



The Onto-Theological Difference in Analytical Thomism

Jason A. Mitchell

The Thomist tradition in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has many different and disparate strands. Among these is Analytical Thomism, a name coined by John Haldane, which refers to the type of Thomism that «deploys the methods and ideas of 20th century philosophy — of the sort dominant within the English-speaking world — in connection with the broad framework of ideas introduced and developed by Aquinas»¹. The metaphysical thought of Analytic Thomists is characterized above all by their engagement with Gottlob Frege’s understanding of existence.

In this paper I want to explore what some Analytical Thomists have written about the onto-theological difference: the ontological difference between a being (*ens*) and its being (*esse*) and the theological difference between the creature’s being (*esse creatum*) and divine being (*esse divinum*). I consider the views and approaches of four Analytical Thomists: Peter Geach; Anthony Kenny; Brian Davies; and Barry Miller. In my conclusion I will offer a general critique of their approaches.

Peter Geach

Analytical Thomism traces its remote origin to the work of Peter Geach (1916-2013), a student of Ludwig Wittgenstein at Cambridge and a convert to Catholicism in 1938. In 1955, Geach presented a paper entitled, *Form and Existence*², which dealt with the meaning of

¹ J. HALDANE, «Analytical Thomism: A Prefatory Note», *The Monist* 80 (1997), p. 485.

² P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55 (1955), pp. 251-272.

actus essendi in Aquinas and employed the analytical ideas of Frege. Throughout his exposition, Geach had to contend with Frege's notion of existence. For Frege, existence is not a first-level concept but rather a second-level concept. In the proposition, "Socrates is wise", "wise" is a first-level concept (*Begriff*) predicated of the object (*Gegenstand*) "Socrates". A second-level concept, however, is predicated of a first-level concept. For example, in the proposition, "Wisdom is rare", "rare" is a second-level property predicated of the first-level concept "wisdom"³.

For Frege, "existence". in the proposition "Socrates exists", is a second-level property of a concept and not a first-level property predicated of an object or a really existing thing. Thus, Frege defines existence as the negation of the number zero: «In this respect existence is analogous to number. An affirmation of existence is in fact nothing other than a denial of the number zero»⁴. Anthony Kenny explains:

What he means is that an affirmation of existence for example, 'Angels exist' or 'There are [such things as] angels') is an assertion that a concept (for example *Angel*) has something falling under it. And to say that a concept has something falling under it is to say that the number which belongs to that concept is something other than zero⁵.

The existential proposition "Socrates exists" can be rendered in symbolic terms as ' $(\exists x)(x = \text{Socrates})$ ' and means: "It is the case that there is at least one thing that is identical with Socrates". According to Frege's thought, I am not predicating anything of Socrates, rather I am saying something about the property (or concept) of being identical with Socrates. «We are being told how often that particular property is instantiated, namely, at least once. And, of course, 'at least once' is 'the denial of [zero]»⁶.

In his article, *Form and Existence*, Geach holds that Aquinas really distinguishes the self-subsistent individual (*suppositum*) from its forms and this is expressed logically in the distinction between the subject and

³ Cf. B. MILLER, «Existence», *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

⁴ G. FREGE, *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, Blackwell, Oxford 1950, p. 65.

⁵ A. KENNY, *Frege*, Penguin Books, London 1995, p. 76.

⁶ B. MILLER, «Existence», *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

the predicate in a proposition. In the second part of his article, Geach examines whether the expression “that by which the individual *x* is” is senseless or whether there is a sense in which “is” or “exists” is properly predicable of individuals. He notes that many modern philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, deny that “exists” is a genuine logical predicate⁷. In response, Geach argues that it is a «mistake to treat all existential propositions as having the same logical status»⁸. He recognizes that there is a thesis that existence is an analogical notion, but he sets aside this thesis, considers three different kinds of (negative) existential propositions, and tries to show that there is a difference between predicating existence in answer to the question, “*an est?*” and predicating existence with respect to some form. In the second case, existence means the persistence in an individual (*x*) of the form “by which *x* is” and, therefore, in this case, existence is a meaningful predicate⁹.

In his defense of Aquinas’ distinction between existence and being (*esse*), Geach asks why we should distinguish between an individualized form (such as the redness of Socrates’s nose) and that by which the individualized form is (that by which the redness of Socrates’s nose goes on existing)¹⁰. Geach provides three reasons for this real distinction. The first reason argues that we must recognize that in the case that “*x* is *F*” and “*y* is *F*”, *x* and *y* are alike, but also that the *F*-ness of *x* is a different individualized form than the *F*-ness of *y*. Furthermore, when “*x* is” and “*y* is”, the *esse* of *x* and the *esse* of *y* are in general different as such. This, according to Geach, marks a distinction between *esse* and any form or *F*-ness. Geach argues that the *esse* of *x* and the *esse* of *y* are distinct and employs the following illustration. If all the members of a family and their cat shared a single *esse*, then if the betrothed of the daughter in the family were to kill the family cat, all the members of the family would die. This, however, is not the case. «In actual families, animality is common to all the members of the family, including the cat, but *esse* is not, and so killing the cat has no such consequence»¹¹. The members of the family and the cat all have their own *esse*. Geach

⁷ Cf. P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 262.

⁸ P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 263.

⁹ Cf. P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 268.

¹⁰ Cf. P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 269.

¹¹ P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 270.

notes that for a man or cat to go on existing is «the continued existence of his animality» and the «persistence of a certain individualized form in continuously renewed matter», but holds that we must recognize that there is a real distinction between the animality of one of the members of the family and their being (*esse*)¹². Geach's second reason notes that a form (F-ness) common to both x and y may be or become more or less intense. This increase does not regard having the same specific F-ness, but regards the existence of F-ness. We can therefore distinguish «between the F-ness of x and the *esse* of individualized form; while the F-ness as such remains unchanged, its existence may vary in degree»¹³. Geach hesitates to offer an example but thinks that sound is a good one: a qualitatively identical sound (the same note) may be louder or softer, and this allows us to distinguish between the form or F-ness of the sound and the degree of its being (*esse*). He takes the third reason from the nature of thought. When a man knows a stone, Geach writes, «there is one individualized form in the stone, and another individualized form in the mind of the man who thinks of it; these individualized forms are both occurrences of the same form but differ in their manner of *esse*; neither the stone nor its individualized form is to be found in my mind»¹⁴. Thus, we have the same form, but the individualized form in the knower (which occurs with “intentional being” or *esse intentionale*) differs from the individualized form in what is known (which occurs with “natural being” or *esse naturale*)¹⁵.

