

THE CONCEPT OF *VERBUM* IN THE WRITINGS OF
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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L'Immaculée Conception

IT IS almost a decade since M. T.-L. Penido published his *Gloses sur la procession d'amour dans la Trinité*.¹ As the reader may recall, the article dealt with the speculative aspect of the second divine procession, passed in review the efforts of a very large number of theologians to attain a coherent statement, and found them all wanting. Briefly and bluntly, for M. Penido, theologians on this issue fall into two classes: those who did not pretend to grasp the matter, and those who did but failed to be convincing. The indictment is startling.

Let us turn at once to what may appear a quite different matter. In his account of intellectual procession, L. Billot remarked: "Et simile omnino est in imaginatione."² On its author's suppositions, this remark is quite accurate; for intellectual procession is conceived not as a peculiarity of intellect but as a necessary consequent in the metaphysical analysis of a cognitional act with respect to an object that may be absent; since these conditions are fulfilled not only in conception but also in imagination, the parallel is quite justified. But if one turns to the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, one would be very hard put to find any inkling of such a parallel; indeed, one would be led to deny its existence. For Aquinas distinguished between image and vestige of the Blessed Trinity; and image he found only in rational creatures and, indeed, only in their minds.³ Further, as is quite apparent from the scale of increasing capacity for reflection outlined in the *Contra Gentiles*,⁴ general metaphysical analysis of cognitional acts is not immediately relevant to Thomist trinitarian theory; the point made in that passage is to the effect that no sensitive potency reflects on itself; that human intellect does reflect on itself, but still man does not know him-

¹ *Ephem. Theol. Lov.*, XIV (1937), 33-68.

² L. Billot, *De Deo Uno et Trino* (Romae, 1910), p. 335.

³ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 6 c.: ". . . nec in ipsa rationali creatura invenitur Dei imago nisi secundum mentem." Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 3, q. 3, a. 1; *De Ver.*, q. 10, aa. 1 & 7; *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 9 c. *ad fin.*

⁴ *C. Gent.*, IV, 11 (ed. Leon., XV, 32a 37-32b 25).

self by his essence; that angelic intellect is reflective, and, further, the angel knows himself by his essence but still the *intentio intellecta* is not the essence; that in God alone is there perfect reflection, in which principle and term, essence and *intentio intellecta*, are identical. Quite clearly, this is not a theory of the procession of the Word in which imagination provides as good a starting-point as intellect; it is a theory that extrapolates solely from the nature of rational consciousness.

Let us now revert to M. Penido's contention, though only to ask a question. By definition, the will is a rational appetite. Might it not be that the procession according to the will is to be grasped only in terms of an analysis of rationality and rational consciousness? Might it not be that M. Penido found so many theologians unsatisfactory on this point for the very reasons that have just led us to discern a difference between Billot and Aquinas on intellectual procession, namely, neglect of what is peculiar to rational creatures? I believe these questions to be significant. It is to discuss them that I have undertaken the present inquiry into the concept of *verbum* in the writings of St. Thomas.

THE GENERAL NOTION OF AN INNER WORD

Etymology and biblical English both favor writing "inner word" or simply "word" as equivalent to the Thomist synonyms, *verbum interius*, *verbum cordis*, *verbum mentis*, and, most common of all, simply *verbum*. The only complication arises in connection with the division of words into simple and compound. It is odd, indeed, to speak of a compound word and mean a sentence or judgment; but such speech will be rare; and the disadvantage of its oddity is outweighed, I think, by the convenience of having an English term for the main matter of the discussion.

The first element in the general notion of an inner word is had from a contrast with outer words—spoken, written, imagined, or meant. Spoken words are sounds with a meaning: as sounds, they are produced in the respiratory tract; as possessing a meaning, they are due to imagination according to Aristotle, or, as Aquinas seems to have preferred, to soul; it is meaning that differentiates spoken words from other sounds, such as coughing, which also are produced in the respira-

tory tract.⁵ Written words are simply signs of spoken words;⁶ the issue was uncomplicated by Chinese ideograms. A similar simplicity is the refreshing characteristic of the account of *imaginatio vocis*;⁷ a term that seems to embrace the whole mnemonic mass and sensitive mechanism of motor, auditory, and visual images connected with language. Finally, the outer word that is some external thing or action meant by a word is dismissed as a mere figure of speech.⁸

There is a twofold relation between inner and outer words: the inner word is an efficient cause of the outer; and the inner word is what is meant immediately by the outer. The aspect of efficient causality seems to be the only one noticed in the *Commentary on the Sentences*: the inner word is compared to the major premise of a syllogism; the imagined word to the minor premise; and the spoken word to the conclusion.⁹ Later works do not deny this aspect,¹⁰ but I think I may say that subsequently the whole emphasis shifted to the second of the two relations mentioned above. Repeatedly one reads that the inner word is what can be meant (*significabile*) or what is meant (*significatum*) by outer words and, inversely, that the outer word is what can mean (*significativum*) or what does mean (*significans*) the inner word.¹¹ There is no doubt about this matter, though, frankly, it is just the opposite of what one would expect. One is apt to think of the inner word, not as what is meant by the outer, but as what means the outer; the outer word has meaning in virtue of the inner; therefore, the inner is meaning essentially while the outer has meaning by participation.

⁵ *In II de An.*, lect. 18, §477.

⁶ *In I Periherm.*, lect. 1: "... nomina et verba quae scribuntur, signa sunt eorum nominum et verborum quae sunt in voce."

⁷ *In I Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 1 sol. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 34, a. 1 c.

⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 34, a. 1 c.: "Dicitur autem figurative quarto modo verbum, id quod verbo significatur vel efficitur; sicut consuevimus dicere, hoc est verbum quod dixi tibi, vel quod mandavit rex, demonstrato aliquo facto quod verbo significatum est vel simpliciter enuntiantis, vel etiam imperantis."

⁹ *In I Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 1 sol.

¹⁰ Efficient causality is mentioned in *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1.

¹¹ "De Ver.", q. 4, a. 2, c.: "... sive sit conceptio significabilis per vocem incomplexam ... sive per vocem complexam..." *C. Gent.*, IV, 11 (ed. Leon., XV, 32b 30ff.): "... est quaedam similitudo concepta ... quae voces exteriores significant; unde et ipsa intentio verbum interius nominatur, quod est exteriori verbo significatum." Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1 c; q. 9, a. 5 c; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 1 c; q. 34, a. 1 c; q. 85, a. 2 ad 3m; *Quodl. V*, a. 9 c; *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1.

That, perhaps, is all very true. But it is not too illuminating. In any case it is not the point made by Aquinas, who asked what outer words meant and answered that, in the first instance, they meant inner words. The proof was quite simple. We discourse on "man" and on the "triangle." What are we talking about? Certainly, we are not talking about real things directly, else we should all be Platonists. Directly, we are talking about objects of thought, inner words, and only indirectly, only in so far as our inner words have an objective reference, are we talking of real things.¹² The same point might be made in another fashion. Logical positivists to the contrary, false propositions are not meaningless; they mean something; what they mean is an inner word, and only because that inner word is false, does the false proposition lack objective reference.¹³

Such is the first element in the general notion of an inner word. It is connected with the well-known anti-Platonist thesis on abstraction that the mode of knowing need not be identical with the mode of reality, that knowledge may be abstract and universal though all realities are particular and concrete. It also is connected with the familiar Aristotelian statement that "bonum et malum sunt in rebus, sed verum et falsum sunt in mente."¹⁴ Because outer words may be abstract, and true or false, because real things are neither abstract nor true nor false, the immediate reference of their meaning is to an inner word.

The second element to be considered is the nature of the correspondence between inner and outer words. Grammarians divide the latter into eight, or sometimes ten, parts of speech; of these the Aristotelian *Perihermeneias* bothered to notice only nouns and verbs, and included both under the same rubric of the element of meaning.¹⁵ Aquinas, in his commentary, denied a point-to-point correspondence between inner and outer words, arguing that inner words correspond to realities,

¹² *In I Periherm.*, lect. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, lect. 4: ". . . haec vox 'homo est asinus' est vere vox et vere signum; sed quia est signum falsi, ideo dicitur falsa."

¹⁴ *In VI Met.*, lect. 4, §1230 f.; cf. V lect. 9, §895 f.; *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 sol.; *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 2c; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 1 c.

¹⁵ The Aristotelian division is of conventionally significant sounds: if the parts have meaning, not merely *per accidens* as "heat" in "cheat," there is a *λόγος*, which is subdivided into indicative, optative, imperative, etc.; if the parts have no meaning, the division is into names and verbs. Cf. *Periherm.*, I, 2-4.

while outer words are the products of convention and custom, and so vary with different peoples.¹⁶ However, since the inner word is in the intellect, and since apprehension of the singular involves the use of a sensitive potency,¹⁷ it should seem that the correspondence of realities to inner words is, at best, like the correspondence between a function and its derivative; as the derivative, so the inner word is outside all particular cases and refers to all from some higher view-point.

A third element in fixing the nature of the inner word is connected intimately with the preceding. What is the division of inner words? On this question, four major works of Aquinas and a large number of his commentators are silent.¹⁸ On the other hand, silence is no argument against positive statement. Four other works of recognized standing divide inner words into the two classes of definitions and judgments, and three of these recall the parallel of the Aristotelian twofold operation of the mind.¹⁹ Moreover, the *De Veritate* argues that there is a *processio operati* in the intellect, though not in the will, on the ground that "bonum et malum sunt in rebus, sed verum et falsum sunt in mente."²⁰ This clearly supposes that the judgment is an inner word, for only in the judgment is there truth or falsity. On the other hand, while Aquinas does refer frequently to the inner word as a *conceptio*, *conceptum*, *conceptus*,²¹ one must not give this term its current exclusive connotation; Aquinas employed it to denote judgments.²² Finally, as stated above, the correspondence of inner words is mainly,

¹⁶ *In I Periherm.*, lect. 2: "Ostendit passiones animae naturaliter esse sicut res per hoc quod sunt eadem apud omnes. . . . Melius dicendum est quod intentio Aristotelis non est asserere identitatem conceptionis animae per comparisonem ad vocem, ut scilicet unius vocis sit una conceptio, quia voces sunt diversae apud diversos: sed intendit asserere identitatem conceptionum animae per comparationes ad res. . . ." Cf. *Arist., Periherm.*, I, 1; 16a 5-8.

¹⁷ Cf. e.g., *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 86, a. 1, ob. 1a, c. & ad 2m.

¹⁸ The four works are the *Sentences*, the *Contra Gentiles* (which, however, mentions definition but not judgment [I, 53; IV, 11]), the *Summa*, and the *Compendium Theologiae*. With regard to the commentators, it is simplest to note that Ferrariensis acknowledges the twofold inner word (*In C. Gent.*, I, 53, §IV *ad fin.* [ed. Leon., XIII, 152]).

¹⁹ *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 c.; q. 3, a. 2 c.; *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1 c.; q. 9, a. 5 c.; *Quodl. V*, a. 9 c.; *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1.

²⁰ *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 ad 7m.

²¹ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 1; q. 34, a. 1; *et passim*.

²² Cf., e.g., *De Ver.*, q. 11, a. 1, c. "... primae conceptiones intellectus, quae statim lumine intellectus agentis cognoscuntur . . . sive sint complexa, ut dignitates, sive incompleta, sicut ratio entis."

not to outer words, but to reality; but reality divides into essence and existence; and of the two Aristotelian operations of the mind "prima operatio respicit quidditatem rei; secunda respicit esse ipsius."²³ It seems beyond doubt that an account of the Thomist inner word has to be an account of judgments no less than of the formation of definitions or quiddities.

A fourth element in the general notion of an inner word is that it supplies the object of thought. What is abstract, what is true or false, is not, as such, either a real thing or a mere copy of a real thing. It is a product of the mind. It is not merely a product but also a known product; and as known, it is an object. The illuminating parallel is from technical invention. What the inventor comes to know is not some already existing reality; it is simply the idea of what will be a reality if financial backing and a demand on the market are forthcoming; and in itself, apart from practical economic considerations, the invention known by the inventor is merely an idea. Such ideas are the products and fruits of a thinking out, an *excogitare*: certain general principles are known; the inventor's task is to work out practicable applications, to proceed from the properties of uranium to the atomic bomb. A similar process of thought is involved in the plans of every architect, the prescription of every doctor, the reflective pause of every craftsman and mechanic before he sets to work. In invention, creative imagination is needed; in the practical arts, imagination moves in the worn grooves of custom and routine; but in both cases there is the same general form of intellectual process, for in both certain general principles are known, in both a determinate end is envisaged, in both the principles are applied to the attainment of the end, and in both this application leads to a plan of operations that, as such, is, not knowing what is, but only knowing the idea of what one may do. Aquinas was aware of this. Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* had analysed such thinking things out and had arrived at the conclusion that the end, which is first in intention, is last in execution, whereas what is first in execution is last to be arrived at in the order of thought.²⁴ But Aquinas was troubled with a problem that had not concerned

²³ *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 7m. *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3 c. *init.* (ed. Mand., III, 110).

²⁴ *In VII Met.*, lect. 6, §1405-10.

Aristotle, namely, how to reconcile the simplicity of God with the infinity of ideas known by God. To solve this problem, he generalized the Aristotelian theorem on the practical arts. It is not merely the prescription of the doctor, the plan of the architect, the idea of the inventor that, in the first instance, is a product and object of thought. The same holds for every quiddity and every judgment. As such, the quiddity is abstract; as such, the judgment is true or false; but no real thing is abstract; and no real thing is true or false in the relevant sense of truth or falsity.

