The Identity Between Knower and Known

According to Thomas Aquinas

Andrew Murray

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Philosophy of the Catholic University of America
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
Supervisor: John F. Wippel

The Catholic University of America
Washington DC
1983/2015
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**Syntheses:**


**Disputed Questions:**

*Quaestiones disputatae.* Vol. 11. Edited by P. Bazzi, M. Calcaterra, T. S. Centi, E. Odetto, P. M. Pession. Turin: Marietti, 1948. This volume contains the following:

*Quaestiones disputatae de potentia.* (De pot.)

*Quaestiones disputatae de anima.* (Quaest. disp. de anima)

Note there is also a semi-critical edition:

*Quaestiones disputatae de spiritualibus creaturis.* (De spir. creat.)


*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus in communi.* (De virt. in comm.)

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**Opuscula:**


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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Commenting on the Liber de causis, St. Thomas Aquinas gives us his own definition of knowledge:

To have something in itself formally and not materially, in which the definition of knowledge consists, is the noblest way of having or containing something.¹

The intention of this paper is to formulate and highlight problems found in this definition, specifically the problem of how to understand the resulting identification between the knower and the thing known. Basically, Thomas tells us that a knower has or appropriates to itself a thing which has its own individual and material existence. The knower does this, not by receiving a form materially, that is, by receiving a form into matter, but by receiving a form formally. The knower, whose nature is already specified by a form, namely its soul, receives another form and is further specified by it. It is identified with and becomes the proper subject of that form.

Such a doctrine cannot be simple. What does Thomas mean by the form of the thing known? How is a form had or appropriated to itself a thing which has its own individual and material existence? The knower does this, not by receiving a form materially, that is, by receiving a form into matter, but by receiving a form formally. The knower, whose nature is already specified by a form, namely its soul, receives another form and is further specified by it. It is identified with and becomes the proper subject of that form.

These questions have to be raised and solved at the level of sense knowledge prior to their resolution with respect to intellectual knowledge. To discuss the problems at the level of sense knowledge is the purpose of this paper. Unless there is some achievement of identity in sensation, it is unlikely that any such claim can be made for intellect. Nevertheless, in these chapters, which are basically introductory to the problem, we will have to treat both sensitive and intellectual knowledge. One reason is that they share a common ontological structure. Other reasons will become more obvious in the course of discussion.³

Modern Thomists use three basic philosophical approaches to knowledge. A metaphysical approach studies the ontological status of the object as known. A psychological approach studies the subject of knowledge and the operations by which knowledge is had. A critical approach attempts to grapple with problems raised by Descartes and Kant by justifying man's ability to know a world external to himself. For our purposes, the metaphysical and psychological approaches are complementary and we will deal with each in turn.⁴

³ Four major reasons will develop:
1. There is much interplay between Thomas’s theories of sensation and intellection. For instance, the nature of the possible intellect is discerned by analogy with sensation (see ch. 4), and the metaphysics of knowledge is worked out by Thomas in terms of intellectual knowledge and then applied with modification to sensitive knowledge according to the principle that the higher sheds light on the lower (see ch. 2).
2. There is an interdependence in activity so that human sensitive knowledge is not the same as animal sensitive knowledge (see ch. 4).
3. Complete identity between knower and known is achieved not by sense or intellect alone but by both together (see ch. 4).
4. Thomas says little about sensitive knowledge but much aboutintellective knowledge where he works out his theory of cognition (see ch. 4).


¹ In Librum De causis, prop. 18, p. 101. ‘... habere aliquid in se formaliter et non materialiter, in quo consistit ratio cognitionis, est nobilissimus modus habendi vel continendi aliquid ...’
² The usual kinds of sameness or identity are numerical, specific, generic, analogous. See De princ. nat. cap. 6, pp. 46-47.
After an historical introduction in this chapter, chapter two will re-examine Thomas's definition — having a form formally—and the metaphysical structures underlying it. Chapter three will examine the knower or subject of human knowledge and chapter four will present Thomas's account of coming to knowledge. Chapter five will again raise the question of identity and will attempt to enunciate problems in terms of the discussions of the earlier chapters. In this dissertation we will not attempt a solution of these problems.

It will be useful if, before beginning an historical survey, we give a somewhat abbreviated outline of Thomas's theory of knowledge. As we have seen, to know is to have the form of another formally. This happens at two distinct levels—at the level of sense and at the level of intellect. In sense knowledge, the sense receives from an object a sensible form (the impressed sensible species) to which it is in potency. This form is retained by the internal senses—the common sense, the imagination, the cogitative power, and the memory—which function so as to allow a sensitive being to use that knowledge gained through the senses and so to interact profitably with its environment. In intellectual knowledge the agent intellect illumines the phantasm and abstracts from it (impressed) intelligible species which initiate understanding as they are received by the possible intellect. Understanding is completed by the formation of a concept or mental word (the expressed intelligible species) which expresses the definition of the thing.7

Cardinal Mercier

Thomism in this century gained much impetus from the work of Cardinal Désiré Mercier (1851-1926), who in 1879 became Professor of Philosophy According to St. Thomas at Louvain and who in 1889 founded the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie.8 In his Psychology Mercier defines senses as:

faculties by which we perceive material things in their concrete reality, through a cognitional determination—species sensibilis—effected in the percipient by the action of the things themselves.7

He does not seem to find it necessary to explore this definition further.

Mercier's primary interest is in his Criteriology in which, in response to Kant, he attempts to demonstrate the validity of judgements by using Thomas's definition of truth. He recognizes an ideal world (of ideas, quiddities, etc.) and a real world defined not as the world of existent things but as 'the synthesis of objects which may be grasped by sensation or by intellect.' 8 Criteriology, according to his method, resolves itself into two fundamental problems, one concerning the form of the judgement [on the level of the ideal] . . . the other concerning the matter or the terms, subject and predicate in themselves [on the level of the real].9

In answer to the second problem, which is closest to the subject of our inquiry, Mercier offers the thesis that 'the intelligible forms which furnish our predicates and which we attribute to the subjects of our judgements are endowed with objective reality.' 10 To prove this he first argues that 'the object of our intelligible forms is contained in the sensible forms, from which it is originally derived.' 11 Then he shows that the object of these sensible forms is real. I am, runs his argument, conscious of passive impressions within me. Since they exist, they must have some adequate, efficient cause. Since they are passive, the cause must be outside me. Therefore, real being outside me produces these impressions.12

That the starting point of Mercier's theory is the existence of judgements in the intellect makes any discussion of the identity of forms complex. It also means that the realism which he espouses is somewhat indirect. 13At the level of objective judgement, however, he does state that 'the intelligible quiddity which I conceive is identical—at least materially—with the concrete reality which

5 Here I have noted the terms 'impressed' and 'expressed' when referring to sensible and intelligible species because they are used by the authors we are about to examine. However, in the remainder of this dissertation I purposely avoid them for three reasons:
1. This terminology is not in Thomas himself.
2. It does not seem to be helpful for understanding Thomas.
3. It can lead one to identify intentional activity too closely with the transitive physical action of Physics III.


8 Van Riet, Thomistic Epistemology, Vol. 1, p. 137.
10 Ibid., p. 379.
11 Ibid., p. 380.
12 Ibid., p. 381.
13 See Van Riet, Thomistic Epistemology, Vol. 1, p. 153, where he outlines some of Mercier's different attempts to characterize truth.
I am conscious of perceiving."¹⁴ This identity he finds expressed in the judgement ‘Callias is a man.’

**Joseph Gredt**

Joseph Gredt (1863-1940) is worthy of mention at least because of the wide use that his manual, *Elementa Philosophiae*,¹⁵ received but also because of the clarity of his exposition. He first treats knowledge in general and insists on identity in the object.

The same objects, which in the nature of things have physical *esse*, in the knower received psychical *esse*, or cognitive *esse*, so that the same object (even the same in number) has a twofold manner of being.¹⁶

The example that he gives is of a sound which is numerically the same in a bell and in a hearer. According to Gredt’s claim, identity belongs to the proper object of the cognitive power, for instance, sound for hearing and the quiddity or essence of a thing for understanding. He claims strict numerical identity with a distinction in mode of being. He stresses that ‘the knower in having a form is not a potency actuated by a form, but is the form itself.’¹⁷

Although knowledge does not consist in the reception of impressed *species*, species are necessary for there to be knowledge. In knowledge, says Gredt, the knower becomes the object in second act through the efficient causality of the thing which is known.¹⁸ Impressed *species* are necessary to constitute the knower in first act. Expressed *species* are necessary as the term of the act of cognition.¹⁹

The impressed *species* is the vicarious form of the object and has both an entitative and a cognitive role. In the latter role the *species* ‘which informs, in cognitive fashion, the form of the object becomes the form of the power, and so the power is constituted the object itself.’²⁰ Gredt again insists that the form in the knower is numerically identical with the object known.²¹ This form is made available to the knower by means of the impressed *species*. The expressed *species* is a similitude which is produced by the intellect and in which the object can be contemplated.²²

**Jacques Maritain**

Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) stresses the identity between the forms had in knowledge and the forms of objects. ‘If things were modified or changed in any way by sensation or intellection, then there would no longer be any truth or knowledge.’²³ He begins by distinguishing the thing as thing—‘existing or able to exist for itself’—and the thing as object,—‘set before the faculty of knowing.’—²⁴ and laments the fact that their radical separation by the late scholastics and by Descartes had produced the modern problematic in which the thing is thought to be concealed behind the object.²⁵ He concludes that ‘the object is one with the thing and differs from it only by a virtual distinction of reason.’²⁶

In his metaphysics Maritain sets out ‘to determine the type of being of the phenomenon of cognition and the necessary conditions for the possibility of knowing.’²⁷ From the *esse naturale* of a being existing in its proper nature, he distinguishes *esse intentionale*, ‘an existence according to which the known will be in the knower and the knower will be the known.’²⁸ This union is achieved by means of *species* or ‘the whole world of intra - physical immaterial forms

¹⁴ Désiré Mercier, *Critériologie générale ou théorie générale de la certitude* (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1899), p. 363. ‘… La quiddité intelligible que je conçois est identique – au moins matériellement – avec la réalité concreta que j’ai conscience de percevoir: Callias est hic homo.’


¹⁶ Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae*, vol. 1, n. 463, p. 357. ‘Eadem objecta, quae in rerum natura habent esse physicum, in cognoscente accipiant esse psychicum, esse cognitum, ita ut idem objectum (etiama idem numero) duplicem habeat modum essendi.’

¹⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, n. 466, p. 359. ‘Ideo forma cognita dicitur esse in cognoscente immaterialiter, sine materia, quatenus cognoscens in habenda forma non est potentia actuata a forma, sed est ipsa forma.’

¹⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, n. 465, p. 358.

¹⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, n. 468, p. 364.

²⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, n. 468, p. 364. ‘Mediante specie impressa cognoscitive informante forma objecti fit forma potentiae, et ita potestia constitutur ipsum objectum.’

²¹ Ibid., vol. 1, n. 468, p. 364. ‘Calor fornacis recipitur in cognoscente, nam fornacis calor cognosciatur, ac proinde est in cognoscente. Eadem numero forma unius migrat in alium. Iam vero id, quod conscientia teste observamus in actu secundo, ad actum primum transferendum est, dictante principio causalitatis: Quidquid est in actu secundo, in actu primo iam praehabetur virtualiter.’

²² Ibid., vol. 1, n. 468, p. 364.


²⁴ Maritain, *Degrees*, p. 91.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 392.


²⁸ Maritain, *Degrees*, p. 114.
that exist in the soul as vicars of the object.32

Species of different kinds comprise the beginning and end of both sensitive and intellective knowledge. Maritain does not dwell at length on sensation, and even in his treatment of intellectual knowledge he is mainly interested in the expressed species, that is, the concept.

Maritain holds that ‘the concept (in its intentional role) and the object are indistinguishable, save that one makes known and the other is known.’30 Faced by criticism of this view, he explains himself in an appendix. After quoting a Trinitarian text of Thomas he says that the word of our intellect contains in an intelligible way the same nature, without a numerical distinction, as is contained in the thing known.31 Even this he qualifies by denying ‘having taught an absolute identity or an identity in all respects between concept and object’.32 What he seems to have in mind is that the concept is, in John of St. Thomas’s terminology, a formal sign whose whole essence is to signify another and to be in itself not known. As such it is the only instance of its kind.33 Maritain admits to the concept both an extensive function whereby it is an accident of the soul and an intentional function whereby it is a formal sign. The form of the object is known in and by means of the concept. This form in its intentional existence is numerically identical to the same form in its existence in the object.

