality of purposiveness', namely 'does not allow us to use any realism of an end in it as an explanatory ground for our power of representation' according to 'empirical principles', of e.g. laws of the affinity of materials (KU, 5: 349-50, §58), and 'can be perceived only internally' as an *preserving* state of mind (KU, 5: 289, §37). Since the formation and maintenance of the representation of the beautiful neither emerges according to concepts nor is an arbitrary phenomenon, it raises, however, the question of whether reflective intuitions could be competent to count as non-conceptual content and be a competitor for sensible intuitions.⁴⁷

Beside the *cognitivist* aspect of judgments of taste that affects the manner of perceiving objects with pleasure and relates to the underlying endeavor of cognitive faculties, the other, and in fact, hitherto confusing, if not neglected, side of Kant's theory of taste concerns the *formalism*

⁴⁵ Cf. KU, 5: 204, 209.

⁴⁶ The feeling of pleasure is only an 'ability' (*Fähigkeit*) of mind (MS, 6: 211), and no representation to be exposed by a cognitive pattern.

⁴⁷ Cf. Aquila (1979), Allison (2001), Ginsborg (2015) and Heidemann (2019), who argue that it is a non-conceptual mental content.

about the status and structure of the representational object that can be felt with pleasure. The initial representational object to be felt with pleasure is not ‘stuff’ of mind in the sense of a cluster of mere imaginations. It is yet a representation given in an empirical intuition and yields thus ‘a ground outside ourselves’ (KU, 5: 246) as a ‘limitation’ (KU, 5: 244). And the kind of phenomenal consciousness Kant attributes to perceiving the initial representational object of judgments of taste is called ‘observation’.

‘Observation’ is a kind of perceptual experience, a stage of the empirical knowledge and description of nature conducted ‘methodologically’ (ÜGTP, 8: 161), and serves to ‘discover the properties of objects of outer sense’ (Br, 11: 143),⁴⁸ and so a kind of active, procedural knowledge conducted by an endeavor of the mind. To this extent, properties derived from observations are other than those already perceived and given in ordinary intuitions, even though they might have one and the same empirical intuition.⁴⁹ Observing does not justify the constitution of the representational object as to the ‘way and manner’ of its perceiving via spatial cognitive pattern, but serves to discover the properties governing ‘phenomena and their laws in general’ (Br, 10: 145). Since the properties derived from observations are disparate and without any primitive pattern given by nature, the relevant representational object contains neither a phenomenal form at the outset nor does ‘possess any necessity’ via a mental form or cognitive pattern (MSI, 2: 404), so that we cannot lay any claim about possession of an object in the first place. The properties acquainted by observations are, therefore, neither isomorphically nor causally ‘designated’ (KU, 5:

⁴⁸ Cf. Ginsborg (2015: 139, 163, 186) and Allison (2001: 151), who take the ‘observation’ in the ordinary, not technical sense.

⁴⁹ In contrast to ‘observation’, ‘experiment’ is as an endeavor to seek elements and conjectures for a theory or hypothesis to be ‘confirmed or refuted’ (KrV, XVIII, note.). Cf. Daston (2013: 663) for a more clarification.

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204). But it is the 'data' contained in empirical intuitions that stand in the foreground of investigation and could result in a peculiar kind of phenomenal form in a discriminatory manner.⁵⁰

Now Kant argues that some variation of the combination of these disparate and non-isomorphic perceptual properties could lay out a phenomenal form of an object to be felt with pleasure by the free and productive power of imagination through its invention.⁵¹ Imagination is a power (*Kraft*) of mind for actualization of representations and their relevant capacities (*Vermögen*),⁵² 'even without [the] presence' of an object in intuition (KrV, B151). It produces only a 'new direction' (V-Anth/Fried, 25: 514f.) by joining a manifold together and is thus capable of functioning in various directions, associated with different capacities of mind and proceeding in the background of different patterns of mind, including those of intuitions, concepts and ideas. It contains thus only a set of 'procedures' (*Verfahren*), i.e., a set of 'method[s] for representing a multitude' (KrV, A140/B179), and contains by itself no patterns.⁵³ But it is also able to 'heighten' any patterns and rules so that it results in fantasy

⁵⁰ Cf. footnote 61 and the relevant text that the faculty of *taste* is a *discriminatory* faculty for evaluating objects.