The foregoing, I believe, is a key element in the Thomist concept of inner word. Its principal expression is to be found, not in trinitarian passages, but in the discussions of the plurality of divine ideas. It would be premature to attempt a detailed study of this matter at once, for it pertains properly to an account of the Thomist position on natural human knowledge of a divine word. On the other hand, the reader is urged to review at once the Thomist texts on the issue. The brilliant treatment is in the *De Veritate* (q. 3, a. 2 c.). Detailed treatment is in the *Contra Gentiles* (lib. I, cc. 46-54) with the central issue in chapter 53. In the *Summa*, I should say that Aquinas handled the matter automatically, as one does a question that has ceased to be real problem.²⁶ In the *Sentences*, on the other hand, though the essential elements of the solution are present,²⁶ I fail to detect the mastery and effectiveness of the later discussions; on this the reader may check by looking up the objections of Scotus,²⁷ and asking himself whether *In I Sententiarum* (d. 36, q. 2, a. 2 sol.) really meets them.

Though the principal account of the quiddity and judgment as both product and object of thought is to be found in the discussion of the divine ideas, parallel affirmations are to be had in passages dealing explicitly with the inner word. The most downright affirmation is the insistence of the *De Potentia*²⁸ that the inner word is "primo et per se

²⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 14, aa. 5 & 6; q. 15, aa. 1-3; cf. q. 27, a. 1 ad 3m, which connects the plurality of ideas with the divine procession of the Word.

²⁶ Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 3 ad 2m; d. 35, q. 1, a. 2.

²⁷ *In I Sent.* (*Op. Ox.*), d. 35, q. unic., n. 7 (ed. Vivès, X, 544). Scotus argues that the divine ideas cannot be accounted for by adding notional relations to the divine essence; for the object precedes the knowing, and relations that precede knowing are not notional but real. The argument does not touch Aquinas' real position, which is that the object as known is not prior and that the relations pertain only to the object as known.

²⁸ *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 5 c.

intellectum." But this view is already present in the *De Veritate*.²⁹ On the other hand, the *Contra Gentiles*, though holding the same position, distinguishes between "res intellecta" and "intentio intellecta": the "intentio" is the inner word, whereas the "res" is the external thing, and the difference between understanding the former and the latter is the difference between logic or psychology and, on the other hand, metaphysics.³⁰ As the term "intentio" refers to the inner word, so also and more frequently does the term "ratio": white and black are outside the mind, but the "ratio albi" is only in the mind.³¹ To close the circle, one has only to recall that the divine ideas, as principles of production, are exemplars, but as principles of speculative knowledge, properly are named "ratio."³²

A fifth element in the general notion of an inner word is that in it and through it intellect comes to knowledge of things. As this threatens to engulf us in the epistemological bog, a brief orientation now may save endless confusion later. A useful preliminary is to note that animals know, not mere phenomena, but things: dogs know their masters, bones, other dogs, and not merely the appearances of these things. Now this sensitive integration of sensible data also exists in the human animal and even in the human philosopher. Take it as knowledge of reality, and there results the secular contrast between the solid sense of reality and the bloodless categories of the mind. Accept the sense of reality as criterion of reality, and you are a materialist, sensist, positivist, pragmatist, sentimentalist, and so on, as you please. Accept reason as a criterion but retain the sense of reality as what gives meaning to the term "real," and you are an idealist; for, like the sense of reality, the reality defined by it is non-rational. In so far as I grasp it, the Thomist position is the clear-headed third position: reason is the criterion and, as well, it is reason—not the sense of reality—that gives meaning to the term "real." The real is, what is; and "what is," is known in the rational act, judgment.

²⁹ *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 1 c.: The inner word is "id quod intellectum est," "ipsum interius intellectum," "id quod actu consideratur per intellectum"; cf. *ibid.*, a. 2 c.: it is "id ad quod operatio nostri intellectus terminatur, quod est ipsum intellectum, quod dicitur conceptio intellectus."

³⁰ *C. Gent.*, IV, 11 (ed. Leon., XV, 32b 33ff).

³¹ *In VI Met.*, lect. 4, §1230. The frequently repeated "ratio quam nomen significat est definitio rei" stems from *In IV Met.*, lect. 16, §733. The initial statement on "ratio" is to be found *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 c. *init.*

³² *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 15, a. 3 c.

The first act of intellect is knowledge of the *quod quid est, τὸ τί ἐστίν*, the "what is it?" By definition, this knowledge involves neither truth nor falsity,³³ for the reason that the question of truth or falsity is not as yet raised, because as yet one knows, not the thing, but only the idea of the thing, because as yet one is in a purely logical order.³⁴ Hence, "scientia est de aliquo dupliciter. Uno modo primo et principaliter, et sic scientia est de universalibus super quas fundatur. Alio modo est de aliquibus secundario, et quasi per reflexionem quamdam, et sic est de rebus illis quarum sunt illae rationes. . . . Ratione enim universali utitur sciens et ut re scita et ut medio sciendi."³⁵ As long as one is dealing with ideas as ideas, there is properly no question of truth or falsity and no use of the inner word as a medium of knowledge. On the other hand, the second operation of intellect—by the very nature of its reflective character,³⁶ by the very fact that it raises the question of truth, which is conformity between mind and thing,³⁷—introduces the duality of idea and thing and makes the former the medium in and through which one apprehends the latter. Thus, our knowledge of God's existence is just our knowledge of the truth of the judgment, *Deus est*.³⁸ And, while this knowledge differs from other knowledge in most respects, it does not differ in the respect now in question. For just as the inner word is a medium between the meaning of outer words and the realities meant,³⁹ so also the inner word is a medium between the intellect and the things that are understood.⁴⁰

³³ *In III de An.*, lect. 11, §746. Parallels are common: *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 7m; *De Ver.*, q. 1, aa. 3 & 9; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 2; *In VI Met.*, lect. 4, §1231–36.

³⁴ *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 7m. ". . . quidditatis esse est quoddam esse rationis."

³⁵ *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 2 ad 4m (ed. Mand., III, 107). This is not contrary to *Sum Theol.*, I, q. 85, a. 2, which treats of the informing *species* and not of the consequent *verbum*, except by contrast in the *ad 3m*. Cf. q. 15, a. 2 c.: "ideam operati esse in mente operantis sicut quod intelligitur; non autem sicut species qua intelligitur, quae est forma faciens intellectum in actu."

³⁶ On judicial reflection in general, cf. *In VI Met.*, lect. 4, §1236; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 2 c. Such reflection is pushed to the level of the critical problem in *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 9 c.

³⁷ *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 1; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 1; cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 sol.

³⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 3, a. 4 ad 2m.

³⁹ *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 5 c.: ". . . vox exterior significat conceptum intellectus quo mediante significat rem; ut cum dico 'homo' vel 'homo est animal.'" *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1 c.: ". . . vox enim exterior non significat ipsum intellectum [the faculty] neque speciem intelligibilem neque actum intellectus sed intellectus conceptionem qua mediante refertur ad rem."

⁴⁰ *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 2 c.: ". . . quidditas . . . compositio vel divisio . . . quoddam operatum

A sixth element in the general notion of an inner word is its necessity for an act termed *intelligere* which, I believe, is to be taken as meaning "understanding."⁴¹ *Quoad se*, this necessity is universal, holding true in the case of God, of angels, and of men.⁴² However, so far as our natural knowledge of God goes, we cannot affirm that His understanding involves the procession of an inner word.⁴³ Why that is so, is to be explained, I believe, only by an exact grasp of the psychology of the inner word.

A seventh element in the general notion is that the inner word of the human mind emerges at the end of a process of thoughtful inquiry,⁴⁴ that, until it emerges, we do not yet understand but are thinking in order to understand,⁴⁵ that it emerges simultaneously with the act of understanding,⁴⁶ that it is distinct from understanding,⁴⁷ that it is a

ⁱ psius; per quod tamen intellectus venit in cognitionem rei exterioris"; *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 ad 5m: "... conceptio intellectus est media inter intellectum et rem intellectam, quia ea mediante pertingit ad rem"; *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1, c.: "... conceptio intellectus ordinatur ad rem intellectam sicut ad finem; propter hoc enim intellectus conceptionem rei in se format ut rem intellectam cognoscat"; *C. Gent.*, I, 53: "... ex hoc quod intentio intellecta sit similis alicui rei, sequitur quod intellectus, formando huiusmodi intentionem, rem illam intelligat"; *Quodl. V.*, a. 9, ad 1m: "... intellectus ... format verbum ad hoc quod intelligat rem"; *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1: "... in ipso expresso et formato videt naturam rei intellectae."

⁴¹ *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 ad 5m; *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1; q. 9, a. 5; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 1 c.

⁴² *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1.

⁴³ *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1 ad 12m; *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 ad 5m; cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 32, a. 1 ad 2m.

⁴⁴ *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1: "... cum volo concipere rationem lapidis, oportet quod ad ipsam ratiocinando perveniam: et sic est in omnibus aliis quae a nobis intelliguntur: nisi forte in primis principiis, quae cum sint simpliciter nota, absque discursu rationis statim sciuntur. Quamdiu ergo sic ratiocinando intellectus iactatur hac atque illac, necdum formatio perfecta est, nisi quando ipsam rationem rei perfecte conceperit: et tunc primo habet rationem rei perfectae, et tunc primo habet rationem verbi. Et inde est quod in anima nostra est cogitatio, per quam significatur ipse discursus inquisitionis, et verbum, quod est iam formatum secundum perfectam contemplationem veritatis."

⁴⁵ *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 9 c.: "Ipsum enim intelligere non perficitur nisi aliquid in mente concipiatur, quod dicitur verbum; non enim dicimur intelligere, sed cogitare ad intelligendum, antequam conceptio aliqua in mente nostra stabiliatur." There is a variant—"cognoscere potius aliquid intelligendo"—to be found in the compilation of texts, mostly from Aquinas, under the title, *De Intellectu et Intelligibili*, *Opusc.* LXIII, (ed. Mand., V, 377). For the distinction between *intelligere proprie* and *intelligere communiter*, see *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 12 c. Cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 2 sol. 1; *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 8, a. 1 c.

⁴⁶ *C. Gent.*, IV, 14 (ed. Leon., XV, 56a 5 ff.): "Similiter etiam verbum quod in mente nostra concipitur, non exit de potentia in actum nisi quatenus intellectus noster procedit de potentia in actum. Nec tamen verbum oritur ex intellectu nostro nisi prout existit in

product and effect of the act of understanding,⁴⁸ that it is an expression of the cognitional content of the act of understanding,⁴⁹ that the more perfect the one act of understanding, the more numerous the inner words it embraces in a single view.⁵⁰ The problem here is twofold: (1) Does *intelligere* mean understanding? (2) What is understanding both in itself and its expression? The contention of this paper will be that Aquinas was speaking of understanding and that an interpretation in terms of general metaphysics misses the point; to follow Aquinas here, one must practice introspective rational psychology; without that, one no more can know the created image of the Blessed Trinity, as Aquinas conceived it, than a blind man can know colors.

DEFINITION

In the foregoing section we approached the Thomist concept of inner word in the omnivorous fashion of the fact collector. Under seven headings we listed most of the matter relevant to the inquiry, and in the references we supplied the reader with indications of the sources of

actu: simul autem cum in actu existit, est in eo verbum conceptum . . . intellectus in actu nunquam est sine verbo." One may recite a definition by rote without understanding; but unless one really understands, one cannot define; and as soon as one understands, one has defined.

⁴⁷ *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1 c. and q. 9, a. 5 c., are the most insistent texts on this point.

⁴⁸ *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 c.: ". . . ipsa enim conceptio est effectus actus intelligendi." Cf. q. 3, a. 2; q. 4, a. 2, ad 7m; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 34, a. 1 ad 3m: ". . . intellectus hominis verbo, quod concipit intelligendo lapidem, lapidem dicit."

⁴⁹ *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 c.: ". . . aliquid expressum a notitia mentis." Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 34, a. 1 c.: "Ipse autem conceptus cordis de ratione sua habet quod ab alio procedat, scilicet a notitia concipientis."

⁵⁰ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 85, a. 4; q. 55, a. 3; q. 58, aa. 2-4; q. 12, aa. 8 & 10. Parallels to these texts abound; see also the series on the plurality of divine ideas (note 25 *supra*). Briefly, there are two points. The first (*In I Eth.*, lect. 11, ad fin.) is that "Principium enim videtur esse plus quam dimidium totius. Quia scilicet omnia alia quae restant continentur in principiis. Et hoc est quod subdit, quod per unum principium bene intellectum et consideratum, multa fiunt manifesta eorum quae quaeruntur in scientia." The second is that a process of reasoning ends, not in the multiplicity of the process, but in a synthetic view of the whole (*Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 14, a. 7 c.): ". . . procedentes enim a principiis ad conclusiones non simul utrumque considerant. . . Unde manifestum est quod, quando cognoscitur primum, adhuc ignoratur secundum. Et sic secundum non cognoscitur in primo sed ex primo. Terminus vero discursus est, quando secundum videtur in primo, resolutis effectibus in causas; et tunc cessat discursus." Numerous texts on this matter have been collected by J. Peghaire (*Intellectus et Ratio*, Institut médiéval d'Ottawa, VI: Ottawa and Paris, 1936, pp. 247 ff.).

fuller and more accurate information.⁵¹ From the catalogue there emerged our thesis, that we must begin by grasping the nature of the act of understanding, that thence we shall come to a grasp of the nature of inner words, their relation to language, and their role in our knowledge of reality. Now, understanding is of two kinds: there is the direct understanding, parent of the definition, in which the mind clicks, one gets the idea, one feels like shouting "Eureka" with Archimedes; there is also a reflective understanding, parent of judgment, in which one sees that one cannot but judge something to be so. Our first concern will be the former; our second, with the latter; in the third place, we shall have to turn to the metaphysical analysis of intellect and thence proceed to our natural knowledge of divine understanding; in the fourth place, we shall consider the Thomist trinitarian theory. Such in outline is the plan.