Etienne Gilson

As a realist, Etienne Gilson (1884-1978) is primarily interested in describing the grounds for accepting the existence of the external world. His epistemology comprises two parts. In the first he attempts, from the point of view of a knower, to establish the existence of things. In this he shows considerable variation of approach during his career.34 It is the second part, in which he seeks to describe how our ideas of things are conformed to them, that impinges directly on our topic. Here his approach remains remarkably consistent over the years.35 Gilson begins with Thomas’s definition of knowledge and quickly takes up the notion of species. ‘To say that the knowing subject becomes the object known is equivalent, therefore, to saying that the form of the knowing subject is increased by the form of the object known.’36 The species (here Gilson is speaking without differentiation of sensible and intelligible impressed species) is identical with the form of the object, in fact, ‘it is the very object under the modes of species; that is, it is still the object considered in action and in the

29 Ib., p. 115.
30 Ib., pp. 126-27. The full text is as follows. ‘On the other hand, the form that the intellect, once it has been placed in first act by the species impressa, engenders within itself, under the uninterrupted irradiation of the agent intellect, is truly, as we have said, the object’s pure likeness, spiritually on fire, or rather itself now made spirit and intentionally present (not as object but as sign): because its entire specification comes from the object. The intellect that illumines and the intellect that knows are by themselves equally undetermined. Thus, the concept (in its intentional role) and object are indistinguishable, save that one makes known and the other is known, one is a sign and the other is signified, one exists only in the mind and the other exists at the same time in the mind and in the thing.’
31 Ib., p. 391. The text he quotes is SCG IV, cap. 14 vol. 3, p. 274. ‘Nec tamen substantia Filio data desinit esse in Patre: quia nec etiam apud nos desinit esse propria natura in re quae intelligitur, ex hoc quod verbum nostri intellectus ex ipsa re intellecta habet ut intelligibiliter eandem naturam [numero] continetur.’ Maritain includes numero in his quotation of this text. It is not found in the Marietti edition. The Leonine edition (Tome 15, p. 56) identifies it as an addition found only in an early printed text: Editio Piana, Rome, 1570, and its derivatives. See also p. 391, fn. 1 where Maritain explains that this kind of numeric identity does not imply individual identity.
32 Ib., p. 388.
33 Ib., p. 119.
34 Gilson’s changes of position are mapped clearly by Van Riet, Thomistic Epistemology, vol. 2, pp. 153-74. He concludes: ‘Evidently the problem of realism has deeply interested our author; it must likewise be admitted that this problem has not always received the same response. In 1927, the existence of things is the simplest hypothesis to explain the objectivity of the concept. It is also a simple hypothesis. In 1932, the hypothesis used is that of sensible evidence; in 1939, a sensitive intellectual evidence; in 1942, the object of a judgement with two terms.’ P. 167. See also Gilson’s Le Réalisme Methodique, 2nd ed., (Paris: Téqui, no date), pp. 44-49, and his Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance (Paris: Vrin, 1947), pp. 200-212.
35 We shall work from Gilson’s The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas (New York: Random House, 1956) which is the English translation of the 5th French edition of Le thomisme. Introduction à la philosophie de saint Thomas d’Aquin (Paris: Vrin, 1948). We shall check his consistency by referring to the 3rd (1927) and the 6th (1965) editions. The 3rd edition is the first in which he treats of our subject. There is only one significant variation in relevant passages.
efficacy it exerts over a subject. 37 Except for their mode of existence, then, *species* and the forms of objects are strictly identical. This identity guarantees objectivity for *if species were being distinct from their [i.e. the objects'] forms, our knowledge would focus upon species, not upon objects.* 38

The concept, according to Gilson, is a product of the intellect, something which "the intellect conceives in itself and expresses in a word." 39 It is, therefore, a substitute for the object, "no longer either the substance of the knowing intellect nor the thing known itself, but an intentional being incapable of subsisting outside thought." 40 As if this were not clear enough, Gilson concludes: "we cannot doubt that the concept of the thing, the first product of the intellect, is really distinct from the thing itself." 41 He summarizes his position:

The concept is not the thing; but the intellect, which conceives the concept, is truly the thing of which it forms itself a concept. The intellect which produces the concept of book does so because it has first become the form of a book, thanks to a species which is but such a form. 42

John Peifer

John Peifer (born 1921) attempts to steer a middle course between sensism and idealism and to assert the superiority of intellectual knowledge over sensitive knowledge. His main interest is in the concept, for which he relies very heavily on John of St. Thomas with some references to Maritain, but he also deals briefly with sense knowledge as a prerequisite to the study of intellection. He expressly admits making "a further refinement and precision of the thought of the Angelic Doctor." 43

According to Peifer, the key to an understanding of Thomas’s definition of knowledge is that a form, although a principle of being, "is not identical with the act of existing" 44 so that "the same form can exist both in nature and in thought." 45 Knowledge is had through the immaterial possession of a form called a *species*.

Peifer’s precise position with respect to the relationship between *species* and object is difficult to discern because of his manner of exposition. As the following quotations from consecutive paragraphs will show, he tends to make a strong, general statement and then to qualify it by further precisions. Speaking of the impressed *species* he says:

knowledge is accomplished through the immaterial possession by the knower of the very form of the other as other, of the very form which makes the object to be what it is. 46

The form existing in the thing is not the principle or inner cause of the act of knowing. Existing in its natural existence the form is outside of knowledge. But the form existing outside knowledge imprints or impresses a likeness of itself, a reduplication of itself, upon the cognitive power. This likeness which is in knowledge is the inner cause of the act of knowledge. 47

Formally considered, the species or similitude is a representation containing the very form of the thing communicated to the knower but existing under a different mode. 48

What we have here is a very strong affirmation of identity between the form of the object and the form that is possessed immaterially by the knower but a distinction in mode of being. Implied also is the distinction between form and object. "The impressed species," says Peifer, "is not the object known (*id quod cognoscitur*), but the means by which the object is known (*id quo objectum cognoscitur*). 49 Underlying this distinction is the insistence that man knows things—stones, horses,

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44 Ibid., p. 49.
46 Ibid., p. 71.
47 Ibid., p. 72.
48 Ibid., p. 72.
49 Ibid., p. 88.

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etc., — rather than their *species*. In a parallel sense, the *species* is the formal principle of the act of knowledge just as the stone's form is the formal principle of its being.⁵⁰ Identity is to be found at this level of formal principle.

The impressed species has correspondence with the object in intentional or representative existence, in fact, it is the very quiddity of the object, in so far as all that is really found in the object, is transferred representatively to the species.⁵¹

Two other distinctions which Peifer makes are relevant. Firstly, the *species* has a double reference and accordingly is named in two different ways. When directed towards the knowing subject so that it is the determinant of the act of knowledge, it is called a form. When understood in its relationship to the object it makes known, it is called a *similitude*. Secondly, he distinguishes between the two ways in which *species* inform the cognitive faculties—entitatively or materially, and cognitively or immaterially.⁵² Entitatively, the *species* is merely a quality of the intellect and bears no resemblance to the thing known. Intentionally, it is the formal similitude of the thing.

'A formal similitude is one in which there is some identity of form.'⁵³ Peifer uses this notion to analyse the kind of identity that exists between the *species* and the form of the object. Discussing the impressed *species*, he explains that in the physical order 'formal similitude' implies specific but not numerical identity as when two men share the same substantial form, and asks whether this is true of the intentional order. He quotes Francis Suarez⁵⁴ to the effect that the similarity of the intentional order is much less than that of the physical order and is in fact only a similitude by analogy. Peifer rejects this view for not being that held by Thomists, but does not tell us what kind of identity obtains.⁵⁵

When it comes to expressed *species*, Peifer takes a stronger stance. First, he gives a familiar argument for a very strict kind of identity.

The form existing in the thing and the form existing in the act of understanding are in a sense *two*; the one is not the other, for the one *is in* the thing and the other *is in* the intellect. Nevertheless, precisely as form and determinant, the two are one. The duality is of existence and mode of existence. Such a duality does not multiply the form really and physically.⁵⁶

A later discussion focuses on Thomas’s notion of image. ‘The Divine Word has numerically the same *form* and enjoys the same manner of existing in the image and in the Exemplar.’⁵⁷ He draws the following conclusions. Though infinitely inferior, an analogously similar situation as to image is found in the human concept, wherein *identically the same form* is found in the concept and in the thing, but *not in the same manner of existing*. The same form exists intentionally in the concept and physically in the thing. So the formal concept is a most perfect type of image, analogously similar to the Divine Word.⁵⁸

We could investigate many more modern Thomistic authors. Andre Hayen, for instance, in criticizing Maritain's manner of opposing intentional being and natural being says:

It is surprising how rare, among better authors, are those who have been concerned to explain this opposition and to define the *analogical unity*, relating one to the other, without confusing intentional being and natural being.⁵⁹

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 91
⁵¹ Ibid., p. 82. Peifer is here quoting John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus IV*, q. 6, a. 3, edited by B. Reiser (Turin: Marietti, 1937), vol. 3, p. 184. These texts highlight a terminological problem which could cause difficulty in understanding Peifer's exposition. Here he is identifying the term object with the thing. The proper object of the intellect is said, however, to be the quiddity or essence of the thing. One needs to keep clear in which context object is being used. The possibility of confusion increases when Peifer introduces the term *objective concept*, which is the object as known in the expressed species. (p.187).
⁵² Peifer, *Mystery of Knowledge*, p.71
⁵³ Ibid., p. 79.
⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 80. See Francis Suarez, *III De anima*, cap. 2, n. 5, in *Opera omnia*, edited by M. André, (Paris: Vivès,1856-78), vol. 3, p. 616. The question Suarez is considering is ‘quidnam sint species intentionales?’
⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 154
⁵⁸ Peifer, *Mystery of Knowledge*, p. 201

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L. M. Regis, on the other hand, in an account of knowledge which keeps extremely close to Thomas's own texts seems carefully to avoid the question of the precise kind of identity had between the two orders of forms while all the same elaborating the notion of identity from various points of view.  

Conclusion

It is clear that when modern Thomists discuss the kind of identity obtaining between an intentional form and its correlative natural form, they do so from significantly different points of view. Gilson holds that impressed species are strictly or numerically identical with the forms of objects, but that the concept is ‘really distinct from the thing itself’. Gredt describes the impressed species as that in which the form of the object is made available to the intellect. Identity obtains to the form of the object as it exists in each of these two modes. He describes the expressed species as a produced similitude in which the object can be contemplated. The same reading, it seems, can be made of Maritain and Peifer. There is another difference of emphasis. Whereas Gilson chooses to place greatest emphasis on identity as found between the object formally considered and the impressed species, Peifer and Maritain clearly give preeminence to the identity between the form of the object in its physical existence and that same form as it is contained in the concept. According to Maritain, for instance, the impressed species places the intellect in first act so that strict identity is achieved when the intellect in second act produces the concept. The richest identity obtains between the form of the object and the form contained in the concept. Authors who stress the role of the concept tend to emphasize the representative function of species.

All this suggests that the issue we have raised is very much alive. The rapidity with which those who have taken the strongest views with respect to the concept have turned to John of St. Thomas for guidance suggests that a solution is not to be readily found in Thomas's own texts. The variety of views leads us to suspect that the issue is not only textual but that there is a philosophical problem which is in need of resolution. The following three chapters will endeavour to set up the terms of this problem.

The question is not without importance. We have already seen it raised in rejection of idealism and sensism. No Thomist wishes to admit that the real world is one constructed solely in the mind or that knowledge is limited to impressions of sense.

He is just as careful to avoid the Lockean position that an idea, that is ‘whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking,’ rather than a real thing, ‘is the object of the understanding when a man thinks.’

We know that Thomas was first of all a realist in knowledge. In fact he offers realism as a reason for accepting his definition of knowledge.

It remains therefore that known material things must exist in the knower not materially but more immaterially. And the reason for this, is that the act of knowing reaches out to those things which are outside the knower.

But ‘realism’ is a very broad and almost vague term. The solution of our question will provide many refinements in an understanding of what it means when applied to St. Thomas. Such meaning hinges around the relationship between a form intentionally present to a knower and a form making a thing to be what it is in itself.

62 ST I 84, 2, p. 614. ‘Relinquitur ergo quod oportet materialia cognita in cognoscente existere non materialiter, sed magis immaterialiter. Et huius ratio est, quia actus cognitionis se extendit ad ea quae sunt extra cognoscentem.’ My translation.

I’un à l’autre, sans les confondre, l’être intentionel et l’être naturel.’
CHAPTER 2

Having a Form Formally: Intentional Identity

Returning to Thomas's definition of knowledge, we can add many brief and similar statements. ‘Knowledge happens insofar as the thing known is in the knower,’63 ‘The species of the known is in the knower’64 Sense receives the species of all sensibles, and the intellect receives the species of all intelligibles, so that the soul of man is, in a certain way, all things according to sense and intellect.65 There seems to be a progression of thought here: in knowledge the knower has something formally; the thing is in the knower, the species of the thing is in the knower; man is, in a certain way, all things. Yet Thomas certainly expects that we understand them all to mean the same. A knower is, therefore, that kind of being which, in having or containing something intentionally, becomes that thing. Thomas frequently expresses the closeness of this union, teaching that even the acts of sensing and understanding do not stand between the knower and the known, but rather flow from their union.66 It will be the purpose of this chapter to explore what Thomas means by a formal having or reception of a form and to expound the metaphysical structures underlying this.

Commenting on Aristotle's famous example of the stone in De anima III, 8,67 Thomas says that,

63 ST I 12, 4, p. 77. ‘Cognitio enim contingit secundum quod cognitum est in cognoscente.’ My translation.
64 ST I 14, 1, p. 110. ‘. . . nam species cogniti est in cognoscente . . .’ My translation. It is my intention in this dissertation to maintain the Latin term species in English translation. This will keep clear what term Thomas is using and in particular distinguish between species and forma both of which can correspond to the Greek eidos. While often species need not mean anything more than forma, it does in certain contexts indicate a doctrine of distinct species in knowledge, that is, of likenesses of vicars of the object. I am not yet certain of how sharp the line between the two usages is in Thomas's texts. For further discussion of this see the appendix.