Six years later, Geach and his wife, G. E. M. Anscombe, co-authored a book entitled *Three Philosophers* (1961). Anscombe wrote the first chapter on Aristotle, and Geach wrote the chapters on Thomas Aquinas and Gottlob Frege. In his treatment of Aquinas, Geach once again considers Aquinas' doctrine of *esse*. He notes that translating *esse* into English as “being” is confusing because there is a difference between *ens* and *esse*: *ens* is that which is (*quod est*) and *esse* is that by which a thing is (*quo est*)¹⁶. In his exposition, Geach posits that Aquinas' views on the verb “*est*” underwent a change:

¹² P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 270.

¹³ P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 270.

¹⁴ P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 272.

¹⁵ Cf. P. GEACH, «Form and Existence», p. 272.

¹⁶ Cf. P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1961, p. 88.

In his earlier writings (e.g. in *De Ente et Essentia*) he sought to establish a real distinction between the *esse* of a given thing and its nature or essence from the obvious difference in meaning between the questions ‘*an est?*’, ‘is there such a thing?’, an ‘*quid est?*’, ‘what nature of thing is it?’ Later on, however, though he retained the doctrine of there being a real distinction between *esse* and nature or essence, he explicitly repudiated this way of establishing it, and explained that what he meant by *esse* had nothing to do with the existence that is asserted by affirmative answers to the question ‘*an est?*’¹⁷.

Geach notes that we can speak about the existence of privations like blindness, yet blindness is not an *ens* and has no *esse*. Existence asserted by saying “there is x” differs from Aquinas’ *esse*¹⁸.

The difference between the questions “*quid est?*” (what is x?) and “*an est?*” (is there x?) does not lead to an identical response to the question about God’s nature and God’s being (*esse*), which are identical. Aquinas argues in *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, a. 4 ad 2 that to know that there is a God is not to apprehend God’s *esse*¹⁹. In the assertion that “there is a God”, existence consists in the truth of the affirmative predication. What Aquinas refers to as *esse* is not the “existence” signified by “there is an x”. His «conception of *esse* thus depends on there being a sense of the verb ‘*est*’ or ‘is’ quite other than the ‘there is’ sense»²⁰. Geach expresses these two senses of “is” as follows:

An individual may be said to ‘be’, meaning that it is at present actually existing; on the other hand, when we say that ‘there is’ an X, we are saying concerning a kind or description of things, Xs, that there is at least one thing of that kind or description²¹.

Geach notes that Frege, as a mathematical logician, was not interested in assertions of present actuality. Of Bertrand Russell, Geach writes: «It is a great misfortune that Russell has dogmatically reiterated

¹⁷ P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 88.

¹⁸ AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 48, a. 2 ad 2.

¹⁹ Cf. P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 89.

²⁰ P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, pp. 89-90.

²¹ P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 90.

that the ‘there is’ sense of the ‘substantive’ verb ‘to be’ is the only one that logic can recognise as legitimate; for the other meaning — present actuality — is of enormous importance in philosophy»²². In discussions about *ens* and *esse*, Aquinas refers to the present-actuality sense of “is”. From this Geach argues that existing is always referred to some form or nature, such that for a man to continue existing is for him to continue being a man. He writes:

Esse, therefore, is always related to some form or other; and any persistent *esse* is the continued existence of some individualized form. [...] [A]part from throwing light on some uses of the substantive verb ‘to be’, Aquinas’s doctrine of *esse* really adds nothing over and above his doctrine of form. The plurality of *esses* that Aquinas asserts there is in a given individual thing simply corresponds to the plurality of individualized forms. There is no ‘continuing to exist’ that is not something’s continuing to be so-and-so — to be a man, to be red, to be round — and ‘that whereby’ the something is so-and-so is always an individualized form — an individual human soul, redness, or shape²³.

Geach affirms that Aquinas maintains a real distinction between each individualized form (Socrates’ soul) and the corresponding *esse*, i.e., that whereby the individualized form continues to exist. To argue for this, Geach refers to an argument based on the intensity of qualities: «When a thing *x* passes from a lower to a higher degree of the quality *F*, or *vice versa*, the *Fness* of *x* remains while the degree of *Fness* changes; there is thus a real distinction between the individualized form ‘whereby’ *x* is *F* and the degree to which *x* is *F*»²⁴. The same individual quality does persist when there is only a change in intensity. At this point, Geach repeats the other two arguments from “Form and Existence”.

In the second part of his chapter on Aquinas, Geach turns to Aquinas’ thought on God and considers Aquinas’ Fourth Way. He refers to the arguments for a real distinction between a form and the corresponding *esse*:

²² P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 91.

²³ P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 92.

²⁴ P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 93.

if any perfection occurs in a thing only to a degree, this requires a real distinction between the individual instance of the perfection and the degree to which that perfection is found. Now such occurrence of a perfection, Aquinas holds, requires a cause; for the fact argues that the perfection occurs gives no reason why it occurs only to such a degree and no more; so what accounts for the actual degree to which the perfection occurs — i.e., on Aquinas's view, accounts for the *esse* of that perfection — must be something outside the thing that has the perfection to that limited degree. The only source of perfections with regard to which such a problem would not again arise would have to be something possessing perfections not to a degree but without limit — God, who is ‘infinite in all perfections’²⁵.