In his zeal to prick complacent bubbles of unconscious ignorance, Socrates made it a practice to ask people just what things are. What is virtue? What is moderation? courage? justice? What is science? On Plato's showing, Socrates had the formula for the sixty-four-dollar question, but it was Aristotle who made capital of it. For Aristotle, it would seem, realized that the real catch was in the form of the

⁵¹ It is to be observed that Aquinas discussed the inner word, not directly in his general treatments of intellect, but in trinitarian passages and in discussions of the plurality of divine ideas. I should say that the theological issues forced a development of the basic Aristotelian materials. Further, it is in the *De Veritate* and in the discussion of the plurality of divine ideas (q. 3, a. 2) that the distinction between the twofold form or species is first enunciated effectively even though the general idea is not new (cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 3 ad 2m; d. 35, q. 1, a. 2 sol.). Finally, though the idea of an inner word is basically the same in the *Sentences* and in later works, still, since the grip is not so firm, statements occur which hardly can be reconciled with the later position. The position is basically the same: a distinction is drawn between the act of understanding ("simplex intuitus intellectus in cognitione intelligibilis") and the ordering of this intelligible to its manifestation; the inner word is some emanation from the intellect as making known (*In I Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 1; *in II Sent.*, d. 11, q. 2, a. 3); it adds something like thought to the simple intuition of intellect (*In I Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 1 ad 3m); it follows upon the intuition of intellect (*ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3); it is the "species concepta in qua est similitudo eius quod dicitur" and "quaedam similitudo in intellectu ipsius rei intellectae" (*ibid.*); it follows upon some intellectual light—at least that of the agent intellect and of first principles; consequently, a conclusion is an inner word but not the principles themselves (d. 34, q. 2, a. unic. ad 2m). But I do not think that later Aquinas would have said that the "species concepta interius" is not an inner word unless it is ordained to some manifestation (*In II Sent.*, d. 11, q. 2, a. 3 sol.), that it is not the divine essence as intellect or as understood, but as medium of understanding (*In I Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 1 ad 4m), that it may be the operation of understanding as such (*ibid.*, a. 2 sol. 1).

question. It may be difficult to define this or that virtue; but what makes things hopeless is the difficulty of saying what one wishes to find out when one asks, even of the most familiar things, "What is it?" Accordingly, one finds the second book of the *Posterior Analytics* opening with an attempt to fix the meaning of this type of question. Any question, we are told—and so any answer and any item of knowledge—can be listed under one of four headings. Either one asks (a) whether there is an X, or (b) what is an X, or (c) whether X is Y, or (d) why X is Y. The superficial eye will pair off the first two questions together and the last two; but the significant parallel is between the first and the third, and between the second and the fourth. In modern language the first and third are empirical questions: they ask about matters of fact; they can be answered by an appeal to observation or experiment. But the fourth question is not empirical; it asks for a cause or reason; and, at least in some cases, the second question is identical with the fourth and hence it too is not empirical, but likewise asks for a cause or reason. Thus, "Why does light refract?" and "What is refraction?" are, not two questions, but one and the same. Again, to take Aristotle's stock example, "What is an eclipse of the moon?" and "Why is the moon thus darkened?" are, not two questions, but one and the same. Say that the earth intervenes between the sun and the moon, blocking off the light received by the latter from the former, and at once you know why the moon is thus darkened, and what an eclipse is. The second and fourth questions, then, ask about causes; but a cause supplies the middle term in the scientific syllogism; and if the cause exists, its consequent necessarily exists. Hence, all four questions are questions about the middle terms of scientific syllogisms. The first and third ask whether there is a relevant middle term; the second and fourth ask what the relevant middle term is.⁵²

But this answer only raises a further question. Granted that we know what is meant by "What is X?" when that question can be recast into an equivalent "Why V is X?" yet one may ask, quite legitimately,

⁵² *Post Anal.*, II, 2, 89b 36 ff. (*In II Post. Anal.*, lect. 1); any of the four causes may be a middle term (II, 11, 94b 20ff.; lect 9). Aquinas (lect. 1) remarked of the four questions: "ad quae quattuor reduci potest quidquid est quaeribile vel scibile," and added that the four questions assigned in the *Topics* are only subdivisions of the two empirical questions here considered. He employed the four questions in proving a natural desire for the beatific vision in the angels (*C. Gent.*, III, 50).

whether there always is a V. It is simple enough to substitute "Why does light refract?" for "What is refraction?" But tell me, please, what I am to substitute for "What is a man?" or "What is a house?" A good question needs a roundabout answer, and Aristotle considered that question good enough for the answer to be attempted, not in the *Posterior Analytics*, but only in the *Metaphysics*.

Let us go back to Socrates. In the *Meno* he proved a reminiscence of the ideas by summoning a slave and questioning him about a diagram. Aristotle was impressed, more by the questions than by the alleged reminiscence, but most of all by the diagram. At least he made grasp of the intelligible a matter of insight into the sensible or the imagined.⁵³ In the *Posterior Analytics* he remarked that, if a man were on the moon during its eclipse, he would not have to ask the first question—whether there is an eclipse—for the fact would be obvious; moreover, he would not even have to ask the second question—what is eclipse—for that too would be obvious; he would see the earth cutting in between the sun and himself, and so at once would grasp the cause and the universal.⁵⁴ Grasping the cause is, not an ocular vision, but an insight into the sensible data. Grasping the universal is the production of the inner word that expresses that insight. And, Aquinas explains, if one reached the universal from such brief acquaintance, that would be a matter of conjecturing that eclipses of the moon always occurred in that fashion.⁵⁵ A similar point comes up in the *Metaphysics*, in the passage that is the source of Aquinas' repeated "unumquodque cognoscitur secundum quod est actu." Aristotle made this point from the instance of geometrical problems; they are difficult when the construction is merely in potency; but draw in the construction, and one solves the problem almost by inspection. Stare at a triangle as long as you please, and you will not be any nearer seeing that its three angles must equal two right angles. But through the vertex draw a line parallel to the base, and the equality of alternate angles ends the matter at once.⁵⁶ The act of understanding leaps forth when the sensible data are in a suitable constellation.

⁵³ *De An.* III, 7, 432a 3–10; cf. 431a 14, b 2 (III, lect. 13, §791; lect. 12, §§772, 777)

⁵⁴ *Post Anal.*, II, 2, 90a 24 ff. (II, lect. 1). ⁵⁵ *In II Post. Anal.*, lect. 1, *ad fin.*

⁵⁶ *Met.*, Θ, 9, 1051a 22 ff. (IX, lect. 10, §1888 ff.)

We may now revert to our main problem—how to transform questions of the second type into questions of the fourth type in such ultimate and simple cases as, What is a man? What is a house? The clue lies in the fact of insight into sensible data. For an insight, an act of understanding, is a matter of knowing a cause.⁵⁷ Presumably, in ultimate and simple cases, the insight is the knowledge of a cause that stands between the sensible data and the concept whose definition is sought. Though Aristotle's predecessors knew little of such a cause—for the cause in question is the formal cause⁵⁸—Aristotle himself made it a key factor in his system; and it was to the formal cause that he appealed when, in the *Metaphysics*, he attempted to settle the meaning of such questions as, What is a man? What is a house?⁵⁹ The meaning is, Why is this sort of body a man? Why are stones and bricks arranged in a certain way, a house? What is it that causes the matter, sensibly perceived, to be a thing? To Scholastics the answers are self-evident. That which makes this type of body to be a man, is a human soul. That which makes these stones and bricks to be house, is an artificial form. That which makes matter, in general, to be a thing, is the *causa essendi*, the formal cause.⁶⁰ The Aristotelian formulation of understanding is the scientific syllogism (*sylogismus faciens scire*) in which the middle term is the real cause of the presence of the predicate in the subject. But the genesis of the terms involved in scientific syllogisms follows the same model: sense provides the subject, insight into sensible data the middle, and conceptualization the predicate, which is the term whose genesis was sought.

There remains a final note. The core of meaning in questions of the second type has been determined by transposing them into questions of the fourth type. What is a man? is equivalent to, Why is V a man?—where V stands for the sensible data of a man, and the answer is the

⁵⁷ The Aristotelian analysis of understanding (*ἐπινοῶναι*) (*Post. Anal.*, I, 2, 71b 9 ff. [I, lect. 4]). is first its identification with knowing a cause and secondly its expression in scientific syllogism. The *Posterior Analytics* simply ring the changes on that analysis; the rest of the logical works serve to narrow attention down to it as to the essential; the non-logical works apply it. Hence, I should say that to miss the point here is the most effective way of missing everything.

⁵⁸ *Met.*, A, 7, 988a 18 ff. (I, lect. 11, esp. §175); A, 10, 993a 11 ff. (I, lect. 17, esp. §272).

⁵⁹ *Met.*, Z, 17, 1041a 9 ff. (VII, lect. 17, §1649 ff.). ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1041b 4 ff. (§1666–68).

formal cause, the soul. Now, this does not imply that one is to answer the question, What is a man? by the proposition, A man is his soul. That answer is patently false. The formal cause is only part of the whole, and part can never be predicated of the whole. The fallacy that leads to this false conclusion is that, while we have transposed, What is X? into, Why V is X?, we have yet to transpose the formal cause which answers, Why V is X? back to the answer of, What is X? That transposition is from formal cause to essence or quiddity. Neglect of this second transposition by Aristotle has led to considerable obscurity: for among the meanings of "substance" Aristotle will write the *causa essendi*, the $\tau\acute{o} \tau\acute{i} \eta\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}ναι$, the form.⁶¹ Very accurately Aquinas hit upon the root of the confusion: "Essentia enim et forma in hoc conveniunt quod secundum utrumque dicitur esse illud quo aliquid est. Sed forma refertur ad materiam, quam facit esse in actu; quidditas autem refertur ad suppositum, quod significatur ut habens talem essentiam."⁶² Questions of the second type ask about the *suppositum*, e.g., What is a man? Transposed to the fourth type, they ask about the matter, e.g., Why is this type of body a man? Common to both questions is inquiry into the *quo aliquid est*, which, relative to the matter, is the form, but relative to the *suppositum*, is the essence, i.e., the form plus the common matter.⁶³

"QUOD QUID EST"

Quod quid est is a medieval attempt to find three Latin words corresponding to the Greek $\tau\acute{o} \tau\acute{i} \epsilon\sigma\tau\omega$; similarly, *quod quid erat esse* is a literal translation of $\tau\acute{o} \tau\acute{i} \eta\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}ναι$; finally, *quidditas* is of medieval coinage and differs from the preceding as abstract from concrete. It will be convenient to refer to these five as Q₁, T₁, Q₂, T₂, and Q₃ respectively. For our present intention is to write a note on the usage of these terms, and in that our purpose is to confirm the interpretation of Aristotle set forth in the preceding section. The argument here invoked is, then, just a challenge: such and such are the pieces of this jig-saw puzzle; put them together in some other fashion if you can.

⁶¹ E.g., *Met.*, Δ, 8, 1017b 10 ff.

⁶² *In V Met.*, lect. 10, §904.

⁶³ There is a parallel ambiguity with regard to *species* (*In VII Met.*, lect. 9, §1473): "Sciendum tamen est, quod nulla materia, nec communis, nec individuata, secundum se, se habet ad speciem prout sumitur pro forma. Sed secundum quod species sumitur pro universali, sicut hominem dicimus esse speciem, sic materia communis per se pertinet ad speciem, non autem materia individualis, in qua natura speciei accipitur."

T_1 and T_2 are twists of the Greek language which Aristotle turned to technical account. Though they have distinct spheres of influence, still their connotations are closely related and their denotations overlap. That both terms exist, is to be accounted for, I would suggest, by the fact that T_1 —the question of the second type—has its meaning defined by transposition to a question of the fourth type, while the answer to this fourth-type question is properly T_2 . Thus, the principal meaning of T_1 is essence, and the principal meaning of T_2 is form; of this difference Aristotle was aware, but his emphasis was not on the difference but on the radical equivalence. His argument was against the Platonists, who failed to grasp both insight into phantasm and the idea of formal cause, who consequently wished to derive essences— T_1 —not from insight into the form of sensible objects, but from a noëtic heaven. Such a controversial interest would suffice to direct attention away from sharp and perfect differentiation, which, in any case, is more the work of the text-book writing pedant than of the original genius.⁶⁴

T_2 ranges in meaning from the concrete and individual form of a particular thing to the abstract core of identical meaning in a scientific term. To begin from the latter, we learn in the *Topics* that the *ἴδιον* is convertible with its subject but does not reveal the T_2 of the subject,⁶⁵ while the *ἄρως* is both convertible with the subject and reveals the T_2 of the subject, so that its criterion is an identity of meaning with the meaning of the subject term.⁶⁶ At the same time we are warned that if one has the *ὀρισμός*, then one will have identity of meaning; but the converse does not hold.⁶⁷ Now this negative criterion of T_2 is employed in the *Metaphysics*; consideration of the candidacy of T_2 for the role of substance opens with some logical exercises to the effect that “being you” is not “being a musician,” and “being a surface” is not “being white.”⁶⁸

But T_2 is also a frequent name for the formal cause of a particular

⁶⁴ J. H. Newman put the point, not without a touch of exaggeration, when he wrote (*Grammar of Assent*, London 1870, p 374): “It is the second-rate men, though most useful in their place, who prove, reconcile, finish, and explain.”

⁶⁵ *Topics*, I, 5 (102a 18); I, 8 (103b 9f); V, 3 (131b 37—132a 9); V, 4 (133a 1, 6, 9).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 4 (101b 19, 21); I, 5 (101b 39).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 5 (102a 14 ff). On definition and its relation to scientific syllogism, cf. *Post. Anal.*, II, 8–10 (II, lect. 7 & 8).

