

The Concept of Essence

in Two Early Writings of Thomas Aquinas

By

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A Thesis

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WRITINGS OF THOMAS AQUINAS**

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AZARMIDOKHT HAGHIGHATKAR

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree**

of

MASTER OF ARTS

Azarmidokht Haghighatkar©1999

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I hope our Lord will give you all His best reward.

Dedicated to wise people and to those who love wisdom.

PROLOGUE

A general statement of the nature of the present study

The concept of essence appeared very early in the history of philosophy, playing a very large role in the metaphysical thought of Plato and Aristotle, and hence in the thought of medieval thinkers influenced by them, such as Thomas Aquinas, a major thinker of thirteenth-century Europe.

Although at the end I will be adding some brief critical comments of a philosophical nature, the present study will be primarily an historical study of the concept of essence, and especially the concept of the essence of living corporeal objects, as that is found in two early writings of Thomas Aquinas, namely his *Concerning Beings and Essence*, and Question 5 of his *Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*. In addition, I will be looking at early origins of the notion of essence, especially in Plato, and, quite briefly, at the origins of the explicit distinction of essence from existence, especially in the writings of the early eleventh-century Islamic thinker, Ibn Sina (Avicenna).

Chapter 1 will be devoted primarily to explaining the concept of essence as that is to be found in the writings of Plato, but especially in the early dialogues. Secondly, it will deal with Aristotle and Ibn Sina.

In Chapter 2, in an attempt to place the two works by Aquinas in their proper setting, I will give a brief account of the life of Aquinas, and discuss two major events or movements that would affect his thought deeply, namely the rise of the medieval universities, and the appearance in Europe of the works of Aristotle, and of the Islamic thinkers, in Latin translations.

In chapter 3 I will analyze Aquinas's *De Ente et Essentia* (*Concerning Beings and Essence*), and summarize what it reveals about his concept of essence.

In chapter 4 I will analyze Question 5 of Aquinas's *Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, and summarize what it reveals about his concept of essence.

In chapter 5 I will attempt to synthesize what has been revealed about Aquinas's concept of essence in *De Ente et Essentia*, with what has been revealed about his concept of essence in Question Five of his *Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate*, and then end with some brief critical comments on Aquinas's concept of essence.

I would ask that readers of this thesis keep in mind that I am attempting to write an analysis and summary of the text of two works written by Thomas Aquinas, and that I am trying to do this without being influenced by other writings. Thus, I will not be comparing the doctrine contained in these two works with the doctrine contained in other works written by Aquinas. And I will not be examining any secondary material written about these two works by Aquinas (though I have read the Introduction and footnotes provided by Maurer in the translation of these two works). I should also mention that I do not read Latin, and so must depend on translations, and the assistance of the director of the thesis to ensure I am grasping the basic points Aquinas is trying to make.

A Detailed Table of Contents

Chapter One

Three earlier philosophers on essence: Plato, Aristotle, and Ibn Sina	1
Part One: Three early Greek thinkers prior to Socrates and Plato: Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Parmenides	1
A. The intellectual revolution at the origins of Greek philosophy and science	1
B. Pythagoras, and the Pythagoreans	3
C. Heraclitus	5
D. Parmenides	5
Part Two: A doctrine of essence in Plato's early dialogues	7
Part Three: Aristotle	13
A. Aristotle in relation to Plato	13
B. Aristotle's doctrine of the (Ten) Categories	17
C. Aristotle on definition and essence	18
Part Four: Ibn Sina	19

Chapter Two

Aquinas, and the context in which he wrote	22
Part One: A life of Thomas Aquinas	22
Part Two: Rise and organization of medieval universities, and the activities of medieval professors and students	27
Part Three: Appearance in Europe of Latin translations of Aristotle, and of several important Islamic thinkers	30
A. How Islamic world became familiar with Greek philosophy, and especially with Aristotle's works	31
B. Some important Islamic and Jewish thinkers who were influential on medieval European thought	32
C. The new translations from the middle of the twelfth century until Aquinas	35

Chapter Three

Essence as found in corporeal beings according to the <i>De Ente et Essentia</i> of Thomas Aquinas	39
Introduction	39
Part One: The primary subject matter, and basic organization, of this Treatise . . .	42
Part Two: A very general presentation of the relationship of essences to beings . .	45
Part Three: Four additional expressions (i.e., other than the word ' <i>essentia</i> ') that have been used to refer to essence	48
Part Four: Is the essence of an individual corporeal substance the same as the form of that substance? Is it the same as the matter of that substance? Or what?	51
Part Five: Two ways of considering an essence	54
Part Six: The distinction between those words which signify an essence as a part, and those words which signify an essence as a whole	56
Part Seven: The connection between essence and what it is that can be correctly predicated of an individual corporeal substance	59
Part Eight: The essence of a corporeal object, and the three universal logical intentions	60
Part Nine: Essence as found in God, the divine substance	63
Part Ten: Essence as found in created substances, in general	66
Part Eleven: A summary of the doctrine of essence which is found in the Treatise . . .	69

Chapter Four

Essence as found in corporeal beings according to Question Five of the Commentary Aquinas wrote on the <i>De Trinitate</i> of Boethius	73
Introduction	73
Part One: A brief overview of the Four Articles in Question Five	75

Part Two:	An analysis and summary of Article One	76
	A. The precise question being addressed by Aquinas in Article One ...	76
	B. The answer Aquinas gives in the body of Article One.	78
	C. A selection of responses Aquinas made to the arguments for a negative answer to the question	82
Part Three:	An analysis and summary of Article Two	85
	A. The question being addressed by Aquinas in Article Two	86
	B. The answer(s) Aquinas gives in the body of Article Two	88
	C. Aquinas's response to the third argument for a negative answer to the question	91
Part Four:	An analysis and summary of Article Three	92
Part Five:	A brief look at Article Four	100
Part Six:	A summary of the doctrine of essence to be found in this work (in comparison the doctrine found in the <i>De Ente et Essentia</i>)	104

Chapter Five

	A summary of the doctrine of essence contained in these two works by Aquinas, and a brief critical comment on that doctrine	108
Part One:	Summary	108
Part Two:	Some critical comments	112
	Notes for Chapter One	115
	Notes for Chapter Two	116
	Bibliography	118

Chapter One

THREE EARLIER PHILOSOPHERS ON ESSENCE: PLATO, ARISTOTLE, AND IBN SINA

This chapter will be devoted chiefly to a doctrine contained in some early dialogues of Plato, with less attention being given to Aristotle, and to Ibn Sina (whose name in Latin was 'Avicenna'). But before turning our attention to Plato, we will take a brief look at Greek philosophy prior to Socrates and Plato.

Part One: Three early Greek philosophers prior to Socrates and Plato: Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Parmenides

A. The intellectual revolution at the origins of Greek philosophy and science

Greek philosophy is generally regarded to have originated in the early sixth century BCE, in the port-city of Miletus on the west coast of Asia Minor. The first three philosophers, who were philosophers of nature, were Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. They were similar in that each of them attempted to explain the presently existing universe, with its great multiplicity and variety of objects undergoing a variety of changes, by postulating a single, eternal, unoriginated, primal substance (such as water or air) from which the present universe evolved.

Why are they regarded as the first philosophers? Because they seem to be the first human beings (or at least the first for whom we have real evidence) to initiate the intellectual revolution that is at the root of philosophical thought, as well as at the root of

western scientific thought (which, of course, builds on earlier scientific work carried out by the Egyptians, in geometry, and by the Babylonians, in astronomy and arithmetic).

According to Guthrie¹, there are two characteristic features of this intellectual revolution. The first feature consists in: (a) the abandonment of a religious, mythological mode of explanation (of physical events, such as storms, and of overmastering psychological impulses, such as jealousy or hatred), where divine persons were viewed as the causes, thereby making the explanations highly particularized; and (b) the adoption of a rational/scientific mode of explanation, where all causes are to be sought within the physical world (with no divine persons being given a role), and the explanation is generalized to a very high level. Guthrie emphasizes that the sort of generalization required by science is radically opposed to the older religious thinking, which was in personal terms and thus demanded particular causes for particular events. This replacement of one mode of explanation by another is often referred to as the shift from *mythos* to *logos*.

As this first feature of the intellectual revolution is explained by Cornford², humans prior to these Milesians distinguished between two orders of existence (namely the natural and the supernatural), and two corresponding orders of human knowledge (namely the matter of fact ordinary knowledge drawn from direct experience, and the revelation accessible only to the inspired). Thus, he says, the birth of Greek philosophy was marked by the tacit denial of the distinction between the two orders of existence (or rather, the tacit denial of the existence of the supernatural world), and the tacit denial of the two orders of knowledge (or rather, the tacit rejection of the alleged revelation of that supernatural world).

The second feature of this intellectual revolution, according to Guthrie³, is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, rather than for the achievement of practical goals.

What were the conditions under which the original authors of the intellectual revolution lived, and the influences to which they were open, that were favourable to this revolution coming about? In answering this question, Guthrie⁴ emphasizes, first of all, the environment which provided these Milesian thinkers with the leisure (*scholē*) and stimulus for disinterested intellectual inquiry. Miletus possessed considerable wealth, and had wide foreign connections that provided contacts and opportunities for the exchange of ideas. In addition, their culture was humanistic and materialistic in tendency, with the anthropomorphic gods being relegated to the background. Cornford⁵ mentions the absence of a politically powerful priesthood (such as is often found in a theocracy), and the absence of a certain sort of revealed books, namely those which so mix together doctrines on the nature and origin of the universe with rules of conduct on which the society is built that as a result it is difficult to criticize doctrines on the nature and origins of the universe without undermining the society.

Let us now look briefly at three early Greek philosophers who were especially influential on the dialogues of Plato: Pythagoras, Heraclitus, and Parmenides.

B. PYTHAGORAS

Pythagoras migrated from the island of Samos, which is to the northwest of Miletus, and in approximately 530 BCE established a Pythagorean community in Croton, a city-state in southern Italy. Apparently Pythagoras was a gifted mathematician, and the

person who discovered that simple numerical ratios can be used to represent the fundamental musical relations of the octave.

The Pythagoreans had some sort of mathematical conception of reality, the precise nature of which is unclear; apparently they said “things are numbers”, which, Armstrong⁶ says, meant “the essential reality of things can be completely expressed in numerical terms”, or, perhaps, that mathematics is the key to understanding nature.

The Pythagoreans had a conception of *psyche* or soul which was in some ways similar to (and possibly in part borrowed from) the Orphic religion, which religion was widely followed in southern Italy.⁷ According to the Pythagorean conception, the soul is by its nature immortal (*athanatos*) because of its intellect, that is, because of the god-like capacity in the soul by which one can know eternal, unchanging objects. This immortal soul, however, has been imprisoned, or entombed, in a body, and thus needs to be purified and released from that body. How is it to achieve this purification? While certain dietary and clothing regulations are to be followed, as well as certain rituals, the purification is primarily achieved by performing certain acts proper to the intellect, i.e., by contemplating the eternal and unchanging objects, which means contemplating the formal order (or *harmonia*) that exists in the universe, especially as it exists in the movements of the celestial bodies and in music.⁸ The ancient Greeks believed that Pythagoras was the person who coined the word ‘*philosophos*’ (philosopher), to refer to someone who, though not *sophos* (wise) –for only God is *sophos*, nonetheless leads a life characterized by the love and pursuit of *sophia* (wisdom).

C. HERACLITUS OF EPHEBUS

Heraclitus⁹, who flourished in Asia Minor around the year 500 BCE, held that all the objects around us are in a constant state of flux or change (a doctrine which was expressed by saying “You cannot step into the same river twice”), and that the world is in a constant state of conflict between opposites. According to him, the human senses are limited and fairly unreliable when it comes to discovering the true nature of reality.

D. PARMENIDES OF ELEA

Parmenides¹⁰, who flourished in southern Italy around the year 485 BCE, introduced a distinction between (1) how reality (i.e., all that exists) is experienced by humans, i.e., how it appears to them, and (2) how reality really is.

Parmenides will agree with earlier Greek thinkers to the extent of holding that reality is experienced by every human being as consisting of many objects of different sorts which undergo a multiplicity and variety of changes. Parmenides used a single word, ‘*doxai*’ (the plural of ‘*doxa*’) to refer to both (a) the physical appearance that reality has in relation to the human senses, and (b) the beliefs or opinions humans form about this reality.

But what is reality really like? According to Parmenides, there is in existence only a single being (which he calls ‘the one’). And this being has always existed, it is indestructible, and in fact it never moves or changes in any way. Multiplicity, variety, coming into existence, going out of existence, motion and change are not features of reality as it really is. Hence, since multiplicity, coming into existence, going out of

existence, motion, and change are well attested to by the human senses, the human senses are completely unreliable when it comes to learning how reality really is.

How did Parmenides arrive at his doctrine as to what reality is really like? It would seem he did this primarily by analyzing the concept of being. In his analysis he over and over builds on the assumption that no distinction whatsoever can be made between being and some subject which possesses being, and comes to the conclusion that it is impossible for there to be more than one being in existence. Further, since there is no alternative to being and non-being, and since nothing can come into existence from either being or non-being, Parmenides drew the conclusion that nothing at all ever comes into existence.

Zeno¹¹, the disciple of Parmenides, will make use of a series of paradoxes to argue that if one were to hold that in reality there is more than one being, or that motion exists in reality, then one would be implicitly holding a position more ridiculous than anything Parmenides ever taught.

Looking ahead to Plato

In certain of Plato's dialogues, the character named 'Socrates' would seem to have been influenced by the above three philosophers in the following ways.

1. Pythagoras, and the Pythagoreans

Their influence can be seen in the following doctrines of the character 'Socrates': the doctrine of the immortal soul, which pre-exists the body; the doctrine of the relation of one's soul to one's body; the otherworldliness of his ethics; the emphasis placed on

mathematics; his regarding forms both as what is most real, and as the object known when one has genuine knowledge.

2. Heraclitus (through Cratylus)

His influence seems to be present when the character 'Socrates' holds that material objects cannot be the proper objects of genuine knowledge, which has the effect of playing down the role of sensation in acquiring genuine knowledge.

3. Parmenides

His influence is present in the distinction made by the character 'Socrates' between what is really real, and what is only apparently real (which can be the object only of doxa, belief or opinion, and never of episteme, genuine knowledge); and in the properties 'Socrates' attributes to each individual transcendent form (e.g., being invisible, eternal, unchangeable, indestructible, etc.).

But once one lists the ways in which these three philosophers have influenced the character 'Socrates', and notes the relative chronology of the writings of Plato, it soon becomes clear that this influence does not show up in significant amounts until the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* II-X; that is, it is not present in the early dialogues in which the character 'Socrates' first develops his concept of *eidos* (under the influence of the historical Socrates), but shows up near the beginning of the middle dialogues..

Part Two: A doctrine of Essence in Plato's early dialogues

The concept of essence which is found in the writings of Thomas Aquinas has its roots at least as far back in history as the concept of *eidos* (a term traditionally translated into English by the word 'form'), as that concept is expressed by the character 'Socrates'

in certain early dialogues written by Plato in the fourth century BCE, dialogues such as the *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, and *Republic I*. Here we will begin by examining the *Euthyphro*.

After an introduction in which the two characters, 'Euthyphro' and 'Socrates', relate how it came about that they were going to court in connection with two separate cases involving a charge of impiety, 'Socrates' gets 'Euthyphro' to do two things:

(1) first he gets 'Euthyphro' to claim he ('Euthyphro') possesses knowledge of divine matters as they pertain to actions which are pious or holy (*to hosion*), and to actions which are impious or unholy (*to anosion*); and

(2) then he gets 'Euthyphro' to agree there is something common to all pious actions, an *idea* (form) which is identical in each pious action, and in virtue of which the action is pious and belongs to the group of pious actions, just as there is an *idea* which is identical in each impious action, and in virtue of which the action is impious and belongs to the group of impious actions.

'Socrates' then asks 'Euthyphro' to identify the *idea* found in every pious action, making it to be what it is, and the *idea* found in every impious action, making it to be what it is.

'Euthyphro' responds by saying piety is what he ('Euthyphro') is now doing in court, i.e., prosecuting someone (in this case, his father) for an act such as unjustified killing, sacrilegious theft, or something of that sort.

'Socrates' rejects this answer, saying it is not the sort of answer he was after when he asked his question. 'Socrates' did not want 'Euthyphro' merely to point to some individual instance, or some sub-class, of the group pious actions. What 'Socrates' wanted 'Euthyphro' to do was to identify the very *idea* or *eidos* of pious actions as such,

i.e., to identify that property, or characteristic feature, found in each pious action, which makes it belong to this group.¹² ‘Socrates’ says that if ‘Euthyphro’ were to do this, ‘Socrates’ could then use it as a *paradeigma* (paradigm, model, standard, pattern) whereby he could tell which actions are pious and which are not.

‘Euthyphro’ then makes another attempt to answer ‘Socrates’ question (the nature of which has now been described even more clearly). After considerable assistance from ‘Socrates’, ‘Euthyphro’ comes up with the answer that the piousness of a pious action consists in the action’s being *prospiles* to all the gods, that is, dear to and loved by all the gods.

‘Socrates’ begins his response to this answer by indicating that it is superior to the first answer that ‘Euthyphro’ had given. (Socrates does not indicate the nature of its superiority, but apparently it would consist in the fact that the second answer, unlike the first, is not obviously too narrow.) Nonetheless ‘Socrates’ also rejects the second answer; it is not an acceptable answer to the question he had asked. For even if it is true that pious actions are loved by all the gods, being loved by the gods is merely a *pathos* of pious actions, something that happens to, or is undergone by, them (because they are pious); it is not the very *ousia* of pious actions (their very being, their reality).¹³ (In the *Meno*¹⁴, the character ‘Socrates’ will make another distinction, somewhat similar to the above distinction between *pathos* and *ousia*, when he says you cannot know a *poion* of virtue, such as whether virtue can be acquired by teaching, prior to knowing what it is (*ti estin*), i.e., prior to knowing the *eidos* of virtuous actions.)

Thus in the *Euthyphro* we find present (at least with respect to two groups of things, namely pious actions and impious actions) the concept of a property or feature:

- (i) that is common and peculiar to members of the group, i.e., a property found in every member of the group but not in any object not in the group;
- (ii) which is precisely that in virtue of which each member belongs to that group; and
- (iii) which is precisely what is referred to by the name of the group; (this third feature of the property will be clearer in other dialogues than it is in the *Euthyphro*).

In other words, the concept of the essence of a group is clearly present in the *Euthyphro*.

In addition, when we look at ‘Euthyphro’s’ third attempt at an answer to the question put to him by ‘Socrates’ (which answer is advanced over numerous stages of emendation and clarification and is produced only with considerable assistance from ‘Socrates’), we find what appears to be a suggestion from ‘Socrates’ regarding a procedure by which his difficult question could be successfully answered. For there ‘Socrates’ seems to suggest that one could successfully answer his question regarding what constitutes the *eidos* or *idea* of pious actions (i.e., his question on the very *ousia* of pious actions, their essence) if one were first of all to show that pious actions are a part, or sub-class, of the group just actions (*to dikaion*), (i.e., if one were to show that while every pious action is a just action, not every just action is a pious action), and then to identify precisely what sort of part pious actions are. In other words, we seem to have here in the *Euthyphro* a very early (perhaps the earliest of all) suggestion that the essence of a group could be stated if one were to identify the (proximate) genus of which the group is a species, and then identify the specifying difference which made this species different from every other group in the genus.