The terminology of Thomas's frequent use of Aristotle's example, 'it is not the stone which is in the soul, but its form' (De anima III, 8, 431b30. Hamlyn, p. 65) is interesting. Most usually be renders the text: 'lapis non est in anima, sed species lapidis' (ST I 85, 2, p. 631); but we also see 'non enim lapis est in anima, sed species lapidis, sive ratio eius' (De ver. 23, 1, pp. 652-53); and 'lapis autem non est in anima sed similitudo lapidis' (De ver. 2, 3, ad l, p. 51). Thomas never uses forma in a direct quotation of this text but we do find in an early indirect reference: 'quia per formam lapidis videmus lapidem' (In IV Sent. d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2, Parma edition vol. 7-2, p.1199).

Something of what Thomas’s use of different terms is about can be seen from an objection and reply in De veritate, 8, 11. The question under consideration is 'utrum angelus cognoscat singularia?' The following objection is raised:

'Praeterea, idem est principium essendi et cognoscendi, secundum Philosophum; sed forma individuata est principium essendi singulari; ergo ipsa est principium cognoscendi singulari; sed intellectus angelicus accipit sine materia et conditionibus materiae ex quibus formae individuantur; ergo accipit universale tantum et non singularere.' (obj. 4, p. 254.) Thomas responds in this way. ‘Ad quartum dicendum quod non oportet formam quae est principium essendi rem, esse principium cognoscendi rem secundum essentiam suam, sed solum secundum suam similitudinem: forma enim qua lapis est, non est in anima, sed similitudo eius; unde non oportet quod forma intellectus angelici qua singularire cognoscit sit individuata, sed solum quod sit formae individuatae similitudo.’ (ad 4, p. 257.)

65 ST I 80, 1, p. 592. ‘. . . sensus recipit species omnium sensibilium, et intellectus omnium intelligibilium, ut sic anima hominis sit omnia quodammodo secundum sensum et intellectum . . .’ My translation.
66 De ver. 8, 6, ad 11, p. 239. ‘Ad undecimum dicendum quod operatio intellectualis non est media secundum rem inter intelligentem et intellectum, sed procedit ex utroque secundum quod sunt unita.’
67 The use of texts from the Aristotelian Commentaries raises the question of the validity of Thomas's Commentaries as a source of his own
for the soul to be all things, it must either be the things themselves or else it must be their *species*. He dismisses the first as the mistaken position of Empedocles, and accepts the second. 'The soul is not the things themselves, for the stone is not in the soul, but the *species* of the stone is in the soul'. 68 Thomas goes on to say that

‘the soul was given to man as a place of all forms so that man is in a certain way all being insosfar as according to his soul teaching. Does Thomas merely give us his understanding of Aristotle, or does he give us his own thought occasioned by Aristotle, or does he give us partly explanation and partly his own exposition?

The express intention of Thomas’s commentaries on Aristotle was to give a true interpretation of Aristotle at a time when his teachings had been used to substantiate positions contrary to faith. This and the fact that Thomas’s Logic, Physics, and Psychology were very heavily dependent on Aristotle give support for accepting his commentaries, at least in the main, as Thomas’s own views.

In other works, Thomas does use the texts of authorities rather liberally for his own purposes. For instance, he often uses St. Augustine in ways that indicate an understanding of the profound differences between their respective views but yet chooses to interpret Augustine in ways sympathetic to his own position. See Mary C. Fitzpatrick, *St. Thomas Aquinas - On Spiritual Creatures* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1949), p. 122, fn. 17.

In the case of this text from *De anima* III, 8 and most others that we shall use, Thomas’s many affirmative citations of the text throughout his corpus give good reason for accepting his interpretation of Aristotle as his own view. Where Thomas is more innovative, for instance in Metaphysics, and where the texts were the subject of controversy in the Medieval period, for instance *De anima* III, 4-5, we need to be more careful. In his discussions of intentional existence Thomas clearly goes beyond the Aristotelian text, and may be understood to give his own view. Statements of intention in the text indicate this.


67 *De ver.*, 2, 2, p. 44. ‘Et secundum hunc modum possibile est ut in una re totius universi perfectio existat.’

Aristotle and Thomas extend the above analysis to each of them. Prime matter and substantial form are principles of substances but neither, by itself, is the thing. Prime matter is pure potentiality or receptivity. Substantial form, on the other hand, brings to matter a determinacy as to what a thing is. The two constitute a substance. At the level of accident the same principles apply. In this case, an accidental form, for instance, the quality colour, determines a material substance or substratum to be this or that colour. 'The form,' says Thomas, 'can be called that by which it is, inasmuch as it is the principle of being'. Comparatively, form is the principle of specification while matter is the principle of individuation since form is limited and individuated only insofar as it is received into matter. Form is alternatively spoken of as principle of being, an actuality, a principle of act, a perfection, a principle of specification, a principle of cognition, a principle of intelligibility.

The Act-Potency Structure and Form

A more fundamental distinction is that between act and potency into which all being divides itself. Act, although strictly indefinable, is etymologically derived from the verb ago, to do, and bespeaks an operation or doing of some kind. Potency, or can-be-ness, signifies an ability to be what is not yet. It is dependent on some act for its becoming. Acting, therefore, brings to a thing its determinate nature and ultimately its existence.

Something which is already actual in certain respects can be in potency to further actualizations. Water, for instance, is in potency to becoming hotter or colder; a boy, who is sitting, is in potency to standing. One could draw examples from all ten of the Aristotelian categories. Whenever an act brings determinacy of kind, whether substantial or accidental, as distinct from existence, it is called a form.

Form as Principle of Cognition

Clearly, not only are the possible forms multitudinous, but there are also many genera and species of form. Which of them are the forms had in knowledge? Our analysis must undergo a turnabout. We have stressed the entitative aspect of form; now we must look more carefully from the point of view of the one knowing. It is true that formality already implies intelligibility. It is also a truism that we know any form about which we might talk. But human knowledge, as an act of a matter - form composite, is limited and so cannot intuit just any form. For example, Thomas holds that we cannot directly know a substantial form apart from its relationship to its proper matter. The two are interdependent 'so that one is not intelligible without the other.' We know substantial forms only as principles of corporeal beings. Form considered as knowable carries with it the condition of the knower. Briefly, since we will return to this, sensible qualities are the forms directly known by the external senses; the quiddities or essences of things are the forms most immediately grasped by the intellect.

What is essential to our present discussion is the relationship between form and act. Thomas says nothing is known so far as it is only in potentiality, but so far as it is in act. That is why the form is the principle of the knowledge of the thing which becomes in act through the form.

As principle of cognition, a form acts in two ways. Firstly, according to the esse it has in the knower it

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75 See In IX Metaph., 5, Lect. 5, n. 1826, p. 437.
76 For a brief discussion of act and potency see De princ. nat. cap. 1, pp. 39-40.
77 *In De Trin.* 5, 3, p. 186. ‘Simi liter autem cum dicimus formam abstraheri a materia, non intelligitur de forma substantiali, quia forma substantialis et materia sibi correspondens dependent ad invicem, ut urnum sine alio non posit intelligi.' Maurer translation, p. 33.
is the cause of knowing. Secondly, by its relation to the thing from which it is derived, it limits that act of knowledge to some definite thing. Knowledge, in similar fashion to things, therefore receives its completion or perfection according to the fullness of the reception of form.

Modes of Existence of a Form

By reconciling the Neoplatonic doctrine of participation and the Aristotelian act-potency structure, Thomas makes the essence-existence distinction central to his metaphysics. In an attempt to explain the problem of the one and the many, Neoplatonism posited unlimited, perfect sources - the One, the Good, etc., in which the multitude of beings participates to a degree limited only by their own capacity to receive the said perfecions. For Thomas the ultimate perfection is existence itself and the source is God who is subsistent esse. Participating beings are composed of their essence, which, although formal, is in potency to further actualization, and existence, which is pure act.

Once a real distinction between essence and existence has been admitted, it is possible that an essence have different ways or modes of existing. Thomas holds that it does and lists four:

- The being (esse) of creatures can be considered in four ways: in a first way insofar as it is in its proper nature; in a second, insofar as it is in our knowledge; in a third way, insofar as it is in God; in a fourth way, commonly, insofar as it abstracts from all these.

The one essence or nature has its natural existence as the act of an individual concrete thing but can also exist in the human mind as the actualizing form in knowledge. It pre-exists in the divine intellect as an idea or exemplar. The fourth mode is that of the essence considered absolutely, irrespective of whether it exists in an intellect or in an individual. In the De ente et essentia where Thomas follows Avicenna's threefold way of viewing essence – absolutely, in individual things and in the soul – he concludes:

- So it is clear that the nature of man, considered absolutely, abstracts from every being, but in such a way that it prescinds from no one of them; and it is the nature considered in this way that we attribute to all individuals.

The doctrine of participation allows Thomas to think of form differently from the way in which Aristotle had thought of it. For Aristotle, matter, unlimitedness, and imperfection coincide, while form lends limit, perfection, and determinacy to amorphous potentiality. According to W. Norris Clarke,

- the guiding image here is clearly not that of matter or potency as a container which contracts the plenitude of form or act; it is rather that of form as a stamp or die, fully determined in itself, which is stamped successively on various portions of an amorphous raw material such as wax or clay.

In Thomas's system form is limited by its reception into matter. It is true that he accepts the Aristotelian position that form imposes determinacy on matter and hence is the principle of organization, a kind of limitation. But he also adds a dimension in which the relations are reversed. Forms existing unbounded in the Divine intellect

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79 What kind of cause is it? Thomas does not say in this text. To answer this question is in large part to answer the question we have put. Insofar as the form constitutes the knowing power in act identical with the object it would seem to be a formal cause. An impressed form lends limit, perfection, and determinacy to the thing as it is stamped or die, fully determined in itself, which is stamped successively on various portions of an amorphous raw material such as wax or clay.

80 See De ver. 10, 4, p. 306.
81 In VI Metaph., 4, Lect. 4, n. 1234, p. 311.
83 In Sent. d. 36, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2, p. 838, ‘Ad secundum dicendum, quod esse creaturae potest quadrupliciter considerari: primo modo, secundum quod est in propria natura; secundo modo, prout est in cognitione nostra; tertio modo, prout est in Deo; quarto modo communiter, prout abstrahat ab omnibus his.’ My translation. See also De pot. 7, 2, ad 9, p. 192.
85 See Physics III, 6. (207a20-37)
are limited only by their participation into matter. Act is limited only by its reception into potency.  

The interrelationship of matter, form, and existence is quite complex. Form is a principle of being because it actualizes matter but it is not existence itself. When received by matter, form is limited to a particular essence. That essence confines the unlimited esse in which it participates. A form, therefore, has a twofold role - it actualizes a potency to be this or that kind of thing and together with actualized matter is receptive and limiting of existence.

Joseph Owens, among others, insists that the doctrine of existence is the basis of Thomas's theory of knowledge. He stresses the lack of preference exhibited by form for any particular mode of existence. Referring to those modes of existence listed in the above text, he says that of itself, in consequence, a thing does not involve any of these ways in which it may exist. It abstracts from them all, and remains open to them all. Just in itself it has no existence whatever. In this absolute consideration it is actually nothing.

Owens recovers the relationship between a form in its cognitional existence and in its natural existence by stressing the role of efficient causality in knowledge. The sensible thing acts to impress its form upon the percipient. Thomas achieves the same effect by attributing a dignified role to sensation. In the disputed question De spiritualibus creaturis he criticizes St. Augustine for basing the truth of science on participation of the human mind in the Divine ideas by means of special illumination. Thomas bases his claim to truth in knowledge of the natures of things on the Aristotelian doctrine of which he cites three elements: firstly, that there is a stability in sensible things; secondly, that sense judges truly of proper sensibles; and thirdly, that intelligibles are grasped through abstraction by the agent intellect.

The import of this doctrine of existence for the topic of this dissertation should be immediately evident. If the one form is of itself indifferent to the mode of its existence, it seems that the strictest kind of identity obtains between the form, whether it is the essence or an accidental quality, of an object and the form received cognitively by the knower. Before this conclusion can be drawn, a further issue will have to be faced. As we have just hinted, man does not receive essences or sensible forms without mediation but does so in a complex interaction with corporeal reality. Is the inference just made consistent with Thomas's account of this process?

**Conditions for the Reception of Form.**

Thomas often quotes the axiom 'whatever is received in another, is received after the manner of the recipient.' This provides another way of approaching the difference between a form in its natural existence and the same form in its cognitive existence. In natural things form is received into matter. It actuates matter for the reception of being. In turn it is individuated by the receiving matter. In cognition, a form is received into a power of the soul, itself a form, where it has a cognitional or intentional existence. According to our earlier

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87 Ibid., pp. 180, 190-92.
89 Ibid., p189.
90 Ibid., p193.
91 De spir. creat. art. 10, ad 8, pp. 409-10.

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terminology, the form is had intentionally or immaterially.

Thomas frequently uses Aristotle's example of an iron or gold seal in *De anima* II, 12. A seal consists of a shape or form to be stamped and of metal out of which it is made. The metal provides the mechanical properties - rigidity and hardness - which enable the seal to take a permanent shape and to impress that shape on other substances. When the seal is pressed against wax, the wax takes up the shape of the seal but none of its mechanical properties. By a weak analogy, the form has been received formally and not materially. It has been received in the way in which wax is able to receive a form rather than in the way it exists in a metal seal, not as the agent had received the form but in the manner of the recipient.

