CHAPTER IV

The Position of Cajetan

We shall now turn to the second position, which is that of Cajetan as outlined in his commentary on the De Ente et Essentia. As in the case of the first position, we shall first state briefly the opinion of Cajetan; secondly, we shall consider the principal texts of St. Thomas which seem to favor this view; thirdly, the objections that might be brought to bear against such a position; finally, we shall review what might be considered the modern or contemporary expression of this doctrine.

It will be best, perhaps, by way of introduction, to view the context in which Cajetan proposes his position. The discussion is centered around the notion of nature or essence considered in its absolute state, or, as St. Thomas calls it, natura absoluta sumpta, i.e. nature or essence taken according to its proper meaning, or what applies to it as such, regardless of the existence it may have either in the mind or in individual things themselves. To nature or essence considered in this fashion, St. Thomas says, nothing belongs strictly except what is included in its very notion or definition. (1) This raises a doubt, as Cajetan notes, especi-

(1) "Natura autem vel essentia sic accepta potest dupliciter considerari. Uno modo secundum naturam et rationem propriam, et haec est absoluta consideratio ipsius, et hoc modo nihil est verum de ea dicere, nisi quod conveniat sibi, secundum hujusmodi..... Haec autem natura habet duplex esse: unum in singularibus, aliud in anima; et secundum utrumque consequuntur accidentia dictam naturam, et sic in singularibus habet multiplex esse secundum diversitatem singularium. Et tamen ipsi naturae secundum propriam consideracionem, scilicet absolutam, nullum istorum esse debet". --- St. Thomas, De Ente et Essentia, c. 4.

ally in regard to the transcendental notions of being, thing, one, etc. For, if the transcendentals are said to belong to nature considered in itself, then they would be quidditative predicates, and thus would be placed in the definition of nature or essence, inasmuch as no definition is complete unless it includes all quidditative predicates. All are agreed, however, that the transcendentals are not placed in the definition of anything. On the other hand, if the transcendentals are not said to belong to nature or essence absolutely, then man, inasmuch as he is man, is neither a thing, nor one, etc., which is likewise denied by everyone. (1)

Among those who did choose, however, the latter alternative was Avicenna, who was of the opinion that being did not belong to nature or the essence considered in its absolute state, for the simple reason that being signifies something that is added to the essence of a thing which is not included in its ratio. (2) . This opinion of Avicenna was rejected by St.

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(1) "Hoc enim patitur difficultatem tum propter transcendentia tum propter quaedam praedicata negativa. Si enim transcendentia, quae sunt ens, res, unum, aliquid, verum et bonum convenire asserantur naturae absolute sumptae, erunt praedicata quiditativa, et si sic ponentur in definitione; nulla enim diffinitio est completa, nisi omnia praedicata quiditativa includat: transcendentia autem in diffinitione poni omnes negant ..... Si autem transcendentia dicantur non convenire naturae absolute, tunc homo secundum se sumptum non est aliquid, nec res, nec unum quid: quod omnes negatur". --- Cajetan, In De Ente et Essentia, c. 4, n. 56

(2) "Avicenna autem, Alpharabius et Algazel, ut testatur Albertus in Postpraedicamentis, opinantur quod ens non conveniat naturae absolute sumptae. Unde dicunt hanc consequentiam non valere, Homo est substantia: ergo homo est ens; eo quod ens significat aliquid additum essentiae rei, quod non est de ejus ratione". --- Cajetan, op. cit., n. 56.

Thomas although, as Cajetan points out, it is difficult to see in what way St. Thomas does differ from Avicenna, since he expressly states that nothing outside God is being through its essence, but by something added to its essence. As a matter of fact, continues Cajetan, he explicitly says that being is not an essential predicate. (1)

In view of reconciling these seemingly opposed positions in St. Thomas' doctrine, some thought, Cajetan remarks, that being is to be taken in a twofold way, namely, as a noun and as a participle. Thus, if being is taken as a noun it can be predicated quidditatively and intrinsically of all things; for, in this sense, each thing is a being by its essence. But if being is taken as a participle, since it signifies the same thing as existing, it cannot be predicated quidditatively and intrinsically of things; for nothing outside of God is a being in this sense through its essence. That being the case, when St. Thomas rejects the opinion of Avicenna and says that being is predicated of nature or essence, being is to be taken in the sense of a noun or nominaliter, and not in the sense of a participle or participialiter. On the other hand, when St. Thomas asserts or contends that being is not an essential predicate, then one is to understand by that assertion being in the sense of a participle and not in the sense of being

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(1) "S. Thomas autem..... expresse in hoc reprehendit Avicennam; unde sententia ejus non est censenda eadem opinioni Avicennae, licet difficile sit videre in quo differat ab ea, cum ipse teneat nullum aliud a Deo esse ens per essentiam suam, sed per aliquid additum suae essentiae; et expresse dicat in quodlibeto II (quaest. 11, a. 1) ens non esse praedicatum essentiale; et in I contra Gent. (cap. xxvi) dicat ens non cadere in conceptu substantiae, quod est genus generalissimum". --- Cajetan, op. cit., p. 87.

as a noun or nominaliter. (1)

We have already had occasion to refer to Cajetan's observations on such a possible solution in commenting upon the position of Ferrara, (2) and so we need not be concerned with that at present. The solution to the problem, then, in the mind of Cajetan, is not to conceive of being as bifurcating into ens nominaliter and ens participialiter, for the transcendental notion of being which is divided into the predicaments is being understood as a participle and not as a noun. The answer lies, therefore, rather in the notion of being itself. Here it is possible to consider two aspects, both very important for a right conception of St. Thomas' viewpoint, namely, that from which the name of being is taken, i.e. the esse by which a thing is; and that to which the name is applied, i.e. the id quod est. (3)

Avicenna, centering his attention upon that from which (esse) the name being is taken, concluded simply that being is a predicate outside the essence of a thing, and consequently is something accidental. While St. Thomas, on the other hand, considering the id quod est to which the name being is imposed, refused to accept the opinion of Avicenna, precisely because the id

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(1) Ibid., p. 88.

(2) Cf. above, pp. 37ff.

(3) "Sed in entis nomine duo aspici possunt, scilicet id a quo nomen entis sumitur, scilicet ipsum esse, quo res est, et id ad quod nomen entis impositum est, scilicet id quod est. Supra enim, in principio operis, dictum est ens significare id quod est in quolibet praedicamento, et in hoc differe ab essentia, quae significat id quo res in praedicamento reponitur. Unde I Physicorum, Aristoteles, loco ly ens, ponit ly quod est". --- Ibid., p. 88.

quod est does not imply something extraneous to the essence of a thing. What is more, adverting to the fact that esse is not something foreign to the quod est, but rather constituted from its very principles, St. Thomas did not consider being as an accidental predicate. (1) As Cajetan notes, this can be said of no other factor outside the essence of a thing; nothing outside the essence can be constituted by the proper principles of a thing itself, except its existence. (2) Everything else that is added is constituted by the proper principles of another genus, namely, its proper genus and proper difference. It is in this way that accident is truly something "superadded" to the essence. White, for instance, is not the proper genus of man, but something entirely different from the nature of man. It is another entity added to him. Whereas existence is constituted through the genus and difference and principles of the very thing itself, the quod est. It adds absolutely nothing that could be put in another predicament. It actualizes, but it does not add another entity to the thing. This is why, Cajetan contends, that St. Thomas leaves esse a substantial predicate, although it is not altogether

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(1) "Avicenna ergo attendens ad id quo res est, unde nomen entis sumptum est, dixit simpliciter ens esse praedicatum extra essentiam rei. S. Thomas vero intuens id quod est, ad quod nomen entis impositum est, Avicennae non adhaesit. Namque ipsum quod est non praedicat aliquid extra essentiam rei. Insuper advertens quod ipsum quo res est, scilicet actualis existentia, non est extraneae naturae ab ipso quod est, sed per principia propria ipsius, quod est constituitur, inter praedicata accidentalia, ens annumerare noluit". --- Ibid., p. 88.

