

- 1 Thomas Aquinas, In I Sent. 19.5.1: Whether truth is the essence of a thing.
2 Thus we proceed to the first. 1. It seems that truth is the same as the essence of a thing.
3 For Augustine says, book II of the Soliloquia (V col. 889, t.I) that, “the true is what which
4 is.” And by others things it is said that the true is the indivision of being and of that which
5 (verum est indivisio esse et ejus quod est). Therefore any given thing is said to be true
6 insofar as it has being (esse). But being (esse) is the act of an essence. Therefore since
7 each thing is formally true by truth, it seems that truth and essence are completely the
8 same.
9
- 10 2. Furthermore, whatever things differ in reality or in notion (re vel ratione) [are such
11 that] one of them can be understood without the other. Whence also according to
12 Boethius, in the De hebdomadibus (c. 1312, t.II), God can be understood without his
13 goodness being understood [in the same notion]. But the essence of a thing cannot be
14 understood without truth. Therefore the essence of a thing and truth do not differ either in
15 reality or in notion.
16
- 17 3. Again, whatever differs in notion from a being (secundum rationem ab ente) is related
18 [to a being] on the basis of an addition to [a being]. But what is related on the basis of an
19 addition to something restricts and determines that thing, just as human is related to
20 animal. Since, therefore, the true does not restrict a being (ens), because the true and a
21 being are convertible, it seems that truth differs from essence neither in reality nor in
22 notion.
23
- 24 4. Furthermore, Anselm, in De veritate ch. xi (col. 480, t.I), says that truth is a rectitude
25 perceptible by the mind alone. It is agreed, however, that he speaks metaphorically of
26 rectitude because rectitude properly said is an attribute of what is continuous. But
27 goodness and justice according to their proper notion are such that they are a rectitude
28 perceptible by the mind alone. Therefore it seems that truth is the same as goodness and
29 justice in reality and in notion.
30
- 31 5. On the other hand, it is possible to say something true both about a being and about a
32 non-being. But non-beings do not have essence. Since, therefore, every true thing is true
33 by truth, it seems that truth is not the same as essence.
34
- 35 6. Furthermore, truth is perceptible by the mind alone, as it evident in Anselm. But what
36 is perceptible by the mind alone is not in sensible things, but only in intelligible things.
37 But essence is in each. Therefore essence and truth are not the same.
38
- 39 7. Again, truth and falsity exist only in complex things, because a singular thing from
40 among things (singulum incomplexorum) which are incomplex, is neither true nor false.
41 But essence is among incomplex things. Therefore it is not the same as truth.
42
- 43 8. Again, falsity is opposed to truth. But it does happen that falsity is found in beings, as
44 we speak of false gold. But a non-being is not said of a being. Therefore the false is not
45 the same as a non-being; therefore neither is truth the same as essence. [This is] because,
46 if contrary is not predicated of contrary as the same, neither is opposite of opposite.
47
- 48 SOLUTION. I respond that it should be said that there is found a threefold diversity
49 among things which are signified by names. For there are some which are outside the
50 soul according to their whole and complete being; of this sort are complete beings such as
51 a human or a stone. There are some, however, that have nothing outside the soul, such as

52 | dreams and the imagination of a chimera. And there are some that have a foundation in
53 | reality outside the soul, but the completion of their notion with respect to that which is
54 | formal [in it] is in virtue of an operation of the soul, as is clear in [the case of] the
55 | universal. For humanity is something in reality, yet it does not have there the notion of a
56 | universal, since there is no humanity common to many outside the soul. But as it is taken
57 | in the intellect, an intention is adjoined to it through the operation of the intellect
58 | according to which [intention] it is called a species. It is similarly the case concerning
59 | time which has a foundation in motion, namely the prior and the posterior in motion
60 | itself. But with respect to that which is formal in time, namely numbering, it is complete
61 | through the operation of the intellect numbering. I say likewise concerning truth that it
62 | has a foundation in reality but its notion (ratio ejus) is completed through the action of the
63 | intellect, namely when [the notion] is apprehended in the way in which it exists.