Another example, not from Thomas but consistent with his thought, will help make this clear. A man can receive the accidental form of redness from the sun in two distinct ways. By looking at an evening sunset, he sees the redness of the sun and receives the form 'redness' immaterially into his sense of sight but does not himself become red. But if he lies uncovered under the midday sun for too long, he will receive the form of redness, virtually present in the sun as agent, materially and will himself become red.

The manner of reception of form dictates the kind of knowledge that is had. On this score Thomas criticized Plato as he knew him through Aristotle. Plato had discounted sense knowledge for its particularity and impermanence. Intellectual knowledge, he realized, is universal, immaterial, and immobile, and so he posited a source - the Forms - of such knowledge. Thomas accepted Plato's account of the conditions of knowledge but attributed those conditions to the mode of reception rather than to their source. Sense, which is the act of a corporeal organ, receives individual material forms without their matter so that its knowledge is individual and particular. The intellect, which does not have a corporeal organ, "knows bodies with an immaterial, universal, and necessary knowledge" - immaterial after the manner of the recipient, universal because not individuated by matter, necessary or certain because beyond the principles of change.

agent acts insofar as it is in act,” see *De ver.* 2, 3, p. 51.


95 *ST* I 84, 1, p. 613. ‘... anima per intellectum cognoscit corpora cognitione immateriali, universali et necessaria.’ My translation.

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CHAPTER 3

The Subject of Knowledge: The Soul and Its Powers

Man: A Body—Soul Composite

According to Thomas, man is a composite being composed of a material and a formal principle. Fundamentally, the material principle is primary matter and the formal principle a substantial form, the principle of life, namely, the intellective soul. Immediately the classical philosophical problem of duality arises. How is it that one substance can result from two principles? It is heightened by Thomas’s teaching on the immortality of the soul according to which, at death, the human soul can leave the body and exist separately albeit imperfectly.

Thomas faced the problem of duality in human nature by asking whether some medium is instrumental in uniting the soul and corporeal matter. The import of the question is that if the soul and body had some existence of their own ontologically prior to the creation of the individual human being, some medium would be necessary to unite them. Thomas argues that there is no medium. Existence, says Thomas, is more immediate and more intimate to a thing than anything else. Since, therefore, existence comes to matter with form, the substantial form of man must give existence to matter in order to constitute it as a body. Simply stated, the soul is the form of the body as Thomas explains in the following text:

it must be said that although the body is not of the essence of the soul, yet the soul, because of its essence has a relation to the body, inasmuch as it is essential for it to be in the form of a body; and accordingly body is set down in the definition of soul. 98

Thomas reinforces his argument for the unity of the human composite by rejecting two contrary positions attributed to Plato. The first is that the soul, insofar as it is the mover of the body, is like the helmsman of a ship. This cannot be, says Thomas, because,

since that which is one simply and per se does not come from mover and mobile, neither man nor animal would be one simply and per se. 99

According to the second position, vegetable, animal, and man are separate universal forms in each of which man participates. Thomas rejects the three-souls principle stressing that the unity of individual substances would not be maintained if these substances were constituted by diverse, actually existing principles.

Nevertheless, Thomas attributes to the soul a special kind of existence. Since the intellective soul is capable of knowing the immaterial essences of things and since it is immortal, it must have spiritual existence which it maintains beyond the life of the body although even that existence is in relationship to a body. He says

the soul is a particular thing being able to subsist of itself, not as having a complete species unto itself, but as perfecting the human species as the form of the body. 100

96 See De spir. creat. art. 3, p. 378.
97 Quaest. disp. de anima art. 9, p. 314.
98 ’Respondeo. Dicendum quod inter omnia, esse est illud quod immediatius et intimius convenit rebus, ut dicitur in Lib. de Causis (prop. 4); unde oportet, cum materia habeat esse actu per formam, quod forma dans esse materiea, ante omnia intelligatur adventire materiea, et immediatius ceteris sibi inesse. Est autem hoc proprium formae substantialis quod det materiea esse simpliciter; ipsa enim est per quam res est hoc ipsum quod est.’
99 De spir. creat. art. 9, ad 4, p. 403. ‘Ad quartum dicendum quod licet corpus non sit de essentia animae, tamen anima secundum suam essentiam habet habitudinem ad corpus, in quantum hoc est ei essentiale quod sit corporis forma; et ideo in definitione animae ponitur corpus.’ Fitzpatrick translation, p. 106.
100 Quaest. disp. de anima art. I, p. 284. ‘Relinquitur igitur quod anima est hoc aliquid, ut per se potens subsistere; non quasi habens in se
A body without a soul, that is, a dead body, is no longer a body properly speaking but has undergone a substantial change. The eye of a corpse, he says, is no more an eye than the eye of a statue since neither is informed by a living operative principle.101

Thomas's use of the term ‘soul’ is extremely broad and liable to be confusing to modern readers. Some of the more common meanings which he uses are: (1) the first act of a corporeal body, namely, the principle of life and action; (2) the whole man but considered in its formal vegetative, sensitive, and intellective functions, either together or individually; (3) that which operates non-organically, namely, the intellect; (4) the separated soul. Uses one through three in no way attribute separate existence or operation to the soul. The specific meaning of ‘soul’ in any text is usually clear from the context.102

The Notion of a Power of the Soul103

Thomas, it seems, accepted the notion of a power from a tradition dating back as far as the Pythagorean philosopher, Areas of Croton (ca. 520 B.C.), 104 and saw no need to justify its existence. 105 He defines a power in the following way.

A power is nothing other than the principle of operation of something, whether it be an action or a passion. Not, indeed, the principle which is the subject acting or suffering, but that by which an agent acts or a patient suffers; just as the art of building is the power in the builder who builds by means of it.106

The term which Thomas uses, potencia, from the present participle, potens, or the verb posse, to be able, need not be understood too strongly. We shall translate it as power rather than by the more substantial term faculty which dates only from the eighteenth century.107 Principle is, for Thomas, a broader term than cause but often interchangeable with it. It denotes something prior and explanatory.108 An act, such as sensing, if it is not self - subsistent must depend on some immediate principle for its existence.

In the definition, Thomas distinguishes the subject (that is, the whole man) and the power by which he acts, a distinction occasioned by the problem of the one and the many. How can a single subject be responsible for many distinct kinds of action? In Thomas's formulation, the question becomes 'whether the powers of the soul are the same as the essence of the soul.'109 The question was very much alive in Thomas's time.110

Consideration of Thomas's arguments in defence of the real distinction between the soul and its powers111 will demonstrate what he means by a

completam speciem, sed quasi perficiens speciem humanam ut forma corporis.' My translation. 101 Quaes. disp. de anima art. I, p. 284.

102 Examples of these usages are found in ST I 75, 1, p. 524; Quaes. disp. de anima art. II, pp. 321-23; art. 3, pp. 290-93; art. 15, pp. 335-39; respectively. Thomas is aware of the looseness with which he uses the term soul as he shows in ST I 79, I et ad 1, p. 573, where he reserves the strictest use of the term for the immediate principle of life. 103 The essential act of the soul is to constitute a human being in existence, that is, to make a living being of such and such a kind. The powers correspond to operations or actions which follow upon life. Thomas distinguishes five genera of powers: vegetative, sensitive, appetitive, locomotive, and intellective. See ST I 78, I, pp. 564-65. 104 See Charles Aloysius Hart, The Thomistic Concept of Mental Faculty (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1930), p. 6. 105 In fact, in his discussions, for instance, Quaes. disp. de anima art. 12, p. 326, Thomas acknowledges only two possible positions: that the soul is its powers, or that it is not its powers. The third possibility, that there are no powers, does not enter into the discussion.

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power and the metaphysics underlying this. We present three such arguments in summary fashion.

1. An essence is one;

but in respect to powers, it is necessary to assert a manyness because of the diversity of acts and objects; for powers must be diversified according to their acts, since potency is said with respect to act.112

Therefore...

2. The soul according to its essence is in act.

If therefore the very essence of the soul were the immediate principle of operation, anything having a soul in act would have the vital operations.

It is found, however, that something having a soul is not always in act with respect to vital operations; it follows, therefore, that the essence of the soul is not a power of it.113

3. It is found that one power moves another (as reason moves the irascible and concupiscible power and intellect the will);

And this could not be if all the powers were the very essence of the soul, because the same thing insofar as it is the same does not move itself. (Phys. VIII, 5);

It follows, therefore, that the powers of the soul are not its essence. 114

Argument one shows Thomas's concern with the unity of the essence of the soul. He demands a lack of division within it and an externally clear division of it from all other things.115 Thomas allows two kinds of essential unity: composite unity, whereby a being has parts but only one essence, and simple unity in which there are not parts.116 It is the latter that he attributes to the soul. The essence of the soul is to be the first act of a potential human body; all other functions belong to its second act and ontologically come afterwards.117

Arguments two and three present some of the direct evidence for the distinction of powers from the soul and indeed from one another. First, powers sometimes act and sometimes do not; yet at all times they can act. Secondly, that the powers act upon each other implies their mutual distinction. Such evidence is ready to hand in simple self knowledge.118

Two of Thomas's metaphysical doctrines underlie this discussion: that of act and potency and that of substance and accidents. We have already examined potency and its correlative act in an earlier context. One further distinction remains. When a potency is directed towards operation or doing, rather than towards being or becoming something, that is, if it is a power, then potency is further divided into act and passive. If the power

invicem; invenitur enim quod una aliquam movet, sicut ratio irascibilem et concupiscibilem, et intellectus voluntatem; quod esse non possit si omnes potentiae essent ipsa animae essentia;quia idem secundum idem non movet seipsum, ut probat Philosophus. Relinquitur ergo quod potentiae animae non sunt ipsa eius essentia.’ My translation.115 De ver. 1, 1, p. 5. ‘… unde sicut ens dicitur unum, in quantum est indivisum: in se ita dicitur aliquid, in quantum est ab aliis divisum.’

See Hart, Thomistic Concept of Mental Faculty, p. 39. It is important to keep this distinction in mind since those who oppose the distinction of powers usually do so in order to safeguard the unity of the composite.

ST I 77, 1, p. 553. ‘Unde quod sit in potential adhuc ad alium actum, hoc non competit ei secundum suam essentiam, inquantum est forma; sed secundum suam potentiam. Et sic ipsa anima, secundum quod subest suae potentiae, dicitur actus primus, ordinatus ad actum secundum.’

A further argument found in Quaest. disp. de anima art. 12, p. 326 indicates that the method of discovery of the powers is indirect since they are incorporeal realities and are discovered only through their effects: ‘Unumquodque agit secundum quod actu est, illud scilicet quod agit . . . et exinde est quod omne agens agit sibi simile. Unde oportet quod ex eo quod agit, consideretur principio quo agitur; oportet enim utrumque esse conforme.’


112 De spir. creat. art. 11, p. 413. ‘… essentia una est; in potentis autem oportet ponere multitudoem propter diversitatem actuum et obiectorum. Oportet enim potentias secundum actus diversificari, cum potentia ad actum dicatur.’ My translation.

113 ST I 77, 1, pp. 553-54. ‘Nam anima secundum suam essentiam est actus. Si ergo ipsa essentia animae esset immediatum operationis principium, semper habens animam actu haberet opera vitae; sicut semper habens animam actu est vivum . . . Invenitur autem habens animam non semper esse in actu operum vitae . . . Relinquitur ergo quod essentia animae non est eius potentia. Nihil enim est in potentia secundum actum, inquantum est actus.’ My translation.

114 De spir. creat. art. 11, p. 413. ‘Tertio appareat idem ex ordine potentiarum animae, et habitudine earum ad
performs the action it is called an active potency; if it receives the action from another agent, it is called a passive potency.\textsuperscript{119}

A substance is something which exists without qualification and in its own right, for example, a man. An accident is a determination which exists only in something else and then in a qualified way, for example, tallness in a man.\textsuperscript{120} Actual substances and accidents are in potency to further determinations or actualities which will in each case be accidental.\textsuperscript{121}

Applied to our question, the proper functions which a man performs are actions which have their correlative potencies or powers.\textsuperscript{122} The necessity of a power is especially clear in respect to operations which can be exercised or not exercised at will. Some are passive potencies, for example, the power of sense, others are active potencies, for example, the locomotive power.\textsuperscript{123}

Since powers belong to a substance (man) and since they can be brought in and out of act without substantial decay (a man who is not at the moment thinking is still a man), they are called accidents. In terms of the Aristotelian categories, Thomas lists them under the second species of quality. He distinguishes three genera of accident: proper, inseparable and separable. Proper accidents, or properties, although not part of the definition of a thing, are caused by the principle of the species and are necessary for understanding the species. It is in this genus that Thomas places the powers. Other accidents relate to individuals.\textsuperscript{124} The implication is that the powers are an intimate part of the soul and that it is unintelligible without them. The powers have their existence from the essence of the soul insofar as it is actual, but they are received into it as accidental modifications insofar as it is in potency to further determination.\textsuperscript{125}

The texts that we have examined indicate that Thomas is quite clear about who or what acts when a man senses, moves, etc. It is the substance or subject of the power which acts; the power is simply that by which it acts.\textsuperscript{126} Powers are not substances and therefore have no existence of their own although, as Thomas complains, many men have a tendency to grant substantiality to anything which is formal.\textsuperscript{127} They are properties inhering in the substance. The real distinction between the soul and its powers does not imply a multiplication of substances or entities. Rather by taking into account the complexity of human life, it binds the composite into an even tighter unity in which every action of a man proceeds neither arbitrarily nor randomly but from principles deep within himself as subject.