Geach holds that there is an “apparent lacuna” in this proof and that Aquinas does not justify the transition *from* a perfection's being derivative *to* its being derived from a being whose perfections are underivative²⁶. Towards the end of the chapter, Geach reformulates the Fourth Way to argue that «what possesses a perfection only to a degree does not possess it underderivatively». Geach writes:

God's perfections are illimitable because there is in no case a distinction between the perfection he has and the degree to which he has it, as there would be if it were possible for him to have that very perfection to a higher degree; and where such a distinction does exist, a perfection is necessarily derivative. Now for Aquinas the degree to which a perfection is possessed must be regarded as the *esse* of that instance of the perfection. We may thus naturally pass to a generalised form of the argument. If there is ever a distinction between an individualised form or nature and the corresponding *esse*, then the *esse* of that form or nature must be caused; an individualised form or nature that is not its own *esse* cannot have *esse* in its own right. God, then, must be his own *esse*; otherwise there would be a cause that supplied *esse* to the Divine Nature, which is absurd²⁷.

²⁵ P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 116.

²⁶ Cf. P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, p. 116.

²⁷ P. GEACH, *Three Philosophers*, pp. 123-124.

Geach holds with Aquinas that there is an ontological difference between a being (*ens*) and its being (*esse*) and this distinction can be argued for in various ways. At the same time, however, Geach closely associates being (*esse*) to a form in a being (*ens*) and is considered by Geach as the form whereby an individualized form persists. For Geach also discerns a theological difference in Aquinas' thought between the being (*esse*) of a creature and the being (*esse*) of God. The creature's being (*esse*) is characterized as a perfection possessed only to a degree and therefore limited and derived from a cause. Divine being (*esse*) is characterized as an underived, unlimited, and illimitable perfection. Notably absent in Geach's proposal is any reflection on causal participation and analogical predication.

Sir Anthony Kenny

Sir Anthony Kenny (b. 1931) was influenced greatly by Geach's 1955 lecture²⁸. Kenny had studied in Rome as a seminarian and was ordained a priest in 1955. In 1963, he left the priesthood and eventually declared himself an agnostic in the late 1960s. We will look specifically at three works where Kenny speaks about the onto-theological difference in Aquinas' thought.

The Five Ways (1969)

In his book *The Five Ways*, Kenny considers Aquinas' Fourth Way at length and approaches Aquinas' theory of the distinction between essence and *esse* in creatures looking at the youthful *De ente et essentia*. Summarizing Aquinas' thought, Kenny writes:

Every essence can be understood without anything being known about its actual existence (*esse*); for I can understand what a man is, or what a phoenix is, without knowing whether these things exist (*esse habent*) in reality (*in rerum natura*); so it is obvious that ex-

²⁸ A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2005, p. vi: «But it was due above all to Peter Geach, whose 1955 lecture to the Aristotelian Society, 'Form and Existence,' first made me see the relevance of Aquinas' metaphysical teaching to the concerns of analytic philosophers. The comparison in that paper between Frege's theory of functions and Aquinas' theory of forms has influenced my thinking on these topics ever since, and provides the background to much of the work in the present book».

istence (*esse*) is different from a thing's essence, i.e. what the thing is (its *quidditas*)²⁹.

Esse (translated as existence), Kenny notes, is represented in modern logic by the existential quantifier. Consequently, Kenny concludes that

if we understand *esse* in this way it is impossible to make sense of what Aquinas also says in this work, namely that God is subsistent *esse*, that his essence is his *esse*, and (ch. VI) that he is pure *esse* to which no addition can be made. For this would mean that God was subsistent existence, that to know that He exists is the same as to know what He is, and that God's essence was best represented by an existential quantifier followed by a bound variable but no predicate³⁰.

Kenny points out that Geach maintained that Aquinas abandoned the nonsensical view of the *De ente*, but that Geach failed to establish Aquinas' change of mind about *esse*. Kenny argues — against Geach — that Aquinas doesn't revise his theory of *esse*, rather Aquinas changed his mind about *quidditas*³¹. Kenny holds that in the *De ente* Aquinas' position is that you can know what a thing is before you know whether or not it exists. In his mature thought, Aquinas says that before you can ask whether a thing exists (*an sit*) you have to know what the word for it means. «But before you begin to investigate what a thing is — what is its nature or essence — he says, you have to know that it is»³². So, according to Kenny's reading, we have to first know the meaning of the word (*significatio nominis*), then ask “does it exist?” (*an sit?*), and then we can know the essence (*quid sit?*). Applying this theory to God, we have to know first what the word “God” means before we prove God's existence; however, in this life we do not know *what* God is after the proof of God's existence. Now, Aquinas holds that God is identical with his *esse*. What does *esse* mean here? Kenny begins his response by distinguishing three sentences that use “is” (*est*):

²⁹ A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1969, p. 82.

³⁰ A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, p. 82.

³¹ Cf. A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, p. 86.

³² A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, p. 86. See *Summa theologiae* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2.

[1]The word “*est*” may be followed by a predicate term that belongs to the Aristotelian category of “substance”: *Socrates est homo*.

[2]The word “*est*” may be followed by a predicate term that belongs to the Aristotelian categories of “accident”: *Socrates est albus*.

[3]The word “*est*” may be followed by a period: *Socrates est*.

According to Kenny, Aquinas reduces the third case to the first, to *esse substantiale*. Kenny quotes Aquinas’ *Exposition of Boethius’s De Hebdomadibus*: «If, therefore, that form is not outside the essence of that which possesses it, but constitutes that item’s essence, from the fact that the item possesses such a form it will be said to have being without qualification [*esse simpliciter*]»³³. For Kenny, the *esse simpliciter* of Socrates is the *esse* which makes him Socrates. Kenny concludes that although form and *esse* are not identical, insofar as *esse* is the actuality of a form, it is clear that there cannot be *esse* without form: everything has *esse* by form (*omnis res habet esse per formam*). Kenny writes:

To be is to be F, where ‘F’ keeps a place for something which stands for a form. When the being in question is substantial being — *esse simpliciter*, denoted by *est* with a period — then the expression which takes the place of F must be an expression for the essence of the substance in question. The essence of Socrates is his humanity; so for Socrates to be is for him to be a human being. ‘Socrates is’ is equivalent to ‘Socrates is a human being’ [...] as meaning that Socrates is actually a being capable of performing the operations characteristic of human nature³⁴.