(2) "Hoc enim non potest asseri de quocunque alio extra essentiam rei. Nihil enim extra essentiam rei per propria principia ipsius rei constituitur, nisi rei existentia..... Ipsum autem existere, non nisi per genus et differentiam et principia ipsius quod est, constituitur". --- Ibid., p. 88.

substantial in the same way as those predicates which form the definition of a thing. (1)

Viewed in this light, continues Cajetan, the doctrine of St. Thomas becomes perfectly intelligible. The transcendentals are not proper predicates of nature or essence, whether it is considered absolutely, or as it exists in singulars, or according to its existence in the intellect. They are rather common predicates, and it is as common predicates that they can thus be predicated of nature or essence in any way whatsoever it is considered. By the very fact that man is found in individuals, man has the character of being, unity, thing, etc. In the same way, by reason of the esse it has in the intellect being is, in a way, undivided, true, good, etc. And the same can be said of nature or essence considered in itself. Hence, absolutely speaking, it is true to say that man is being. According to Cajetan, this is what St. Thomas means when he says that being signifies the natures or essences of the ten genera, whether they be actually or only potentially, and not only according as they are actually. (2)

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(1) "Et haec est ratio, qua S. Thomas arguit Avicennam, unde ens praedicatum de aliquo, puta homine, cum non trahat hominem extra proprium genus et propriam differentiam, nec ratione ipsius quod est, substantiale praedicatum esse relinquitur cum Aristotele et Commentatore, ubi supra, licet non sit omnino eodem modo substantiale, quo praedicata illa, quae in diffinitione cadunt". --- Ibid., p. 89.

(2) "Transcendentia non sunt praedicata propria naturae secundum suam absolutam considerationem, neque secundum esse in singularibus, neque secundum esse in intellectu, sed sunt praedicata communia naturae quomodolibet acceptae, convenientia non solum concomitative, sed etiam causaliter. Et de natura quidem tam secundo quam tertio modo accepta, patet: ex hoc

A full understanding of Cajetan's opinion, as stated here, presupposes much of what has been established previously in the earlier part of his commentary. Under the circumstances, in order to see this position in its proper light, we shall have to consider certain factors that are basic in Cajetan's conception of being. Leaving aside for the moment all thought of ens nominaliter and ens participialiter, our attention will be brought to bear mainly on the notion of being itself, such as it is understood by Cajetan.

According to Cajetan, being signifies that which has esse: id quod habet esse. In other words, being comprises in a manner both essence and esse. In this it differs profoundly from essence, which simply signifies what is implied in the definition of a thing, abstracting from the fact whether it has esse or not. (1) Viewed in this light, being presents a rather composite aspect in contrast to the simplicity of essence; and it

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enim quod homo in singularibus invenitur, entis, unius, rei, et reliquorum rationem habet. Similiter ex hoc quod habet esse in intellectu ens est aliquo modo indivisum, etc; et debetur enim sic sibi aliquod esse, licet rationis. De natura autem primo modo sumpta, ex dictis patere potest, et ex eo quod in quocunque invenitur posterius transcendens, invenitur et prius. Manifestum est autem de posterioribus transcendentibus, quae sunt unum, res, aliquid, etc., quod conveniunt naturae absolute. Unde de homine, absolute loquendo, ista est vera: Homo est ens. Unde et S. Thomas dicit super X Metaph., ubi supra, quod ens praedicat naturas decem generum, secundum quod sunt actu, vel potentia, et non tantum secundum quod sunt actu". ----- Ibid., p. 89.

(1) "Ens, ut infra dicetur, significat id quod habet esse, id autem quod habet esse comprehendit in se essentiam; essentia vero significat id quod importat diffinitio, ut dicetur, quae non dicit esse vel non esse". --- Ibid., n. 8, p. 20.

is precisely this light that enables us to grasp more easily the notion of essence. For it is from being that the notion of essence is derived. Now, being may be spoken of in two ways: in one way it is divided into ten supreme genera; in another way as it signifies the truth of a proposition. This latter case need not interest here, since essence is taken from being spoken of in the former sense. Since being signifies, then, that which is in each category or predicament and in each genus and species, essence, inasmuch as it is derived from being, must signify that by which each thing is in a certain genus or species. Now, it is according to their natures that things are placed in the various categories, but what is placed in the category is the thing itself. Hence, it follows that essence signifies something common to all the natures of things, just as being signifies that which is in each genus and each species; for being and essence are related as quod and quo. Consequently, continues Cajetan, just as being is predicated of all things which are in the various genera, in like manner essence is predicated of all those things by which they are placed in the various genera. By essence, therefore, one understands the nature of a thing; whereas by being one understands what has such a nature. (1)

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(1) "Sicut ens significat aliquid commune omnibus existentibus, ita essentia, cum ab illo sumatur, significat aliquid commune omnibus generibus et speciebus; et sicut ens significat id quod est in quolibet genere et qualibet specie, ita essentia oportet quod significet id quo aliquid est in quocunque genere et quavis specie: habent enim se ens et essentia ut quod et quo. Cum autem naturae rerum sint illae, quibus res reponuntur in generibus et speciebus, sequitur quod essentia significat aliquid commune omnibus naturis rerum; unde quemadmodum ens praedicatur de homine, bove, et similibus quae sunt in generibus, ita essentia praedicatur de humanitate et bonitate, quibus res in generibus reponuntur. Per nomen ergo Essentiae intelligitur natura rei, sicut per nomen Entis id quod habet naturam illam". --- Ibid., n. 10, p. 23.

In thus contrasting being and essence Cajetan has established what he regards as fundamental to a proper understanding of being. With a view of giving more explicit developments Cajetan turns next to a consideration of the concept of being itself. As he explains it, to speak of the concept of being is to speak of its signification; for they are one and the same thing. (1) A proper understanding of the nature of being presupposes a proper understanding of what being signifies; and conversely, a proper understanding of the signification of being presupposes a proper understanding of its nature. In the concept of being, as in the concept of any other object of thought, we can distinguish a formal concept, i.e. the image which the intellect forms within itself representing the thing understood, and an objective concept, i.e. the thing represented in the formal concept in which the act of understanding is terminated. (2) Thus, the formal concept of being represents that in which all real things are assimilated. But all things are alike or can be assimilated in so far as they have esse. Hence,

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(1) "Nec putandum est cum dicitur nomen significare conceptum quod significat alterum tantum: significat enim leonis nomen conceptum utrumque, licet diversimode, est namque signum conceptus formalis ut medii, seu quo, et est signum conceptus objectalis, ut ultimi seu quod. Unde idem est loqui de conceptu entis et de significatione ejus". --- Ibid., n. 14, p. 25.

(2) "Conceptus formalis est idolum quoddam quod intellectus possibilis format in seipso repraesentativum objectaliter rei intellectae: quod a philosophis vocatur intentio seu conceptus, a theologis vero verbum. Conceptus autem objectalis est res per conceptum formalem repraesentata in illo terminans actum intelligendi, verbi gratia: conceptus formalis leonis est imago illa quam intellectus possibilis format de quiditate leonina, cum vult ipsam intelligere; conceptus vero objectalis ejusdem est natura ipsa leonina repraesentata et intellecta". --- Ibid., p. 25.

the similitude or likeness which all things have in esse is the formal concept of being. (1) It is important to note, however, that this formal concept of being does not represent the similitude itself that exists between all such things, for no formal concept does that. What it represents is the basis or foundation of this similitude; and this foundation thus represented forms the objective concept of being, for the objective concept is nothing else but that which is represented by the formal concept. (2)

It is in insisting on this factor especially, i.e. the fact that there is something in the things themselves which is the foundation for this similitude that one can argue the objective validity of the concept of being, that it is something real found in all things. (3) This is the argument

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(1) "Ens significat unum conceptum formalem communem in repraesentando substantiae et accidenti Deo et creaturae..... Omnia similia quacumque similitudine etiam analoga seu imitativa secundum id in quo assimilantur, possunt per eandem imaginem repraesentari; sed Deus et creaturae, substantia et accidens habent similitudinem inter se saltem analogam: ergo secundum id in quo assimilantur, possunt per eandem similitudinem repraesentari. Sed assimilantur in esse: ergo eadem similitudine poterunt repraesentari in quantum habent esse; similitudo illa est conceptus formalis entis". --- Ibid., p. 26.

