

The Existence of Being and the Original Cognitive Acts

Paweł Gondek

Since Rene Descartes developed his method for philosophical investigations, philosophers have tried to indicate an indubitable starting point in philosophy. That postulate was introduced in order to avoid the errors that appeared over the course of history in philosophical knowledge. Thus they searched for a point that would allow them formulate precisely cognitive operations or the object of investigations. The starting point was most often understood as the object of knowledge, or as the first cognitive act or way of apprehending the object that could be the condition for the right conduct of philosophical discourse. There is a fundamental point where the object of knowledge and the first cognitive act come in contact that determines all the subsequent stages in the philosophical explanation of the world. The cognitive relation that appears here is affected by the knowing subject who determines that moment. The knowing subject has an influence on the act of knowledge, both with respect to permissible sources of knowledge, and with respect to the organization of the process as such of knowledge. However, the formulation of the object of philosophical knowledge, which is performed in the context of a critical analysis of the process of knowledge, is affected by more than the subject's cognitive possibilities.

The object of knowledge becomes a fundamental difficulty in the precise determination of the starting point as the starting moment of philosophy. The discovery of the phenomena that occur in reality constitutes for man as a knowing subject the source of data concerning the world. However, that discovery does not guarantee the direct translation of the results

Artículo recibido el día el 2 de mayo de 2014 y aceptado para su publicación el 1 de octubre de 2014.

of the acquisition of knowledge to indubitable knowledge. The cognitive effort must be performed in order for acquired organized knowledge to constitute thought on reality; this constitutes one of the main tasks of the process of philosophical knowledge. For this reason, in philosophy the subjective conditions for knowledge are formulated and critical thinking on knowledge is performed. This is essential in order to organize properly the real sources and methods of knowledge, and to show the scale of errors that can occur in the cognitive space. However, a full analysis of the process of knowing is possible only in the context where all the factors of that process are present. It becomes possible to consider who it is that knows (the subject) with reference to what the subject knows (the object). Only this allows one to evaluate the value of the result as such of knowing, that is, how knowing is performed (the act). The correctness of knowledge is based first of all on the discovery of the agreement of the contents of knowledge with the object. This schema brings the proper procedure to the analysis of the starting point; that analysis is primarily directed to the object.

These reflections constitute an especially important question in realistic philosophy, in which cognitive contact with reality is emphasized as the fundamental postulate for the cultivation of philosophy. In the analyses presented we are drawing mainly on the results that arose in the Lublin Philosophical School in which they look to the Peripatetic tradition in the cultivation of philosophy.¹ In this line of thought, the question of the starting point was closely connected with the objective conditions for philosophical inquiries. As we point to philosophy as the rational explanation of reality, we are looking to the structure of really existing things and we are seeking methods of acquiring knowledge that correspond to those structures. The restoration of the realistic tradition of inquiries in the twentieth century (in particular, by E. Gilson and M. A. Krąpiec), started a new consideration of perennial philosophical problems and started a new quest for answers to the question concerning ultimate cause of the existence of things. In the discussion in our time on the condition of philosophy, the line of realistic philosophy seems to be a proposal that is constantly relevant.

¹ On this topic, cf. M. A. KRĄPIEC-A. MARYNIARCZYK, *The Lublin Philosophical School*; S. KAMIŃSKI, "The Methodological Peculiarity of Theory of Being", 7-23.

I. The Spontaneous Knowledge of Reality as the Starting Point

In philosophy we can look at the question of knowledge in at least two aspects. We can investigate what knowing is as a process, and we can analyze knowing as a human activity. In our considerations on the starting point of philosophy we should properly consider both these aspects. The first question, however, is the fundamental one. With regard to the second question, we should emphasize that all cognitive operations always occur in the context of knowledge. Man as the subject of knowledge by nature possesses only an ability to perform the act of knowledge. It follows from this that at the starting point, man as the subject of knowledge cannot possess a critically formed approach to the process of knowledge. The proper realization of the process is determined by the first cognitive act, which is a spontaneous and non-reflective act. Spontaneous knowledge is not only the sum of sensory impressions, but it also refers to intellectual apprehensions.² This kind of knowledge constantly accompanies human life and enriches its organized knowledge about the world. Openness to the world has the result that we are not limited to specific sources of knowledge, but we receive everything that we are capable of cognitively receiving. Its chief asset is the fact that it is knowledge that is not systematically organized, that it, it does not possess a specified purpose or method.