⁵¹ Cf. Anth, 7: 240–41. The power of imagination is either 'productive' and 'precedes' all perceptual 'experience' and data of mind or 'reproductive' that 'brings back to the mind an empirical intuition that it had previously' (Anthr, 7: 167; cf. KrV, B152).

⁵² Cf. HN, 17: 73.

⁵³ Other procedures of mind Kant takes into consideration include the justification of knowledge and reasoning and include 'analyses' of the concepts and 'deduction' (KrV, BXIX–XXIII), different kinds, i.e. apagogic and ostensive 'proof' for knowledge (KrV, A791–794/B819–822, A727/B755, A734/B762), logical 'division' of concepts and 'principle for interference' (KrV, B112–116), 'criticism' as 'the maxim of a general mistrust of all' proposition in metaphysics for discerning 'a universal ground of their possibility' in 'the essential conditions of our cognitive faculty' (ÜE, 8: 226), 'speculative', 'naturalistic' and 'scientific' method (KrV, A5/B9, A780/B808f.) of inquiring the pure reason 'in accordance with principles' (KrV, A855/B883f.) and 'censorship of reason' as 'subjecting the *facta* of reason to examination and when necessary to blame' (KrV, A760/B788).

(Anth, 7: 173). To be a meaningful procedure, it should operate, however, on, within or according to some pattern.

Both in the *first edition* of the *first Critique* and in the *third Critique*, the apprehension of the power of imagination appears as a procedure independent of the activity and concepts of understanding for representing objects, and its action is ‘exercised immediately upon perceptions’ (KrV, A99, A120). In the *first Critique*, the power of imagination proceeds *within* the way and manner of perceiving intuitions, i.e., restricted to and controlled by ‘the modification of our sensibility’ that is ‘the only way in which objects are given to us’ (KrV, A139-140/B178-179), to construct and bring about the pattern for pure intuitions or reconstruct the pattern of empirical intuitions given by nature. Even by appending the power of imagination to the faculty of understanding in the *second edition*,⁵⁴ its procedure is dedicated to schematization according to the pattern ‘of’ concepts of understanding, the significance of which is in any case restricted to sensibility. By contrast, for the lack of any ‘sensible substratum’, i.e., any sensible intuitions and any ‘intelligible substratum’, i.e., any concepts as a cause, namely as ‘a determinate end’ for objects in the *third Critique* (EEKU, 20: 246; KU, 5: 228), the procedure of the power of imagination in its free play proceeds to the extent ‘the mind *becomes conscious* in the feeling of its state’ in-process (KU, 5: 204). That is to say, apprehending the phenomenal form of empirical intuitions, i.e. the extensive magnitude of shapes and surfaces of appearances in the *first Critique* proceeds by producing the parts of the whole of a representation in the background of a primitive pattern given by nature (KrV, A162/B201f.) – or by

⁵⁴ Even though the ‘figurative synthesis (*synthesis speciosa*)’ in the second edition seems to parallel the ‘apprehension’ in the first edition, it is ‘an effect of the understanding on sensibility’ because its activity pertains to ‘the original synthetic unity of apperception’ due to its ‘exercise of spontaneity’ (KrV, B151-2). As in the case of pure geometrical figures, the exercise of understanding here does not necessarily entail, however, the application of its concepts. Cf. footnote 40 and the relevant text.