\textbf{Methods of Differentiation of Powers}

The correlativity of act and potency provides a basis for the differentiation of powers. To every distinct act or operation performed by a man there must correspond a distinct power. Gilson refers to ‘particular principles of activity ... which preside over the proper operation of each being.’\textsuperscript{128} Thomas uses this method in his division of the genera of powers. He explains the necessity for five genera: ‘the reason for this diversity is that various souls are distinguished insofar as the operation of the soul diversely transcends the operation of corporeal nature.’\textsuperscript{129} By means of the same method he further distinguishes the species of vegetative

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{119} See \textit{ST} I 77, 3, pp. 556-57.
  \item \textsuperscript{120} \textit{De princ. nat.} cap. 1, p. 39. ‘Nota quod quoddam potent esse licet non sit, quoddam vero est. Illud quod potest esse dictur esse potentia, illud quod iam est dictur esse actu. Sed duplex est esse, scilicet esse essentiale rei sive substantiale, ut hominem esse, et hoc est esse simpliciter; est autem aliud esse accidentaliter, ut hominem esse album, et hoc est esse aliquid.’
  \item \textsuperscript{121} See \textit{De virt. in comm.} art. 3, p. 715, where Thomas discusses how an accident can be the subject of another accident: not, he says, as a foundation, which belongs to substance only, but either as potency to act (as a surface receives color) or as a cause to an effect (as moisture is the cause of taste).
  \item \textsuperscript{122} The correlativity of act and potency is used by Thomas in \textit{ST} I 77, 1, p. 553 as another proof for the distinction of the powers from the soul. ‘Since, he says, the act, e.g. sensing, is not essential, the correlative power does not belong to the essence of the soul.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} See \textit{Quaest. disp. de anima} art. 12, p. 326.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} See \textit{Quaest. disp. de anima} art. 12, ad 7, p. 327.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} \textit{ST} I 77, 6, p. 560 ‘... quia iam dictum est quod accidens causatur a subiecto secundum quod est actus, et recipitur in eo inquantum est in potentia.’
  \item \textsuperscript{126} \textit{Quaest. disp. de anima} art. 12, p. 326. See also \textit{ST} I 77, 5, p. 559. Thomas distinguishes between powers that involve no use of a corporeal organ, viz., intellect and will, and which therefore have as their subject the soul only, and powers that involve the use of corporeal organs, such as sight, and so have as their subject the composite. This distinction is liable to be troubling to the modern mind but rests on Thomas's conviction that ‘the rational soul, which is caused immediately by God, so exceeds the capacity of its matter that corporeal matter is not totally capable of grasping and confining it.’ \textit{De virt. in comm.} art. 10, p. 735. Fitzpatrick translation, p. 100.
  \item \textsuperscript{127} \textit{De virt. in comm.} art. 11, p. 739.
  \item \textsuperscript{128} \textit{Christian Philosophy}, p. 209.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} \textit{ST} I 78, 1, p. 564. ‘Et huius diversitatis ratio est, quia diversae animae distinguuntur secundum quod diversimodo operatio animae supergregditur operationem naturae corporalis.’ My translation.
\end{itemize}
power according to the operation necessary for the maintenance of bodily life, and the species of internal sense according to the operations necessary for sensitive life. In Quodlibet VIII Thomas distinguishes sensation, imagination and intellection on the basis of the ways in which agents and patients can act.

A second method of division is based on a hierarchy of beings. It is interesting both for its foundation in empirical investigation and for its metaphysical implications. In the De anima Aristotle differentiates a hierarchy of living beings – plants, stationary animal, moving animals, men. Thomas uses this hierarchy to distinguish powers possessed by higher but not by lower beings. For instance, he distinguishes sense from intellect and imagination from the possible intellect by considering the respective capabilities of animal and men. Underlying this method is the principle of continuity governing the universe.

In Thomas's own words:

130 ST I 78, 2, p. 566.
131 ST I 78, 4, pp. 570-72.
132 Quodl. VIII 2, 1, p. 159-60.
133 One ought not underestimate the empirical foundation of Thomas's theory although the manner of his writing can be deceptive. For instance, when differentiating the senses, he simply asks 'whether the five exterior senses are properly distinguished?' He treats the question metaphysically but at the same time relies totally on Aristotle's very careful empirical analysis. Evidence of an empirical base is seen by making a comparison between the various divisions of living beings that Thomas makes: three grades of soul, five genera of powers, and four modes of living beings. The asymmetrical fourth mode, immovable animal, is added because investigation showed there to be such animals.
134 SCG II, cap. 66-67, pp. 201-02.
135 Gilson, Christian Philosophy, p. 219 See also Joseph de Finance, Etre et Agir Dans la Philosophie de Saint Thomas, 3rd edition (Rome: L'Université Grégorienne, 1965), especially pp. 31, 123-34, 315-26. See also Edward P. Mahoney, 'Metaphysical Foundations of the Hierarchy of Being According to Some Late – Medieval and Renaissance Philosophers,' in Parviz Morewedge, ed., Philosophies of Existence Ancient and Modern (New York: Fordham, 1982), pp. 165-257. Mahoney examines the 'various medieval and Renaissance accounts of the hierarchy of being which at some point or other invoke God in some way as the measure of the scale and explain that a thing has its place or grade in the scale according as it approaches to God and recedes from non-being and matter...' 165. He shows how as an explicit metaphysics this doctrine had its origins in Neoplatonism and especially in Proclus, the Pseudo-Dionysius, and the Liber de causis. He we are able to contemplate the marvellous connections of things. For it is always found that the lowest in the higher genus touches the highest in the lower genus.

On this basis he enumerates the grades of being beginning with an inanimate object totally caught up in its corporality and ending with the human intellective soul whose operation is accomplished without the use of a corporeal organ. The same principle allows Thomas to extend his metaphysics to angels or separate substances. In general it is useful for ensuring the completeness of any classification.

A finer distinction of the species of powers demands a keener tool than the two we have just considered. Thomas refines the first method and concludes that powers are distinguished according as their objects differ. A power is directed toward act and so is diversified as an act is diversified. An act, whether it be of an active or of a passive power, is specified by its object. For active powers, the object is the end for which the action takes place; in the case of passive powers, the object is the agent which acts upon them. The difficulty of this method is to determine which differences of object are essential to the differentiation of powers and which are not. Thomas gives an example. The external senses are directed towards passive qualities such as colour and sound. Differentiation of powers is therefore made according to essentially different qualities.

The Actual Differentiation of Powers

Our interest in differentiating the powers rests only with the cognitive powers. There the fundamental generic distinction is between sensitive and intellective powers. We have already indicated ways in which Thomas makes this distinction by means of the two methods above. These genera are also distinguished in terms of gives an analysis of Thomas's use of the hierarchy of being on pages 169-72 which he concludes with a note that is of interest to us. 'Thomas already states that there is a twofold diversity among the Intelligences: one according to their metaphysical composition and the degree of perfection resulting from their closeness to or distance from God; the other according to the universality of their intelligible species.' p. 172.

137 See ST I 77, 2, p. 555.
proper objects. Both are directed toward corporeal things external to man. Sense is directed to the particular and individual; intellect is directed to universal being. The difference in object is, therefore, a difference in immateriality of the form under consideration. The respective powers show corresponding degrees of immateriality.

For there is one grade according to which things are in the soul without their proper matters, but nevertheless with the singularity and individuating conditions which follow upon matter. This is the grade of sense which is receptive of the species of individuals without matter, but still in a corporeal organ. But the higher and more perfect grade of immateriality is intellect, which receives species altogether abstracted from matter and the conditions of matter and without a corporeal organ.

This distinction is basic to the whole of Thomas's theory of knowledge. It rests on the internal evidence that man is capable both of perceiving individual objects in all their particularity and of knowing abstractly the universal natures of things. In the latter case, an essence or nature common to a number of individuals is understood without the individual particular characteristics of any one of them.

The division of external senses which are passive potencies acted upon by external agents can be quickly made since it is fairly clear and almost universally accepted, certainly within medieval philosophy. Sight has as its object colour, hearing sound, smelling odour, taste savour, and touch hot and cold, wet and dry, and things of that sort.

The four internal senses are distinguished according to the operations which are necessary for the life of a perfect animal. Not only must such an animal sense single qualities, it must be able to perceive them together in a whole; it must be able to preserve them and so apprehend the object when it is no longer present. Finally, it must be able to know what is dangerous and to be avoided and what is pleasant and to be sought. The common sense is the foundation of all the exterior senses. It distinguishes between them and collates sensible forms in order to perceive whole objects. The imagination is a retentive power which presents sensible forms in their absence. The estimative power in animals, or the cogitative power in man, knows intentions which the senses do not apprehend, such as useful and harmful. In animal this is done by instinct but in man by some form of collating. Memory recalls preserved sensible forms.

The intellect, which we have already distinguished as having universal being for its object, is a passive power in the sense that it receives, rather than generates, the forms to which it is in potentiality. It must be purely potential, argues Thomas, because otherwise it would be in act with respect to the whole universe which is true only of God. Quoting Aristotle, he says that the human intellect ‘is at first like a clean tablet on which nothing is written.’ This intellect, which Thomas calls the possible intellect, is certainly active in some respects. It is, for instance, a positive determination of the substance of the soul. It is also active with respect to the forms it has received in that it composes and divides them. Nevertheless, in terms of the forms which it first knows, the possible intellect is totally dependent on reality external to itself. The final power which Thomas allows is the agent intellect whose function is to illuminate sensible forms in the imagination or to abstract intelligible forms from them. We simply make mention of this power although it is central to Thomas's theory of intellect and was the source of much controversy.

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139 ST I 78, 1, p. 565. ‘Et quantum ad hoc, sunt duo genera potentiârum: scilicet sensitivum, respectu objecti minus communs, quod est corpus sensibile; et intellectivum, respectu objecti communissimi, quod est ens universale.’

140 Quaest. disp. de anima art. 13, pp. 239-30.

141 ‘Unus enim gradus est secundum quod in anima sunt res sine propriis materiis, sed tamen secundum singularitatem et conditiones individuales, quae consequuntur materiam. Et iste est gradus sensus, qui est susceptivus specierum individualium sine materia, sed tamen in organo corporali. Allior autem et perfectissimus inmaterialitatis gradus est intellectus, qui recipit species omnino a materia et conditionibus materiae abstractas, et absque organo corporali.’ My translation.

142 ST I 78, 4, p. 571; Quaest. disp. de anima art. 13, pp. 330.

143 ST I 79, 2, p. 575. ‘... in principio est sicut tabula rasa in qua nihil est scriptum (De anima III, 4).’ My translation.

144 It is a mark of the power and spirituality of the intellect that there are not a number of intellectual powers derived in a fashion similar to that of the internal sensitive powers. Thomas deals with intellectual memory, reason, practical and speculative knowledge and so on but does not find it necessary to posit distinct powers for these operations. For a discussion of this matter see Regis, Epistemology p. 278ff.


146 An enormous amount of controversy arose in the middle ages with respect to the interpretation of Aristotle's De anima III, 4-5 wherein he distinguishes the intellective powers and their
The Necessity that all Knowledge Come Through Sense

From the beginning of his career Thomas remained absolutely convinced that ‘nothing is in the intellect which is not first in sense.’ Knowledge, always directed towards things, is first in the senses and then in the intellect. According to Thomas, the evidence for this is that if a particular sense is lacking, one cannot know the objects of that sense, and that even when thinking of something previously known, one must first turn to a phantasm in the imagination. These processes are appropriate to the composite nature of a human being. Divine and angelic minds do not draw their knowledge from things but have intelligible species naturally impressed upon them. They have no need of a body. The human intellect, on the other hand, is like a wax tablet and must be united to a body since ‘it is necessary that it receive intelligible species from exterior things by the mediating sensitive powers, which are not able to have their proper operation without corporeal organs.

Thomas’s insistence that all human knowledge be mediated through the senses ought not be oversimplified. ‘Although,’ he tells us, ‘the operation of the intellect begins from sense, still in a thing apprehended through sense, the intellect knows many things which sense is not able to perceive. Clearly, essences abstracted from the phantasm are not apprehended by the senses. The first principles of reason are immediately known by the intellect when it knows their terms. Complex operations can be performed by the mind on the data of sense. Even the imagination can conceive gold mountains by joining ‘gold’ and ‘mountain’ while reason is able to advance from one thing to another in more complex ways. By negation of various aspects of corporeal being and by analogy, man is able to know something of immaterial beings. God is known through his effects which are seen in the material world.

Nevertheless, it remains that in knowing its proper object, the natures of corporeal things, the intellect is dependent on sense and that to carry on further investigations of things it must work with data that first came to it through sense.

Conclusion

Two conclusions can be drawn from this chapter. The first is an appreciation of the ontological aspects of the act of knowledge as it takes place in the one knowing. Cognitive forms are received into the powers, which are themselves accidents inhering in the essence of the soul. Knowledge is, therefore, a further accidental modification of the passive potencies of the soul. Secondly, since the powers are really distinct from one another and since all knowledge comes through the senses, there must be a process of coming to knowledge. This will be the subject of our next chapter.

