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CAJETAN  
COMMENTARY  
ON BEING AND ESSENCE

*(In De Ente et Essentia d. Thomas Aquinatis)*

*Translated from the Latin*

*With an Introduction*

*By*

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Thomas de Vio, Cajetan  
Commentary on St. Thomas Aquinas'  
*On Being and Essence*

INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Because a small mistake in the beginning is a great one in the end, according to the Philosopher in *primo Coeli et Mundi*,<sup>2</sup> and since what the intellect first conceives is being and essence, as Avicenna says in the *Metaphysica*,<sup>3</sup> we ought first, lest we fall into error through ignorance of them, state for the purpose of disclosing the difficulty they involve, what is meant by the names of Essence and Being, how they are found in different things, and how they are related to logical intentions, namely, to genus, species, and difference.

1) This remarkable work is divided into two principal parts: the introduction and the treatise which begins with the words, *We must observe that*, etc. In the introduction, following the art of rhetoric, St. Thomas accomplishes three things. First, he puts the reader in the proper disposition by showing the usefulness and necessity of what is to be said, using this argument: all who err concerning the principles of all intelligibles will err even more in other matters; all who err concerning essence and being are in error concerning the principles of all intelligibles; therefore all who err concerning essence and being will err even more in other matters. It is therefore useful and necessary, in order to avoid the many errors which occur from not knowing them, to set forth the notion of essence and being. The proof for the major of this reasoning is stated in words taken from I *Coeli*.<sup>4</sup> The minor is proved by the text of Avicenna.<sup>5</sup>

For the evidence of the major and its proof, note well that because the beginning is small in quantity, therefore an error in the beginning is called small; and because the beginning is great virtually inasmuch as it virtually contains all the conclusions, therefore a small error in the beginning becomes a great error in the end. For error grows as the

<sup>1</sup> The Latin text used for this translation is the following: Thomas de Vio, Cajetani, *In De Ente et Essentia d. Thomae Aquinatis Commentaria*; Cura et Studio P.M.-H. Laurent, (Taurini: Marietti, 1934), pp. i-xvi, 260. The variations from this text have been taken from the following: *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Quaestiones Disputatae accedit liber De Ente et Essentia cum commentariis R.D.P. Thomae de Vio Cajetani Cardinalis*,

t. IV; (Parisiis: Librariis Consociationis Sancti Pauli, 1883), pp. 371-569.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, I, 5, 271b 13; St. Thomas, *In I de Caelo*, lect. 9; ed. Leonine, Vol. III, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Avicenna, *Metaphysica*, tr. I, c. 6, fol. 72r; in *Opera*, Venetiis, 1508.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, I, 5, 271b 13.

<sup>5</sup> Avicenna, *Metaph.*, tr. I, c. 6, fol. 72r.

beginning is extended in its consequences, as is quite clear in the beginning of a forked road: a slight deviation leads one very far away.

### [QUESTION I]

[Whether Being Is What the Human Intellect First Knows?]

2) For evidence of the minor, there is well-aired dispute in this matter, namely, whether being is known first by the human intellect in the order of origin. In this question, I shall make *five points*.

First, it will be stated where the difficulty in the question resides.

Secondly, the opinion of Scotus with its support will be given.

Thirdly, the teaching of St. Thomas will be given and, at the same time, the opinion of Scotus will be attacked.

Fourthly, the arguments against the statements of St. Thomas will be given and answered.

Fifthly, justice will be done to the principal arguments.

3) *Concerning the first point*, it is to be noted that the universal, which we assert is known directly only by the intellect, has a twofold totality: it is a definable whole and a universal whole. Now these totalities differ in three ways. First, because the definable whole is based on the actuality<sup>6</sup> of the thing, whereas the universal whole is based on a power or potency. Secondly, because the definable whole is ordered to higher universals, if it has them, whereas the universal whole is ordered to lower ones. Thirdly, because the definable whole is naturally prior to the universal whole.

Now, just as the universal itself has a twofold totality, so there is a twofold confused and a twofold distinct knowledge of the universal. The first confused knowledge of the universal is that by which it is known as a definable whole without being resolved into its definitive parts. The second confused knowledge of the universal is that by which it is known as a universal whole but without joining it with its subjective parts. The first distinct knowledge of the universal is that by which it is known as a defined whole by resolving it into the singular parts of the definition; and this corresponds to the first confused knowledge of the universal. The second distinct knowledge of the universal is that by which it is known as a universal whole by joining it with its subjective parts; and this corresponds to the second confused knowledge of the universal.

<sup>6</sup> The Laurent edition of Cajetan's commentary (p. 2, line 18 from bottom) has *actualitatem*. The Paris edi-

tion of Cajetan's commentary (p. 372, line 14 from bottom) has *actualitates*.

These two confused knowledges, however, differ in three ways. First, because the first confused knowledge of the universal views the object as a definable whole, while the second views it as a universal whole. Secondly, because the first confused knowledge allows within itself no distinct knowledge of the same object, whereas the second confused knowledge allows within itself a distinct knowledge of the same object as a definable whole, inasmuch as such knowledge is not opposed to it. Similarly, I do not know animal in its species and know what an animal is. Thirdly, because the first confused knowledge is naturally prior to the second confused knowledge. Because of these differences, I advance here a difference in wording; I shall refer to the first as an actual confused knowledge, and to the second as virtually confused knowledge. And rightly so, for in the first knowledge what is actually found in the object is known confusedly, and in the second, what is virtually included in the object is known confusedly.

The two distinct knowledges also differ in three ways. First, because the first distinct knowledge penetrates the thing as a definable whole, and the second as a universal whole. Secondly, because the first distinct knowledge allows within itself a virtual confused knowledge of the same object inasmuch as such knowledge is not opposed to it, while the second does not, for with the knowledge of animal with its species there cannot remain ignorance of animal in itself. From this difference follows the third, that the second distinct knowledge bears within itself the first, but not conversely. Because of these differences, I use here a difference in wording: I shall refer to the first distinct knowledge as an actual distinct knowledge; to the second as a virtual distinct knowledge. And with good reason, for the first penetrates the thing according to what is actually found in it; while the second knows the thing according to what is virtually included in it.

From what has been said, I shall first formulate definitions of these four knowledges, then the interordering of the same four. Now, because a privation is known and defined through what is positive (*per suum habitum*), we must begin from what is distinct and say that actual distinct knowledge is that which penetrates what is actually found in the object. Actual confused knowledge is that which knows what is actually found in the object without penetrating it. Virtual distinct knowledge is that which penetrates the object according to what is virtually included in it. Virtual confused knowledge is that which does not perfectly know the object according to what is virtually in it.