⁶⁸ *Met.*, Z, 4, 1029b 13 ff. (VII, lect. 3, §1308 ff.).

thing: if particulars are discrete from their formal causes, they could neither be nor be known.⁶⁹ Is this merely a blind leap from the remotely abstract to the concrete? Hardly, for the proof in the *Physics* that there are just four causes turns upon a consideration of material cause, efficient cause, final cause, and, no doubt what is meant is the formal cause, but the only thing mentioned is T_1 ; the cause from which the geometer argues is the definition.⁷⁰ A similar tendency is to be observed in other treatments of the four causes, though in the other treatments the formal cause is named not T_1 but T_2 .⁷¹

The naturalness of such transitions appears more clearly in Aristotle's environment and problems than in an abstract discussion held over twenty centuries later. Let us turn to these antecedents. Aristotle rebuked Democritus for advancing the statement that the *μορφή* was revealed by shape and color; the shape and color of a fresh corpse are the shape and color of a man; but a fresh corpse is not a man.⁷² On the other hand, Empedocles was applauded more than once for his discernment in affirming that the substance and nature of a bone is, not some one of its elements, or all of them, but the proportion of their combination.⁷³ The proportion is named *λόγος* and T_2 , and Aristotle's objection was that Empedocles should have held not just bones, but all natures to be such. Aristotle himself, after explaining the meaning of T_1 in the *Metaphysics*, went on to remark that a syllable is not just its component vowels and consonants, that flesh is not just fire and earth; there is a further factor, which is not an element, but a principle and cause—a *causa essendi*—which in natural things is the nature.⁷⁴ Thus, a sense is an accidental form, for a sense is to its sense organ, as soul is to body;⁷⁵ but though a form,

⁶⁹ *Met.*, Z, 6 (VII, lect. 5).

⁷⁰ *Phys.*, II, 7, 198a 14 ff.; cf. II, lect. 10, *ad fin.*, where Aquinas summarized the argument in terms of ontological form.

⁷¹ *Phys.*, II, 3, 194b 16 ff. (II, lect. 5); *Post. Anal.*, II, 11, 94a 20 ff. (II, lect. 9); *Met.*, A, 3, 983a 26 ff. (I, lect. 4, §70); Δ , 2, 1013a 27, b 23, b 33 (V, lect. 2, §§764, 779; lect. 3, §786).

⁷² *De Part. Anim.*, I, 1, 640b 31 ff. Cf. *ibid.*, 641a 18 ff.; and *De An.*, II, 1, 412b 20 ff. (II, lect. 2, §239).

⁷³ *De Part. Anim.*, I, 1, 640a 20 ff.; *Met.*, A, 10, 993a 17 (I, lect. 17, §272); cf. *Phys.*, II, 2, 194a 20 (II, lect. 4).

⁷⁴ *Met.*, Z, 17, 1041b 11 ff. (VII, lect. 17, §1672–80).

⁷⁵ *De An.*, II, 1, 412b 17 ff. (II, lect. 2, §239). If the whole soul is in each of the parts, it might seem to follow from this Aristotelian position that each of the parts of an animal

a sense is also named the *λόγος*, or proportion, of the organ;⁷⁶ and this is considered to account for the fact that violent light, sound, heat, and so on, injure not merely the sense organ but the sense as well, or again for the fact that, though plants are alive and may freeze, yet they do not feel cold because their matter is not in the right proportion.⁷⁷ But the crowning sample is the Aristotelian triumph, the definition of soul: soul is the substance as form of a natural body potentially alive;⁷⁸ it is the first entelechy of a natural body potentially alive,⁷⁹ or of a natural and organic body;⁸⁰ it is the substance according to reason,⁸¹ and that is the T₂ of a body of such a kind,⁸² for if an eye were an animal, its soul would be sight.⁸³ But one must not be content with an empirical definition.⁸⁴ Just as "squaring the rectangle" may be defined empirically as finding a square equal in area to a given rectangle, or causally as finding the mean proportional between the unequal sides of the rectangle—where the former definition follows logically from the latter (for if $A:C::C:B$, then $AB = C^2$);⁸⁵ so too the soul may be defined empirically as the first act of a natural and organic body, but causally as the ultimate principle of our living, feeling, and thinking—where the former definition follows logically from the latter (for the ultimate principle of our living is the first act of our matter).⁸⁶ Hence, the soul is not matter or subject, but *λόγος τῆς ἀν εἶη καὶ εἶδος*;⁸⁷ again, the soul is an entelechy and the *λόγος* of what potentially has such a nature.⁸⁸

Now, I think the main point is merely missed by anyone who sees in such passages no more than confused leaping back and forth between ontological and logical considerations. Why was Aquinas able to

was equally an animal. Hence, when he wrote *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 5, a. 3, c., Aquinas seems to have considered the Aristotelian position silly, but had found a saving distinction by the time he wrote *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 76, a. 8 ob. 3a et ad 3m. (In the Ottawa edition, "anima" instead of "animal" [last word in objection] seems a mere misprint).

⁷⁶ *De An.*, II, 12, 424a 27 (II, lect. 24, §555); III, 2, 426b 7 (III, lect. 2, §592). The significant word is, of course, not the translation, "proportion," but the Greek, *λόγος*.

⁷⁷ *De An.*, II, 12, 424a 28 ff. (II, lect. 24, §556 f.). ⁷⁸ *De An.*, II, 1, 412a 20.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, a 27.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, b 5.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, b 9: *οὐσία γὰρ ἢ κατὰ τὸν λόγον*.

⁸² *Ibid.*, b 9–11; cf. *Met.*, Z, 10, 1035b 14 (VII, lect. 10, §1484). ⁸³ *Ibid.*, b 18.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 2, 413a 12.

⁸⁵ *Loc. cit.*; cf. *Post. Anal.*, II, 8–10 (II, lect. 7 & 8).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 414a 4 ff. (II, lect. 4, §271–75). It is not Aristotle but Aquinas that dots the T's and crosses the T's on the twofold definition of soul as an application of the pure theory of the *Posterior Analytics*.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 414a 14.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

affirm that intellect penetrates to the inwardness of things? Only because Aristotle had made his point, against the old naturalists and with some help from number-loving Pythagoreans and defining Platonists,⁸⁹ that what is known by intellect is a partial constituent of the realities first known by sense. For the materialist, the real is what he knows before he understands or thinks: it is the sensitively integrated object that is reality for a dog; it is the sure and firm-set earth on which I tread, which is so reassuring to the sense of reality; and on that showing, intellect does not penetrate to the inwardness of things but is a merely subjective, if highly useful, principle of activity. To the Pythagoreans the discovery of harmonic ratios revealed that numbers and their proportions, though primarily ideas, nonetheless have a role in making things what they are; and for Aristotle the ratio of two to one was the form of the diapason.⁹⁰ Socratic interest in definition reinforced this tendency,⁹¹ but the Platonist sought the reality known by thought, not in this world, but in another. Aristotle's basic thesis was the objective reality of what is known by understanding: it was a common sense position inasmuch as common sense always assumes that to be so; but it was not a common sense position inasmuch as common sense would be able to enunciate it or even to know with any degree of accuracy just what it means and implies. Aristotle is the representative of unconscious common sense; but conscious common sense found voice in the eminent Catholic doctor and professor of philosophy whom I heard ask, "Will some one please tell me what is all this fuss about *ens*?" When, then, Aristotle calls the soul a *λόγος*, he is stating his highly original position, not indeed with the full accuracy which his thought alone made possible, but in a generic fashion which suited his immediate purpose; and it is that generic issue that remains the capital issue, for the denial of soul today is really the denial of the objectivity of the intelligible, the denial that understanding, knowing a cause, is knowing anything real.

Aquinas employed *quod quid est, quod quid erat esse*, and *quidditas*—*Q*₁, *Q*₂, and *Q*₃. But *Q*₂ occurs only rarely outside the Aristotelian

⁸⁹ *Met.*, A, 8, 989b 29 ff. (I, lect. 13, §202 f.); A, 7, 988a 34 ff. (I, lect. 11, §175 ff.).

⁹⁰ *Phys.*, II, 3, 194b 27 f. (II, lect. 5); *Met.*, Δ, 2, 1013b 33 (V, lect. 3, §786).

⁹¹ *Met.*, M, 4, 1078b 9–34.

commentaries⁹² and even there the whole tendency is to identify it with Q_1 . A discussion will begin with Q_2 as its topic, and a few lines later the discussion will be about Q_1 ;⁹³ and however disconcerting this may be, at least it accounts for the emergence of such intermediate forms as *quod quid est esse* and *quid est esse*.⁹⁴ I have attempted to put together a representative, if not exhaustive, account of Thomist usage by listing the references to T_2 in Ross's index to the *Metaphysics* and checking the corresponding passages in the Thomist commentary. In some instances of T_2 Aquinas employed, not so much either Q_1 or Q_2 or Q_3 , but *forma* or *causa formalis*.⁹⁵ In other instances of T_2 Aquinas employed Q_2 where the meaning of the latter is form, formal cause, formal principle, though this may be obscured or may be made doubtful by a later switch from form to essence. Thus, we are told that Q_2 was not employed by Aristotle in his *Categories*, that it means "neque genus neque species neque individuum sed horum omnium formale principium."⁹⁶ More or less in this sense, Q_2 is generated only *per accidens*;⁹⁷ it is soul;⁹⁸ it is the artist's idea;⁹⁹ it is what pertains to form;¹⁰⁰ it is proper to a single subject;¹⁰¹ it is a principle and cause.¹⁰² At the opposite pole, Q_2 is more or less the same as Q_1 , and certainly it is not form, for it is predicable of the whole.¹⁰³ In a passage in which Aristotle argued from the properties of T_1 to those of T_2 , Aquinas maintained a distinction between Q_1 and Q_2 , though it does not seem that Q_2 here means form.¹⁰⁴ Finally, there is the identification of Q_2 with

⁹² *De Ente et Essentia*, c. I (ed. Roland-Gosselin, Kain, 1926, p. 3 *ad fin.*): "Et quia id per quod res constituitur in proprio genere vel specie est hoc quod significatur per diffinitionem indicantem quid est res, inde est quod nomen essentie a philosophis in nomen quidditatis mutatur; et hoc est quod Philosophus frequenter nominat quod quid erat esse, id est hoc per quod aliquid habet esse quid."

⁹³ E.g., *In VII Met.*, lect. 3, §1308 ff.; lect. 5, §1363, 1366, 1378.

⁹⁴ *In IV Met.*, lect. 4, §627; V, lect. 7, §864.

⁹⁵ *In I Met.*, lect. 4, §70; lect. 11, §175; lect. 17, §272.

⁹⁶ *In VII Met.*, lect. 2, §1275. Note that the question is the nature of substance; cf. §1270, where the same term is taken as "quidditas, vel essentia, sive natura rei."

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, lect. 7, §1421; but cf. §1422, and lect. 16, §1608.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, lect. 10, §1487; but cf. §1491.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, lect. 6, §1404; but recall that the artist's idea is an inner word that has been thought out and not strictly a form.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, lect. 13, §1567. ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, §1577. ¹⁰² *Ibid.*, lect. 17, §1648, 1668, 1678.

¹⁰³ *In IV Met.*, lect. 7, §625; V, lect. 19, §1048; VII, lect. 3, §1309; VII, lect. 5, §1378; VII, lect. 7, §1422; VII, lect. 10, §1493.

¹⁰⁴ *In VII Met.*, lect. 4, §1331 ff., 1339 ff., 1352 ff.

substance. This occasions no difficulty with regard to separate substances which are pure forms,¹⁰⁵ but *Metaphysics Z* deals with material substances,¹⁰⁶ and a measure of ambiguity is introduced into the whole Book by the fact that the centre of interest is not the composite, nor the matter, but substance as form¹⁰⁷ which shortly is referred to as T_2 .¹⁰⁸ To some extent this accounts for Thomist corrections of Aristotle's speech, so that the commentary states "substantia, idest forma";¹⁰⁹ however, the ambiguity is perhaps really more fundamental, for such corrections are not confined to *Z*.¹¹⁰ It is to be noted that substance and Q_2 are not subjective universals but objective entities: "quod quid erat esse est substantia, et ratio significativa eius est definitio";¹¹¹ "substantia rei quae est quod quid erat esse est principium et causa."¹¹² Finally, with reference to the answer to the question, What is a man? there is a veritable cascade of terms: *substantia, forma, species, causa materiae, principium et causa, quod quid erat esse*, and *quidditas* all occur within the space of two short paragraphs.¹¹³

Thus, I think, Thomist usage may be summarized as follows. *Quod quid est* (Q_1) is the essential definition as inner word. *Quod quid erat esse* (Q_2) is also the essential definition as inner word, but with a very special reference to the ground of essential definition, namely, the formal cause, so that at times it almost is, or simply is, the formal cause,¹¹⁴ and precisely because of this uncertainty and ambiguity, the term appears so rarely outside the Aristotelian commentaries. *Quid-*

¹⁰⁵ *In VIII Met.*, lect. 3, §1709.

¹⁰⁶ *In VII Met.*, lect. 1, §1269;

¹⁰⁷ *Met.*, Z, 3, 1029a 26 ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, 1029b 2.

¹⁰⁹ *In VII Met.*, lect. 10, §1484, 1487.

¹¹⁰ *In IX Met.*, lect. 5, §1828.

¹¹¹ *In VIII Met.*, lect. 1, §1685.

¹¹² *In VII Met.*, lect. 17, §1649.

