Form and Species or Intelligible Form versus Intelligible Species

To avoid any confusions at this point, please note that, if the form of a thing or an event is to be distinguished from the species of the same thing or the species of the same event (although, in some contexts if not in most contexts, form and species are viewed as meaning or referring to the same thing), if we want to talk about form as something which is grasped within or through a direct act of understanding (form as a direct object of our understanding) and species as something which is somehow other than this grasped content, we could possibly say that a species is that which we know once we have moved through an act of understanding toward an act of conceptualization which produces a definition that advert to the meaning of a specific form, expressing it in a communicable manner. From form as an intelligibility which exists with respect to a meaning that is given to us as

1See how Lonergan speaks about form and species in Verbum, p. 175. See also Collection, p. 284, n. g., for an editorial definition of “eidos“ and species that talks about form as the meaning or apt translation of these terms. For Aristotle, “regularly” or usually, form is eidos (or morphê) although, at times, eidos has been translated as species first in Latin and later in English. Cf. Byrne, “Teleology, Modern Science and Verification,” p. 4, n. 4; Lonergan, Caring about Meaning, p. 45; Topics in Education, p. 171; Verbum, p. 175. In Lonergan's translation, eidos translates as “form.” For both Aristotle and for Aquinas, eidos as form refers to that which is known through an act of the intellect or an act of the mind (through nous) and not that which is known through an act of sense perception. Cf. Byrne, Analysis and Science in Aristotle, p. 198; p. 200. With respect specifically to forms (and not to essences), in Aristotle's De anima, 3, 7, 431b 2 (as cited and translated by Lonergan in Collection, p. 138), it is said that “the faculty of understanding grasps the forms in images”; in the original Greek: τὰ μὲν οὖν εἴδη τὸ νοητικὸν ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι νοεῖ.

2See Patrick Byrne, “The Thomist Sources of Lonergan’s Dynamic World-view,” The Thomist 46 (1982): 128. Please note that if we should want to distinguish between the form of a thing as it exists within a given thing (as it exists in its intelligibility apart from our human acts of understanding) and the form of this thing as it exists within the apprehensions of our understanding (existing as the term of an act of direct understanding), then, within this metaphysical context and not within a cognitional context, we understand why “in the thirteenth century, the form existing in my intellect was commonly called 'intelligible species' in order to distinguish it from the form existing in the thing I am thinking about.” Cf. Georgio Pini, “Two Models of Thinking: Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus,” Intentionality, Cognition and Representation in the Middle Ages, ed. Gyula Klima, New York: Fordham University Press, forthcoming, p. 6. Cognitionally, yes, in terms of an identity, an intentional identity, if, in a given act of direct understanding, we understand the nature of a given thing or the nature of a given event, then, as knowers, we participate in the nature of that which we have understood and, as a consequence, through this nature, we participate in the being of a thing or in the being of an event which we have come to understand. Correct understanding (as this exists in our reflective acts of understanding) points to the truthfulness or the reality of this species of participation. Always, in understanding the nature of a given thing or in understanding the nature of a given event, the nature of a given thing or the nature of a given event comes to exist within ourselves as understanders. In our acts of human understanding, a form of direct realism is to be alluded to: a realism which exists as a critical realism which is other than that which would exist for us through some form of naïve realism. Cf. Claude Panaccio, “Aquinas on Intellectual Representation,” Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality, ed. Dominik Perler (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 192.
the content or as the term of a direct act of understanding (form, as a universal, that is grasped within a set of material conditions), in or through one or more acts of conceptualization we can then begin to speak about a form as it exists within multiple sets of material conditions that resemble each other and so, if we should want to speak about an intelligibility which exists within this larger context of common conditions, we can then speak about the species of a given kind of thing or the species of a given kind of event. The intelligibility which is present within a form and the intelligibility which is present within a species do not really differ from each other. In form and species, in intelligible form and in intelligible species, we find the same meaning even if we can also say that the meaning present within a species can be rightly understood to exist as a significance that, in some way, means more. The meaning is deeper or larger because it has been added to or it has been augmented or increased in some way because of what occurs in that which exists as an act of conceptualization.\(^3\)