Now here are the interorderings of these knowledges. The first order is that of actual confused knowledges; the second, of virtual confused knowledges; the third, of actual distinct knowledges; and the fourth, of virtual distinct knowledges. In the first order, there is the knowledge

by which substance is known in itself without, however, penetrating it; and the knowledge by which body is known as body,<sup>7</sup> and the animated body as animated, and the animal as animal, and man as man; always, however, without penetrating, that is, without having the formal notion (*ratio*) clarified and resolved. In the third order are knowledges which are opposed to the one just mentioned, namely, that by which substance, and body, and animal, and man are known quidditatively. In the second order are knowledges in which substance, body, animated body and animal are known without composing them with their subjective parts. In the fourth order are knowledges which are opposed to these latter, namely, that in which substance now with its inferiors is composed in perfect knowledge into a universal whole, namely, with its parts; and similarly, that in which body with its subjective parts is penetrated, and so for the rest.

Now since, as is clear from what has been said, the order of actual confused knowledge is prior in origin to the other knowledges, and the first known in the order of actual confused knowledge will be the thing known first without qualification. Thus, when we ask, what is the first thing known by the human intellect in the order of origin simply? we do not doubt that it is anything else than what is known first in the order of actual confused knowledge. The issue that stands between Scotus and us, therefore, is whether in the order of actual confused knowledge the first known by way of origin is being (*ens*) or is the ultimate in species (*species specialissima*.) This makes clear the error of Anthony Trombeta<sup>8</sup> who, in his consideration of this point, gives the teaching of St. Thomas from I *parte*, q. 85, a. 3.<sup>9</sup> Now in this text, St. Thomas makes no comparison between actual confused knowledges, which is the whole question here; rather he makes a comparison of actual distinct knowledges with each other. He also compares an actual distinct knowledge of something higher with a virtual distinct knowledge of the same; also he compares confused knowledge of something higher with a virtual distinct knowledge of the same; also he compares actual confused knowledge with an actual distinct knowledge of the same object. This is clear to anyone who reads the text. So for the first point.

4) Concerning the second point, Scotus<sup>10</sup> lays down this conclu-

<sup>7</sup> The Laurent edition (p. 3, line 12 from bottom) has *ut corpus*. In the Paris edition (p. 373, line 15 from bottom), *ut corpus* is omitted.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Trombeta, *Quaestiones Metaphysicales*, In I *Librum Aristotelis*, q. X, fol. 11 ff.; in *Quaestiones Metaphysicales seu Opus in Meta-*

*physicam Aristotelis* (Venetiis: 1500).

<sup>9</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 85, 3, *Resp.*

<sup>10</sup> Scotus, *Commentaria Oxoniensia ad IV Libros Magistri Sententiarum*, I, d. 3, a. 2, n. 22; in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Wadding, (Lyons: 1639), V, Part I, 409.

sion: the first thing known in actual confused knowledge is the ultimate in species, the singular of which first and more efficaciously acts on sense. Scotus proves this conclusion in three ways.

*The first is:* unimpeded natural causes first produce the most perfect effect which they can first produce. This is clear because they act up to the limit of their power; but the agents in the first act of the intellect are unimpeded natural causes; therefore these agents first produce the most perfect effect which they can first produce; but such an effect is none other than the actual confused concept of the ultimate in species; therefore, etc. This last position is proved, because if such a concept, namely the most perfect, were a concept of the more common, it follows that these agents will never produce a concept of an ultimate in species. The consequence holds, for no power can produce an effect more perfect than its most perfect effect; but the concept of an ultimate in species is more perfect than a concept of the more common, just as the whole is of its part.

Anthony Trombeta<sup>11</sup> remarks that this fact is established by a consideration of the following point. Whenever two natural agents are equally present to a properly disposed patient, that which is more actual precedes that which is less actual in acting on the patient; but the objective characteristics (*rationes*) of the ultimate in species and of anything higher are of this sort, namely, that the ultimate in species is the more actual; therefore the ultimate in species produces its effect before the genus does.

*The second reason* is the following. The most universal or metaphysical terms are the last actually known in the order of learning. This is clear from Avicenna who says that metaphysics is the last in the order of learning;<sup>12</sup> but such terms are the most universal; therefore the more universal are not actually known first. Anthony Trombeta remarks that this point is further established because the order of the sciences relative to us is considered from the viewpoint of the order of knowables relative to us. If, therefore, metaphysics is the last relative to us, metaphysical terms will also be the last known relative to us.

*The third reason* is the following. If it were necessary to conceive the more universal before the concept of species, then, supposing that the sense were in act and the intellect were unimpeded, there would be a great interval of time before the intellect knew the species. The consequence holds, for there are many predicates between the superior and the inferior.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Trombeta, *Quaestiones Metaphysicales*, In I *Lib. Aristotelis*, q. X; ed. cit., fol. 11r ff.

<sup>12</sup> Avicenna, *Metaph.*, tr. I, c. 6; ed. cit., fol. 71v.



The fourth, Anthony Trombeta argues the same point in the following way. That which is easier to abstract is known first; but the ultimate in species is the easiest to abstract; therefore the ultimate in species is known first. The major is proved thus: since the intellect does not understand except by abstracting, the way it is related to abstracting is also the way it is related to understanding. The minor is clear, since abstraction is easier from similar than from dissimilar things; but the individuals from which the species is abstracted are more similar than are the species among themselves, from which the genus or any superior is abstracted.

The fifth: that universal is the first known by the intellect whose singular more forcefully acts on the sense; but the singular of the ultimate in species acts on the sense more forcefully than the singular of any higher order; therefore the ultimate in species is first known by the intellect. The major is clear because our intellectual knowledge arises from sense knowledge. The minor is proved in two ways. First, the sense is acted on by the singular, and is therefore most acted on by that which is most singular (according to the topical rule: from the unqualified to the unqualified); but the singular of the ultimate in species is the most singular because it is determined not only by the determination of singularity, but also by that of a determinate nature not further determinable by another nature, which does not befit the individuals of a higher order; therefore, etc. Secondly, the minor is proved thus: the more actual singular more forcefully acts on the sense; but the singular of the ultimate in species is more actual because it is more perfect, since it adds to other singulars; therefore the singular of the ultimate in species acts more forcefully.

The sixth thus: the more composite is known first; but the ultimate in species is more composite than all higher orders; therefore the ultimate in species is known before all the higher orders. The major is from the Commentator.<sup>13</sup> The minor is clear from Porphyry who says that the species flows down from the genus.<sup>14</sup> So for the second point.

5) Concerning the third point,<sup>15</sup> we place two conclusions. The first is: being embodied in an essence able to be sensed<sup>16</sup> is the first thing known in the actual confused knowledge.

<sup>13</sup> Averroes, *In Physicorum*, I, c. 3; in *Opera*, Venetiis, 1550, t. IV, fol. 4v; St. Thomas, *In Physicorum*, I, lect. 1; ed. Leonine, Vol. II, n. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Porphyry, *Isagogen*, c. 2; in *Commentarium in Aristotelem Graeca*, Vol. IV, Part I: *Porphyrii Isagoge et in Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, ed. A. Busse, (Berlin: Reimer, 1887), pp. 28-33.