¹¹³ *In VII Met.*, lect. 17, §1667 f.: "Et similiter cum quaerimus quid est homo, idem est ac si quaeretur propter quid hoc, scilicet Socrates, est homo? quia scilicet inest ei quidditas hominis. Aut etiam idem est ac si quaeretur propter quid corpus sic se habens, ut puta organicum, est homo? Haec enim est materia hominis, sicut lapides et lateres domus. Quare manifestum est quod in talibus quaestionibus quaeritur 'causa materiae' idest propter quid materia pertingat ad naturam eius quod definitur. Hoc autem quaesitum quod est causa materiae 'est species' scilicet forma qua aliquid est. Hoc autem 'est substantia' idest ipsa substantia quae est quod quid erat esse. Et sic relinquitur quod propositum erat ostendere, scilicet quod substantia sit principium et causa."

¹¹⁴ *In V Met.*, lect. 2, §764: "Et, quia unumquodque consequitur naturam vel generis vel speciei per formam suam, natura autem generis vel speciei est id quod significat definitio, dicens quid est res, ideo forma est ratio ipsius 'quod quid erat esse,' idest definitio per quam scitur quid est res. Quamvis enim in definitione ponantur aliquae partes materiales, tamen id quod est principale, in definitione, oportet quod sit ex parte formae. Et

ditas (Q_3) strictly is an abstract term with Q_1 as the corresponding concrete term: thus Q_3 is to form, as humanity is to the human soul;¹¹⁵ unlike form, it includes common matter;¹¹⁶ but this is only the proper meaning of Q_3 , for at times it is indistinguishable from Q_1 , a fact to be explained, at least in part, because it can be manipulated grammatically while Q_1 was practically indeclinable.¹¹⁷

To a superficial thinker, whose grasp of philosophic thought begins and ends with an exact use of language, the foregoing will appear as a horrid blemish. But the fact is that the original genius, precisely because he is original, finds all current usage inept for his purposes and succeeds remarkably if there is any possibility of grasping his meaning from his words; the possibility of exact expression of a philosophic position only arises long after the philosopher's death when his influence has moulded the culture which is the background and vehicle of such expression. This is all the more true in matters that are at the very center of philosophic synthesis, and the *quod quid est* is at the very center of Aristotelian and Thomist thought. For *quod quid est* is the first and immediate middle term of scientific syllogistic demonstration; simultaneously, it is the goal and term of all positive inquiry, which begins from wonder about data¹¹⁸ and proceeds to the search for causes—material, efficient, final, but principally formal; for the formal cause makes matter a thing and, combined with common matter, is the essence of the thing. The *quod quid est* is the key idea not only in all logic and methodology, but also in all metaphysics. *Simpliciter* it is substance; for substance alone is a *quid* without qualification; accidents, too, are instances of *quid*, but only after a fashion, for their intelligibility is not merely what they are, but also includes an added relation to their subject; and this difference in their intelligibility and essence involves a generically different *modus essendi*.¹¹⁹

ideo haec est ratio quare forma est causa, quia perficit rationem quidditatis rei." Cf. *In I Met.*, lect. 4, §70, where however 'quod quid erat esse' occurs presumably in the text but not in the commentary.

¹¹⁵ *In V Met.*, lect. 10, §702.

¹¹⁶ *In VII Met.*, lect. 9, §1473. See also lect. 2, §1270; lect. 10, §1491; lect. 15, §1606.

¹¹⁷ E.g., *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 12, c., where the argument moves from 'essentia' to 'quidditas,' and then on to 'quod quid est' without any apparent difference of meaning.

¹¹⁸ *In I Met.*, lect. 1, §2-4; lect. 3, §54 f., §66 f.

¹¹⁹ *In VII Met.*, lect. 4. A less dialectical instance than the snub-nose may make the matter clearer: the intelligibility of circularity is its necessary consequence from equality

There follows the logico-ontological parallel: as methodology moves to discovery of the *quid*, so motion and generation move towards its reality; as demonstration establishes properties from the *quid*, so real essences are the real grounds of real properties. Nor is there only parallel, but also inter-action: the real is the cause of knowledge;¹²⁰ inversely, the idea of the technician or artist is the cause of the technical or artistic product;¹²¹ and for Aquinas the latter is the prior consideration, for God is artisan of the universe. Even in this brief and rough delineation, one can perceive the magnificent sweep of genius. Now the issues we have been agitating in this section lie behind this synthesis: The essential definition proceeds from an act of understanding; the real thing is what it is, because form has actuated matter. The Aristotelian term, T_2 , was a logical effort to isolate understanding and form, and one has only to consider the difficulties of such isolation to grasp why Aquinas dropped this Aristotelian effort as abortive and proceeded on lines of his own. Because the act of understanding—the *intelligere proprie*—is prior to, and cause of, conceptualization, because expression is only through conceptualization, any attempt to fix the act of understanding, except by way of introspective description, involves its own partial failure; for any such attempt is an expression, and expression is no longer understanding and already concept. Again, in a sense, the act of understanding as an insight into phantasm is knowledge of form: but the form so known is not the philosophic concept of form; insight is to phantasm as form is to matter; but in that proportion, form is related to prime matter, but insight is related to sensible qualities; strictly, then, it is not true that insight is grasp of form; rather, insight is the grasp of the object in an inward aspect such that the mind, pivoting on the insight, is able to conceive, not without labor, the philosophic concepts of form and matter.

INSIGHT INTO PHASTASM

Insight into phantasm is the first part of the process that moves from sense through understanding to essential definition. Though Aquinas

of radii; but unless one adds the subject, "plane," that intelligibility will not define the circle nor circularity. Substance is a *quid* on its own; but ontological accident is not.

¹²⁰ *In IX Met.*, lect. 11, §1897 ff.

¹²¹ *In VII Met.*, lect. 8, §1450 ff. See the whole argument, *Met.*, Z, 7-9 (lect. 6-8).

derived the doctrine from Aristotle,¹²² he also affirmed it as a matter of experience: "Quilibet in se ipso experiri potest, quod quando aliquis conatur aliquid intelligere, format sibi aliqua phantasmata per modum exemplorum, in quibus quasi inspicat quod intelligere studet."¹²³ However, to many profound minds, so brief a description seems to have been insufficient. Scotus flatly denied the fact of insight into phantasm.¹²⁴ Kant, whose critique was not of the pure reason but of the human mind as conceived by Scotus,¹²⁵ repeatedly affirmed that our intellects are purely discursive, that all intuition is sensible. Though the point is elementary, still it is so important that I beg to be permitted to dwell on a plain matter of fact.

¹²² Cf. *supra*, note 53.

¹²³ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 7 c.

¹²⁴ *In I Sent. (Op. Ox.)*, d. 3, q. 6, n. 10 (ed. Vivès, IX, 250 ff.).

¹²⁵ Scotus (*Metaphys.*, II, q. 1, n. 2 [VII, 96]) posits concepts first, then the apprehension of nexus between concepts. His *species intelligibilis* is what is meant immediately by external words (*In Periherm.*, I, q. 2, n. 3; I, 541); it is proved to exist because knowing presupposes its object and indeed its object as present (*In I Sent. [Op. Ox.]*, d. 3, q. 6, nn. 5-14 [IX, 236-53]); its production by agent intellect and phantasm is the first act of intellect, with knowing it as second act or inner word (*ibid.*, q. 8, n. 3 [IX, 401]); it is not necessarily an accident inhering in the intellect but necessarily only a sufficiently present agent cooperating with intellect in producing the act of knowing; ordinarily it is the subordinate, but may be the principal, agent (*ibid.*, q. 7, nn. 21 f. [IX, 362 f.]); sensitive knowledge is merely an occasion for scientific knowledge (*ibid.*, q. 4, nn. 7 ff. [IX, 173 ff.]); as our inner word proceeds from the species, so the divine word proceeds from the divine essence (*ibid.*, d. 2, q. 7, n. 15 [VIII, 543]). The Scotist rejection of insight into phantasm necessarily reduced the act of understanding to seeing a nexus between concepts; hence, while for Aquinas, understanding precedes conceptualization which is rational, for Scotus, understanding is preceded by conceptualization which is a matter of metaphysical mechanics. It is the latter position that gave Kant the analytic judgments which he criticized; and it is the real insufficiency of that position which led Kant to assert his synthetic a priori judgments; on the other hand, the Aristotelian and the Thomist positions both consider the Kantian assumption of purely discursive intellect to be false and, indeed, to be false, not as a point of theory, but as a matter of fact. While M. Gilson (*Arch. d'hist. doct. et litt. du M.-A.*, I [1926], 6-128; II [1927], 89-149; IV [1929], 5-149), has done splendid work on Scotist origins, there is needed an explanation of Scotist influence. Cajetan (*In I Sum. Theol.*, q. 12, a. 2, §XIV; ed. Leon., IV, 118) confessed that at one time he held, taught, and may even have published a Scotist view of the beatific vision and this view he names the common run of opinion (*ibid.*). Though Cajetan *ibid.*, q. 79, a. 2, §XIII; ed. Leon. V, 262) did not believe Scotus to have grasped Aristotle on intellect, P. Hoenen (*Gregorianum*, XIV [1933], 153-84; XIX [1938], 498-514; XX [1939], 19-54, 321-50) seems to have demonstrated conclusively that Cajetan has been overcome by Scotus on knowledge of principles; see also E. Longpré's remark (*La philosophie du B. Duns Scot*, [Paris, 1924] p. 215). Innocently enough, R. P. Mingès ("Duns Scotus," *Cath. Encyclopedia*, V, 197) summed up the extent of Scotist influence: "The psychology of Scotus is in its essentials the same as that of St. Thomas." Really!

The Platonists posited not only sensible objects and eternal forms but also pure mathematical objects; their reason for adding the third category was the fact that mathematical objects are like the forms by their necessity and immobility, but unlike the forms and like sensible objects inasmuch as they are many of the same kind.¹²⁶ One and one are two. But I plus myself am not two but one. For one and one to be two, the second "one" cannot be identical with the first; but neither can it differ in meaning, in idea, in essence, from the first; else it would not be "one" that was added to "one," but something else. When the geometer argues about two triangles similar in all respects, he deals with two triangles, and not with some one triangle; but if they are similar in all respects, then they do not differ in idea, in essence, in nature, or in any accidental characteristic; there is mere material multiplication. In Aristotelian and in Thomist psychology, the second "one" or the second "triangle" is accounted for, not by a second concept, but by the reflection or conversion of intellect back to phantasm where the many instances of the one idea are represented.¹²⁷

Phantasm is involved not only in the employment of abstract concepts but also in their genesis. Euclid's first problem was to construct an equilateral triangle on a given base, AB . His procedure was to draw two circles in the given plane, one with center at A and radius AB , the other with center at B and radius BA . The point of intersection, C , was then joined to A and to B , and that ABC was an equilateral triangle was proved from the equality of the radii, AB and AC , BA and BC , and the axiom that things equal to the same are equal to each other. What Euclid failed to demonstrate was that the two circles would intersect; nor can it be demonstrated from abstract concepts; for there are not two abstract circles, and even if there were, they would be outside space, and so could not intersect. That the circles in question must intersect is known by insight into phantasm; draw or imagine the construction, and you will see this necessity; but you will see the two circles by a sensitive faculty, the necessity by an insight into the sensible presentation. Such insight is involved fre-

¹²⁶ *Met.*, A, 6, 987b 14 ff. (I, lect. 10, §157). For the distinction of different Platonist positions; cf. M, 1, 1076a 17 ff.

¹²⁷ *In III de An.*, lect. 8, §713. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 86, a. 1; q. 84, a. 7; *et passim*.

quently enough in Euclidean proofs, but it is also involved in grasping primary quiddities, definitions. A plane curve with neither bumps nor dents, of perfectly uniform curvature, cannot be had if not all radii are equal but must be had if all radii are equal; one sees the curve, the radii, their equality, the presence or absence of bumps or dents by one's eyes or imagination; one cannot know them in any other way, for there is only one abstract radius, and it does not move; but the impossibility or necessity of perfectly uniform curvature is known by intellect alone in the act of insight into phantasm.

Aristotle grasped such facts. Intelligible objects, he maintained, do not exist apart from concrete extension but are in sensible forms and mathematical diagrams; accordingly, a person without sense perception would never learn anything or understand anything; further, speculative thought keeps an eye on phantasm for, in its case, phantasms play the role taken by sensible objects in sense perception.¹²⁸ Aquinas repeats Aristotle in such a variety of ways that one can be certain that he grasped the issue himself and was not merely appealing to an authority. Phantasm is to intellect as object to potency, as sensible objects to sense, as color to vision.¹²⁹ Phantasm is the object of intellect.¹³⁰ It is also the mover of intellect, but it is not the object because it is the mover, and so is the object perhaps only in some mechanical or metaphysical, but non-psychological, sense; it is the mover because it is the object.¹³¹ Human intellect in this life needs phantasms as objects¹³²—indeed, as proper objects.¹³³ Since knowledge requires an object, and since phantasm is the object of intellect, a phantasm is always necessary for intellectual activity, no matter how perfect the *species intelligibilis*.¹³⁴ “*Potentiae sensitivae sunt ne-*

¹²⁸ Cf. *supra*, note 53. On insight into phantasm and modern scientific theory see, *James Clerk Maxwell: A Commemoration Volume*, essays by J. J. Thomson, *et al.*, (Cambridge, 1931), pp. 31, 98, 104, 106.

¹²⁹ *In II Sent.*, d. 17, q. 2, a. 1 sol.; d. 20, q. 2, a. 2 ad 2m; IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 6 ad 3m; *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 2 c. [ed. Mand., III, 132]; *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 6 c.; etc.

¹³⁰ *In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 2, a. 2 ad 1m; III, d. 14, q. 1, a. 3 sol. 1. There is even the early and somewhat incautious statement *In I Sent.*, d. 3, q. 4, a. 3 sol.: “. . . oportet quod in definitione huius actus qui est intelligere, cadat phantasma, quod est obiectum eius, ut in III de An., text. 38, dicitur, quod per actum imaginationis repraesentatur intellectui.”