However, on the other hand, a cognitional form of identity is not to be confused with a metaphysical form of identity. Things exist apart from our having a possible understanding of them and, in the context of our understanding, they continue to exist apart from what we have grasped in our understanding, although admittedly, through our acts of cognition, we are joined and we can be joined to very many things (everything which we can understand and know). According to one way of speaking about the kind of difference which is being alluded to here: “to cognize something is to have a likeness of that thing in the intellect, not to have that very thing in the intellect.” Cf. Pini, p. 9. The reality of a knower is to be distinguished from the reality of a thing which is understood and known because the form of a thing or the form of an event exists with a different mode than that which exists for us as a form which would exist within the data of our human understanding (existing as the term, the *terminus*, or the object of a direct act of understanding). Our acts of understanding occur if certain conditions are met with respect to how we exist as contingent, cognitive subjects (as potential knowers, as partial knowers, and as accomplished knowers). But, with respect to forms which exist externally within material conditions of one kind or another that we are sensing, we do not argue that these forms exist because of the same set of conditions which would refer to how an order of constitution exists within our human acts of cognition and the kind of genesis which occurs within the growth and the development of our understanding and learning. In our abstracting acts of understanding, we detach or we remove an immaterial form from a set of material conditions while, on the other hand, in the order of being which exists apart from our acts of understanding, a form is introduced or we say that it is “instantiated in a certain portion of matter.” Cf. Pini, p. 11. Two different modes of being can be distinguished when we refer to the nature or the form of a thing (or the nature or the form of an event). A material kind of being exists when a nature or a form exists within a set of material conditions (matter as “natural matter”) and an immaterial kind of being exists when a nature or a form exists within the mind or intellect (mind or intellect as that which can be viewed in an analogical way as a specification of “immaterial matter”). Cf. Aquinas, *Sentencia Libri De anima* 2, 12, as cited by Panaccio, p. 187, n. 8. Citing the wording of an interpretation of this difference that can be allegedly grounded in texts that have taken here and there from the corpus of Aquinas's writings: “the intellect is the sort of subject that receives forms without becoming the thing whose form it receives because the intellect is an immaterial subject.” Cf. Pini, p. 10, citing Aquinas, *Sent.* 2, d. 3, q. 1, ad 3; *De ente*, 4, 375, 11-375.23; *Contra Gentiles* 2, 50, n. 1261 and n. 1264; 2, 91, n. 177.

If we recall to mind or if we can think about what it is like to solve a mathematical problem in geometry, at one level, we suddenly realize that a given angle must always equal this other given angle. However, at another level, once we realize that a given angle must always equal this other given angle, we also realize in our awareness of self that we are in the presence of a mathematical principle. We are confronted by this presence. We first solve a problem by grasping a meaning, an intelligibility, a
With respect thus to possible acts of conceptualization, if we should want to speak about one kind of conceptualization which directly moves from the content or the object of an act of understanding to a concept or word which expresses an intended meaning which has now been understood, we can speak about how, through an inner word or a concept which proceeds from an act of conceptualization, we have a species that is able to speak about a form in a manner which links it to a universalized notion of matter (a universalized notion which refers to specifications of common matter and not to any instance or specifications of particular matter as this can be given to us in any of our particular acts of sense). In this context, through our acts of conceptualization, every form which exists as a universal within a given set of material conditions is detached more fully from a given set of material conditions and, as a result, in the transposition which occurs, a form is known as a species. Within this context, a conceptualized form (or a conceptualized universal) can be properly referred to as a species (a species which exists as an intelligible species).

However, with respect to other acts of conceptualization, if we should again refer to the term or the content of an act of understanding and if we should now refer to it as a *species quae* (a “species which” is understood), and if we should then try to convert it into metaphysical principle which would refer to the presence or the activity of some kind of external formal agent cause (or some kind of external formal agent object) and how it acts from without to effect a change within the acts and terms of our human cognition, moving our cognitive consciousness from a condition of potency to a condition of act with respect to something which we now understand in contrast with what, previously, we had not understood), then, within this context, we would introduce a distinction which distinguishes between that which exists as a *species quae* and that which exists as a *species qua*. A *species qua* refers to a species or a form which is seen to exist as a medium or means by which something other is understood or by which something other can be understood (*species qua intelligitur* [a species by which (a thing) is understood]). As that by which something other can be possibly understood, it can be seen to refer to a habitual form of understanding which perhaps we already have (an understanding which has been acquired over time). Its externality, relative to that which can be newly understood through the emergence of a new, proximate act of understanding, suggests a difference which exists between a *species qua* and a *species quae*. Prior to many of our acts of understanding, we have a situation where, already, “the mind is well organized and amply stocked with 'species qua'.” As we attend to the order

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necessity, that is given to us in the manner of a form. But, through a conceptualization that immediately moves within our intellectual consciousness, we also find and notice that this same form which we have understood is a form that also points to the presence of an invariant mathematical principle, a possible mathematical law (a mathematical principle or law which would be invariant within the kind of geometry that we are supposing through the kind of work that we have been doing to solve a given mathematical problem).

