

Truth as Relation in Aquinas

The purpose of this paper is to come to a more correct understanding of Aquinas's claim that truth is both a relation and one of the transcendentals. Aquinas explains transcendental truth as a relation to the divine and human intellects. The difficulty lies in that whereas "relation" is one of the ten categories, the transcendentals are cross-categorical. Since a transcendental cannot belong to a single category, this "relation" must be a special one, one which does not fall into the category of *ad aliquid*. But how is it possible to be a relation and at the same time a transcendental?

In *De Veritate* q.1, a.1 and q.21, a.1, Aquinas solves this problem by confining the *relation* to the human intellect. But some contemporary commentators argue that this cannot be the final solution, because as the relation to the human intellect is accidental for *ens*, it would follow that *ens* is *verum* only *per accidens*.

In the following, I will examine Aquinas's argument, keeping these problems in mind. My conclusion will be that Aquinas's argument in *De Veritate* q.1, a.1 and q.21, a.1 is consistent free from the alleged problem, although there are obstacles to in reaching the correct understanding of transcendental truth in relation to the divine intellect. I will also try to propose one way to overcome the obstacles in the last part of this paper.

1. Truth of being: real and transcendental

Unlike Augustine or Anselm, Aquinas's investigation into "what is truth" is systematic from the beginning. Augustine, in *Soliloquia*, and Anselm, in *De Veritate*, inquire into the definition of truth. Their method is to examine the common usage of the word in order to arrive at a tentative definition, which can be refined against counterexamples. Aquinas's strategy is not to start from everyday usage of the term *truth*, but to start from examining the structure of the concept.

In the first article of the first question of *De Veritate*, Aquinas states that *verum* is "the mode ... that is common, and consequent upon every being" *modus generalis consequens omne ens* (*Truth I: 6, De Veritate Q.1, a.1, c.*). According to Aquinas, every concept of the human intellect is acquired by addition to *ens*, which the intellect first conceives as, in a sense, the best known: "*illud quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quod conceptiones omnes resolvit est ens*" (*ibid*). Explaining the meaning of this "addition," Aquinas says, "some predicates may be said to add to being inasmuch as they express a mode of being not expressed by the term *being*" *secundum hoc aliqua dicuntur addere super ens in quantum exprimunt modum ipsius entis qui nomine entis non exprimitur* (*Truth I: 5, ibid*). From this statement we learn that the term *being* does not have the content rich enough to express the whole content which a real *being* has but it only expresses a certain common aspect of real *beings*. But the concept *being* is unique and special in that it includes implicitly all other concepts. Nothing is external to being. A man is a being, white is being, \$1 is being, a son is a being, to beat and to be beaten are both beings, and both where and when are also beings. These beings are categorical. They express special modes of being, for example, that a man is a being *in itself*, and so on. On the other hand, Aquinas argues that there are

five concepts which express not special but common modes of being. This determination of the number seems to show that there are in reality exactly five such common aspects in being itself. Their respective names are *unum*, *res*, *aliquid*, *bonum* and *verum*. These five and *ens* are called “transcendentals.” Aquinas does not use this term but for convenience’s sake we use it to name the following 6 concepts: *Res* expresses the aspect of being that it has its essence. *Unum* expresses undividedness of being in itself. *Aliquid* expresses that being is divided from others, *bonum* that it corresponds to the appetitive power, and *verum* that it corresponds to the knowing power. In summary, the term *verum* expresses the common aspect of real beings which the term *being* does not express and the aspect is that any being corresponds to the knowing power of our soul.

From this argument, we confirm two points. First, the term *verum* corresponds to a real aspect which belongs to a real being. Second, the aspect of being which *verum* expresses is not special but common to all beings. We call the first element the *reality* of *verum* and the second *verum’s* *transcendentality*. Aquinas’s basic understanding of truth of being¹ is that it is real and transcendental.

2. Truth adds to being a conceptual relation to the human intellect

Verum is understood to be real and transcendental, which means that it is not categorical. But Aquinas says that the aspect of being which *verum* expresses is the correspondence of a being to the knowing power. Thus a question arises. Is the “correspondence” not a kind of relation? If it is, *verum* would not be transcendental but categorical, for it expresses a special mode of being, i.e., being *ad aliquid*.