(2) "Sicut conceptus formalis animalis repraesentat fundamentum similitudinis genericae, et conceptus formalis hominis repraesentat fundamentum similitudinis specificae, et universaliter quaelibet imago communis pluribus in repraesentando repraesentat fundamentum similitudinis inter illa plura, ut patet in exemplo de specie in oculo causata a specie Sortis in speculo: quum illa repraesentat non similitudinem inter speciem in speculo et Sortem, cum sit relatio, sed fundamentum illius similitudinis puta qualitates et lineamenta quae sunt in utroque". --- Ibid., p. 27.

(3) "Sic conceptus entis formalis repraesentat fundamentum analogicae similitudinis in esse inter omnia entia realia existentis, quod in omnibus esse absque opere intellectus ex eo patet quod similia sunt extra animam: cum hoc fundamentum repraesentatum sit conceptus objectalis entis, ut dictum est, patet conceptum objectalem entis esse aliquid reale inventum in omnibus". --- Ibid., p. 27.

that Cajetan uses; and as he points out in this connection, since what is signified by the name being is something found in all things, and since it is not a grade distinct from the generic and specific grades found in things except by a distinction of reason, the objective concept of being are the generic and specific natures as having esse; for it is thus that they establish the analogous similitude which we perceive in the notion or concept of being. (1)

Cajetan arrives at this conclusion in the following way: Each generic, specific, or individual grade found in things is such that it can be considered in many ways. In so far as each is considered as having esse, it is signified by the name being, and thus pertains to the objective concept of being. But according as such and such a grade of being is considered absolutely in itself, then it is signified by its proper name, and that is its objective concept. For instance, humanity, by reason of its proper formal perfection, as distinguished from all other perfections, is represented by the formal concept of humanity and it is known and signified by the name humanity. Humanity as such, however, has also that which belongs to it, namely, quiddity and actual existence; and thus it is represented in the formal concept of being as a part of its objective concept, and signified by the name of being. (2)

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(1) "Unde conceptus objectalis entis sunt naturae genericae et specificae ut habentes esse; sic enim fundant analogam similitudinem, de qua loquimur, et propterea ens et passiones ejus in quolibet gradu praecise accepto salvantur". --- Ibid., p. 28.

(2) "Gradus quicunque genericus vel specificus, vel differentialis vel individualis, habet in se unde multis modis concipi possit: et secundum quod

From these considerations, Cajetan concludes, it is evident that it is from beings in so far as they are similar, that the concept of being is abstracted. And just as essence does not signify a nature common to all the various generic and specific natures, but signifies all natures as agreeing in this that they are essences; in the same way, being does not signify a reality distinct, over and above the reality of things themselves, but rather it signifies all things in so far as they are assimilated in this that they are or have esse in some way. (1)

Let this suffice as a summary of the position of Cajetan. If it has not already been evident from the preceding considerations of Cajetan's views, it should be noted that ens participialiter need not be taken here in the manner described by Ferrara, namely, that being signifies primarily esse and secondarily the subject which has esse. As we have seen, Cajetan

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quilibet ergo est habens esse, nomine Entis importatur, et ad conceptum objectalem entis pertinet: secundum vero quod absolute talis vel talis gradus consideratur, nomine proprio significatur, et conceptus objectalis illius est, verbi gratia, humanitas ex sua propria perfectione formali, qua distinguitur contra reliquas universi perfectiones, habet quod per conceptum formalem humanitatis repraesentatur et cognoscatur et significetur humanitatis nomine. Humanitas, ut sic etiam habet quod sibi debeatur, seu conveniat esse quiditativum, et actualis existentiae: et sic repraesentatur conceptu formali entis tanquam pars sui objectalis conceptus, et entis nomine significatur". --- Ibid., p. 28.

(1) "Sic ergo patet qualiter ab omnibus entibus utpote similibus abstrahibilis est conceptus entis..... et patet qualiter sit verum quod hic S. Thomas dicit: ..... non enim intendit quod essentia significet aliquam naturam communem omnibus naturis, sed quod significet omnes naturas, ut assimilantur in hoc, quod essentia sunt: quaelibet enim naturae ut sunt, quibus res sunt, essentiae rationem habent, sicut quaelibet res habent rationem entis, ut sunt habentes esse seu quae sunt". --- Ibid., p. 29.

did not define the two terms at all; but it is quite obvious that he does not consider ens participialiter in exactly the same fashion as Ferrara. There is no question, it seems, in the mind of Cajetan of a primary and secondary signification of being. For him, being signifies the whole quod est or, as he states it himself, id quod habet esse. As he views the matter, being signifies the essences or natures of things, but precisely in so far as they have esse. What he seems to insist upon is that being in its proper formality signifies whatever has a reference to esse. If he rejects the position of ens nominaliter, therefore, it is only because it appears to him to identify being with essence or to relegate esse to a sort of secondary and unimportant position.

Now we must examine the principal texts of St. Thomas which seem to confirm the position of Cajetan. The strongest arguments in favor of such a view center around the doctrine of St. Thomas on the good. This doctrine may be found in the Summa Theologica, First Part, Questions V and VI; De Veritate, Question 21; and in the commentary on I Ethics, Lesson VI. The most significant passage in this regard is, perhaps, the following passage from the Summa Theologica.

> Nam cum ens dicat aliquid proprie esse in actu, actus autem proprie ordinem habeat ad potentiam, secundum hoc simpliciter aliquid dicitur ens, secundum quod primo discernitur ab eo quod est in potentia tantum. Hoc autem est esse substantiale rei uniuscuiusque; unde per suum esse substantiale dicitur unumquodque ens simpliciter. (1)

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(1) Ia, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1. In addition to the texts mentioned above, the following might be added as further evidences of St. Thomas' doctrine

This passage would seem to summarize perfectly the principles outlined by Cajetan. Of special note is the use of the word proprie which St. Thomas employs in this connection. This appears to be a clear indication that being signifies formally and properly actual existence, and hence being in the sense of ens participialiter. This is quite evident, moreover, from the context of the body of the article, where St. Thomas equates actuality and perfection which play the role of middle term in bringing out the convertibility of being and the good. This same idea is expressed again in Article Three: Every being as being is good. For every being, as being, has actuality and is in some way perfect. And since every act implies some sort of perfection, and perfection implies desirability and goodness, it is evident that every being as such is good. (1)

Cajetan regards these and similar other passages concerning St. Thomas' doctrine on the good as so conclusive and, at the same time, so expressive of the mind of St. Thomas, that any further evidence would be superfluous and wholly unnecessary. If, however, the contrast between the two positions

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on the good: In divin. nom., c. 6, lect. 1: "Etiam non existens actu, quod est ens in potentia, hoc ipso quod habet ordinem ad bonum, habet rationem boni secundum causalitatis entis quod participat quando fit ens actu". --- Ia, q. 20, a. 2c: "Omnia existentia, inquantum sunt, bona sunt; ipsum enim esse cuiuslibet rei quoddam bonum est". ---- Ia, q. 44, a. 4c and ad 1; q. 45, a. 4c; a. 5, ad 1; a. 8c; q. 48, a. 1c; a. 6c; q. 49, a. 1c; q. 65, a. 2, ad1.

(1) "Omne ens, inquantum est ens, est bonum. Omne enim ens, inquantum est ens, est in actu, et quodammodo perfectum, quia omnis actus perfectio quaedam est". --- Ia, q. 5, a. 3c. That the actus St. Thomas is speaking about is esse can be gathered from what he has said previously: "Intantum est autem perfectum unumquodque, intantum est actu; unde manifestum est quod intantum est aliquid bonum, inquantum est ens; esse enim est actualitas omnis rei, ut ex superioribus patet". --- Ibid., a. 1c.

is to be judged adequately, a brief survey of other relevant texts will have to be considered, in order that the position may not be open to the charge that its major weakness suffers from too close an identification between being and good.

A very important passage is the following statement wherein St. Thomas shows that, because no imperfection or mode of participation is included in its signification, being can be applied properly to God.

> Quaedam vero nomina significant ipsas perfectiones absolute, absque hoc quod aliquis modus participandi claudatur in eorum significatione, ut ens, bonum, vivens, et hujusmodi; et talia proprie dicuntur Deo. (1)

Further confirmation can be found in the following texts from the Metaphysics. In many of these places St. Thomas employs both ens and esse as if they signified exactly the same thing.