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147 De ver. 2, 3, ob. 19, p. 49. ‘Nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu.’ Although the principle is stated in an objection, Thomas confirms it in the reply (p. 55), ‘et ideo oportet ut quod est in intellectu nostro prius in sensu fuerit.’ See also In De Trin. 6, 2, p. 215; In I Sent. d. 34, q. 3, a. 1, ad 4, p. 799; SCG I, cap. 3, vol. 2, p. 5; I, cap. 12, vol. 2, p. 16; Quaest. disp. de anima art. 8, ad I, p. 310; ST I 84, 6, pp. 621 - 22; 85, I, p. 627.

148 De ver. 1, 11, p. 34.

149 ‘De ver. 10, 6, p. 312. ‘... tum ex hoc quod deficiente sensu deficit scientia de suis sensibilibus, tum etiam ex hoc quod mens nostra non potest actu considerare etiam ea quae habitualiter seinit nisi formando aliquaphantasmata.’ See also De ver. 19, 1, p. 564; Quodl. VIII 2, 3, p. 162; ST I 84, 6, p. 622; Quaest. disp. de anima art. 15, p. 337-39.

150 See De ver. 10, 6, p. 311.

151 See Quaest. disp. de anima art. 8, p. 309.

152 Quaest. disp. de anima art. 8, p. 309. ‘Unde oportet quod species intelligibiles a rebus exterioribus accipiat mediandibus potentiis sensitivis, quae sine corporeis organis operationes propriae habere non possunt.’ My translation.

153 ST I 78, 4, ad 4, p. 572. ‘Dicendum quod, licet intellectus operatio oriatur a sensu, tamen in re apprehensa per sensum intellectus multa cognoscit quae sensus percipere non potest.’ See also De ver. 10, 6, ad 2, p. 313. In In De Trin. 6, 2, pp. 215-17 Thomas analyses the roles of sense, imagination and intellect in the natural, mathematical, and divine sciences. Each science must use sense and imagination as its starting point. But while in natural science knowledge terminates in sense and in mathematical science it terminates in the imagination, in divine science knowledge terminates in the intellect alone.

154 See De ver. 1, 12, p. 35.

155 Quodl. VIII 2, 1, p. 160.
CHAPTER 4

The Process of knowledge

External Sensation

Any analysis of Thomas’s theory of sensation is faced with a shortage of texts for the very reason that Thomas, in his theological writings, was concerned specifically with ‘the intellectual and appetitive powers, in which the virtues reside’ and considered other powers only in preamble. There is a similar lack of secondary literature. Our discussion will centre, therefore, around texts from the commentaries on the De anima and on the De sensu et sensato. Again some justification is needed for using these texts. Let it suffice to say that Thomas relies very heavily on the basic Aristotelian description of the process of sensation but, at the same time, goes beyond the texts by offering more detailed description and explanation.

Thomas first sets up the terms of his discussion by gently sifting out the significant details of the phenomena of sensing. Sensing involves a change or alteration in the sense. That is, it implies being moved. Sense, itself, is only a potency since there is no sensation without the presence of what is sensible. Sensation presumes a prior existing agent which acts on the sense to make it like itself so that the power which is at first dissimilar to its object becomes like it.

The beginning of a theory of sensation is the attempt to account for this process by means of Aristotle’s theory of physical motion and to analyze the similarities and dissimilarities between an intentional act on one hand and a purely physical act on the other. To do this, Thomas takes account of two parallel levels of action, first, the physical immutations which always accompany sensation, second, the act of sensation itself. The immanent action of sensing necessarily coincides with a transitive action exercised by a physically present object. By way of example, the act of sensing warmth, is always co-existent with physical heating of the organ of touch. The act of seeing is always accompanied by some physical change in the organ of sight.

The modern reader can easily have some difficulty with this method. Thomas made no distinction between physics as natural philosophy and physics as physical science in the modern sense. Modern physics is well able to describe the physical changes surrounding sensation, but it cannot even attempt to explain intentional activity. On the other hand, although Thomas’s physical science can be shown to be seriously defective in the light of modern discoveries, this does not necessarily throw his analysis of intentionality into disrepute since each analysis can begin from its own principles. What we must do is elucidate his reasoning without becoming entangled in errors of scientific fact, if that is possible.

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moventur ab activo, et existente in actu; quod scilicet dum facit esse in actu ea, quae patiuntur, assimilat ea sibi . . . quia a principio dum est in transmutari et pati, est dissimile; in fine autem, dum est in transmutatum esse et passum assum, est simile.’ See also In II De anima, 5. Lect. 12, n. 382, p. 98.

Thomas explicitly refers to this methodology in In II De anima, 2. Lect. 2, n. 592, pp. 148-49, where he refers to making use of Physics III.

Yves Simon, ‘The Philosophical Study of Sensation’, 23 (1946): iii - 19, regret this lack of secondary material and draw up a schedule for research but it seems that not a great deal has happened since.

ST I 78, proem., p. 563. ‘Ad considerationem autem Theologi pertinet inquirere specialiter solum de potentis intellectivis et appetivis, in quibus virtutes inveniuntur ... primo namque considerandum est de his quae sunt praemacula ad intellectum.’ See also ST I 84, proem., p. 611.

Yves Simon and J. L. Pégahire in ‘The Philosophical Study of Sensation,’ The Modern Schoolman 23 (1946): iii - 19, regret this lack of secondary material and draw up a schedule for research but it seems that not a great deal has happened since.


In II De anima, 5. Lect. 10, n. 354, p. 92.

‘...anima sensitiva non est actu sensibilis, sed potentia tantum. Et propter hoc, sensus non sentient sine exterioribus sensibilibus...’

In II De anima, 5. Lect. 10, n. 357, p. 93. ‘Dicit ergo quod omnia quae sunt in potentia, patiuntur et

Andrew © Murray, Identity of Knower and Known, page 25.
Thomas accepts the Aristotelian distinction of three kinds of sensible object. The *proper sensibles*, such as black, hot, and smelly, are the direct objects of individual external senses. They define the kind of agent which can activate a sense. The *common sensibles*, for example, movement, number, and figure, register the mode of action of the agent. *Incidental objects* are perceived by the cogitative power absolutely, but by an external sense only insofar as they are connected with a proper sensible. For example, a dog is seen by sight only insofar as it is black or brown. The analysis of sensation begins with the proper sensibles since, says Thomas, objects are prior to the powers. In the interests of space, our discussion will deal mainly with sight and touch which, as the most and least perfect senses, will give us the range of Thomas's theory and will present a strong contrast particularly at the level of physical theory.

The object of sight is color, a quality and 'a kind of form [which] has the power to cause its likeness in the medium.' Touch has as its objects the qualities of bodies as such, namely hot, cold, dry, wet, and so on. Tangible objects differ from visible objects insofar as they simultaneously affect both sense and the medium through which the quality is transmitted, and insofar as the organ of sense receives the same quality both physically and intentionally. The sensible as such, nevertheless, remains quite distinct from the physical immutations affecting either the organ of sense or the medium. When the wood of a tree is split by thunder, says Thomas, it is not sound, but rather moving air that causes the action. The sensible as such is not defined in isolation from sense. It is rather the kind of quality residing in a body of which sense is receptive. The act of a sensitive power is to ‘receive species without matter’.


174 In II De anima, 12. Lect. 24, n. 555, p. 138. 'organum enim sensus, cum potentia ipsa, utputa oculus, est idem subjecto, sed esse aliud est, quia ratione differ potenter a corpore.' My translation.

175 In II De anima, 11. Lect. 23, n. 548, p. 136. This idea of a proportion in the sense of touch bears further study because it is here that the physical action of a quality (heat) on a body (sense organ) is most closely related to the immaterial action of a sensible on a sense. In fact, comparing Thomas's science and the findings of modern science, it could be that modern Thomists are mistaken when they concentrate primarily on sight in their discussion of sensation since by doing so they easily ignore the role attributed by Thomas to the physical immutation of an organ.

176 In II De anima, 12. Lect. 24, n. 557, p. 139. Explaining why plants do not sense hot and cold although they become hot and cold, Thomas says that they have no proportion between extremes of tangible qualities and concludes: 'et ideo non habent in se huieselmodi principium, quod potest recipere species sine materia, scilicet sensum.'

do not change one another unless they touch one another.\footnote{In II De anima, 7. Lect. 15, n. 432, p. 108. ‘Oportet autem quod color moveat diaphanum in actu, puta aerem vel aliquid huismodi; et ab hoc movetur sensitivism, idest organum visus, sicut a corpore sibi continuato. Corpora enim non se immutant, nisi se tangant.’ My translation.}

The question is, what is carried by the medium? Obviously, some kind of physical quality or change is transferred; but are \textit{species}, that is, sensible forms already participating in some immaterial mode of existence, so transferred? A text would seem to indicate that Thomas thought they were. Explaining that sight is the highest sense because its exercise involves only spiritual change, he says:

Spiritual change is what happens when a \textit{species} is received in the organ of sense or \textit{in the medium} in an intentional mode and not in the mode of a natural form.\footnote{In II De anima, 7. Lect. 14, p. 105. ‘Immutatio vero spiritualis est secundum quod species recipitur in organo sensus aut in medio per modum intentionis, et non per modum naturalis formae.’ My translation. See also a similar text in De pot. 5, 8, p. 151-52, which was the occasion of Cajetan’s theory of the necessary action of separate substances in causing sensation. (Scripta Philosophica: In II De anima, 11, 2 vols, edited by P. I. Coquelle (Rome: Angelicum, 1939), II, nn. 265-67, pp. 252-54.) See also Klubertanz’s discussion of this text and of the meaning of \textit{intentional} in ‘De Potentia 5, 8. A Note on the Thomistic Theory of Sensation,’ The Modern Schoolman 26 (1949) 323-31.}

It is precisely here that the problem of Thomas’s physical science comes to the fore. Color being transmitted through a medium does not exist in the same way as color which is a property of the surface of a natural body. But in what sense is it spiritual or intentional? To answer this question we must first make an examination of various media and the means of transmission of sensible qualities through them.

Sight requires a medium which Thomas calls the \textit{diaphanum} (transparency). It is colorless but receptive of color and its proper act is light.\footnote{In II De anima, 7. Lect. 14, n. 418, p. 105. ‘Immutatio vero spiritualis est secundum quod species recipitur in organo sensus aut in medio per modum intentionis, et non per modum naturalis formae.’ My translation. See also a similar text in De pot. 5, 8, p. 151-52, which was the occasion of Cajetan’s theory of the necessary action of separate substances in causing sensation. (Scripta Philosophica: In II De anima, 11, 2 vols, edited by P. I. Coquelle (Rome: Angelicum, 1939), II, nn. 265-67, pp. 252-54.) See also Klubertanz’s discussion of this text and of the meaning of \textit{intentional} in ‘De Potentia 5, 8. A Note on the Thomistic Theory of Sensation,’ The Modern Schoolman 26 (1949) 323-31.}

Thomas follows Aristotle in explaining the relationship between the three.

That which is seen in the light is color, and without light it cannot be seen because that it be the mover of the diaphanum is of the essence of color. This happens by means of light which is the act of the diaphanum and therefore color cannot be seen without light.\footnote{In II De anima, 7. Lect. 15, n. 431, p. 108. ‘Dicit ergo primo, quod per supradicta, intantum manifestum fit, quod illud quod videtur in lumine, est color, et quod sine lumine videri non potest, quia, ut supra dictum est, hoc est de ratione coloris quod sit motivum diaphani; quod quidem fit per lumen, quod est actus diaphani; et ideo sine lumine color videri non potest.’ My translation.}

The medium of touch is flesh. Thomas gives two reasons why this should be so. First, there has to be a medium because all the other senses require media. Secondly, an object placed against the flesh can be felt whereas none of the other organs are able to sense their objects when those objects are placed against them.\footnote{In II De anima, 11. Lect. 23, n. 545, p. 135. ‘Dic it ergo primo, quod per supradicta, intantum manifestum fit, quod illud quod videtur in lumine, est color, et quod sine lumine videri non potest, quia, ut supra dictum est, hoc est de ratione coloris quod sit motivum diaphani; quod quidem fit per lumen, quod est actus diaphani; et ideo sine lumine color videri non potest.’ My translation.}

From this we conclude that the transmission of a sensible quality across a medium is an essential ingredient of the process of sensation.

In the case of sound and odor, Thomas describes transmission in terms of successive motion which he compares with the projectile motion of Physics VII. For sound, the medium is air, part of which is first moved by what is sounding. This part moves the next and so on until the air immediately touching the aural organ is moved. It in turn moves the organ. Something similar happens during the transmission of odor but suspects Thomas, probably by means of alteration rather than by local motion.\footnote{In II De anima, 6. Lect. 16, nn. 236-38, p. 69.}

In each of these cases, Thomas recognizes and describes physical changes within the medium which serve as the means of transmission.

Thomas’s discussion of the medium required by taste provides a helpful foil to the discussion of sight. Taste, like touch, senses by contact but in the presence of moisture. The medium, namely flesh, is joined (coniunctus) to the organ. But what if, as suggested by Aristotle, something tasty and soluble were placed in water so that even at a distance one could be aware of its flavour? It would seem that the sense of taste had achieved contact with its object through the instrumentality of an extrinsic medium. This Thomas rejects on the grounds that one would not be tasting by means of an aqueous medium but would rather be sensing a taste belonging to the solution itself. He compares this solution to a drink in which honey or wine has been mixed with water.\footnote{In II De anima, 10. Lect. 21, nn. 502-06, pp. 126-27.}

Sight, for which the physical separation of organ and object is necessary, is analysed in quite different terms. Thomas explains that colour

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is not seen through its medium in such a way that the colour body is mixed with the medium or that something of it flows to the eye, as Democritus supposed. Rather it is seen by means of a spiritual change of the medium. Hence sight does not perceive colour as belonging to air or as belonging to water but as belonging to a distant colored body and of the same intensity [as it would be if perceived from a closer position].