64 | Hence the Philosopher says (Metaph. VI text 8) that the true and the false are in
65 | the soul, but the good and the bad are in things. Since, however, there is in a thing its
66 | quiddity and its being, truth is founded in the being of a thing more than in the quiddity,
67 | as also the name 'a being' is imposed from 'to be' (nomen entis ab esse imponitur). And
68 | in the very operation of the intellect receiving through a certain likeness of [the thing]
69 | being of the thing as it is, a relation of adequation (conformity: adequationis) is
70 | completed in which the notion of truth consists. Hence I say that the very being of a thing
71 | is the cause of truth according as it is in the cognition of the intellect. (dico, quod ipsum
72 | esse rei est causa veritatis, secundum quod est in cognitione intellectus.) But
73 | nevertheless the notion of truth is found in the intellect in a primary way rather than in
74 | the thing. [It is just] as the hot and the cold and the other causes of health are the cause of
75 | the health which is in the animal and nevertheless the animal is said to be healthy
76 | primarily and the signs of health and the cause of health are called healthy by analogy to
77 | the health which is said of the animal. Hence I say that the true is said of truth in the
78 | intellect primarily and it is said of a proposition insofar as it is a sign of that truth; but it is
79 | said of a thing it is said insofar as it is a cause. Hence a thing is said to be true which is
80 | naturally constituted of itself to cause a true apprehension in regard to its external
81 | appearances. Likewise a false thing is said to be one which is naturally constituted to
82 | cause a false apprehension in regard to its external appearances, just as fools' gold is
83 | called false gold. So it is also that we call a human false who shows by words or deeds
84 | something of himself different from the way he is. The opposite is understood to be truth
85 | which is virtue in words and deeds, as the Philosopher says (Metaph. V text 34). But
86 | each truth, namely that of the intellect and that of the thing, is reduced as to a first
87 | principle to God himself, because his being is the cause of all being and his
88 | understanding is the cause of all cognition. For this reason he is the first truth just as he is
89 | also the first being. For any given thing is related to truth just as it is related to being, as
90 | is clear from the things said. So it is that the first cause of being is the first cause of truth
91 | and is true to the greatest degree, that is, God, as the Philosopher proves (Metaph. II text
92 | 4). The truth of a proposition, however, is reduced to first principles known per se as to
93 | first causes and chiefly to this principle, that affirmation and negation are not true at the
94 | same time, as Avicenna says (II Logicae ch. 4). In this way it is evident how diverse
95 | definitions of truth are given. For one definition of truth is given according to which
96 | truth is completed in the manifestation of the intellect, as Augustine says (On true
97 | religion, ch. 36 col. 151, t. III): "The truth is that by which that which is is shown;" and
98 | Hilary, De Trinitate V (section 14, col. 137, t.II) "The true is declarative or manifestive
99 | being." Something concerning the truth insofar as it has a foundation in a thing, as
100 | Augustine says in II Soliloquies, (cap. 5, col. 889, t.I): "The true is that which is;" and
101 | another master (Anselm) "The true is the indivision of being and of that which is." And
102 | Avicenna [writes in Metaphysics VIII], "The truth of any thing is a property of its being

103 which grounds it (quod stabilitum ei est).” Another is given according to the
104 commensuration of what is in the intellect to what is in the thing, as it is said: Truth is the
105 adequation of the thing to the intellect. Augustine, as cited above, says: “The true is what
106 is related such that it is seen by the knower if he wishes and is able to know.” Another is
107 given of truth insofar as it is attributed to the Son to whom also is attributed knowledge,
108 namely by Augustine (De vera religion ch. 36, col. 151, t.III): “ Truth is the highest
109 likeness of the principle which is without any dissimilarity.” Another is given of truth,
110 entailing all the senses of truth (comprehendens omnes veritatis acceptiones), namely:
111 Truth is a rectitude perceptible by the mind alone. Commensuration is touched upon in
112 rectitude, and in the phrase ‘perceptible by the mind alone’, is touched upon that which
113 completes the notion of truth. It is evident also from what has been said that truth adds to
114 the essence in notion, namely an order to knowledge or demonstration of something.