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apprehending the ‘expansion’ of its sensations that ‘fills a space’ (KrV, A174/B216f.). Apprehending the phenomenal form of, eventually the same, empirical intuitions in the *third Critique* proceeds, by contrast, devoid of a primitive pattern, i.e., a corresponding sensible intuition, *within* which the power of imagination could proceed, and to this extent does ‘step beyond nature’ (KU, 5: 314), although its product can find its pattern ‘in a possible world’ (Anth, 7: 181).⁵⁵ The very apprehension in the *third Critique* has yet also the task of perceiving the proportion, arrangement and appropriateness of the disposition of cognitive faculties towards each other,⁵⁶ and subsuming the faculty of imagination under the understanding, by the reflective power judgment, without mapping with its concepts.⁵⁷

To this point, Carroll, for instance, argues that the apprehension of the power of imagination proceeds ‘in accordance with various patterns with no necessary end in view’ (2014: 64). Also, Allison argues that the imagination ‘strives to conceive new patterns of order’ in the form of an object (2001: 171). However, none of the suggestions determines what these patterns are, where they are derived from, or where the process of schematization of the power of imagination ends. As Kant himself points out, the procedure of forming and maintaining the representation of the

⁵⁵ Kant also notes that the ‘presentation’ of the ideal of the beauty in artistic creation (§59; KU, 5: 232) proceeds ‘in a way merely analogous to that which it observes in schematization’ without any corresponding sensible intuition (KU, 5: 351). However, and for the sake of its ‘richness’ and ‘originality’, the representational object to be produced in ideas by the genius ‘is not as necessary for the sake of beauty as is the suitability of the imagination in its freedom to the lawfulness of the understanding’ (KU, 5: 319).

⁵⁶ Kant calls it, therefore, the ‘common apprehension’ (KU, 5: 292).

⁵⁷ Cf. EEKU, 20: 231, note; KU, 5: 235, note, 323, 329, for arrangement and proportion of cognitive faculties; and KU, 5: 287, for subsuming the power of imagination under the faculty of understanding. I cannot thus agree with Zinkin that ‘the pure form of intensive intuition’ makes the feeling of pleasure possible (2006: 151), because reflective intuitions lack any sensations. The ‘intensity’ here should instead relate to the status of the power of imagination itself (cf. V-Anth/Fried, 25: 514f.).

beautiful ends where the human subject contents with himself because representational objects could have some patterns that would content the evaluating subject with himself. Call it the presumptive natural pattern. It is a kind of pattern that could be expected to be felt with pleasure from the first-person perspective as well as by others.⁵⁸

The first point is that the procedure of the power of imagination operates on no initial pattern (given by nature or the mind itself) to be reconstructed (or constructed) and according to no cognitive pattern for perceiving objects. We are only capable of revamping our cognitive faculties in order to form a pattern from disparate properties so that the resulted phenomenon affects the state of mind to be felt with pleasure. As a result, the apparently mutual and common empirical intuitions containing images, surfaces and shapes discussed in the *first* and *third Critique* follow distinct and different phenomenological patterns. While in the *first Critique* these products can be represented as mental content as to their spatial characteristics and manner, in the *third Critique* they signify only a phenomenal content of a *peculiar* kind without bearing any mental form. The product of judgments of taste cannot, therefore, be world-directed, but directs exclusively at self-satisfaction and charm. This line of thought can be followed and confirmed both in the *first* and *third Critique*. In §49 of the *third Critique*, where Kant speaks of artistic creation and worth to put into comparison with perceiving the beautiful in nature, he admits that the combination of the ‘stuff’ of mind grasped from a multitude of sensations and supplementary representations amounts to non-world-directed ‘inner intuitions’ goes ‘beyond the bounds of experience’ because the power of imagination is thereby not constrained by sensibility and understanding. They serve, therefore, to ‘entertain ourselves’ instead of explaining the appearances of the world

⁵⁸ As Kant argues, we are allowed to ‘expect’ and ‘presume (*zumuten*)’ the ‘confluence’ of the same feeling of pleasure of everyone (KU, 5: 240), because we are allowed to ‘ascribe (*ansinnen*)’ them similar cognitive faculties (KU, 5: 290).