Consequently, if we are to know what we mean when we say “X *est*” we have to be able to supply the appropriate complement “F” to refer to the essence or nature of X. Now what of God’s being? For Kenny, the proposition, “God is”, has to be understood as “God is F”, and Aquinas replaces F with *esse*: «For this is the meaning of Aquinas’ best-known doctrine about God, namely that God’s essence is *esse*, or that in

³³ AQUINAS, *Expositio libri boetii de ebdomadibus*, lect. 2: «Si ergo forma illa non sit praeter essentiam habentis, sed constituat eius essentiam, ex eo quod habet talem formam, dicetur habens esse simpliciter».

³⁴ A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, p. 89.

God essence and *esse* are identical»³⁵. What is the sense of *esse* here? Kenny first looks to *De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 2 and Aquinas' idea that *esse* is the most common effect caused by God, the superior cause. In this argument, being is «a common attribute which is possessed automatically by anything which possesses any substantial or accidental form». Kenny concludes: «'To be', so understood, seems to be the thinnest possible kind of predicate; to be, so understood, is to have that attribute which is common to mice and men, dust and angels. This attribute, being common to every substance, could hardly constitute the particular essence of any subject»³⁶.

Kenny notes that Aquinas himself denies that *esse*, as that which is most common, is the most imperfect. For Aquinas *esse* is the most perfect of all things and is the actuality of all things and all forms. Kenny also records Aquinas' thought on how the common *esse* predicated of all things "has nothing added to it" and how God's *esse* "has nothing added to it". Aquinas means that «if God's *esse* is his existence, then we must say not that God is such-and-such a kind of thing, but that God is, period». To prevent God's *esse* from being the applicability of a quite uninformative predicate, turns it into the applicability of a predicate which is no predicate at all. «When we say, of anything but God, that it IS, we mean that for some F, [...] it IS F; when we say of God that he IS, we mean the same except that no predicate may be substituted for the F which occurs in the formula». Kenny concludes that «God is ...» is an incomplete sentence and the incommunicable name seems to be an all-formed formula.

According to Kenny, the absurdity does not stop there. God, for Aquinas, is not just pure *ens* (a concrete predicate applied to God), but God is *ipsum esse subsistens* (an abstract predicate applied to God). To explain this, Aquinas appeals to the Platonic model of an Idea. Kenny holds that the objections to Plato's theory of Ideas apply to Aquinas' theory of God as subsistent being. What is more the predicate "*esse*" is in Aquinas' mind an extraordinary predicate:

Either it is understood as a predicate which holds of all substances;
in which case it is too uninformative to constitute the essence of any

³⁵ A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, p. 90.

³⁶ A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, p. 92.

entity; or it is understood as a variable expression which permits of no substitution, in which case it is an ill-formed formula. The notion of *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, therefore, so far from being a profound metaphysical analysis of the divine nature, turns out to be the Platonic Idea of a predicate which is at best uninformative and at worst unintelligible³⁷.

Aquinas (1980)

Ten years later, Kenny returns to the theme of being in his book *Aquinas* (in the Past Masters Series). After considering Aquinas' thought on the compositions of substance and accident and that of matter and form, Kenny turns to Aquinas' thought on being (*esse*) and states that: «To be simply is to continue in possession of a certain form: *omnis res habet esse per formam*»³⁸. Existence, he notes, can be attributed to a subject in various ways, either as “specific existence” or as “individual existence”. He distinguishes them as follows:

[1] Specific existence: when we use the phrase “there is a...” we are saying that there is something in reality corresponding to a certain description or instantiating a certain concept. It is the existence of something corresponding to a certain specification, something exemplifying a species. Examples include: “King Arthur never existed” and “God exists”³⁹.

[2] Individual existence: when we say, “Julius Caesar is no more”, we are not talking about a species, but rather about a historic individual. We are saying that he is no longer alive among the things that have their being in the world⁴⁰.

Aquinas, Kenny notes, draws distinctions between different senses of *esse*: *esse* signifies either the actuality of being (*actus essendi*) or the composition of a proposition effected by the mind in joining a predicate to a subject⁴¹. The second sense of *esse* allows us to formulate true

³⁷ Cf. A. KENNY, *The Five Ways*, p. 95.

³⁸ A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 49.

³⁹ Cf. A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 50.

⁴⁰ Cf. A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 50.

⁴¹ AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 3, a. 4 ad 2: «esse dupliciter dicitur, uno modo,

propositions about things which are not in the first sense, such as “there is blindness”. Individual existence (the actuality of being) is twofold: not only substances but also accidents have individual existence⁴².

Kenny notes that contemporary philosophers and logicians have concentrated on specific existence and rewrite sentences like “Fs exist” as “there is at least one x such that x is F”. For these contemporary philosophers “existence is not a predicate” means that statements of specific existence are not to be regarded as predications about any individual. Having established this contemporary understanding of specific existence, Kenny turns to consider «Aquinas’ most celebrated doctrine concerning *esse*: the thesis that in all created things essence and existence are distinct, whereas in God essence and existence are to be identified»⁴³.

Kenny tries to interpret Aquinas’ thesis as benignly as possible. He first notes that a creature’s essence and existence cannot be distinct in the sense that one could have one without the other: «For a dog to exist is simply for it to go on being a dog». Secondly, he notes that Aquinas is not of the opinion that God gives existence to the individualized essence of a non-existent being. Creation, for Aquinas, is not the actualization of a pre-existent potentiality⁴⁴.

Kenny holds that Aquinas’ doctrine of the identity of essence and existence in God is ambiguous. At times, Aquinas says we do not know the essence of God, though we know what the word “God” means. At other times, Aquinas presents God’s essence as *esse*: «God’s essence is *to be* in the same way as the essence of fire is *to be hot*». However, «if the *esse* which denotes God’s essence is like the ‘esse’ which is predicable of everything, except that it does not permit the addition of further predicates, then it is a predicate which is totally unintelligible»⁴⁵.

According to Kenny, if we accept Aquinas’ theory that *esse* is not the most indeterminate and empty predicate and is the richest and fullest predicate and, therefore, the most appropriate predicate to capture

significat actum essendi; alio modo, significat compositionem propositionis, quam anima adinvenit coniungens praedicatum subiecto».

⁴² Cf. A. KENNY, *Aquinas*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1980, p. 52. AQUINAS, *Quodlibet*, IX, q. 3.

⁴³ A. KENNY, *Aquinas*, p. 53.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. KENNY, *Aquinas*, p. 55.

