

The Role of Existential Judgments in Knowing the Existence of Beings

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I. Introduction

Philosophers did not always pay attention to knowledge of the existence of beings. This mainly resulted from the fact that there is a strict correlation between how being is understood and the conception of knowledge. If existence is not considered as a constitutive fact of being, then it is not strange that one does not pay more attention to it in explaining knowledge, and conversely, the recognition of existence as a fundamental element of the structure of being cannot be not translated into a fundamental role in knowledge. The close connection of knowledge with the structure of being indicates that the explanation of cognitive acts that apprehend existence requires many systemic analyses. However, such explanations usually have not enough a systemic character, since they most often concentrate on describing and explaining cognitive acts alone, but do not sufficiently emphasize the reasons for knowledge on the side of the subject and on the side of the object. In the twentieth century the Polish Dominican Father M. A. Krapiec made an attempt to grasp these problems in a complementary way. He was inspired by the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas and formulated an original explanation of the knowledge of the existence of beings. At the same time he indicated the basic role of this act in all metaphysical knowledge and made cognitive realism dependent on this act.

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In my paper I am trying to outline M. A. Krapiec's position. However, at the beginning, following E. Gilson, I am making note of the main difficulties connected with explaining the knowledge of the existence of beings, and the need to develop suitable cognitive tools for explanations of this type. Next, I present a specific description of the existential judgment as the fundamental cognitive act in which the intellect apprehends the existence of a thing. It is here that I look to M. A. Krapiec's interpretations, who unlike other authors developed this questions systematically and exhaustively. Further on, I analyze the structure and content of the existential judgment, in which I emphasize the role of the existential factor. I finish this article by showing the key significance of the existential judgment for metaphysical knowledge as a whole, which turns out to be nothing other than the development of what is contained *in actu confuse* in the first cognitive acts.

II. The Difficulties Connected with the Apprehension of the Existence of Being

In this short presentation, it is impossible to discuss even the most important difficulties connected with our knowledge of the existence of beings, because the question concerns not only suitable cognitive acts, but also concerns the holistic conception of being. In the history of philosophy, they formulated various explanations both for the course of human knowledge and for the fundamental structure and properties of being. Despite the variety of positions in both questions, we can indicate certain matters that most often presented obstacles to complementary and coherent apprehensions of the problematic of the knowability of the existence of beings. In connection with the broad scope of the topic, I am limiting myself to the opinions of E. Gilson, since it seems that this philosopher accurately grasped the main sources of the problems concerning the existence of being, and he indicated the methodological tools needed to explain adequately the above mentioned problem.

According to E. Gilson, the fundamental source of difficulties in explaining the knowledge of the existence of beings is that some has based human knowledge on the method of abstraction; the method of abstraction concentrates on the acts of knowledge that guarantee conceptual knowledge. The result of knowledge of this kind can only be the apprehension of the essential aspect of being. Meanwhile, even if the cognitive apprehension of

being does not necessarily imply the apprehension of existence, this does not need to mean that existence is unknowable or that that it does not play any essential role in knowledge. Gilson writes: “Since every real object contains something more than its essence, our knowledge of any real object, to be adequate to it, must contain something more than its concept and definition.”¹ Therefore, ontologies based on abstraction either abandon knowledge of existence, regarding it as a universal property of beings, a property that determines that they are real beings, but does not allow one to make distinctions between them, to classify them, or to place them in an hierarchy, or by defining existence they fall into the various paradoxes that result from a conceptual apprehension of existence.² Nevertheless, Gilson thinks that “one should not be hasting to draw the conclusion that what is not an object is not an object of knowledge, and that what is not an object of knowledge does not exist [...]. To require that *esse* can be apprehended means to want it to be a thing of some sort.”³ Meanwhile, existence is the final constitutive act of a thing, and so it cannot be treated as a thing.