115
116 To the first it should therefore be said that being (esse) is said in two ways: in one
117 way according as a being (ens) signifies the essence of things as divided into the ten
118 categories; and in another according as being (esse) signifies a composition which the
119 soul makes, and this being (istud ens) the Philosopher (Metaph. V text 14) calls the true.
120 Likewise, when Augustine says that the true is that which is, it is as if he is saying: The
121 true is when that which is is spoken of; and likewise is understood what is said: The true
122 is the indivision of being and of that which is. And if in negations there is truth which
123 does not consist in a composition but in division, nevertheless truth is founded negatively
124 upon truth taken affirmatively, the sign of which is that no negative is proven except
125 through some affirmation. Or it can be said that those definitions are given of the true,
126 not according to its complete notion, but according to that which is founded in the thing.

127
128 To the second it should be said that just as goodness bespeaks a notion through
129 which an essence is ordered to desire, so too truth bespeaks a notion through which an
130 essence is ordered to intellect. Hence, just as no being is desired when the notion of the
131 good has been removed, so too no being is understood when the notion of the true has
132 been removed. Yet nevertheless the notion of the true and the notion of being are
133 different. For something is said not to be able to be understood without another in two
134 ways: either such that one cannot be understood if the other is not taken to exist, and in
135 this way it is said that being cannot be understood without the true, as also it cannot be
136 understood without this: that it is intelligible being; or such that whenever one is
137 understood, the other is understood, just as anyone who understands human understands
138 animal. In this way “being” (esse) can be understood without the true but not the
139 converse, because the true is not in the notion of a being, but a being is in the notion of
140 the true. [This is so] just as someone can understand a being (ens) and nevertheless not
141 understand something of the notion of intelligibility. But a thing can never be understood
142 to be intelligible, according to this account, unless it is understood to be a being. Hence
143 also it is clear that a being (ens) is the first conception of the intellect.

144
145 To the third it should be said that the true adds to a being just as [do] both the
146 good and the one. Nevertheless neither or these adds some difference restricting a being,
147 but [there is added] a notion which follows upon every being, just as the one adds the
148 notion of indivision and the good the notion of end and the true the notion of an order to
149 cognition (ad cognitionem). For this reason these four are convertible: a being, the good,
150 the one and the true.

151
152 To the fourth it should be said that rectitude is said of goodness, justice and truth
153 metaphorically according to diverse notions. For there is found in the right a certain equal

proportion of beginning, middle and end. Hence according as someone observes the measure of equality of justice or the measure of legal precept in distributing or communicating, it is called the rectitude of justice. But according as something does not stray from a commensuration of the end, it is called the rectitude of goodness, whereas according as it does not stray from the order of commensuration between the thing and the intellect, it is called the rectitude of truth.

To the fifth it should be said that according to Avicenna (Metaph. tr. II ch.1), concerning that which in no way exists nothing can be asserted (non potest aliquid enuntiari). For it is necessary at least that this of which something is asserted be something apprehended. So it has some being at least in the apprehending intellect. And thus it is agreed that there always is some being corresponding to truth. Nor is it necessary that being in reality outside the soul always corresponds to [truth] since the notion of truth is completed in the notion of the soul.

To the sixth it should be said that, although being is in sensible things, nevertheless a sense does not apprehend the notion of being or the intention ‘a being,’ as neither [does it apprehend] any substantial form except accidentally, but only sensible accidents. So also, although truth is in sensible things according as truth is said to be in things, nevertheless the intention ‘truth’ is perceived by the intellect alone.

