There Are Four Modes: Possible, Impossible,

Necessary, and Contingent

3. Sunt autem huiusmodi modi quatuor proprie loquendo, scilicet possibile et impossibile, ne-cessarium et contingens.

Having determined above that only modes which affect the composition are properly called modes, Caje-tan, following Aristotle,[1] now says there are four modes which can be used in this way to make a modal enunciation: possible, impossible, necessary, and con-tingent. As has already been pointed out, it is the verb which is the nota compositionis. Now, it is peculiar to the verb to consignify time; in fact, it differs from the noun by that very quality.[2] But only a verb that consig-nifies present time is a verb in the strict sense. Verbs in the past or future tenses are rather casus verbi and can be called verbs only in an imperfect sense.[3]

> Recte autem ea quae consignificant tempus praeteri-tum vel futurum, non sunt verba proprie dicta: cum enim verbum proprie sit quod significat agere vel pati, hoc est proprie verbum quod significat agere vel pati in actu, quod est agere vel pati simpliciter: sed agere vel pati in praeterito vel futuro est secundum quid.[4]

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[1] Periherm., 21 a 34-36.

[2] "Distinguit verbum a nomine, in hoc scilicet quod dicit quod consignificat tempus. Dictum enim in definitione nominis quod nomen significat sine tempore." S. Thomas, In Periherm., Lib. I, lect. 5, n. 2.

[3] Aristotle, Periherm., 16 b 16.

[4] S. Thomas, In Periherm., Lib. I, lect. 5, n. 12.

Since the modes affect the verb in its very act of composing (and not as the _res verbi_), they will differ from each other according as they vary the verb as verb, i.e., according to what is peculiar to the verb. The modes, therefore, will vary (the) verb and the composition which it signifies according to the time consignified. The function of modal (the) enunciation, consequently, is to extend the enunciation beyond the limits of present time to all time, to no time, or to future time.

> Quatuor enim primi illorum modorum (i.e., possibile, contingens, necessarium, et impossibile) compositionem (quae consignificat tempus) ampliant extra tempus praesens. Possibile enim et contingens ampliant praesens ad futurum, et ad esse, et ad non esse: quia contingens est futurum, et potest esse et non esse. Necessarium autem et impossibile ampliant compositionem ad omne tempus: quia necessarium et impossibile ponunt compositionem in omne tempus: et ideo illi sunt modi speciales facientes totam enuntiationem modalem, necessarium simpliciter omni tempore inesse, et impossibile simpliciter numquam inesse.[1]

Ampliation is a property of a part of the enunciation and is defined as "the extension of a term from a lesser to a greater supposition."[2] This can be done in two ways: by extending a common term to include more individuals or by increasing the times in which a term can be verified. It is the second way which is in question here.

[1]S. Albertus, _Periherm_., Lib. II, Tr. II, cap. 1, I, p. 440.

[2]_Extensio termini a minori ad majorem suppositionem_, Joan. a Sto Thoma, _Curs. Phil._, I, p. 37 a.

John of St. Thomas says that "possible" extends all the terms in the enunciation to be possible, e.g., in "It is possible that men be white," it is verified both of "man" and of "white."[1] By thus extending the time of the _esse_ of the dictum, the mode distributes the subject of the modal enunciation, i.e., the dictum, according to the parts of time. In this way, the modal enunciation is universal or particular in its quantity.[2]

The True and False Are Not Modes

(3. cont.) Verum namque et falsum, licet supra compositionem cadant cum dicitur, Socratem currere est verum, vel hominem esse quadrupedem est falsum, attamen modificare proprie non videntur compositionem ipsam. Quia modificari proprie dicitur aliquid, quando redditur aliquale, non quando fit secundum suam substantiam. Compositio autem quando dicitur vera, non aliqualis proponitur, sed quod est: nihil enim aliud est dicere, Socratem currere est verum, quam quod compositio cursus cum Socrate est. Et similiter quando est falsa, nihil aliud dicitur, quam quod non est: nam nihil aliud est dicere, Socratem currere est falsum, quam quod compositio cursus cum Socrate non est. Quando vero compositio dicitur possibilis aut contingens, iam non ipsam esse, sed ipsam aliqualem esse dicimus: cum siquidem dicitur, Socratem currere est possibile, non substantificamus compositionem cursus cum Socrate, sed qualificamus, asserentes illam esse possibile. Unde Aristoteles hic modos proponens, veri et falsi nullo modo meminit, licet infra verum et non verum inferat, propter causam ibi assignandam.

The true and the false cannot be numbered among the modes which make modal enunciations for the reason that they

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 38 a.

[2] Cf. _infra_, chap. vi.

do not modify the composition. It is true that they affect the composition, but not by qualifying it. True or false applied to a composition of subject and predicate merely say that the composition is or is not. They do not say that it is such. True and false in no way affect the form of the enunciation; rather, they serve to compare any enunciation with the reality signified. Previously, in distinguishing affirmation and negation on the one hand from truth and falsity on the other, St. Thomas said,

> Secunda diversitas est per comparationem ad rem, ex qua dependet veritas et falsitas intellectus et enunciationis. Cum enim enunciatur aliquid esse vel non esse secundum congruentiam rei, est oratio vera; alioquin est oratio falsa.[1]

To say that an enunciation is true is to say that the very substance of the enunciation exists, but, as Cajetan points out, in a modal enunciation we are not signifying the substance of the composition but qualifying the substance of it (non substantificamus compositionem cursus cum Socrate, sed qualificamus, asserendo illam esse possibilem).

St. Albert casts further light on the reason that the true and the false do not make modal enunciations: they do not extend the time of the composition.[2] Since, as was indicated above, this extension beyond present time

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[1] In Periherm., Lib. I, lect. 9, n. 2.

[2] Non ampliant compositionem secundum tempus, Periherm., I, p. 440 b.

is the special function of the modal enunciation, the true and the false do not qualify as modes. St. Albert says they can, however, be called general modes of *de inesse* enunciations, although they do not make modal enunciations except in a secondary sense.[1]

The objection might be raised that a negative added to a verb affects the composition of the enunciation, and, in fact, affects it as enunciation, not, however, by comparing the enunciation to that which it signifies as do the true and false. It would seem, therefore, that a negative added to the composition would render the enunciation modal. St. Albert again answers that such a negative does not extend the time of the enunciation nor does it inform the enunciation in a special mode, but it simply divides the enunciation.[2] It should be borne in mind that "composition" is sometimes used to refer to the second act of the mind which includes both composition and division. Composition, in the second sense, is signified by an affirmative enunciation, and division by a negative enunciation, although in each case the enunciation can be said to be "composed" of subject and predicate. Affirmative and negative, however, are opposed as species of the enunciation, not as substance and mode.

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[1] ". . . . dicunt generalem modum illarum de inesse, ideo non sunt modi speciales, sed sunt modi quidam non facientes propositionem modalem nisi secundum quid." *ibid*.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 441 a.

There Are No Subjective Modes

Some authors have held the opinion that, besides the necessary, impossible, possible, and contingent, there can be other modes, deriving from the subjective dispositions of the knower. In fact, in a work attributed to Scotus, the author says that any determination that affects a whole proposition can be called a mode.