Spontaneous knowledge thus constitutes the “passive” reception of reality in which everything appears (the object) and how it appears (the mode or means) is received. The indication of the moment or point of passivity in knowledge is an important fact for philosophical reflections on the topic of the process of knowledge, because at the moment reality is most fully revealed. The cognitive contents that have been acquired correspond to real states in reality. An organized method for organizing the contents is not produced at this level, nor are general and systematic theses about the world formulated. The value of cognitive data obtained here possesses a direct reference to reality. The object of knowledge is the most autonomous element in the process of spontaneous knowledge, and it is the element that constitutes the motive for the occurrence of the cognitive relation. This act can be described as the discovery or reading of that which is. The knowing subject at this moment is fully determined by the ontological structure of

² When we speak of knowledge as an activity or operation, we have in mind the cognitive act that is performed in various structures, but in the same subject.

the known thing. Each subsequent moment in some way determines the primary and original cognitive relation that results from the engagement of the knowing subject. At the stage of becoming aware that it is necessary to set in order acquired knowledge, there is a thought on the data acquired in the course of knowledge.

Of course, the rational verification of assertions pronounced on the basis of spontaneous knowledge shows many difficulties in their direct reception in philosophical reflections. Spontaneously received data concerning the world, and the too hasty generalization of those data, can lead more than once to wrong assertions. However, this does not mean that meta-objective conditions must be set forth for the first cognitive acts. The postulate of making acts of knowledge critical before any cognitive operations have been performed possesses pre-philosophical marks.³ In it, the possibility is precluded of using anything other than knowledge that is rational, methodical, and systematic, subjected to the intersubjective verifiability of the theses. Meanwhile, it is not a question of directly harnessing spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge to the methods of philosophical explanation of reality, but it is a question of showing the genesis of the cognitive apprehension of the world in the framework of which we affirm the existence of something that we know. Since knowledge at the pre-scientific stage is affected by the object, the analysis of the starting point must first of all be directed to the object. Spontaneous knowledge is directed to the thing, and it corresponds to the nature of the thing. It is affected by concrete cognitive data that is not subject to modification resulting from the knowing subject's cognitive attitude.

In this way we discover that fact that something exists, which then can become the foundation for profound knowledge. In the Peripatetic tradition, Thomas Aquinas remarked on this in a special way as he indicated being as that which is first apprehended.⁴ Although the formulation "being" already seems to be a technical term in philosophy, it possesses a direct reference to reality. The understanding of being is not limited only to the aspect of content, but it is also identified with the act of existence. In the English language it was formulated on the basis of the infinitive form

³ Cf. S. KAMIŃSKI, *Method in Classical Philosophy*, 112-114.

⁴ Cf. S. THOMAE AQUINATIS, *Questiones disputatae. De veritate*, I, 1: "Illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum, et in quo omnes conceptiones resolvit, est ens."

of the verb “be” (“to be,” “to exist”). The accepted nominal form, “being,” means “that, which is.” The fundamental meaning of this formulation is thus primarily ordered to existence. This way of describing the objective of philosophy is not something unique to the English language. The term “being” (as *to on*) in reference to the verb “to be” (*einai*) was formulated for the first time in the ancient Greek language. It is accepted that Parmenides introduced the term in philosophy; he showed being as that which is (or, that which is remains without change). In Aristotle’s writings the term was used as a philosophical term to mean something that is and constitutes the proper object of first philosophy (metaphysics).⁵ On this philosophical and grammatical basis, the Latin term “*ens*,” which comes from “*esse*” (to be, to exist) arose; the term basically provided the groundwork for the formulation of the word in modern European languages (French “l’être,” German “sein,” and Polish “być”).⁶ Thus, the formulation “being” has become part of a tradition, reaching back to ancient times, of seeking the causes of the existence of things, and it constitutes an expression of philosophical inquiries.