4 *Verbum*, pp. 176-177, p. 188, p. 318. See also Christopher Friel, “Lonergan on the Unity of Man,” unpublished paper, pp. 33-35.

5 Christopher Friel, “Lonergan on the Unity of Man,” p. 34, citing Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #150, #199. In a contribution of his own which Friel makes to help us understand the difference between a *species quae* and a *species qua*, we can advert to the difference which exists between a present indicative verbal expression and a present continuous indicative verbal expression. When we say, “I understand,” what is understood refers to a *species quae*. But, when, on the contrary, we say, “I am understanding,” we refer to a time which moves from the past and which
of acts within our human cognition and the relation which exists between acts and objects, we should notice that the *species quae* exists as a species of direct object. It is is the direct object of an act of understanding. It is a form which is intended by our prospective acts of understanding (our acts of inquiry; our acts of imagining, our acts of thinking) and it is constituted by our acts of understanding. However when, through our subsequent reflection, we begin to think about a *species* or form which is conceived in terms which would want to think about it as a species of operative cause (existing as a proactive formal cause), we can begin to speak about it as a second kind of species. In a *species qua*, an instrumental cause exists since, by it, something which is other can be properly understood or, by it, something other can be understood. If, in a *species qua*, a formal cause is identified, in apt images or phantasms, a material cause is identified and, together, both exist as instrumental causes within the order, the structure of our human cognition.

Hence, through a kind of application which prefers to speak about our acts of human cognition in a manner which works with metaphysical categories, we can say that, when or as we engage in an analysis which thinks about which causes are to be regarded as external and which causes are to be regarded as internal with respect to what happens within our acts of understanding, we should find that, within the context of our self-understanding, within our acts of understanding, two acts can be distinguished from each other (a *species qua* from a *species quae*): two acts, however, which cognitionally always occur together in a unity which can never be sundered. Two acts are constitutive of the kind of apprehension which always exists in an act of understanding. A first act exists as the emergence or the procession of an operation (as a *processio operationis* in a shift which, in knowing, moves us from a condition of potency to a condition of act) and this first act, as soon as it occurs, immediately elicits or it leads to a distinct second act. Hence, within this context, we can say that a reception first occurs with respect to our acts of understanding when a formal agent object (an externally existing formal object) acts from without (externally) upon our inquiring consciousness continues on in the present. The present continuous indicative more readily refers to a state or condition of cognitive consciousness which points to the presence of our operative habitual understanding.

6*Verbum*, pp. 175.

7Please notice here that questions can be raised about whether we are speaking about a real distinction or the possible presence of a conceptual distinction (sometimes referred to as a “mental distinction”). In the presence of a real distinction, within our inner experience of self and within our self-reflection, we should experience one datum of consciousness which points to one species of act and a second datum which points to a second species of act. If, for instance, we work with mathematical problems and find solutions for mathematical problems, in our self-reflection, we should be able to distinguish between an act of understanding and a consequent act of conceptualization. Despite the affinity which exists or which joins these two kinds of intellectual act with each other, we should be able to notice that, within the order of being or reality, one act is not to be confused with the other. However, when, allegedly, we want to speak about acts of understanding and how a given act of understanding is constituted by two distinct acts, if we cannot advert to any difference which would exist within the data of our self-experience (our self-consciousness), we can legitimately wonder if we are working with a distinction that is properly real or if we are working with a distinction which exists only as the term or as the product of our speculative analysis as we reason about that which should exist as a cause and that which should exist as its proper effect. An “*x*” should lead of “*y*”: hence, a *species qua* to a *species quae*. 
which refers to our questions that intend or lead to possible acts of understanding or, in other words, to possible acts of mind or intellect. A species qua [a species by which] is received by our possible understanding and then, as a consequence of this reception or by means of this reception, a second act immediately follows. A distinct second act proceeds: an act which actively grasps or which actively knows, considers, or ponders that which exists for it as its species quae (its “species which,” its apprehended form, or its apprehended intelligibility) which is found to exist within an imagined, imaged object which exists for us as an apt image or an “illuminated, illuminating phantasm.”