> Quod omnis determinatio nata determinare totam propositionem, potest dici modus; ita quod si illa determinatio potest esse unum extremum propositionis, respectu unius propositionis materialiter sumptae, quae est aliud extremum, tunc illa determinatio dicitur modus, ut patet de istis modis, scio, opinor, dubito, apparet, et de participiis ipsorum, et de istis modis, verum, falsum, et sic de singulis.[1]

To the objection that Aristotle did not treat subjective modals, respondetur, quod Aristoteles omisit propter brevitatem.[2] In another place, Scotus lists the modes which, according to his opinion, can be used to make modal enunciations: necessarium, per se, verum, possibile, contingens, impossibile, falsum, dubium, scitum, opinatum, apparens, natum, volitum, and dilectum.[3]

That such subjective modes are inadmissible is clearly shown from the reason given by St. Albert,

> Quatuor autem sunt tales modi (impossibile, possibile, necessarium, et contingens), quia in compositione non est nisi esse.[4]

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[1] Joan. Duns Scotus, *In Librum Priorum Analyticorum Aristotelis Quaestionis*, q. 36, ed. Waddingus (*Opera Omnia*, Paris: Vives, 1891), Vol II, p. 174 a.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 175 b.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 143 a.

[4] *Periherm.*, I, p. 441 a.

An enunciation is a sign of a concept, and a concept is
nothing but the object existing intentionally and purely
objectively in the mind. The whole being of an enuncia-
tion is to signify things. That one enunciation is ne-
cessary and another is contingent depends entirely on
the necessity or contingency of the connection between
the objects signified by the enunciation. As was said
above, formal logic does not abstract from objects,
but only from certain differences of objects. Its ob-
ject is not, therefore, a pure fiction or construction
of the mind. All of logic is concerned with the relations
of objects as they are in the state of being known; what
is important here is that logic is concerned with objects.

To say that I know one proposition with certitude
and another with probability is not to say that the two
differ as signs. The three propositions: "A is B," "That
A is B is certain," "That A is B is probable" differ by
reason of what is signified, but they do not differ as
enunciations, i.e., as signs.[1] The composition of A and B
is not qualified, nor is it extended beyond present time.
That the same enunciation, e.g., "A is B," can be certain
for one man and probable for another or even probable and
certain for the same man at different times shows that
certitude and probability do not enter into the composition

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[1] They do, of course, differ grammatically.

as such, but are rather qualities of the assent given
to a composition. The "modes" of certitude and proba-
bility are, therefore, posterior to the formation of the
sign which is the enunciation and can in no way affect
the enunciation as a sign. A modal enunciation itself
can be certain or probable.

Since there is nothing in a composition but being,
as St. Albert said, the different modes of the composition
can only be modes of being.[1] It is on that basis that
the kinds of modal enunciations will be distinguished one
from the other, and on the basis of the expression or non-
expression of the mode that the modal will be distinguished
from the de inesse enunciation. How one mode is distinguished
from another will be taken up in another chapter where the
division of the modal enunciation is treated. What has been
said is sufficient to show that the mode in a modal enun-
ciation must be a mode of signifying the object, and that
the "subjective modes" are not modes of signification at
all. It was, therefore, truth rather than brevity that
compelled Aristotle to omit a treatment of the "subjective
modals."[2]

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[1] Cf. S. Thomas, In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Commentaria,
Lib. IX, lect. 11, n. 1897, ed. Cathala (Turin: Marietti,
1935). "Dispositio rei est causa veritatis in opinione
et oratione."

[2] Ockham also multiplied the kinds of modal propositions, ac-
cording to the testimony of Fr. Bochenski. The number of
syllogisms using modal propositions was, as for Scotus,
increased proportionately. But since this increase in the

CHAPTER III

THE MODAL ENUNCIATION: QUID SIT?

The Integral Parts of the Modal Enunciation

4. Et quia enunciatio modalis duas in se continet compositiones, alteram inter partes dicti, alteram inter dictum et modum, intelligendum est eam compositionem modificari, idest, quae est inter partes dicti, non eam quae est inter modum et dictum. Quod sic perpendi potest. Huius enunciationis modalis, Socratem esse album est possibile, duae sunt partes; altera est, Socratem esse album, altera est, possibile. Prima dictum vocatur, eo quod est id quod dicitur per eius indicativam, scilicet, Socrates est albus; qui enim profert hanc, Socrates est albus, nihil aliud dicit nisi Socratem esse album; secunda vocatur modus, eo quod modi adiecti est. Prima compositionem quandam in se continet ex Socrate et albo; secunda pars primae opposita, compositionem aliquam sonat ex dicti compositione et modo. Prima rursus pars, licet omnia habeat propria, subiectum scilicet, et praedicatum, copulam et compositionem, tota tamen subiectum est modalis enunciationis; secunda autem est praedicatum.

Having determined what is meant by "modal enunciation," Cajetan now begins to arrive at its definition by treating first its integral parts. He points out that in a modal enunciation there are two compositions: one between the parts of the dictum and the other between the dictum and the mode. It is the first composition which is

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[2](cont.) number of valid syllogisms depends on false logical doctrine, it is difficult to agree with Fr. Bochenski's judgment, "C'est donc un beau progrès: partant de 125 d'Aristote à travers les 300 de Pseudo-Scot nous sommes arrivés à 1000." "Notes historiques sur les propositions modales," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, XXVI (1937), pp. 673-692, No. 8.

said to be modified. In the enunciation "That Socrates be white is possible," the dictum is "that Socrates be white"; the mode is "possible." The dictum contains the composition of "Socrates" and "white" and, considered in itself, it is a complete enunciation with subject and predicate, copula and composition; yet as dictum it becomes a part, the subject, of the modal enunciation in which the mode is the predicate. The dictum, whether its grammatical form be an accusative with the infinitive or a noun clause, becomes the subject or suppositum[1] for the verb "is" which joins the mode to the dictum.

Since the dictum can be stated separately as a de inesse enunciation, e.g., "Socrates is white," the dictum is properly said to signify esse or non esse. It is the esse or non esse which becomes the subject of the modal enunciation.

> Esse quidem subjectum fit, idest dictum significans esse vel non esse subjecti locum tenet; contingere vero et posse appositiones, idest modi, praedicationes sunt.[2]

Once more it is necessary to insist that the appositio does not depend on its grammatical form.

> Adverte quod modos, appositiones, idest, praedicationes vocavit (Aristoteles), sicut esse in illis de inesse, intelligens per modum totum praedicatum enunciationis modalis, puta, est possibile. In cujus signum modos ipsos verbaliter protulit dicens: Contingere vero et posse appositiones sunt. Contingit enim et potest, totum praedicatum modalis continent.[3]

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[1] S. Albertus, Periherm., I, p. 441 b.

[2] Cajetanus, In Perih., Lib. II, lect. 9, n. 2.

[3] Ibid., n. 3.

The Mode Modifies the Composition of the Dictum

(4. cont.) Dicti ergo compositio subiicitur et
modificatur in enunciatione modali. Qui enim dicit,
Socratem esse album est possibile, non significat
qualis est coniuncti possibilitatis cum hoc dicto,
Socratem esse album, sed insinuat qualis sit com-
positio partium dicti inter se, scilicet albi cum
Socrate, scilicet quod est compositio possibilis.
Non dicit igitur enunciatio modalis aliquid inesse,
vel non inesse, sed dicti potius modum enunciat.
Nec proprie componit secundum significatum, quia
compositionis non est compositio, sed rerum composi-
tioni modum apponit.

Although the modal enunciation has its own subject,
the dictum, and its own predicate, the mode, it is not
called modal as if the mode qualified the composition of
its predicate with its subject. The mode qualifies, rather,
the composition of the parts of the dictum. It is the com-
position of "Socrates" and "white" that is said to be pos-
sible.

Cajetan's last two sentences specify what is pro-
per to the modal enunciation and what is common to it and
the de inesse. The modal does not declare that one thing
is in another or   not, but, assuming that one thing is
or is not in another, it declares in what mode. In that,
it differs from the de inesse. The modal does not,
however, make a new signified object (nec proprie componit
secundum significatum), but merely adds a mode to the
composition of things. Thus, it does not differ from
the de inesse by reason of the things signified, but pre-
cisely as a sign. It is a new sign which adds something
to the de inesse enunciation, although it demands nothing
but the de inesse. The composition, therefore, of mode

with the dictum is a composition which is made solely
in the order of the enunciation, which is a sign, not
in the order of what is signified (compositionis non est
compositio). What has just been said serves to prove very
clearly that the modal enunciation is defined in the order
of signification and is distinguished from the de inesse
enunciation in its mode of signification.