⁴⁵ A. KENNY, *Aquinas*, p. 58.

the divine perfection, Kenny holds that the richness of being still consists in its entire lack of property. Thus, Kenny concludes his treatment of being according to Aquinas with the following negative judgment, calling Aquinas' treatment "sophistry and illusion":

The theory of the real distinction between essence and existence, and the thesis that God is self-subsistent being, are often presented as the most profound and original contributions made by Aquinas to philosophy. If the argument of the last few pages has been correct, even the most sympathetic treatment of these doctrines cannot wholly succeed in acquitting them of the charge of sophistry and illusion⁴⁶.

Aquinas on Being (2002)

After a long study of the development of Aquinas' texts on being, Kenny concludes that we cannot extract a «consistent and coherent theory» from Aquinas' writings⁴⁷. Kenny identifies 12 types of being employed by Aquinas. Types 3-12 fall under «individual existence».

Being	Example	Explanation
1. Specific existence	"There are extra-terrestrial intelligences".	Not a predicate, means only that a particular concept is instantiated.
2. Individual existence	"The Great Pyramid still exists, while the Pharos of Alexandria do not".	This kind of being is a predicate which belongs to individuals, who may come into and go out existence.
3. Substantial being	"S is" = "S is P" "Lucy is" = "Lucy is a human being".	Individual existence is identified with substantial being.
4. Accidental being	"Peter is tall". "Socrates is wise".	Socrates' wisdom is an accident that inheres in Socrates. As a result of its inherence, Socrates himself enjoys a particular kind of being. Being wise is his accidental being.

⁴⁶ A. KENNY, *Aquinas*, p. 60.

⁴⁷ A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 89.

5. Common being	“In the universe, there are many different kinds of things that are”.	Being is something that all things or entities in the universe have in common with each other.
6. Actual being	“The caterpillar is now a butterfly”.	To be marks the transition from potentiality to actuality.
7. Absolute being	God.	A type of being where no predicate can be attached.
8. Intentional being	The form of a horse intentionally existing in my mind.	When I think of X, X comes to be intentionally in my mind.
9. Fictional being	Blindness (a privation); species; genera; negations.	Absence of a particular kind of being. Treated mentally as if it were a real being. It is a creation of the mind.
10. Possible being	Before Julius Caesar existed, there was possible Julius Caesar.	Possible being only lacks the perfection of existence until actual existence is conferred to it.
11. Predicative being	The book <i>is</i> on the table.	To be used as a copula joining a predicate to a subject.
12. Identical being	Aquinas is the Angelic Doctor. The Angelic Doctor is Aquinas.	Distinguished from predicative use by its reversibility. If the “is” is the “is” of identity, then A is B and B is A.

Kenny gives three reasons for the failure of Aquinas to give a “consistent and coherent” theory. First, Kenny holds that Aquinas does not satisfactorily recognize the difference between being and existence: «there is at no stage of Aquinas’ career a clear awareness of the profound syntactic difference between the ‘there is’ of specific existence and the other types of ‘is’ he discusses»⁴⁸. Second, in Aquinas there is no room for the notion of a pure form, a form that would correspond to a predicate that was not a predicate of something. Third, there is a problem about Aquinas’ identification of God with subsistent being. Kenny holds that there is ambiguity as to whether the *esse* of which God is the pure example of common being or absolute being. «If it is common being, then God seems to be the Platonic Idea of the thinnest

⁴⁸ A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 192.

possible predicate; if it is absolute being, then the divine name seems to be equivalent to an ill-formed formula»⁴⁹. Aquinas, Kenny holds, is aware of the problem and oscillates between both versions depending on the objection with which he is dealing.

Why did Aquinas fail in Kenny's opinion? First, being is one of the most difficult of all metaphysical questions. Frege, Kenny believes, «saw more clearly than Aquinas on the relationship of being to existence». Second, Aquinas was a swift and fecund writer and that there are unresolved inconsistencies is only natural: «to keep in one's head throughout a massive corpus the twelve types of being we have identified, and to make sure that one wove them all into a consistent whole, is a task that could daunt even the greatest genius»⁵⁰. Third, because Aquinas sought to bring out the best in those whose work he discusses, he is sometimes too sympathetic to erroneous philosophical positions and too much influenced by the writings of authoritative thinkers⁵¹.

Many Thomists have responded to the deficiencies in Kenny's misreading of Aquinas' texts and thought⁵². As regards my own response to Kenny, I say first that Aquinas' achievement of a consistent and coherent theory of being takes into account not only the development of his thought and his sympathetic reading of his sources, but also his robust analogy of being, founded on the notion of participation. Analogy, in its various forms of proportionality, reference, many-to-one, and one-to-another, is able to coordinate such distinctions as "logical being" and "natural being," "created being" and "divine being", "substantial being" and "accidental being", and "being-in-act" and "being-in-potency", "the act of being" and "being as copula". Second, one can challenge Kenny's reduction of the existential proposition "Lucy is" to the attribution of substantial being to the subject in "Lucy is a human be-

⁴⁹ A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 193.

⁵⁰ A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 194.

⁵¹ Cf. A. KENNY, *Aquinas on Being*, p. 194.

⁵² Cf. See L. DEWAN, «On Anthony Kenny's *Aquinas on Being*», *Nova et Vetera* 3 (2005), pp. 335-400; G. KLIMA, «On Kenny on Aquinas on Being: A Critical Review of Aquinas on Being», *International Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (2004), pp. 567-580; B. DAVIES, «Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Being*», *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 22 (2005), pp. 111-115.

ing”. Kenny’s identification of the two propositions does not allow for a distinction between *esse ut actus essendi* (being as act: the actuating act and principle of being) and *esse in actu* (being-in-act: the actuated act of a substantial or accidental form). Third, one can also distinguish between the three modes of participation in being: participation in common being (first mode); participation in the act of being (second mode); and participation in a likeness of divine being (third mode)⁵³. By taking into consideration Aquinas’ analogy of being, the distinction between *esse ut actus* and *esse in actu*, and the three mode of participation, a successful consistent and coherent theory of being emerges.

Brian Davies, O.P.