Another source of difficult is empiricism, which regards the assertion of the fact of a thing’s existence as the starting point of knowledge, and as a necessary condition for thought to possess a real object. However, according to Gilson, knowledge of existence in the framework of this conception does not go beyond the declarations mentioned above, while the problem itself eludes philosophical investigations.⁴ This is because in empiricism one is unable to discover the internal structure of being; that internal structure in a fundamental dimension is constituted by two correlated factors — the act of existence, and the essence made real by that act. From this fact, Gilson draws the conclusion that the explanation of the existence of the finite beings that are given in experience requires the apprehension of each of them as composed “of ‘what it is’ (its substance or essence) and of the fact of existence or *esse*, by virtue of which the substance or essence exists.”⁵ Otherwise, existence would still be something that could not be apprehended, even if we experience certain manifestations of existence.

Gilson also criticizes conceptions of the intuitive knowledge of existence. In discussion with J. Maritain, he emphasizes that intuition that

¹ É. GILSON, *Byt i istota* [Being and essence], 213.

² *Ibidem*, 239.

³ *Ibidem*, 83-84.

⁴ *Ibidem*, 239.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 87.

would allow us to apprehend in one look the inexhaustible and unlimited reality of “being as being,” that is, which would make metaphysical experience possible, would have to be “closer to religious grace than to the natural features of the mind,” which “in each man possesses the same properties.”⁶ Meanwhile, existence cannot be understood apart from the “concept of being,” which always comprehends the containment of the act of existence (*esse*) in the concrete being (*ens*), and as such remains an “identical reflection of infinitely many completely different acts of existence.” On this basis, Gilson writes: “Do we have to imagine that to fill this concept with content, some sort of intuition is necessary that would make possible a vague vision, in the unity of an idea, of the separateness of the acts?”⁷ The being that imposes itself to direct knowledge is that same being that is apprehended by the concept of “being as being” in metaphysics.

For Gilson, it is clear that we cannot know existence as such, since it is always the existence of some sort of substance. Existence separated from what exists is a term that has no content.⁸ On the other hand, he emphasizes that “the existence of being is closer to us than its intellectual knowability.”⁹ He writes that “existence is not an illness of essence — on the contrary — it is its life.”¹⁰ It is also not an illness of being, since the illness is rather the “pathological inclination to lose existence.” On this account, he remarks that “the restoration to existence of the place that it truly occupies in being is the fundamental condition for making being as such the foundation of metaphysics.”¹¹

The methodological and cognitive instruments that Gilson devised in his investigations on the existence of being were “historicism” and natural language. Historicism allows one to check actually performed metaphysical inquiries “by locating them upon the background of metaphysical systems that have been historically interpreted and compared precisely with the realized system.”¹² Also, natural language presupposes the “analogical

⁶ É. GILSON, *Tomizm. Wprowadzenie do filozofii św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, 59.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 60.

⁸ É. GILSON, *Byt i istota* [Being as essence], 83–84.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 247.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 248.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 234.

¹² W. CHUDY, *Poznanie istnienia (bytu) w ujęciu tomistów egzystencjalnych (dokończenie)* [Knowing the existence (of being) according to existential Thomists (the completion)], 42.

parallel of being — knowledge — language, since being constitutes the primary and original ontological foundation for the formation of knowledge and linguistic expressions.”¹³ Using the above mentioned cognitive tools, Gilson in reference to the knowledge of the act of the existence of being says that since “this act eludes conceptual knowledge,” then “either knowledge of it must be impossible, or it must be capable of being apprehended by judgment, which itself is an act.”¹⁴ This is because this way of knowing is indicated by the possibility of making existential judgments; that “finds a justification when we accept that the intellect of a knowing being right away apprehends in its object — regardless what it is like — that which in it is most internal and deep: the *actus essendi*.”¹⁵ In this way, Gilson became the discoverer of existential judgments, which allow us to explain the cognitive apprehension of the existence of beings, whereby all metaphysical knowledge finds a stronger support in really existing things. Gilson’s discovery found wide resonance among philosophers who were engaged in reflection on an new reading and interpretation of the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas. One of the philosophers who significantly developed this idea and based the entire system of metaphysics on it was M. A. Krąpiec. In the points that follow, I will try to present his most important accomplishments in this area.