If the modal enunciation is considered purely
under the common notion of the enunciation, its mode is
a predicate of the modal enunciation. Considered, however,
as a species of the enunciation, i.e., formally as a modal
enunciation, its mode is a determination of the composition
of the dictum. The mode, in addition to being a predicate,
is a syncategorematic term that affects the esse of the
dictum, distributing it according to the parts of time.
In this respect, the mode is like "all" and "some" which
affect the subject of a de inesse enunciation.[1] St. Albert
says:

> Modus enim quamvis sit praedicatum enuntiationis,
> tamen est modus dicti qui ad compositionem dicti
> habet referri. Hoc enim non est inconveniens, quod
> aliquid respectu diversorum sit praedicatum et modus.[2]

In another place, St. Albert brings up the objec-
tion that a predicate is not a determination of composition.

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[1] Cf. infra, chap. vi.

[2] Periherm., I, p. 453.

In answer, he cites the solution of Alexander who says
the objector is right when the predicate is predicated
as being; but a predicate which is a mode is not predi-
cated as being, but as a mode of the being signified by
the composition of the dictum. The mode is, therefore,
both a predicate and a mode of composition.[1]

The Definition

(4. cont.) unde nihil aliud est enunciatio mo-
dalis, quam enunciatio dicti modificativa.

The preceding analysis permits Cajetan to conclude
to the definition of the modal enunciation: an enunciation
which modifies its dictum. "Enunciation," is, of course,
the genus, and "which modifies its dictum" is the difference.
In the definition all the integral parts of the modal enun-
ciation are contained: the dictum, which is its subject,
the mode, which is its predicate, and the copula, which
is implied in the genus enunciation.

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[1] Ibid., p. 441 b. "Et si dicitur, quod praedicatum non est
determinatio compositionis. Ad hoc respondet Alexander,
quod verum est quando praedicatum praedicatur ut esse, et
non ut modus, sicut currit cum dicitur, homo currit: vel
sicut album cum dicitur, homo est albus. In enuntiatione
autem modali quia non subjicitur substantia cui inest
praedicatum, sed subjicitur dictum cum sua compositione,
praedicatum modus praedicatur non ut esse, quia hoc dicit
praedicatum dicti: sed praedicatur ut modus esse quod
dicit compositio dicti: et ideo et est praedicatum et
est modus compositionis. Et haec solutio notanda est:
quia ad multa valet et hic et in scientia libri Priorum."

The definition given by Cajetan is superior to that cited by John of St. Thomas in his *Summulae*.

Propositio modalis est "in qua praedicatum inesse subjecto cum modo, quo illi inest et convenit.[1]

The latter definition does not state the difference as formally as Cajetan's *dicti modificativa*. The definition from the *Summulae* defines the modal enunciation as if it were only a *de inesse* enunciation with something added; it fails to indicate that the mode is also a predicate that qualifies the dictum which is the subject of the modal enunciation. The definition given by Peter of Spain in his *Summulae Logicales* is merely a description.

Propositio modalis est quae determinatur aliquo istorum sex modorum.[2]

The Modal Enunciation Is One

5. Nec propterea censenda est enunciatio plures modalis, quia omnia duplicata habeat: quoniam unum modum de unica compositione enunciat, licet illius compositionis plures sint partes. Plura enim illa ad dicti compositionem concurrentia, veluti plura ex quibus fit unum subiectum concurrunt, de quibus dictum est supra quod enunciationis unitatem non impediunt. Sicut nec cum dicitur, domus est alba, est enunciatio multiplex, licet domus ex multis consurgat partibus.

Despite the fact that all the elements of the enunciation are doubled in the modal enunciation, it is

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[1] *Curs. Phil.*, I, p. 48 a.

[2] Ed. Bochenski (Rome: Marietti, 1947), p. 11; Peter later eliminates the true and false from his consideration.

not thereby many. The reason, as Cajetan says, is that it declares one mode of one composition. Although the dictum which is the subject includes a plurality of parts in its composition, it is nevertheless one by reason of its composition. It is of the dictum taken as a whole that the mode is predicated.

CHAPTER IV

DIVISION OF THE MODAL ENUNCIATION: PRINCIPLE OF THE DIVISION

After having considered the definition of the modal
enunciation, it is now necessary to consider its division.
Before each of the subjective parts, or species, can be
treated in detail, the very basis on which the division
is made must be analyzed. In a previous chapter, the four
modes necessity, contingency, possibility, and impossibi-
lity were distinguished according to the way in which they
extend the time consignified by the verb which is the sign
of composition. There, the consideration was solely of
a distinction of signs; here, it will be of the foundation
of that distinction. Because, as St. Albert says, in
compositione non est nisi esse,[1] the foundation for the
division of that composition will be in the division of
being. Accordingly, the doctrine on which the division
of the modal enunciation is based is properly metaphysical.

Besides being divided according to the ten predi-
caments, being is also divided into potency and act, and
it is that which is in act which is most properly said to
be either true or false.[2] His opinion, therefore, is true
who thinks that to be divided which really is divided;

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[1] Periherm., I, p. 441 a.

[2] S. Thomas, In Metaph., Lib. IX, lect. 11, n. 1895.

likewise, he who thinks that to be composed which is composed in things. But the opinion which holds things to be other than they are is false. From Aristotle's example that you are not white because I think you are, but rather I think you are white because you are, St. Thomas draws this conclusion,

> Unde manifestum est, quod dispositio rei est causa veritatis in opinione et oratione.[1]

Then he explains further the relation between the composition and division in things and the composition and division in the mind, the latter being signified by the composition and division in speech.

> Hoc autem addit ad manifestandum quod supra dixerat, quod verum et falsum est in rebus componi et dividi. Oportet enim veritatem et falsitatem, quae est in oratione vel opinione, reduci ad dispositionem rei sicut ad causam. Cum autem intellectus compositionem format, accipit duo, quorum unum se habet ut formale respectu alterius: unde accipit id ut in alio existens, propter quod praedicata tenentur formaliter. Et ideo, si talis operatio intellectus ad rem debeat reduci sicut ad causam, oportet quod in compositis substantiis ipsa compositio formae ad materiam, aut ejus quod se habet per modum formae et materiae, vel etiam compositio accidentis ad subjectum, respondeat quasi fundamentum et causa veritatis, compositioni, quam intellectus interius format et exprimit voce. Sicut cum dico, Socrates est homo, veritas hujus enunciationis causatur ex compositione formae humanae ad materiam individualem, per quam Socrates est hic homo: et cum dico, homo est albus, causa veritatis est compositio albedinis ad subjectum: et similiter est in aliis. Et idem patet in divisione.[2]

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[1] Ibid., n. 1897.

[2] Ibid., n. 1898.

The composition in the mind and in speech, since it depends on the composition in things as on its cause, will be divided according to the differences of composition of things. Aristotle and St. Thomas are speaking, of course, of composed substances.[1]

> Si compositio et divisio rei est causa veritatis et falsitatis in opinione et oratione, necesse est quod secundum differentiam compositionis et divisionis ejus quod est in rebus, est differentia veritatis et falsitatis in opinione et oratione. In rebus autem talis differentia invenitur circa compositionem et divisionem: quod quaedam semper componuntur, et impossibile est ea dividi; sicut anima rationalis sit sine virtute sentiendi, licet e converso posset esse anima sensitiva sine ratione. Quaedam vero sunt divisa, et impossibile est ea componi sicut nigrum albo, et formam asini homini. Quaedam vero se habent ad contraria, quia possunt componi et dividi, sicut homo et albus, et etiam currens.[2]

Some things are always composed and cannot be divided; others are always divided and can never be composed; still others can be either composed or divided. The modal enunciation is divided according to these divisions of being. Things that are always composed are necessary, those that are always divided are impossible; and those that can be either composed or divided are possible or contingent.