<sup>15</sup> In the Laurent edition (p. 5), there is no title to this section. In the Paris edition (p. 375), the following title appears. *Conclusio. Ens concretum quidditati sensibili est primum cognitum cognitione actuuli confusa.*

<sup>16</sup> The expression used by Cajetan is the following: *ens concretum quidditati sensibili.*

Before I prove this conclusion, I shall present two points. First, I shall explain the meaning of the term in the subject of the conclusion, namely, I shall explain what it means to say, being embodied in an essence able to be sensed. Secondly, I shall explain a point which this conclusion itself presupposes.

Regarding the first point, note that being can terminate the act of the intellect under three conditions. First, as having that condition which is total abstraction; I do not mean abstraction from singulars, but from species and genera. The second mode, as having that condition which is formal abstraction, which likewise is abstraction from species and genera. The third mode, as having none of these conditions, but abstracted from singulars. In the first mode of terminating the act of the intellect, being does not pertain to our question, because being under this condition is a universal whole, and we are speaking of actual confused knowledge, not virtual knowledge. In the second mode, being is a metaphysical term, and perhaps until now escaped the notice of very learned men. It is in the third mode that being is first known, and it is called being embodied in an essence able to be sensed, because it is not separated by one of the listed abstractions from the specific or generic quiddity.

For a better understanding of this point, note that just as there is a twofold composition, namely, of form with matter, and of the whole with its parts, so also there is a twofold abstraction by the intellect, namely, that by which the formal is abstracted from the material, and that by which the universal is abstracted from its subjective parts. According to the first, quantity is abstracted from sensible matter; in the second, animal is abstracted from an ox or a lion. I call the first one formal abstraction, and the second one total abstraction. For what is abstracted in the first abstraction is as a form of what it is abstracted from, while what is abstracted in the second abstraction is as a universal whole in relation to what it is abstracted from.

These two abstractions differ in a fourfold way.

First, because in formal abstraction, each of the two concepts separately stand as complete, namely, the concept of what is abstracted, and the concept of what it is abstracted from, that is, the formal and the material, so that one concept does not include the other. For a line in so far as it is a line has completely its own definition which does not include sensible matter; and conversely, the sensible matter of a line has completely its own definition which does not include in its definition anything of a line in so far as it is a line. Otherwise, the definitions of natural things would abstract from sensible matter. But in total abstraction, each of the two concepts taken separately does not remain complete so that the one does not include the other; for there is only

one, namely, what is abstracted. For when I abstract animal from man, the concepts of man and animal do not cut themselves off from each other; it is only that the concept of animal does not include the concept of man, for man is not intelligible without animal.

The basis of this difference is that total abstraction takes place by the consideration of some factor which is of the essence (*ratione*) of an inferior, and by removal, that is, by the non-consideration of some factor which is of the essence of the same inferior. For animal is abstracted from man in so far as the intellect considers in man the animal factor and not the rational factor, both of which are included in the essence of man. Formal abstraction, however, does not take place by the consideration of some factor included in the essence of matter, and by the non-consideration of some factor included in the same essence; rather, it takes place by a separation of whatever has the nature (*ratione*) of formal from whatever has the nature of material, and conversely, as the example given clearly shows.

*Secondly*, they differ because distinctness and intelligibility arise through formal abstraction because actuality is abstracted. But in total abstraction, lesser intelligibility arises because the confusion of potentiality is abstracted.

*Thirdly*, they differ because in formal abstraction the more abstract a thing is, the more knowable it is in its nature. In total abstraction the more abstract a thing is, the more knowable it is to us. The basis of this difference is that formal abstraction takes place by a separation from material potentialities, and things of this sort. Total abstraction, on the other hand, takes place by a separation from specific actualities, and the more it abstracts from these actualities, the more potential it is, since the genus virtually includes the inferiors; and to this extent it is less intelligible, since act in itself is more knowable than potency.<sup>17</sup>

*Fourthly*, they differ because the speculative sciences are distinguished in view of the diverse modes of formal abstraction, as is said in VI *Metaph.*,<sup>18</sup> but total abstraction is common to all the sciences. For this reason the objects of metaphysics are not compared to the objects of natural philosophy as a universal whole to its subjective parts, but rather as the formal to the material, as also the objects of mathematics are. For, although the intelligibles of the metaphysical order are more universal than others and can be compared to them as to subjective parts, inasmuch as each kind of abstraction can fit the same thing; nevertheless in so far as they are considered metaphysical-

ly, they are not universal with respect to natural objects, but are forms, and the objects of natural philosophy are their matter. This has been well noted.

It is, therefore, clear how being sometimes has the condition of formal abstraction, namely, when it is taken with precision from other generic and specific factors; and how it sometimes has the condition of total abstraction, namely, when it is considered as a universal whole, virtually including other genera and species. Also, what we intended to show is now clear, namely, how being is embodied in an essence able to be sensed, namely, when it is supported by neither of these abstractions, but is seen in a sensible essence abstracted from singulars but with no separation. Thus, what we mean by the term, being embodied in an essence able to be sensed, is clear.

*What our conclusion presupposes is the following:* being can be known in actual confused knowledge. This is a point which the Scotists deny, holding that being cannot be known in actual confused knowledge, but only in distinct knowledge. Their proof for this is: what is known by an unqualifiedly simple concept cannot be known by actual confused knowledge; being is known by a simple concept; therefore, etc. The major is clear, because actual confused knowledge takes place when the intellect bears on the object according to what is actually included in it, without knowing the resolution into the parts of the essence of the object. But when something is known by an unqualifiedly simple concept, it does not happen that the intellect bears on the object in one respect and not in another, for then the concept of the object would be composed. The minor is clear, since the concept of being cannot be resolved.

To see that our conclusion does not presuppose anything false, and that this argument of the Scotists is insufficient, note well that it is not of the essence of actual distinct knowledge that the object be known by resolving it into the parts of the essence, as is true when being is known distinctly; but its essence consists in this that the intellect penetrate to what is actually found in the object, whether this comes about by a resolution of the object into the parts of its essence, or by a clear intuition, namely, of a simple object. In like manner, it is not of the essence of actual confused knowledge that the intellect know the object in one respect, and not know it in another; it suffices that the intellect actually bear on the object itself and not penetrate to its actuality. Thus, it is of the essence of actual confused knowledge that the intellect bear on the object according to what is actually in it, without penetrating to that. However, whether this<sup>19</sup> comes about because the ob-

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX (Θ), 8, 1050a 4. See St. Thomas, *In Metaphysicorum*, IX, lect. 8; ed. Cathala, n. 1856. <sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI (E), 1, 1025b-1026a 32; St. Thomas, *In VI Metaph.*, lect. 1, n. 1144 ff.

<sup>19</sup> The Laurent edition (p. 8, line 17) line 22 from bottom) has *id.* has *hoc*. The Paris edition (p. 376,

ject is resolvable into many concepts, or from some other reason, is accidental to actual confused knowledge. Therefore the reasoning of Scotus lays down a false major and a proof erring by the fallacy of the consequent, from an inferior to its superior negatively, from the negation of one mode of confused knowledge to the negation of every mode.