> Quantitas et qualitas et hujusmodi non sunt simpliciter entia, ut infra dicetur. Nam ens dicitur quasi esse habens, hoc autem solum est substantia, quae subsistit. Accidentia autem dicuntur entia, non quia sunt, sed quia magis ipsis aliquid est, sicut albedo dicitur esse, quia ejus subjectum est album. (2)

> Hoc autem nomen ens significat ipsum esse. (3)

> Ponit alium modum entis, secundum quod esse et est, significant compositionem propositionis, quam facit intellectus componens et dividens.. Ponit distinctionem entis per actum et potentiam; dicens quod ens et esse significat aliquid dicibile vel effabile in potentia, vel dicibile in actu. (4)

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(1) Ia, q. 13, a. 3, ad 1.

(2) In XII Metaph., lect. 1, n. 2419.

(3) In IV Metaph., lect. 2, n. 556.

(4) In V Metaph., lect. 9, nn. 895, 897.

> Nam ens simpliciter, dicitur id quod in se habet esse, scilicet substantia. Alia vero dicuntur entia, quia sunt hujus quod per se est, vel passio, vel habitus, vel aliquid hujusmodi. Non enim qualitas dicitur ens, quia ipsa habeat esse, sed per eam, substantia dicitur esse disposita. (1)

There seems to be little doubt from these texts that St. Thomas is here considering being as formally related in some way or another to esse. This is brought out with equal force in the following passages, where St. Thomas says that being signifies formally esse.

> Unde oportet, quod ens contrahatur ad diversa genera secundum diversum modum praedicandi, qui consequitur diversum modum essendi; quia "quoties ens dicitur", idest quot modis aliquid praedicatur, "toties esse significatur", idest tot modis significatur aliquid esse. (2)

There are numerous other passages, especially in the Summa Contra Gentiles, which manifest this same doctrine. Here is a typical example showing how St. Thomas envisioned being as predicated of God and creatures, without the necessity of introducing ens nominaliter.

> Quod per essentiam dicitur, est causa omnium quae per participationem dicuntur..... Deus autem est ens per essentiam suam: quia est ipsum esse. Omne autem aliud ens est ens per participationem: quia ens quod sit suum esse, non potest esse nisi unum. (3)

Much insight, obviously, could be gained by an examination of other pertinent texts, but we shall let these suffice for the present. Now we must

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(1) In XI Metaph., lect. 3, n. 2197.

(2) In V Metaph., lect. 9, n. 890.

(3) C. G. II, c. 15.

take up some of the possible objections that might be urged against this position. The main difficulty arising from such a solution, it might be objected, is that it fails to account for the radical difference between God and creatures. The infinite distance between the Ipsum esse subsistens and the creature is such that it can be effectively retained only by a sedulous demarcation such as ens nominaliter and ens participialiter. This was precisely the difficulty that confronted Ferrara, we will recall, and that is why he asserted that ens participialiter is that which is predicated essentially only of God, whereas being that is predicated essentially of creatures is ens nominaliter, which signifies the essence of things and which is divided into the predicaments, and not ens participialiter.

The difficulty mentioned in the objection has already been answered in part. The reasoning of St. Thomas, as Cajetan observes, is not easy to grasp, but it is nonetheless very profound. (1) The name of being is taken from the act of being, which is esse; for esse is said to be the act of being in so far as it is being, that is, that by which something is denominated being in act in the natural order. (2) It is evident that the only esse we have direct experience of is the esse of created things. It is, therefore, from created things that our notion of being is taken. (3) On the

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(1) Cajetan, op. cit., n. 56, p. 87.

(2) "Esse dicitur actus entis inquantum est ens, idest quo denominatur aliquid ens actu in rerum natura". --- Quod., 9, 2, 3c.

(3) "Non enim cadit in visionem intellectus nostri nisi aliquod ens creatum et finitum quod omnino deficit ab ente increato et infinito: et ideo oportet quod Deum intelligamus esse supra omne id quod intellectu

other hand, we realize that no finite thing is its own *esse*, but is one having *esse*; that in every creature whatsoever, that which has *esse* is different from its *esse*. In all finite things, consequently, a distinction must be made between that from which the name of being is taken, *esse*, that by which the thing is, and that upon which the name of being is imposed, *id quod est*. Our notion of being, therefore, as Cajetan shows, is a composite notion made up of *id quod*, the subject of being, and *esse*, the act of being. (1)

In intellectual substances the *id quod est* is the form; (2) in composite substances the *id quod est* comprises both matter and form; (3) but in both cases the *esse* of a thing is consequent upon the form; (4) and this *esse* following upon the form enters in the very constitution of the thing. (5)

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apprehendere possumus". --- *In de div. nom.*, lect. 4. Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 7: "Intellectus autem noster hoc modo intelligit esse quo modo invenitur in rebus inferioribus a quibus scientiam capit, in quibus esse non est subsistens, sed inhaerens".

(1) "Ens primo modo est illud compositum, de quo supra diximus, quod aliqualiter complectitur in se essentiam et esse". --- Cajetan, *op. cit.*, n. 9, p. 22.

(2) "In substantiis autem intellectualibus, quae non sunt ex materia et forma compositae, ut ostensum est, sed in eis ipsa forma est substantia subsistens, forma est *quod est*, ipsum autem *esse* est actus et *quo est*". --- *C. G.* II, c. 54.

(3) "Unde in compositis ex materia et forma nec materia nec forma potest dici ipsum quod est, nec etiam ipsum esse. Forma autem potest dici *quo est*, secundum quod est essendi principium; ipsa autem tota substantia est ipsum *quod est*; et ipsum esse est quo substantia denominatur *ens*". --- *Ibid.*, c. 54.

(4) "Esse per se consequitur formam; unumquodque enim habet esse secundum propriam formam; unde esse a forma nullo modo separari potest". --- *Q. D. De Anima*, q. 1, a. 14c.

(5) "Esse enim rei quamvis sit aliud ab ejus essentia, non tamen est intelligendum quod sit aliquid superadditum ad modum accidentis, sed quasi constituitur per principia essentiae". --- *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 2, n. 558.

Thus, each thing has in itself an *esse* which is proper to it, and which is substantial and distinct from all others. (1) In this way, being is a substantial predicate; and it can be predicated as such of all things, for it signifies precisely things in so far as they *are* or have *esse* in some way.

This in no way suggests, however, that being is an essential predicate, or that it pertains to the essence intrinsically as such. For being is not put in the definition of any finite thing; otherwise we should have to say that being is a genus. But since this is impossible, the question *whether a thing* is is different from the question *what it is*. In this respect, since everything that is outside the essence is said to be an accident, the *esse* which pertains to the question *an est*, is an accident. (2) But it is an accident only in a wide sense or through a certain likeness. (3)

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(1) "Habet enim res unaquaeque in seipsa esse proprium ab omnibus aliis rebus distinctum". --- *C. G.* I, c. 14. --- "Esse vero quod in sui natura unaquaeque res habet, est substantiale. Et ideo, cum dicitur, Socrates est, si ille Est primo modo (i.e. as divided into the predicaments) accipitur, est de praedicato substantiali. Nam ens est superius ad unumquodque entium, sicut animal ad hominem. Si autem accipiatur secundo modo (i.e. as signifying truth in a proposition), est de praedicato accidentali". --- *In V Metaph.*, lect. 9, n. 896.

(2) "Ens autem non ponitur in definitione creaturae, quia nec est genus nec differentia; unde participatur sicut aliquid non existens de essentia rei; et ideo alia quaestio est *an est* et *quid est*. Unde, cum omne quod est praeter essentiam rei, dicatur accidens; esse quod pertinet ad quaestionem *an est*, est accidens". --- *Quod.*, 2, 2, 3.

(3) "Accidens dicitur large omne quod non est pars essentiae; et sic est esse in rebus creatis, quia in solo Deo esse est ejus essentia". --- *Quod.*, 2, 2, 3. --- "Esse non dicitur accidens quod sit in genere accidentis, si loquamur de esse substantiae (est enim actus essentiae), sed per quandam similitudinem; quia non est pars essentiae, sicut nec accidens". --- *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 4, ad 3.