III. The Articulation of Metaphysical Experience

The conception of existential judgments arose on the canvas of St. Thomas Aquinas’ interpretation of being. In his commentary on Boethius’ treatise “*De Trinitate*,” along with conceptual knowledge, he listed a second operation of the intellect that he called judgment, and ascribed to it a close connection with the apprehension of a being’s existence — *iudicium respicit esse rerum*.¹⁶ This can be seen even in a predicative judgment where the copula “is” that is the foundation of the judgment’s structure indicates a relation to a thing, even though the assertion based on it refers only to the thing’s potential existence. All truth-based knowledge is based on this kind of dependence, since without a reference to an external object, we could

¹³ *Ibidem*, 46-47.

¹⁴ É. GILSON, *Byt i istota* [Being as essence], 213.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 214-215.

¹⁶ S. THOMAE DE AQUINO, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3.

not speak of any form of cognitive harmonization of the intellect with a thing, or of the combination and division that the intellect performs on the basis of what is connected or divided in a thing. On this account, the “is” in a predicative judgment requires a justification in the existential “is” that underlies the basic cognitive experience that is the affirmation of the existence of a being. According to Krapiec, the existential judgment is the cognitive act in which the experience thus understood is performed¹⁷. This judgment is the only act that expresses the formal cognitive apprehension of the existence of being. Although the judgment has certain elements in common with predicative judgments, it differs essentially from them. This is because predicative judgments imply conceptual knowledge, while the existential judgment is the most primary act of human cognition.

In Krapiec’s interpretation, the existential judgment is the cognitive act that directly apprehends the existence of being, and it is verbalized in the proposition “*x* exists.” Hence the term “existential judgment” covers both the cognitive operation and its product. The core of this kind of cognitive apprehension is the affirmation of being, and the apprehension of being is performed with a view to existence. The determining moment is the direct contact of the cognitive act with a real being¹⁸. Krapiec calls this moment the “contact” of two existences, or alternatively two acts, and it is regarded as the knowing subject’s most primary and authentic experience. This act is the subject’s “cognitive” response to existing reality; existing reality by its existence actualizes man as a knowing being — the existence of a thing awakes our intellect to the possibility of cognition.¹⁹ At the same time, this the most holistic apprehension by the senses of the content-related aspect of the object as “something that exists.” This is because existence is always the existence of a concrete thing and content, hence Krapiec speaks of the “pincer” apprehension of being in the aspect of existence and content.²⁰ The affirmation as such of existence, however, is independent of sensory knowledge because the apprehension of existence is prior to the apprehension of content. Existence cannot be reduced to content or materiality, and so it requires a cognitive act other than sensory operation. Therefore in the existential judgment there is a special synthesis of the action of the

¹⁷ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Doświadczenie i metafizyka* [Experience and metaphysics], 15.

¹⁸ A. GONDEK, *Egzystencjalny sąd* [Existential judgment], 45.

¹⁹ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 99.

²⁰ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Filozofia i nauki*, [Philosophy and sciences], 177.

senses and the intellect²¹. The faculty called the “particular reason,” the *vis particularis*, performs the integrating function. This faculty connected the intellectual affirmation of existence with the content apprehended by the senses. Nevertheless, existence is the reason for the knowledge of content.²²

The apprehension of existence in the existential judgment is performed instantaneously and spontaneously. Although that judgment be of varied intensity and undergoes various phases of expression, yet it always remains evident in itself, since the reason for the judgment is the real existence of a known being. Human knowledge starts from this kind of act. As a result, this act is the foundation of all later cognitive operations, including other operations based on knowledge. On this account, Krąpiec speaks of the genetic primacy of the existential judgment in human knowledge, and of its priority in rational justification, because this judgment constitutes the reason for the knowability of things. Because this judgment first connects the knower with the reality that is known, it is at the same time the foundation for the realism of cognition, since it guarantees the real presence of the object without which knowledge would not be actualized. As it provides the foundation for human knowledge, the existential judgment indicates the process-character of knowledge; knowledge starts from the first act and passes through further phases. This judgment plays a special role in metaphysical knowledge. According to Krąpiec, the act of the existential judgment comprehends the whole of metaphysical experience because it potentially contains the whole of the apprehended being. Metaphysical knowledge is in large measure an explicit expression of what has been apprehended in an existential judgment. Krąpiec includes the following among the most important properties of the existential judgment: immediacy, individuality, pre-reflexivity, and super-verity²³.