Now that this is the situation, and that being or anything which is unqualifiedly simple can be known in actual confused knowledge; I prove thus. Whenever the intellect bears on being, actually conceiving it, without distinguishing being from substance and accident, it has an actual confused knowledge of being; but the intellects of many men operate in this way; therefore, etc. The major is made clear in this way. When the intellect actually bears on being, and yet does not separate the proper notion of being from the proper notions of substance and accident, it has either a confused or a distinct knowledge. But such knowledge is not distinct, because the inseparable effect of distinct knowledge is to know the difference of this object from others. Therefore the knowledge is confused; and since it was given that the knowledge is actual, it follows that it must be confused actual knowledge.

Experience substantiates the minor, for we observe that men have been engaged in studies for many years and yet do not distinguish the proper notion of being from substance and accident. But to say that these men have no knowledge of an actual concept of being is fatuous and against common sense, for they consider being according to what it actually contains in itself and they attain the whole. But because they do not understand it as a whole, they therefore do not know it as separated from substance and accident. It remains, therefore, that what was presupposed in our conclusion is true, and that it is false to say that being can be known in actual distinct knowledge only.

*It now remains to prove the first part of our conclusion* from St. Thomas and Avicenna who say that being is that which is first imprinted in our intellect. This conclusion is proved in the following way. The most imperfect concept of all is the first by way of origin; but the actual confused concept of being is the most imperfect of all concepts; therefore it is the first by way of origin. The major is clear because the more imperfect is prior by way of generation.<sup>20</sup> The minor is also evident because every other concept, since it adds to the concept of being, is more perfect than it, just as the whole is of its part.

On this point, Anthony Trombeta remarks that because the perfection of a concept is twofold, namely, the objective perfection and the perfection of clearness; that concept is more perfect objectively which has an object that is more perfect positively, and that concept is more

perfect in clarity which has an object that includes less within it, as Aristotle says.<sup>21</sup> Wherefore, if there is question in the argument of the objective perfection of a concept, the major is false and the minor is true; if there is question of the perfection of the clarity, the major is true and the minor is false.

He is wrong, and I will prove that the minor is true when speaking of the perfection of clearness, so that relative to clarity the actual confused concept of being is the most imperfect. That concept is the most unclear of all when an intellect with it is farther from the knowledge of all other things than with any other concept; but the actual confused concept of being is of this sort, namely, that the intellect having it is farther from the knowledge of other things than one having any other concept; therefore the actual confused concept of being is the most unclear of all.

The major is clear, for clarity of a concept, since it is a proper perfection of the intellect, puts the intellect closer to a knowledge of other things in proportion to the clarity, especially since the intellect naturally proceeds from what is evident to what is not. The minor is proved in the following way. Whenever there are two concepts, one of which actually includes the other, but not conversely, the intellect having the one that actually includes the other is more immediately disposed to know the object of that other than the other way around; but this is the way the concept of being is related to other concepts, that it does not include them, but they actually include it; therefore when the intellect has the concept of being, it is further from the knowledge of other things than when it has any other concept.

This point is confirmed by Scotus himself, who says that part of a nature (*rationis*) actually understood is so close to the intellect that it cannot be closer. But the point brought in from *prohem. Metaph.*,<sup>22</sup> that clarity pertains to an object actually containing fewer factors, is not at issue here, since that perfection (*certitudo*) is an objective perfection and the point at issue here is the clarity that plays a role for the intellect. It is from such evident and clear concepts that the intellect proceeds to what is not evident and not clear to it.

Secondly, the same conclusion is proved thus. The knowledge of first principles is the first complex knowledge; therefore the knowledge of being is the first incomplex knowledge. The antecedent is clear because the knowledge which proceeds from nature ought to precede the knowledge which proceeds from diligent effort, both because they are known to all, even the knowledges which proceed in childhood, and

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX (Θ), 8, lect. 8, n. 1856.  
1050a 5; St. Thomas, *In IX Metaph.*

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I (A), 1, 981a 1-10. <sup>22</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I (A), 2, 982a 25-30.

because they are presupposed in learning, as held in I *Poster*.<sup>23</sup> The consequence is proved in the following way. Since being is that term from which a first principle is acquired, and if being were not the first thing known, but something else was, there could then be another complex act by the intellect, while as yet there was no knowledge of a principle present, etc.

Against the position of Scotus, I argue thus. The ultimate in species is not the most confused object simply; therefore the actual confused knowledge of it is not the first simply, and consequently it is not the first thing known. The consequence holds owing to the stand of the adversary, that therefore the ultimate in species is the first thing known because it is the most confused. The antecedent is proved thus: genus is more confused than species; therefore species is not the most confused. Here the consequence is known. The antecedent I prove in this way. What contains more is the more confused; but genus contains more than does the species, for animal contains more than man; therefore, etc.

They answer that there are two kinds of containing: one actual, one potential; and that that is more confused which contains many actually, not potentially. Now a genus contains many in potency, but the species contains many in act. Therefore the species is more confused.

On the contrary. What contains many without order is more confused than what contains many with order; but what contains many actually contains them as ordered, for the species contains the definitive parts as ordered; but what contains them potentially contains them without order; therefore that which contains many potentially is the more confused.

Anthony Trombeta answers that genus contains species as ordered, and not without order, in that it does not relate to them except by mediating differences, which are highly ordered.

On the contrary. Genus contains species and differences not in act but in potency, as Porphyry says;<sup>24</sup> and therefore it contains them indistinctly. The consequence holds, since it is act which distinguishes;<sup>25</sup> then the ultimate contains indistinctly, and therefore not as ordered. The consequence holds because an order without distinction is not imaginable (even with the liberty of making one up). But what Anthony says, namely, that genus does not relate to species except by ordered mediating differences, is no solution, because genus contains not only the species, but also contains without order the differences which are ordered within themselves, as was proved.

<sup>23</sup> Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I, 1, 71a 17.

<sup>24</sup> Porphyry, *Isagogen*, c. 6; *ed. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII (Z), 13, 1039a 7; St. Thomas, *In VII Metaph.*, lect. 13, nn. 1588-1589.

We notice here that confusion is not a result of containing many, as the Scotists imagine, for in that case a universal would be the most confused; rather, it is a result of containing many without order, whence the proverb, where plurality is without order, there is confusion, etc.

*Our second conclusion is this.* Among actual confused concepts of quidditative predicates, there is no essential order of origin. Here is the proof. When there are concepts essentially ordered in the order of origin, it is impossible to produce the concepts of the extremes without producing the concepts of intermediaries. This point is clear, otherwise there would be no essential order of origin among them. But we do, in fact, have actual confused concepts of the extremes without concepts of the intermediaries; therefore among them there is no essential order of origin. Experience makes the minor clear, for we are aware that we conceive man and substance, and yet we are ignorant of the intermediaries not only as distinct, but even as confused, for we lack the proper concepts of them by which the keenness of the intellect might be directed to them, not merely that we do not know the resolution of them into definitive parts. Now I have advanced this argument alone because it is convincing to me. From it the error of the Scotists, who say that there is an essential order among confused concepts, is manifest, for they cannot answer this argument.