We can now return to the question raised earlier. In what sense does a species in the medium exercise intentional or spiritual existence? The contrast is between natural change and spiritual change. A quality is received naturally when it informs a material substance in such a way that the substance takes on the characteristics of the quality. All other receptions of forms are spiritual. This can be understood in a very broad sense. Thus the movement of air during the transmission of sound contains the sound but not in the material way in which a bell contains sound. Sound exists in its medium more spiritually than heat in the medium of touch, since in the latter case, the flesh actually does become warm due to a degree of material reception. But the species of sound in its medium is less spiritual than that of color in the diaphanum because in sound there is some discernible physical movement or change in the medium, namely the successive movements of air.

The reception of the species into a sense is accompanied by a further immaterialization. According to the principle which we quoted in chapter two, 'whatever is received from another is received after the manner of the recipient,’ Thomas calls the difference a difference in mode of being. Sense is more immaterial than the medium. It is true that it is located in a corporeal organ but due to its relation to the soul it is more immaterial than material and nonsensing beings. Sense, therefore, receives the species into a spiritual and intentional mode of existence. Another way of saying this is that the sense receives the form of other as other. How this can be so is to be discovered in the nature of the species sensibilis. It is significant for our discussion that, in the text cited in footnote 185, Thomas uses forma generically of both qualitas and species.

The change from natural to intentional existence is achieved by the kind of causality exercised by the sensible object. Discussing the role of the material object in the genesis of intellectual knowledge, Thomas rejects two positions. The first is that of Democritus who held that knowledge is caused by a discharge of images from the object sensed. The second is that of Plato who, according to Thomas’s sources, held that the intellect is incorporeal and cannot be affected by corporeal beings. Thomas presents Aristotle’s position as his own. He agrees, with Democritus, that sensible things outside the soul can affect the human composite but disagrees with the view that this is by means of a flow of images. Rather, he

184 In II De anima, 10. Lect. 21, n. 507, p. 127. ‘Sed color non sic videtur per medium, quod scilicet corpus coloratum admissatur medium, aut aliquid eius defluat ad visum, ut Democritus ponebat; sed per spiritualem immutationem medi. Unde visus non percipit colorum vel aeris, vel ut aquae, sed ut conpors colorati distantis, et secundum eamdem mensuram.’ My translation.

185 See fn. 23. The text in question is In II De anima, 7. Lect. 14, n. 418, p. 105. As it is a key text we reproduce it here fully. ‘Secundo apparat quod sensus visus est spiritualior, ex modo immutationis. Nam in qualibet alio sensu non est immutatio spiritualis, sine naturalis. Dico autem immutationem naturalen prout qualitas recipitur in patiente secundum esse naturae, sicut cun aliquid infrigidatur vel calefit aut movetur secundum locum. Immutatio vero spiritualis est secundum quod species recipitur in organo sensus aut in medio per modum intentionis, et non per modum naturalis formae. Non enim sic recipitur species sensibilis in sensu secundum illud esse quod habet in re sensibilis. Patet autem quod in tactu, et gustu, qui est, tactus quidam, fit alteratio naturalis; calefit enim et infrigidatur aliquid per contractum calidi et frigid, et non fit immutatio spiritualis tantum. Similiter autem immutatio odoris fit cum quadam fumali evaporatione: immutatio autem soni, cum motu locali. Sed in immutatone visus est sola immutatio spiritualis: unde patet, quod visus inter omnes sensus est spiritualior, et post hunc auditus. Et propter hoc hi duo sensus sunt maxime spiritualae, et soli disciplinabiles; et his quae ad eos pertinent, utimur in intellectualibus, et praecipue his quae pertinent ad visum.’

186 Thomas clearly did not have the resources of modern physical science at hand and so has called things, which today would be described as physical or material, spiritual. Nevertheless, his understanding of a gradation of differences in the reception of forms was accurate. If the border of what we might call spiritual or intentional is pushed back, nevertheless we have to recognize that at some point cognitive activity ceases to be explicable in merely physical terms.

187 In II De anima, 12. Lect. 24, n. 553, p. 138. ‘Quandoque vero forma recipitur in patiente secundum aliun modum essendi, quom sit in agente.’

says, it is ‘by means of a certain kind of operation.’ 189

In this way, Thomas preserves the nobility of the incorporeal by defining precisely the role of the sensible object in sensation. In the words of Klubertanz, the sensible object ‘causes sensation by actuating the potency of sense toward a determinate object.’ 190

**Internal Sensitive Life**

Although external sensation is a complete act in which the act of the sensible agent comes to perfection, 191 the full potential of sensitive knowledge is reached only in the actuation of the internal senses. As we have already noted, there are four: the common sense, the imagination, the cogitative power, and the memory. Each receives and further manipulates the individual species into more complex wholes so that sense knowledge itself becomes more comprehensive.

The common sense is necessary because one ‘must judge between perceived sensibles and distinguish them from one another which must be done by a power to which all sensible come.’ 192 The common sense and the external sense function in close collaboration. In the *Summa Theologica*, Thomas attributes the reception of sensible species to the common sense and to the external senses together and distinguishes them only in the replies to objections. 193 A proper sense can distinguish differences in its own proper object, e.g. ‘white’ and ‘black,’ but the common sense distinguishes between all sensible objects, e.g. ‘white’ and ‘sweet.’ 194 Hence, the common sense gives unity to the multiform receptions of the individual senses. 195 It can do this because it perceives the intentions of the proper senses ‘as when someone sees himself see.’ 196 The action of sight is completed by the change effected in the sense by the sensible form. The common sense perceives both the sensible intention and the act of its reception.

The synthesized species, as well as species received directly from the proper senses, are preserved in the imagination or *phantasia*. Thomas calls them images, or following the Greek, phantasms. Imagining takes place both in the presence of sensible objects and in their absence. 197 By means of phantasms, an animal can be aware of things that are absent from it and so seek what it needs, for instance, food. 198 At least in man, the imagination has an active function in that it divides and composes images received from the senses so as to construct new images. 199 The imagination plays an important role in the development of intellectual knowledge. In conjunction with the memory it builds stable representations of things out of many species and from these the intellect is able to abstract intelligible notions.

That a sheep will flee the presence of a wolf, whose appearance as such is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, shows, according to Thomas, that it is necessary that there be a power which apprehends intentions (intentiones) that the senses do not, for instance, the intention ‘harmful’, which, added to the apprehension of the wolf, stimulates the sheep to flee. Thomas does not tell us from where these intentions come. We know that they are necessary because of the observed behaviour of animals. 200 Such an intention remains, however, the act of a corporeal power and as such ‘is not of the order of judgement; it is merely a conscious reaction conditioned by the very structure of our nervous

189 ST I 84, 6, p. 622. ‘Quia igitur non est inconveniens quod sensibilia quae sunt extra animam, causent aliquid inconjunctum, in hoc Aristoteles cum Democritu concordavit, quod operationes sensitivae partis causentur per impressionem sensibilium in sensum: non per modum defluxionis, ut Democritus posuit, sed per quaedam operationem.’
190 Klubertanz, ‘De Potentia 5, 8.’ P. 327.
191 In II De anima, 2. Lect. 2, n. 592, pp. 148-49.
See also ST I 78, 4, ad 2, p. 572.
193 See ST I 78, 4 et ad 1, 2, pp. 570-72.
194 In III De anima, 2. Lect. 3, nn. 601, 604, pp. 150-51
195 There is a tendency to assign the common sensibles as objects of the common sense. Thomas explicitly rejects this, stating that common sensibles are known directly by more than one of the proper senses and reflect the mode of

196 ST I 78, 4, ad 2, p. 572. ‘. . . sicut cum aliquid videt se videre.’
197 See In III De anima, 3. Lect. 6, n. 664-65, p. 162.
198 ST I 78, 4, p. 571; Quaest. disp. de anima art. 13, p. 330.
199 ST I 84, 6, ad 2, p. 623. ‘. . . tamen est quaedam operatio animae in homine quae dividendo et componendo format diversas rerum imagines, etiam quae non sunt sensibibus acceptae.’

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words, the *species* received into the external senses have been synthesized and modified so as to present in the phantasm a more perfect representation of individual things.²⁰⁶

**Intellec**tion²⁰⁷

It is not our purpose to make any detailed examination of intellec**tion** since that would be outside the scope of this dissertation. However, what Thomas says about *species* with respect to intellec**tion** is in some ways applicable to their role in sensation. A brief outline will also provide a contrast to our discussion of sense and highlight Thomas's understanding of the degrees of immateriality in knowledge.

The proper object of the human intellect is 'the quiddity of a material thing, which it abstracts from the phantasmas.'²²⁰ In contrast to the senses which


²⁰³ *ST* I 78, 4, p. 571. ‘Ad conservandum autem eas (intentiones quae per sensum non acippiuntur), vis memorativa quae est thesaurus quidam huiusmodi intentionum.’

²⁰⁴ *Quaest. disp. de anima* art. 13, p. 330. . . requiritur quod ea. quae prius fuerunt apprehensa per sensum et interius conservata, iterum ad actualem considerationem revocentur.’ (Quaest. disp. de anima art. 13, p. 330). In the *ST* text he immediately relates this to the reception and preservation of species sensibilis. 2. In *ST* I 78, E, p. 571, Thomas begins by referring to the reception of the species sensibilis by sense. However, as soon as he begins to discuss the cogitative (or estimative) power he uses *forma sensibilis* (from the text it seems synonymously) which he contrasts with *intentiones* which are not received through the external senses: ‘Et huius perceptionis operet esse aliquod aliud principium: cum perceptio formarum sensibilium sit ex immutatone sensibilis, non autem perceptio intentionum praedictarum.’

²⁰⁷ *Texts* in which Thomas discusses the intellectual faculties and their operation are most numerous due to the disputes in his time concerning the interpretation of De anima III, 4 et 5 and due to the importance, as we have already noted, of the intellect and the soul in the discussion of theological and moral matters. Since our purpose in this chapter is a survey of his basic teaching we shall restrict ourselves to a small number of the more important later texts.

²⁰⁸ *ST* I 85, 8, p. 639. ‘Dicendum quod objectum intellectus nostri, secundum praesentem statum, est quidditas rei materialis, quam aphantasmatis abstrahit, ut ex praemissis patet. Et quia id quod est primo et per se cognitum a virtute cognoscitiva, est proprium eius objectum . . .’ Benziger translation p. 439. See also *In De Trin.* 5, 2, ad 2, p. 177. For further texts and also for an analysis of the difficulty with which such knowledge is achieved,
can perceive only the sensible qualities of things, the intellect is able to penetrate their essences. In this Thomas sees the primary meaning of intellect.

The name intellect is drawn from this that it knows the inmost elements of a thing: for to understand is as it were to read within (intus legere). Sense and imagination know only the exterior accidents but only the intellect attains interior things and the essence of a thing. 209

What is the relation of this essence or form to the existing matter – form composite which is the only locus of its existence outside the mind? Thomas rejects Averroes’ view that the essence or quiddity of a thing is identical with its form, and in particular with its substantial form, to the exclusion of all matter. He holds with Avicenna that sensible matter and form enter together into the essence of a thing. 210 The reason is that a material thing is not intelligible without such matter. 211 For example, man cannot be understood apart from flesh and bones which Thomas calls sensible matter. The intellect does, however, abstract from determinant or individuating matter such as this flesh or these bones. This Thomas calls the abstraction of the universal from the particular. 212

Thomas says explicitly that Aristotle’s study of the intellect developed from a comparison with the senses, and himself accepts this method as a proper way in which to proceed. 213 That we are sometimes sensing and sometimes not demands that we be in potency to receive sensible species. Similarly, we sometimes understand and sometimes do not, so that there must be a power ‘which does not have in its essence or nature any of the natures of sensible things which we can understand, but is in potency to them all.’ 214 This intellect, at first like a clean

maxime nota, tamen intellectus noster se habet ad ea ut oculus noctuae ad lucem solis, ut dicitur in II Metaphysics, per lumen naturalis rationis pervenire non possumus in ea nisi secundum quod per effectus in ea ducimur.’ (In De Trin. 5, 4, p. 194.)

210 Armand Maurer, ‘Form and Essence in the Philosophy of St. Thomas’, Medieval Studies 13 (1951): 165-76, discusses this in considerable detail and gives many texts. See especially pp. 165, 169, 172. Essence used in this sense means the same as quiddity which comes from the definition of a thing. See also In De Trin. 5, 1, p. 165. See also De ente cap. 2, p. 370.

211 See In De Trin. 5, 3, p. 183. ‘Quando ergo secundum hoc, per quod constitutur ratio naturae et per quod ipsa natura intelligitur, natura ipsa habet ordinem et dependentiam ad aliqium aliuid, tunc constat quod natura illa sine illo alio intelligi non potest.’

212 In De Trin. 5, 2, pp. 176-77. See also Armand Maurer, The Division and Methods of the Sciences (Toronto: P.I.M.S., 1963), p. 21, fn. 16 and p. 22, fn. 20. See also ST I 85, 1, ad 1, pp. 627-28.