In his 1997 article, *Aquinas, God, and Being*⁵⁴, Brian Davies (1951-) asks whether Aquinas’ identification of God’s existence and God’s essence is a teaching of any importance or value. Davies highlights the issues raised by philosophers in the analytic tradition, who are opposed to Aquinas’ “pre-Kantian” notion of being. Davies refers to Kant’s thesis that existence is not a real predicate, and this means that while there are predicates that give us information about an object or individual, the predicate “exists” is not one of them. Here, Davies refers to Frege’s position: «Statements of existence, then, are statements of number».

After mentioning those who hold that “being” is not a real predicate, Davies asks whether we should therefore reject what Aquinas says about God as *ipsum esse subsistens*? Davies first notes that Aquinas uses “to be” or “being” in at least two distinct ways: being according to the ten categories; and being as used in a true statement. Davies characterizes the two uses as follows: 1) existence statements which tell us something about a distinct individual (e.g., Pope John Paul II is pious); 2) existence statements which look as though they are doing this, but in fact are not (e.g., blindness exists)⁵⁵. According to Davies, the latter «tell us something true without telling us something about any individ-

⁵³ Cf. J. MITCHELL, «Aquinas on *esse commune* and the First Mode of Participation», *The Thomist*, 82 (2018), pp. 543-572.

⁵⁴ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», *The Monist* 80 (1997), pp. 500-520.

⁵⁵ Cf. B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 510.

ual»⁵⁶. Davies concludes that existence statements that say that something exists do not tell us anything significant about this something: «for Aquinas, there is nothing which can be characterized simply by saying that it is»⁵⁷.

Davies understands Aquinas' view of form and existence to mean that «we cannot describe something by saying that, as well as being feline, intelligent and so on, it also exists. To exist is to be or to have form»⁵⁸. To say of Thor the cat that “Thor exists” means “Thor is a cat”. Thus, names like Socrates or Plato signify human nature as ascribable to certain individuals. «On Aquinas'

account saying *Socrates est* or *Plato est* is not to inform people of a property of existence had by Socrates and Plato. It is to assert what Socrates and Plato are by nature, i.e., human»⁵⁹.

At this point, Davies endeavors to understand what Aquinas means by *esse* as had by creatures and means by speaking of God as *ipsum esse subsistens*. He considers the word “unicorn” and concludes that knowing what a unicorn is simply amounts to knowing the meaning of the word “unicorn”. Davies holds that Aquinas is aware of this and is the basis for Aquinas' rejection of the argument for God's existence based on the meaning of the word “God”⁶⁰.

In the case of God, Davies writes, *ipsum esse subsistens* is not part of Aquinas' account of God's properties or attributes. «We must content ourselves with considering “the ways in which God does not exist, rather than the ways in which he does”»⁶¹. *Ipsum esse subsistens* refers to the way in which God is non-composite. Creatures, on the other hand, can be thought to be composite and are dependent since their *esse* is derived [from another]. According to Davies, Aquinas holds that «creatures exist by being what they essentially are. Hence, for example, for Thor to be is for Thor to be a cat»⁶². The question then becomes, “Why does anything have an essence? God is a cause which pours forth everything that exists in all their differences”. Davies concludes that by

⁵⁶ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 510.

⁵⁷ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 510.

⁵⁸ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 511.

⁵⁹ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 512.

⁶⁰ Cf. B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being» p. 513.

⁶¹ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 516.

⁶² B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», pp. 516-517.

teaching that God is *ipsum esse subsistens*, Aquinas is not attempting to tell us what God is but tells us that we must bear in mind that God is not created⁶³.

Although it is difficult to discern Davies' thought on the onto-theological difference, I note that Davies is critical of Kenny's skeptical conclusions. When Davies reviewed Kenny's book *Aquinas on Being*, he concluded that Kenny managed to miss the forest for the trees and did not catch «what Aquinas is generally driving at in what he has to say about God, being, and existence. Perhaps Kenny's basic mistake is to assume that talk about God is easily assimilated to talk about creatures»⁶⁴.

More recently, Davies has published his fourth edition of *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (2021). Davies defends that existential propositions, such as “Brian Davies exists” says something about Brian Davies: «that he is an actual thing and not a figment of someone's imagination»⁶⁵. When Davies considers God's simplicity, that there is no real distinction between God's nature and God's existence, Davies points out that there are those who suggest that talking about God as “Subsisting Existence Itself” does not make sense:

Some have suggested that it does not, arguing that being or existence is not a property or quality of anything. If they are right, it would seem to follow that we cannot truly characterize God's nature by saying that it amounts to existence (or being). Hence, for example, C. J. F. Williams (1930-1997), endorsing Frege's claim that statements of existence are statements of number (implying that ‘Xs exist’ means ‘The number of Xs is not nought’), observes: ‘What God is can hardly be indicated by saying that the number of gods is not nought’⁶⁶.

Davies holds, once again, that when Aquinas claims that God's simplicity means that God is “Existence Itself”, he does not suggest that there is a property or quality of existence with which God should

⁶³ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 517.

⁶⁴ B. DAVIES, «Aquinas, God, and Being», p. 115.

⁶⁵ B. DAVIES, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Fourth edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2021, p. 116.

⁶⁶ B. DAVIES, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 172.

be identified. «Rather, he says that God is ‘Existence Itself’ since ‘God exists’ is true and since there is nothing which caused it to be the case that God exists. In other words, Aquinas’ teaching that God’s nature is to exist amounts to the conclusion that God is *not* created (*not* caused to exist by anything)»⁶⁷.

Barry Miller

Barry Miller (1923-2006), an Australian philosopher and Marist priest, is known for his trilogy in philosophical theology: *From Existence to God: A Contemporary Philosophical Argument* (1992), *A Most Unlikely God: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of God* (1996), and the *Fullness of Being: A New Paradigm for Existence* (2002). Miller also wrote an important article in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* on “Existence”. Elmar Kremer summarizes that: «Miller’s work deserves critical attention because of its thorough and original defense of three highly controversial positions: that existence is a real property of concrete individuals; that it is possible to prove, without assuming any principle of causality or of sufficient reason, that there is an uncaused cause of the universe; and that the uncaused cause is the simple God of classical theism»⁶⁸.