For, although *esse* has a certain likeness to an accident because both are outside the essence of a thing, nevertheless it must not be confused with accident for it results from the very intrinsic principles of a thing.

For that reason, Cajetan contends that there is no necessity for introducing the notion of *ens nominaliter*, nor is there any difficulty in maintaining that being in the sense of *ens participialiter* is that which is transcendent and divided into the predicaments. Here, as elsewhere, one must realize that being is not predicated of God and creatures in the same way. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to find a more precise way of describing the radical difference between the Creator and the creature than the expression so often employed by St. Thomas that being belongs to God essentially, while it pertains to creatures only by participation; that in God *esse* is identical with his essence, whereas in finite things *esse* is received and limited by an essence. (1) This is the profound truth that the *Metaphysics* discovers, and that is why Cajetan maintains that it is concerned formally with *esse*. (2) The limited realization of being in creatures, the distinction between potency and act and essence and existence, the multiplicity and order of beings, all this leads inevitably to the demonstration of an *ens per se*, to one who is being *essentially*, and who is con-

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(1) *In II Post. Anal.*, lect. 6, n. 3.

(2) "Si perfectiones omnes formaliter et praecise considerentur, scilicet esse, vivere, intelligere, et caetera, ut sanctus Thomas in *Prima Parte* q. IV a. 1 et 2 docuit, esse est perfectissima omnium et comparatur ad omnes ut actus ad potentiam. Unde, cum scientia de anima sit de vivere et intelligere, et metaphysica sit formaliter de esse, sequitur quod metaphysica sit nobilior". --- Cajetan, *Commentaria in De Anima Aristotelis*, I, n. 19.

sequently the principle and cause of all being. (1) It is only when this principle is reached that the esse of created things can be understood; for the esse which is in finite things can be understood only as deduced from the divine esse. (2) Finite being is intelligible only in the light of Him who is being essentially. The metaphysician searching for truth finds it when he attains the First Principle of being, for that which is the cause of esse is the cause of truth. (3)

While such a point might be conceded, a further objection could be proposed on the ground that the position of ens participialiter cannot possibly be reconciled with the clear and explicit statement, so often repeated by St. Thomas, that being which is divided into the predicaments signifies the essence of things, whether they be actual or possible; and that being, although taken from the act of being, signifies the same thing as the name taken from the essence. Since this is so, it would seem more proper, and at the same

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(1) "Cum ergo esse inveniatur omnibus rebus commune, quae secundum illud quod sunt, ad invicem distinctae sunt, oportet quod de necessitate eis non ex se ipsis, sed ab aliqua una causa esse attribuatur.....Unde oportet quod ab uno illo ente omnia alia sint, quaecumque non sunt suum esse, sed habent esse per modum participationis". --- De Pot., q. 3, a. 5c.

(2) "Licet causa prima, quae Deus est, non intret essentiam rerum creatarum; tamen esse, quod rebus creatis inest, non potest intelligi nisi ut deductum ab esse divino; sicut nec proprius effectus potest intelligi nisi ut deductus a causa propria". --- Ibid., ad 1.

(3) "Cum enim ita sit, quod ea, quae sunt aliis causa essendi, sint maxime vera, sequitur quod unumquodque sicut se habet ad hoc quod sit, ita etiam se habet ad hoc quod habeat veritatem. Ea enim, quorum esse non semper eodem modo se habet, nec veritas eorum semper manet. Et ea, quorum esse habet causam, etiam veritatis causam habent. Et hoc ideo, quia esse rei est causa verae existimationis quam mens habet de re". --- In II Metaph., lect. 2, n. 298.

time more in keeping with the doctrine of St. Thomas, to hold the position of ens nominaliter.

This objection can easily be answered from what has already been stated. As in the case of the previous objection, the difficulty here is due largely to a misunderstanding. In the first place, it would certainly be wrong to interpret this position as maintaining that being does not signify the natures and essences of things. Such a view would be untenable, of course. As was indicated previously, what is divided into the predicaments are things, not natures. The nature or essence is that by which an object is ordered in the various genera; but what is placed in the category is the object itself, that which has such and such a nature. (1) As St. Thomas remarks in the De Ente et Essentia: "Because that by which a thing is constituted in its proper genus or species is that which is signified by the definition indicating what a thing is, hence the name essence is changed by philosophers into the name quiddity; and this is what the Philosopher frequently calls quod quid erat esse, that is, that by which a thing has to be something..... but it is called essence in as much as through it and in it the thing has its esse". (2) Consequently, being as divided into the predicaments signifies precisely that which has esse in some way or another: id quod habet esse

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(1) Cajetan, op. cit., n. 10.

(2) De Ente et Essentia, Prooemium.

aliquo modo. The point which Cajetan appears to maintain, therefore, in opposition to the theory of ens nominaliter is that being in its proper formality does not signify essence but esse. (1) In his opinion, what the first position fails to observe is that the notion of essence is derived from the notion of being, and apart from any other consideration this would be, in itself, an indication that being does not signify formally the same thing as essence.

One other objection could possibly be raised here. The tendency to make ens participialiter the being that is divided into the predicaments seems to involve the danger of running counter to one of the most fundamental doctrines of metaphysics, namely, that being may be either actual or potential. The unavoidability of such a consequence, then, would seem to indicate that the very principle itself upon which such a theory is based is false.

Before proceeding to deal with this objection we must draw attention to one possible misunderstanding. It should be noted, first of all, that in asserting being signifies esse this in no way implies that something is said to be or to exist. That is an altogether different problem, and one which pertains to the act of judgment. What we are concerned with here is not the judgment of the intellect, but rather the simple signification of being, i.e. what does being in its formal aspect signify?

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(1) "Ens aut solum aut maxime significat formaliter esse". --- Cajetan, Commentaria in Summam Theologicam, In Primam Partem, q. 3, a. 5, n. II.

In the first place, the position of ens participialiter in no way conflicts with the metaphysical doctrine of potency and act. On the contrary, it is most evidently in harmony with it. One must not overlook the fact that the division of being into the predicaments is what Aristotle calls perfect being. It is being as contracted according to the various ways that things have esse. It is a classification of things that are, that have esse. (1) For the predicaments follow the diverse modes of predicating only because they depend in the last analysis on the various modes of being. (2) The distinction of being into potency and act, on the other hand, follows the division of being into the predicaments. It is a much more general division, which includes being after a fashion or imperfect being, i.e. being in potency. Therefore, this latter division of being is much wider in extent than perfect being, the being of the predicaments. (3) Secondly, and this reason follows as a consequence of the first, being properly speaking means that something is actually. St. Thomas repeats

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(1) "Omne quod est in genere substantiae est compositum reali compositione: eo quod id quod est in praedicamento substantiae, est in suo esse subsistens, et oportet esse suum sit aliud quam ipsum; alias non posset differe secundum esse ab illis cum quibus convenit in ratione quidditatis suae; quod requitur in omnibus quae sunt directe in praedicamento: et ideo omne quod est directe in praedicamento substantiae compositum est saltem ex esse et quod est." --- De Ver., q. 27, a. 1, ad 8.

(2) "Unde oportet, quod ens contrahatur ad diversa genera secundum diversum modum praedicandi, qui consequitur diversum modum essendi; quia "quoties ens dicitur", idest quot modis aliquid praedicatur, "toties esse significatur", idest tot modis significatur aliquid esse". --- In V Metaph., lect. 9, n. 890. Cf. De Ver., q. 21, a. 1c.

(3) "Tertio dividit ens per potentiam et actum: et ens sic divisum est communius quam ens perfectum. Nam ens in potentia, est ens secundum quid tantum et imperfectum". --- In V Metaph., lect. 9, n. 889.

this often: being is said of a thing simply in respect, not of what it is potentially, but of what it is actually. (1) The notion of being derives all its force and meaning from the actuality of being: ens dicitur quasi esse habens. (2) In its rigorous and fundamental sense that is what being means. (3) When it is said that being signifies esse, or that ens participialiter is the being that is divided into the predicaments, this does not, however, exclude being in potency by any means, nor should anyone consider it in that light. All that is implied here is that something has esse; whether it has esse actually or only potentially, that is another matter altogether. The main point, therefore, that Cajetan seems to insist upon is that being must be defined in terms of esse, in much the same way as St. Thomas speaks of it in the following passage.