A large part of *De Veritate*, q.21, a.1, c. is devoted to this problem. Aquinas’s strategy is to show that some relations are not categorical but merely conceptual and that *verum* expresses this sort of relation. Aquinas argues that there are three kinds of addition. As we have seen above, “A adds B to C” means that the term A expresses B where C does not express it. Sometimes, B is entirely external to C’s essence. For example, “a white body” adds “white” to “body,” but being white is not included in the essence of a body. The same can be said of all accidental predications. Sometimes A expresses an implicit aspect of C by adding B. For instance, “man” adds “rational” to “animal.” In this case, “rational” is not entirely external to “animal,” for in this case “rational” means “having a rational soul,” and “animal” means “having any type of soul.” Therefore, “rational” is not entirely external to “animal” but some determination or actualization of the meaning of “animal.” Lastly, sometimes B is “nothing in reality but only in thought” *quod tamen nihil est in rerum natura sed in ratione tantum* (*Truth III: 5, De Veritate* Q.21, a.1, c.). Aquinas’s example is *blind*. “Blind” adds “blindness” to “a man” or “a mole.” In the former case, “a man” is limited by “blindness,” since not all men are blind. In the latter case, however, “a mole” is not limited by the addition. Whether or not the limitation takes place, what is added is only conceptual having no correspondence in reality.

¹ Aquinas’s whole system of truth includes the truth of the intellect (*veritas intellectus*) and the truth of the thing (*veritas rei*). In present literature, the former is sometimes called “logical truth” and the latter “ontological truth.” As our present investigation is exclusively related to truth as transcendental, we use the term “truth of being” for ontological truth, following Wippel’s terminology.

After distinguishing these three types of addition, Aquinas asks which types of addition are possible when anything is added to *ens*. He answers with the second and the third. The second type of addition is for categories and the third is for transcendentals. The reason for this is almost the same as what he said at *DV*, q.1, a.1, c., namely, there cannot be anything that is not *ens*, so it is impossible that anything external to being exists. Hence, the first type addition is not possible in the case of addition to being. But being is determined to one of ten categories by the second addition, i.e., by explicating an implicit content of being. For example, “substance” adds “in itself” to “being,” for “substance” means “being in itself.” Therefore, the addition by which transcendentals add to being must be of the third type, namely, merely conceptual addition.

Aquinas proceeds to argue that there are only two types of conceptual addition, i.e., the addition of negation and the addition of conceptual relation. By the former we get *unum* because *unum* is *ens indivisum*, which adds only the negation of division to being. Hence, there remains the addition of conceptual relation for *bonum* and *verum*. Here Aquinas brings in a rather technical theory of relation which derives from Aristotle, i.e., the theory of one-way relation. Suppose P is in some way dependent on Q. In this case, the relation of P to Q is real, while the relation of Q to P is only conceptual. The idea is that P is really dependent on Q but Q has no such dependence on P. The most typical case is found in the relation between God and creatures. Every creature is really dependent on God for its entire existence, since without God’s creation it would not exist at all. But God has no real dependence on any creature. Without creation and consequently creatures, God would still remain the same God. Aquinas expresses this situation by saying that the relation between God and creatures is one-way, i.e., the relation of creatures to God is real, whereas the relation of God to creatures is not real but only conceptual.

The same thing can be said of whatever has one-way dependence. For example, our knowledge of external things is dependent in its content on the things known by us. On the other hand, the external things which are objects of our knowledge are not dependent on our knowledge at all. Therefore, the relation of our knowledge to the object is real but the relation of the object to our knowledge is not real but merely conceptual. Now, Aquinas concludes that *verum* and *bonum* add to being this type of relation. “The true and the good must therefore add to the concept of being, a relationship of that which perfects” *Oportet igitur quod verum et bonum super intellectum entis addant respectum perfectivi* (*Truth III: 6, De Veritate* q.21, a.1, c.). Namely, both *verum* and *bonum* perfect something. *Verum* perfects in the conceptual or intelligible aspect (*secundum rationem speciei tantum*), while *bonum* perfects something in reality (*non solum secundum rationem speciei sed etiam secundum esse quod habet in rerum natura*) in the manner of a final cause (*primo et principaliter dicitur bonum ens perfectivum alterius per modum finis*).

This argument clearly shows that what *verum* adds to *ens* is the perfective relation to intellect, and this relation is not real but only conceptual. Therefore, *verum* is not a categorical concept but a transcendental one. By arguing this way, Aquinas shows that *verum* is not a categorical being in spite of its relational character.

3. Is *verum* an external denomination?

But according to some contemporary interpreters, this solution is faced with another problem. Namely, if the relation which *verum* adds to being is only conceptual, isn't *verum* only an external denomination? In other words, by saving the transcendentalism of truth, does Aquinas not fail to save the reality of truth?

This was pointed out by Aertsen and Wippel:

One may wonder whether in this way truth can still be regarded as intrinsic to things. If “things are called true in virtue of the truth in an intellect” (*ST I*, 16, 8.), it follows from this that being is called true only by *extrinsic* denomination (Aertsen. “Truth”: 168).