But immediately against this argument the following objection arises. Among actual confused concepts of a superior and an inferior, there is no essential order of origin; therefore the concept of the ultimate in species, just as the concept of being, can be the first concept generated. This is against the first conclusion. The consequence holds because a non-essential order is not necessary and can be varied.

In response to this, I answer by denying the consequence. For, although there is no essential order among all confused concepts, there is, nevertheless, such an order between the concept of being and any other concept. Nor is this a matter of preference, for the concept of being is a kind of general form of the intellect, just as the form of corporeity is a general form of matter. Thus, as between the form of corporeity and other forms there is an essential order, but not among these latter forms in themselves, so also there is an essential order between the concept of being and other concepts, but not among other concepts in themselves. After the concept of being, anything else can be conceived, whether it be substance, accident, species, or genus. There is also a concept of being in a sense natural to the intellect, just as the knowledge of a first principle; for as soon as being is presented it is conceived by all. The concept of being must, therefore, be essentially prior to other concepts, just as universally a natural act is prior to those

which are wholly from the outside. But a similar reason does not hold for other concepts among themselves. So for the third point.

6) *Concerning the fourth point*, because Anthony Trombeta<sup>26</sup> attacks certain statements of the Holy Doctor in *I parte*,<sup>27</sup> treating of the order of intellectual knowledge according to the doctrine of the Peripatetics, I shall state his attacks and offer a solution. *There are five statements* he argues against. First, that the intellect knows universals and knows first the most universal. Second, that the human intellect proceeds from potency to act. Third, that the knowledge of things in the universal is incomplete knowledge. Fourth, that the knowledge in the universal is knowledge in a qualified sense, and in potency. Fifth, that the senses in passing from potency to act know the more common before they know the less common.

*Against the first statement*, he argues in the following way. St. Thomas holds that whatever is in a thing and from the nature of that thing is singular; to which we add another proposition, namely, that which precedes the act of knowing is real. Then this argument: whatever is in a thing is singular; but what is known by the first act of knowledge is in the thing; therefore what is known by the first act of knowledge is singular; therefore the more universal cannot be known. The major is from St. Thomas. The minor is clear owing to the second proposition, which is proved in four ways. (1) A being of reason is posterior to the act of comparison made by the intellect. (2) Such an object is the cause of a real being, namely, of the first act of knowing. (3) Such a first act is related to the object by a real relation, which is impossible if not related to a real term. (4) Such a first act depends on the object as a measure; whereas a real being does not depend on a being of reason.

To this I answer that the major can be understood in two ways. First, whatever is in a thing is singular, that is, whatever is in a thing is singularity; and this is false, for there is in Socrates not only singularity, but humanity and animality. In the second way, whatever is in a thing is singular, that is, whatever is in a thing has singularized being (*esse*); and this is true according to the Peripatetic doctrine. Thus, if an argumentation must have three terms, the major understood in the first sense is false. I concede the major taken in the second sense, for the being which is first known has no real being except in singulars. As to the arguments he adds, what truth they contain will be clear in what follows.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony Trombeta, *Quaestiones Metaphysicales*, In *I Lib. Aristotelis*, q. X; *ed. cit.*, fol. 11r ff.

<sup>27</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 85, 3, *Resp.*

*Against the second statement*, namely, that the human intellect proceeds from potency to act, Anthony argues: St. Thomas assumes that proposition to prove this conclusion, namely, that the more universal is known first. But this proposition either concludes nothing to the point or it itself is simply false. If St. Thomas means that the intellect knows something potentially before it knows actually, the proposition is true, but not to the point. I concede that the intellect knows the ultimate in species potentially before it knows it actually, but this does not mean<sup>28</sup> that the intellect knows the genus before it knows the species. If, however, St. Thomas means that the intellect proceeds from potency to act, that is, from imperfect to perfect knowledge, that is not universally true, as is clear when we proceed from a knowledge of the premises to a knowledge of the conclusion, and from a knowledge of the cause to a knowledge of the effect. From this it is clear that this too is false, namely, that the intellect comes to an imperfect act before it comes to a perfect one. For the illuminated air is not illuminated by the sun first imperfectly and then perfectly; in like manner, the intellect produces an act before it produces a habit, and yet an act is more perfect than a habit. Thus, to show the truth of the proposition in question, it is necessary to show an essential order of the incomplete<sup>29</sup> act to the complete act.

To this argument I answer that St. Thomas understands that proposition in neither of these ways exactly, but in this way. The intellect going from potency to the ultimately perfect act will have passed through many intermediate acts and arrives at an imperfect act before a perfect one. This proposition, namely, that what is prior in generation is more imperfect is held in *VIII Phys.*,<sup>30</sup> and in *IX Metaph.*,<sup>31</sup> and in *libro II de Partibus animalium*.<sup>32</sup> Under that major, therefore, let us subsume this minor, namely, that the human intellect going from potency to its ultimately perfect act, for example, the distinct knowledge of the ultimate in species, will have passed through many intermediate acts; therefore it comes to an imperfect act before it comes to a perfect one.

The minor is evident because the knowledge of genus is conceded by all to be an intermediate act. The argument concludes, therefore, we know distinctly the more universal before the less universal. This

<sup>28</sup> The Laurent edition (p. 12, lines 7 and 8) has *sed ex hoc non habetur quod*. The Paris edition (p. 381, line 5) has *sed hoc non habet quod*.

<sup>29</sup> There is an obvious misprint in the text: *ncompleti* should read *incompleti*.

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII, 7, 261a 13;

St. Thomas, *In VIII Phys.*, lect. 14, n. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX (Θ), 8, 1050a 4; St. Thomas, *In IX Metaph.*, lect. 8, n. 1856.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, II, 1, 646a 24.

is precisely the conclusion blessed Thomas intended. But Anthony is deceived. He believed that St. Thomas was speaking of actual confused knowledge when, as was said above, he was speaking of the virtual confused knowledge of the species itself and the distinct knowledge of species and genus. For in that place the actual distinct knowledge of the genus is called confused knowledge of the genus itself and the species, because the species and the virtual content of the genus are known confusedly. In reply to what Anthony adds against this proposition, that the intellect proceeds from imperfect to perfect knowledge, I say that this proposition is universally true if it is understood.

To understand this point and to solve all replies, observe first that the progression of nature and of the intellect is twofold. For one is in the order of generation alone, and the other is in the order of generation and of efficient or final causality. The first process is had when there is between the terms and the media only a priority and a posteriority according to generation. The second when there is over and beyond that priority a priority of efficient or final causality.