From a metaphysical perspective which attends to objects as these differ from ourselves as subjects, we reason and move toward that which would exist for us as a species qua (a species qua leads to a species quae) or, in other words, we move retroactively or back from a species quae which exists as an intended, understood object to that which exists as a species qua although, from a cognitional perspective, when we attend to ourselves as subjects and as we inwardly move from acts toward objects, as our acts of inquiry lead us toward acts of understanding, a species quae is to be identified as the received term of our acts of understanding and, on this basis (within this context), as we attend to that which exists for us as the term of a direct act of understanding, we move toward an order of conceptualization and an articulation which allows us to speak about a form which would exist for us as a species of cognitive cause (the species quae as a species qua, as a “that by which” something else is understood, is that which allows us to understand something which exists apart from or independently whether or not we should happen to understand and know it). Through that which exists as a species quae, something else, something other, is understood by us in a way which brings into ourselves something which exists in an outer, outward way. In the context of our understanding, an understood species (or an understood form) primarily refers to things which are other than ourselves and only secondarily to that which exists in itself as a grasped, understood species.

If, within the context of a metaphysical kind of inquiry, it is said or it is argued that an act of understanding is constituted by a union which moves from a species qua to a species quae, when, from there, we attend to an inquiry which asks about the nature or the kind of species which exists with respect to our later acts of conceptualization, then, within this context, we can refer to a third kind of intelligible species, a species with a conceptuality which speaks about a species in qua (a species in which).

All these things being said and by way of a conclusion, if, for some reason, a given person does not want to go to the trouble of trying to make a distinction which points to some kind of real distinction which could be present in the relation which exists between a form and a species, a verbal distinction (a verbal difference) could be the only kind of distinction which we can properly think about and speak about. The difference which would be noticed at this level exists as a difference about mere words and one's choice of words. But, on the other hand, if we should want to move into an analysis that attends to the possible relevance of a real distinction (a real difference) between an act of understanding and an act of conceptualization, then we can get into a way of thinking which attends to the existence of possible real distinctions which derive from the real differences which exist between the term of an act of direct understanding and the consequent term of an act of conceptualization. As has already been noted, an identical intelligibility can be posited. In form and species, a joint intelligibility or a common intelligibility is shared. But, on the other hand, within the context of a self-reflective kind of inquiry

8 *Verbum*, p. 188; Friel, “Lonergan on the Unity of Man,” p. 36.
9 *Verbum*, p. 178, n. 149, citing Aquinas, *De unitate intellectus*, 5, 110; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 2.
10 *Verbum*, p. 177, p. 317.
which refers to the structure or the order of our human cognition, if we delineate and compare the meaning of a form with the meaning of a species, the meaning of a species can differ from the meaning of a form when we realize that a species is differently related to matter than that which we find when we refer to that which exists as a form. A form, in its meaning, is abstracted. It is detached or it is separated from its connection with a set of material conditions through an abstracting act of direct understanding (in Aquinas, an act of simple comprehension) but, on the other hand, a species, in its meaning, is rejoined or it is reconnected to material conditions when these conditions are referenced in a manner which would refer to the being and the kind of first principle which exists when we refer to that which exists as common matter. An inner connection (an inner relation) exists between a form as a species and an understanding of matter which has been specified in terms which would speak about a specification of common matter. Whether or not we can clearly find these distinctions in Aristotle and Aquinas or the degree that we can find these distinctions is a question that cannot be answered unless a competent inquiry and reading of texts is undertaken. However, since, in Aquinas, we do find that a real distinction exists between acts of understanding and acts of conceptualization, on the basis of this real distinction, we could go on to speak about a real distinction which could possibly exist between form and species, even as we find and even as we admit that, in his usage, Aquinas employs these terms in an interchangeable fashion. \textit{Forma intelligibilis} and \textit{species intelligibilis} commonly refer to the same thing.\footnote{11Aquinas, \textit{De Potentia}, q. 8, a. 1 and q. 9, a. 5 (as referenced by Lonergan, \textit{Verbum}, p. 23, n. 48) other texts notwithstanding.}

\footnote{12See Lonergan, \textit{Verbum}, p. 175, for a discussion that points to the interchangeable use which we find in Aquinas although the evidence which exists that points to the existence of interchangeable use should not lead us to conclude with any degree of certainty that Aquinas was unaware of certain distinctions which were present to his self-understanding (distinctions that he was probably aware of within his acts of understanding but which he could not so clearly distinguish in the conceptuality that was available to him and which he used in his choice of external words). The scientific methodology and specifications of meaning which exist in our own day was not the scientific methodology and the specification of meaning which was available to Aquinas in the context of his own day and time. Cf. \textit{Verbum}, p. 51.}