The strengthening of the philosophical path of explaining reality in the pre-scientific mode of knowledge, which cannot be simply qualified as belonging to the philosophical theory of knowledge, should not be considered in terms of methodological error. This is because it is not the task of philosophy to qualify, by logical rules of correctness, the instruments of knowledge. Philosophy as knowledge about the world first of all must correspond to real states of affairs. The lack of cognitive contact with reality can become the reason why in philosophy an object is introduced that is an intellectual construct built on the foundation of properties of things that are possible to apprehend in conceptual knowledge. Meanwhile, the object of philosophy, which as its purpose to explain reality, must correspond to what exists independently of our cognitive acts. For this reason, we search for ways of knowing whereby we can adequately apprehend reality that exists in this way. In spontaneous common-sense knowledge, reality becomes the cause for the occurrence of cognitive acts, and such acts guarantee the direct reference to that which is.

⁵ Cf. C. H. KAHN, *The Verb ‘be’ in Ancient Greek. With a New Introductory Essay*.

⁶ Interesting remarks on the formation of this term in the Latin language and on the contexts in which it is understood were presented by E. GILSON, “Notes sur le vocabulaire de l’Être”, 150-158.

However, a problem arises with the interpretation of spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge, and this problem could be reflected in the methodical doubt that Descartes proposed.⁷ Spontaneous knowledge can be the cause of a distorted image of the world. This is because human knowledge that has not been reflected upon is not free of non-rational impulses, which can appear in the form of naive generalizations of sensory knowledge, or can appeal to the sphere of emotions that generate subjective desires. The problem of an irrational attitude in the act of spontaneous knowledge arises here; that attitude appears in the rise of prejudices or opinions that distort objective knowledge. However, we must look at the act of spontaneous knowledge from a complete different point of view. That which is the core of this act does not concern values formulated on the basis of content. In spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge we are not directed to the discovery of a thing's essence. The content that is read can be completely unrecognized in that knowledge. This knowledge mainly has a receptive character, not a constructive character. It would be difficult to consider spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge by applying the tools of critical thinking to it. Only an analysis of the fact of human knowledge leads to us to see that it is necessary to consider the factors that appear in this process. However, the apprehension of a thing in its fundamental existential elements is undeniable in spontaneous knowledge.

II. The Specific Character of the Object of Knowledge

Cognitive contact with a thing is not a simple matter. This is because there are functional divergences between the real way that things exists, and man's cognitive abilities. Philosophical knowledge, in which we strive for general assertions, is mainly built on the basis of conceptual knowledge. Therefore the consideration of being as the object of philosophy is often reduced to an analysis of the concept of "being," of its content, and of the semantic "regions" connected with being. Although in a pre-scientific apprehension, the first moment of the affirmation of the existence of a known thing occurs, yet at the level of abstraction, which is understood as a meth-

⁷ The method that Descartes formulated on the basis of mathematics required the rejection of any form of knowledge that could be doubted. For this reason, the object of philosophical knowledge became the result of mathematically elaborated simple natures. Cf. E. GILSON, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 125-146.

od for the univocal apprehension of being, existence is left aside.⁸ Concepts formulated on the basis of total spontaneous abstraction apprehend the features that characterize a thing in denotation, which allow us to distinguish one thing from another. In such a cognitive operation, existence can also play a certain role. However, only methodical abstraction that is directly exclusively to content makes the denotation of concepts precise. The operation of making the content of an apprehending thing precise and strict moves in the direction of drawing out, in conceptual knowledge, that which is general in the read features of things. At this stage, concepts are formulated by the rejection of individual features from the known content of things. When the first affirmation of the existence of things is omitted in this process, and existence is reduced to the role of an individual feature, then existence loses its value as a sub-ontological element and is neglected in the process of abstraction.

In this place, a key difference in how the object of philosophy is understood appears. In conceptual knowledge, being as “something” can be apprehended only in the aspect of content, while as “something that exists” it cannot be apprehended in this aspect. A concept is a cognitive apprehension of what is general, necessary, and constant in a thing. Therefore in conceptual knowledge we are apprehending the factors of content that constitute a thing, which most often are called the essence of a being. However, we cannot conceptually apprehend “that something is,” in other words, existence. Existence as the individual and concrete factor of every being is not subject to conceptualization. A real thing then would cease to be a proper object of knowledge because the thing’s existence does not fully correspond to the contents of concepts. This is because there are no common features that would constitute a foundation for the designates of the concept of existence. Existence is always the existence of something concrete, and it requires the use of cognitive operations that go beyond conceptual apprehensions. For this reason it becomes necessary to look to a method of knowing in which we can also cognitively apprehend existence. In this context, judgement as the intellectual way of asserting the existence of the states of things becomes an important act.