Observe, secondly, that one thing can be more perfect than another in two ways, namely, simply and in a qualified sense. It happens that a thing is simply, that is in its nature, more perfect than another, and yet is less perfect than it under some condition; for example, a material substance is simply more perfect than an accident, and yet is more imperfect in a qualified sense, inasmuch as it is actuated by an accident. St. Thomas says, therefore, that in the progression of generation alone both nature and intellect always proceed from the imperfect simply to the perfect simply, inasmuch as the order of generation looks to the genus of material cause, as animal is generated before man, as is said in *libro de Animalibus*.<sup>33</sup> But in the second progression, there is progress from the imperfect, not simply, but in a qualified sense to the more perfect in a qualified sense; for example, substance is prior to accident in the order of generation and beyond this is prior in the order of final causality, inasmuch as substance is the end of accident, and sometimes the agent. It is clear that substance is in a qualified sense more imperfect than accident, in so far as it is in potency with respect to it, and participates in material causality.

In reply to the first of his objections, I answer that the premises are not prior to the conclusion in the order of generation alone, but also in the order of efficient causality, as is said in other words in II *Phys.*<sup>34</sup> (as St. Thomas testifies, commenting on this text),<sup>35</sup> and can be derived

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, II, 3, 736b 2; St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 118, 2, ad 2.

<sup>34</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 2, 195a 15.

<sup>35</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Phys.*, lect. 5, n. 8.

from I *Poster.*<sup>36</sup> It suffices, therefore, to say that the knowledge of the premises is more imperfect in a qualified sense, whence also they are placed in the genus of material cause.<sup>37</sup>

I say the same regarding the passage from the knowledge of the cause to the knowledge of the effect. The example of illuminated air is not to the point, for illumination is not successive, whereas the concept of genus and the concept of species succeed each other. Also it is false that the act which precedes the habit is simply more perfect, although this is true of an act elicited by a habit, but such an act is posterior to the habit. Also, the essential order of a generic concept to a specific concept in distinct knowledge is sufficiently clear from what has been said; thus it will not be necessary to elaborate it in another manner.

*Against the third statement*, namely, that knowledge in the universal is incomplete knowledge, Anthony argues in the following way. Universal demonstration is stronger than particular demonstration; therefore knowledge in the universal, which is acquired through universal demonstration, is stronger than particular knowledge.

I answer that the argument errs through the fallacy of equivocation of the term *universal*. Aristotle calls universal demonstration one in which a property is known of its proper subject, and this for both generic and specific properties. And he wants to say that the knowledge which we acquire by demonstrating a property of its first subject is stronger than the knowledge which we acquire by demonstrating a property of the subjective part of the first subject. Now we say that to know man in animal is to know man more imperfectly than to know man in himself; and this is what we mean by the knowledge in the universal. It is manifest, therefore, to everyone with talent that what we say is not contrary to Aristotle. For it is one thing to say that A is known in the universal, and another to say that A is demonstrated by universal demonstration. In the first way, A is not known in itself, but in its superior; while in the second way, A in itself is known in its own being (*esse*) in the first subject.

*Against the fourth statement.* It is that the knowledge in the universal is knowledge in a qualified sense, and is in potency; because in the universal itself particulars are known in some confused way. From this we infer: therefore knowledge in the universal is confused knowledge. On the contrary, there is no proof where there is a fallacy of equivocation; but this argument is such; therefore, etc. The minor is explained thus: it is one thing to speak of the actual knowledge of an

<sup>36</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Posteriorum Analyticorum*, I, lect. 2; ed. Marietti, nn. 13-21.

<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 3, 195a 15;

*Metaphysics*, V (Δ), 2, 1013b 16; St. Thomas, *In V Metaph.*, lect. 3, n. 778.

object, and another to speak of the virtual knowledge of what is included in the object. For, although the virtual knowledge of the particulars in the universal is confused, the actual knowledge of the universal itself is distinct knowledge. And because confused knowledge is consequent upon factors actually confused in the object, when knowledge be specied by the object and by factors intrinsic to the object, it should not be called confused knowledge, but distinct.

To this argument, I answer that he who wants to make the distinct knowledge of animal as a definable whole be the confused knowledge of animal as a universal whole, and hence a confused knowledge of the species, does not understand St. Thomas. And therefore there is no equivocation present. We admit that the knowledge in which the intellect actually bears on animal itself as a universal and not on its species, is a confused knowledge of animal, as a universal whole is, and not only of its species, as St. Thomas expressly says in that place. Whence it happens that animal can be known distinctly and confusedly at the same time in diverse ways, as was said above. Nor does it follow that if these two knowledges occur at the same time, that they are the same when they are also distinguished, for example, when actually and virtually animal is known distinctly. But what he adds, that such knowledge should not be called confused, is shown to be false, because actual confused knowledge is less than potential. His last addition, that knowledge is specified by an object and by what is intrinsic to the object, is not to the point. Confused and distinct knowledge are not species of knowledge; if they were, confused and actual knowledge of the same object would not be of the same species, and thus knowledge would not be specified by an object. Anthony's position, therefore, implies a contradiction.

Against the fifth statement, namely, that the senses, in passing from potency to act, know the more common before they know the less common, he argues in the following way. Sense knows nothing but the singular; therefore it does not know the more common first. But suppose you say that sense does not know the more common in itself, but knows first the more common singular. The argument against this is: either sense knows the more common singular so that singularity will be the formality (*ratio*) of knowing, or [it knows the more common singular] so that the common nature will be the formality of knowing. The first alternative cannot be maintained, as is clear in itself; and Thomists cannot hold the second, for this would mean that the common nature would be the formality of moving a sense.

Against this last point he argues thus. That is not the formality of moving which is identical in reality and in reason to what the formality of moving is repugnant to; but the common nature is identified in

reality and in reason with singularity which the formality of moving is repugnant to; therefore, etc. The proof of the minor: the nature and the singular are not really distinguished, not by the nature of the real, as you say, nor by reason. We prove this thus. A distinction of reason follows an act of the intellect; but in what is prior there is no act of the intellect. This point is confirmed in the following way. A real act does not depend upon a being of reason; but sensation is a real act; therefore it does not depend upon a being of reason; but a sensible object, which has in itself a distinction of reason, is a being of reason, or an aggregate of real being and a being of reason; therefore, etc.

The main argument is confirmed by this. Whatever factors are in no way distinct in the thing, if one terminates in some real action, the other will terminate in the same action; but the more common and the less common nature are such; therefore, etc., and this holds granted the due proximity to the sense. The point is confirmed by a second argument. The same sense knows first what the sensible species first represents; but the sensible species, with the due proximity supposed, first represents the singular of the ultimate in species; therefore, etc. The minor is proved thus. The sensible species first represents the object under that formality by which it is impressed upon the sense; but it is impressed by an object under the formality of specific nature, both because this is more actual and perfect and because the sensible species is the natural similitude caused by the object, and represents the nature adequately according to that formality which fits the nature more essentially; therefore the sensible species represents the object under that formality which is more perfect and essential to it, than under that formality which is less essential and less principally belongs to it.