In none of the early dialogues dealing with the What-is-Xness? type of question does ‘Socrates’ raise the general question of whether there is an *eidos* for every group of objects, and, if not every group, then, which groups do have an essence. In the first book of the *Republic*, ‘Socrates’ asks what is the nature of just actions (and just persons); and in the *Laches*, he asks what is the nature of courageous actions. Similarly for temperate actions in the *Charmides*. In the *Meno* (which appears at the beginning of Plato’s middle dialogues), ‘Socrates’ will assume there is an *eidos*, not only for each of the various groups of virtuous actions, but also for bees, shapes, colors, etc. In the *Phaedo* (another middle dialogue), ‘Socrates’ will talk of many other groups which have an *eidos*, and in the *Republic* II-X¹⁵ he seems to suggest that there is an *eidos* for every group for which we have a common noun for a name, or at least for every group characterized by a positive feature, such as beautiful things, or good things. In a yet later dialogue, the *Parmenides*, some doubt will be cast on the existence of an *eidos* for certain groups, such as dirt and hair. Thus, it would appear that there is no clear and final answer to the question of which groups have an *eidos* that makes things to be members of the group.

If one were to set out to examine the concept of *eidos* that is to be found advanced in Plato’s dialogues by the character ‘Socrates’, one of the first things to be noted is that one probably should talk almost in terms of there being two rather distinct concepts of *eidos* in his writings.¹⁶

In the early dialogues devoted to the What-is-Xness? type of question (i.e., up to and including the *Meno*) we find a concept of *eidos* where an *eidos* is always conceived as a characteristic property which is intrinsic to the individual instances in the group of which it is the *eidos*, and which is present in each instance in exactly the same way.

Note that at this early stage the nature and function, and the existence, of an *eidōs* is merely assumed by the character 'Socrates'. Socrates does not stop to argue in favour of the existence of an *eidōs*, and he does not examine in any detail its ontological status. Further, he does not clearly relate it to the distinction between knowledge (*epistēmē*) and belief (*doxa*), or to the unreliability of the senses. Nor does he relate it to the question of whether the soul is immortal or not. The relationship of *eidōs* to these other matters will be taken up by the character 'Socrates' only later, in a group of middle dialogues written just before, or soon after, Plato's trip to Italy to visit the Pythagoreans.

And it is in these middle dialogues (see especially the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic* II-X) that the character 'Socrates' advances what in many ways is a quite distinct doctrine of *eidōs*. True, in these middle dialogues an *eidōs* will still perform the function of making individuals to be members of a group. But it will do this in a way that is quite distinct from the way in which it does it in the earlier doctrine. For in this second doctrine, 'Socrates' will conceive an *eidōs*, not as a property which is intrinsic to, and exactly the same in, each individual in the group, but as itself a perfect or ideal being which transcends the members of the group; i.e., it has an existence separate from, and independent of, the individual members of the group. Some examples that 'Socrates' mentioned of an *eidōs* when he conceived it in this way: beauty, goodness, justice, equality. What are the characteristics of each *eidōs*? Each of them is invisible, or, rather, unable to be grasped by the senses; each of them is unchangeable, eternal, indestructible. As for the relationship of individual members of a group to the *eidōs* for that group (say, the relationship of beautiful objects to beauty itself), 'Socrates' will now refer to it by saying the individual members of the group imperfectly reflect or imitate the *eidōs*, so

that various individuals could approximate that *eidos* in varying degrees, or a single individual member could approximate it in different degrees at different times. ‘Socrates’ will continue to say that the individuals in a group participate in, or share in, the *eidos*; but now it is clear that they do not always share in it to exactly the same degree.

It is within these latter dialogues (i.e., the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Republic* II-X, plus the *Timaeus*) that an *eidos* takes on certain additional roles (besides the role of constituting a group, and providing a foundation for common nouns), such as the following:

- (a) being the proper object of knowledge (*episteme*), as distinct from belief/opinion (*doxa*) which has as its proper object the individual members of the group;
- (b) being the model utilized by the Demiourgos (in the *Timaeus*) when fashioning the physical universe;
- (c) being an ideal standard against which humans can judge whether, and to what extent, existing individual objects are in fact members of a certain group;
- (d) being an ideal model which humans can attempt to approximate in their moral behaviour, or artistic activity.

When we examine Thomas Aquinas’s notion of essence, we will indicate which of these two notions of *eidos* Aquinas’s notion of essence is closer to.

Part Three: Aristotle

A. Aristotle in relation to Plato

Aristotle arrived at Plato’s Academy in approximately 367 BCE, when he was about seventeen years old, and stayed there for about twenty years, leaving only at the

death of Plato in approximately 347 BCE. This means that Aristotle came to the Academy after Plato had written the early *What-is-Xness?* dialogues, and even the middle dialogues such as the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*.

This twenty-year stay at the Academy had a deep effect on Aristotle. It is true, of course, that Aristotle himself undertook extensive empirical research soon after leaving the Academy (see, for example, his work in marine biology carried out on the island of Lesbos), and the school he later founded in Athens, the Lyceum, in some part took on the character of a scientific research institute -things that would not be true of Plato or of the Academy. But it is also true that Aristotle retained a deep interest in those non-empirical areas in which Plato and the Academy were primarily involved, such as metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical psychology, and ethics, and he was active in these areas up to the end of his life.¹⁷ That, of course, does not mean that in these latter fields he adopted the same positions as were advanced in Plato's dialogues, or in the Academy. For example, if you compare doctrines advanced by Aristotle in his late works with those advanced by the character 'Socrates' in the middle dialogues, it will become relatively clear that Aristotle rejected the doctrine of personal immortality of the human soul that had been advanced by 'Socrates', and that he taught an ethics that is this-worldly rather than otherworldly. But at times Aristotle did take positions which, from a certain angle, were quite similar to what one would find in the middle dialogues; for example, Aristotle also held that finality is present in nature, at least in the sense that the various parts and organs of a living being (e.g., roots, hands, feet, stomach, lungs) work to the benefit of the whole plant or animal, and individual members of a group of living beings work to the benefit of the whole group (especially by reproduction).¹⁸

Thus Aristotle's later philosophical doctrines are sometimes quite different from those advanced by the character 'Socrates' in the middle dialogues of Plato, and are sometimes fairly similar to them. But what about the doctrines of *eidos* or *ousia* that are to be found in Plato's dialogues? Did Aristotle adopt them, or reject them? While a full answer to this question would have to be rather long and complex, the following rough outline should do for our present purposes.

In the first place, it is perfectly clear that Aristotle completely rejected the doctrine of Transcendent Forms, that is, the doctrine (found in the middle dialogues) of forms existing independently of and separate from the individual objects which they place into groups, and that he rejected this doctrine fairly early in his career, perhaps while he was still at the Academy. His earliest attack on this doctrine was in a work entitled *Concerning Ideal Forms*, which is no longer extant except from some fragments; and the attack contained in his *Metaphysics* (Book I, ch. 9), though extant, is on the obscure side. Nonetheless, his attack would basically seem to have gone roughly as follows:¹⁹

- (i) the arguments in favor of the existence of Separate Forms are not convincing;
- (ii) anyone who does accept those arguments as convincing should also postulate the existence of certain additional Ideal Forms which the Platonists (says Aristotle) are unwilling to accept (such as Ideal Forms corresponding to nouns for negations and for artifacts);
- (iii) the doctrine is still not complete, in that the nature of the relationship of individual members of a group to their separate Form is always expressed in metaphorical terms (such as 'sharing/participating', 'imitating', 'reflecting', etc.);

i.e., those who hold this doctrine never say what the relationship of individuals to their Form is literally;

- (iv) Even if Ideal Forms do exist, they would be of no help in solving the problems (in physics, metaphysics, and epistemology) which they were postulated to solve.

But the fact that Aristotle rejected the doctrine of Separate Forms which is found in the middle dialogues of Plato does not mean Aristotle was not deeply influenced by any doctrine of *eidos* in Plato's dialogues. For Aristotle in fact adopted, and never seems to have rejected, the doctrine that it is form that places objects into groups, and that it is form that is the proper object of intellectual and scientific knowledge.²⁰

When Aristotle came to disagree radically with the doctrine of forms, this has to do, first of all, with location and ontological status of forms: for Aristotle, a form has no extra-mental existence other than as a property within the members of the group (which is very similar to the position to be found in Plato's earlier dialogues concerned with the What-is-Xness? type of question). For Aristotle, at least at the time of writing his *Categories*, that which is most real, and most deserving of the title '*ousia*' (reality), is the individual member of the group. The group itself, whether it be a species or a genus, is *ousia* only in a secondary way. Secondly, Aristotle's disagreement had to do with the way in which the human intellect comes to acquire knowledge of form; for Aristotle, the human intellect uses a type of abstracting activity to grasp the form present in the individual objects that have been sensed (as distinct from the doctrine spelled out in the *Meno* and *Phaedo*, according to which the knowledge of form was acquired in a previous existence, i.e., prior to the soul entering the present body, and all that happens now is that

sensation (or astute questioning) simply reminds the soul what it already knew but had forgotten).

B. Aristotle's Doctrine of the (Ten) Categories²¹

Since the opening chapters of Aristotle's work called the *Categories* are a mixture of grammatical, logical, and metaphysical investigation, it is not easy to give a simple and final explanation of his doctrine of categories, or of the way in which he arrived at it.

As used by Aristotle, the noun '*kategoria*' would seem first of all to have meant a predicate, or what is asserted. In addition, the word would seem to have meant one of a number of irreducible groups (or supreme genera) into which entities, and aspects of entities, can be placed. (Apparently Aristotle arrived at his list of irreducible groups of entities, and aspects of entities, by examining the various types of predicates, though this is not clear.)

Although it is customary to refer to 'the ten categories' of reality, one should not assume that Aristotle himself had settled on a doctrine according to which all reality can be organized into exactly ten irreducible groups. Aristotle on occasion listed fewer than ten, and he never suggested the list of ten is exhaustive.

The first category given by Aristotle is *ousia* (traditionally translated in this context by the word 'substance'). As indicated above, the primary instance of *ousia* would be an individual member of a species, e.g., Socrates. The other nine categories Aristotle mentioned were all called 'accidents', and consist of the following: quantity, quality, relation, location, time, action/doing, passion/undergoing, position, and state/habitus.

C. Aristotle on definition and essence²²

Today it is customary to distinguish between nominal definition (that is, a definition where what is being defined is a word or symbol), and a real definition (an ambiguous expression used to refer to a variety of activities where what is being subjected to the defining process is not a word or symbol, but a thing). (Some would restrict the term ‘definition’ to the process of defining terms and symbols.) Aristotle, like Plato, did not explicitly make this distinction between nominal and real definition; but if one examines the various ‘definitions’ he gives, it becomes clear that (with a few exceptions, where the *definiendum* is a word) he (like Plato) did not think that he was merely explaining what a word means. Thus, when in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he gave the *logos* of *eudaimonia* (happiness) as characteristic human activity performed in accordance with, and as an expression of, the highest human virtue of all, he was not trying to say what Greek speakers meant by the word ‘*eudaimonia*’. Similarly, when in the same work he ‘defined’ moral virtue as the habit, or acquired disposition, inclining one to choose the mean between two extremes, he was trying to convey what he thought moral virtue consisted in, not what Greek speakers meant by the term. Aristotle’s ‘definitions’ were (for the most part) not something you started with, but a goal to be achieved by demonstration. For Aristotle, to successfully ‘define’ something was to give a true account of the essence of the thing being defined.

As for the method for producing a ‘real definition’, Aristotle is most closely associated with the method using the (proximate) genus, and the specifying difference, of the thing (which method may have been present in the final section of Plato’s *Euthyphro*). In the above ‘real definition’ of *eudaimonia*, the genus was ‘characteristic

human activity', and the specifying difference was 'performed in accordance with, and as an expression of, the highest human virtue of all'. As for the above 'real definition' of moral virtue, 'habit or acquired disposition' was the genus, and 'inclining one to choose the mean between two extremes' was the specifying difference. The 'real definition' of a human being as a rational animal (where animal is the genus, and rational the specifying difference) is probably the most famous 'definition' attributed to Aristotle over the centuries, though its basis in Aristotle's writings is not so clear as the above two 'definitions' taken from the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Part Four: Ibn Sina (Avicenna)²³

According to the Islamic thinker Ibn Sina (980-1037), who was known in Medieval Latin as 'Avicenna', there are several concepts which are primary, in the sense that their meaning is obvious, and there are no simpler notions by which they could be explained. The first notion which our intellect conceives is the notion of 'being' (Ibn Sina's word here will later be translated into Latin as '*ens*'); a being is anything that exists. Another primary concept is 'thing' (to be later translated into Latin as '*res*'), a thing being anything about which a true statement can be made. Each thing has an essence by which it is what it is. And since every being (except one) has an essence through which it necessarily is what it is, every being involves some necessity; thus, if a being has the essence of a triangle, it is necessarily a triangle. Further, it is characteristic of an essence that it be communicable to many.

Aristotle had made a logical distinction between the following two aspects of an object: (i) what the thing is; and (ii) the fact that it is. That is, Aristotle distinguished

between the answers to the following two questions: (i) What kind of thing is it? And (ii) Does it exist?

Alfarabi (870-950), an Islamic thinker a bit earlier than Ibn Sina, took Aristotle's logical distinction and turned it into a real distinction to be found in every creature (between its essence and its existence), thereby distinguishing creatures from the Creator (in whom there is no such distinction).²⁴

Ibn Sina incorporated this distinction (between the essence and the existence of a creature) into his metaphysics, and developed the concept of an essence, e.g., humanness, considered in itself, as distinct from being considered as it exists, either in individual humans (where the essence is individualized), or in an intellect (where it is universal, in the sense of being able to be predicated of individual humans). Considered in itself, humanness is simply itself, neither individual nor universal. By this means Ibn Sina arrived at a notion of essence considered in itself, abstracting from anything extrinsic to it.

Although this distinction between essence and existence is made within philosophy, historically speaking the discovery (or making) of it was no doubt in part the result of religion. As Maurer puts it:

No doubt the impulse to extend Aristotle's logical distinction to the order of reality came from the revealed notion of creation, which was unknown to Aristotle. For Alfarabi and Avicenna, a creature in itself is a possible being; that is to say, it is an essence which can exist when given existence by its cause. Its existence, then, is not identical with its essence, nor is it one of the essential properties following upon the essence, as the ability to laugh is an essential property of the essence of man and a necessary concomitant of it. Existence is a separable concomitant or accident of essence. At least this is true of created existence. In God there is no distinction between essence and existence. Indeed, Avicenna denies to God an essence, properly speaking, for an essence is communicable to many, whereas God is unique. He alone exists necessarily through himself; he alone is pure existence.²⁵

Ibn Sina, like Aristotle, divides science into speculative sciences and practical sciences, and then divides speculative science into:

- (i) natural science, which deals with mobile objects whose existence depends on matter;
- (ii) mathematics, which also deals with objects existing in matter, but which are considered without considering matter; and
- (iii) Metaphysics, which deals with things that do not exist in matter and motion. Metaphysics is also referred to by other names: 'prime science', because it considers the first principle, being, and 'wisdom' or divine science', because it considers God and the Separate Intelligences.

Chapter Two

Aquinas, and the context in which he wrote

This introductory chapter contains three major parts. The first part gives a brief account of Thomas Aquinas's life; the second part explains the rise and organization of universities in medieval Europe, and the activities of medieval professors and students; the last part considers translations, and familiarity with Aristotle in the Middle Ages.

Part One: A life of Thomas Aquinas¹

At the end of 1224 or beginning of 1225, the Castle of Roccasecca, not far from Naples, witnessed the birth of Thomas Aquinas. His parents sent him to the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino as an oblate when he was five years old. From 1230 to 1239, he stayed there, until the Emperor Frederick II expelled the monks. The fourteen-year-old boy returned home and after a few months, in the autumn of 1239, he went to the University of Naples. He studied the seven liberal arts (i.e., grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy) and philosophy in Naples. At Naples, Master Martin taught grammar and logic, while Peter of Ireland taught natural philosophy. Peter of Ireland was an Aristotelian, and Aquinas first became familiar with Aristotelian thought through this teacher. During this period of his life Aquinas became acquainted with Dominican friars and was attracted to their community. He entered the Order of preachers in the year 1244, at the age of nineteen.

It might be because his family did not approve of his entrance to the Order that the Dominican General took Thomas with him to Bologna, and then sent him to the University of Paris. Thomas was kidnapped by his brothers on the way, and was prisoner

at Aquino for about a year. His family's efforts were not successful in changing his mind. Thomas remained in the Order, and was taken to Paris (by John the German), where he stayed from 1245 to 1248.

According to Weisheipl, there are difficulties in accepting the theory that during these three years at Paris Thomas studied under Albert the Great, or that he enrolled in the arts course at the University of Paris. Perhaps "he would have spent his three years at Paris, before his going to Cologne, in prayer, in private study under the lector of the house, and in observing the Dominican way of life"².

Thomas accompanied Albert the Great to Cologne in the summer of 1248. Albert was sent there to establish the first *studium generale* (house of studies) in Germany. Thomas remained there until 1252. According to Copleston, during the three years in Paris and four years in Cologne, Thomas was in close contact with Albert the Great, who had a great influence on Thomas; however, Albert was not the first person who introduced Thomas to Aristotle. Albert believed in a sound philosophical foundation for theology. As a bachelor under Albert in Cologne, Thomas produced three commentaries. A bachelor, or assistant, must lecture cursorily on one or other book of the Bible, which means reading the text, paraphrasing difficult passages, and analyzing series of questions arising from the text. Those years at Cologne were the most propitious years in both Albert's life and Thomas's.

Thomas returned to Paris in 1252 and continued his studies. He also prepared himself to teach the *Sentences*. According to Copleston, Thomas lectured on the Scriptures from 1252 until 1254 and on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard from 1254 until 1256. Thomas worked, during these years, under Elias Brunet, the only master in

theology in the Dominican chair for “foreigners”. Unfortunately, there are no writings known to have been produced by Brunet.

The *Scriptum super sententias* (which is a commentary of the *ordinatio* type) is Thomas’s commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. (There are two kinds of commentaries attributed to Thomas: the *reportio*, which is a report of the live lecture written down by a student, and the *ordinatio*, which is a finished product written or dictated by the author himself.) Peter Lombard’s first three books are about Trinity, Creation, Christ, and virtues. The fourth book of the *Sentences* considers the seven sacraments, which are signs, or symbols. Thomas divided the four books into two groups of two each: the first two consider the *exitus* of all things from God, and the last two concern with the *reditus* of all things to God. Weisheipl in his *Friar Thomas D’Aquino* says “the *Scriptum* on the *Sentences* can be compared with the modern Ph.D. thesis. Although the *Scriptum* is a work of genius, it does not present the final and definitive thought of Thomas, such as we find in his later works, particularly the *Summa contra gentiles*, the *Summa theologiae*, and his *Questiones disputatae*”.³ It was during these four years (i.e., 1252-1256, before he began lecturing as a master) that, at the request of his brethren, he wrote the following two treatises: *De ente et essentia ad fratres et socios suos* (*Concerning Being and Essence*), and *De principiis naturae ad fratrem sylvestrum* (*Concerning the Principles of Nature*). The first one is one of the two works of Thomas Aquinas that will be examined in this thesis.