If truth adds to being a relation to the intellect but the relation to the human intellect is not “essential” for things, then the unfortunate consequence seems to be that being is called true only *per accidens* (Aertsen. “Truth”: 169).

Thomas has been criticized for holding this last-mentioned point. If the relation assigned to being insofar as it is true is only a relation of reason, is this not to make truth of being purely extrinsic? (Wippel: 324)

Interesting enough, their solutions to this are almost the same:

If truth adds to being a relation to the intellect but the relation to the human intellect is not “essential” for things, then the unfortunate consequence seems to be that being is called true only *per accidens*. Essential for the truth of things can only be a real relation to the intellect, a relation of dependence. ... Essential for the truth of things is the relation to the divine Logos. Ontological truth has a divine ground. For Thomas the ultimate meaning of *adaequatio rei et intellectus* as the definition of truth is the conformity of the thing with the divine intellect (Aertsen. “Truth”: 169).

Therefore we should conclude that when we consider truth of being in terms of a being's relation to the divine intellect and measure, being so viewed is really related to the divine intellect. Therefore, truth of being, when viewed from that perspective, entails a real relation to its divine measure, not one that is merely conceptual (Wippel: 326).

As seen here, their common strategy is to connect the truth of being to the divine intellect. Every being is related to the human intellect only conceptually but the relation to the divine intellect is real, for every creature depends on God in reality.

3.1 Questions

By interpreting in this way, Aertsen and Wippel hold that we can avoid the difficulty that truth is an only extrinsic denomination and that things are only accidentally true. But, I find their line of answer problematic.

3.1.1 DV1.1, 1.21?

First, what about Aquinas's arguments in *De Veritate* q.1, a.1, c. and q.21, a.1, c., where he says clearly that *verum* is said in relation to the human intellect?

This problem is in fact pointed out by Wippel, who answers that “there Thomas is restricting himself to the relationship between truth and any created intellect” (Wippel: 326). I think that this will be the only answer to the problem if Aquinas avoids the difficulty (i.e., truth might be an external denomination) by appealing to the real relation of things to God. But in my impression, if Aquinas really thought that the transcendental character of truth of being was based on the relation to God, he would have made it explicit either in *De Veritate* q.1 or q.21. But the fact is that in both places Aquinas clearly argues for transcendental truth in relation to the human intellect.

Alio modo secundum convenientiam unius entis ad aliud, et hoc quidem non potest esse nisi accipiatur aliquid quod natum est convenire cum omni ente; hoc autem est anima, quae << quodam modo est omnia >>, ut dicitur in III De anima: in anima autem est vis cognitiva et appetitiva; convenientia ergo entis ad appetitum exprimit hoc nomen bonum, ... convenientiam vero entis ad intellectum exprimit hoc nomen verum (*De Veritate* q.1, a.1, c.: emphasis added).

In quolibet autem ente est duo considerare, scilicet ipsam rationem speciei et esse ipsum quo aliquid subsistit in specie illa. Et sic aliquod ens potest esse perfectivum dupliciter: uno modo secundum rationem speciei tantum, et sic ab ente perficitur intellectus qui percipit rationem entis, nec tamen ens est in eo secundum esse naturale; et ideo hunc modum perficiendi addit verum super ens: verum enim est in mente ut Philosophus dicit in VI Metaphysicae, et unumquodque ens in tantum dicitur verum in quantum est conformatum vel conformabile intellectui; et ideo omnes recte diffinientes verum ponunt in eius diffinitione intellectum (*De Veritate* q.21, a.1, c.: emphasis added).

At *De Veritate* q.1, a.1, c., Aquinas says “anima”, which is nothing other than the human intellect in this context. At *De Veritate* q.21, a.1, c., he says that the intellect is perfected by a being. This “intellect” can not be the divine intellect, for the divine intellect, as the most perfect of all, is not perfected by anything else. There is a possibility that this intellect means the angelic intellect, but it is very strange to interpret this “intellect” as the angelic intellect, since Aquinas seldom mention the angelic intellect in relation to the truth of being. Hence, it would be most natural to take this “intellect” as the human intellect. Aquinas's mention to Aristotle in both texts would support this interpretation.

Therefore, Wippel's interpretation does not seem to me well supported. We will discuss this problem later.

3.1.2 Real addition?

The second problem of the Aertsen/Wippel interpretation is this: if *verum* adds to *ens* a real relation to the divine intellect, does this real addition not reduce (*contrahere*) *ens* to the category of relation again?

Neither Aertsen nor Wippel explicitly address this question. But perhaps their answer to this would be that the creature's relation to the divine intellect is universal; therefore, it does not belong to the category of relation, but remains transcendental. In other words, the relation to the divine intellect is common to all beings. Because of this generality, such relation can be regarded as transcendental not as categorical. Namely, it is to claim that the real relation to God is a transcendental relation.