St. Albert has stated this doctrine explicitly:

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[1] Truth and falsity in the knowledge of simple things is taken up beginning at n. 1901 of the same lesson.

[2] *Ibid.*, n. 1899.

> Quatuor autem sunt tales modi, quia in compositione non est nisi esse. Quod autem dicit esse aut dicit esse permixtum potentiae, aut quod est in actu perfecto. Si primo modo: tunc est esse possibile, vel contingens. Et haec duo differunt in hoc, quod possibile determinat esse secundum se: et contingens autem in comparatione ad causam non stantem: unde esse non stans, est possibile: contingens autem est, quod non habet causam stantem. Si autem est esse perfectum secundum actum: aut accipitur in ipso esse, et sic est necessarium: aut accipitur in ipso non esse, quod ad simpliciter esse est oppositum, et sic est impossibile. Contingens autem et possibile non possunt accipi secundum divisionem esse et non esse; quia utrumque dicit esse permixtum cum non esse.[1]

The correspondence to the differences of composition is evident: things which are always composed correspond to esse perfectum secundum actum (acceptum) in ipso esse; those which are always divided, to the same in ipso non esse; those which can be either composed or divided, to esse permixtum potentiae. The distinction between the possible and the contingent will be taken up later.

Near the end of his commentary on the modal enunciation, Cajetan gives the reason for the order which should be observed in the table of equipollent modals. Just as there is an order in the grades of the universe, so should there be an order in the table of modals.[2] The first grade of the universe is those things which are in act without any admixture of potency; the second, those which are in

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[1] Periherm., I, p. 441 a.

[2] In Periherm., Lib. II, lect. 12, n. 9.

act but with potentiality, e.g., all mobile beings; the
third, those which will never be in act but will always
remain in potency, e.g., motion, time, and the infinite
division of a magnitude, because act is repugnant to
them. Cajetan then says the order of modals imitates
this order of the grades of the universe.

> Posuimus siquidem primo necessarium, quod sonat
> actu esse sine potestate seu mutabilitate, imitando
> primum gradum universi.--Locavimus secundo loco
> possibile et contingens, quorum utrunque sonat actum
> cum possibilitate, et sic servatur conformitas ad
> secundum gradum universi. . . . . Ultimum autem
> locum impossibili reservavimus, eo quod sonat
> nunquam fore, sicut et ultima universi pars dicta
> est illa, quae nunquam actu est.[1]

It is, therefore, on the division of being that
the division of the modal enunciation is founded. The
examination of each of the four modes which make a modal
enunciation will show in exactly what sense each mode is
to be taken.

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[1] Ibid., n. 9b.

CHAPTER V

DIVISION OF THE MODAL ENUNCIATION: ITS SUBJECTIVE PARTS

The Necessary

The first of the four species of the modal enunciation is that made by the addition of the mode of necessity. The necessary will be treated first because it implies eternity and the eternal is prior to the temporal. Aristotle says,

> Manifestum est autem ex his quae dicta sunt, quod id quod ex necessitate est, secundum actum est: quare si priora sunt sempiterna, et quae actu sunt potestate priora sunt.[1]

The necessary implies eternity because it implies being in act which excludes all mutability and, consequently, time. The possible, however, implies time because it does not exclude the possibility to be and not to be; it is therefore posterior to the necessary.[2]

It is in the fifth book of the Metaphysics where Aristotle treats the various senses of the necessary.[3] In his commentary on this chapter, St. Thomas begins by showing that Aristotle treats the necessary immediately after his treatment of causes because the necessary belongs to the very notion of cause. A cause, in fact,

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[1]Periherm., ed. Leonina, Lib. II, 23 a 21.

[2]Cf. Cajetanus, In Periherm., Lib. II, lect. 12, n. 8.

[3]Chap. 5.

is that on which something else necessarily follows.[1]
That the necessary implies a relationship of cause to
effect is shown also by the way in which the necessary
is distinguished from the contingent. A contingent
effect is contained in its cause with the possibility
of proceeding from the cause or not, whereas the ne-
cessary effect is in its cause only with the possibi-
lity of proceeding from it.[2] More will be said about
this in connection with the contingent; what is important
here is that "necessary" is said with respect to the
cause of a being.

The necessary is, therefore, not limited to ne-
cessary being, which has no cause whatsoever. A being
that is in anyway caused is in potency with respect to
that cause and, consequently, is not a necessary being.
However, the necessary used here in logic is solely con-
cerned with the necessity of the connection between
subject and predicate, regardless of whether the being
itself which is signified in the composition is ne-
cessary or contingent. Even in contingent beings

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[1] Lect. 6, n. 827. "Distinguit nomen quod significat
aliquid pertinens ad rationem causae; scilicet neces-
sarium. Causa enim est ad quam de necessitate sequitur
aliud."

[2] S. Thomas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Lib. I, cap. 67, ed.
Leonina. "Contingens a necessario differt secundum quod
unum quodque in sua causa est: contingens enim sic in sua
causa est ut non esse ex ea possit et esse; necessarium
vero non potest ex sua causa nisi esse."

(i.e., caused beings) there are certain notions which are
necessarily connected, e.g., that an animal is necessarily
corruptible.

> Dicitur. . . . necesse esse in enunciationibus,
> quando scilicet coinherentia praedicati cum subjecto
> inevitabilis et necessaria est. Tale necessarium
> non est ens necesse: quia tale necessarium esse nihil
> prohibet habere causam: quinimo illud possibile
> praedicatur de eo quod est necesse esse causam habente.[1]

The knowledge we have of necessary being is such that even
in the case, for example, of the attributes of God one is
the reason for another (e.g., the eternity of God is be-
cause of His immutability). There is, of course, no causality
exercised by one attribute on another in God Himself, but
our knowing one attribute is the cause of our knowing another.

Modes of the Necessary

Aristotle distinguishes four modes of the necessary:
(1) that which is necessary because something cannot be
without it, e.g., an animal must breathe in order to live,
or in order to be in a distant city it is necessary to
travel to it; (2) that which is necessary for the well being
of something, e.g., although it is possible to reach the
distant city on foot, a vehicle of some kind is necessa-
ry for making the trip easily and well; (3) that which is
necessary by reason of violence; (4) that which is absolu-
tely necessary.[2] The first two, necessary _ad esse_ and

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[1] S. Albertus, _Periherm._, I, p. 451 a.

[2] _Metaph._, Bk. V, chap. 5; S. Thomas, _In Metaph._, Lib. V,
lect. 6, nn. 827-832.

ad bene esse, are modes of necessity from the final cause and the third is from the efficient cause. Thus, the first three modes are from extrinsic causes and are necessary _secundum quid_.[1] The absolutely necessary is defined as that which cannot be otherwise.[2] It is absolute because it is necessary from an intrinsic cause, from what is intimate and proximate to a thing. This intrinsic or absolute necessity can be on the part of the matter, the form, or the essence of a thing. Because of its matter, an animal is necessarily corruptible; because of its form, an animal is necessarily sensitive; because of its essence, an animal is necessarily an animated, sensible substance.[3] However, Aristotle reduces all the other modes of the necessary in some way to the fourth, for it is true to say of each of them that that which is necessary cannot be otherwise, regardless of the cause of that necessity.[4] It should be noted that _necessarium absolute_ is here opposed to _necessarium secundum quid_, the former being from an intrinsic cause and the latter from an extrinsic cause. In the _Perihermeneias_,

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[1] S. Thomas, _ibid._, nn. 832, 834, 835.