In *The Fullness of Being*, Miller writes that he is unconvinced by the Fregean thesis that existence is not a property of individuals and, therefore, not predicable of them. Against Frege, Miller argues that “exists” is predicable of concrete, individual objects⁶⁹. Miller concentrates on Frege’s existential use of “is” and the thesis that existence is neither a first-level property nor a first-level predicate. For Frege, “exists” always functions as a second-level predicate and what it stands for is a property of a concept, i.e., the property of having at least one object falling under it⁷⁰.

Miller considers Aquinas to hold, on the ontological plane, that existence is logically prior to essence and is not an accident. However,

⁶⁷ Cf. B. DAVIES, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 186.

⁶⁸ E. KREMER, *Analysis of Existing: Barry Miller’s Approach to God*, Bloomsbury, New York 2014, p. 1.

⁶⁹ Cf. B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being: A New Paradigm for Existence*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 2002, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Cf. B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 9.

Miller thinks that Aquinas struggles to explain the relationship between an individual and its instance of existence. With regard to the linguistic plane, Aquinas distinguished

between two existential uses of ‘is.’ In one of them, ‘is’ is taken to express the being of whatever falls under the Aristotelian categories, whether the being of a substance or that of the accidents. As used in this way, ‘is’ refers to that by which something is actual. In the second existential sense, however, it expresses the truth of a proposition. Following Geach, these two existential uses might be called the ‘actuality’ and the ‘there-is’ uses respectively⁷¹.

Miller holds that this is a distinction between “is” or “exists” as first-level predicates and as second-level predicates.

Miller argues that “exists” is a first-level predicate and hence a first-level property. According to Miller, “existence” is a real property and can be distinguished from all other properties insofar as these properties are posterior to an individual, while existence is logically prior to individuals. Furthermore, «an individual is not the subject in which its instance of existence inheres, but is that which bounds its instance of existence»⁷². For Miller, this is a paradigm shift: instead of thinking that all first level properties must inhere in an individual, we must recognize that at least one property (existence) requires only to be bounded by an individual.

In response to the lack of an adequate metaphor to talk about the bounding of existence by the individual, Miller proposes the metaphor of a block or stick of butter cut into a number of parts. «Each piece of butter has a different surface or bound. A peculiar thing about bounds is that, although they are real enough, they themselves are totally devoid of thickness: [...]. Despite their ontological poverty, however, they do have a genuine function, for they serve to distinguish every block from every other block. In that sense they can be said to individuate the blocks they bound»⁷³.

For Miller, “wisdom” inheres in Socrates, but Socrates’s instance of existence does not inhere in the subject but is “bounded by” the in-

⁷¹ B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, pp. 16-17.

⁷² B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 20.

⁷³ B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 97.

dividual. Miller quickly moves to explain these two “elements” in an existing Socrates: 1) an instance of existence; 2) what is actualized by that instance of existence, namely, the Socrates element that includes all his properties⁷⁴. As the bound of his instance of existence, Socrates is logically prior to his instance of existence with regard to individuation, but is logically posterior to his instance of existence with regard to actuality⁷⁵. In Miller’s view, not only does Socrates bound his instance of existence, Socrates also provides a pattern of the various limits to which that actuality extends: intelligence, wisdom, generosity, etc. The second role is called the “socratizing” of his instance of existence⁷⁶.

In presenting the Socrates element as the “bound of existence”, Miller clarifies that the Socrates element has no actuality independently of his instance of existence. The Socrates element is not a container or outer layer. Miller invites us to think of the Socrates element as the etching on the surface of a glass sphere. Like the surface, the individual element contributes nothing by way of actuality. The individual element may be more or less complex, just as the human being is more complex than the chimpanzee. Miller writes: «like the etched surface of the sphere, the role of the Socrates element is simply that of a pattern or imprint on his instance of existence, but not in any way that of an actualizer»⁷⁷.

Miller then contrasts his view with that of Aquinas. In a footnote, he writes that although Aquinas speaks about Socrates contracting or determining his existence, Aquinas does not regard Socrates as bounding existence. In fact, in *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2 ad 7, Aquinas explicitly refers to *esse* inhering in individuals (in contrast to God’s subsistent *esse*). Miller seems to imply that Aquinas’ view has to attribute an actuality to Socrates independent of his instance of existence. For Miller, there is a difference between «individuating by being a bound» and «individuating by being a subject of inherence»⁷⁸.

⁷⁴ Cf. B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 98.

⁷⁵ Cf. B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, pp. 98-99.

⁷⁶ Cf. B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 100.

⁷⁷ B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 102.

⁷⁸ B. MILLES, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 103.

For Miller

once an individual's instance of existence is recognized as *bounded* by that individual, its existence has to be accepted as more or less rich ontologically, depending on the extent to which it is restricted by the individual that both individuates it and marks its bound. [...] the less restricting the bound, the richer the instance of existence that is individuated by it⁷⁹.

Existence, for Miller, is not merely that by virtue of which an individual is something rather than nothing, for it is also that by virtue of which an individual both is the kind of entity it is and has the kinds of properties it does have. Thus, the fullness of being proper to the subsistent being is not ultimate in ontological poverty, but ultimate in ontological wealth⁸⁰.

Conclusion

My brief overview of the thought of four Analytic Thomists on the onto-theological difference shows that they are divided on the problem of whether or not existence is a meaningful, real predicate, predicable of individual objects. If it is not, then the question about the relationship between a being (*ens*) and its being (*esse*) and the relationship between created being and divine being is largely meaningless. Skepticism about Aquinas' notion of being reigns in the agnostic interpretation of Kenny. And, while Davies is critical of Kenny's position, his view on existence as predicated of a creature means that it is not a "figment of one's imagination" and when predicated of God, i.e., "God is *ipsum esse subsistens*", it means that God is not created. Other Analytical Thomist hold that *esse* refers to either that whereby a form exists (Geach) or an instance of a real property bounded by the individual (Miller). The respective positions of Geach and Miller are represented in the following comparative chart.

⁷⁹ B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 153.

⁸⁰ Cf. B. MILLER, *The Fullness of Being*, p. 153.