Besides lecturing, Thomas had to participate in disputations which means that he had to answer ‘objections’ of his own master, and also of other masters; to get his licence, he had to be evaluated by other masters.

Thomas received his licence to teach in the faculty of theology in 1256. He was a Dominican professor at the University of Paris for three years (until 1259). During these years he performed all the requirements of his office, namely lecturing, disputing and preaching. The basic text of the master's classes was the Bible. Thomas's biblical commentaries on Isaiah and on the Gospel of St. Matthew probably belonged to this period. The *Questiones quodlibetales* 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, plus two commentaries on Boethius, *In Boethium de Hebdomadibus*, and *In Boethium de Trinitate*, are also to be assigned to this period (i.e., before 1259, when he left for Italy). (The last mentioned work is another work of Aquinas that will be examined in this thesis.)

Thomas began his famous *Summa contra Gentiles*, a writing that did not originate from strictly academic obligations, in Paris (1258-59) and finished it in Italy (1264). It seems that Spanish Dominican Raymond of Penafort, who was evangelising non-Christians in Spain and North Africa, suggested the *Summa contra Gentiles*, as a theological encyclopaedia for the use of missionaries among Jews and Muslims. *Summa contra Gentiles* has basically two parts: Books I-III consider truths about God that can be known by human reason, and Book IV deals with truths about God and divine things that can be known only by revelation. Since missionaries argued with people who were usually familiar with the philosophy of Aristotle and Avicenna, the first three books rely heavily on Aristotle and Avicenna.

Thomas went to Italy in the spring of 1259 to teach theology at the *studium curiae* attached to the Papal court until 1268. According to Copleston, he was at Anagni with Alexander IV (1259-61), at Orvieto with Urban IV (1261-64), at Santa Sabina in Rome (1265-67), and at Viterbo with Clement IV (1267-68). Thomas met William of

Moerbeke, the famous translator, at the court of Urban IV. Armand A. Maurer states that William of Moerbeke's contribution to this work of translating is worthy of special notice. He revised older translations and made new and more faithful translations of Aristotle's Greek texts. He also translated some Greek commentaries.⁴

Thomas composed the *Summa Theologiae* between 1265 and 1273 as a result of his experience in Rome. It seems that Thomas found the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard unsuitable for teaching beginners because they were too detailed, unsystematic, and too repetitious. "Not only were the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard a prime example of these deficiencies, but the *Scriptures* themselves lack a logical order".⁵ In the prologue of the *Summa Theologiae* he says, "...it is our purpose in the present work to treat of the things which belong to the Christian religion in such a way as befits the instruction of beginners".

Thomas returned to Paris in 1268. He was teaching there until 1272. Besides his teaching, he engaged in controversy with the Averroists, and those who attacked the religious Orders.

In 1272 he went to Naples to set up a Dominican *studium generale*. He did his last academic work there. In 1274, Pope Gregory X summoned him to Lyons to participate in the Council. He never finished his journey, passing away "on the way on March 7th 1274 at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanuova, between Naples and Rome. He was forty-nine years of age at the time of his death, having left behind him a life devoted to study and teaching".⁶

Part Two: Rise and organization of medieval universities⁷, and the activities of medieval professors and students

The Middle Ages contributed universities to western culture. The new universities were one of the most important developments that shaped thirteenth-century thought. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, France, England, northern Spain, and Italy all witnessed increasing numbers of students and teachers. Subsequently the large number of students and teachers needed a better way of organization, especially for controlling the acceptance of students and the granting of a licence to teach. Masters and students joined together to fix rules for these new institutions. Universities must receive their privileges from Pope or Emperor. The University of Paris was founded by teachers and students attached to the Cathedral School of Notre Dame and the other schools of Paris. Robert de Courçon, Papal Legate, sanctioned the statutes of University of Paris in 1215. In the thirteenth century, the most important center of higher studies was the University of Paris. Universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna and some smaller ones had been established by the middle of the thirteenth century. "... Whereas Paris was the scene of the triumph of Aristotelianism, the name of Oxford recalls a characteristic mingling of the Augustinian tradition with 'empiricism', as in the philosophy of Roger Bacon".⁸

As for the usual organization of a medieval university, there were faculties of Law, Medicine, Theology, and Arts, with the latter being the basic faculty. In the Faculty of Arts, students studied seven liberal arts (i.e. grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy). To be accepted in other faculties, a student had to study at the Faculty of Arts, and to go to the Faculty of Arts the student should be between 15 and 21 years old. Four and a half to six years, depending on the university, of studies in

Arts was mandatory before proceeding to theology. Having been admitted to Theology, students had to spend four years in attending Biblical lectures, and two more years in attending lectures on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. After that if they were twenty-six years of age, they became a Baccalaureate and lectured on two books of the Bible for two years. Then they could lecture on the *Sentences* for the next two years. Finally after several years in lecturing and disputing they could teach theology, provide they met the minimum age of thirty-four.

Three functions of a medieval professor: Preaching, Lecturing, and Holding Disputations⁹

Weisheipl says:

Already in the twelfth century the function of a master in theology was threefold: to lecture (*legere*) on a suitable authority universally recognized as such, to dispute (*disputare*) and determine questions brought up for discussion by himself, other masters, or students, and to preach (*praedicare*) university sermons, as well as other sermons when the occasion presented itself.¹⁰

Basically, a lecture involved reading aloud a section of an authoritative text, dividing the text into smaller parts, paraphrasing difficult parts, and discussing important points. Literal commentaries and other literary forms were the usual material of a lecture.

There were three kinds of lectures: ordinary, extraordinary, and cursory. Ordinary lectures were those on required textbooks. Extraordinary lectures were not restricted to the textbooks but could be on other books that were reviews or supplements of the ordinary courses. Cursory lectures were short reviews of main problems of standard texts. Lecturing was a function for both a bachelor (or assistant) and a master; however, their lectures were different. A bachelor first lectured cursorily on Biblical texts for one or two

years, and then on the *Sentences* the next two years. His lecture consisted in running lightly over the text, which means reading it, paraphrasing difficult parts of the text, and bringing up some questions. In this way, the bachelor and other students became familiar with the text. On the other hand, a master's lecture involved explaining every problem in the text, bringing up theological questions, and saying the last word, which was the truth of the matter.

Another function of a master in theology was to carry out disputations at various times in an academic year. These disputations, in the form of questions and answers, are important to evaluate medieval philosophers and theologians. There were three types of disputations, the ordinary, the special, and the final examination for the students. An ordinary formal disputation usually was held for two days. On the first day, the professor announced the time and the topic. All his bachelors were summoned to participate, all other masters and their students were also invited. The professor gave a brief introduction, then a bachelor, who was appointed by professor, received and responded to arguments presented by some members of the audience. If it was necessary, the master helped his bachelor. A secretary recorded the whole session. The discussion took about three hours during the morning. The next available day, the company gathered to hear the summary and final solution given by the master. Disputations were usually published either as a note taken in a meeting or in a revised and expanded version by the master.

There were also special disputations presented two times a year (during Advent and Lent), which were open to a greater public, and the topic could be about anything initiated by any member of the audience. Another type of disputation was the one

connected with the final examination, for evaluating the ability of a student to find the truth, defending it, and rejecting the objections to it.

Religious Orders at universities

In thirteenth century, there were two major mendicant Orders: the Dominicans and the Franciscans. Both Orders claimed chairs of theology in the University of Paris. In 1229, the Dominicans received one chair and in 1231, the second chair. In 1231, the Franciscans received their only chair. The Franciscan thinkers were influenced by the Augustinian current of thought, which was “conservative in character and generally reserved in its attitude towards Aristotelianism, its attitude varying from marked hostility to partial acceptance”.¹¹ The Dominicans were much more favourable to the Aristotelian current of thought. Averroism was another current of thought. Independent and eclectic thinkers like Duns Scotus, who revised the Franciscan tradition in the light of Aristotelianism, could be counted as yet another current of thought at that time.

Part Three: Appearance in Europe of Latin translations of Aristotle, and of several important Islamic thinkers

Since the rise of universities, and familiarity with Aristotle and Islamic thinkers through translations, are keys for understanding western intellectual development in the Middle Ages, it is worth considering those translations historically. Thus this part will deal with the following: background of how the Islamic world became familiar with Greek thought, and especially with Aristotle’s works; a brief survey of some important Islamic and Jewish thinkers, who had influence on the medieval Latin world; and

consideration of the new translations from the middle of the twelfth century until the philosopher-theologians whose thoughts are focused in this theses, Thomas Aquinas.

A. How the Islamic world became familiar with Greek philosophy, and especially with Aristotle's works¹²

To explain the familiarity of the Latin world with Aristotle, we should first take a look at the familiarity with Aristotle to be found in the Islamic world. For some of Aristotle's works, and commentaries on them, came to the Latin world through Islamic and Jewish thinkers. Gilson states:

our religion is Christianity, and its birthplace, Palestine, is in Asia, not in Europe. Our whole philosophy comes from Greece, which lies on the borderline between Europe and Asia and, for this very reason, has always been open to Asiatic influences. Through Egypt, even Africa has been influential in shaping western culture. Last, not least, mediaeval Europe did not inherit Greek philosophy directly, but indirectly, through the channel of Syrian, Persian and Arabic scholars, scientists and philosophers. Some elementary notions concerning the history of Arabian philosophy are therefore necessary for a correct interpretation of the history of mediaeval thought.¹³

The philosophical schools in Athens and elsewhere were closed by Emperor Justinian's order in 529 AD. The Christian school of Edessa, where the philosophy of Aristotle had been taught together with other subjects, was one of the schools that were closed. When Edessa was closed, its teachers went on into Persia and established the schools of Nisibis and Gondisapora. In Syria, philosophical and scientific works had been translated from the Greek, and even in some schools the philosophy of Aristotle was taught. The reason that Syrians had to learn Greek was that since they became Christians, they needed to know Greek to read Holy Writ. Thus, Persia and Syria became familiar

with Greek works, especially Aristotle's works. After Persia and Syria converted to Islam, and the scientific language became Arabic, "Euclid, Archimedes, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle, Theopastus and Alexander of Aphrodisias were translated, either directly from Greek into Arabic or indirectly from Greek into Syriac, then from Syriac into Arabic".¹⁴ Syrian and Persian thinkers were attracted to Greek philosophy quickly. Islamic and Jewish thinkers, then, over the centuries assimilated and in some cases developed Aristotle's philosophy. However, they, as well as Greek commentators, mingled Aristotle's with Neoplatonic ideas, and circulated under Aristotle's name some Neoplatonic works.

B. Some important Islamic and Jewish thinkers who were influential on medieval European thought

First of all, four important Islamic thinkers will be mentioned; in the case of some, their main ideas were indicated in my first Chapter.

Al-Kindi¹⁵: Al-Kindi (805-873), who was an encyclopaedist and lived in Basra, wrote 260 treatises covering almost the whole field of Greek learning: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, optics, medicine, logic, psychology, meteorology and politics. In his *On the Intellect*, written under the influence of Alexander of Aphrodisias, he deals with the nature of the intellect. He clarified the distinction between the possible intellect (which receives intellection) and the agent intellect (which makes objects to be actually intelligible). Through describing the operations of the intellect, he showed the nature of abstraction, which produces universals. He claimed that his explanation of the intellect is following the doctrine of Plato and Aristotle. He also considered the agent

intellect, or “intellect always in act”, to be a spiritual being, separate from the soul, as an Intelligence; this is one for all mankind, and it actualizes the potential intellect.

Al-Farabi¹⁶: Al-Farabi (870-950) studied and taught at Baghdad. He translated and wrote commentaries on Porphyry’s and Aristotle’s logical works. Al-Farabi also wrote treatises: *On the Intellect and the Intelligible*, *On the soul*, *On unity and the One*, etc. He seems to have been the first thinker in history to claim the distinction between essence and existence is a real distinction.

Avicenna¹⁷ (Ibn Sina, 980-1037), who lived in area of present-day Iran, was unique as a systematizer of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought. His *Al-Shifa* (the cure) should be mentioned as an organized collection of all of logic, mathematics, physics, psychology, and metaphysics. It had great appeal for later, Christian theologians.

Averroes¹⁸ (1126-1198) was the most famous Spanish Arab philosopher, born at Cordoba. He (like Avicenna) wrote a treatise on medicine that was later a textbook. He has been known as “the commentator”, because his efforts to write commentaries on most of Aristotle’s works were successful. In his commentaries, he summarized and discussed earlier Greek and Arab explanations. His aim was to establish a definitive interpretation of “the Master”. Averroes believed in the eternity of the universe, despite religious doctrine, and he also rejected any real distinction between essence and existence, and the Avicennian theory of emanation.

Averroes’s consideration of three classes of men and three kinds of arguments is famous¹⁹. People in the first class, whose imagination is stronger than their reason, are apt to be convinced by clever speech only. Religion and revelation are philosophical truth made acceptable to them. In the second group, people are more open to dialectical

probabilities. They believe the same thing as the first group, but they want a reason for accepting these beliefs. The third group is made up of those for whom nothing except necessary demonstrations can quench their thirst for knowledge. Only philosophers can see the truth, and common persons and believers get only a symbolic interpretation.

Another of Averroes's doctrines is about the unity of the human intellect. He went beyond Avicenna and said that for all humans there was only one separate possible intellect. "The best that individual souls can do, says Averroes, is prepare percepts (called phantasms) on which the separated intellect works to produce its universal ideas"²⁰; consequently, he rejected personal immortality. His doctrine against religious beliefs resulted in hostility toward his philosophy among Christians, as well as among Muslims. Also, since he was influenced by Aristotle's philosophy, he gave Aristotle a bad reputation. But Aquinas learned a great deal from him, as he usually referred to Averroes's commentaries on Aristotle.

Secondly, two Jewish thinkers:

Ibn Gabriel²¹ (Avicbron ca. 1021-ca.1058), a Spanish Jew, wrote *The Source of Life*. He was a Neoplatonic thinker, and taught that all creatures corporeal and incorporeal are composed of form and matter. Almost all Franciscan theologians adopted the doctrine of "spiritual matter", but Aquinas would reject it.

Moses Maimonides²² (1135-1204), the greatest Jewish Aristotelian of the Middle Ages, was born in Cordoba and lived most of his life in Cairo. He wrote *The Guide for the Perplexed* to answer the question whether Greek science and philosophy could be reconciled with the Jewish faith. He believed there was no conflict between reason and faith; however, he thought that faith should come first (and it is good enough for children

and ordinary people). Aquinas would adopt many of the positions of Maimonides on the relationship of faith and reason. Maimonides rejected Aristotle's argument for the eternity of the universe, since Aristotle did not consider the omnipotence of God; therefore, we should leave the answer to revelation. Aquinas also adopted the same attitude toward this problem. Maimonides accepted the existence of God based on Aristotelian metaphysics, as the unmoved mover, uncaused cause and the only necessary being. He was against the use of positive attributes in describing God, but not opposed to negative or action attributes. "Aquinas opposed his doctrine of the divine attributes".²³ Maimonides followed Avicenna's cosmology, and accepted his doctrine of personal immortality through human union with the agent intellect.

C. The new translations from the middle of the twelfth century until Aquinas²⁴

The next step is to find out when the Latin world became aware of the writings of Aristotle, and of the above philosophers who were more or less under the influence of Aristotle's thought.

Some Latin thinkers from one or two centuries before the Christian era read Aristotle in Greek and reflected his ideas in their Latin compositions. From the fourth to the sixth century of the current era, Latin translations became more numerous; however, only Aristotle's logical writings were translated into Latin. Boethius, a Roman scholar and statesman (ca.480-ca.524), translated Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation*; he wanted to translate all of Plato's and Aristotle's works to show their basic agreements.

The remaining works of Aristotle were not available in Latin until the middle of the twelfth century. It seems that Mediterranean countries (especially Italy, Sicily, and

Spain), where Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived together and spoke each other's language, were the starting places for the new translations. Sicily and Spain were two important centres of the work of translation. The most famous school of translators was in Toledo, Spain. All of Aristotle's works, and those of his followers and his commentators, were either in Greek or in Arabic. Thus, there were two kinds of translations: from Arabic to Latin, and from Greek to Latin.

(i) Translations from Arabic to Latin:

“Joannes Hispanus translated from Arabic into Latin the logic of Avicenna. Dominicus Gundissalvus, with help of other scholars, translated the *Metaphysics* of Avicenna, parts of his *Physics*, his *De Sufficientia*, *De Caelo et Mundo* and *De Mundo*, the *Metaphysics* of Al-Gazel and *De Scientiis* of Al-Farabi. He also translated from Arabic into Latin the *Source of Life* of Avicenna”.²⁵ Gerard of Cremona (died in 1187), who worked at Toledo, “translated from Arabic to Latin Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (together with the commentary of Themistius), *Physics*, *De Caelo et Mundo*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *Meteorologica* (first three books); Alkindi's *De Intellectu*, *De Somno et Visione*, *De Quinque Essentiis*, the *Liber de Causis* and some other works”.²⁶ Toledo was also important in thirteenth century. There, Michael Scot (died c.1235) translated *De Caelo et Mundo*, *De Anima*, and the *Physics* of Aristotle, Averroes's commentaries on the *De Anima* and the *De Caelo et Mundo*, and Avicenna's compendium of the *De Animalibus*. Herman the German (died in 1272) translated Averroes's 'middle commentary' on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Averroes's compendium of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and his commentaries on the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. In addition to

these works, sections of Avicenna's encyclopedia, *Al-Shifa*, were translated into Latin in Toledo.

(ii) Translations from Greek to Latin:

James of Venice (d. after 1142) translated, from the Greek, the *Posterior Analytics*, *Physics*, *De Anima*, *Metaphysics* and some minor works. Henricus Aristippus translated (before 1162) Book IV of the *Meteorologica* from the Greek. (As has been mentioned, Gerard of Cremona translated from Arabic the first three books.) It seems that in the twelfth century there were several translations for which the translators are unknown, e.g., translations of the *De Generatione et Corruptione*, the *De Sensu and De Somno*, the *Physics*, the *Metaphysics*, Books II and III of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Prior Analytics* and the *Topics*. It is said that it is a mistake to think that Latin scholars were completely dependent on translations from Arabic completely. Copleston states that some parts of *Metaphysics* were translated from Greek before the translation from the Arabic. He argues that the translation had been used in Paris by 1210 and was known as the *Metaphysica Vetus*, as distinct from the translation from Arabic that was known as *Metaphysica Nova*. (Later the title *Metaphysica Nova* was given to the translation from the Greek by William of Moerbeke (after 1260), the translation that Aquinas's commentary is based on.) There were also translations of the *Physics*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, and the *De Anima* from Greek before their translation from Arabic. William of Moerbeke (1215-1286) translated Aristotle's works from Greek, and revised earlier translations. He also translated some commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Simplicius, Joannes Philoponus and Themistius from Greek, as well as some works of

Proclus and the *Timaeus* of Plato. Other works of William were translations of the *Politics*, *Rhetoric*, *Oeconomica* or *Magna Moralia*, *De Caelo*, *Meteorologica* I-III, *De Animalibus* and *Metaphysics*.