But against this interpretation I would argue that transcendentality is not mere generality. Even if something is consequent on every being, this generality is not sufficient for transcendentality. We would better understand this point if we pay attention to Aquinas's argument on *creatio passive accepta*. The creation which is understood passively, i.e., "being created" is common to all creatures but it can be considered a kind of accident which exists in a subject.

This argument is found explicitly in *Summa Theol.* Q.45, a.3. whose title is "whether creation is something in creature." Aquinas's answer to this question is that creation (being created) is a real thing as real relation to God². But against this, the third objection to this question argues as follows:

Praeterea, si creatio est aliquid praeter substantiam creatam, oportet quod sit accidens eius. Omne autem accidens est in subiecto. Ergo res creata esset subiectum creationis. Et sic idem esset subiectum creationis et terminus. Quod est impossibile: quia subiectum prius est accidente, et conservat accidens; terminus autem posterius est actione et passione cuius est terminus, et eo existente cessat actio et passio. Igitur ipsa creatio non est aliqua res.

If creation (being created) is not a substance, it must be an accident. But since every accident is in a subject, in this case a creature must be a subject of the creation. This is impossible. Because if so, a created subject would precede its being created. This objection seems quite reasonable. Aquinas says that "being created" is real as real relation to God. But this also seems to mean that createdness is a categorical accident which is in the subject. But this subject is the one which is to be created by the very creation. Therefore, Aquinas seems to claim that a created thing precedes its creation.

² ST I, 45, 3, c.

Utrum creatio sit aliquid in creatura.

Respondeo dicendum quod creatio ponit aliquid in creato secundum relationem tantum. Quia quod creatur, non fit per motum vel mutationem, fit ex aliquo praeexistenti: quod quidem contingit in productionibus particularibus aliquorum entium; non autem potest hoc contingere in productione totius esse a causa universali omnium entium, quae est Deus.

Unde Deus, creando, producit res sine motu. Subtracto autem motu ab actione et passione, nihil remanet nisi relatio, ut dictum est. Unde relinquitur quod creatio in creatura non sit nisi relatio quaedam ad Creatorem, ut ad principium sui esse; sicut in passione quae est cum motu, importatur relatio ad principium motus.

Aquinas's reply to this objection is quite interesting for our present investigation. Aquinas says:

Ad tertium dicendum quod creationis, secundum quod significatur ut mutatio, creatura est terminus: sed secundum quod vere est relatio, creatura est eius subiectum, et prius ea in esse, sicut subiectum accidente. Sed habet quandam rationem prioritatis ex parte obiecti ad quod dicitur, quod est principium creaturae. Neque tamen oportet quod, quandiu creatura sit, dicatur creari: quia creatio importat habitudinem creaturae ad creatorem cum quadam novitate seu incoptione.

“Insofar as it is signified as change, a creature is the terminal of creation. But insofar as creation is truly relation, a creature is a subject of creation and the subject precedes its creation, just as a subject precedes an accident.” From this statement it is clear that Aquinas does not hesitate to say that the real relation of creatures to God is an accident. Therefore, it can be regarded as categorical not transcendental, for “a transcendental accident” is contradictory.

But how can we understand this argument of Aquinas? My interpretation is that Aquinas here is not talking about temporal but logical priority. Since the creation did not take place in time but rather the time itself was created, a creature cannot precede temporally its creation. Rather, Aquinas means that from a timeless ontological point of view, a creature has ontological priority over its createdness.

Now, the createdness of a creature is a real relation of the creature to God and it is an accident which is preceded ontologically (not temporally!) by the creature as a subject. Our present question is whether truth of being which is found in relation to God is categorical or transcendental. In view of the above argument on createdness, it seems no obstacle for Aquinas to say that the relation is categorical. Therefore, it is a problem that if *verum* adds to *ens* the real relation to the divine intellect, why this real addition does not reduce (*contrahere*) *ens* to the category of relation again.

3.1.3 Real transcendental relation (Aertsen)

Facing this problem, Aertsen, though not explicitly, tries to repair Aquinas's theory of truth of being by introducing another type of relation, namely, “real transcendental relation.” Wippel reports this as follows:

Aertsen attributes this weakness in Thomas's explanation to this restricted understanding of relation. Accordingly, Thomas cannot appeal to a real relation in this case because he views every real relation as falling within the category of relation, and therefore as an accident which inheres in a substance. Aertsen laments the fact that in his doctrine on the transcendentals, Thomas has not taken into account the possibility of a real transcendental relation (Wippel: 324).