⁸ According to Krapiec, we do not single out the object of philosophy by abstraction because “it follows from the nature of abstraction itself that a concept formed by abstraction really abstracts from —disregards— real ontic elements and hence it is inadequate for presenting the reality in what is real”; M. A. KRAPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 76.

The knowledge of existence cannot be reduced to the role of purely sensory knowledge because data obtained in this way concern individual sensory impressions in which we do not apprehend existence. Only intellectually (while using sensory knowledge) can we assert that something is. This is done mainly through acts of judgement in which the process of knowledge is assertively directed to a thing. Among judgements, there also occurs a way of performing this act in which we assert the existence of what it. Such a cognitive act is called an existential judgement.⁹ The value of such a judgement can be reduced to the theoretical determination of the cognitive contact with reality that occurs in spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge. However, the existential judgement should not be understood as a cognitive construction but rather as a theoretical determination of the act of knowing a thing's existence. We should also make a distinction between the assertion of the existence of something as a positive act, and judgement as the result of knowing that is expressed in language by a proposition. The proposition, "a thing exists," seems trivial and in language it is rarely used. It is rather the case to hear assertions that something is such or otherwise. This shows that the analysis of language is not sufficient for a complete analysis of acts of knowledge, and the existential judgement is the best example of this. Such an act of knowledge also does not fit in the criteria for conceptual knowledge of things. Therefore the philosophical knowledge of reality must look to the data of pre-scientific knowledge in which the thing always appears as an existing whole.

Since in spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge the existence of a thing or things appears as a fundamental fact, the existential judgement logically becomes the first act of philosophical knowledge. The assertion that something is constitutes the first non-critical apprehension of a thing; in it real states of being are discovered. Therefore the existential judgement becomes the foundation for all subsequent cognitive apprehensions. Every way of making the content of a thing precise (including the construction of a concept) must have the existence of the thing as a condition. Otherwise, the analysis of an isolated content could easily cease to be an analysis of things. Because of the evidence of existence, when we apprehend something in the aspect of content we somehow suppose that the content exists. However, the univocal treatment of being in terms of content leaves aside existence as an individual feature, and that approach remains at the level of conceptual

⁹ Cf. M. A. KRAPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 86-90.

analysis.¹⁰ Meanwhile, if the explanation of being occurs in isolation from the existential foundation of being, this may cause philosophy to cease to be an explanation of reality, and to become an analysis of concepts. For this reason, the quest for a starting point for the philosophical explanation of reality in the Peripatetic tradition has always been an appeal to real states of being.

Because there is no possibility of formulating univocal methods of investigation in which we could apprehend something's act of existence, we are forced to seek ways of knowing that correspond to the real states of things. We cannot assume realism, but as we discover existing things and the rationality of reality (which appears in daily experience and action directed by what surrounds us), we must adequately read this fact and rationally justify it.¹¹ At the same time, we must remember that only those methods that in the context of real states of being discover the real structure of those states possess cognitive value for philosophy. The difference between what is real and what is cognitively apprehended creates a distance of non-univocal translatability of affirmed states of being to cognitive contents. Therefore in philosophical inquiries, constant cognitive contact with reality is necessary. Each thing must be apprehended in a broad existential perspective and must be analyzed as an existing content. The reference to real states of being constitutes a condition for the proper (general existential) way of explaining reality.¹² This way of philosophical is marked by realism that is directed to contact with reality, and by universalism that strives to discover the causes of everything that exists.

Realistic philosophy requires rational openness to reality. This can be achieved only through a starting point that is free of assumptions and through neutralism in how the object is apprehended. The assumption-free approach is achieved in the primary and original way in pre-scientific knowledge, and therefore subsequent cognitive operations can be formu-

¹⁰ I. KANT remarked on this in the text of *Critique of Pure Reason*, 564-567. Gilson emphasized the significance of this assertion for the preservation of "existential neutrality" in the theory of knowledge. Cf. E. GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 3-5 and 126-131.