[2] Quod non contingit aliter se habere, _ibid._, n. 832.

[3] Cf. S. Thomas, IIIa, q. 46, a. 1 with Cajetan's commentary; Joan. a Sto Thoma, _Curs. Phil._, I, p. 252 a.

[4] _Metaph._, 1015 b 1-7; cf. S. Thomas, _In Metaph._, Lib. V, lect. 6, nn. 836, 837.

Aristotle calls the absolutely necessary, __necessarium__
__simpliciter__.[1]

To avoid some possible objections, it should also
be noted that the __absolute necessarium__ is used in diffe-
rent senses. The first of these is the same as the fourth
mode of the necessary defined above: that which is impos-
sible to be otherwise, e.g., man is necessarily a rational
animal, because it is repugnant that man not be a rational
animal. The absolutely necessary is necessary from its
very terms. To this absolute necessity is opposed the
necessity of immutability, i.e., the necessary which
cannot be changed but which, absolutely speaking, could
have been otherwise. Thus the divine science of vision
is not necessary by absolute necessity since God was free
to have willed otherwise, but it is necessary by the neces-
sity of immutability, since what God has known from all
eternity, He knows always, and this knowledge cannot be
changed.

S. Thomas also uses __necessarium absolute__ in the
broader sense of the __necessitas consequentis__ to oppose it
to __necessitas consequentiae__. For example, in the propo-
sition, __Socrates currit, si est praescitum a Deo__, he says,

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[1]Bk. II, chap. 13, 23 & 15.

Antecedens est necessarium absolute, tum ex immobilitate actus tum etiam ex ordine ad scitum.[1]

Here the absolutely necessary is that which is necessary in itself and without dependence on another proposition; according to this sense, a proposition is necessary when what it signifies is necessary. If the antecedent were necessary merely because God had seen it, it could not be absolutely necessary, but only by reason of consequence.

> Si unumquodque a Deo cognoscitur sicut praesentialiter visum, sic necessarium erit esse quod Deus cognoscit, sicut necessarium est Sortem sedere ex hoc quod sedere videtur. Hoc autem non necessarium absolute, vel, ut a quibusdam dicitur, necessitate consequentis: sed sub conditione, vel necessitate consequentiae. Haec enim conditionalis est necessaria: Si videtur sedere, sedet.[2]

The absolutely necessary is used to include both the necessary which from its very terms is impossible to be otherwise (necessarium absolute in its first sense) and the necessary by reason of immutability.[3]

A necessary modal enunciation can signify any of these meanings of the necessary, because there is necessity in an enunciation when there is an inevitable and necessary inherence of the predicate in the subject.[4] There is, therefore, no reason to distinguish three kinds of necessary propositions as does Scotus: de necessario conditionali,

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[1] I Sent., dist. XXXVIII, q. 1, a. 5 ad4; cf. Ia, q. 14, a. 13 ad 2; De Veritate, q. 2, a. 12 ad 7.

[2] S. Thomas, Contra Gentiles, Lib. I, cap. 67.

[3] Syl. Ferrariensis, Comment. In Summam Contra Gentiles, Lib. I, cap 67, ed. Leonina, Vol. XIII, p. 194, nn. 9, 10.

[4] S. Albertus, Periherm., I, p. 451 a.

de necessario quando, and _de necessario simpliciter_.[1]
The necessity required for a necessary modal enunciation
is concerned only with the inherence of the predicate in
the subject and not with the reason for the necessity
of that inherence. This necessity abstracts from dif-
ferences of kinds of necessity, for these differences
are rather on the part of the matter of the enunciation
than of its form.

The Possible and the Impossible

Physical Possibility

The mode of possibility by which the composition
of subject and predicate is qualified is founded on the
possibility in the composition of things. Since something
is said to be possible because of a potency, it is neces-
sary to distinguish the different senses of potency before
the senses of possible. _Possibile a potentia nascitur_.[2]

A potency or power is realized first of all in
something which is a principle of change in another as
other. "As other" is added because, e.g., someone who
has the art of medicine can cure himself, but it is himself
as other, not as having the art of medicine that is cured.
This kind of potency is an active potency.[3] A second kind

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[1] Joan. Duns Scotus, _In Librum Priorum Analyticorum Aristotelis
Quaestiones_, ed. Waddingus, Vol. II, p. 144 a.

[2] Cajetanus, _In Periherm._, Lib. II, lect. 11, n. 3.

[3] "Hoc est principium activum, quod est principium transmuta-
tionis in alio inquantum est aliud." S. Thomas, _In Metaph._,
Lib. IX, lect. 1, n. 1776; Cf. Lib. V, lect. 14, n. 955.

of potency is the passive potency which is a principle of receiving a change from another.[1] A third potency is the power to do something well or as one would like to do it, as when we say that someone cannot walk or talk if he cannot walk or talk well.[2] A fourth potency is that of a disposition whereby a thing is rendered impossible or difficult to change for the worse, e.g., that whereby something is unbreakable.[3]

To these four kinds of potencies there are corresponding modes of the possible. Something is possible by an active potency when it can be done by an agent either immediately by himself or mediately through another to whom the agent communicates its power. Something is possible by a passive potency when it can be changed either for better or for worse. Corresponding to the third and fourth kinds of potencies things are said to be possible because they can act well or can be changed easily, and others are possible or powerful because they cannot be changed for the worse.[4]

Since impotence is the privation of a potency, impotence will be a taking away of such a principle from

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[1] Principium quod aliquid moveatur ab alio, inquantum est aliud. ibid., n. 1777; cf. n. 956.

[2] Principium faciendi aliquid non quoqumque modo, sed bene. ibid., n. 959; cf. n. 1780.

[3] Dispositio quaedam ex qua aliquid habet quod non possit pati transmutationem in deterius. ibid., n. 1778, cf. n. 960.

[4] Ibid., nn. 961-966.

a determinate subject and at a determinate time. Something is said to be blind, for example, only when it is a being which is naturally capable of sight and at a time when he should be capable of it.[1] The modes of impotence are distinguished according to the modes of potency of which they are the privation, because _privatio et habitus sunt ejusdem et secundum idem._[2] Likewise, there are modes of the impossible corresponding to modes of the possible.

All the kinds of potencies can be reduced to the active potency. The passive potency is that which is moved by the active potency; it is an active potency which can do something well; and, again, it is with reference to an active potency that something cannot be changed for the worse. In the same way all the modes of impotence can be reduced to the first.[3] Therefore, the division of potencies is an analogical division: _per prius_ of the active potency, _per posterius_ of the others, because they refer to the active potency and depend on it for their very definitions. St. Thomas, accordingly, gives as the proper definition of potency, _principium permutationis in alio inquantum est aliud._[4] It should be noted that the

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[1] _Ibid._, n. 967.

[2] _Ibid._, n. 1784.

[3] _Ibid._, nn. 975-976; nn. 1776-1780.

[4] _Ibid._, n. 976; cf. n. 1780.

potencies which have been treated are all called po-
tencies for the same reason: they are all physical po-
tencies[1] and are distinct from logical or mathematical
potencies which are potencies only equivocally.

Rational and Irrational Potencies

"Potency" can not only be distinguished according
to different modes but potencies can differ according to
the beings in which they are found, e.g., active and pas-
sive potencies are found in animate and inanimate things.
Now some of the potencies found in animate beings do not
differ from those found in the inanimate, e.g., gravity,
which is common to all bodies, and the nutritive and sen-
sitive potencies which, although they exist only in living
beings, nevertheless operate from a natural impulse as
do inanimate potencies. But there are other potencies
over whose act the soul exercises dominion; these are
found in the rational part of the soul and are called
rational potencies. Such potencies are the arts whose
actions are transitive, e.g., the art of housebuilding,
and the sciences, whose operations do not pass into an
external matter, e.g., moral science and logic. All of
these habits can be called potencies because they are
principles of change in another as other.[2] Corresponding

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[1]Cajetanus, In periherm., Lib. II, lect. 12, n. 1.