Translations from Arabic had been circulated widely; however, William of Moerbeke's versions quickly displaced them (except for the *De Animalibus*). It seems that William's versions were more faithful and complete.

By the end of the twelfth century, most of Aristotle's works, except the *De Animalibus* and part of *Ethics*, were translated into Latin. However, Aristotle did not become very important in the academic world (universities) until the middle of the thirteenth century. Study of Aristotle's books of natural philosophy was forbidden in the beginning of the thirteenth century (1210) at Paris (though not in other universities like Oxford). In 1215, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and books on natural philosophy with their commentaries were prohibited. In 1231, Pope Gregory IX set up a commission to censor the forbidden books. The commission was not successful, and "by 1255 the tide had turned so strongly in favor of Aristotle that all his known works were being taught at Paris".²⁷

Chapter Three

Essence as Found in Corporeal Beings according to the *De Ente et Essentia* of Thomas Aquinas

Introduction

Thomas Aquinas wrote the important short treatise entitled *De Ente et Essentia* (*Concerning Beings and Essence*) at some point prior to his becoming a master in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris in March of 1256. Thus, it was one of his earliest writings, written when he was about thirty years old, and at the time as he was also composing his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* (which he had begun in 1252).

Among all the writings of Aquinas in which he expresses metaphysical doctrines, this treatise is almost unique in at least three ways. In the first place, this work is different from the vast majority of his writings, which are theological in character in the sense that the philosophical doctrine contained in them is seen by Aquinas as having a special relationship to Christian doctrine. Note particularly the absence of quotations from Sacred Scripture in this treatise. Here Aquinas will often simply explain in some detail what he holds, though at other time he will give arguments to support his positions; but at no time will he appeal to texts he would regard as revealed. Secondly, this work does not take the form of a commentary on an authoritative text, and hence is quite different in style from, say, his commentaries on the works of Aristotle, where his primary goal is to express, not his own philosophical positions, but those of Aristotle. In his *De Ente et*

Essentia, Aquinas will quote many other thinkers, especially Aristotle, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and Ibn Rochd (Averroes), but he is clearly expressing his own philosophical views, and is not writing a history of philosophy. Thirdly, this work is not made up of a long series of units that reflect the various oral disputations he carried on (with each unit beginning with a question, followed by arguments for the negative answer to the question, then arguments for the affirmative answer, then his own answer, followed by his responses to the two sets of arguments). Unlike the *Summa Theologiae*, and more like the *Summa contra Gentiles*, this short treatise simply explains the position of the writer without the elaborate structure of an article which is so typical of scholastic writing.

When analyzing and summarizing this treatise, I will generally be following the standard translation of it made by A. Maurer. When giving references to the text of Aquinas, I will do this by referring to the pagination in the 1968 edition of Maurer's translation.

I would like to clarify my use of the English word 'being' when explaining the doctrine of Aquinas in this treatise (and in its title). When Aquinas uses the word '*ens*' (a substantive derived from the present participle of the Latin verb '*esse*', to be), I will follow Maurer's practice of translating this word as 'a being' (or else I will pluralize it as 'beings'). My purpose in using the indefinite article, or in pluralizing the word, is to help the reader understand where Aquinas is using the Latin word for being as a concrete noun that can be predicated of an individual material object, as in the sentence "Socrates is a human being". Aquinas will also in this work use another Latin word that generally gets translated into English by the word 'being', namely '*esse*', the infinitive form of the verb to be. But this latter translation leads to a certain amount of confusion, at least for those

who are unaware of the fact this usage of the word 'being' is such that here the word cannot be predicated of an individual material object; that is, when the word 'being' is used in this second way, one must not say an individual material object is being, one must always speak as if being is something possessed by an object, something it has. It is important to know when Aquinas is using the word '*ens*', and when he is using the word '*esse*'. To make this clear to the reader, I will use 'a being' or 'beings' whenever Aquinas uses '*ens*', and I will use 'beingness', or sometimes 'existing' or 'existence' (words that suggest Aquinas's view of what precisely makes a being to be a being) whenever he uses the term '*esse*'. While keeping track of this distinction, one should take particular note of how the title of this treatise is usually translated into English, namely as *On Being and Essence*; even though the indefinite article 'a' was not used just before the word 'being', the word being translated is '*ens*', and not the word '*esse*'.

As indicated earlier, the present summary will tend to emphasize those parts of the treatise which deal with material objects such as plants, non-human animals, and humans, i.e., the objects Aquinas will generally refer to by the expression 'composite substances'. I will not spend much time on either spiritual beings (i.e., 'simple substances'), or even on the nine 'accidents' of material objects, such as quantity, quality, relation, time, place, etc.

Part One of this chapter will be devoted to identifying the primary subject matter of this treatise, and to outlining the basic organization of the work. The remaining parts of the chapter will summarize in some detail the more important doctrines advanced in this work (or at least the doctrines related to our primary interest in corporeal objects such as plants, non-human animals, and humans).

Part One: The Primary Subject Matter, and Basic Organization, of this Treatise

In his brief prologue (which is on page 28 of the Maurer translation), Aquinas indicates that in this work he will be treating the following three things:

- (1) that which is signified by the term '*essentia*', and that which is signified by the term '*ens*'. (Although here, and occasionally elsewhere, Aquinas refers to the words '*essentia*' and '*ens*', and says he will be dealing with what is signified by each of these terms, this should not be interpreted to mean that Aquinas intends to give merely a nominal definition in which he will report how speakers of Latin use these two terms. For Aquinas is interested primarily, not in the conventional meanings as such of these two terms, but in what is true of that in reality which is referred to by these two words, as will be relatively clear when he identifies the other two topics he will be dealing with.)
- (2) how *essentia* and *ens* are to be found in various things. (Note that, in the language of linguistic theory, the words '*essentia*' and '*ens*' are here being used, not mentioned.)
- (3) how *essentia* and *ens* are related to the three logical intentions, namely the concept of genus, the concept of species, and the concept of (specifying) difference.

Aquinas does not, however, in this prologue give any further details either as to what dealing with these three topics (and especially the second topic) would involve, or as to the order in which he will deal with the topics. To discover such details one must first read Chapter One of the treatise, and then skim over the remainder of the treatise. By this procedure one can learn the following:

- (i) Chapter One is supposed to deal with what is signified by the term '*essentia*' and the term '*ens*'. In point of fact, Chapter One concentrates on three things:

- (a) the question of which of two senses of the word '*ens*' is the one where every being has an essence;
 - (b) four additional expressions (besides the word '*essentia*') that have been used to refer to essence;
 - (c) the general order in which topics will be treated in the remainder of the treatise, namely substances prior to 'accidents', and 'composite substances' prior to 'simple substances'.
- (ii) Chapters Two, Three, Four, and Five are supposed to deal with essences found in substances (such as plants, non-human animals, humans, God, and the separate intelligences), plus the relation these essences have to the three logical intentions (namely the concept of genus, the concept of species, and the concept of difference). Chapter Six is supposed to deal with essences found in the beings called 'accidents' (such as quantity, quality, relation, time, place, etc.), plus the relation of these essences to the three logical intentions.
 - (iii) Chapters Two and Three are supposed to deal with 'composite substances' (i.e., corporeal objects such as plants, non-human animals, and humans), while Chapter four is supposed to deal with 'simple separate substances' (such as God, separate intelligences, and separated human souls). Chapter Five is largely a summary of how essence is found in God, created separate intelligences, and 'composite substances'.
 - (iv) Chapter Two is supposed to deal with how essence is found in 'composite substances', i.e., in corporeal substances such as plants, non-human animals, and humans. A closer reading of Chapter Two reveals that it in fact deals with the

following four topics (with the third topic being dealt with only indirectly, and with the fourth topic overlapping with the second and third):

- (a) the relation of the essence of an individual corporeal substance to the matter and form of that corporeal substance;
 - (b) the relation of the essence of an individual corporeal substance, such as Socrates, to the essence of his species, human beings; and the relation of the essence of the human species to the essence of the genus to which the human species belongs, namely animal;
 - (c) the relation of the essence of the group animal to the essence of the genus of which animals are a species, namely corporeal object, or bodies (where the word 'body' is used in to refer to this group, as distinct from its usage to refer to body as a part of a living being, the soul being the other part);
 - (d) the relation of the genus, difference, and species of a corporeal object to the matter and form of that object, and the composite itself.
- (v) Chapter Three is supposed to deal with how the essences of 'composite substances' are related to the three logical intentions (namely the concept of genus, the concept of species, and the concept of difference). A closer reading of Chapter Three reveals that in fact it deals with the following two problems:
- (a) Where, or under what conditions, does the essence of a corporeal substance take on the character of universality that is required by the concept of genus, the concept of species, and the concept of difference?

(b) What exactly is it that is predicated when an essence is appropriately predicated of an individual material object, as in the sentence “Socrates is a human being?”

In the remaining parts of the present chapter I will give a summary of the main doctrines of Aquinas in this treatise, or at least those most closely related to my main interest, which is essence in corporeal substances, and the relation of this essence to the three logical intentions. While in general I will be following the same order as that found in Aquinas’s treatise, in parts Five, Six, and Seven I will be explaining some material that actually comes a bit later in the treatise than the material explained in Part Eight.

Part two: A very general presentation of the relationship of essences to beings

Aquinas begins Chapter One of *Concerning Beings and Essence* by saying that one must deal with what is signified by the term ‘*ens*’ (a being) prior to dealing with what is signified by the term ‘*essentia*’. Why? Because one should follow the order that is appropriate for learning things; that is, one should get knowledge of simple things from, or after, knowledge of composite things. In the present context this implies that, relative to one another, Aquinas regards a being as a composite in which its essence is some sort of component. (Maurer, p.29).

Aquinas then notes (Maurer, pp. 29-30) that (as Aristotle has pointed out) there are two different uses of the term ‘*ens*’ (or rather of the expression ‘*ens per se*’), and implies that only one of them is relevant to the task he has undertaken in the present treatise.

- (1) In one of the uses of this term something is called a being only if it is something positive in reality, and thus a member of one or other of the ten categories (or ten supreme genera). Thus, in this first sense a privation or negation would not be called an *ens*.
- (2) In the other use of the term '*ens*' something can be called a being even though it is not something positive in reality; all that is required is that it can be the subject of a subject-predicate statement which asserts something that is true. Take, for example, the statement "Blindness is located in the eye"; although blindness is not something positive in reality (it is the lack of something positive), nonetheless it is called an *ens* in this second meaning of the term '*ens*' (presumably because of the presence of the word 'is' in the sentence). In this second sense, not only something that is positive in reality, but also negations and privations are called *entia* (the plural of *ens*).

Which of these uses of the word '*ens*' is relevant to the task Aquinas has undertaken in this treatise? Only the first. Why? Because whereas in the first sense there is an essence for every *ens*, in the second use of the term there are things called *ens* which do not have an essence. (Maurer, p.30)

Aquinas has now completed (at least for the time being) his explanation of what is signified by the word '*ens*' in the sense that interests him: an *ens* is anything positive in reality, anything that falls into one or other of the ten categories.

Now for Aquinas this entails (by a line of reasoning not entirely clear) that what is signified by the word '*essentia*' is something common to all the natures through which diverse beings are gathered (first) into one or the other of the ten genera, and (then) into their own species within their genus. (Maurer, p. 30)

Then (after briefly examining four expressions which, in addition to '*essentia*', have been used to signify essence – to which topic I will return in Part Three of this Chapter) Aquinas draws attention to the fact that the term '*ens*' is not predicated of all ten categories in exactly the same way (i.e., it is not a univocal term). For the word '*ens*' is predicated primarily and absolutely (i.e., without qualification) of substance (the first category), and is predicated of the nine accidents only secondarily, and in only a qualified way. Because of this, and the relationship of essence to *ens*, essence is properly speaking found in substances, and in the nine accidents in only a qualified way. (Maurer, 32-33). (Although Aquinas does not explicitly say so, this seems to be his reason for treating essence in substances (in Chapters Two through Five) prior to turning his attention to essence in accidents (in Chapter Six).)

Then, in the final paragraph of Chapter One (Maurer, p. 33), Aquinas says that although essence is properly speaking found in all substances, it is found more nobly in simple substances than in composite substances because simple substances have *esse* (beingness, existing, existence) more nobly than do composite substances, and are the cause of composite substances (or at least this is true of one of the simple substances, God). Still, the essences of simple substances are more hidden from human beings than are the essences of composite substances. Hence, Aquinas will once again adopt an order more appropriate to the learning process, and take the easier route, which means dealing with the essences of composite substances before dealing with the essences of simple substances. (Maurer, p. 33)

Part Three: Four additional expressions (i.e., other than the word 'essentia') that have been used to refer to essence

In Chapter One, just prior to considering these four additional expressions, Aquinas had concluded that an essence is that through which diverse beings are gathered (first) into one or the other of the ten (supreme) genera, and (then) into their own species.

Now when he (in effect) examines four other expressions that -in at least one of their meanings- have been used to refer to essence, we learn more about what an essence is; in addition, we learn how the word 'essentia' suggests or emphasizes a certain feature of essence while the other expressions suggest or emphasize other features of an essence.

The first two expressions:

(1) '*quiditas*' (quiddity, whatness); and (2) '*quod quid erat esse*'

Aquinas seems to be making suggestion as to why this Latin word '*quiditas*' (which is derived from the Latin word '*quid*', meaning what, plus the abstract ending '*...itas*') has been adopted as yet another word (in addition to '*essentia*') for referring to essence. His explanation would seem to go roughly as follows: What does it mean to give a definition of a thing by telling what it is? It means identifying that in the thing by which it is located in its proper genus and species (namely its essence). Thus, this term is derived from what is signified by a definition. As for the expression '*quod quid erat esse*' (what something was to be), this is simply a Latin version of an obscure expression used by Aristotle to refer to that which makes a thing to be what it is, i.e., to refer to the essence of a thing (or at least to the essence of a substance).

The expression dealt with next by Aquinas:

(3) '*forma*' (form)

Aquinas seems to be suggesting that the word '*forma*' has been adopted as yet another word for referring to essence because it (in one of its meanings) signifies the determination (*certitudo*) of a thing, i.e., that which determines the thing. (In this context, the Latin word '*certitudo*' is the translation of an Arabic word used by Ibn Sina which meant perfection or complete determination.) Note that this use of the word 'form', where it refers to the whole essence, should not be confused with the use of the word 'form' where (e.g., in Chapter Two) it is used to refer to only one part of the essence, matter being the other part.

The fourth expression dealt with by Aquinas:

(4) '*natura*' (nature)

In a somewhat obscure passage, Aquinas seems to give two different explanations of the use of this term 'nature' as another word for referring to essence. In his first explanation, Aquinas refers to four uses of the term '*natura*' to be found in Boethius's *Liber de Persona et Duabus Naturis*, and indicates he is interested in the first of these four uses. And according to this first usage, anything is called a 'nature' which the intellect can grasp in any way, since a thing is intelligible (i.e., something able to be grasped by an intellect) only through its definition and essence. (Maurer, p.31) But after giving the above explanation, Aquinas then quotes Aristotle, and adds that the term '*natura*' in this sense seems to signify the essence of a thing in so far as it is directed to the operation proper to that thing. (Maurer, p.32), which would seem to constitute a second explanation of why the word 'nature' can be used to refer to

essence. In other words, when the word '*natura*' is used to refer to the essence of a thing, it would seem to bring out two aspects of essence: that essence is what makes the object intelligible, and that essence is that by which a thing is ordered to the specific operations proper to that thing.

When he has completed his explanation of these four additional expressions that have been used to refer to essence, Aquinas seems to make the point that the five different expressions used to refer to essence emphasize different aspects of essence. At any rate he indicates the word '*natura*' means the essence of a thing as directed to the action proper to the thing, while '*quiditas*' refers to essence as what is signified by the definition of the thing, and the word '*essentia*' itself is used because a being, or that which is (*id quod est*), has its *esse* (beingness, existing, existence) in and through its essence. (Apparently the word '*essentia*' emphasizes this aspect of an essence because its first four letters are '*esse...*'.)

What, then, can we learn about the essence of a being from this explanation of the five expressions for referring to it, plus the earlier explanation of what is signified by the word '*essentia*'? We can learn that, according to Aquinas, an essence is all of the following things:

- (1) it is that which places a being in one or other of the ten categories; or rather,
it is that which places a being in its proper genus and species;
- (2) it is that which determines a being to be what it is;
- (3) it is that which is signified by a definition stating what a thing is;
- (4) it is that which makes a being to be intelligible, i.e., to be able to be grasped by an intellect;

(5) it is that which directs a being to its proper or specific operations;

(6) it is that in which and through which a being has its *esse* (beingness, existing, existence).

Part Four: Is the essence of an individual corporeal substance the same as the form of that substance? Is it the same as the matter of that substance? Or what?

In the opening three paragraphs of Chapter Two (according to the paragraphing of the Maurer translation on pages 34 to 36), Aquinas deals rather briefly with the question of the relation of the essence of an individual corporeal object (such as a human, a dog, or a plant) to the matter and form of that individual corporeal substance. Aquinas does not really explain what he means by the terms ‘matter’ and ‘form’ of an object, other than to connect matter with potentiality and form with actuality, and indicate that in a living corporeal substance the matter is the body and the soul is the form. About all he does here is to make three statements of what does not constitute the essence of a corporeal substance, give a brief argument for each of these rejections, state his own answer, and give a brief argument in favour of it.

What does the word ‘essence’ signify in a composite substance (that is, in a corporeal substance that is viewed as a composite of matter and form)?

First of all, the matter alone is not the essence (i.e., it is not what is signified by the word ‘essence’). Why? In the first place, because the essence is a principle of knowledge, whereas matter alone is not a principle of knowledge. And in the second place, only something actual can perform the function of essence according to which an

essence fixes a corporeal object in its genus and species, whereas matter alone is not actual. (Maurer, p. 34)

Secondly, although the form as such is something actual, and a principle of knowledge, still the form alone cannot be the essence of a corporeal substance. For the essence is that which is signified by the definition of a thing, and the definition of a natural or composite substance includes matter intrinsically (and not as something added to the form). (Maurer, pp.34-35)

Thirdly, the essence of a corporeal substance cannot be some relation between matter and form, or something added to them. For then, it would not be something belonging necessarily to the thing, as distinct from being accidental to it; nor would it be that through which the thing is known. But it is characteristic of the essence of a being to belong to the thing in a non-accidental way, and to be that through which the thing is known. (Maurer, p.35)

What, then, is the essence of a composite substance? It is, according to Aquinas, the composite of matter and form. He quotes both Ibn Sina and Ibn Rochd as holding this position, and then gives his own argument in favour of it, which argument runs approximately as follows:

An essence is that by which a thing is denominated an *ens*, i.e., it is that according to which a thing is said to be (*esse*). (This seems to be the same point Aquinas had made earlier, in Chapter One, when he explained how the word '*essentia*' differed from other words for referring to essence in that '*essentia*' is used to indicate it is in and through the essence that a being has *esse* (beingness, existing, existence).)