	Peter Geach	Barry Miller
Response to Frege	Existence, asserted by saying “there is an x”, differs from an x “having <i>esse</i> ” (present actuality).	A first-level property is whatever can be attributed to an individual by a predicate.
To be (<i>esse</i>)	That whereby an individualized form exists and persists; the <i>esse</i> of a perfection is the degree to which a perfection is possessed.	Existence is an instance of a real property that actualizes the quidditative content of the Socrates element. The richness of an instance of existence is relative to the kind of restriction marked by its bound.
Ontological Difference	There is a real distinction between a self-subsistent individual and their forms, including the form of <i>esse</i> .	The quidditative content of the Socrates element, without having an actuality independently of his existence, bounds or individuates his instance of existence and provides a pattern of the various limits to which that actuality extends.
Theological Difference	Created <i>esse</i> is a perfection possessed only to a degree and therefore derived from a cause; divine <i>esse</i> is unlimited and illimitable underived perfection.	The instance of existence can be boundlessly rich. Subsistent Existence is an entity the essence of which is identical with its existence.

In my opinion, Geach tends to reduce “to be” (*esse*) to the “being-in-act” (*esse in actu*) of some form, even though he uses the phrase “that by which an individual form is.” This reductive view does not allow *esse* as *actus essendi* to emerge, so to speak, above accidental being (*esse accidentale*) and substantial being (*esse substantiale*). As well, Geach’s language is confusing when he tries to distinguish the perfection of the form and the being (*esse*) of the formal perfection. For Geach, being (*esse*) seems to become the degree of the perfection itself, rather than the intrinsic source of the perfection, limited and measured by the form or essence.

For his part, Miller attempts a paradigm shift to say that existence does not inhere in an individual, but is bounded by an individual. His proposal, in my opinion, tends to confuse the subject with the essence of the subject when he speaks of the “Socrates element” or individual as that which bounds existence. In Aquinas, the subject has being (*esse*)

or finitely participates in being (*esse*), while the essence of the subject is that which determines or measures being (*esse*). In the end, Miller holds that Aquinas' view of Socrates receiving, contracting, and determining being (*esse*) differs from his own view of the quidditative content bounding existence.

As regards a response to the proposals of Geach and Miller, I point out that, for Aquinas, the proper method of metaphysics is not the analysis of propositions but rather the resolution of being as being to causes and the corresponding composition from principles (or causes) to effects. The consideration of the modes of predication and the corresponding modes of being is a preliminary stage that helps grasp the commonness of being and the distinction between substantial modes of being and accidental modes of being. The method of resolution considers being according to act and potency and employs a robust theory of analogy. An analogy of proportionality (four-term analogy) moves the metaphysician from one act-potency composition to the next, while the analogy of reference (analogy of many to one or analogy of one to another) employs the priority of act over potency both with respect to the compositions themselves and with respect to the relationship between an effect and its ultimate cause.

On the one hand, a robust analogy of being enables us to organize the meanings of being (such as those listed by Kenny). On the other, the analogy of being enables us to grasp how the determination of the subject by accidents is analogously similar to and yet different from the determination of prime matter by substantial form and similar to and different from the determination of a being's "to be" (*esse*) by the essence. In creation, God simultaneously gives being and produces that which receives being. In Aquinas, there is no question of a prior actuality of the essence to its act of being.

In their work, Analytical Thomists like Geach and Miller strive to show that "existence" in Aquinas is not reducible to a "second-level property of concepts" and, therefore, a quantifier equal to the negation of zero. They hold that as well as expressing, "it is the case that there is at least one *x* such that...", existence or being can also be predicated of an object and means "that by which the object is". This distinction is important and helpful when dealing with affirmative propositions about

things or objects that do not exist in reality. At the same time, I would argue that making the distinction between *esse ut verum* (or *esse* as used in a judgment) and *esse* in the sense of “the predicable form that signifies the act/form that makes something persist or actually present in reality” is only a first step in a long journey toward understanding being (*esse*).

Aquinas’ texts on being (*esse*) distinguish between *esse* as the essence and *esse* as the act of being (*esse ut actus essendi*) and between *esse substantiale* and *esse accidentale*. Cornelio Fabro presents these distinctions as between being-in-act (*esse in actu*) and being as act (*esse ut actus*) and between subsistence and inherence (*in esse*). For Aquinas, *esse* is more than just “that by which a thing is”. *Esse* as *actus essendi* is the actuality of all acts and the intrinsic perfection of all perfections.

Along with the method of resolution and the analogy of being, it is also important to be attentive to the important role of the notion of participation in Aquinas’ metaphysics. Structurally, all created beings participate in their act of being, which they have received from divine being and which is measured intrinsically by their essence, which is measured extrinsically by the corresponding divine idea. The ontological difference between a being (*ens*) and its being (*esse*) is not equivalent to the difference between an individual subject and an accidental form (a virtue like wisdom). The two differences are analogous but not identical. As well, the theological difference should not be reduced to a difference between being that is limited or bound and therefore derived and being that is unlimited or unbounded and, therefore, not derived. Understood properly, the creature’s being (*esse*) can be called *inhaerens* precisely because it is participated and possessed in a limited fashion and divine being is “subsistent” because it is *per essentiam* and not *per participationem*. The creature’s *esse*, measured and specified by its essence, is not merely “that by which it exists outside of its cause and nothingness”, but is the intrinsic source of its natural perfection, including its operative powers that flow from and are measured by its essence, its operative habits, and its perfective operations, by means of which a being (*ens*) attains its ultimate end and perfection.

It is commendable for Analytic Thomists to engage the Frege-Russell-Quine notion of existence and respond initially by means of

the analysis of propositions. Metaphysics, though, is not limited to the analysis of propositions. Its true analysis is the resolution to ultimate intrinsic and extrinsic causes and its true synthesis is the composition to transcendental properties, perfective operation, and created effects. Some fields, in my opinion, that need to be explored especially by Analytic Thomists, who reject the reduction of existence to a “positing of a thing” (Kant) or to a “denial of the number zero” (Frege), include the following: the relationship between metaphysics, logic, and mathematics; the relationship between the ontological subsistence in a nature and participation in a species; the logical structures of the *triplex via*; and the relationship between the analogy of being and participation in being.