[2]S. Thomas, In Metaph., Lib. IX, lect. 2, nn. 1786-1788.

to the rational and irrational potencies are two senses of the possible, rational and irrational. It is evident that rational potencies can be found only in animated beings, whereas irrational potencies exist in both inanimate and animate, even in man.[1]

Among the active potencies, the rational potency differs from the irrational in that one and the same rational potency can be related to contraries, e.g., the art of medining can cause health or sickness. The rational potency, on the other hand, cannot be related to opposites: one potency can have only one effect per se, e.g., the heat of the sun per se can only heat an object, although it could cool an object per accidens.[2] Since such a potency is determined to only one of the opporites, it is in potency neither to contradictories nor to contraries, e.g., heat cannot both heat and not heat, nor can it heat and cool.[3] The reason that the rational potency is not limited to one object but can be related to contraries is that the rational potency is a certain nature of a thing as it is known; and the thing and the privation of it are known by the same means.

[1]Ibid., lect. 4, n. 1817.

[2]Ibid., lect. 2, n. 1789.

[3]Cajetanus, In Periherm., Lib. II, lect. 11, n. 4.

Scientia, quae est potentia rationalis, est quaedam ratio rei scitae in anima. Eadem autem ratio rem manifestat et ejus privationem, licet non similiter; quia primo manifestat eam rem existentem, per posterius autem autem ejus privationem. Sicut per rationem visus per se cognoscitur ipsa visiva potentia, ex consequenti vero caecitas; quae nihil aliud est, quam ipsa carentia visus in eo quod natum est habere visum. Unde necessarium est, si scientia est quaedam ratio rei scitae in anima, quod eadem sit scientia contrariorum. Unius quidem per prius et secundum se, alterius vero per posterius. Sicut medicina per prius est cognoscitiva et factiva sanitatis, per posterius autem infirmitas; quia et hoc, ut jam dictum est, est de ratione rei scitae in anima, quae est unius oppositorum secundum se, et alterius secundum accidens.[1]

Irrational potencies, however, operate through forms which inhere in them, not trhough an intentional form. Since contrary forms cannot inhere in the same being, it is impossible that one and the same natural thing perform contraries. Natural things can do only one thing, whereas a being that operates by means of the knowledge it has can do opposite things.[2]

What has been said about irrational potencies is true of active irrational potencies, but there remains the special problem of the passive irrational potencies. Such a potency is a _principium patiendi_; i.e., a potency to be heated. But that which can be heated can also be cooled. A passive potency, therefore, is capable of contrary acts; there is one and the same subject of a

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[1] S. Thomas, _In Metaph._, Lib IX, lect. 2, n. 1790.

[2] _Ibid._, n. 1792.

form and of the privation of it.[1] St. Albert calls
the passive potency a material potency to being,
which is a potency with privation. Since it is with
privation, it is a potency to being and to non-being,
and therefore the possible which corresponds to it is
in possibility to be and not to be.[2]

It is important for the enunciation with the
mode of possibility to note how the active potencies
are reduced to act. Whenever an irrational active po-
tency is brought into the presence of that on which it
can act, it is necessary for it to act, unless it is
impeded, e.g., fire burns that which is combustible when
the two are brought together. Praesente passo, necessario
operatur, deductis impedimentis.[3] The same is true of
all potencies that act apart from reason, since they act
as from a natural form, e.g., one swallow instinctively
builds its nest in the same manner and at the same time
as another. Even the will ut natura which is distinguished
from the voluntas ut ratio, is necessitated by certain
objects.[4] If the irrational active potency sometimes is

[1]Cajetanus, In Periherm., Lib. II, lect. 11, n. 7.

[2]Periherm., I, p. 451 b.

[3]Cajetanus, In Periherm., Lib. II, lect. 11, n. 4; cf.
S. Thomas, In Metaph., Lib. IX, lect. 4, n. 1818.

[4]Cf. S. Thomas, IIIa, q. 18, a. 5.

not in act, this is _per accidens_, because it has nothing
on which it can act.[1] The rational active potencies,
however, are not necessitated by the presence of that on
which they can operate. If they were so necessitated it
would follow that they would at once do contraries, which
is impossible.[2] Because such a rational potency is related
as something common to contrary objects and because a
determinate effect does not proceed from a common cause
unless the common cause be more determined to one effect
than to another, the rational active potency is reduced
to act by something outside itself, i.e., by choice. The
agent is moved to act when he desires that which it is
in his power to do.[3]

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[1] S. Albertus, _Periherm._, I, p. 451 b.

[2] S. Thomas, _In Metaph._, Lib. IX, lect. 4, n. 1819.

[3] _Ibid._, n. 1820. In free choice itself there are both an
active and a passive aspect: the power to act and the
indetermination or indifference to objects. If indif-
ference or indetermination to act are considered on the
part of the potency, they imply imperfection, mutability,
and a passive potency; if they are considered on the part
of their object, they imply an operative potency which
has dominion over its act and over the object which
specifies its act. For a detailed discussion of this
point the texts of St. Thomas, see N. Del Prado, _De
Gratia et Libero Arbitrio_, (Friburg, 1907), Vol. II,
pp. 267-270.

One last point about the rational active po-
tency is very important for the teaching on modals,
particularly for what concerns the composed and divided
senses of certain modal propositions used in theology.
To say that a potency is at one time capable of contraries
is not to say that it is in potency to possess both con-
traries at the same time, for that would be impossible.
Rather, it means that at one and the same time the po-
tency is capable of each of the contraries. Cajetan says,

Unde et dici solet et bene, quod in hujusmodi
est simultas potentiae, non potentia simultatis.[1]

Logical Possibility

In the preceding, there has been consideration of
physical potencies and their analogical division. This is
potency in its proper sense, and the corresponding possibles
and impossibles are so because they contain an active or
passive principle in themselves. But possible and potency
are also spoken of in another sense. In this case it is
not because of a principle which they have in themselves;
the potency, consequently, is called potency only equivocally.[2]
One kind of equivocal potency is the mathematical potency,
which is called a potency metaphorically because it does
not have an intrinsic principle, but only a certain

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[1] In Periherm., Lib. II, lect. 11, n. 7; cf. S. Thomas,
In Metaph., Lib. IX, lect. 4, n. 1822.

[2] S. Thomas, In Metaph., Lib. IX, lect. 1, n. 1773.

similitude of one. In geometry, e.g., a line is said
to be in potency to be a square, because the line can
be produced and brought back to itself to make a four-
sided figure. Likewise, in numbers, three has the power
of becoming nine if it is squared, i.e., three multiplied
by itself is nine. We can speak of a mathematical potency
in the line or in a number because of the similarity they
have to matter from which things are generated.[1] The
mathematical possible is considered here only to be excluded.

There is, secondly, the logical possible, which
does not come from a potency in the proper sense, but from
a non-repugnance of the terms in a proposition. In this
sense, possible and impossible are used, not only because
of the potency or impotence of a thing, but because of
the truth and falsity of a composition or division in
propositions.

> Unde impossibile dicitur, cujus contrarium est
> verum de necessitate.[2]

> In logicis dicimus aliqua esse possibilia et im-
> possibilia, non propter aliquam potentiam, sed eo
> quod aliquo modo sunt aut non sunt. Possibilia
> enim dicuntur, quorum opposita contingit esse vera.
> Impossibilia vero, quorum opposita non contingit
> esse vera. Et haec diversitas est propter habi-
> tudinem praedicati ad subjectum, quod quandoque est
> repugnans subjecto, sicut in impossibilibus; quandoque
> vero non, sicut in possibilibus.[3]

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[1] Ibid., n. 1774; Lib. V, lect. 14, n. 974.