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(KU, 5: 314-17). In addition, in *The ideal of pure reason* of the *first Critique*, on the ‘ideals of sensibility, he emphasizes that ‘the creatures of the imagination’ are not constrained by the attainable patterns of empirical intuitions and, thus, not explainable by the laws of sensibility. Such ‘individual traits’, namely ‘monograms’ are yet constituting ‘more a wavering sketch’ than a ‘determining image’ (KrV, A570/B598).⁵⁹ Notably, not being constrained by the concepts of understanding cannot count as an argument for the standpoint that some inner intuitions are thus non-conceptual. Inner intuitions in terms of stuff of mind could count as non-conceptual if they are positively justified by the way and manner of perceiving them to be world-directed. Consequently, Kant’s argument that ‘taste’ is a kind of ‘common sense (*sensus communis*)’ (KU, 5: 293-4, §40), is, as I see it, a cumulative argument, to give more weight to the non-sensible, i.e., the reflective status of the representation of the beautiful, and does not justify the emergence of the latter representation by itself. Since the empirical intuitions stand as the mutual representational objects for both sensible and reflective intuitions, it is also an argument against the non-conceptualists who restrict the class of sensible intuitions to empirical ones and take them as the relevant candidate for non-conceptual content. If the ‘data’ contained in appearances could justify the non-conceptuality of sensible intuitions, then reflective intuitions would also be another type of sensible intuitions.

Another point is that reflective intuitions can be felt with pleasure exclusively in judgments in terms of ‘formative evaluations’, whereas sensible intuitions can be propositional and non-propositional. Kant

⁵⁹ Thanks to an unanimous referee who reminds me of these two passages. However, the expressions of the aesthetic ideas by the genius is of less significance than perceiving the beautiful in nature for Kant’s aesthetics, namely ‘is not as necessary for the sake of beauty as is the suitability of the imagination in its freedom to the lawfulness of the understanding’ (KU, 5: 319).

discriminates judgments of taste from ‘cumulative evaluations’ in logic and the first *Critique* itself, in ethics and in teleology where there exists a determinate or initial judgment or a representational object to which we formally assign an additional value to make them perfect, rich and useful.⁶⁰ By contrast, judgments of taste are ‘subjectively, both object as well as law’ (KU, 5: 288), because there exists no initial object prior to the contention of the human subject.⁶¹ Kant calls this process of the mind of becoming conscious of some representational object as beautiful the *Empfänglichkeit* of the subject (EEKU, 20: 22), i.e., responsiveness of the evaluating subject to a representational object or its susceptibility of a representational object, as I suggest in English, not perceiving an object in the passive sense (*Rezeptivität*).⁶²

Kant does not develop the formalist aspect of judgments of taste in detail, but it is obvious that beside the conditionality defined between the animation and harmony of cognitive faculties, as the ‘ground’ (KU, 5: 217, 220f.), and the feeling of pleasure, as an ‘effect’ (KU, 5: 219), embedded in the logical ‘relation’ of judgments of taste (KU, §§10-17, ‘Third Moment’), he is implicitly convinced that the ‘quality’ of judgments of taste concerning the nature of the initial representational object itself (KU, §§1-5, ‘First Moment’), is biconditional to the effect that the feeling of pleasure is a result of judgments of taste if and only if the relation between the cognitive faculties accompanies the representation of an object observed among multiple variations of a representational object, if any. The product of judgments of taste is thus relational by nature. In other words, not all variations or combinations of an initial

⁶⁰ Cf. Log, 9: 16; V-Lo/Blomberg, 24: 26; KrV, BIX, A12/B26; KpV, 5: 58; KU, 5: 379.

⁶¹ Therefore, Kant calls the faculty of taste an ‘unusual’ (KU, 5: 281, §31), and ‘entirely special faculty for discriminating and evaluating (*Beurteilung*)’ (KU, 5: 203; emphasis added), that rests on its own special transcendental principle.