Immediacy consists in the absence of any cognitive mediator, e.g., a sign or concept. Krąpiec precludes cognitive mediators, whether subjective, instrumental, or formal, and radicalizes immediacy in a special way. In the existential judgment there is only the “contact” with the object, but there is still no differentiation of any of the object’s properties²⁴. Therefore it is a judgment without a predicate. This is because existence does not does

²¹ S. KAMIŃSKI, *The methodological peculiarity of theory of being*, 14.

²² M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Teoria analogii bytu* [The theory of the analogy of being], 114-115.

²³ A. MARYNIARCZYK, *Metoda metafizyki realistycznej* [The method of the realistic metaphysics], 49.

²⁴ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Doświadczenie i metafizyka* [Experience and metaphysics], 14-15.

not evoke in the knower any “copy” or sign, but is only the action of the object on the subject. Immediacy is a feature only of the apprehension of existence, since all other cognitive acts are always in some way mediated. Immediacy occurs both the “contact” of two acts — the act of the existence of being, and the act of knowledge, and in the subject’s internal experience of the existence of his own “I,” although the latter, despite its epistemologically equality, is secondary to the first temporally and methodologically.²⁵ The individual character of existential judgments is closely connected with their immediacy. Their individual character results from the non-repeatability and individuality of the existence of things. Individuality indicates the connection of judgments with concrete things without which such judgments could not come into existence.

The pre-reflectivity of the existential judgment results from the fact that, as Krąpiec understands it, this judgment is completely filled with presence (facticity) of the object, so that in it there is no room for the consciousness or self-consciousness of the knower; that consciousness is drawn forth only in additional acts of reflection²⁶. Also, in this act there is no creative action on the part of the subject, since the main reason for the occurrence of the act is the existence of the known thing acting on the subject. Therefore Krąpiec emphasizes that this act has the character of a spontaneous reception or passion, or even an instinctive reflex. No delimitation *de facto* occurs in it yet between the subject and the object of knowledge, but consciousness *in actu exercito* is the only form present in it. The exclusion of the subject as the primate source of this act guarantees the realism of the other cognitive acts.

The qualification of truth still does not belong to the existential judgment, since the possibility of cognitive error is excluded in that judgment. This results primarily from the absence of any mediators, and it results from the non-theoretical character of the act. Hence Krąpiec calls this judgment “super-veridical,” [above truth] “evident,” “indubitable,” and “infallible.” In other words, the existential judgment is always true, since the condition for the affirmation made in it is the existing object. The super-verity of the existential judgments causes it to be condition for truth expressed in subject-

²⁵ W. CHUDY, *Poznanie istnienia (bytu) w ujęciu tomistów egzystencjalnych (dokończenie)* [Knowing the existence (of being) according to existential Thomists (the completion)], 65.

²⁶ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *I-Man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, 135.

predicate judgments, since the affirmation of the agreement of the intellect with the thing implies the necessity of knowledge of the existence of the thing. Moreover, because of existential judgments, we can distinguish between real and fictitious predicative judgments.

On the basis of the above mentioned properties, Krąpiec proposes a division of existential judgments. The first kind, are immediate judgments that concern the external world. These judgments are divided into unclear and clear judgments. Besides these, the immediate judgments also include the subject's knowledge of the existence of his own "I," which he identifies with the experience of self-consciousness; self-consciousness accompanies all other cognitive acts. The second kind are indirect existential judgments, which are the result of an act of reasons that is made based on direct existential judgments. In indirect judgments, as in the subject's apprehension of his own "I," concomitant action of sensory knowledge does not occur. An example of judgments of this kind are the statements "God exists," and "the soul exists."

IV. An Analysis of the Course and Structure of the Existential Judgment

With respect to the properties listed earlier, the existential judgment must be a simple act. Nevertheless, we can discern in the course of the existential judgment certain phases. In the first phase, as Krąpiec expresses it, reality "strikes us with the 'blade' of its existence."²⁷ This is a reflexive reaction of the subject to "the strongly self-manifesting presence of being."²⁸ In the subject, reflection does not yet occur, and content is not clearly expressed in the apprehended being. The factual character of being plays a key role. It actualizes in genetic and structural way knowledge and the subject's self-consciousness. The existence of the object is perceived here only as the first manifestation of a thing as that which determines its factual character. In the second phase, the subject's engagement appears. This engagement is expressed in a resolute affirmation of the existence of a being; this affirmation entails the harmonization of the knowing subject with the known

²⁷ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 86.