[2] Ibid., n. 971.

[3] Ibid., n. 1775.

Answer to a difficulty.--There seems to be a contradiction in the two foregoing quotations from St. Thomas. In the first case, he says the impossible is that cujus contrarium est verum de necessitate. In the second, Impossibilia vero, quorum opposita non contingit esse vera. The difficulty arises chiefly in the second statement about the impossible, since the first is the common definition of the impossible. The solution must be sought in the context. He is talking about the logical possible and impossible. The first opposition of propositions is that of affirmation and negation. The opposita, then, are an affirmative and a negative proposition. But the diversity of possible and impossible, he says, comes from the connection of subject and predicate.[1] If, by a consideration only of the relation of subject and predicate, one of the opposites is necessarily false because the predicate is repugnant to the subject, then the other

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[1]"Impossibile quod dicitur secundum nullam potentiam, sed secundum se ipsum, dicitur ratione discohaerentiae terminorum. Omnis autem discohaerentia terminorum est in ratione alicujus oppositionis; in omni autem oppositione includitur affirmatio et negatio, ut probatur X Metaph. (text. com. 15); unde in omni tali impossibili implicatur affirmationem et negationem esse simul." S. Thomas, Quaest. disp. de Potentia, q. 1, a. 3 corp.

opposite is necessarily true, but both opposites cannot
be true. For example, "man" and "irrational" are repugnant,
and the affirmative proposition, "Man is irrational," is
necessarily false; its opposite, "Man is not irrational,"
is necessarily true--_opposita non contingit esse vera_, i.e.,
from the very relationship of the terms of the proposition
both opposites cannot be true. But if the predicate is not
necessarily connected or separated from the subject, both
the affirmative and the negative propositions can be true
from the sole point of view of the relationship of terms.
For example, "Socrates" and "sitting" have neither a ne-
cessary connection nor a repugnance; both the affirmation,
"Socrates is sitting," and the negation, "Socrates is not
sitting," can be true--_Possibilia . . . . quorum opposite
contingit esse vera_. The fact that _opposite_ is plural is
important; it shows that St. Thomas is not speaking of
the proposition opposed to a certain affirmative or nega-
tive proposition but of both the affirmative and negative
propositions that can be formed from the same subject and
predicate. There is, therefore, no contradiction between
the two quotations. An impossible proposition is one whose
contrary is necessarily true. Something is impossible if
the relation of subject and predicate which signifies it
prevents either an affirmation of a negation from being

true.[1]

It is necessary, furthermore, to distinguish between what is false and what is impossible. If a subject and a predicate are not repugnant, only one of the propositions (either the affirmative or the negative) will be true; the other will be false although not impossible. If a subject and a predicate are repugnant, the affirmation of their connection will be false and impossible.

> Quaedam vero sunt falsa tantum, sed non impossibilia, sicut Socratem sedere et stare. Non enim idem est falsum esse et esse impossibile; sicut te stare nunc est falsum, sed non impossibile. . . . . quaedam sunt possibilia, licet sint falsa . . . . . quaedam sunt falsa et impossibilia.[2]

As St. Thomas says in the paragraph preceding the one just quoted,

> Illa solum possibile est esse aut fieri, licet non sint, quibus positis non sequitur aliquid impossibile.

Further explanation of the logical possible.--The twelfth lesson of Cajetan's commentary on the second book of the Perihermeneias explains further details of the logical possible.

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[1] Cf. Cajetanus, In Iam, q. 9, a. 2, n. VI, "Aliquid est possibile logicum, quod tamen est necessarium reale. Possibile quidem logice: quia neutra pars contradictionis de secundo adiacente, implicat contradictionem; puta, nec ista, caelum est, nec ista, caelum non est."

[2] S. Thomas, In Metaph., Lib. IX, lect. 3, n. 1809.

Logica potentia est qua duo termini coniungi
absque contradictione in enunciatione possunt.[1]

This kind of potency and the possible include that which
is possible because it already exists, e.g., it is pos-
sible that Socrates walk when he is already walking. This
possible, which is possible because it actually is, is
distinct from the possible which is possible because it
can act. That which is possible because it actually is
cannot be related to opposites as can the physical po-
tencies. The potency to be because it actually is is
therefore called a potency only equivocally.[2]

However, the definition of the logical potency
and the logical possible is not verified solely of that
which is possible because it is. To be in act without
involving an impossibility is also true of mobile beings
which are in physical potency and of necessary things which
cannot be otherwise. The logical possible is not, therefore,
divided against the physical possible, but is related to
the physical possible as the more common to the less common,
for logical possibility includes necessary, immutable, and
mobile things.[3] In a word, what is logically possible is
not impossible.[4]

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[1] N. 1.

[2] Ibid., n. 2.

[3] Ibid., n. 3. The community of the logical possible is that
of a purely logical genus.

[4] Ibid., n. 4.

But if the logical possible is what is not impossible, and the impossible is what is necessary not to be,[1] it follows that this possible includes everything that can be, regardless of whether it ever was or will be. It includes, therefore, all possibles, even those that will never be realized. This is important for the teaching on the omnipotence of God and His knowledge of simple intelligence, which is His knowledge of things which neither are, nor were, nor will be.[2] Something is not possible for the reason that God can do it, because the argument would be circular: a thing would be possible because it is not repugnant to the divine omnipotence, and it would not be repugnant to the divine omnipotence because it is possible. The reason, consequently, for that which is absolutely possible is not to be found in the active power of God.

John of St. Thomas explains the distinction between the physical and the logical possibles by pointing out that the physical possibility is on the part of a _subject_, i.e., something which is subjected to a potency, whereas the logical or absolute possibility is on the part of the _object_, although it is denominated possible from an active power.

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[1] S. Thomas, _De Potentia_, q. 1, a. 3 corp.

[2] S. Thomas, Ia, q. 14, a. 9; _Contra Gentiles_, Lib. I, cap. 66; _De Veritate_, q. 20, a. 4 ad 1.

Unde communiter distingui solet duplex potentia,
alia logica, alia physica: logica solum explicat
rationem objecti alicujus potentiae activae, et
accipit denominationem possibilitatis a potentia
ipsa et virtute activa: potentia physica est po-
tentia subjectiva et per modum materiae, quae potest
suscipere id quod produci potest, et subjicitur
agenti ut ex illa producat, non illi objicitur sicut
res producibilis.[1]

Absolute possibility is not considered as being subjected
to a potency and its physical influence, but rather ac-
cording to a non-repugnance of terms, which is something
logical. Physical potency is always potency in a subject.

Absolute possibility can not be explained in re-
ference to existence, because the existence of a thing
depends on the physical influence of an efficient cause
putting the thing outside its cause and in existence. It
is explained rather as a capacity for existing, and capa-
city can be defined as a certain non-repugnance to that
for which it has a capacity.[2] This capacity to exist is
on the part of the essence. Such possibility is neces-
sarily included in the essence of all created things.
As an essence is that which can exist, so the possible
is that which can exist. Any object capable of existing,
which is the same as an object capable of an essence,

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[1] Cursus Theologicus, disp. XVIII, a. 1, n. 3, ed. Solesm.
(Paris: Desclée, 1931-), Vol. II, p. 373 a; cf. disp. XXXI,
a. 1, n. 5, Vol. III, p. 578 a.

[2] Ibid., disp. XXXI, a. 1, n. 5, Solesm., III, p. 578 a.

can be called real regardless of whether or not it actually exists. This is real being as divided against fictive being. Fictive being is that which is incapable of an essence and therefore cannot exist. Cajetan makes explicit the two meanings of "real."