¹³¹ *In II Sent.*, d. 17, q. 2, a. 1 sol.

¹³² *De An.*, a. 15 ad 3m.

¹³³ *De Ver.*, q. 18, a. 8 ad 4m.

¹³⁴ *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 2 ad 7m (1a ser.).

cessariae animae ad intelligendum, non per accidens tamquam excitantes ut Plato posuit; neque disponentes tantum sicut posuit Avicenna; sed ut repraesentantes animae intellectivae proprium obiectum, ut dicit Philosophus in III de Anima.”¹³⁵ In a word, one cannot understand without understanding something; and the something understood, the something whose intelligibility is actuated, is in the phantasm. To understand circularity is to grasp by intellect a necessary nexus between imagined equal radii and imagined uniform curvature. The terms to be connected are sensibly perceived; their relation, connection, unification, is what insight knows in the sensitive presentation.

Because the necessity of phantasm is the necessity of an object, that necessity regards not merely the genesis but also the use of scientific grasp.¹³⁶ It makes no difference how spiritual the object, how far removed from sense; phantasm remains necessary; “etiam Deus cognoscitur a nobis per phantasma sui effectus, in quantum cognoscimus Deum per negationem vel per causalitatem vel per excellentiam.”¹³⁷ Habitual possession of scientific knowledge is useless without conversion to phantasm “in quo resplendet species intelligibilis sicut exemplar in exemplato vel imagine.”¹³⁸ The difference between invention or learning and use of science is that, in the first instance, phantasm has to produce the act of insight whereas, in subsequent instances, informed intellect guides the production of an appropriate phantasm;¹³⁹ in other words, in the first instance, we are at the mercy of fortune, the sub-conscious, or a teacher’s skill, for the emergence of an appropriate phantasm; we are in a ferment of trying to grasp we know not what; but once we have understood, then we can operate on our own, marshalling images to a habitually known end.

The act of intellect with respect to phantasm is an insight: “cum phantasmata comparentur ad intellectum ut obiecta in quibus inspicit omne quod inspicit, vel secundum perfectam repraesentationem vel

¹³⁵ *De An.*, a. 15 c., *ad fin.*

¹³⁶ *Boet. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 2 ad 5m [ed. Mand. III, 154]; *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 2 ad 7m; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 7; q. 85, a. 1 ad 5m.

¹³⁷ *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 8 ad 3m; cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 7 ad 3m.

¹³⁸ *C. Gent.*, II, 73 [ed. Leon., XIII, 462b 11].

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*; *De Ver.*, q. 19, a. 1 c.; *In III Sent.*, d. 14, q. 1, sol. 3; sol. 5 ad 3m; contrast *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 12, a. 2 c., which modifies the position on Christ’s human knowledge. See also *In III de An.*, lect. 8, §700 ff.; *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 8.

secundum negationem."¹⁴⁰ Though theoretical science proceeds from principles known of themselves, yet these principles are obtained from sense as explained in the second book of the *Posterior Analytics*.¹⁴¹ There the account is of a process from many sensations to a memory, from many memories to an element of experience, and from many elements of experience to grasp of a universal.¹⁴² Aquinas noted the parallel in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*: The man of experience knows that such and such medicine cured such and such patients in such and such circumstances; but the technician knows that such a kind of medicine cures such a kind of disease.¹⁴³ Like the senses,¹⁴⁴ the man of experience merely knows *quia*,¹⁴⁵ but the technician knows causes—*propter quid*—and so is able to teach and to solve objections.¹⁴⁶ In other words, the technician knows the abstract universal, which is an inner word consequent to insight. But the man of experience merely knows the *universale in particulari*, and that knowledge is not intellectual knowledge but exists in a sensitive potency variously named the *ratio particularis, cogitativa, intellectus passivus*. It carries on comparisons of particulars in virtue of the influence of intellect,¹⁴⁷ and it knows Socrates and Callias, not merely as Socrates and Callias, but also as *hi homines*,¹⁴⁸ and without this sensitive apprehension of the universal in the particular it would be impossible for intellect to reach the abstract universal.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁰ *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 2 ad 5m; cf. *C. Gent.*, II, 73.

¹⁴¹ *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 7 ad 12m; cf. *De An.*, a. 15 ad 20m.

¹⁴² *In II Post. Anal.*, lect. 20.

¹⁴³ *In I Met.*, lect. 1, §19.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, §30.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, §§23, 24, 29.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 78, a. 4 c., ob. 5a & ad 5m.

¹⁴⁸ *In II Post. Anal.*, lect. 20; cf. *In II de An.*, lect. 13, §396 ff.

¹⁴⁹ While Scotus posited a knowledge of the singular in intellect (see C. S. R. Harris, *The Philosophy of Duns Scotus*, [Oxford, 1927], II, 20 ff.), Aquinas, at least when commenting Aristotle, could affirm the necessity of some knowledge of the universal in sense (*In II Post. Anal.*, lect. 20): "Manifestum est enim quod singulare sentitur proprie et per se, sed tamen sensus est quodammodo et ipsius universalis. Cognoscit enim Calliam, non solum in quantum est Callias, sed etiam in quantum est hic homo; et similiter Socratem in quantum est hic homo. Et inde est quod tali acceptione sensus praeeistente, anima intellectiva potest considerare hominem in utroque. Si autem ita esset, quod sensus apprehenderet solum id quod est particularitatis, et nullo modo cum hoc apprehenderet universale in particulare, non esset possibile quod ex apprehensione sensus causaretur in nobis cognitio universalis." This position is impossible if one defines intellect as that which alone knows the universal; it is inevitable, if by intellect one means the faculty which is subject of acts of intelligence, understanding, etc. Naturally enough, crypto-

This dependence of human intellect on sense for its object and for the preparatory elaboration of its object implies that human intellect is essentially intellect-in-process or reason. We do have occasional flashes of insight; but angelic, and, still more, divine, knowledge is exclusively that sort of thing, a continuous blaze of the light of understanding. We shout our rare "Eurekas" with Archimedes, but for the most part we have to reason: "Nam cum volo concipere rationem lapidis, oportet quod ad ipsam ratiocinando perveniam: et sic est in omnibus aliis quae a nobis intelliguntur; nisi forte in primis principiis, quae cum sint simpliciter nota, absque discursu rationis sciuntur."¹⁵⁰ This necessity of reasoning arises from the dependence of our intellects on sense: "Ex hoc ipso quod intellectus noster accipit a phantasmatibus, sequitur in ipso quod scientiam habet collativam, inquantum ex multis sensibilibus fit una memoria, et ex multis memoriis fit unum experimentum, et ex multis experimentis fit unum universale principium, ex quo alia concludit; et sic acquirit scientiam, ut dicitur in I *Metaphys.* in proem. et in fine *Posteriorum*."¹⁵¹ Hence the theory of innate ideas—and, one may add, of Kantian a priori forms—contradicts the experience we all have of working from, and on, a sensible

Scotism would prefer to consider the passage just cited as representing the mind of Aristotle but not that of Aquinas. I would not contend that everything to be found in the Aristotelian commentaries is the mind of Aquinas. On the other hand, one must insist on some evidence before one can consider that an opinion is merely Aristotelian. With regard to the present question the following is perhaps significant (*De Ver.*, q. 8, a. 11, c., *ad fin.*): ". . . omnis forma, inquantum huiusmodi, universalis est. . . Omnis autem actio est a forma; et ideo, quantum est ex virtute agentis, non fit aliqua forma a rebus in nobis nisi quae sit similitudo formae; sed *per accidens contingit* ut sit similitudo etiam materialium dispositionum, inquantum recipit in organo materiali, quia materialiter recipit, et sic retinentur aliquae conditiones materiae. Ex quo contingit quod sensus et imaginatio singularia cognoscunt." For a fuller account of this mechanism, cf. *In II de An.*, lect. 24, §§551–554. If sense knowledge of the singular is in some sense *per accidens*, it hardly is impossible a priori that a sensitive potency under the influence of intellect should know the universal in the particular. For a documented study of the *cogitativa*, cf. J. Peghaire, "A Forgotten Sense: The Cogitative, according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Modern Schoolman*, XX (1943), 123–40; 210–19; on knowledge of universal, pp. 138 ff.

¹⁵⁰ *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1; cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 2.

¹⁵¹ *In III Sent.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 3 sol. 3; cf. II, d. 3, q. 1, a. 2 sol; d. 39, q. 3, a. 1 sol; *C. Gent.*, III, 56; *Sum. Theol.*, II–II, q. 180, a. 6 ad 2m; see J. Peghaire, *Intellectus et Ratio*, pp. 103 ff.

basis towards understanding.¹⁵² The Kantian apriori form of space has been junked by the geometers, and the Kantian apriori form of time has been junked by the physicists, for human understanding develops, and its *posse omnia fieri* knows no limit save that set by its natural object,¹⁵³ which is *ens*.

Now, just as human intellect is mainly reason, because it operates from sense as a starting-point, so the quiddity known by the human intellect is different in kind from that known by the angelic.¹⁵⁴ The angel has no senses and so his acts of understanding cannot be insights into sensibly presented data; they must be pure acts, though limited, of understanding. Of this more will be said later, but its main Aristotelian elements can be noted at once. As soon as Aristotle arrived at the meaning of the question, What is a man?, he immediately concluded that the separate substances must be objects of a different type of knowledge and inquiry.¹⁵⁵ The Platonist extrapolation to higher regions was modelled on the universal concept, and Aristotle rightly criticized the anthropomorphism of such a procedure.¹⁵⁶ Aristotle's own extrapolation is not from universal concepts, but from the act of insight: it consists in affirming the quality of understanding while removing the sensible object and limitation; the result is a *νόησις νοήσεως*¹⁵⁷ in which understander and understood are identical.¹⁵⁸ Thus the pure Aristotelian theory of intellect is to be sought in the Aristotelian account of his separate substances, and from that account O. Hamelin rightly derives the main features of his description of Aristotelian intellect.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, the pure Thomist theory of intellect is to be sought in the Thomist account of angelic knowledge, and from that account J. Peghaire rightly begins his investigation of Thomist notions of intellect and reason.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² *In IV Sent.*, d. 50, q. 1, a. 1 sol; cf. *ibid.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 6 ad 3m.

¹⁵³ *C. Gent.*, II, 83 [ed. Leon., XIII, 523a 26 ff.].

¹⁵⁴ *De An.*, a. 7 ad 1m; *Comp. Theol.*, c. 104; *In Boet de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 4; *C. Gent.*, II, 94, "Praeterea"; III, 41.

¹⁵⁵ *In VII Met.*, lect. 17, §§1669 ff.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, lect. 16, §§1642-46.

¹⁵⁷ *Met.*, A, 9, 1074b 34; *In XII Met.*, lect. 11.

¹⁵⁸ *De An.*, III, 4, 430a 3; cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 87, a. 1 ad 3m; *De Ver.*, q. 8, aa. 6 & 7; *De Subst. Sep.*, c. 3 [ed. Mand., I, 81]; *In IX Met.*, lect. 11, §1904.

¹⁵⁹ O. Hamelin, *Le Système d'Aristote* [éd. 2e; Paris, 1931], Lecture VIII, p. 108 ff.

¹⁶⁰ J. Peghaire, *Intellectus et Ratio*, pp. 29 ff.

“EMANATIO INTELLIGIBILIS”

The procession of the inner word, we are told, is an *emanatio intelligibilis*.¹⁶¹ This brings us to our main point. All causation is intelligible, but there are three differences between natural process and the procession of an inner word. The intelligibility of natural process is passive and potential: it is what can be understood; it is not an understanding; it is a potential object of intellect, but it is not the very stuff of intellect. Again, the intelligibility of natural process is the intelligibility of some specific natural law, say, the law of inverse squares, but never the intelligibility of the very idea of intelligible law. Thirdly, the intelligibility of natural process is imposed from without: natures act intelligibly, not because they are intelligent, for they are not, but because they are concretions of divine ideas and a divine plan. On the other hand, the intelligibility of the procession of an inner word is not passive nor potential; it is active and actual; it is intelligible because it is the activity of intelligence in act; it is intelligible, not as the possible object of understanding is intelligible, but as understanding itself and the activity of understanding is intelligible. Again, its intelligibility defies formulation in any specific law; inner words proceed according to the principles of identity, non-contradiction, excluded middle, and sufficient reason; but these principles are not specific laws but the essential conditions of there being objects to be related by laws and relations to relate them. Thus the procession of an inner word is the pure case of intelligible law: one may say that such procession is a particular case of “*omne agens agit sibi simile*”; but one has only to recall that this agent may be similar to anything, that it is “*potens omnia fieri*,” to see that really one has here not a particular case but the resumé of all possible cases. Thirdly, it is native and natural for the procession of inner word to be intelligible, actively intelligible, and the genus of all intelligible process; just as heat is native and natural to fire, so is intelligible procession to intelligence in act; for intelligence in act does not follow laws imposed from without, but rather it is the ground of the intelligibility of law, it is constitutive and, as it were, creative of law; and the laws of intelligible procession of an inner word are not any particular laws but the

¹⁶¹ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 1 c., *ad fin.*: “*Secundum emanationem intelligibilem, utpote verbi intelligibilis a dicente.*”

general constituents of any law, precisely because of this naturalness of intelligibility to intelligence, precisely because intelligence is to law as cause to effect.