²⁸ W. CHUDY, *Poznanie istnienia (bytu) w ujęciu tomistów egzystencjalnych (dokończenie)* [Knowing the existence (of being) according to existential Thomists (the completion)], 61.

being.²⁹ The affirmation of existence is the dominant and primary operation of the intellect. The affirmation of existence can be expressed either in the simple cognitive reaction that “something exists,” or in an explicit affirmation “A exists.” In the third phase, the cognitive result contained in the existential judgment is formulated, and it is expressed in a proposition: “A exists,” or “A is.”

If we keep in view the content of the existential judgment, we must say that it is the most potentialized form of human knowledge. This act includes what in tradition has been described with the formula: *ens ut primum cognitum*.³⁰ It potentially contains everything that bears in itself known being. For this reason in its most primary form it is an act *in confuse*. Also, the vagueness concerns both the content of the known object, and the structure of the cognitive act in which the object is apprehended. The apprehension of the “existence of something,” means the “existence of a definite content of being,” that is, what *de facto* constitutes the object of metaphysical knowledge, “being as being,” or “the concept of being.”

On account of its primacy and how existential judgments take their course, they are acts of intellectual knowledge that cannot be reduced to any other acts. For this reason, they have a completely different structure than subject-predicate judgments. They include “*iudicium de secundo adiacente*,” which means that they do not possess a predicate since their only content is the apprehension of the existence of the object, not the attribution of any feature to the object, as takes place in predicative judgments³¹. To put this in a few short words, the existential judgment asserts that the object is, and not how it is. Existence is not a feature of an object, but the constituent factor. Hence an act that apprehends the existence of an object in its structure reflects the elementary structure of the object, which is composed of existence and a content (essence) proportional to existence. Human knowledge is ordered to being that is structured in such a way. If it is to be real knowledge, it cannot miss the structure of the object. However, different cognitive acts refer to each of the two fundamental elements of the structure of being: while content is known by signs, existence is known in an existential judgment.

²⁹ Ibidem, 62.

³⁰ M.A. KRAPIEC, *I-Man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, 134.

³¹ M.A. KRAPIEC, *Teoria analogii bytu* [The theory of the analogy of being], 99.

The differences between existential judgments and predicative judgments do not concern only the structure, but also concern the meaning of judgments. The term “is” in an existential judgment occurs in the most fundamental sense, which has an existential character. Its meaning is exclusively affirmative, not cohesive or assertive as in the case of predicative judgments. Moreover, the cohesive and assertive “is” implies the existential “is,” since without a reference to an object no judgment can be said about an object³². Predicative judgments do not assert existence, but only presuppose or imply existence. Therefore, the composition or division of feature that belong or do not belong to an object potentially imply or presuppose the existence of the object. It is likewise in the case of judgments of location (e.g., “John is running”) since, according to Krąpiec, they are only a variety of predicative judgments. Without existential judgments, therefore, the truth of the other judgments loses its reason for being.

V. The Basis of Metaphysical Knowledge

Existential judgments thus understood constitute the foundation for metaphysical knowledge. First, they are the starting point that determines the entire further course of metaphysical knowledge. Only the existential judgment gives a clear meaning to the traditional formula that indicates the basis of metaphysical knowledge — *ens ut primum cognitum*.³³ This is because it allows us to determine or describe the area of this knowledge, which is demarcated by really existing things. Metaphysical knowledge appears thereby as the explicit expression of what *in actu confuse* is already contained in the first act of knowledge. If it is not recognized that the basic cognitive acts are dependent on really existing things, then the realism of knowledge remains something conventional or simply declarative.

By an analysis of existential judgments, the object of metaphysical knowledge is singled out. That object is “being as a concrete existing content.”³⁴ These procedures constitute the main method of metaphysical

³² M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 87-88.

³³ M.A. KRĄPIEC, O realizm metafizyki [On realism in metaphysics], 19.