> Quae enim nondum esse participant, in esse quodam naturali appetitu tendunt; unde et materia appetit formam, secundum Philosophum in I Phys. Omnia autem quae iam esse habent, illud esse suum naturaliter amant, et ipsum tota virtute conservant..... Unde sicut impossibile est quod sit aliquod ens quod non habeat esse; ita necesse est quod omne ens sit bonum ex hoc ipso quod esse habet. (4)

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(1) "Et quia bonum, sicut et ens, non dicitur simpliciter aliquid secundum id quod est in potentia, sed secundum id quod est in actu". --- Ia IIae, q. 56, a. 3c. Cf. C. G. I, c. 22.

(2) In XII Metaph., lect. 1, n. 2419.

(3) "Cum autem in re sit quidditas et suum esse, veritas fundatur in esse rei magis quam in quidditate, sicut et nomen entis ab esse imponitur". --- In I Sent., d. 19, q. 5, a. 1c.

(4) De Ver., q. 21, a. 2c.

What the objection fails to observe, and without which it is impossible to adequately understand the nature of being, is that being has not one absolute signification. This was the old Parmenidean error. Parmenides was forced to deny motion, change and multiplicity simply because being could have for him only one meaning: being in act. In a similar way this is the difficulty that besets the objection. It cannot conceive of ens participialiter except as being in act, and consequently it concludes that such a position is impossible to hold, because being in the predicaments is divided by potency and act. It is quite evident, however, that such an assumption is not justified. Being, as St. Thomas has repeated over and over again, is said in many ways. The importance of this factor cannot be overlooked, without risking a misunderstanding of the nature of being and its analogical character. Ens participialiter does not mean being in act solely. That is what it signifies principally; but it can mean being in act or being in potency. One must not forget, however, that the latter must be defined in terms of the former, for we do not explain being in act by being in potency, but rather being in potency is explained by being in act. Potency is ordered to act, and it can be defined only in reference to actuality: potentia dicitur ad actum. (1) Consequently, being properly signifies being in act; but this is not its sole signification.

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(1) "Sed potentia non potest definiri nisi per actum. Nam prima ratio possibilis in hoc consistit, quod convenit ipsum agere vel esse in actu..... Ergo est necessarium, quod ratio actus praecedat rationem potentiae, et notitia actus notitiam potentiae". --- In IX Metaph., lect. 7; n. 1846. --------- "Esse actum quemdam nominat: non enim dicitur esse aliquid ex hoc quod est in potentia, sed ex eo quod est in actu". --- C. G. I, c. 22. --- "Cum ens dicatur ab essendo et per ordinem ad existentiam, sicut ens reale definitur per ordinem ad esse, quod vere habet et in re, ita ens rationis". --- John of St. Thomas, op. cit., Logica, p. 285 b 23.

One other matter remains in order to complete our exposition of this position. As in the case of the former position of ens nominaliter, we shall likewise here inquire as to what modern or contemporary expression of this doctrine can be found. In doing so, however, we shall limit ourselves to a few typical examples, without discussing in detail any of the matters involved. In this group are such writers as Maritain, Gilson, Renard, Zigliara, De Raeymaeker and Van Steenberghen. Though they may differ in certain respects as to the manner in which they present their views, nevertheless these writers are all agreed on this one point, namely, that being does not mean essence. In pointing out the weakness of certain scholastics on this point, Maritain has the following to say:

> It is a radical error to restrict the object of the intellect to the object of the first operation of the mind. Unfortunately, a number of popular expositions of scholasticism seem to represent the matter in this light. They speak as though the object of the first operation constitutes the object of intellection as such. This is quite untrue. It is merely a preparation for the second, which achieves knowledge.
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> When we affirm that the object of the intellect is being, an affirmation which displays the profound realism of Thomistic philosophy, we do not stop short at essences. It is to existence itself that the intellect proceeds when it formulates within itself a judgment corresponding to what a thing is or is not outside the mind. (1)

Maritain's convictions on this point are brought out more forcefully when he takes up the discussion of being as the object of metaphysics.

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(1) Maritain, A Preface to Metaphysics, (London, 1945) pp. 19, 20. A more recent work of the author entitled "Court Traite de L'Existence et de L'Existent (Paris, 1947) discusses these notions more thoroughly, especially in regard to the nature and role of the judgment.

He seems to leave no room for doubt that he understands being in the sense of ens participialiter.

> A third error, this time a metaphysical one, is to assign as the specific object of metaphysics essences as such, and not to require the intellect to proceed, as its nature craves, to existence, to esse, I mean esse ut exercitum, actual or possible..... Metaphysics too refers to the corruptible existence which can be attained by sensation..... It does so to know how (things) exist, for this, too, metaphysics should know, to attain their mode of existence. (1)

The erroneous conceptions described here by Maritain might well sum up the major point of criticism between the writers of this position and those who favor the ens nominaliter view. No one, perhaps, has analyzed more acutely the difference between the two systems than Gilson. In a recent work entitled L'Etre et L'Essence Gilson has traced the origins and developments of what he calls the essentialist metaphysics and the influence they have had on scholastic thought. In a sense, his judgment is more severe than that of Maritain.

> Les ontologies de l'essence ne commettent pas seulement l'erreur d'ignorer le rôle de l'existence, elles se trompent sur la nature de l'essence même. Elles oublient simplement que l'essence est toujours celle d'un être, que le concept de l'essence seule n'exprime pas tout entier. Il y a, dans le sujet que chaque essence désigne, un élément métaphysique transcendant à l'essence même. Ceci revient à dire que la réalité correspondante au concept contient toujours, outre sa définition abstraite, cet acte d'exister qui, transcendant à la fois l'essence et sa représentation conceptuelle, ne peut être atteint que par le jugement. La fonction propre du jugement est de dire l'existence..... L'erreur fondamentale des métaphysiques de l'essence est de prendre la partie pour le tout et de spéculer sur l'essence comme si elle était l'être. (2)

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(1) Ibid., pp. 37, 38.

(2) Gilson, L'Etre et L'Essence, (Paris, 1948) p. 248.

Such fateful consequences, Gilson shows, are inevitable. Once you attempt to divorce the notion of being from existence, then you have destroyed its meaning. It has already lost its signification. What sense, for instance, continues Gilson, has being without the notion of esse? Certainly nothing more than matter for pure abstract consideration or speculation. (1) The most that one can say is that it is being that is possible. (2) No wonder, then, metaphysics became, as it did for so many, a refuge and

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(1) "Ainsi tendue vers l'idéal d'une ontologie et d'une philosophie de la nature achevées une fois pour toutes, la raison peut entrevoir un avenir relativement proche, ou la philosophie première, ayant atteint sa perfection définitive, deviendrait transmissible sous forme de propositions analytiquement justifiables et dont nul terme, pas même celui d'être, ne recélerait plus aucun mystère. Or, pour qu'il en puisse être ainsi, il faut d'abord que la métaphysique s'assigne comme objet propre l'essence seule, exclusion faite de cet inconnu toujours suspect à la raison qu'est l'acte d'exister.

"C'est précisément ce qu'on fait, à la suite de Suarez, les philosophes que l'on nomme 'scholastiques'..... Pour s'en assurer, il suffit de demander à un interprète aussi autorisé que Kleutgen, quel est l'objet propre de la métaphysique telle que l'entendent les philosophes scholastiques. C'est le réel -- ens reale -- repondra-t-il d'abord. Mais demandons-lui en outre ce qu'il faut entendre sous le nom d'être réel, et il nous dira, en se référant expressement à Suarez, qu'il s'agit ici de ce que signifie le mot ens, non pas pris comme un participe du verbe esse, mais comme le substantif qui en dérive. Ens signifie pour cette ontologie "quelque chose" ayant une essence, par conséquent un être. Rien de (esse) dans cette version moderne de la scholastique dont on peut bien dire qu'elle en est devenue comme la vulgate, car elle s'établit si franchement et si résolument dans l'essence, qu'elle fait abstraction non seulement de son existence actuelle, mais même de son existence possible". --- Op. cit., pp. 152, 153.