To the seventh it should be said that since the operation of the intellect is twofold, one of which is called by some the imagination of intellect (imaginatio intellectus)¹ which the Philosopher (III De An text 21) calls the intellection of indivisibles,² which consists in the apprehension of a simple quiddity, which is also called by another name, ‘formation’ (formatio).³ The other is what they call assent (fidem),⁴ which consists in the composition or division of a proposition. The first operation regards the quiddity of a thing, while the second regards its being (esse ipsius). Because the notion of truth is founded on being and not on quiddity, as was said, for this reason truth and falsity are properly found in the second operation and in its sign which is the proposition, and not in the first [operation] or in its sign which is the definition, except in a qualified way (nisi secundum quid); just as also the being of a quiddity is a certain being of reason, and according to that being truth is found in the first operation of the intellect: in this way a definition is also said to be true. But to this truth falsity is not joined per se because the intellect has a true judgment of the proper object toward which it naturally tends, which is the quiddity of the thing, as also [is the case regarding] sight of color. But falsity is admixed accidentally, namely by reason of an adjoined affirmation or negation, which occurs in two ways: either from the comparison of the definition to what is defined, and

¹taṣawwur bi-l-ʿaql تصور بالعقل : Avicenna, Algazel and Averroes.

² H ... τῶν ἀδιαίρετων νόησις: 430a26

³ Michael Scot first renders the Arabic تصور بالعقل taṣawwur bi-l-ʿaql as imaginatio per intellectum but later gets it right as formare per intellectum or formatio per intellectum in the Latin translation of the Long Commentary on the De Anima of Averroes.

⁴taṣdīq: تصديق φάσις or κατὰφασις De An. III 6, 430b26-27, or ἀποφαντικός λόγος. Latin from Arabic in Averroes’ Long Comm on the De An. of Aristotle at 430b26-27: Et dicere aliquid de aliquo, sicut affirmation: Arabic in alternate translation: فكل سألبة

إما صادقة وإما كاذبة : وكذلك كل موجوبة.

192 then the definition is said to be false with respect to something and not absolutely, as the
193 definition of a circle is false of a triangle; or in regard to the parts of a definition with
194 respect to one another in which [parts] an impossible affirmation is implied, such as the
195 definition of a vacuum which is a place in which there is no body; and this definition is
196 called false absolutely, as is said in Metaph. V (text 34). But this happens only in regard
197 to the quiddity of composites, because in regard to the quiddities of simple things the
198 intellect does not err (deficit: fail) except in the circumstance that it understands nothing
199 at all. Falsity, however, is also admixed with the second operation per se, not indeed with
200 respect to the first affirmations which the intellect naturally knows, so that they are
201 axioms (dignitates), but with respect to the subsequent ones; because the intellect may err
202 by inducing reason [to assent] through the application of one thing to another. It is
203 therefore evident from what has been said that the true properly speaking, which is found
204 only in complex things, does not impede the conversion of the true and a being. For any
205 given incomplex thing has its own being, which is received by the intellect only by way
206 of a composition (complexionis); and for this reason by the very notion which the true
207 adds to being, namely the order to intellect, this difference follows: that the true is of
208 complex things and being is said of an incomplex thing outside the soul.

209
210 To the last it should be said that, as was said, a being (ens) is the first intention of
211 the intellect (prima intentio intellectus). Hence there cannot be anything opposed to a
212 being by way of contrariety or privation, but only by way of negation; because, just as it
213 is not founded on another, so neither is its opposite, for opposites concern the same thing.
214 But the one, the true and the good, according to their proper intentions, are founded upon
215 the intention 'a being' and for this reason they can have an opposition of contrariety and
216 privation founded on being, as also they themselves are founded on being. Whence it is
217 evident that the true and the false and the evil and the good are not related in the same
218 way as a being and a non-being, unless a non-being is taken in a particular way for the
219 removal of something to which some other being stands as subject (pro remotione
220 alicuius cui substernitur aliquod ens). Hence, just as any given privation of a particular
221 being is founded on the good, so too the false is founded on something true as on some
222 being (esse). Whence, just as that in which there is falsity or wickedness is some being
223 but is not a complete being, so too that which is evil or false is some incomplete good or
224 true.