Now it is only to restate the basic contention of this and subsequent articles to observe that the human mind is an image, and not a mere vestige, of the Blessed Trinity because its processions are intelligible in a manner that is essentially different from, that transcends, the passive, specific, imposed intelligibility of other natural process. Any effect has a sufficient ground in its cause; but an inner word not merely has a sufficient ground in the act of understanding it expresses; it also has a knowing as sufficient ground, and that ground is operative precisely as a knowing, knowing itself to be sufficient. To introduce a term that will summarize this, we may say that the inner word is rational, not indeed with the derived rationality of discourse, of reasoning from premises to conclusions, but with the basic and essential rationality of rational consciousness, with the rationality that can be discerned in any judgment, with the rationality that now we have to observe in all concepts. For human understanding, though it has its object in the phantasm and knows it in the phantasm, yet is not content with an object in this state. It pivots on itself to produce for itself another object which is the inner word as *ratio, intentio, definitio, quod quid est*. And this pivoting and production is no mere matter of some metaphysical sausage-machine, at one end slicing species off phantasm, and at the other popping out concepts; it is an operation of rational consciousness.

I believe there cannot be any reasonable doubt that the foregoing represents the mind of Aquinas. It is true that he does not employ the term *intelligere* exclusively in the sense of understanding.¹⁶² It remains that the principal meaning of *intelligere* is understanding. Aquinas knew perfectly well what Aristotle meant by *quod quid est*, by the wonder that is the source of all science and philosophy, by insight into phantasm; he can take these positions, fuse and transform them, and come forth with a natural desire for the beatific vision,¹⁶³

¹⁶² J. Peghaire (*op cit.* pp. 18-25), lists a dozen senses of *intellectus* in Aquinas.

¹⁶³ A natural desire for the beatific vision is absent from the earlier writings: there is the silence of *In II Sent.*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 2; IV, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1; *Quodl.*, X, a. 7; *De Ver.* q. 8, a. 1; furthermore, it seems positively excluded by *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 2, with which compare *Sum. Theol.*, II-II, q. 4, a. 1. Its first appearance would seem the masterly dis-

a position that is notoriously unintelligible to people who do not grasp just what understanding is. He repeatedly affirmed that the *quod quid est* is the proper object of intellect,¹⁶⁴ and his affirmation carried with it all the implications of the Aristotelian ideal of science. A definition always rests on prior knowledge;¹⁶⁵ to know the quiddity, to define, to conceive the form of the thing, are identified;¹⁶⁶ to know the definition is to know in potency the science that is demonstrated from the definition;¹⁶⁷ definition is comprehension, embracing the whole range of implications of the defined.¹⁶⁸ In the *De Veritate* he considered as distinct potencies the *scientificum* and the *ratiocinativum*; by the former we know the necessary; by the latter we know the contingent; but it is the former that has as its object the *quod quid est*, that through definitions knows principles, and through principles knows conclusions; in other words the former is intellect in the sense of understanding.¹⁶⁹ Later, in the *Pars Prima*, he found his way to include knowledge of the contingent within the same potency, not indeed by changing his concept of intellect, but by admitting within its range imperfect instances of its object.¹⁷⁰ Whatever intellect knows, it knows through the *quod quid est* which is the substance of the object:

cussion of beatitude in *C. Gent.*, III, 25–63; see esp. cc. 25, 48, 50, 63. It is reaffirmed in *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 1 c.; a. 8 ad 4m; q. 62, a. 1 c.; I–II, q. 3, a. 8; *Comp. Theol.*, c. 104. The origin of the doctrine is Aristotle (*In I Met.*, lect. 1, §2–4; lect. 3, §54 f; §66 f.). This appears most clearly in *C. Gent.*, III, 50, and *Sum. Theol.*, I–II, q. 3, a. 8 c.

¹⁶⁴ The source is *In III de An.*, lect. 8, §705–19, with the relevant statement in §717. Affirmations of this position are endlessly recurrent: cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 2 c.; *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 12 c.; q. 15, a. 2 ad 3m; *C. Gent.*, III, 56, “Amplius”; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 17, a. 3; q. 85, a. 6; q. 85, a. 8; q. 84, a. 7.

¹⁶⁵ *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 3, c. [ed. Mand. III, 136]. “Oportet enim definitionum cognitionem sicut et demonstrationum ex aliqua praeexistente cognitione initium sumere.” Cf. *ibid.*, a. 4 c. [p. 140].

¹⁶⁶ *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 1 ad 9m: “Tunc intellectus dicitur scire de aliquo quid est, quando definit ipsum, id est quando concipit aliquam formam de ipsa re quae per omnia ipsi rei respondet.”

¹⁶⁷ *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 7 ad 5m: “qui cognoscit definitionem, cognoscit enuntiabilia in potentia quae per definitionem demonstrantur.” Search Euclid for a property of the circle that is not demonstrated through the definition of the circle.

¹⁶⁸ *De Ver.*, q. 20, a. 5 c ad fin.: “Tunc enim unaquaqueque res comprehenditur, quando eius definitio scitur. Cuiuslibet autem virtutis definitio sumitur ex his ad quae virtus se extendit. Unde si anima Christi sciret omnia ad quae virtus Dei se extendit, comprehenderet omnino virtutem Dei; quod est omnino impossibile.”

¹⁶⁹ *De Ver.*, q. 15, a. 2 ad 3m.

¹⁷⁰ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 79, a. 9 ad 3m.

just as whatever is known by sight is known through color, so what is known by intellect is known through the *quod quid est*. What cannot be known by intellect in that manner cannot be known at all. However, it is true that in the natural, as opposed to the mathematical, sciences, intellect begins, not from the definition, but from sensible accidents; still, that does not affect the principle enunciated above; it occurs *per accidens* inasmuch as our intellectual knowledge proceeds from sense.¹⁷¹ To grasp the meaning of these passages is impossible, I believe, without also grasping that by *intelligere* Aquinas means understanding, the act which, if frequent, gains a man a reputation for intelligence and, if rare, gains him a reputation for stupidity.

In the second place, Aquinas considered the inner word to be a product of the act of understanding;¹⁷² to be expressed from the knowledge possessed by the mind;¹⁷³ of its very nature to proceed from the

¹⁷¹ *C. Gent.*, III, 56: "Amplius, nulla virtus cognoscitiva cognoscit rem aliquam nisi secundum rationem proprii obiecti; non enim visu cognoscimus aliquid nisi in quantum est coloratum. Proprium autem obiectum intellectus est quod quid est, id est substantia rei, ut dicitur in III de Anima. Igitur quidquid intellectus de aliqua re cognoscit, cognoscat per cognitionem substantiae illius rei: unde in qualibet demonstratione per quam innotescunt nobis propria accidentia, principium accipimus quod quid est, ut dicitur in II libro Posteriorum. Si autem substantiam alicuius rei intellectus cognoscat per accidentia, sicut dicitur in I de Anima quod accidentia magnam partem conferunt ad cognoscendum quod quid est, hoc est per accidens, in quantum cognitio intellectus oritur a sensu; et sic per sensibilibus accidentium cognitionem oportet ad substantiae intellectum pervenire; propter quod hoc non habet locum in mathematicis sed in naturalibus tantum. Quidquid igitur est in re quod non potest cognosci per cognitionem substantiae eius, oportet esse intellectui ignotum."

¹⁷² *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 c.: "omne autem intellectum in nobis est aliquid realiter procedens ab altero; vel sicut progrediuntur a principiis conceptiones conclusionem, vel sicut conceptiones quidditatum rerum posteriorum a quidditatibus priorum, vel saltem sicut conceptio actualis ab habituali cognitione; et hoc universaliter verum est de omni quod a nobis intelligitur, sive per essentiam intelligatur sive per similitudinem; ipsa enim conceptio est effectus actus intelligendi." I do not believe that the three alternatives listed equate with the full range of possibilities, for they regard the deductions of an adult mind, which would have been the aspect of the matter Aquinas would have considered most familiar to his contemporaries. I do not believe that the general principle affirmed as without exception is to be restricted to the field illustrated by these examples. As to conception from habitual knowledge, it is true, on the one hand, that habitual possession of principles without explicit advertence to them controls actual thinking (*De Malo*, q. 16, a. 6 ad 4m), but on the other hand, it is not true that there is ever conception without understanding in act as cause of the conception (*C. Gent.*, IV, 14 [ed. Leon., XV, 56a 5 ff.]; cited *supra*, note 46).

¹⁷³ *De Ver.*, q. 4, a. 2 c.: "... aliquid expressum a notitia mentis."

knowledge of the person conceiving it.¹⁷⁴ Of themselves, these statements do not give one a realization of *emanatio intelligibilis*. For that, examples and instances are necessary, and so we turn to the Thomist division of concepts. In this field the modern development of scientific methodology has added greatly to the precision of our knowledge; such precision no one will expect of Aquinas; but, on the other hand, no great discernment is required to see that his medieval grasp of the nature of intellect was sufficiently penetrating to enable him to anticipate what modern methodologists are apt to fancy a private preserve of their own.

Apart from certain natural concepts, of which we shall speak later, it cannot even be suggested that Aquinas thought of conception as an automatic process. Conceptualization comes as the term and product of a process of reasoning.¹⁷⁵ As long as the reasoning, the fluctuation of discourse, continues, the inner word is as yet unuttered.¹⁷⁶ But it also is true that as long as the reasoning continues, we do not as yet understand; for until the inner word is uttered, we are not understanding but only thinking in order to understand.¹⁷⁷ Hence understanding and inner word are simultaneous, the former being the ground and cause of the latter.¹⁷⁸ What, it may be asked, can be the reasoning that is prior to the emergence of the term? Must there not be three terms before there can be any reasoning at all? Clearly such a difficulty is possible only if one's notions of rational psychology are limited to the data to be found in an abbreviated and very formal text-book on deductive logic. But if one is willing to take a broad view on reasoning, to conceive syllogism with some of the intellectual suppleness of Aristotle, one will be willing to grant that every question either asks whether there is a middle term, or asks what the middle term is; that when one asks what a stone is, one asks for the middle term between the sensible data and the essential definition of the stone; between those two, there has to occur an act of understanding, and leading up to such understanding there is the discourse or reasoning of scientific method; finally, such discourse differs with the progress of the human

¹⁷⁴ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 34, a. 1 c.: "Ipse autem conceptus cordis de ratione sua habet quod ab alio procedat, scilicet a notitia concipientis."

¹⁷⁵ *In Ioan.*, cap. 1, lect. 1; cited *supra*, note 44.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; see also note 46 *supra*.

¹⁷⁷ See note 45.

¹⁷⁸ See note 46.

mind, for Aquinas, under the misapprehensions of Aristotelian physics, probably thought of stones as things while any modern thinker would pronounce them to be accidental aggregates. Already we have seen that from the fact that human understanding had its object in phantasm, Aquinas deduced that human intellect was mostly reason; one should not be surprised when he goes on to affirm that we have to reason in order to form concepts.

The rational character of conceptualization has, as its corollary, human ignorance and human progress. The first philosophers were babbling babes,¹⁷⁹ yet all our predecessors render us the double service either of hitting off the truth for us or of missing the mark, and so of challenging us to get to the root of the matter ourselves.¹⁸⁰ No one knows truth perfectly, and no one knows none at all; individual contributions are inevitably small but the common sum is great.¹⁸¹ Ignorance may force us to use accidental in place of essential differences.¹⁸² There are many properties of nature that are totally unknown, and even those that fall under our observation do not readily yield their secrets.¹⁸³ There is no one who is not caught in some error, or is not at least ignorant of what he wishes to know or obliged to conjecture where he would have certitude.¹⁸⁴ The fact of indefinite human progress precludes the possibility of beatitude being placed in this life.¹⁸⁵ "Intellectus enim humanus se habet in genere rerum intelligibilium ut ens in potentia tantum, sicut et materia prima se habet in genere rerum sensibilibium, unde possibilis nominatur."¹⁸⁶

Besides implying human ignorance and progress, the rational character of conceptualization also implies a psychological account of abstraction. No doubt, a great deal of what Aquinas has to say of abstraction is on the metaphysical level; to that we hope to attend, inasmuch as it enters into our inquiry, in due course. But our imme-

¹⁷⁹ *In I Met.*, lect. 17, §272; cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 44, a. 2.

¹⁸⁰ *In II Met.*, lect. 1, §287 f.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, §275 f.

¹⁸² *In VII Met.*, lect. 12, §1552; *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 1 ad 6m; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 77, a. 1 ad 7m.

¹⁸³ *C. Gent.*, I, 3, ad fin.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 48, "Praeterea."

¹⁸⁵ *C. Gent.*, III, 48: "Quamdiu aliquid movetur ad perfectionem, nondum est in ultimo fine. Sed omnes homines cognoscendo veritatem semper se habent ut moti et tendentes ad perfectionem, quia illi qui sequuntur *semper* inveniunt alia ab illis quae a prioribus inventa sunt, sicut dicitur in II Metaphys."

¹⁸⁶ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 87, a. 1 c.

diate concern is to observe that not a little of the Thomist theory of abstraction is psychological. As a preliminary, we may recall that knowing the universal in the particular, knowing what is common to the instances in the instances, is not abstraction at all; it is an operation attributed by Aquinas to the sensitive potency which he names the *cogitativa*. As a second preliminary, we may explain that by a psychological account of abstraction we mean the elimination by the understanding of the intellectually irrelevant because it is understood to be irrelevant. That, we submit, is the very point of the celebrated three degrees of abstraction. What is variously termed *materia individualis*, *materia designata*, *materia signata*, the *hic et nunc*, cannot be an explanatory factor in any science; it is irrelevant to all scientific explanation; it is irrelevant a priori; time and place as such explain nothing, for the reason for anything, the cause of anything, is never this instance at this place and time, but always a nature which, if found here, can be found elsewhere, if found now, can be found later. Hence natural scientist, mathematician, and metaphysician all abstract from individual matter,¹⁸⁷ "quae est materia determinatis dimensionibus substans."¹⁸⁸ Intellect abstracts from the *hic et nunc*.¹⁸⁹ One cannot account for divine or angelic knowledge of the particulars of sense by accumulating any number of universal predicates, for the resultant combination will not be singular but "communicabile multis";¹⁹⁰ it could occur in any number of other possible worlds or, on the ancient hypothesis, in any number of completely similar cycles of one world. The astronomer can predict all the eclipses of coming centuries; but his science as such will not give him knowledge of any particular eclipse as particular "sicut rusticus cognoscit";¹⁹¹ for in so far as the astronomer knows future eclipses as particular, it is only by relating his calculations to a sensibly given here and now. Properly, intellect does not remember; to know the past as past, like knowing the present, is the work of sense.¹⁹² Why are all these statements made

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, q. 85, a. 1 ad 2m.