But the *esse* (beingness, existing, existence) that a composite substance has is neither the *esse* of the matter alone, nor the *esse* of the form alone, but the *esse* of the composite.

Therefore, the essence of a composite substance is neither the matter alone, nor the form alone, but both of them (though the form alone is in a special way the cause of the composite substance, since it is through form, which actualizes matter, that matter becomes an actual being and this particular being). (Maurer, pp. 35-36)

In the fourth paragraph of Chapter Two (Maurer, pp. 36-37), Aquinas deals briefly with a problem that arises out of what he has just said, and in particular out of his inclusion of matter within the essence of a corporeal or composite substance. The problem arises in the following way: matter is the principle of individuation (it is what makes possible the fact that there is more than one individual in the same species; when it comes to spiritual beings, no two can belong to the same species). Hence, if matter is included in the essence of a species of composite substances, that essence would be particular, not universal. And since essence is that which is signified by a definition, no universal could ever be defined.

The solution Aquinas offers to this problem involves his distinguishing between two uses of the term 'matter'. According to one use of this term, while matter would be included in the essence of an individual corporeal substance (assuming, of course, that a corporeal substance does have an individual essence which can be defined), it would not be in the essence of the species to which the individual belonged. But according to the other use of the term 'matter', matter would be included in the essence of the object's species. That is, the matter which is the principle of individuation is not the same as the

matter which is included in the definition of the essence of the species to which the individual belongs. Thus, the definition of Socrates (if he has a definition) would include this flesh and these bones, whereas the definition of the human species would include flesh and bones in general. In the *De Ente et Essentia*, Aquinas refers to the matter which is the principle of individuation (and which would belong to the essence of the individual object if it has one) as ‘signate matter’, or ‘designated matter’ (the matter that is determined, and can be pointed to), whereas the matter that is included in the essence of the species is called ‘undesigned matter’. (In some works written soon after the *De Ente et Essentia*, that is, in works where he is more under the influence of Ibn Rochd on this point than of Ibn Sina, Aquinas will change his vocabulary, so that the matter which individuates will be referred to as ‘undetermined matter’.)

Part Five: Two ways of considering an essence:

(a) absolutely, i.e., in itself; or

(b) as existing, either

(i) as existing in extra-mental individual beings, or

(ii) as existing in the intellect of an individual knower.

Essence actually exists only in the various individual extra-mental beings that are located in the various genera and species, or in the intellects which grasp the essence of those extra-mental beings. (Chapter Three, Maurer, pp. 46-49)

When an essence exists in several individual extra-mental beings, e.g., when it is present in several plants in the same species, it acquires several *esse*’s (acts of existing), and numerous accidents. Hence, an essence as present in several individuals of the same species does not possess a unity such that it constitutes one essence for all these

individuals. The essence of the individual called 'Socrates', and the essence of the individual called 'Plato', are not the same essence.

When an essence exists in an individual intellect, then it exists in abstraction from all individual conditions of the extra-mental beings, and thus has a uniform relation to all those individual extra-mental beings (since it is equally the likeness of all of them, and leads to a knowledge of all of them in so far as they are individuals in the same species).

Still, while an essence can exist only in individual extra-mental beings or in some intellect, it can be considered without one also considering it as existing in those two places. That is, it can be considered absolutely, or in itself, without considering anything that comes to it because of its existence in extra-mental objects or in intellects. Something is necessarily true of an essence absolutely considered only if it is a property of the essence as such, i.e., only if it belongs to the intelligible content of the essence (just as being rational belongs to the human essence absolutely considered). Thus, if you discover anything which in fact is true of an essence, but not true of it in every case, you can be sure that this does not belong to the essence absolutely considered. For example, while it is true that the human essence is present in Socrates, this being in Socrates does not belong to the human essence absolutely considered, since it does not belong to the human essence in Plato; or to put this more accurately, if being Socrates belonged to human nature absolutely considered, there would be no human other than Socrates. In addition, it is true that being common is a property of the essence of humans, namely when that essence exists in the intellect. But if being common belonged to the human essence absolutely considered, then it would be found wherever human nature is found,

such as in Socrates; but being common is not found in Socrates, since everything in Socrates is individuated.

(The importance of this distinction will become clearer when later we deal with essence and the problem of what exactly is predicated of an individual corporeal object.)

Part Six: The distinction between:

- (1) those words which signify an essence as a part, and**
- (2) those words which signify an essence as a whole; and**
the corresponding distinction between:
 - (i) abstracting plus prescinding, and**
 - (ii) abstracting without prescinding.**

Crucial to the Thomistic analysis of essence, but especially the analysis of essence in connection with predication, is a certain distinction Aquinas will frequently put to use in this treatise. To explain this distinction, let us look at the following pairs of words (where the English parallels the Latin):

- a. human, humanness
- b. animal, animality
- c. rational, rationality
- d. pale, paleness
- e. corporeal, corporeality

One can correctly say the following: “Socrates is a human”, or “Socrates is an animal”, or “Socrates is rational”, or “Socrates is pale”. But one cannot correctly say (at least not literally) the following: “Socrates is humanness”, or “Socrates is animality”, or “Socrates is rationality”, or “Socrates is paleness”. Why is that? What exactly is the difference between the two words in each of the above pairs?

According to the explanation given by Aquinas, one must distinguish between two different ways of abstracting a characteristic belonging to an object:

(1) One can abstract the characteristic from the object in such a way as to prescind from all other characteristics the object in fact has; that is, one can abstract a characteristic in such a way as to formally exclude those other characteristics from one's concept of the object. Thus, if the object is Socrates, and we abstract from him the essence of his species, and also prescind from all other characteristics he may have, such as his being this individual with this weight and height, these other characteristics have been formally excluded from our concept; and to express this concept we use the word 'humanness' (rather than the word 'human'). Thus, Socrates is being viewed as something made up of parts, the parts being humanness on one hand, and his individual characteristics on the other.

(2) One can also abstract a characteristic from the object in such a way as not to prescind from, i.e., not to formally exclude, any other characteristics the object does in fact have. Thus if the object is Socrates, and we abstract his essence as a human being but without prescinding from those characteristics, this concept is expressed by the word 'human', which is viewed as referring to Socrates, not as a part, but in a sense as a whole, i.e., in the sense that nothing is formally excluded from the concept (though of course those other characteristics are not explicitly included either).

Now let us look at the other pairs. We can correctly say "A human is a rational being", "A human is an animal", or "A human is a rational animal". In each of these cases the essence referred to by the predicate was grasped by means of an abstraction without precision, that is, by an abstracting in which any feature abstracted from, while

not being considered, nonetheless was not formally excluded from the concept, and hence the essence is treated by Aquinas as if it were the whole of the object and not only a part of it. If, however, we were to consider the same characteristics only this time prescinding from other characteristics (which would be conveyed by using the words ‘rationality’ or ‘animality’), then the characteristic is being conceived as only a part; and thus we would say “A human is a composite of animality and rationality”. Similarly, while we can say “Socrates is pale”, where an abstraction without precision is involved, so that pale is conceived as in a sense the whole that Socrates is (in the sense that nothing is formally excluded; otherwise you could not correctly say Socrates is pale), when we speak of paleness, what is involved is an act of abstracting joined to an act of prescinding, in which case paleness is viewed as a part of Socrates.

Aquinas will single out for special attention (see Maurer, pages 38-40) the somewhat unusual case of the word ‘body’. For the Latin word ‘*corpus*’, like the English word ‘body’, is used as the word corresponding to both forms of abstracting, i.e., whether it be done with precision or without precision. That is, the single word ‘body’ is commonly used both for the conception of the relevant characteristic conceived as a whole (e.g., “Socrates is a body”, where the word ‘body’ is a synonym for ‘corporeal object’), and for the conception of this characteristic conceived as a part (e.g., “Socrates is a composite of body and soul”). Thus, one is generally unable to say whether the word ‘body’ is being used to indicate that the characteristic has been abstracted with precision, or without precision, unless one examines the context in which the word is being used, to see whether the characteristic is being viewed as a part of a thing, or as the whole that it is (in the sense that no other characteristic of the thing has been formally excluded).

Part Seven: The connection between:

(a) essence, and

(b) what it is that can be correctly predicated of an individual corporeal substance.

In Chapter Three, where at least ostensibly he is primarily interested in a different problem, Aquinas gives his own answer to the perennial problem of what it is that is predicated when we say “Socrates is a human”, or “Plato is a human”, which answer is implicit in what has been said in the previous two parts of this thesis.

In the first place, what is being predicated is the essence, human being, considered absolutely, not that essence as existing (whether it be as existing in individual humans, or as existing in intellects). For the essence when existing (either in individual humans, or in intellects) takes on additional characteristics which would result in its not being predicable of various individual objects.

In the second place, what is being predicated is this essence, human nature, considered, not as a part of Socrates, but as in a sense the whole that he is (which means that nothing about Socrates is formally excluded from one’s consideration).

Thus, when one says “Socrates is a human being” (and one means he is a human being in the same sense in which Plato is a human being), the predicate ‘human being’ signifies the human essence considered absolutely, but not as a part of what Socrates is.

Similarly, when one says “Socrates is pale” (and means he is pale in the same sense in which any other person is pale), what is said of Socrates (by means of the predicate ‘pale’) is the essence pale considered absolutely, but not as a part of what Socrates is; i.e., the word ‘pale’, unlike the word ‘paleness’, formally excludes nothing else that Socrates is, and corresponds to the activity of abstracting without prescinding.

Part Eight: The essence of a corporeal object, and the three universal logical intentions

When Aquinas (in Chapter Three) gives his answer to the question of how an essence of a corporeal substance is related to the notions of genus, species, and difference (which three notions he refers to as the universal logical intentions), he will make use of concepts and distinctions which have already been explained in previous parts of the present thesis; and as a result his answer may appear to the reader be fairly obvious, or at least some of the concepts involved in his answer will be fairly familiar. But there is a real danger that one will fail to grasp the precise question to which Aquinas is offering an answer. I will first attempt to clarify the question Aquinas is addressing, and then summarize his answer to it.

Aquinas in effect makes a distinction (see Maurer, pages 13-14) between the following two kinds of concepts:

- (i) Concepts of first intention, i.e., concepts which have an immediate foundation in reality, and which signify reality directly. Such concepts correspond to words like ‘human’, ‘animal’, and ‘pale’; i.e., to words which can be correctly predicated of individual physical objects such as Socrates, as in “Socrates is an animal”.
- (ii) Concepts of second intention, which do not have an immediate foundation in reality, and which do not signify reality directly. Such concepts correspond to word like ‘genus’, ‘species’, and ‘difference’; i.e., to words which can never be correctly predicated of an individual physical object. Thus, while you can correctly say “Animal is a genus”, it would not be correct to say “Socrates is a genus” (even though Socrates is an animal).

Thus, when Aquinas asks (in Chapter Three) how the essence of a corporeal substance is related to the universal logical intentions of genus, species, and difference, he is not asking, for example, about the essence of the species human, or the essence of the genus animal; these are matters he has dealt with already, in Chapter Two, when he dealt with first intention concepts. No, in Chapter Three Aquinas is dealing with the very concept of species as such, and the very concept of genus as such, i.e., with second intentions, where the corresponding words ('species' and 'genus') can never be predicated as such of a concrete individual material object. Perhaps the problem Aquinas is addressing in Chapter Three could be phrased as follows: Given the nature of a species as such, where, or under what conditions, does an essence take on the nature of a species? Or, given the nature of a genus, where, or under what conditions, does an essence take on the nature of a genus?

Aquinas will give his answer in four (not always easy to follow) stages:

In the first stage, Aquinas argues that a species cannot be an essence when the essence is viewed as a part (i.e., where it is abstracted with precision), but only when it is viewed as the whole of what the object is (i.e., when it is viewed as containing -implicitly and indistinctly- everything in the individual, with nothing formally excluded). (Maurer pp.45-46)

In the second stage, Aquinas argues that a species cannot be an essence as considered absolutely. (Maurer, pp. 46-48)

In the third stage, Aquinas argues that a species cannot be an essence as it actually exists in various individual corporeal substances in the group. (Maurer, pp.46-47)

In the fourth stage, Aquinas finally concludes that, e.g., the human essence takes on the character of universality required by a logical intention only when it exists in some intellect (since only in the intellect is human nature abstracted from all individuating factors, and thus has a uniform character with regard to all individual humans in extra-mental reality). To be more precise, while an essence has the nature of a universal (such as a species) only when it exists in the intellect, its universality consists, not in existing in an intellect, but precisely in its uniform relationship to extra-mental beings as their likeness. (Maurer, pp.47-50)

Perhaps one way of clarifying Aquinas's point on where an essence takes on the nature of one of the logical intentions would be to compare the following two sentences:

“Socrates is an animal.”

“Animal is a genus.”

Why do these not entail the statement “Socrates is a genus”? Because the word ‘animal’ signifies something at least partially different in each case, and hence does not really constitute a middle term. In the first sentence, the word ‘animal’ signifies an essence absolutely considered, and viewed as the whole that Socrates is (in the sense that nothing true of Socrates has been formally excluded); thus this word can be correctly predicated of Socrates, as well as of other humans or animals. But in the second sentence, where the word ‘animal’ is the subject of the sentence with the word ‘genus’ as the predicate, the word ‘animal’ signifies an essence as it exists in an intellect, where it picks up the characteristic of being universal, something that is necessary for an essence to be correctly called a genus.

Part Nine: Essence as found in God, the divine substance

The main point here is concerned with the mode in which essence is had by God, and can be put quite simply: in the divine substance (and in it alone), the referent of the term '*essentia*' is in reality the same as the referent of the term '*esse*' (existing, existence). To put this in the terminology expressed earlier in the *De ente et essentia*, *esse* is included in the intelligibility of God's essence; that is, *esse* is included in the divine essence absolutely considered. God is a thing whose essence is *ipsum suum esse*; or, as Aquinas also puts it, God is only *esse*, *esse tantum*. It was this point, says Aquinas, that led some previous philosophers to say that God does not have an *essentia*, because His *essentia* is not other than His *esse*. (See Chapter Five, Maurer, p. 60)

Thus Aquinas held that (1) there could be only one being in which the *esse* is not other than the *essentia*, and that (2) this one possibility must be the being whose actual existence is required in order to explain the existence of beings in which the *esse* is other than the *essentia*. But it is one thing to state Aquinas's conclusions, and another to show exactly how he got to those conclusions without making it appear that his argument is circular. The following would seem to represent his position as presented in the *De ente et essentia*. (See Chapter Four, Maurer, pp.55-56)

(1) That there could be no more than one being in which the *essentia* and *esse* are the same and not other (that is, a being that is *esse tantum*) was shown at greatest length in Chapter Four. There the argument amounted to this:

There are three and only three ways of multiplying, that is, of having a plurality, and in none of these ways could there be more than one being in which the *essentia* and *esse* are not other.

(a) One way of ‘producing’ a plurality is by adding (specific) differences to a generic essence, with the result that you have more than one specific essence or species. With regard to material substances, this mode of ‘multiplication’ results in a plurality of species which are groups of individuals. With regard to immaterial substances such as the Intelligences, this manner of ‘multiplying’ results in a plurality of species, each of which has only one member.

But this way of multiplying could not result in two beings in neither of which is the *esse* other than the *essentia*. For such an *esse* could not receive the addition of a difference, since that would mean that the being is not *esse* alone, but is *esse* plus some form beyond the *esse*.

A plurality of beings that are *esse tantum* would be a contradiction in terms if the plurality were the result of adding a formal difference.

(b) Another way of ‘producing’ a plurality is by adding (signate) matter to the specific essence (or, as he first puts it, by the form being received in different parts of matter), with the result that you have more than one individual within the species.

But this way of multiplying especially could not result in two beings each of which is its very *esse* in such a way that the *esse* itself is subsistent. For such an *esse* could not receive the addition of (signate) matter, since that would mean that the *esse* is not subsistent, but material.

Once again, a plurality of beings that are *esse tantum* would be a contradiction in terms.

- (c) A third way of having plurality is by X (e.g., heat) existing both separately and as received in something else, with the result that the being which is X existing separately -that is, unreceived in something else- would be other than (i.e., in addition to) X as received in something else.

While Aquinas obviously considered that there are pluralities to be explained by the first two ways of 'multiplying', it is not clear that he thinks there actually is a plurality to be explained in this third way. Perhaps the reason why he speaks of such a third way at all is only because he finds mention made of it in philosophical literature explaining or advancing the Platonic doctrine of participation. But what is surprising is that, having mentioned such a third possibility, Aquinas simply drops it, without bothering to reject it as a way of 'multiplying' beings whose *esse* is subsistent.

Therefore, should there exist a being which is simply its *esse*, then there would be only one such being.

Such was the argument given in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five (Maurer, pp. 60-61) Aquinas makes a remark that apparently is general enough to serve as the foundation for any argument against a plurality of beings each of which is *esse tantum*. For there he says that the *esse* that God is (presumably this means the *esse* of any being which is *esse tantum*) is such that no addition can be made to it; it is not a question merely of its notion not including any addition to it, but of actually implying the exclusion of any addition. Thus, if all plurality is possible only by way of some sort of addition, then it is impossible that there be more than one being that is *esse tantum*.

(2) Not only is one exception (to the 'rule' that in every being the *esse* is other than the essence) a possibility; such a being does actually exist, namely as God, the First Cause. But how Aquinas arrives at the actual existence of such a being is not perfectly clear in the *De ente et essentia*. It would seem that the argument amounts to the following (which, in the original (see Maurer, p.56-57), forms part of an argument designed to show that the intelligences are composed of potency and act):

Beings in which the *esse* is other than the *essentia* do exist. (All existing beings, with one possible exception, are of this sort.)

But every being whose *esse* is other than its *essentia* has its *esse* from another being, and ultimately from a being existing in virtue of itself, that is, from a being which is *esse tantum*.

Therefore, there does exist a being that is *esse tantum*, i.e., a being that is its own *esse*.

Part Ten: Essence as found in created substances, in general

The main point about the mode in which *essentia* is had by created substances in general is simply this: in every created substance, the referent of the term '*esse*' is other than the referent of the term '*essentia*'.

The argument by which this is shown amounts to the following:

Whatever does not belong to the intelligibility of an essence, that is, to the essence absolutely considered, is other than that essence, and comes to that essence from without and enters into composition with it.

But the *essentia* of every substance (except possibly one) is such that *esse* does not enter into its essence absolutely considered.

When Aquinas argues for this last statement by saying that one can understand what a man or a phoenix is without knowing whether it has *esse* in reality, it seems clear enough that the word '*esse*' here refers to actual existence, and not merely to beingness.

Therefore in every substance (except possibly one) the essence absolutely considered does not contain the *esse*; that is, the *esse* is other than the essence, coming to that essence from without and entering into composition with it.

But the one possible exception could be only God.