According to this, Aertsen might think that Aquinas's theory of ontological truth is “lamentable” in this point. He would say that if Aquinas had the real transcendental relation, his theory of ontological truth would be more consistent. In this case, there are three ontologically distinguished relations, namely, conceptual relation, real categorical relation and real transcendental relation. The latter is the one which *verum* adds to *ens*, namely, the relation to the divine intellect. But the problem is that Aquinas does not say any such thing. Therefore, we had better ask how Aquinas does

without this real transcendental relation. In other words, whether is it really necessary to bring this “real transcendental relation” into Aquinas’s system? We will consider this after the next section.

3.2 Solution: conceptual addition does not imply external denomination

I have discussed some of the problems with the Aertsen/Wippel interpretation. I will now give my own. Basically, the question of Aertsen and Wippel seems to be guided by a wrong assumption. Their assumption is that conceptual addition necessarily leads to an external denomination. But is this understanding correct? Does the fact that truth of being adds to being only a conceptual relation to the human intellect cause such trouble? As we have seen above, both Wippel and Aertsen think so. But I think there is still room for discussion.

Let us consider the case of *unum*. *Unum* adds being “indivisible in itself.” Aquinas says that this indivisibility is negation. *Unum* adds to *ens* only negation. This negation is formed in the human intellect and there is no corresponding reality just as in the case of a conceptual relation. But does this mean that *unum* is merely an external denomination? Does this mean that *ens* is *unum* only *per accidens*? It is clearly not so. Therefore, it is to be concluded that conceptual addition does not imply external denomination.

In this point, I think that Wippel and Aertsen may be wrong. It seems to me that the fact that *verum* adds to *ens* only a conceptual relation to the human mind does not mean that *ens* is called *verum* only accidentally. Just as being is essentially indivisible in itself and therefore is one, being is essentially related to the human mind and consequently is true.

In order to understand this point more clearly, we have to take a close look at Aquinas’s theory of *additio ad ens* and understand the meaning of *additio secundum rationem tantum*. Aquinas explains *additio ad ens* as follows:

Sed enti non possunt addit aliqua quasi extranea per modum quo differentia additur generi vel accidens subiecto, quia quaelibet natura est essentialiter *ens*, ... ; sed secundum hoc aliqua dicuntur addere super *ens* in quantum exprimunt modum ipsius entis qui nomine entis non exprimitur, ... (*De Veritate* q.1, a.1, c.)

First of all, we should recognize that Aquinas’s argument is not confined to the logical sphere. When Aquinas says this, he is looking at the limit of the language. The term *ens* can not express the modes of being itself (*modus ipsius entis*). Aquinas’s sight goes through the concept of being and reaches being itself in reality. And he notices that the real being has far more abundant contents than the term *ens* can express. Since this is not expressed by one term *ens*, we need some other terms to fully express it. We had better not think that being in reality has several distinct properties and that one of them is expressed by *ens* and another by *unum* etc.. Rather we must understand that each aspect of the rich content of being is expressed by each transcendental term, as if various shapes of one statue are reflected on several mirrors around it.

The following is Aquinas’s explanation of *additio in ratione tantum*.

Et ideo oportet quod vel nihil addat super *ens* vel addat aliquid quod sit in ratione tantum; si enim adderet aliquid reale oporteret quod per rationem boni contraheretur *ens* ad aliquod speciale genus (*De Veritate* q.21, a.1, c.).

Aquinas argues that if anything is added to *ens*, *ens* is determined to a certain special genus. From this it follows immediately that *bonum* and *verum* do not add anything real to *ens*, for they are co-extensive with *ens*. But why does it determine *ens* to a special genus when anything real is added to it? I think that the point here is the meaning of *reale*. What is the exact meaning of *addere aliquid reale*? Let us look at the following statement from his *Summa Theologiae*, where Aquinas explains the same dichotomy in a different expression.

substantia, quantitas et qualitas, et ea quae sub eis continentur, contrahunt ens applicando ens ad aliquam quidditatem seu naturam. Sic autem non addit aliquid bonum super ens: sed rationem tantum appetibilis et perfectionis, quod convenit ipsi esse in quacumque natura sit. Unde bonum non contrahit ens (*ST I*, q.5, a.3, ad1).

Here, Aquinas uses the expression *contrahere ens applicando ad aliquam quidditatem seu naturam* instead of *addere aliquid reale super ens*. Hence, we can understand the correct meaning of the latter expression by the former. As is clearly said, adding something real to being is “determining being by applying it to a certain essence or nature.” From this expression, we could understand that *addere aliquid reale super ens* means determining *ens* to a certain category, which is *the* category of reality for Aristotle. Since everything real is a being, nothing real is outside of being. Therefore, when something real is added to being, this “something real” must be implicitly or potentially included in being. And when added, it is actually expressed, and consequently being is determined to a certain *natura*, i.e., one of the categories.