¹⁸⁸ *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 5 c.

¹⁸⁹ *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 6 ad 1m; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 57, a. 2 c.

¹⁹⁰ *In II Sent.*, d. 3, q. 3, a. 3 sol. The basic discussion is Aristotle's argument that the Platonic ideas, because singular things, do not admit definition. Cf. *In VII Met.*, lect. 15; Aquinas drew the relevant conclusion in §1626.

¹⁹¹ *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 5 c.; cf. *De An.*, a. 20 c.

¹⁹² *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 2 c.

so confidently? Because it is common to all science to consider the *per se* and disregard the *per accidens*.¹⁹³ In other words, the “here and now,” or the “there and then,” as such are irrelevant to understanding, explanation, the assigning of causes; and from them intellect abstracts, inasmuch as, and because, it understands that irrelevance. The datum “round” is understood as necessitated by equal radii in a plane surface; “equal radii in a plane surface” is abstracted as common matter from phantasm and spoken in an inner word; no more is abstracted, because no more is relevant and, proximately, because understanding grasps that no more is relevant. The theorem on abstraction from individual matter is a theorem with respect to all our acts of understanding, to the effect that the “here and now” always pertains to the sensible residue and never enters into the relevant, the essential, that is abstracted.

The second degree of abstraction is similar to the first: as all science prescind from the “here and now,”¹⁹⁴ so all mathematics prescind from all sensible qualities—from colors, sounds, tactile experiences, tastes, odors;¹⁹⁵ the color of the geometrical figure, of the arithmetical or algebraic symbol, is never relevant to the mathematical theorem. The difference between a perspective geometry and a science of optics is that the manner in which light actually does move is relevant to the

¹⁹³ *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3 c., *ad fin.*: “Tertia secundum oppositionem universalis a particulari, et haec competit etiam physicae, et est communis omnibus scientiis, quia in omni scientia praetermittitur quod est per accidens, et accipitur quod est per se.” The whole of this opusculum, but especially questions 5 and 6, are a monument to Aquinas’ devotion to *Met.*, Z, 10–15 (VII, lect. 9–15).

¹⁹⁴ It might be thought that, while Euclidean geometry abstracts from “here” and “there” in the sense that they are irrelevant to theorems, non-Euclidean geometry consists in attaching a significance to “here” or “there” as such. Such a view is mistaken. All geometries suppose a manifold of merely empirical differences which as such are not significant; the various geometries differ by the laws which relate the elements of the manifold; and Euclidean geometry has its unique position because it employs, for the most part unconsciously, the simplest laws. One cannot imagine, much less, see, indefinitely large space; one imagines a certain amount and conceives the addition of further amounts according to some sets of laws which may be, but are not necessarily, of the type named Euclidean.

¹⁹⁵ There is left the space-time continuum which is the pure matter of the *sensibilia communia*, namely, magnitude, shape, number, motion, rest. One cannot imagine any of these without also imagining some of the *sensibilia propria*; but while the *sensibilia communia* are essential to both pure and applied mathematics and enter into its object, the *sensibilia propria*, though necessarily present in imagination, are irrelevant to theorems.

latter but irrelevant to the former;¹⁹⁶ if it is true that light rays bend, then optics has to be corrected, but not perspective geometry; for the physicist that overlooks matters of sensible fact falls into error, but the theorem and the judgment of the geometer are independent of sensible fact and are content with imagination.¹⁹⁷ Nor does the discovery of the more remote and generic types of non-Euclidean geometry invalidate this position: they still reduce to an imagination, though not to the imagination that we possess; they presuppose an intellect capable of the third degree of abstraction, of transcending its own imagination; but they do not move within the third degree of abstraction, for they deal with a numerical multiplicity, not merely as a category—as does metaphysics—but as an essential factor in their proper object. Finally, the third degree of abstraction prescind from all matter, individual and common, sensible and intelligible, to treat of “ens, unum, potentia et actus, et alia huiusmodi.”¹⁹⁸ It does so, because metaphysical theorems are valid independently of any sensible matter of fact and of any condition of imagination. Conceptualization is the self-expression of an act of understanding; such self-expression is possible only because understanding is self-possessed, conscious of itself and its own conditions as understanding; in so far as the understanding has its conditions all within the intelligible order, the expression abstracts from all that is sensible and imaginable, and so is in the third degree; in so far as the understanding has conditions in the imaginable, but not in the empirical, order of sensible presentations, the abstraction is of the second degree; in so far as the understanding has conditions within the empirical order of sensible presentations, the abstraction is of the first degree; but there is always some abstraction; for the “here and now” of sensible presentation or of imagination is never relevant to any understanding. The Aristotelian and Thomist theory of abstraction is not exclusively metaphysical; basically, it is psychological, that is, derived from the character of acts of understanding. On the other hand, it is in the self-possession of

¹⁹⁶ This probably was the occasion of the distinction between sensible and intelligible matter. See *Phys.*, II, 2, 193b 23 ff. (2 lect. 3); *In I Met.*, lect. 10, §157; VI, lect. 1, §1145; VII, lect. 10, §1494-96; VII, lect. 11, §1507 f.; VIII, lect. 5, §1760; *Met.*, M, 3, 1078a 14 ff.; *De Caelo*, I, lect. 19, §4; *In III de An.*, lect. 8, §707 f., 714; *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3; *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 6 ad 1m; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 85, a. 1 ad 2m; etc.

¹⁹⁷ *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 6, a. 2 c.

¹⁹⁸ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 85, a. 1 ad 2m.

understanding as the ground of possible conceptualization that one may best discern what is meant by saying that the self-expression of understanding is an *emanatio intelligibilis*, a procession from knowledge as knowledge, and because of knowledge as knowledge.

The concept is the definition, provided there is a definition.¹⁹⁹ Perhaps enough has been said to make the point that defining is a fruit of intelligence, the *quid rei* of understanding the thing, and the *quid nominis* of understanding the language. But what about ultimate concepts that defy definition? Are we to say that they too proceed from acts of understanding? Or must not some less psychological, some more purely metaphysical, process be invoked in their case? Let us consider them.

Aristotle explained whence we obtain the ultimate concepts of potency and act. One begins from the sensible and concrete: "Inducendo in singularibus per exempla manifestari potest illud quod volumus dicere."²⁰⁰ Relevant examples are the comparison of the sleeping and the waking, eyes closed but not blind and eyes that are seeing, the builder and the raw materials, the raw materials and the finished product. In these cases we are asked to notice a proportion and, indeed, different kinds of proportions. As eyes are to sight, so ears are to hearing (*auditus*, the faculty). As sight is to seeing, so hearing (*auditus*) is to hearing (*audire*) or—to adapt the example to the resources of our language—so taste is to tasting. The former is the proportion of matter to form; the latter is the proportion of operative potency to operation.²⁰¹ Now, can this be put in different terms? I think so. One begins by imagining the instances. The comparisons of the *cogitativa* prepare one for an act of insight, seeing in the data what itself cannot be a datum; when we express this insight by a concept, we say "possibility." In closed eyes we discern the possibility of actual seeing; in eyes we discern the possibility of sight; what is possible is the act, and its possibility is the potency; both are objective, but the act is objective when it occurs, the potency when the act is possible; and that objectivity of possibility is, for instance, what makes the difference between an invention and a mere bright idea. Ultimate concepts, like derived concepts, proceed from understanding.

¹⁹⁹ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 sol.

²⁰⁰ *In IX Met.*, lect. 5, §1826.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, §1827-29.

I think much less ink would be spilt on the concept of *ens*, were more attention paid to its origin in the act of understanding. Tell any bumpkin a plausible tale and he will remark, "Well now, that may be so." He is not perhaps exercising consciously the virtue of wisdom which has the function of knowing the "ratio entis et non entis."²⁰² But his understanding has expressed itself as grasp of possible being. Intelligibility is the ground of possibility, and possibility is the possibility of being; equally, unintelligibility is the ground of impossibility, and impossibility means impossibility of being. To affirm actual being, more than a plausible tale is wanted; for experience, though it is not as such the source of the concept of being—else, as Kant held, the real would have to be confined to the field of possible experience—still it is the condition of the transition from the affirmation of the possibility to the affirmation of the actuality of being. Hence, the first operation of intellect regards quiddities, but the second, judgment, regards *esse*, the *actus essendi*.²⁰³ Note, however, that being is not reduced through possibility to intelligibility as to prior concepts; being is the first concept;²⁰⁴ what is prior to the first concept is, not a prior concept, but an act of understanding; and like other concepts, the concept of being is an effect of the act of understanding.²⁰⁵ Hence, when it was stated above that intellect from intelligibility through possibility reaches being, an attempt was being made to describe the virtualities of the act of understanding in its self-possession, to conceptualize reflectively the pre-conceptual act of intelligence that utters itself in the concept "being." Now it is impossible to state that Aquinas himself attempted such descriptive psychology; but though he kept such matters secret, rather amazingly he hit off the implications of such an analytic description. From this it follows that the concept of being is natural to intellect; for intelligibility is natural to intellect, for it is its act; and conceptualization is natural to intellect, for it is its activity; but the concept of being, on the above showing, is the conceptualization of intelligibility as such, and so it too is natural

²⁰² *Sum. Theol.*, I-II, q. 66, a. 5 ad 4m.

²⁰³ *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 7m; *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3 c.

²⁰⁴ *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 ad 2m; *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 1, a. 3 ob. 3a; q. 6, a. 4 c; *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 1; *In IV Met.*, lect. 6, §605; *In I Post. Anal.*, lect. 5; *De Ente et Essentia*, Proem.; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 5, a. 2 c; I-II, q. 94, a. 1 c.

²⁰⁵ See note 172 *supra*.

to intellect.²⁰⁶ Again, it follows that the content of the concept of being is indeterminate;²⁰⁷ for it is conceived from any act of understanding whatever; it proceeds from intelligibility in act as such. Again, it follows that the concept of being cannot be unknown to intellect;²⁰⁸ for its sole condition is that intellect be in any act of understanding. Again, it follows that being is the object of intellect: for intellect would not be intellect were it not at least *potens omnia fieri*; in potency to any intelligibility;²⁰⁹ but what of its nature is *potens omnia fieri* must have being as its object.²¹⁰ Finally, it is impossible to recount in a sentence or so the position of Aquinas on analogy; but one may note briefly that, on the above showing, the concept of being cannot but be analogous; being is always conceived in the same way—as the expression of intelligibility or intelligence in act; but the content of one act of intelligibility or intelligence differs from the content of another; it is the identity of the process that necessitates the similarity of the proportion, and it is the diversity of the content that makes the terms of the proportion different. In brief, we may not claim to have investigated the Thomist concept of being; but at least it is not plausible that the concept of being has to be ascribed to some metaphysical mechanism and must lie outside the field of introspective and analytic psychology.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis on which we have been working is this: The human mind offers an analogy to the trinitarian processions because it is rational in its conceptualizations, in its judgments, in its acts of will. A fragment of the complicated evidence on the thought of Aquinas has been examined. There remain to be considered the psychology of judgment, the metaphysical analysis of insight, of conceptualization, and of judgment, and the metaphysical and psychological elements in the Thomist concept of God as known both naturally and through

²⁰⁶ *C. Gent.*, II, 83 [ed. Leon., XIII, 523a 26 ff.]: “Est eius (intellectus) unum naturale objectum cuius per se et naturaliter cognitionem habet . . . non est aliud quam ens. Naturaliter igitur intellectus noster cognoscit ens et ea quae sunt per se entis in quantum huiusmodi. . . .”

²⁰⁷ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 11 c.

²⁰⁸ *De Ver.*, q. 11, a. 1 ad 3m.

²⁰⁹ This underlies the argument of *In III Sent.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 1 sol. 2 c.; *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 79, a. 2; *C. Gent.*, II, 98; cf. *In III de An.*, lect. 13, §790; *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 9 c.

²¹⁰ *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 79, a. 7 c.; *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 3 ad 4m.

divine revelation. Until all the evidence on all these points has been passed in review, there can be no conclusions.

I have begun, not from the metaphysical frame-work, but from the psychological content of Thomist theory of intellect: logic might favor the opposite procedure but, after attempting it in a variety of ways, I found it unmanageable. Though I do not expect every reader, at this stage, to see how objections—especially from the metaphysical quarter—might be answered, perhaps the following points may be granted. The Thomist concept of inner word is rich and nuanced: it is no mere metaphysical condition of a type of cognition; it aims at being a statement of psychological fact and the precise nature of those facts can be ascertained only by ascertaining what was meant by *intelligere*. Behind the notion of quiddity there lies the speculative activity that began with Socrates, was pushed forward at the Academy, and culminated in Aristotle: the *quod quid est* is central to a logic, a psychology, a metaphysic, and an epistemology; and this unity is intimately connected both with the metaphysical concept of form and the psychological experience of understanding. This conclusion is reinforced by the insistence of Aquinas on insight into phantasm, by the turn he gave to the notion of an inner word, by the psychological nature of his theory of abstraction. No less powerfully is it confirmed by the psychological wealth of his pages on intellect as contrasted with the psychological poverty of the pages of other writers who mean by *intelligere*, not principally the act of understanding, but any cognitional act of an alleged spiritual nature.



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