Hence, in every created substance the referent of the term '*esse*' is other than the referent of the term '*essentia*' absolutely considered; that is, no creature is *esse tantum*, or to put it slightly differently, the *esse* of no creature is subsistent.

Some consequences of the main point:

First consequence: every creature, that is, every substance whose *esse* is other than its essence, must have its *esse* efficiently caused by another being, and ultimately by a First Cause which is the substance whose *esse* is not other than its essence absolutely considered.

The argument by which Aquinas attempts to establish this amounts to the following:

Anything actually found with X could be efficiently caused only by the principles of the essence of X or by something else.

But *esse*, though actually found with beings in which the *esse* is other than the essence absolutely considered, could not be efficiently caused by the principles of the

essence. (For that would entail the impossible situation of a thing bringing itself into existence.)

Therefore every being whose *esse* is other than its essence absolutely considered must receive its *esse* from another, and ultimately from a being existing in virtue of itself, that is, a being which is its *esse*.

Second consequence: since this *esse* is received in the essence, it is limited and restricted to the capacity of the receiving essence.

Third consequence: every creature (even an immaterial one) contains some composition of potency and act.

The argument Aquinas gives to establish this third consequence amounts to the following:

If X receives Y from another being, then X is in potency to Y, and Y is its act.

But every created substance (or rather, its essence?) receives *esse* from another being, and ultimately from the being that is *esse tantum*.

Therefore every created substance (or at least its essence) is in potency to *esse*, which is its act; in other words, every creature, that is, every being other than God, is composed of potency and act.

Fourth consequence: perfections possessed by created substances are not as unified, or possessed in as excellent a manner, as they are in God.

Part Eleven: A summary of the doctrine of essence which is found in the treatise

What has Aquinas revealed, in this treatise, about his doctrine of essence, and in particular about the essence of corporeal objects such as plants and animals, as it stood at the time when he composed this relatively brief treatise?

In the first place, he has provided in Chapter One what we might call his basic notion of essence. According to this basic notion, an essence is that component of a being which performs all of the following (overlapping) functions:

- (1) It is that which places a being in one or the other of the ten categories (i.e., ten supreme genera); or, to be somewhat more specific, it is that which fixes a being in its own genus and species.
- (2) It is that which determines a being to be what it is.
- (3) It is that which is signified by a definition stating what the being is.
- (4) It is that which makes a being to be intelligible, that is, to be something that can be grasped by an intellect.
- (5) It is that which directs a being to its proper or specific operation.
- (6) It is that in which and through which a being (an *ens*, or an *id quod est*, that which exists) has its *esse* (beingness, existing, existence). Or, as Aquinas expresses this in Chapter Two (page 36), it is that by which a thing is denominated an *ens*, i.e., it is that according to which a thing is said to be.

It should be noted that, while all 'six' characteristics or functions belong to an essence, they do not all play a prominent role in the remainder of this treatise. For example, the function of an essence as directing a being to its proper or specific operations (which function is especially associated with the word '*natura*') virtually

disappears from the treatise after Aquinas contrasts the words '*natura*' and '*essentia*' in Chapter One. In addition, the role of essence as that which makes a being to be intelligible has a fairly minor role in the remainder of the treatise, at least in the sense that only rarely is it referred to at all explicitly. What seems to dominate this treatise is the role of essence as fixing things in their proper genus and species within the ten categories, plus the role of essence as that in which and through which a being has *esse* (beingness, existing, existence); in other words, the two roles he associates most closely with the word '*essentia*'. (When we come into analyze Question Five of Aquinas's *Commentary on the De Trinitate*, we will note that there Aquinas will emphasize the word '*natura*' rather than that word '*essentia*'.)

When Aquinas turns his attention to essence as it is found in material substances, and especially the living ones such as humans and animals, he will emphasize that this essence must include both components of which such beings are composed, namely their matter and their form (which in living things he seems to identify with their body and soul).

Further, Aquinas makes a distinction between the matter that must be included in the essence (and the definition of the thing's essence) of, say, the species human, namely the undesignated matter, and the matter that must not be included in the essence (or the definition of the thing's essence) of the species human, namely designated matter (though this latter matter would be included in the essence of the individual Socrates *qua* this individual, and in the definition of that individual if Socrates actually has a definition).

Perhaps the greatest contribution Aquinas made to the subject of the philosophical analysis of essence was the clarity he introduced, not so much in identifying the basic

roles or functions of essence, as in distinguishing between the various ways in which humans can consider essence, or the different ways in which humans can refer to an essence.

First of all, Aquinas notes that while essence actually exists in only two places (namely, in individual extra-mental beings, and in individual intellects), one can consider it absolutely, that is, one can consider what still belongs to it if you abstract it from all that accrues to the essence as existing in individual extra-mental beings, and all that accrues to the essence as existing in intellects.

Secondly, Aquinas notes that when we refer to an essence, we can do this in two quite distinct ways. In one way we can refer to an essence by words which signify an essence (whether it be the essence of a substance, or the essence of an accident) as a part of the thing, in which case these words cannot be predicated of an individual material thing; here, the essence is considered by means of an act of abstracting which is accompanied by an act of prescinding from any other characteristics the object in fact has. In a second way we can refer to an essence by words that signify the essence (whether it be the essence of a substance, or the essence of an accident) as the whole of the thing, in which case these words can be predicated of the thing (as when we say “Socrates is a human”); here, the essence is considered by means of an act of abstracting which is not accompanied by an act of prescinding from the other characteristics which the thing in fact also has.

Having made the two distinctions explained in the previous two paragraphs, Aquinas is now in a position to explain, and to mount a defense of, the following three doctrines:

- (a) The doctrine that what is being predicated of individual corporeal objects (in correctly formed statements where the individual corporeal object is in the subject position) is an essence considered absolutely, and, in addition, conceived as the whole that the thing is.
- (b) The doctrine that when the words ‘genus’, ‘species’ and ‘difference’ are correctly predicated, that of which they are predicated (i.e., that which is in the subject position of the statement) is always an essence as it exists in an intellect.
- (c) The doctrine that God is the only being in which the essence absolutely considered includes *esse* (existence); that is, the doctrine that in all beings other than God the *esse* (existence) is never included in the essence absolutely considered, with the result that they are not subsistent beings but must be caused by another being. Thus a corporeal being is composite in two basic ways:
- (1) like every other corporeal object, it is composed of matter and form;
 - (2) like every other being other than God, it is composed of essence and *esse* (existence).

Chapter Four

Essence as found in corporeal beings according to Question Five of the Commentary Aquinas wrote on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius

Introduction

Thomas Aquinas wrote his important *Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius* between the years 1255 and 1259; thus, it was probably written during his first years as a Dominican Professor of Theology at the University of Paris, and hence a few years after writing his *De Ente et Essentia*.

Questions Five and Six of this Commentary are of special interest to historians of medieval philosophy. Question Five deals primarily with the division of speculative science or philosophy into three parts: philosophy of nature (or physics), mathematics, and metaphysics (or divine science). Question Six presents a general discussion of how the methods proper to these three speculative sciences differ from one another. With these two Questions Aquinas presented a grand overview of the speculative sciences (and, to a lesser extent, of the practical sciences, and the seven liberal arts as preparation for philosophy), with their various subject matters, procedures, and inter-relationships. Even though he is commenting on a treatise entitled *De Trinitate*, in Questions Five and Six Aquinas is concerned almost exclusively with science or philosophy that can be attained by humans using only the natural light of reason. In addition, one should be careful to note that, when speaking of what is attainable by the light of natural reason, Aquinas makes no distinction between the expressions ‘speculative science’ and ‘speculative philosophy’; sometimes he will refer to physics, mathematics, and

metaphysics as parts of speculative science, whereas at other times he will refer to them as parts of speculative philosophy. The modern distinction between science and philosophy by and large did not yet exist in the thirteenth century.

Although Aquinas in this work is writing a commentary on an authoritative text, this commentary differs from the commentaries on works of Aristotle he will write later. For in this early work he will make extensive use of the typically medieval method of writing along the lines of an oral disputation (with an initial question, a set of arguments favoring the negative answer to the question, a set of arguments favoring the affirmative answer, then Aquinas's own answer, followed by his responses to the arguments for the negative and for the affirmative answer), something he does not do when commenting on Aristotle. Thus, while Aquinas before beginning Questions Five and Six has already presented a division of the text, along with a brief commentary on a very brief passage in Boethius, Questions Five and Six are clearly intended to represent Aquinas's own views on the speculative sciences, and are not restricted to explaining what Boethius said on the subject.

When analyzing and summarizing Question Five, I will generally be following the standard translation of this work which was made by A. Maurer, who also did the translation of the *De Ente et Essentia* which I used in the previous chapter. And when giving references to the text of Aquinas, I will again do this by referring to the pagination of the 1986 edition of Maurer's translation.

Part One: A brief overview of the Four Articles in Question Five

Before examining each article in detail, it is worth while to take a quick and general look through the four articles. Each article begins with a question, as follows:

Article One: Is speculative science appropriately divided into these three parts: natural, mathematical, and divine?

Article Two: Does natural philosophy treat of what exists in motion and matter?

Article Three: Does mathematics treat, without considering motion and matter, of what exists in matter?

Article Four: Does divine science treat of what exists without matter and motion?

Articles Two, Three, and Four ask about the things treated by the three sciences in terms of the connection those things have in reality to matter and motion. Now if all three questions were to be answered in the affirmative, it would mean that both physical science and mathematics consider what exists in or joined to matter and motion, while divine science considers what exists separate from matter and motion. This, of course, would be insufficient to distinguish between natural philosophy and mathematics. Perhaps that explains why Article Three asks about a further point, namely whether or not mathematics -if it does consider what exists only in matter (and motion)- also includes matter and motion in its consideration. But the answer to this latter question would be sufficient to distinguish mathematics from natural philosophy only if the same question were asked (or assumed to have been asked) about natural philosophy, and the opposite answer given.

So at this point (i.e., when we have before us only the initial statement of the four questions to be addressed in the four articles) it would appear that Aquinas intends to

distinguish between the three speculative sciences in terms of two factors: (i) the relation, to matter and motion, of the things each considers; (ii) whether or not matter and motion are considered by those sciences considering things that exist in matter and motion. In fact, that Aquinas apparently distinguishes between natural philosophy and mathematics on the basis of whether matter and motion enter into the consideration would almost suggest that otherwise what they consider is the same; if what they each consider is different independently of whether matter and motion enter into the consideration, then there would be less need to emphasize whether or not matter and motion do in fact enter into the consideration.

Part Two: An analysis and Summary of Article One

Part Two will be divided into three sub-sections. In the first I will deal with the precise question Aquinas is addressing in this Article. In the second I will examine his own answer to this question as given in the body of the article, and in the third I will examine some of his responses to arguments given earlier in favour of the negative answer.

A. The precise question being addressed by Aquinas in Article One

It is important to have a clear understanding of a question being addressed by someone prior to summarizing or evaluating their answer to it. Now it is true that Aquinas opens Article One with the following question:

Is speculative science appropriately divided into these three parts: natural, mathematical, and divine?

But this initial statement of the question gives the reader only a rather general indication of the question actually being addressed. To get a more precise understanding of the question, one would have to know in some detail what characteristics Aquinas would require, of a division of speculative science into parts, before he would agree that the division is *conveniens* (appropriate, fitting). And it would appear that Aquinas selected the ten arguments for a negative answer to the question as initially stated (which arguments are commonly, though somewhat misleadingly, referred to as ‘objections’) precisely in order to provide the reader with the criteria Aquinas thinks would have to be met for a division to be appropriate.

‘Objections’ 3, 5, and 6 conclude that the initial list of parts of speculative science, though perhaps partially correct, includes things it should not: natural philosophy (3 and 5) and divine science (5) should not be on it at all; again, natural philosophy and mathematics should not appear as distinct units alongside divine science, since they are only parts of divine science (6).

‘Objections’ 2 and 4 conclude that the initial list of parts of speculative science, though perhaps partially correct, has left out things that should be on it: logic (2) and ethics (4).

‘Objections’ 1, 7, and 8 apparently suggest that the division is radically wrong, having been made on an inappropriate or less essential basis.

‘Objections’ 9 and 10 conclude that the three parts are not listed in the correct order, namely that of dependence on one another (9), or of the ease with which they are acquired (10).

In other words, the ten arguments for the negative answer to the question of Article One suggest that, for Aquinas, a division -to be fitting- must have the correct parts (no more, no less, with the division being made on the appropriate basis), and the parts must be given in the correct order. Thus, the question being addressed by Aquinas in Article One would probably be better understood if it were phrased approximately as follows:

Is the division of speculative science into natural, mathematical, and divine an appropriate one? That is, has any science that should be on the list been omitted from it? Has any science been included on the list that should not be on it? Have the three speculative sciences on the list been given in the correct order?

B. The answer Aquinas gives in the Body of Article One

The body of the article (Maurer, pp.12-14) presents, against the background of the distinction between speculative and practical sciences in general, Aquinas's account of what makes speculative sciences to be distinct from one another.

(1) Distinction between speculative sciences on the one hand, and practical sciences on the other:

Speculative sciences differ from practical sciences in two ways (the first of which is the more fundamental, since it determines the second) (Maurer, pp. 12-13):

(a) As to end:

Practical sciences have as their end, not the truth they consider, but the operation toward which that truth is directed. Speculative sciences have as their end the truth they consider.

(b) As to subject matter (which, of course, must be proportionate to the end):

Practical sciences must have as their subject matter those things which are able to come into being by our work; for only the knowledge of such things can be ordered to operation as to an end. Speculative sciences must have as their subject matter things which do not come into being by our work; the consideration of these things is unable to be ordered to operation as to an end.

(2) Distinction of one speculative science from another:

Speculative sciences qua habits differ specifically from one another according to the essential distinction of those things which are the subject-matter of speculative sciences –essential, of course, not in the sense of pertaining to the essence of those things qua things, but in the sense of pertaining to those things qua objects-of-speculative-science. Thus to divide speculative sciences qua habits into parts, and do so fittingly, we need first to locate the characteristics common to all objects-of-speculative-science qua objects-of-speculative-science; and second to state and apply the principle according to which one group of objects-of-speculative-science is essentially distinct from another group.

The characteristics common to all objects-of-speculative-science are the following:

- (a) These objects must be immaterial, because the intellect, which a speculative science perfects as a habit, is immaterial.
- (b) These objects must be necessary, and therefore also immutable (i.e., ‘immobile’ in the sense of unchangeable; for whatever is changeable is, as such, able either to be or not be, either absolutely or in a way and hence would not be necessary).

Therefore, separation from, or connection with, matter and motion (i.e., change) is a property of every object-of-speculative-science. (Maurer, pp.13-14)

The next step is to discover the division of speculative science into its essential parts on the basis of the essential differences between one group of immaterial-necessary-immutable objects and another. Now one group of immaterial-necessary-immutable objects is essentially distinguished from another according to their level of remoteness, or separation, from matter and change. Therefore speculative science is to be distinguished into its specifically distinct parts according to the specifically distinct levels (or kinds) of remoteness -from matter and change- that are to be found in objects-of-speculative-science. (It should be noted that remoteness from change will soon get much less attention than remoteness from matter.)

But there are three and only three specifically distinct ways in which objects-of-speculative-science can depend upon matter (which is soon replaced by the concept sensible matter) or lack such dependence:

- (i) Those objects depending on sensible matter both *secundum esse* and *secundum intellectum*, that is, both for their extra-mental existence, and for their being understood (i.e., sensible matter would be present in the definition of the object); for example, plants, animals, and human beings.

The speculative science that considers this essentially distinct group of objects-of-speculative-science is called 'natural philosophy' or 'physics'.

(A topic to which we must turn eventually: how are objects that depend on sensible matter for their existence, and for their being understood, immaterial (as they must be to be an object of speculative science)?)

(ii) Those objects depending on sensible matter for their extra-mental existence but not for their being understood (i.e., sensible matter would not be present in the definition of the object); for example, lines and numbers. The speculative science that considers this essentially distinct group of objects-of-speculative-science is called 'mathematics'.

(iii) Those objects not depending on sensible matter either for their extra-mental existence or for their being understood. These objects are said to exist independently of sensible matter: either in the sense that they are individual things which never exist in sensible matter, such as God or angels, or in the sense that they are groups which can exist without sensible matter (namely, those groups where at least one individual member of the group never exists in sensible matter, such as the class being, the class substance, the class quality, potency, act, one and many).

The speculative science which considers this essentially distinct group of objects-of-speculative-science has many names: 'theology', or 'divine science', because God is the most important thing known in it; 'metaphysics', because it is acquired after physics by those who must proceed from sensible things to beings that are not sensible; 'primary

philosophy', because it precedes those sciences which receive their principles from it.

- (iv) What about those objects not depending on sensible matter for their extra-mental existence, yet depending on sensible matter for their being understood? Actually, no such class of objects exists; hence, there could not be a fourth kind of speculative philosophy or science.

Therefore, there are three and only three distinct kinds or parts of speculative philosophy or science, namely natural philosophy, mathematics, and divine science.

(Maurer, pp. 14-15)

C. A selection of responses Aquinas made to the arguments for a negative answer to the question

Summary of the first argument for the negative answer:

Speculative philosophy should be divided in the same way as the habits perfecting the speculative part of the soul are divided (since the various parts of speculative philosophy are such habits). Nevertheless, the habits perfecting the speculative part of the soul are, according to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, to be divided into wisdom, science, and understanding. Therefore, the parts of speculative philosophy should be wisdom, science, and understanding, not natural philosophy, mathematics, and divine science.

Response of Aquinas to this first argument for the negative:

Such a mistake is the result of confusing two quite different ways in which habits perfecting the speculative intellect are divided:

- 1- The division into wisdom, science, and understanding is based on a consideration of these habits of the speculative intellect *qua* virtues. For virtues are organized into groups according to the different ways in which they perfect their subject, in this case the speculative intellect. (a) The name given to the virtue perfecting the speculative intellect with reference to principles is 'understanding'. (b) The name given to a virtue perfecting the speculative intellect with reference to **demonstrated conclusions** is: 'wisdom', if the demonstration proceeds from the highest causes; 'science', if the demonstration proceeds from less than the highest causes.
- 2- The division of habits perfecting the speculative intellect into natural philosophy, mathematics, and divine science is based on a consideration of them *qua* habits. For habits are organized into groups according to their objects, that is, according to the things with which they are directly concerned.

Summary of second 'objection':

The division mentioned is not adequate because it omits logic.

Aquinas's response to 'objection' two:

Logic is not studied for its own sake, whereas in the case of speculative sciences knowledge is sought for its own sake. Logic is more an instrument of science than a science.

Summary of 'objection' four:

Since all practical sciences, such as medicine, ethics, moral science have speculative parts, they also should be included in a division of speculative sciences.

Aquinas's response to 'objection' four:

It is not correct to put a practical science as a part of speculative science, merely on the basis of its containing some speculative parts. A theoretical science, as a whole, is directed only to knowledge of truth; while a practical one, as a whole, is directed to operation.

Summary of 'objection' six:

Metaphysics studies being. The subject matter of physics and mathematics is included within being. Therefore, physics and mathematics are not sciences distinct from metaphysics.