¹¹ It becomes possible to know reality rationally by discovering the order that occurs in the structure of the world. This question is connected with the problems of the transcendental properties of being; those properties are discovered in things and at the same time constitute the foundation for the formulated principles of knowledge. cf. M. A. KRAPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 99-190.

¹² Cf. E. GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 202-205.

lated with reference to it. Neutralism is closely connected with the starting point, which is understood as the first original cognitive apprehension of the object. If we set subjective conditions for the process of knowing at the starting point of philosophical reflections, this does not permit us to preserve neutrality in our apprehension of the object. We should not accept any sort of preconception concerning the conditions for the correctness of philosophical discourse in the cognitive attitude to reality. In the context of the cognitive process, only the thing can set the conditions of knowledge. The subjective formulation of the conditions of knowledge already constitutes a kind of theoreticized thought that is not free of assumptions. The critical transformation of the process of knowledge (as an investigative operation) can occur only after a cognitive reference to the object. The formulation of the philosophical object of knowledge must therefore occur with reference to the real object, which is the guarantee of the cognitive apprehension of reality.¹³ Only a reference to what is in reality can constitute an assumption-free starting point for philosophy.

For this reason, the assertion of something's existence becomes the fundamental cognitive act in which we apprehend what a being is. Although human knowledge is aspective knowledge, in philosophy the existential aspect becomes fundamental.¹⁴ The explanation of reality in the existential dimension requires a way of proceeding in investigation that is directed to the fact of things' existence. Judgement-based knowledge in the form of the existential judgement constitutes a particular moment in the affirmation of ontological facts that are already there. However, the cognitive data obtained in this way cannot be apprehended univocally in the form of a concept. The apprehension of the existence of things in the existential judgement is a direct act of affirmation that something is. In this type of knowledge we appeal to the fundamental way of being of things, in which we read not some feature, but we read the relations that occur in the feature. We do not affirm the fact as such of existence, but the fact of the existence of something. It is not an independent ontological element, but it is a relation of elements that performs a fundamental role in the being of things. In judgement-based knowledge, we apprehend being in the order of relations, and so we do not apprehend the content alone or existence alone, but the

¹³ Cf. M. A. KRAPIEC, *Metaphysic. An Outline of the History of Being*, 38-41.

¹⁴ Philosophy investigates reality in the light of the ultimate causes of reality's existence. The existential aspect of inquiries makes this the most general body of knowledge.

relation of a thing's essence to its existence. Therefore the first knowledge of things cannot be reduced to one element, nor to each element separately, but it must constitute a cognitive apprehension of a fundamental ontological relation.

To be sure, the cognitive apprehension of a thing in the order of ontological relations provides the opportunity to read reality adequately. This is because it allows us to apprehend the ontological foundations of everything that is, without regard for the content of the particular individual things that appear in reality.¹⁵ As a result of this, philosophy as a body of general knowledge requires a form of objectivization that will be able to apprehend the relations that occur in various states of being. It is not possible to render univocal such a denotation or scope of knowledge in concepts. For this reason, the construction of the theory of knowledge in realistic philosophy is based on the method of analogical knowledge, in which there is a direct reference to the relational being of things. Relations of being possess fitting proportions that constitute the foundation for the analogical way of being of things. The theory of analogical knowledge results from the fact of the analogical way that being as such exists.¹⁶ This method of knowing does not require univocal treatment, and so it becomes fitting for the relational way that things exist. This is the first original apprehension of the fact "that it is." However, the investigation of the things essence happens through the apprehension of the essential features that demarcate the nature of the thing. Both these cognitive ways concern being and constitute elements of the method of knowing reality. However, the relational apprehension of the fact of a thing's existence, which must accompany all cognitive operations, is the first and original cognitive act in philosophy.

In the history of philosophy, the fact that it is impossible to apprehend existence in conceptual knowledge led to a movement toward essential

¹⁵ Kamiński emphatically states: "the scope of the conception of being *qua* being reaches everywhere, where anything exists and is contentually neutralized, that is, the very fact of existence does not yet impose on the mind some preconception of what reality is like." S. KAMIŃSKI, "The Methodological Peculiarity of Theory of Being", 15. The neutralization of the content occurs in such an apprehension of things.