³⁴ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 93-94: “To be a being as a being means to exist concretely in a determinate content: every ontically determinate content is proportionally existing, everything that is, is ontically determinate in itself”.

knowledge, which Krapiec calls “separation”: separation is composed of a complex series of cognitive operations, which are made indeed on existential judgments³⁵. That method has as its task to express explicitly what is contained in the “concept” of being, which concept is singled out on the basis of the existential judgment. There is no room here to present the particular stages of separation, hence I will mention only the most important matter. Now, the “concept” of being obtained in this way is not in its structure *de facto* a concept, but it is a judgment that refers not only to content, but also to the existence of a being.³⁶ Any description of the nature of first knowledge other than a description in terms of judgment would take away objectivity from knowledge, since without a clear rational justification of the “presence” of the object in acts of knowledge, nothing except the search for “objective” conditions into subject would remain.

Knowledge that is based on the existential judgment does not lose contact with really existing being, hence it is typically objective knowledge. The conditioning by the object is so radical that without an existing object, the existence of a cognitive act would be impossible³⁷. The adaptation of cognitive acts to external objects entails another feature of knowledge, which is its analogical character. This property opens cognitive acts to the wealth of the object and to all of reality, and it brings forth also what is individual and unrepeatable. Especially in reference to human existence and the human being, the analogical character of knowledge of being is very important, since it defends us from different kinds of cognitive reductionism, which often are translated into practice.

Knowledge realized on the basis of existential judgments, in keeping with what was asserted earlier, has a truth-related or veridical character. This is because only by the real “presence” of being, is the cognitive agreement of the intellect with the known thing possible. Without the basic existential “is,” no truth of any sort could be rationally justified in judgment-based knowledge³⁸.

The unlimited scope or denotation of the predication of the existential judgment leads us to the next very important property of metaphysical knowledge, which is its transcendental character. It is not a question here

³⁵ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Teoria analogii bytu* [The theory of the analogy of being], 140-144.

³⁶ A. MARYNIARCZYK, *Metoda metafizyki realistycznej* [The method of the realistic metaphysics], 56.

³⁷ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *Pojęcie-słowo* [Concept-word], 88.

³⁸ M.A. KRĄPIEC, *I-Man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, 136.

of the transcendental factors that condition the subject's faculties, but it is a question of indicating in a real and concrete being such factors that effect that character of being as such. If that which determines the character of being is not discovered, then being will remain unintelligible, which opens the way to agnosticism.

By basing the existential judgment in the structure of real being, we can also indicate the causal character of metaphysical knowledge, which seeks explanations for asserted facts by indicate a suitable reason. The explanation is provided only by objective reasons, since any other reasons would possess an *a priori* character or would not be reasons at all, as a result of which knowledge would be completely relative. The objective character of rational justification leads to the question of the ultimate reason; the ultimate reason is a necessary element of the systemic explanation of being, since without an appeal to a reason of this type, the object that is being explained would remain unintelligible, or indeed contradictory in itself. In that case we would be dealing with the terminal point of metaphysical knowledge, which is indirectly constituted by existential judgments. By proper proof, we arrive at the discovery of the existence of such factors that render free of contradiction the known facts. The negation of factors of beings asserted or affirmed in indirect existential judgments would be a negation of facts of being asserted in direct existential judgments³⁹. The properties that have been presented of metaphysical knowledge refute the grounds of skeptical, agnostic, and relativistic positions.

VI. Conclusion

The analyses made affirm the key role of the act of existence, both in the structure of being, and in the process of human knowledge. This is because the act of existence provides the foundation for the character of being, not only of concrete real things, but of everything that exists, including the process as such of knowledge; if that process is real, it must be explained in categories of being. Krapiec sees the fundamental significance of the act of existence in metaphysical knowledge and he makes existence the cognitive key for explaining not only the general structure of being, the main principles of human knowledge, but also he makes existence the key for

³⁹ M.A. KRAPIEC, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, 96.

understanding particular philosophical problems, which become intelligible only by rational justifications concerning their existential aspect; the existential aspect brings forth, along with essential and content-related features, also individual and unrepeatable properties. This is especially important in the case of the human being, who as a rational and free subject of his actions can be understood only in an existential perspective. For this reason, we should emphasize that a deeper understanding of how the existence is apprehended is a major task of metaphysical knowledge.

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