Aquinas's response to 'objection' six:

The way metaphysics treats being makes it to be a distinct science from physics and mathematics. It is true that the subjects of physics and mathematics are part of being; however, physics and mathematics treat their part of being in special way different from metaphysics' point of view.

Summary of 'objection' nine:

There is a problem with the order of the speculative sciences mentioned in the initial question. Divine science, which other sciences depend on for their principles, must be placed first.

Aquinas's response to 'objection' nine:

Divine science is first by its nature; however, with respect to us, other sciences come before it. To grasp divine science we need first to learn natural science and mathematics. For example, to understand divine facts we need to know generation,

corruption, and motion in natural science, and number, and disposition of the heavenly spheres, through astronomy and mathematics.

However, there is no vicious circle in the fact that, although we must acquire other speculative sciences prior to acquiring divine science, those other sciences receive their principles from divine science. For, divine science proves the principles of those other science from self-evident principles, not from some information it received from those sciences.

In addition, demonstrations based on natural science are clearer to us at first. Therefore, relative to us divine science comes last, in spite of the fact that by its nature it is first.

Summary of 'objection' ten:

The objection says that mathematics should come before natural science, because young people can easily study mathematics, while only the more advanced can study natural science.

Aquinas's response to 'objection' ten:

Although it is true that mathematics is studied before natural science, still the things known by natural science, namely sensible things, are better known than the things known by mathematics, and that is what determines the appropriate order for listing the two sciences (as distinct from the order in which they are learned).

Part Three: An Analysis and summary of Article Two

According to Article One, speculative science has three parts: natural philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics. Article Two is concerned with the subject matter of

natural philosophy. The structure of Article Two is the same as that of the other Articles; that is, it begins with an initial stating of the question, it then presents a set of arguments favouring a negative answer to the question, a smaller set of arguments favouring an affirmative answer, followed by the body of the article in which Aquinas gives his own answer to the question, and then the responses Aquinas makes to the arguments for the negative.

A. The question being addressed by Aquinas in Article Two

Once again, it takes a bit of work to get a precise grasp of the question (or set of questions) Aquinas is actually addressing in Article Two. As he states the question at the beginning of the Article, it goes as follows:

Does natural philosophy treat of what exists in motion and matter?

Now perhaps the first step towards reaching an understanding of precisely what this question means is to recall what Aquinas had concluded in Article One in so far as that would be relevant. First of all, when Aquinas spoke in Article One of the characteristics common to all objects-of-speculative-science, he said that the object of every speculative science must be immaterial, necessary, and immutable. This would suggest that in the question which opens Article Two the word 'motion' should probably be taken in its broad sense, as meaning change of any sort, rather than in its narrow sense where it would refer only to local motion. Thus, Aquinas would seem to be asking whether natural philosophy treats of what exists in change and in matter. Secondly, when in Article One he identified the class of objects-of-speculative-science which are studied by natural philosophy, Aquinas spoke of objects which depend on sensible matter both

for their extra-mental existence, and for their being understood (i.e., sensible matter would be included in the definition of these objects). This would suggest that the question at the beginning of Article Two should be taken as if it had asked: “Does natural philosophy treat of what exists in change and in sensible matter?”

Let us now examine the set of arguments for a negative answer to the initial question of Article Two, to see what light they cast on the precise nature of the question that Aquinas is addressing in Article Two.

Aquinas brings up seven arguments against the position that natural philosophy deals with what exists in motion and matter.

According to three ‘objections’ (1,4,5), since a speculative science deals with what is universal and necessary, it therefore cannot treat of what exists in matter and motion. For matter is the principle of individuation, and motion is the principle of contingency. Thus, natural science ought not to deal with what exists in matter and motion. The second ‘objection’ argues that, since the only way the intellect knows is by abstracting from matter and its conditions, natural science cannot deal with matter. Thus four objections (1,2,4,5) raise the question of whether material and movable things can ever be the subject of any speculative science.

The third and sixth arguments for the negative conclude that natural science treats not only what is in matter and motion/change, it also deals with a First Mover who is free from all matter, plus the soul and the earth which are not subject to motion (where the word ‘motion’ clearly refers to local motion, not change in general). In other words, these two ‘objections’ (3,6) give a negative answer to the question whether natural philosophy considers only what exists in matter and motion.

The seventh ‘objection’ argues that since there are some mutable things which natural science does not treat, the subject matter of natural science should not be described as whatever exists in matter and change.

Thus, if we were to judge by the seven arguments for a negative answer, we would conclude that the question Aquinas is actually addressing in Article Two could be understood better if it were presented as a set of related questions, as follows (where the clarifications deriving from our review of Article One have now been taken into account):

- (1) Are mutable things involving sensible matter ever able to be objects constituting the subject matter of a speculative science?
- (2) (Assuming an affirmative answer to the first question) does natural philosophy, when studying mutable things involving sensible matter, include sensible matter and change in its consideration?
- (3) Does natural philosophy consider every mutable thing involving sensible matter?
- (4) Does natural philosophy consider only mutable things involving sensible matter?

B. The answer(s) Aquinas gives in the body of Article Two

The body of Article Two is concerned primarily with the first two questions on the list immediately above, namely:

- (1) Are mutable things which involve sensible matter ever able to constitute the subject matter of a speculative science?
- (2) When natural philosophy considers mutable things which involve sensible matter, does it include sensible matter and change in its consideration?

But prior to giving his answers to these two questions, Aquinas alludes to the great difficulty of the first question, and says that it was Plato's failure to solve this problem that led him to posit the existence of Separate Ideal Forms. For Plato, Aquinas says, accepted the position of Heraclitus and Cratylus, namely that material things are always changing, and from that drew the conclusion that material things cannot be the objects directly studied by science, or the objects being defined in a definition. As a result, Plato posited the existence of Separate Ideal Forms, since he thought they were required to provide the objects studied by science, and the objects defined in a definition. Aquinas says that Plato's error consisted in failing to distinguish between what is essential, and what is not. (Maurer, p. 27)

Aquinas bases his own answer to these two questions on a distinction he draws, when talking about an individual sensible substance, between the following:

- (a) The individual sensible substance, such as an individual human, or an individual tree, which is referred to here as 'the whole', i.e., the composite itself.
- (b) The (specific essence) of that individual sensible substance. (For some reason that is not clear, Aquinas here seems to prefer the word 'nature', or even 'form', to the word 'essence' when referring to the essence of the individual.)

Now if we examine an individual sensible substance, we see that it changes (it comes into existence, and it goes out of existence), and that it includes individual sensible matter, or determinate (or signate) matter. Therefore, such individuals cannot, as individuals, be the subject matter of natural philosophy.

But change and individual sensible matter do not belong *per se* to the specific essence of the sensible individual substance. What is produced by a housebuilder is not

the essence house, but this house. What is included in the specific essence of an animal is bones, not these bones.

Further, it is possible to consider anything in abstraction from (i.e., without considering) anything which is not related to it *per se*.

Therefore, the specific essence of a sensible object (while it cannot exist extra-mentally without change or particular sensible matter) can be considered by a person without that person at the same time considering change, or considering determinate sensible matter, or considering any conditions required by change and determinate sensible matter (though of course it cannot be considered by a person without that person considering common, or indeterminate, sensible matter).

So, do things which constitute the subject matter of natural philosophy exist in sensible matter and change? Aquinas seems to express his answer in two at least slightly different ways. First he seems to say that the objects which make up the subject matter of natural philosophy are immaterial (in the sense of not including particular sensible matter) and immutable (lacking all changes) essences which exist extra-mentally only in individual sensible things. But at the end of the body of this Article, Aquinas seems to be saying that when we possess the speculative science called 'natural philosophy', what we know are individual sensible beings, whereas that through which we know those things are their immutable essences considered without considering the particular sensible matter (required for the essence to exist extra-mentally) being considered at the same time. These answers seem to mean two at least somewhat different things, and Aquinas does not tell us which is the more precise answer.

C. Aquinas's response to the third argument for a negative answer to the question

Summary of 'objection' three:

Natural science considers the First Mover. But the First Mover does not have any matter. Therefore, natural science does not consider only what exists in matter.

Aquinas's response to 'objection' three:

In his response to this third argument favoring a negative answer, Aquinas distinguishes between two sorts of objects which in some way or other are dealt with by a speculative science:

- (i) those objects which constitute the subject genus of the science, objects which are considered by the science in themselves; and
- (ii) those objects which, though not part of the subject genus of that science, are nevertheless dealt with in it because of some relation they have to the beings which are included in the subject genus.

Now it is true that God, a completely immaterial and immutable being, is dealt with in natural philosophy. But God is studied by natural philosophy, not as a member of the subject genus of natural philosophy, but only because of His relationship to things within the subject genus. The question, being addressed, on the other hand, was specifically about what constitutes the subject matter of natural philosophy in the narrow sense of subject genus (things treated for their own sake). Hence, to admit that God is studied in natural philosophy is in no way to say something contrary to the position that the subject genus of natural philosophy includes only objects that exist in change and sensible matter.

Part Four: An analysis and summary of Article Three

If one were to examine simply the four questions given at the beginning of the four articles in Question Five, one would probably form the impression that Article One would consist in a general discussion of the tripartite division of speculative science into philosophy of nature, mathematics, and divine science, whereas Article Two would be a discussion of the subject matter of the philosophy of nature in particular (or at least a fuller discussion of that subject matter than would be found in Article One), Article Three would be a discussion (or at least a fuller discussion) of the subject matter of mathematics, and Article Four would be a discussion (or at least a fuller discussion) of the subject matter of divine science. And after one has subjected the four articles to a close examination, it would be clear that this first impression was for the most part a correct one, especially as it pertains to Articles One, Two, and Four, and even up to a point with regard to Article Three.

But if one were simply to read the body of Article Three while being totally in the dark as to its context, and then attempt to summarize its main points or topics, I think one would likely say that overall its author was attempting to do approximately the following two things:

First of all, to explain in some detail the three ways by which the human intellect in its operations can legitimately abstract one thing from another thing; that is, to explain the three ways in which the human intellect:

(a) can distinguish one thing from another thing

(b) where this is done *vere* ('truthfully', 'correctly', 'legitimately', i.e., where it is possible to do the abstracting without involving oneself in falsehood, or attempting to do the impossible).

Secondly, to identify the special connection that exists between these three ways of abstracting, on the one hand, and the three speculative sciences, on the other.

Thus, while Article Three does deal with the subject matter of mathematics (in fact, this is about the only thing the 'objections', and the responses to them, do deal with), the body of Article Three is more similar to Article One than it is to Articles Two and Four, at least to the extent that it presents a fairly general discussion of the tripartite division of speculative science, without being especially concerned (as Articles Two and Four are) with presenting a fuller discussion of the subject matter of only one of the speculative sciences.

In view of this, and of the need from now on to place greater emphasis on those parts of the text that are more relevant to my thesis, I will abandon the practice I followed for Articles One and Two, where I began by attempting to determine the precise question Aquinas was addressing in the Article. Hence, for Article Three I will not attempt to summarize either the 'objections', or the responses to the 'objections', but will concentrate almost exclusively on the body of the article.

Aquinas begins the body of Article Three by drawing attention to the two operations of the human intellect that are relevant to his main topic in this article (i.e., to the operations which are relevant to the three ways in which the intellect can legitimately abstract, or, the three ways in which the intellect can consider one thing without considering the other thing while not involving oneself in falsehood, or attempting to do

the impossible). (Maurer, pp. 34-35) (While there are other activities of the human intellect which do not fall under these two operations, e.g., reasoning, these other operations are not directly relevant to the ways in which the intellect can legitimately abstract, and so are not dealt with by Aquinas at this point.)

The 'first' operation of the human intellect, namely the operation by which we know what a thing is (no matter whether that thing is complete, i.e., a whole thing, or incomplete, such as a part or accident). What is it in the thing that this operation is concerned with? The nature of the thing. (Although Aquinas does not at this point actually use the word 'essence', and he does not here explicitly refer to the ten categories, he is quite clearly talking about what, in the *De Ente et Essentia*, he referred to as the essence by which a thing (whether a substance, or an accident) is fixed in its proper genus and species.)

The 'second' operation of the human intellect, namely the operation by which we make statements, either affirmative statements (in which the intellect 'joins two things', or rather asserts that the two things are joined), or negative statements (in which the intellect 'divides or separates two things', or rather, asserts that the two things are separate). What is it in the things that this operation is concerned with? According to Aquinas, it is the esse (or existence) of the things (which existence in a corporeal object results from the two intrinsic principles of the thing, namely its matter and form).

Having briefly explained these two operations of the human intellect, and identified the two aspects of things that they are concerned with, Aquinas then devotes a number of pages (Maurer, pp. 35-41) to the three different ways in which the intellect can

legitimately abstract (where the term ‘abstracting’ is being taken in a broad sense, so that it includes not only abstracting where the term is taken strictly, but also an activity which is not abstracting properly speaking):

Two of these ways of abstracting are carried out by the ‘first’ operation of the intellect; both of them are abstracting properly speaking.

The third way of abstracting is carried out by the ‘second’ operation of the intellect; this way, which is called ‘*separatio*’ (separating), is not strictly speaking a case of abstracting, since an activity of distinguishing one thing from another is not called ‘abstracting properly speaking’ unless the ‘two things’ are united in reality, something that does not apply to the ‘two things’ involved in the activity called separating.

Let us begin by taking a closer look at separating, that is, at the third way of abstracting, which is carried out by the ‘second’ operation (though presumably only in so far as this ‘second’ operation is used to form negative statements). Suppose one were to say “A human is not a donkey”. This would mean that one is ‘abstracting human from donkey’, or distinguishing human from donkey, in the sense that one is stating they are separate in reality. That is, one is stating that no human is a donkey (where ‘donkey’ is being used literally), and no donkey is a human. And since this statement conforms to reality, this statement is the result of an abstracting that has been carried out *vere* (‘truthfully’, correctly, legitimately). Or, suppose one were to say “To be human is not to be white”. This would mean that one is abstracting human from white in the sense that one is saying they are ‘separate’ in reality in the sense that not all humans are white and not all white things are human. Since this statement in fact conforms to reality, this

statement is the result of an abstracting that has been carried out *vere* (correctly). But if one were to make the statement that the ‘two things’ are separate when in fact they are united in reality (in the relevant sense), then this would not be an instance of a legitimate or correct use of this type of abstracting. (The distinction between separating and abstracting properly speaking seems to be muddled a bit by the fact that Aquinas at least seems to be using, and without any explanation, the case of distinguishing between human and white as an example both of separating, and of one of the forms of abstracting properly speaking.)

Let us now examine more closely abstracting properly speaking, which is carried out by the ‘first’ operation of the human intellect, and always involves things that are ‘united in reality’. (We will look at the two sorts of abstracting properly speaking only after looking at what they have in common.) When ‘two things are united in reality’, in some cases it is possible to correctly abstract the first from the second (i.e., consider the first without at the same time considering the second), while in other cases it is impossible to consider the first without at the same time considering the second, and do this ‘truthfully’. Much of what Aquinas writes in the body of Article Three is concerned with stating the principle according to which this sort of abstracting can be carried out correctly, and with providing examples of pairs where the first thing can legitimately be abstracted from the second, and examples of pairs where the first thing cannot be legitimately abstracted from the second.

(Part of what makes the body of this article so difficult to analyze and summarize is the fact that sometimes when Aquinas is attempting to state in principle when it is legitimate to abstract one thing from another thing, you cannot tell whether the principle

is intended to apply only to the two ways of abstracting properly speaking, or is intended to apply as well to the third way, where the two things are not united in reality. Similarly, when Aquinas speaks of ‘things separate in reality’, and ‘things united in reality’, it is not always clear to the reader whether there is a perfect dichotomy between these two expressions, so that there could be no example that could be placed in both groups.)

What is the principle that justifies abstracting one thing from another thing when they are united in reality? According to Aquinas (in the context of a difficult philosophical analysis of corporeal objects -see Maurer, pp. 35-36), if one thing depends on a second thing with regard to what constitutes the intelligibility of the essence of the first thing, one cannot ‘truthfully’ abstract the first from the second; i.e., one cannot correctly consider the first without at the same time considering the second. But if one thing does not depend on a second thing with regard to what constitutes the intelligibility of the essence of the first thing, one can ‘truthfully’ abstract the first from the second. Thus, (given certain obvious assumptions about the literal meaning of the following terms as translations of the Latin words used by Aquinas) one can ‘truthfully’ consider letter of the alphabet without considering syllable, although one cannot ‘truthfully’ consider syllable without considering letter of the alphabet. One can ‘truthfully’ consider nose without considering snubness, although one cannot ‘truthfully’ consider snubness without considering nose. One can ‘truthfully’ consider animal without considering paw, although one cannot ‘truthfully’ consider paw without considering animal.

Having explained at some length the general notion of abstracting by means of the ‘first’ operation of the human intellect, Aquinas then (Maurer, p.39) distinguishes between two distinct ways of abstracting by means of the ‘first’ operation of the intellect.

What is the basis upon which this distinction is made? The two distinct types of unions between two things where one can be 'truthfully' considered without the other being considered at the same time. Thus, there is one type of abstracting corresponding to the 'union of a whole to its parts'; initially Aquinas refers to this type of abstracting as 'abstracting the whole from its parts'. And there is another type of abstracting corresponding to the 'union of form and matter' (or the 'union of accident and subject'); Aquinas refers to this type of abstracting as 'abstracting the form from the matter'. (It should be noted that Aquinas's terminology here tends to be rather unclear, and even a bit eccentric when compared to the way he will speak elsewhere; at any rate, one should not attempt to infer the nature of these two ways of abstracting from the names he attaches to them initially.)

Having made the distinction between these two ways of abstracting by means of the 'first' operation of the human intellect, Aquinas proceeds to explain each of them in considerable detail, in the course of which explanation he will give additional examples of legitimate and illegitimate acts of abstracting. (Maurer, pp. 37-41).

First of all, he gives an initial explanation of the kind of abstracting properly speaking called 'abstracting form from matter' (Maurer, pp. 37-39), to which he will add further explanation later. This expression turns out to refer (at least in this context) to considering quantity (an accidental form) without considering the sensible matter in which that quantity actually exists. This abstracting can be carried out 'truthfully' because, although quantity cannot exist except in a corporeal substance involving sensible matter, it can be understood without at the same time considering sensible matter (though of course it could not be understood without simultaneously considering

something called 'intelligible matter'). How is it possible for quantity to be understood without simultaneously considering sensible qualities? Because accidents belong to a substance in a certain order, and quantity is 'closer' to the substance than are these sensible qualities.

As for the kind of abstracting properly speaking initially called 'abstracting the whole from the part', Aquinas will, in his further explanation, refer to this by a much clearer expression, namely 'abstracting the universal from the particular'. (Maurer, p.40) This, Aquinas says, was called the 'abstracting the whole from the part' because with it we have an essence absolutely considered, that is, according to its essential character, in independence of all parts that do not belong to the species. (It will be recalled from the *De Ente et Essentia* that an essence, viewed as a whole rather than as a part, and considered absolutely, i.e., considered without at the same time considering any characteristics it receives from its existing in extra-mental beings or in intellects, was regarded as the 'whole of the thing' in the sense that nothing was formally excluded from it, and hence it could be predicated of individual objects.)