⁶² The Cambridge Edition reads ‘receptivity’ instead of ‘responsiveness to’ or ‘susceptibility of’.

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representational object apprehended by the power of imagination can be felt with pleasure.

Kant's theory of taste, irrespective of considering the notion of 'observation' as a kind of phenomenal consciousness, is, therefore, highly confusing. If reflective intuitions were non-conceptual content, then the power of imagination had to provide a 'way and manner' for perceiving them. But it cannot. As I see it, reflective intuitions are no candidate for non-conceptual content because neither do they contain some (primitive) pattern given by nature or the mind itself nor do they exhibit the way and manner in which the world behaves. They only exhibit how cognitive faculties behave towards each other and towards observations. If the power of imagination could stand as the relevant cognitive apparatus for creating and justifying some content as non-conceptual, then reflective intuitions were *the* very candidate for non-conceptual content, a thesis that in turn implies that sensible intuitions were not.

4. Sensible Intuitions and Explanatory Clashes

Kant's different, i.e., synthetic and analytic narrative patterns in *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Prolegomena* suggest different scenarios about the role, significance and status of sensible intuitions, which have resulted in multiple explanatory clashes regarding the objectivity and unity of sensible intuitions. The narrative pattern in the *stepladder* passage of the *first Critique* suggests that sensible intuition is a 'conscious' representation, an 'objective perception' and thus a 'kind' of 'cognition' (KrV, B376f.), but should 'stand under categories, as conditions under which alone their manifold can come together in one consciousness' (KrV, B143, §20). By contrast, the narrative pattern in the *Prolegomena* suggests that 'the discussion here is not about the *genesis* of experience', i.e., about the formation of the object in question, but about justification of 'that which lies in experience' (Prol, 4: 304, §21, emphasis added).

The different narrative patterns have been developed within the framework of four merged and requisite explanatory clashes, namely whether sensible intuitions: (i) are themselves a kind of cognition; (ii) should be considered as to their status quo or as to their generation; (iii) should be considered as violations against conceptual or as positive contributions of mind; and (iv) are propositional or non-propositional. I am not going to review all the solutions contributed in the secondary literature in detail but only to address them with regard to the trilogy of pattern, manner and procedure, as I have distinguished them in the previous sections, very briefly. As an initial diagnosis, the non-conceptual features and criteria assigned to sensible intuitions in contemporary Kant scholarship are borrowed to some great extent from Fregean and Russellian conceptions. Yet, unlike Frege's doctrine of sense (*Sinn*), sensible intuitions are not so constituted that they may have 'a sense' but 'no reference' (*Bedeutung*) (Frege, 1984: 159), and unlike Russellian doctrine of acquaintance, sensible intuitions do not refer to objects of the outer world if they are specified by their constituent 'sense-data' (Russell, 1911: 111, 115).

Kant believes that sensible intuitions are indeed a self-contained kind of cognition and differ from other conscious states of mind and perceptions contained in the inner sense. Except Hanna (2011, 2020), almost any non-conceptualist reading considers that the representational content of sensible intuitions is a positive and conscious state of mind that provides us with direct and non-propositional awareness of objects. Without considering the status of sensible intuitions as to their generation in judgments of cognition, they try, however, to highlight the notionally separable status of sensible intuitions and argue thus in favor of the immediacy of intuitions in terms of their actuality, including the fineness of grain of sensible intuitions and the analogy between human and non-human animals as having a mutual

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sensory layer cake in cognitions.⁶³ As I argued, the fineness of grain concerns the ‘data’ of appearances and is restricted to the specific pattern of empirical intuitions given by nature, not their mental form. Nor do I agree with the second argument because ‘we can speak of space, extended beings, and so on, only from the human standpoint’ (KrV, A26/B42).