(2) "Il est characteristique de la pensée de Wolff que, pour atteindre le réel, il lui faille passer par le possible, et pout atteindre le possible, par l'impossible.... le possible est ce qui peut exister, précisement parce que, sa notion n'impliquant aucune contradiction, rien ne s'oppose à ce qu'il puisse exister. Or, c'est précisement là ce qu'on nomme l'être: Ens dicitur quod existere potest, consequenter cui existentia non repugnat". --- Op. cit., pp. 169, 170.

a retreat into the world of abstract essences and pure possibles. It could not be otherwise; it was merely the logical consequence of attempting to divorce being from its relation to existence.

Much the same idea is expressed by writers like De Raeymaeker and Van Steenberghen. But since most of their observations border on the logical and epistemological aspects of being we can be content here with merely mentioning them as advocates of this position. Perhaps the most faithful expression, in the traditional way, of the doctrine of Cajetan is that presented by Zigliara. By the name being, he says, it is commonly understood that which exists, or at least that which can exist: id quod existit, aut saltem existere potest. (1) Being taken in this sense, he continues, is divided into real being and being of reason. Since being is defined in relation to esse, real being is that which has or can have esse in reality. It is called actual being, if it actually has existence; it is called possible, if it does not have existence actually but can have it. Commonly, however, that is called real which actually exists; but what does not actually exist, but nevertheless can exist is called possible. As regards the distinction between res and ens Zigliara says the following.

> Duo autem in ente concipimus, sicut in quolibet concreto, nempe subjectum existentia affectum, et formam seu ipsam existentiam qua subjectum illud afficitur. Subjectum illud dicitur essentia, vel res, vel etiam ens substantive, seu nominaliter sumptum. Idem vero subjectum concrete sumptum, seu ut affectum existentia, dicitur ens sumptum ut participium, et etiam ens simpliciter; nam, ut saepe docet

(1) Zigliara, Summa Philosophia, (Paris, 1891), vol. I, Bk. 2, p. 336.

> Angelicus, ens est id cujus actus est esse, nempe existere. Haec theoretice: in praxi enim res et ens promiscue usurpantur, et nonnisi ob quaestionum necessitatem illa distinctio inducitur. (1)

These last few lines seem to indicate that Zigliara was forced to make some concession to the position of ens nominaliter. One can easily understand this, for he was practically alone among all the other writers of his time in upholding the position of ens participialiter as the being St. Thomas envisioned as the object of metaphysics. But as he insists, the very title of the De Ente et Essentia indicates unmistakably such a distinction.

> In superiori articulo diximus rem ab ente differe in hoc quod res dicit essentiam seu subjectum quoddam, cui intelligimus supervenire perfectionem, quam existentiam nominamus, et qua res fit ens seu existens. Quae duplex consideratio exhibit conceptus potentiae et actus..... Imo ipse titulus De Ente et Essentia praefatam distinctionem indicat manifeste. (2)

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(1) Ibid., pp. 337, 338.

(2) Ibid., pp. 338 - 342.

SECTION THREE

A TENTATIVE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER V

Judgment of the Two Positions

As can be gathered from the expositions of the two positions, there are a number of important issues involved in the discussion between Ferrara and Cajetan. Although the constituent issues cover a wide variety of doctrinal points, yet they are all very closely connected, centering as they do around the notion of being. This factor justifies, we believe, our method in the previous section of treating all the issues together in a common way, without attempting to determine any specific point in question. As was indicated earlier, this was considered the best and the most proper manner of procedure, i.e. to present the problem as the commentators themselves envisioned it, without any weighing of merits or demerits in regard to either position. In this sense, our purpose was first to understand the opposed doctrines, not to judge them; for one ought to certify the genuineness of a problem before attempting to solve it. As Aristotle has aptly remarked, it is advantageous to discuss the difficulties well beforehand, and sometimes it is even more difficult to state the problems than it is to solve them. (1) To single out these various factors separately and to examine each of them from a more critical point of view will comprise, therefore, the remaining portion of our inquiry.

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(1) Aristotle, Metaphysics, Bk. III, c. 1, 995 a 26: "Hence one should have surveyed all the difficulties beforehand, both for the purposes we have stated and because people who inquire without first stating the difficulties are like those who do not know where they have to go; besides, a man who does not otherwise know even whether he has at any given time found what he is looking for or not; for the end is not clear to such a man, while to him who has first discussed the difficulties it is clear. Further, he who has heard all the contending arguments, as if they were the parties to a case, must be in a better position for judging".

What judgment can be made as to the relative merits of the position of Ferrara and Cajetan, in the light of the foregoing analysis? There are three possibilities: (a) the analysis has resulted in an impasse, with neither position having an edge of superiority; (b) one of the positions is seen to be unquestionably right, and the other wrong; (c) both positions, if understood properly and with due qualifications, are acceptable; although one position is, nevertheless, more clearly justified in its claims than the other. If the first possibility has occured, then the problem may justly be regarded as insoluble. But this does not seem to be the case. If the second possibility has occured, then the problem is not only soluble, but solved. This, however, does not seem to be the case either. It is the third possibility, then, that appears to have been realized.

From their own point of view, both positions are perfectly legitimate and each can be justifiably maintained in opposition to the other. In a way, although both Ferrara and Cajetan view the problem from a different angle, the divergency between them is not of such a nature that it does not admit of any possible reconciliation. Ferrara's position, if we are to understand him correctly, is quite different from the manner in which it is understood and criticized by Cajetan. As was indicated earlier, Cajetan seems to have viewed the <u>ens nominaliter</u> position as equivalent to essence, and consequently he rejected the distinction as being inconsonant with St. Thomas' express statement in the <u>De Ente et Essentia</u>, as well as elsewhere, that being and essence are not the same thing. But as Ferrara maintains, there is absolutely no basis for such an assumption; it is simply a misunderstanding of the notion of <u>ens nominaliter</u>.

On the other hand, Cajetan's position is rejected by Ferrara, and with no less equal emphasis, on the grounds that ens participialiter signifies primarily existence and secondarily the subject which has esse, which is contrary to St. Thomas' doctrine which explicitly states that being signifies the essences of things whether they be actual or potential. From the exposition of Cajetan's position, however, it is equally clear that Cajetan does not view ens participialiter in quite the same fashion as Ferrara. On the contrary, he maintains that ens participialiter signifies the essences of things, but precisely in so far as they have esse in some way, either actually or potentially.

For that reason we do not think the divergence between the two positions, at least from this point of view, is too great, and that it is possible to adopt either position. This factor becomes even more evident when the two positions are considered from the viewpoint of science. For instance, it does not make a great deal of difference from the standpoint of metaphysics whether being is taken as a noun or as a participle. In either case, it is the essence or quiddity that is primarily considered and which forms the basis for the demonstrations. The only difference, then, would be the manner in which the essence is viewed. In the case of ens nominaliter, the conclusions would be judgments solely upon the aspect of essence, abstracting from the fact whether it existed actually or potentially; whereas in the case of ens participialiter, the conclusions would be judgments on the essences of actual things, abstracting from the fact of existence hic et nunc. Whichever position is chosen, consequently, its principal objective would be the consideration of the essences of things, and not their existence.

Which of the two positions is more justified in its claims is a rather difficult judgment to make, but we feel compelled to say that the position as outlined by Cajetan seems to be the more preferable. This does not mean, however, that it is necessarily true, or that we regard the position of Ferrara as false; but rather that the views expressed by Cajetan seem to be more expressive of the mind of St. Thomas and, at the same time, more profoundly analytical of the whole process of the Metaphysics, than those of Ferrara. And this is, after all, the whole purpose of our inquiry. What we are interested in is not so much what Cajetan's position is or what Ferrara's position is, but rather what was St. Thomas' conception of being. If we feel, therefore, that the position of Cajetan is preferable, it is only because it seems to reflect more of what St. Thomas himself was most earnestly convinced. The fact that we judge it "preferable" indicates, however, that our solution is regarded as only tentative.