Aquinas draws the body of Article Three to a close (Maurer, p.41) by connecting the above three ways of abstracting with the three speculative sciences:

- (1) the activity called 'separating' belongs to metaphysics;
- (2) the activity of abstracting quantity from sensible matter belongs to mathematics;
- (3) the activity of abstracting universals from particulars belongs to all sciences, including physics.

Part Five: A brief look at Article Four

Before summarizing Article Four from the point of view of the interest of my thesis, it might be useful to review what Aquinas has told us in earlier articles regarding the third speculative science, which is the subject of Article Four.

In Article One, Aquinas said that objects-of-speculative-science have the following three features in common: they are immaterial, necessary, and immutable. (In Article Two he seems to add, but without explanation, yet a fourth feature, namely that they be universal.)

The distinction of speculative science into three parts, or into three speculative sciences, results, says Aquinas (in Article One as supplemented by later Articles), from the fact that objects-of-speculative-science as such fall into three distinct groups according to the three distinct ways in which objects-of-speculative-science as such are removed from/attached to sensible matter and change:

(1) the first group of objects-of-speculative-science, which are studied by the philosophy of nature, have two features in common:

- (a) all of the objects studied can exist extra-mentally only if they exist in individual sensible matter and in change; and
- (b) when these objects are considered by this speculative science, individual sensible matter is not considered, though common sensible matter is included in the consideration; that is, these objects cannot be understood without common sensible matter being understood, since common sensible matter would be included in the definition of such objects.

(2) the second group of objects-of-speculative-science, which are studied in mathematics, also have two features in common:

- (a) all of the objects studied can exist extra-mentally only if they exist in individual sensible matter and in change; and
- (b) when these objects are studied by this speculative science, neither individual nor common sensible matter is included in the consideration; that is, no sensible matter is included in the definition of these objects. Still, something called 'intelligible matter' is included in the consideration of them by mathematics.

(3) the third group of objects-of-speculative-science, which are studied in metaphysics, also have two features in common (though the second one is not explicitly dealt with by Aquinas):

- (a) all the objects studied can exist extra-mentally without any matter or motion being present. Or to be more precise, this feature means that (1) if the object studied is an individual being (such as God), it can never exist in matter; and (2) if the object studied is a group (such as the group being, the group substance, the group quality, etc.), it (i.e., the group) must include at least one member which does not exist in matter and motion. And
- (b) when these objects are studied, no matter of any sort need be present in the definition of them as such.

In Article One Aquinas explained how this third speculative science has several names assigned to it:

- (i) 'theology' or 'divine science': because God is the principal thing treated in it.
- (ii) 'metaphysics': because, being humans, we have to study material or sensible things before we study immaterial or non-sensible things, and hence this third science comes after physics.
- (iii) 'primary/first philosophy': because all the other sciences take their principles from it.

Turning now to the body of Article Four, we see that Aquinas repeats the point (previously made in Article One) that this third speculative science treats of beings existing separate from matter in the following two ways:

- (1) Either they are individual beings that cannot exist in matter and motion (e.g., God),
- (2) Or they are groups which do not depend on matter and motion for their extra-mental existence, i.e., they need not exist in matter and motion in the sense that at least one member of the group does not exist in matter and motion. (Maurer, p. 52)

But the real purpose, or contribution, of Article Four is not merely to repeat the above point. Although Article Four is a fairly long and rather complex article, it would seem that primarily it is an attempt to do the following two things:

1. to show how this third speculative science, namely philosophical theology (which depends on the natural light of reason), differs from another theology, (or another divine science), namely the one taught in Sacred Scripture; and
2. to show how the various things actually studied by philosophical theology (and, in particular, God) relate to the subject genus of this science.

I will attempt to summarize Aquinas's solution to these problems in the following way: While God is studied by both philosophical theology (or metaphysics) and the theology of Sacred Scripture, in the technical sense God is the subject genus of only one of these theologies, namely the theology of Sacred Scripture. But if God is not included in the subject genus of philosophical theology, how is God able to be studied by philosophical theology, and in fact actually be the principal thing studied by it (whence the name 'theology' or 'divine science')? In solving this problem, Aquinas follows Aristotle in dividing the total group of things studied in a science into two sub-groups: those things which are studied directly, and thus are included in the subject genus of the science, and those things which are not studied directly but only because of a significant relationship they have to the objects which are included in the subject genus.

Which, then, are the objects contained within the subject genus of metaphysics? In general, those objects which exist separate from matter in the second way explained above, i.e., groups that do not depend on matter and motion for their existence in the sense that, while some members of the group do depend on matter and motion for their existence, there is at least one member of the group which does not exist in matter and motion. The examples Aquinas gives of the groups that make up the subject genus of metaphysics are being, substance, quality, actuality, etc. But when Aquinas describes the subject genus of metaphysics more technically, he will say that it is being as being. God is studied by metaphysics, but only indirectly, and to the extent that objects included in the subject genus have a causal dependence on God, and thus can be used to demonstrate God's existence. This is a point Aquinas will emphasize frequently: God is not included

in the subject genus of any human science dependent on the natural light of reason.
(Maurer, pp. 51-53)

Part Six: A summary of the doctrine of essence to be found in this work (in comparison to the doctrine found in the *De Ente et Essentia*)

What has Aquinas revealed in Question Five of his Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius about his doctrine of essence, and in particular about essence in corporeal objects such as plants and animals, as that doctrine stood at the time when he composed this work?

Perhaps the first thing to note is that this work differs from the *De Ente et Essentia* in that this time essence is not the central topic of the work, and that whatever we can learn about essence from it has to be extracted from passages where the primary interest is in some other topic.

In addition, when Aquinas does deal with essence in Question Five, he spends little time on essence as a metaphysical component in extra-mental beings; rather, here his interest in essence is primarily in how it is grasped by the human intellect in its operations, and, more importantly, in how essences relate to the subject matter of the three speculative sciences.

When Aquinas does deal in Question Five with essence as a metaphysical component in corporeal objects such as plants, animals, and humans, he will make a number of points which will be quite familiar to one who has read the *De Ente et Essentia*. For example, one can distinguish, within an extra-mental corporeal object, between its two principles:

- (i) that by which the thing (whether it be a complete thing, ‘the whole’, or incomplete, such as a part or accident) is what it is, and holds a certain rank in reality, namely its essence (*natura*); and
- (ii) that by which it exists, its *esse*.

Further, an individual corporeal object differs from the essence of its species in that, whereas the individual requires individual or particular sensible matter for its existence, the essence of the species for that individual would include common sensible matter (this is included in the definition of the thing’s specific essence) but no individual sensible matter. Although the vocabulary on this point is different in Question Five from what it was in the *De Ente et Essentia*, it is clear that the expression ‘individual or particular or indeterminate sensible matter’ in the Question Five refers to the same thing as ‘designated matter’ did in the *De Ente et Essentia*; and the expression ‘common or indeterminate sensible matter’ in Question Five refers to the same thing as did ‘undesignated matter’ in the earlier work. In explaining this distinction, Aquinas used the same example in both works (‘this flesh and these bones’ and ‘flesh and bones’), and in both works the signate matter/individual sensible matter plays the role of the principle of individuation.

The earlier work dealt at much greater length with topics such as how essence is found in various types of substances, how essence is found in accidents, how the essence of a species relates to the essence of its genus, and of the connection of essence to the notions of genus, species, and difference. But when the two works deal with the same problems, the doctrine of essence as a constituent of a real being seems to be basically the same in the two works, with no obvious advance having been made in the later work.

Where the later work does represent an advance on the earlier work is in connection, not with what an essence is, but with how essence is considered or grasped by the human intellect.

In the *De Ente et Essentia*, Aquinas placed great emphasis on the fact that an essence, say the essence of a species, can exist only in individual members of that species (where it takes on certain characteristics), or in individual intellects (where it takes on certain characteristics). Now one can consider this essence as it exists in individual members of the species. And one can consider this essence as it exists in some individual intellect. But, Aquinas insisted, one can also consider that essence in yet a third way, namely without at the same time considering anything that is true of it because of its existence in individual things or in individual intellects. Aquinas referred to an essence considered in this way as essence absolutely considered. By means of this analysis Aquinas was able to explain his doctrine of predication (regarding precisely what constitutes the predicate of a statement in which the subject is a particular corporeal substance), and his doctrine regarding the universal logical intentions of genus, difference, and species, two topics which are hardly present in Question Five.

But when he wrote Question Five of his Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, Aquinas attempted a much more general analysis of abstraction (i.e., of the various ways in which one can 'truthfully' consider one thing without considering another), and he did this while making explicit reference to, first of all, the first two operations of the human intellect, and, secondly, the three speculative sciences. As a result, his fairly brief comments in the *De Ente et Essentia* regarding an essence considered absolutely have been superseded by a much fuller explanation of when one

can legitimately consider one thing without consider something else; and this time the explanation in principle is accompanied by many helpful negative and positive examples.

Chapter Five

A Summary of the doctrine of essence contained in these two works by Aquinas, and a brief critical comment on that doctrine

Part One: Summary

These two works were written at about the same time, with one being written a bit before Aquinas became a Professor of Theology at the University of Paris, and the other being written in his first years as a Professor of Theology.

Although the primary topics of these two works are not the exactly same, there is considerable overlap in topics. As for the doctrines of essence presented in them, there would seem to be no logical incompatibility between the doctrine presented in one and the doctrine presented in the other, and on some points they would appear to be saying almost exactly the same thing. Therefore, here I will attempt a unified summary of the doctrine on essence contained in these two works.

There is an essence for every being, provided the word ‘being’ is being used to refer to something positive in reality. (Negations and privations do not have essences.)

When subjecting an individual physical being such as a plant or animal to a metaphysical analysis, one must distinguish between its essence and its existence.

Aquinas mentioned approximately six (overlapping) functions performed by the essence of a thing (though one could perhaps extend this list a bit if one were to include in it the roles played by essence with respect to the subject matter of the three speculative sciences, especially the philosophy of nature and mathematics):

- (1) It is that which places a being in one or the other of the ten categories (or ten supreme genera); or, to be somewhat more specific, it is that which fixes a being in its own genus and species.
- (2) It is that which determines a being to be what it is.
- (3) It is that which is signified by a definition stating what the being is.
- (4) It is that which makes a being to be intelligible, that is, to be something that can be grasped by an intellect.
- (5) It is that which directs a being to its proper or specific operation.
- (6) It is that in which and through which a being (an *ens*, or an *id quod est*, that which exists) has its *esse* (beingness, existing, existence). Or, to put it slightly differently, the essence is that according to which a thing is called a being.

When Aquinas wished to refer to essence, he generally used the term '*essentia*' or '*natura*', though occasionally he would also use the terms '*forma*' and '*quiditas*'. On one occasion he pointed out that, although these terms can all be used to refer to essence, each of them tends to emphasize one role of essence rather than another. But most of the time he uses these terms as if they were completely interchangeable ways of referring to an essence, with no special significance to be attached to one word being chosen over another; about the only clear exception would seem to be a possible preference for the word '*essentia*' in a context in which he will also be talking about *ens* and *esse*.

When discussing material substances, where he usually seems to have in mind living ones such as plants and animals, Aquinas will emphasize that essence does not consist in the matter alone, or even in the form alone (where form is conceived as a part),

but in the composite of matter and form. Thus, the essence of a living object includes both its body and its soul.

Closely connected to this last point is Aquinas's doctrine that an individual corporeal being such as Socrates (or the essence of Socrates as an individual) includes a material component variously called 'signate matter', 'individual sensible matter', or 'particular sensible matter', which serves as the principle of individuation (which accounts for the possibility of there being more than one member of a species of corporeal objects).

As for the essence of the species to which Socrates belongs, Aquinas insists that this also contains sensible matter (since its definition would include sensible matter), only this time the matter is 'undesignated matter', 'common sensible matter', or 'universal sensible matter'. Aquinas distinguishes common sensible matter from individual sensible matter by saying that the definition of the human species includes having flesh and bones, but it does not include having this flesh and these bones; the latter would, however, belong to the definition of an individual such as Socrates (if he has a definition).

Aquinas never wavers from his position that an essence can exist in only two places: in individual members of a group, or in individual intellects; and that in each of these places the essence takes on additional characteristics unique to that place. But he also insists that the characteristics acquired in each of those places do not belong to essence as such, since they are not found in both places, and hence are not a property belonging to the very intelligibility of the essence.

There could exist only one being in which its essence includes existence; that is, there could be only one being that is subsistent *esse*. In every other being, the essence

does not as such include existence, and hence such beings must receive their existence from some other being.

The above represents most of what Aquinas said in these two works regarding essence in so far as it is a metaphysical constituent in every corporeal being. About all that has been left out is a detailed list of the characteristics an essence acquires when it exists in individual extra-mental objects, and a detailed list of the characteristics an essence acquires when it exists in an individual intellect. While these would be interesting topics, the passages dealing with them have proved to be too difficult for me at this stage.

The rest of what Aquinas said in these two works (and it was quite extensive) had to do mostly with the relation that humans (with their intellects) have to essence when they do the following with regard to some extra-mental being:

- (1) grasp what sort of being it is, or to which genus and species it belongs;
- (2) make statements about that being, by putting it into the subject-position in a statement and then predicating of it some essence;
- (3) define it;
- (4) consider the thing as an object of one of the sciences, and demonstrate properties of it.

Thus, Aquinas will point out that, because what an essence is in itself is not in all respects the same as what it is when it exists in the only two places where it can exist, there are three ways of considering an essence;

- (a) considering the essence as it exists in individual extra-mental beings;
- (b) considering the essence as it exists in individual intellects;

(c) considering the essence in itself, or absolutely, i.e., according to what is true of it after you leave out of consideration what is true of it because of its existence in the two places where it in fact exists.

Further, Aquinas will put the above distinction (between three ways of considering an essence) to use, first in his explanation of the nature of the predicate when that predicate is correctly predicated of an individual corporeal object, and second in his explanation of the nature of the subject when the correctly predicated predicate is the word 'genus', or 'species', or 'difference'.

Further yet, Aquinas will attempt a complete theory of abstraction (which will be related to the first two operations of the intellect), and point to three distinct ways in which the human intellect can 'truthfully' abstract an essence, which three ways he will then use to elaborate on the distinction between the three speculative sciences.

Part Two: Some critical comments

After reading these two early works by Aquinas, I remain puzzled by a couple of problems which I cannot see how he avoids. First, I will mention the first problem and a possible answer for it, then the second problem and a possible solution Aquinas would give.

The first problem would be that when Aquinas says essence belongs only to something positive in reality, he did not mention how he would deal with those essences that do not exist in reality (e.g., phoenix). We know what a phoenix is, but obviously it does not exist in reality.

Perhaps Aquinas would solve this problem either by saying the essence exists in the human practical intellect in the case of human artifacts (assuming they have essences), or by saying that those essences of natural things which do not yet exist in individuals might exist in the mind of God.

Another problem is that I cannot quite understand Aquinas when he says that, in a being, essence receives *esse* (existence). In general, surely a receiver must exist before it receives something. But Aquinas's explanation of essence seems to imply that the essence, being the receiver of existence, must exist before receiving the *esse* (existence), which is puzzling. (In other words, Aquinas's definition seems to imply sort of primacy for essence over existence.)

The latter problem could be resolved either by assuming the primacy of existence over essence, or by denying the real distinction between existence and essence. If we can come up with a solution that a being is only one thing in reality (i.e., it is not a combination of existence and essence as two distinct parts of a thing in reality), then there will be no argument over the primacy of each part. Essence cannot play the main role in a thing, because essence does not have any act and cannot be without existential act in reality. In contrast, existence does not depend on essence for its act (since essence is nothing without existential act). However, we cannot deny essence, groups, sciences, our knowledge about essence, etc. On the one hand, essence is nothing without existence in reality; and on the other hand, we are dealing with essence in our everyday lives. The problem might be solved by switching from essence as a receiver to a limitation of existence. Someone might say that we still have two things in reality: existence, and its limitation (as essence); how does this differ from the position just rejected? The answer

would be that existence and its limitation are not really two things. Rather, it is one thing and its property. There is nothing in the world except being. Pure being is God and limited beings are His creatures. Each individual has its own limitation; individuals with the same limitation belong to the same group and have the same essence.

Perhaps exploring other works of Aquinas, secondary sources regarding Aquinas's thought, and other philosophical views will give us a right path to find the best solution for these problems, which we might face by studying only Aquinas's two early works.

Notes for Chapter One

1. This presentation of the intellectual revolution depends heavily on W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. I, chapter 2.
2. See F. M. Cornford, *Before and After Socrates*, chapter one
3. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. I, chapter 2
4. Guthrie, pages 29-34
5. Cornford, *Before and After Socrates*, chapter 1
6. A. H. Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*, pages 5-8
7. W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, ch. 11
8. Armstrong, *Ibid.*
9. J. Owens, *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy*, ch. 3
10. J. Owens, ch. 4
11. J. Owens, ch. 5
12. *Euthyphro*, 6d-e
13. *Euthyphro*, 11a-b
14. *Meno*, 71a-b
15. *Republic*, 596a
16. On the development of the doctrine of Forms, see David Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*
17. On the relation of Aristotle to Plato, see G. E. R. Lloyd, *Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of His Thought*, chapters 2-5
18. Lloyd, p. 67
19. Lloyd, pp. 43-47
20. Lloyd, p. 51
21. See Owens, *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy*, pp. 298-299
22. See R. Robinson, *Definition*, chapter 6.
23. A. A. Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 94-100. E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in Middle Ages*, pp. 206-210.
24. A. A. Maurer, *ibid.*, p. 97.
25. A. A. Maurer, *ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

Notes for Chapter Two

1. My main source of information on the life of Tomas Aquinas is:
James A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino His Life, Thought, and Work*.
2. Weisheipl, *ibid.*, p. 38.
3. Weisheipl, *ibid.*, p. 70.
4. Weisheipl, 118, 127, and 137. Also, see Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy* (Volume II), p. 304.
5. Weisheipl, *ibid.*, p. 218.
6. Copleston, *ibid.*, p. 304.
7. My general sources on Medieval Universities were E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 246-250, and J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino His Life, Thought, and Work*.
8. Copleston, *ibid.*, p. 212.
9. Weisheipl, *ibid.*, pp. 110-129.
10. Weisheipl, *ibid.*, p. 118.
11. Copleston, *ibid.*, p. 216.
12. Gilson, *ibid.*, pp. 181-187.
13. Gilson, *ibid.*, p. 179.
14. Gilson, *ibid.*, p. 181.
15. Gilson, *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.
16. Gilson, *ibid.*, pp. 184-187.
17. Gilson, *ibid.*, pp. 187-216.
18. Gilson, *ibid.*, pp. 216-225.
19. Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, chapter 2.
20. Wallace, William A. "Aristotle in the Middle Ages" in *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Volume I), 459.
21. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 226-229.
22. Gilson, *ibid.*, pp. 229-231.
23. Armand Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy*, 107.

24. On the translations, see Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 235-240; and Maurer, pp. 86-88.
25. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy (Volume II)*, 205.
26. Copleston, *ibid.*, 206.
27. Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy*, p.27.

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