From this consideration, it is clear that the opposition between *addere aliquid reale super ens* and *addere aliquid quod sit in ratione tantum* is not based on the difference of ontological status of what is added to *ens*. Rather, the difference is whether or not being is determined to one of the categories. When it is determined to a category, it is called “real addition,” whereas when it is not, it is called “conceptual addition.” In other words, the ontological status of what is added to *ens* is in a sense real in every case, for whatever is added to *ens* is implicitly included in *ens* and therefore is real. Even that “undividedness” which *unum* adds to *ens* is real in so far as it corresponds to a positive mode of being, although the expression is a kind of negation. But when *ens* is reduced (*contrahi*) to a category seen from the categorical viewpoint, it is called real addition, while when it is not contracted but expresses a certain common mode of *ens*, it is called conceptual addition. In short, the *real* here is categorical, i.e., *real for Aristotle*.

Therefore, contrary to what Wippel and Aertsen claim, the fact that truth adds a conceptual relation to the human intellect does not give rise to the problem that *ens* is *verum* only accidentally. Rather, *verum* expresses the mode of being itself which is essentially related to the human intellect by the perfective, and therefore, only conceptual relation. This does not contradict Aquinas’s thesis that every transcendental, including truth, is not conceptual but real.

On this ground, it seems that Aertsen’s suggestion that Aquinas should have introduced “real transcendental relation” is misguided. This is clearly seen if we examine the meaning of this expression, “real transcendental relation.” What in the world does “real transcendental relation” mean? The *real* in this expression can not mean “categorical”; otherwise, the expression itself would turn into contradiction. Therefore, the *real* means “not conceptual,” and consequently, “belonging to being” or, in Aquinas’s words, “mode of being.” But Aquinas thinks that every tran-

scendental is real because it expresses a certain mode of being. Hence, “real transcendental” is redundant, for *transcendental* implies *real*. That is why there is no such thing as “conceptual transcendental.” As we have considered above, even if the ontological status of what is added to being is only conceptual, the whole that a transcendental term expresses is real. Truth is real in this sense. Even though what truth adds to being is merely conceptual relation, the whole which expressed by the term *truth* is real. Therefore, we should say that the conceptual relation which every being has in relation to the human intellect is the relation which constitutes a relational transcendental, which is *verum*. This is enough for the theory of transcendentals. Aquinas does not need the real transcendental relation, nor is his theory weak or lamentable in this point.

4. Transcendental truth and truth in analogy (*verum* and *veritas rei*)

Aquinas’s theory of truth as transcendental is consistent in relation to the human intellect. There is no need to bring in the relation to the divine intellect. This is the reason why Aquinas does not refer to the divine intellect in *De Veritate* q.1, a.1, c. and q.21, a.1, c.. Wippel says that in both articles “Thomas is restricting himself to the relationship between truth and any created intellect” (Wippel: 326), but based on our argument so far, this restriction is not arbitrary. His theory of transcendental truth is self-sufficient without any relation to the divine intellect.

But that Aquinas’s theory of transcendental truth is self-sufficient without the relation to the divine intellect does not imply that his theory of transcendental truth has nothing to do with God. Therefore, our next question is how the divine intellect is related to transcendental truth. In the following, we will consider Aquinas’s theory of truth of being in relation to the divine intellect.

As we argued above, the relation of creatures to God is real and can be understood as categorical. Therefore, if *verum* adds to *ens* such relation, the *verum* is put in the category of relation. So, it would be very important to understand how Aquinas treats transcendental truth in relation with the divine intellect.

In *De Veritate*, the relation to the divine intellect is argued in the context of the theory of analogy. The theory of analogy is taken from Aristotle. For example, Aquinas says in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* that “*analogia*” is one of three modes of predication. One is “univocation,” by which one term is predicated of various things in entirely the same meaning. Another is “equivocation,” by which a term is predicated of various things in entirely different meanings. And the third one is called “analogy”, which is placed between the two. Hence, a term is predicated of various things, but the meanings are partly the same and partly different³. For example, the meanings of the word “animal” in these two sentences, “A horse is an animal” and “A dog is an animal,” are entirely the same. Therefore, these predications are univocal. Whereas “That constellation is the Dog” and “The dog never bite” have entirely different meanings for

³ Sed sciendum quod aliquid praedicatur de diversis multipliciter: quandoque quidem secundum rationem omnino eandem, set tunc dicitur de eis univoce praedicari, sicut animal de equo et bove. --- Quandoque vero secundum rationes omnino diversas; et tunc dicitur de eis aequivoce praedicari, sicut canis de sidere et animali. --- Quandoque vero secundum rationes quae partim sunt diversae et partim non diversae: diversae quidem secundum quod diversas habitudines important, unae autem secundum quod ad unum aliquid et idem istae diversae habitudines referuntur; et illud dicitur <analogice praedicari>, idest proportionaliter, prout unumquodque secundum suam habitudinem ad illud unum refertur (*In IV Met*, l.1, n.535).