¹⁶ In analogical knowledge we read the relations and proportions that demarcate the necessary relations that occur in being. On this topic, cf. M. A. KRAPIEC, "The Theory of Analogy of Being", 31-106. With reference to the analogical way of the being of things, the method of metaphysical separation has been formulated; that method constitutes the proper method for singling out the object of philosophy-being, and the transcendental properties that belong to being.

ontology. That tendency has grown from the reduction of what is real to representations of thought, and it has led to the absolutization of cognitive contents in concepts. The ontological attempts to analyze the contents of concepts have led philosophy outside the realm of rational thought on reality.¹⁷ In this way, the existential foundation for the philosophical explanation of reality has been lost, and neutralism in the apprehension of the object has been upset. Any speculation on the contents and denotations of conceptions that does not refer to real states of things ceases to be a philosophical explanation of reality. Therefore concentration on the analysis of concepts understood as autonomous cognitive contents goes beyond the bounds of philosophical discourse. The involvement of the creative and speculative functions of the intellect in the analysis of the concept of being can lead to the formation of intellectual constructions that are non-contradictory, but which at the same time are not necessarily real. Such intellectual operations say much about the creative power of the human cognitive powers that show themselves in their full richness in artistic creativity. However, in philosophical investigations they are a contravention of the real possibilities of an adequate explanation of reality. The limit of philosophical knowledge is set by the real existence of things, on the basis of which we formulate the object of philosophy, which is that which is – being.

III. Conclusions

The demonstration of the proper object and the cognitive acts that correspond to it is the fundamental task of research in philosophy. This is because all subsequent inquiries result from these operations. However, when we try to determine precisely the starting point of philosophy, we encounter the difficulty of harmonizing the method of knowledge with real states of being. Therefore the quest for indubitable investigative procedures that would allow us to avoid errors has often become the main purpose of philosophy. Tendencies to cultivate meta-objective philosophy have been dominant in contemporary forms of conducting philosophical discourse. Meanwhile, philosophical thought on reality, to the same degree as the

¹⁷ Cf. E. GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 191-202. The understanding of the concept as a non-transparent sign has essential significance for these inquiries.

precise method of knowledge, requires that one shows the specific features of cognitive contact with the world that philosophical thought is supposed to explain. Reference to real states of things seems to be fundamental for philosophy because it sets the criterion of correctness and of truth for all cognitive operations. The analysis of real cognitive processes also allows us precisely to show the errors that might occur in those processes.

The first and original cognitive act is the not yet critical reference to things in which the subject is only a passive recipient of cognitive contents. This type of knowledge was called pre-scientific knowledge, which constitutes a pre-reflective and unorganized experience of reality. From the point of view of the theory of philosophical knowledge, spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge does not possess any investigative value. However, for the proper establishment of the starting point for the results of this knowledge, it cannot be omitted. This is because in it the structure of the known, which is reduced to the assertion that "something is," is revealed. Conceptual knowledge, which became the domain of reflective philosophical knowledge, is insufficient here. Conceptual knowledge is not in a position to apprehend a thing in its sub-ontological elements. Existence is the special element that is absent in the conceptual cognitive apprehension. However, in spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge, this element constitutes the foundation for the apprehension of a thing. For this reason, spontaneous pre-scientific knowledge becomes the guarantee of realism in philosophical knowledge. On its foundation in realistic philosophy judgement-based knowledge has been formulated in the form of existential judgements in which we affirm the existence of something.

The investigative scope of philosophy concerns the ontological foundations of everything that is. The cognitive apprehension of such a wide area of inquiries leads to difficulties in the selection of suitable cognitive acts. From the objective viewpoint, it is not the apprehension of existence as such or of the content of a thing, but the apprehension of the relation of the elements that occur in every object of knowledge that becomes the fundamental apprehension of reality in realistic philosophy. This is done by the method of analogical knowledge, which reads in a thing the relations that occur in it. The various cognitive acts that are used in philosophical knowledge can basically be reduced to the same object, an object which constitutes a relational ontological whole. This allows us more precisely to formulate the proper object of philosophy; that object is described as "that

which is," or being. Since the times of Aristotle, metaphysics has been the fundamental philosophical discipline; it investigates being as being, and what belongs to being in an essential way.

Paweł Gondek

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin
pablo@kul.lublin.pl

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