I reply to all this that the response reported there is correct and right. To the attack on it, I say that such a nature, color for example, and not a common nature, that is, common color, is the formality of modifying the sense. As for the proof, I deny the minor for both its parts. Now, according to St. Thomas in *I parte*,<sup>38</sup> nature and singularity are really distinct in material things; and a distinction of reason, though it actually be after sensation, still it comes fundamentally before sensation, and this is sufficient. To his confirming argument, I say first that a sensible object, which has a distinction of reason with a foundation is not a being of reason nor an aggregate of real being and a being of reason; for a distinction of reason with a foundation adds nothing beyond the thing. Secondly, I say that sensation is not caused by a distinction of nature, but by the nature itself conditioned in such a way.

<sup>38</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 3, *Resp.*

Thus, granted that the distinction in question is a being of reason it still proves nothing; for color does not move the sense in so far as it is distinct from its own singularity, but color<sup>39</sup> in so far as it is color, concerning the essence (*ratio*) of which there is neither a distinction nor a union. To the second confirming argument, I say that the major is false regarding actions which have no real term, such as immanent actions; for one can understand the wisdom of God without understanding His goodness.

As for the other confirming arguments, I bring in first that St. Thomas does not say that the sense always knows first the more common before it knows the less common. These are his words: *And because sense goes from potency to act, as does the intellect, the same order of knowledge exists in the senses, for by sense we first judge the more common before the less common, in reference to both place and time.*<sup>40</sup> These words show only that sense knows first the more common singular in reference to place and time, not that this is always so. Hence, the arguments advanced are not against St. Thomas, even though they do not conclude. For it is false that the sensible species first represents the singular of the ultimate in species; and its proof is also false, namely, that the sensible species is first impressed on the sense by a specific nature. The sensible species is first impressed on the sense by a *per se* primary object of sense; and the ultimate in species is the primary object of no sense, as is clear by running down the list. Wherefore, a visible species is first impressed on the sense by a visible object, inasmuch as it is colored, and not because it is white or black. Nor is this a problem, that whiteness is more actual than color, since this is not sufficient. What is required is the primary object of a power. Nor is his position true, namely, that the ultimately specific nature is more essential to a sensible object than the generic nature. In fact, for this visible object as such, color is more essential than whiteness or blackness. This is evident because when whiteness or blackness is taken away, the object remains visible, whereas the converse is not true. So for the fourth point.

7) *Concerning the fifth point*, I shall now answer in order the arguments advanced.<sup>41</sup>

*The reply to the first argument.* I deny the last premise of this argument, namely, that the most perfect effect which agents involved in intellection can first produce is a specific concept. I say that the most

perfect effect such agents can produce at that time is the concept of being; in fact, that they can produce no other at that time. And when the contrary of this is argued: if such is the case, a specific concept would never be produced, the consequence does not hold. Against the proof for the consequence, I say that no power can produce a more perfect effect than what is simply its most perfect effect; but any power can produce a more perfect effect than the most perfect effect it could produce at some prior time, for that effect is not the most perfect, except in a qualified sense. For example, the generative power of a lion is not up to a more perfect effect than the lion, for such an effect is simply its most perfect effect. But it can produce a more perfect effect than that which it produced in the beginning of action, because that effect was the most perfect it could produce at that time. As for the confirming argument, I say that the minor is false. For an intellect existing in pure potency is not disposed to a specific concept in the same way that it is to the concept of being. This is not owing to some contrary disposition, but to the order of the most general concept to specific ones; just as prime matter, leaving aside all contrary dispositions, is not disposed to specific forms in the same way that it is disposed to the form of corporeity, but must receive first the form of corporeity because of the order of a general form to specific ones. Wherefore we customarily say that it is undisposed privatively, not contrarily.

*The reply to the second argument.* The answer is clear from what has been said. We do not claim that metaphysical terms as such are known first by us, for metaphysical terms are abstractions by a formal abstraction. But we say that what is signified by such a term, being embodied in an essence able to be sensed, is known first.

*The reply to the third argument.* I say that it is not necessary in every act of forming a specific concept always and in each case to form ahead of time a confused concept of being; but it suffices that being be the first known of all things, since in the concept of being all things are virtually conceived. Further, we say that since we do not hold an essential order between confused concepts themselves, there is no necessity for much of a time interval between them.

*The reply to the fourth argument.* I say that, speaking of the abstraction which is at issue here, the ultimate in species is not easier to abstract than being. For in the confused concept of the ultimate in species there is required, and suffices, a twofold abstraction. One by the act of the agent intellect, namely, the separation from singulars; and one by the act of the possible intellect, namely, actually to see the species, and not actually to see the genus. So also for the actual confused concept of being, a twofold abstraction is necessary. The first is abstraction from particulars, which takes place when any species is abstracted

<sup>39</sup> The Laurent edition (p. 16, line 6 from bottom) has *color*. The Paris edition (p. 384, line 13) has *hic color*.

<sup>40</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 85, 3, *Resp.*

<sup>41</sup> The arguments advanced are those given in the second point. See section 4, pp. 42-44.



by the agent intellect; and the other is done by the possible intellect, in that it first conceives being in any quiddity that is first actually presented to it, without conceiving actually what else is in it. Therefore such is this abstraction of being and as easy as the abstraction of the ultimate in species. In fact, this abstraction of being is easier, since it is easier to conceive actually what is prior without conceiving what is posterior, than conversely. It is clear, therefore, that the abstraction to which the argument refers is not necessary for confused knowledge.

*The reply to the fifth argument.* I say that the minor is false. As for its proof, I deny the consequence, because the sense is not moved by the singular in so far as it is singular. That method of arguing according to the topical rule does not hold, unless the predicate belongs to the subject essentially, as St. Thomas holds in III *contra Gentiles*.<sup>42</sup> This is not present in the matter presented, for it is not this color in so far as it is this color that moves the sight, but in so far as it is color.

To the second proof, I answer that the major used in the argument is not universally true, since the colored thing more moves the sight than this black thing, because it acts on the sense from a greater distance. And with a corporeal agent, to the extent that it acts on the more distant, the more efficacious it appears. Secondly, I say that many imperfect singulars more efficaciously move the sense than one more actual and more perfect singular. And, because all singulars are singulars of being, the cogitative power of a child, in whom new knowledge ought to arise, is moved more efficaciously by the singulars of being than by the singulars of this species. And, since the intellect receives the universal from many singulars, as is said in I *Post*.<sup>43</sup> and in *prohemio Metaph.*,<sup>44</sup> it therefore knows being before species. On this basis I reply to the argument that, other things being equal, the major is true, but not when there is such a preponderant discrepancy as occurs in the argument; for the greater number of the singulars of being outweighs by far the lesser number of the singulars of a species, just as a thousand weak men can pull more than ten strong men.