“dog”. So, these are called equivocation. But in “Her look is healthy” and “Broccoli is healthy,” the meanings of “healthy” are neither entirely the same nor entirely different. Both signify a certain relation to the health which is found in the body. In this case, these predications are analogous.

Transcendentals are commonly predicated of things which belong to any category. But since nothing is univocally predicated of all categories, transcendentals are analogically predicated of them. It must be noted that among those things which are predicated analogously, there is one thing in terms of which all the other things share the same term. In the case of “healthy”, such thing is the body. The body is primarily called healthy, while all the other things are called healthy in relation to the body, and in this sense are called healthy secondarily.

In the same matter, *true* is predicated of intellects and things. But since things are called *true* insofar as they conform to an intellect, *true* is primarily predicated of intellects and secondarily of things. But things are related to different intellects, namely, the human intellect and the divine intellect. Aquinas says, “a natural thing ... is said to be true with respect to its conformity with the divine intellect in so far as it fulfills the end to which it was ordained by the divine intellect. ... With respect to its conformity with a human intellect, a thing is said to be true in so far as it is such as to cause a true estimate about itself;” (*Truth I: 11, De Veritate* q.1, a.2, c.). According to this statement, things are basically said to be true insofar as they conform to some intellect. But in relation to the divine intellect, things are called true when they “fulfill the end” which God gives to them, whereas in relation to the human intellect, they are true when they give rise to true cognition in the human intellect.

Things are called true in relation to these two intellects but Aquinas says that there is an order between them, namely, the relation to the divine intellect is prior to that to the human intellect. The reason is that things are primarily dependent on the divine intellect, while they are not dependent in their existence on the human intellect. Because of this, Aquinas says, truth which is predicated of things in relation to the human intellect is in a sense “accidental” to them, while truth predicated of things in relation to the divine intellect is “inseparably attendant on them” (*ibid.* q.1, a.4, c.). In other places, he says more clearly, “the relation to the divine intellect is essential to a thing; (Its relation to the human intellect is accidental to it;”⁴) (*ibid.* q.1, a.10, c.).

From these statements, we learn that when things are said to be true in relation to the divine intellect, the intellect is not speculative but practical, namely, the creative divine intellect as the cause of all creatures. The divine intellect, the intellect of the creator, is primarily practical since it is the cause of every creature. Yet, in the way in which an architect can speculate about his ideas which he does not produce, the creator has speculative cognition of what he does not create. In this respect, Aquinas says that things are related to the divine intellect in two ways. First, a thing is related to the divine practical (productive) intellect as “the measured” to “its measure,” and second, it is related to the divine speculative intellect as “a thing known” to “the knower” (*Truth I: 44, De Veritate* q.1, a.10, c.). In the latter case, even the privation and the negation, which God does not create, are known to God and in this sense, they can be called true.

⁴ Sed, quia, ut dictum est, comparatio rei ad intellectum divinum est ei essentialis et secundum eam per se dicitur vera, sed comparatio ad intellectum humanum est ei accidentalis, secundum quam non dicitur absolute vera sed quasi secundum quid et in potentia, ...

Then, returning to our question, we ask: “which truth is regarded as transcendental in relation to the divine intellect?” It is clearly the truth which is said in respect of the divine practical intellect. Because, in relation to the divine speculative intellect, even privation and negation are called true, but they are not *ens* but *non ens*. Transcendentals are terms which express aspects of *ens* which the term *ens* itself cannot express. Therefore, truth said in relation to the divine speculative intellect is too extensive to be transcendental. On the other hand, truth which is said in relation to the divine practical intellect can be regarded transcendental. This is because it is the intellect of the creator of *omne ens*. Every being has its being (*esse*) which God gives. Therefore, since every being has this relation to God and the term *ens* does not express this, the term which expresses this relation, namely truth, is to be regarded transcendental.

With respect to this point, we raised one question earlier in this paper. Namely, this relation entails the real dependence of creatures on God. Therefore, this relation is a real relation. But in Aquinas’s system, any real relation is seen as categorical. Mere generality is not enough for transcendentality. Therefore, the question arises: Is the truth which is said in this respect transcendental?

At present, I am not quite certain in responding to this question. Indeed, there are two possibilities. One is to say that the truth of being in relation to the divine intellect cannot be transcendental, but must be considered in the context of analogy. The other reply is to say that not only in relation to the human intellect, but also in relation to the divine intellect, truth is considered as transcendental.