Moderate conceptualist readings seem to be more consistent at this point. Among others, Longuenesse argues that sensible intuitions should be submitted to a ‘rereading’ according to ‘figurative synthesis’ (KrV, B151-2) in judgments of experience and are, therefore, proto-propositional (Longuenesse 1998: 214f.). It utters as well the problem of whether the necessity of applying categories to sensible intuitions implies as well the ‘justification’ of doing so (Stephenson 2014) and ‘instantiation’ of these concepts in experience (Gomes 2010). If not, then there is a gap.⁶⁴ By contrast, absolute conceptualists argue that judgments of cognition ‘imply’ the application of categories from the very beginning and sensible intuitions are thus nothing other than sensory inputs.⁶⁵ As I see it, Hanna’s absolute non-conceptualism is compatible with the latter conception and creates, as he himself develops, another kind of gap, i.e., that there are certain essentially non-conceptual perceptual experiences that violate the application of categories.⁶⁶ Hanna’s gap does not affect my reading because rogue objects are not of significance as world-directed representations.

Nor does absolute conceptualist readings affect my reading because ‘the conditions of its unity’ that the understanding assigns to appearances cannot degenerate the isomorphy of sensible intuitions,

⁶³ Arguments for non-conceptual content can be found in Speaks (2005), Schmidt (2015) and Hanna (2011: 330-31).

⁶⁴ For an extensive discussion of these gaps, cf. Schulting (2017: 141ff.).

⁶⁵ Cf. McDowell (1994) and Ginsborg (2013), among others.

⁶⁶ Cf. Hanna (2013: 15-16).

and because the ‘conditions’ of the unity of understanding are not equal to the application of its ‘concepts’. As to the first feature, pure concepts of understanding apply to ‘objects of intuition *in general* (*überhaupt*)’ (KrV, B150, §24; emphasis added), where ‘in general’ could include, for one thing, both sensible and non-sensible intuitions opaquely,⁶⁷ and cannot substantiate, for another thing, the extendedness of objects. And as to the second feature, the understanding can be operative in determining objects (as in the case of the geometrical figures), ‘insofar as it contains the basis for the unity of the construction of these figures’ meta-cognitively without applying its concepts (Prol, 4:321-2).⁶⁸ The same line of argument can also be found in Kant’s theory of taste, where the harmony of the cognitive faculties affects the state of mind ‘in general’ (*überhaupt*),⁶⁹ without thereby mapping the contribution of the productive power of imagination with the concepts of understanding. The kind of ‘unity’ that the understanding assigns to representational objects is, therefore, not necessarily identical with that of its concepts.

5. Conclusion

I think that Kantian non-conceptualists can have their own cake and eat it, and in fact, eat it alone. I clarified that it is ‘the way and manner’ of perceiving objects through the representation of *space* as a *cognitive pattern* that justifies the emergence of sensible intuitions with phenomenologically different *patterns*, given by nature or the mind itself. I also clarified that the *procedure* of joining the manifold contained in the representation of an object together through the apprehension of the power of imagination operates in the *background* of an already available world-directed pattern. If not, it operates on disparate properties to

⁶⁷ Cf. KrV, 148-9.

⁶⁸ Cf. also footnote 40.

⁶⁹ Cf. KU, 5: 238-9, 5: 241, note.

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form and maintain a non-world-directed, i.e., a presumptive pattern. As a result, representations can be referring if they are spatial.

I clarified that sensible intuitions and reflective intuitions assign two distinct kinds of phenomenal consciousness. Even though both kinds of intuitions are positive contributions of the mind, sensible intuitions are well-founded information and the positive truth of cognition as to their cognitive pattern, whereas reflective intuitions are discriminatory and peculiar by nature. Sensible intuitions can be considered both as to their status quo and as to their generation, while reflective intuitions exclusively as to their generation. Sensible intuitions can be propositional, proto-propositional and non-propositional, while reflective intuitions can be exclusively propositional.

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