> Ens reale dupliciter accipitur: uno modo ut distinguitur contra ens ab intellectu fabricatum, alio modo ut distinguitur contra non existens actu. Primo modo omnis res praedicamentalis est ens reale sive sit sive non. Secundo modo id tantum quod realiter existit extra causas suas est ens reale.[1]

What pertains to existence belongs to the efficient cause and demands the intervention of the will. The truth which is implied in the possibility of things before their passage to existence is transcendental truth which is the very intelligibility of an object. It is real being as opposed to fictive being which is the object of the divine omnipotence.

Objective or absolute possibility is explained in logical terms as the non-repugnance of predicate to subject.

> Dicitur autem aliquid possibile vel impossibile absolute, ex habitudine terminorum; possibile quidem, quia praedicatum non repugnat subiecto, ut Socratem sedere; impossibile vero absolute, quia praedicatum repugnat subiecto, ut hominem esse asinum.[2]

And in the same article, he says,

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[1] In de Ente et Essentia, cap. 4, q. 6, n. 59, ed. Laurent (Turin: Marietti, 1934), p. 92.

[2] S. Thomas, Ia, q. 25, a. 3 corp.

Esse autem divinum, super quod ratio divinae
potentiae fundatur, est esse infinitum, non limi-
tatum ad aliquod genus entis, sed praehabens in
se totius esse perfectionem. Unde quidquid po-
test habere rationem entis, continetur sub pos-
sibilibus absolutis, respectu quorum Deus dicitur
omnipotens.

Nihil autem opponitur rationi entis, nisi non
ens. Hoc igitur repugnat rationi possibilis abso-
luti, quod subditur divinae omnipotentiae, quod
implicat in se esse et non esse simul. Hoc enim
potentiae; sed quia non potest habere rationem
factibilis neque possibilis.

That a predicate be repugnant to a subject and that it

be contradictory that a subject be with a predicate mean

the same. To be contradictory is to imply that something

at the same time can both be and not be; this is the very

root of impossibility, since the first self-evident prin-

ciple is that it is impossible for the same thing to be

and not to be at the same time. The first principle cannot

be proved, but is known from its terms: because what is

proposed in to be is taken away by not to be, and conse-

quently to be and not to be at the same time is to be

proposed and taken away at the same time, as is evident

from the terms themselves. But if a predicate is repugnant

to a subject, it is opposed to it and destroys it. If

it could be proposed with the subject, it would not be

repugnant to it. It is for this reason that St. Thomas

says that the reason for impossibility is found in the

repugnance of terms and the reason for possibility comes

from a non-repugnance of terms. If terms are not repugnant, they can be at the same time, for that is the very meaning of non-repugnance. Therefore, where there is non-repugnance of terms, there is possibility, because they are able to be.[1]

To apply this teaching on the possible to the modal enunciation it is necessary to recall that the possible is spoken of in two ways, just as there are physical and logical potencies. In one sense, the possible is opposed to the necessary, as when something is possible because it can be and not be. In the second sense, the possible is common to necessary and contingent things and is opposed to the impossible.[2] It is the physical possible which is opposed to the necessary, and the logical possible which includes the necessary. The necessary here is the _necessarium absolute_ or _simpliciter_. That which is possible by an active irrational potency is assimilated to the necessary, because it is determined to one object and acts necessarily when that on which it acts is present and there is no impediment. These distinctions are important for ordering the consequences of modal enunciations as will be evident in a later chapter.[3]
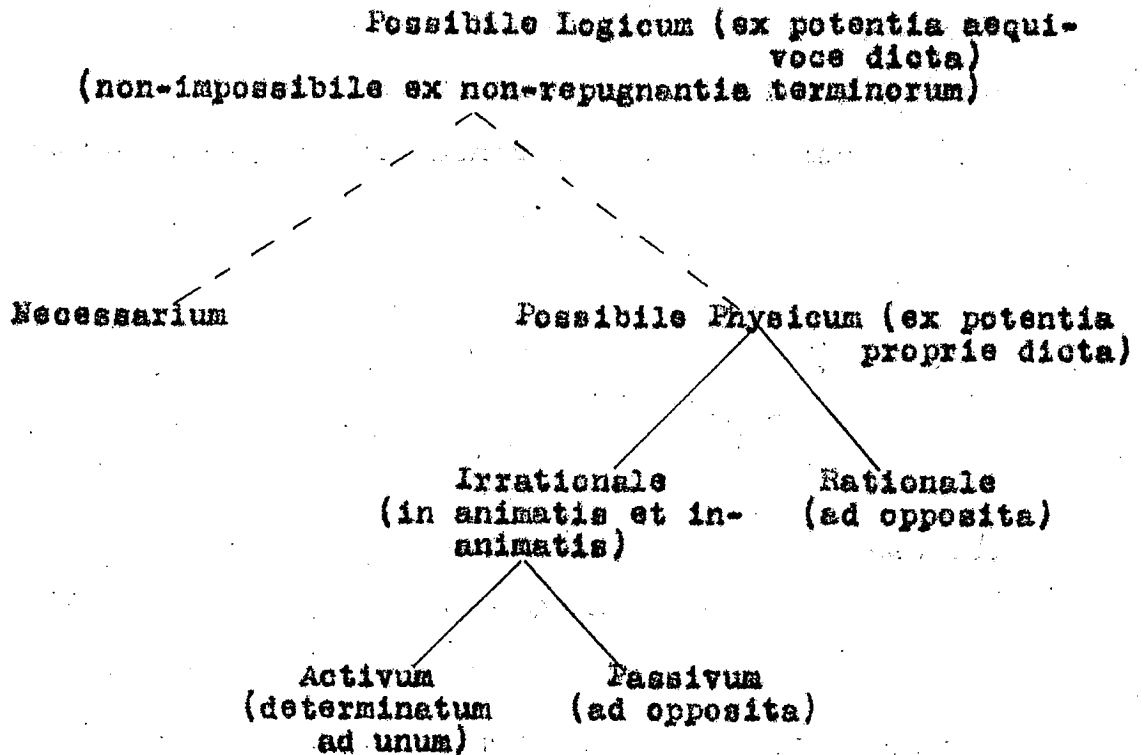
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[1]Joan. a Sto Thoma, _Curs. Theol._, disp. XXXI, a. 1, n. 11, Solsam., III, pp. 579-580; cf. S. Thomas, _De Potentia_, q. 1, a. 3.

[2]S. Thomas, _In Metaph._, Lib. IX, lect. 3, nn. 1811, 1812; _Contra Gentiles_, Lib. III, cap. 86.

[3]Cajetanus, _In Periherm._, Lib. II, lect. 12, n. 5.

Under the logical possible is included those
things which are possible because they are in act, although
they are not necessary from an intrinsic cause. Both the
rational active and the material or passive potencies can
be taken in two ways: before they are in act and as existing
in act. For example, while Socrates is sitting he has
the possibility of walking, even though he is not exercising
that possibility. When he is actually walking, it can also
be said that it is possible for him to walk. This latter
is possible because it actually is. When that which was
in potency to opposites and, therefore, was opposed to the
necessary becomes actualized, it approaches the necessary
in that the possible is not in pure act but in act mixed
with potency. This possible becomes necessary by what
St. Albert calls "reduplication of the act," e.g., a man
necessarily walks while he is walking.[1]

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[1]Periherm., I, p. 452 a.

Divisio Possibilis

Possibile Logicum (ex potentia aequi-
voce dicta)
(non-impossibile ex non-repugnantia terminorum)

Necessarium   Possibile Physicum (ex potentia
proprie dicta)

Irrationale   Rationale
(in animatis et in-   (ad opposita)
animatis)

Activum   Passivum
(determinatum   (ad opposita)
ad unum)

N.B. Possibile physicum potest deno-
minari necessarium quia ex hoc quod est
actualiter est impossibile quod non
sit; ergo, necesse quod non sit.