Although I am not sure of the final answer, I am inclined to take the latter, namely, transcendental truth is said also in relation to the divine intellect. In the final part of this paper, I will try to defend this thesis.

5. Transcendental truth and imitation of the divine art

Let us again take a look at the description of the difference between categories and transcendentals again.

...; sed secundum hoc aliqua dicuntur addere super ens in quantum expriment modum ipsius entis qui nomine entis non exprimitur, quod dupliciter contingit. Uno modo ut modus expressus sit aliquis specialis modus entis; sunt enim diversi gradus entitatis secundum quos accipiuntur diversi modi essendi et iuxta hos modos accipiuntur diversa reurm genera: ... Alio modo ita quod modus expressus sit modus generalis consequens omne ens, ... (*De Veritate* q.1, a.1, c.: emphasis added.)

Here Aquinas clearly says that in categories, their different *modi essendi* are taken from *gradus entitatis*. For example, substance and quality are different in their grade of being, for substance is a being in itself (*ens per se*), while quality is a being in other (*ens in alio*). Returning to our discussion here, the problem is whether the relation to the divine intellect is to be regarded as one of those grades of being, i.e., being towards something (*ens ad aliquid*). Aquinas’s argument on the creation passively taken seems to support the negative reply, since *being created* is regarded as an accident with regard to its subject, which is, a creature. So, I have to admit that this real relation which every creature has with regard to God is to be considered as one of the grades of being, namely, the grade

of relation. Therefore, this bare relation to the divine intellect would reduce being to one of categories, and consequently, it can not be transcendental. But I still think that the relation to the intellect of a creator is essential to every being in whatever status it is. In Aquinas's thought, God creates the world *ex nihilo*, without any presupposed matter. Every being, insofar as it is a being, is created by God and in this sense, is related to the divine intellect as to the divine art. So this relation does not seem to be contracted to any special grade of being.

If the relation is the bare dependence on the divine intellect, it must be real and categorial. So, Aquinas opts to confine the relation to the human intellect both in *De Veritate* q.1 and q.21. This relation is not real but only conceptual; therefore, it does not reduce being to the category. But in one of the early writings, Aquinas mentions the relation to the divine intellect in the context of transcendental.

Alia vero quae diximus scilicet bonum, verum et unum, addunt super ens, non quidem naturam aliquam, sed rationem: ... verum autem et bonum addunt relationem quandam; sed bonum relationem ad finem, verum relationem ad formam exemplarem; ex hoc enim unumquodque verum dicitur quod imitatur exemplar divinum, vel relationem ad virtutem cognoscitivam; diximus enim verum aurum esse, ex eo quod habet formam auri quam demonstrat, et sic fit verum iudicium de ipso (*In I Sent*, d.8, q.1, a.3, c.).

Here, Aquinas mentions two relations, namely, the relation to the exemplary form and to the cognitive power. From this we can see that Aquinas certainly has the intention to include the relation to the divine intellect in his theory of transcendentals. But as we have discussed, the strict application of the theory of categories does not allow this relation to be transcendental, as Aertsen lamented. But I would suggest that as in this context, the relation is to the divine practical intellect, so, everything is called true insofar as it *imitates* the divine art. But this imitation can not be static. The imitation must be achieved in its highest activities. Therefore for natural things, their imitation consists in their operation. As their operation with regard to the human intellect is to perfect it in respect of their conceptual structure (*ratio*), it would be possible to say that natural things imitate the divine exemplary forms by perfecting the human intellect.

From this perspective, things are related to the two intellects, namely, the divine practical intellect and the human speculative intellect. But things are related to the latter on the basis of the relation to the former. The relation to the divine practical intellect is the cause and the reason why things have the perfective relation to the human speculative intellect. In this sense, the relation to the divine intellect can be understood as transcendental, *as the foundation of transcendental truth*.

6. Summary

Truth of being is real and transcendental. The meaning is the term *true* expresses the real general aspect of being which the term *being* does not express. The aspect which the term *true* expresses is the relation to the cognitive power. This relation is only conceptual; otherwise the term *true* expresses a special mode of being, namely, *ens ad aliquid*. *Verum* adds to *ens* the relation to

human intellect, which is perfected in its content by *ens*, and this perfective relation is only conceptual. Aertsen and Wippel claim that this conceptual addition leads to the understanding that being is called true only accidentally. But this claim derives from a misunderstanding concerning the conceptual addition. Aquinas's theory of transcendental truth found in *De Veritate* is consistent in relation to the human intellect. But this does not mean his theory of transcendental truth excludes the relation to divine intellect. The relation to divine intellect is considered to be transcendental not as the bare dependency of creatures on God, but as the basis of transcendental truth. Any being is called true insofar as it perfects human intellect and imitates divine art by perfecting the human intellect.

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