*The reply to the sixth argument.* I say that the major is simply<sup>45</sup> false. Regarding the text of the Philosopher, I say first that the text the Commentator uses is corrupt, for it should read *confused*, not *composite*. In order to salvage the words of the Commentator, I say secondly, that the composite is more knowable than its components as such, but not absolutely. Thus, I know man confusedly before I know his definitive parts as such; yet absolutely, I know the more universal

<sup>42</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, III, 139.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I, 31, 88a 2.

<sup>44</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I (A), 2, 982a 21-22.

<sup>45</sup> *Simpliciter* in the text should read *simpliciter*.

first. The truth of the minor is clear from what has been said, and receives the approbation of Avicenna.

8) Then St. Thomas, showing the difficulty of the matter to be treated, draws the attention of the reader by proposing three points: what is signified by the terms *essence* and *being*; how they are found differently in diverse things; how they are related to logical intentions. The difficulty of these points is, as the diversity of opinion testifies, no small one; for it is the most universal which is the most difficult to understand, as is said in I *Metaph*.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding this text, note well, that just as the what-it-is of a thing is the quiddity of a thing, so also the what-it-is of a term is the quiddity of a term. Now a term, since it is essentially a sign of the impressions which are objectively in the soul, as is said in I *Perihermenias*,<sup>47</sup> has no other quiddity except to be the sign of some thing understood or thought. Now a sign, as such, is relative to what is signified. Whence, to know the what-it-is of a term is nothing else than to know to what such a term has the relation of sign to signified. Such knowledge can be acquired through the accidentals of the thing signified, through the common and the essential characteristics of the thing, through nods, and in any other way. For example, if we ask a Greek the what-it-is of the term *anthropos*, and he points out a man with his finger, we now understand the what-it-is of the term, and similarly in other cases. But if we ask about the what-it-is of a thing, it is necessary to point out what belongs to the thing signified in the first mode of adequate per-seity. And this is the essential difference between the what-it-is of a term and of a thing; that the what-it-is of a term is the relation of a term to the thing signified; but the what-it-is of a thing is the essence of the thing related, or signified. From this difference follow all the others which we usually give. For example, that the what-it-is of a term may pertain to complex non-beings, and may be acquired through what is accidental, common, extraneous; but the what-it-is of a thing pertains to incomplex beings, and is acquired through what is proper and essential. The reason is that the relation of a term can terminate in things which are complex and do not exist in nature, and can be made clear through accidental characteristics, and the like; but the essence of a thing cannot be had except through the essential properties when there is question of incomplex beings.

Now we ought to get our knowledge of the simple from the composite and arrive at our knowledge of what is prior from what is posterior, so that, beginning with easier things, learning

<sup>46</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I (A), 2, 982a 23; St. Thomas, *In I Metaph.*, lect. 2, nn. 45-46.

<sup>47</sup> Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, ch. 1, 16a 3; St. Thomas, *In Perihermenias*, I, lect. 2; ed. Marietti, n. 12.

may be more suitable. For this reason we ought to proceed from the meaning of being to the meaning of essence.

In this third part of the introduction, St. Thomas prepares the reader to learn, proposing the method of procedure by means of this conclusion: we must proceed from being to essence. This he proves in two ways. First, we must proceed to what is simple from what is composite; but being stands as the composite, and essence as the simple; therefore we must proceed from being to essence. Second, we must proceed from what is posterior to what is prior; but being is posterior to essence; therefore we must proceed from being to essence. The proof of the major in both arguments lies in the fact that we must begin with what is easier known; but what is composite and posterior is easier for us than what is simple.

Regarding the minor of the first argument, note that being, as will be explained later, signifies that which has existence (*esse*), and that which has existence (*esse*) includes essence in it. Essence, on the other hand, signifies what the definition means, as will be explained, and does not say either existence (*esse*) or non-existence (*non esse*). Being, therefore, is so related to essence that it includes in itself both, namely, essence and existence. Essence, however, is only one of the two factors, and being is therefore called composite in respect to essence.

Regarding the major of the second argument, note that when we must proceed from what is posterior, we mean from what is posterior in nature, but prior to us; for, as is said in I *Phys.*,<sup>48</sup> the natural method of procedure for us is from what is more knowable to us to the less known things of nature. The minor of the second argument is proved from the fact that the composite is posterior to its components, and being, as was said, is composite in respect to essence.

<sup>48</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, I, 1, 184a 16; St. Thomas, *In I Phys.*, lect. 1, n. 6.

## CHAPTER I<sup>1</sup>

It should be known that being in itself is spoken of in two ways, as the Philosopher says in V *Metaph.*<sup>2</sup> In one way it is divided into the ten categories; in the other it signifies the truth of propositions. The difference between these two is that in the second way everything can be called being about which an affirmative proposition can be formed, even though it posit nothing in reality. In this way, even privations and negations are called beings, for we say that affirmation is opposed to negation, and that blindness is in the eye. But in the first way, nothing can be called being unless it posits something in reality. Thus, according to the first way, blindness and the like are not beings. Therefore, the term *essence* is not taken from being in the second sense. For in this sense some things which do not have an essence are called beings, as is evident in privations. But essence is taken from being in the first sense. Thus the Commentator says in the same place<sup>3</sup> that being in the first sense of the word is what signifies the substance of a thing.

9) *Here begins the treatise, which is divided into two parts.* In the first part is explained what is signified by the name *Being* and *Essence*; in the second, how essence is found differently in diverse things. The first part of the treatise consists of one chapter; and the second of six. Thus the whole treatise is made up of seven chapters. The first chapter, which we are now considering, has three parts. In the first is explained what is signified by the term *Being*. In the second, what is signified by the term *Essence*. And in the third, the different terms for essence itself are designated.

According to this division, he first points out that being is spoken of in two ways. First, as it is divided into the ten genera. Secondly, as it signifies the truth of propositions, in the manner in which Aristotle explains.<sup>4</sup> St. Thomas spoke of being in itself (*per se*) to distinguish it from being *per accidens*, which is the union of beings from diverse genera, for example, a white man, as you find in V *Metaph.*<sup>5</sup> He indicates that being in the first sense differs in a threefold way from being in the second sense. First, because being in the first sense is predicated only of things existing in the ten genera; but in the second sense being is predicated of anything that can be the subject of an affirmative proposition. Secondly, they differ because being in the first sense is that

<sup>1</sup> The Laurent edition (p. 21) has no title to Chapter I. The Paris edition (p. 387) has the following title to Chapter I. *Entis et Essentiae nomine quidnam significetur ostendit. Nomina item varia ponit, quae essentiam significant.*

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V (Δ), 7,

1017a 22-35; St. Thomas, *In V Metaph.*, lect. 9, n. 889.

<sup>3</sup> Averroes, *In Metaphysicorum*, V, com. 14; *ed. cit.*, t. VIII, fol. 55v.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V (Δ), 7, 1017a 22-35.

<sup>5</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *In V Metaph.*, lect. 9, n. 889.