The fact that we consider the two positions as not too widely divergent but that, if properly understood, both could very well be accepted is confirmed, moreover, by practically all the modern adherents to both positions. All are agreed, and this is another reason why we regard the position of Cajetan as a somewhat superior interpretation, that being in its proper sense is to be taken in the manner of a participle or as ens participialiter. This is what being means strictly speaking; however, being the participle has come to be used as being the noun. This is clearly borne out, as we have seen, by Coffey, Rickaby, Zigliara, and others. (1) As both Rickaby and Zigliara show, the matter seems

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(1) Coffey, Ontology, p. 32: "The term 'Being' as present participle of

to be simply one of convention or agreement. (1) In any number of places Rickaby quite frankly admits that St. Thomas is speaking of being in the sense of ens participialiter but, as he says, he is abiding by his decision to accept being in the sense of ens nominaliter. (2)

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the verb to be means existing. But the participle has come to be used as a noun; and as such it does not necessarily imply actual existence hic et nunc. It does indeed imply some relation to actual existence; for we designate as 'being' (in the substantive sense) only whatever we conceive as actually existing or at least as capable of existing; and it is from the participial sense, which implies actual existence, that the substantive sense has been derived. Moreover, the intelligible use of the word 'being' as a term implies a reference to some actually existing sphere of reality. It is in the substantive sense the term will be most frequently used in these pages, as the context will show. When we speak of 'a being' in the concrete, the word has the same meaning as 'thing' (res) used in the wide sense in which this latter includes persons, places, events, facts and phenomena of whatever kind".

Rickaby, General Metaphysics, p. 20: "Being is either actual or possible; but we will begin with the former, because it pre-eminently is Being, and is called by the schoolmen, ens participii, Being as the participle. For the force of the present participle is to signify the actual exercise of that which the verb means..... when we deal with Being, it might mean an actually existent thing; or it might mean simply whatever is capable of an existence, whatever presents an actualizable content, whatever is an existible; or lastly, it might mean existence in the abstract, as when we speak of the Being that is given to some possible essence..... The second of these several meanings is found most eligible, when we want to assign Being its place as 'the formal object' or special subject-matter of Ontology"..... Zigliara, Summa Philosophia, p. 386: "Subjectum illud dicitur essentia, vel res, vel etiam ens substantive, seu nominaliter sumptum. Idem vero subjectum concrete sumptum, seu ut affectum existentia, dicitur ens sumptum ut participium, et etiam ens simpliciter; nam, ut saepe docet Angelicus, ens est id cujus actus est esse, nempe existere".

(1) Zigliara, op. cit., p. 337: "Haec theoretice: in praxi enim res et ens promiscue usurpantur, et nonnisi ob quaestionum necessitatem illa distinctio inducitur"..... Rickaby, op. cit., p. 24: "It may allay the rising discontent of some if we declare at once that the sense which we have just been assigning to the term Being (i.e. Being means Thing) is in part conventional".

(2) Ibid., p. 22: "Being so understood is called Ens Essentiae in con-

We do not contend, however, that Ferrara himself shared these views; although it does seem possible that he decided, at least for himself, just what being as a noun and being as a participle should signify. It is quite obvious that Ferrara's whole position is based on the factor of significa-

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trast to Ens Existentiae; where essence is to be taken in its wider sense for anything that has a whatness or quiddity, even though this be of the accidental order as opposed to the substantial. St. Thomas fully sanctions the use of the term Being in the signification which we have just attached to it; but of course it is not anything like his invariable interpretation. In some passages he distinguishes Being and Thing, because he is using the former professedly in its participial force, and therefore is obliged to make it convey the notion of actual existence. For example, 'There is nothing affirmable of every Being (ens) except its essence (essentia): and the latter is signified by the word thing (res), which differs from Being (ens) in this, that Being is a term derived from the fact of existing (ab actu essendi), while thing expresses the essence or quiddity'; or again, 'that is called simply a Thing which has a definite, fixed nature (habet esse ratum et fixum in natura): but it is called Being so far as it has existence'".

As Rickaby clearly indicates in the above passage, he is accepting ens nominaliter although this use of the term is not anything like St. Thomas' invariable interpretation of it. This is brought out more clearly when he says: "These passages suffice by way of acknowledgment that many places in St. Thomas are not to be read in the light of our present interpretation of Being, which is made simply with a view to settling the most convenient form for the primary idea in the science of Ontology". (p. 23) Here is another typical example: "St. Thomas had dealt with the question whether we should regard Being as more fundamental than the good; and his reply is that 'in the order of reason, Being is prior to the good. For being is the first object which the mind conceives, because it is precisely that according to which a thing is cognizable: everything is cognizable inasmuch as it is in act', inasmuch as it is not merely potential but actual. It is only from the actual that the potential can be known; never can it be known directly from itself. It will be observed that St. Thomas is speaking rather of ens existentiae than of ens essentiae; rather of Being the participle than of Being the noun: whereas we, for the sake of clear consistency throughout our exposition, must speak of ens essentiae when we defend the truth of all Being. Nevertheless, we may adopt his language and make it our own". (p. 124) One final instance will suffice to show what we mean: "By agreement, then the schoolmen have settled that they will not mean by per se the self-existence which is proper to God alone. To mark the distinction, St. Thomas even rejects, with an explanation, the definition of substance, which under another explanation might be accepted. 'The definition of substance', he writes, 'is not Being per se without a subject'. At first sight the words appear to deny what we want to prove, namely, that to be per se is just what we ought to mean by substance. But the divergence simply turns on a double use of Being, either for

tion. This is quite legitimate, of course; and, as a matter of fact, one must necessarily approach the problem of being from the standpoint of signification. However, there are other equally important issues that cannot be overlooked without risking the danger of attempting to fix the signification of terms simply by the sheer necessity of the words themselves. (1) For instance, according to his definition of the terms, Ferrara is right when he says that ens in actu and ens participialiter are not the same thing. Admittedly, from the standpoint of signification, such a distinction might be made; but in reality there is certainly no difference between an actual being and an existing being. This is, perhaps, the major weakness that stands out in Ferrara's position, and one is forced to conclude quite naturally that he is simply trying to avoid the issue. It is wholly understandable, of course, why he would insist upon such a distinction; for, if he had admitted the identity of the two notions as he should have, he would naturally have had to concede the validity of the arguments of Cajetan, and consequently would have had to abandon his own position. In this sense, Ferrara's answer seems somewhat

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existence or for the thing or quiddity which may exist: St. Thomas is speaking of the former, we are keeping our original engagement to abide by the latter".

(1) This is what Suarez was to do much later. Suarez puts the matter thus: "Being in its double acceptation does not stand for two divisions of a common concept, but for a greater and a less degree of abstraction in the formation of one idea. Being as a noun (ens vi nominis) signifies that which has a real essence, prescinding from the question of actual existence, not indeed so as to exclude or deny it, but simply abstracting from it: while being as a participle (ens vi participii) signifies an actual being as existent, and thus it considers being in a more restricted sense. Accordingly, being, as a noun, does not mean potential being (ens in potentia), inasmuch as the latter is privatively or negatively opposed to actual being; but it means being so far as it is a real essence, a real something. Hence, being, as a noun, may be predicated of God, of whom we could never predicate potential being". --- Metaphys., d. ii, sect. iv.

unsatisfactory. Much the same might be said of his conception of the division of being by potency and act and the predicaments. It is not too clear just what he means by his triple division of being, being in act and being in potency. What he says in this connection can be readily granted from another point of view, but it is difficult to see how it answers the problem at hand. Another thing that likewise appears to have been left unsolved, and which we think Ferrara should have explained in order to better justify his position, is the difference between ens nominaliter and ens in potentia. From the brief account which Ferrara gives of these terms it is extremely difficult to find any distinguishing detail that would permit a clear and concise distinction between these two notions. It may possibly be that Ferrara did not consider the occasion as demanding a fuller explanation of these factors, but in view of the importance of such a distinction, we think it should have been pointed out in some way or another. As the matter stands, however, there appears to be no noticeable difference between ens nominaliter and ens in potentia.

For all these reasons, then, we believe that the position as adopted by Cajetan is more preferable and, as we hope to point out, more in conformity with the mind of St. Thomas. This will become more evident as we take up the various points in question individually. The order in which we shall treat of the different issues is dictated largely from the viewpoint of importance, although it might be noted that the order is even one of a logical sequence. Other factors could possibly be discussed, and with equal profit, but the points which we have chosen, if understood properly, should offer the solution to most of the problems that we have thus far examined.