213 De spir. creat. art. 9, p. 402. The reference is to De anima III, 4. (429 a13).

214 De spir. creat. art. 9, p. 402. ‘... quae quidem in sua essentia et natura non habet aliquam de naturis rerum sensibilium, quas intelligere possumus, sed sit in potentia ad omnia. ...’ A typographical error in the Marietti edition omits a line of print from this text. We have corrected it
wax tablet and then informed by intelligible species, is a passive power in the broadest sense. It is, namely, a potency which receives a form without any deprivation to itself. Thomas calls it the possible intellect. The intelligibles, viz., quiddities, essences, and universals, have no separate existence of their own and so of themselves cannot move the possible intellect. They must be produced by an intellective power which Thomas calls the agent intellect. ‘It makes [actual intelligibles] by abstracting them from matter and from the conditions of matter, which are the principles of individuation.’ Abstraction is made from phantasms in the imagination. Thomas follows the Aristotelian line that ‘without a phantasm, intellectual activity is not possible.’ We have already given the evidence for this. The phantasm is necessary because the essences which the human intellect knows exist only in individuals and so must be first brought to knowledge in their individuality. This is the function of sense and imagination.

There are three distinctive moments of the act of intellectual apprehension. First, the agent intellect throws light on the phantasm and abstracts from it intelligible species which are free from any individuating conditions. The active power of the agent intellect moves the phantasm from potential intelligibility to actual intelligibility but is not in any way receptive of a form. Secondly, the intelligible species are received by the possible intellect in an action that Thomas likens to the impression of sense by a sensible thing. It is in this act that union is achieved between the thing known and the intellect since the form or species of the object has been received into the potency of the intellect. Thirdly, there is the formation of a mental word or concept by the possible intellect. It is a quality produced by and residing in the possible intellect.

In ST I 85, 2 Thomas asks whether the intelligible species abstracted from the phantasm are what the intellect understands. He rejects this possibility on two counts. Firstly, if this were the case, every science would be concerned not with objects outside the soul but with only its own intelligible species. Secondly, in such a situation, the only measure of truth would be the impressions (passiones) of the intellect so that all opinions, even those contradictory to one another, would be true. Thomas goes on to establish the status of species by an often used dictum: ‘the intelligible species is related to the intellect as that by which

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215 See ST I 79, 2, pp. 574-75. This text is significant for any comparison between intentional and physical change.
216 Quaest. disp. de anima art. 4, p. 295. ‘Facit autem ea per abstractionem a materia, et a materialibus conditionibus, quae sunt principia individuationis.’ My translation.
217 De mem. et reminis. 1. (449b31).
220 ST I 85, 1, ad 4, p. 629. ‘Dicendum quod phantasmata et illuminatur ab intellectu agente; et iterum ab eis, per virtutem intellectus agentis species intelligibiles abstrahuntur.’
221 ST I 85, 2, ad 3, p. 631. ‘... nam primo quidem consideratur. passio intellectus possibilis secundum quod informatur specie intelligibili.’

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222 De ver. 8, 6, p. 238. ‘... sed intelligens et intellectum, propt' eis est effectum unum quod quid est intellectus in actu, sunt unum principium huius actus quod est intelligere.’
223 ST 107, 1, p. 767. ‘Quando autem mens convertitur se ad actu considerandum quod habet in habitu, loquitur aliquis sibi ipsi; nam ipse conceptus mentis interius verbum vocatur.’ It is difficult to know whether the concept is always necessary for the completion of intellectual apprehension. See, for instance, Barry Miller, The Range of Intellect (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), p. 97 who argues to the contrary against John of St. Thomas.

The notion of concept comes partly from the application of the Aristotelian theory of motus to knowledge. See In I De anima, 4. Lect. 10, nn. 157-61, pp. 41-42. It also arises with respect to reflexive self-knowledge had by the intellect of itself. See De pot. 2, 1, pp. 24-25. It is noteworthy that, in very many of the texts in which Thomas discusses the mental word, he is using it in a theological context as an analogy for his description of the procession of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity from the Father. See, for example, In I Sent. d. 13, q. 1, a. 1-3, pp. 301-09; SCG IV, cap. 12-13, pp. 270-73; De pot. 10, 1, pp. 254-55; ST I 1-27, 1. p. 216.
224 ST I 85, 2, p. 630. The argument here gives us some insight into Thomas's method of discussing knowledge. A modern epistemological approach would set out to demonstrate that species or impression were only means to knowledge and thereby prove the existence of objects external to the soul. Thomas, on the other hand, has already established a realistic metaphysics and his discussion of knowledge is a reflection on what it was that he did in his physics and metaphysics. According to this approach, the fact that knowledge is of objects external to the soul becomes evidence for the status of species.
the intellect understands.'

Species can be known only in a secondary way when the intellect reflects upon itself and in knowing itself knows the species which are the forms actualizing it. In reply to an objection, Thomas brings together all these threads.

Interaction between Sense and Intellect
An analysis such as ours can easily leave one with the impression that each cognitive act is complete and separate in itself. This is far from Thomas’s understanding of knowing and makes it necessary to discuss the interaction between the different cognitive powers, especially between sensation and intellect. We have already seen examples of the close interaction between sense and intellect. When naming the internal senses, Thomas distinguished between the estimative power in animals and the cogitative power of particular reason in man because of the influence of the intellect on human sensitive life. He allows pre-eminence to the cogitative power and memory because of the influence of their ‘affinity and closeness to universal reason, and according to a certain overflow’ into them. On the other hand, actualization of the intellect requires a return to the phantasm even when the possible intellect has stored in it the intelligible species of the object of reflection. Reminiscence is performed with an interplay between memory recalling individual intentions and reason guiding or organizing this recall.

A dramatic example of the involvement of sense and intellect with each other is found in Thomas’s descriptions of how we come to know universal principles. Universal principles are not grasped in an instant. Rather, experience is first built up from many sensings and rememberings of individual things. It is experience which tells a doctor that a particular herb will cure the fever of Plato or that of Socrates or those of many other individuals. Such knowledge becomes universal only when by abstraction the doctor knows that the herb will cure fever as such in all men. Even then knowledge is first had in a confused and more general, imperfect way. It is clarified by repeated intellectual acts.

Even the abstraction of simple universal notions is begun by the internal sensitive powers which collate individual events prior to the specific act of the intellect. At the same time, the cogitative power and memory are under the direction of reason.

In his analysis of prudence and human action, Thomas shows that the universal first principles of moral life belong to the understanding. Judgements about particular instances of action, however, belong to the particular reason or cogitative power. Moral decision involves a complex interaction between sense and intellect.

Although the intellect primarily and directly knows only universals, Thomas allows that ‘indirectly and as it were by a kind of reflexion, it is able to know the singular.’ This reflexion is directed back to the phantasm of the particular individual. It seems to us that only in this act is a

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225 ST I 85, 2, p. 630. ‘Et ideo dicendum est quod species intelligibilis se habet ad intellectum ut quo intelligit intellectus.’
226 ST I 85, 2, ad 1, p. 631. ‘Ad primum ergo dicendum quod intellectum est in intelligente per suam similitudinem. Et per hunc modum dicitur quod intellectum in actu est intellectus in actu, inquantum similitudo rei intellectae est forma intellectus; sicut similitudo rei sensibilis est forma sensus in actu. Unde non sequitur quod species intelligibilis abstracta sit id quod actu intelligitur, sed quod sit similitudo eius.’ My translation. This text needs to be carefully compared with our discussion of the object of the intellect.
228 ST I 78, 4, ad 5, p. 572. ‘... sed per aliqum affinitatem et propinquitatem ad rationem universalem, secundum quandam refluentiam.’

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complete identification achieved between an individual knower and a particular corporeal object. As one modern author says, emphasizing the importance of sense in human cognitive life:

We cannot forget, therefore, that in us the act of sensing is impregnated with intellectuality. Though analytically separable, they are functionally continuous so that no radical cleavage can be effected between sense and intellect in the actual exercise of human knowing.\textsuperscript{235}

**Conclusion**

This chapter has traced the process by which we come to knowledge. In other words, it has investigated how a knower can become known. The central role is played by the *species* which represent the known object to the knower. All *species* have an intentional mode of existence but, as we have seen, there are still many differentiations to be recognized among *species*. We can allow Thomas to summarize his own doctrine.

For since there is the greatest distance between intelligible *esse* and material and sensible *esse*, the form of a material thing is not received by the intellect immediately, but is brought to it through many intermediaries. For example, the form of some sensible is first in the medium, where it is more spiritual than in the sensible thing; and afterwards it is in the organ of sense; and from there it is drawn off into the phantasy, and into other inferior powers; and further on it is brought at last to the intellect.\textsuperscript{236}

The problem of identity between the knower and the known exists and must be addressed at each of these levels.


\textsuperscript{236} Quaest. disp. de anima art. 20, p. 356. ‘Cum enim maxima sit distantia inter intelligibile et esse materiale et sensibile, non statim forma rei materialis ab intellectu accipitur, sed per multa media ad eum deducitur. Puta, forma aliquid sensibilis prius fit in medio, ubi est spiritualior quam in re sensibili, et postmodum in organo sensus; et exinde derivatur ad phantasiam, et ad alias inferiores vires; et ulterior tandem perducitur ad intellectum.’ My translation.
CHAPTER 5

Identity: The Problem

Identity

The usual kinds of identity or sameness enunciated by medieval philosophers are numerical (strict), specific, generic, and analogous. Thomas accepted this division and in a very early work explained it in Aristotelian terms. In the following rather long quotation he defines each kind of identity very succinctly.

Certain things are the same in number as Socrates and 'this man' (said pointing at Socrates); certain things are diverse in number but the same in species, as Socrates and Plato, who although they coincide in the human species, nevertheless differ in number. Moreover, certain things differ in species but are the same in genus, as man and ass coincide in the genus of animal; certain things, however, are diverse in genus but the same only according to analogy, as substance and quantity, which do not agree in any genus but agree only according to analogy: for they agree only in being.

Another useful tool is the discussion of the same by Aristotle in his philosophical lexicon in *Metaphysics* V, on which Thomas comments. Here sameness (idem) is divided into accidental sameness (idem per accidens) and essential sameness (idem per se).

Three kinds of accidental sameness are listed: (1) White and 'musical' are the same if they inhere in one subject. (2) 'Man' and 'musical' are the same by predication when we say 'the man is musical' and (3) in the inverse case when we say 'the musical thing is a man',

Things are essentially the same when either their matter is the same, for example, two houses each of which is made out of brick, or their substance is the same by continuity of substance or by the unity and indivisibility of their intelligible structures of forms. Numerical, specific, generic, and analogous identity are applicable to things essentially the same.

Essential sameness or identity arises in two instances: (1) when the things under comparison are many *secundum esse* but are united in some respect; (2) when only one thing is being considered but is somehow divided by the mind, which considers it from two viewpoints.

Before applying these notions of sameness one needs to be quite clear about what are the terms of the comparison. There are three important candidates. Firstly, there is the relationship that prevails between the object, formally considered, and the *species* in its role as a quality of the knowing power. Secondly, there is the relationship between this *species* and the sensitive or intellective power. Thirdly, there is the relationship between the knowing power and the object considered formally.

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237 *Metaphysics* V, 6. (1016b31-1017a3)
238 *De princ. nat.* cap. 6, p. 46. 'Quaedam enim sunt idem numero, sicut Sortes et 'hic homo' demonstrato Sorte; quaedam sunt diversa numero et sunt idem in specie, ut Sortes et Plato, qui licet conveniant in specie humana, tamen differunt numero. Quaedam autem differunt specie sed sunt idem genere, sicut homo et asinus conveniunt in genere animalis; quaedam autem sunt diversa in genere sed sunt idem solum secundum analogiam, sicut substantia et quantitas, quae non conveniunt in aliquo genere sed conveniunt solum secundum analogiam: conveniunt enim in éo solum quod est ens, ens autem non est genus, quia non predicat or univoce sed analogice.' My translation.

239 In V *Metaph.*., 9. Lect. 11, n. 908, p. 244.
240 Ibid., n. 911, p. 245.
241 Ibid., p. 912, p. 245. In n. 907, p. 244 Thomas shows that Aristotle related sameness to the parts of substances but used *like* (*simile*) to express unity between qualities. This is significant for the discussion of knowing sensible quality. Thomas frequently states that the likeness (*similitudo*) of the thing is in the knower.
242 One might add the identity between knower considered as the full individual composite and the individual existent thing. However, that union is derivative of the identity between the knowing power and the object considered formally and is always qualified by Thomas with *quodammodo* or some similar adverb. The question of whether strict or numeric identity can be applied to immaterial forms since

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From the point of view of intentionality, the third possibility is the most important. While the first two relationships have to do with how knowledge takes place, the third focuses on the achievement that is had in knowledge. Here we contrast a form considered in its natural existence and in its intentional existence. In each case the form has the same intelligible structure so that essential unity applies. It is upon the nature of this identity that we must ultimately decide.

Tensions Inherent in the Theory

Once the question of identity is raised in this way, tensions which seem to be inherent in Thomas’s theory itself come to the surface. They can be seen in the relationships between the contents of each of the last three chapters of this dissertation.

According to chapter two, the one form can have three different modes of existence - as an exemplar in the divine intellect, in its concrete natural existence, and in the human cognitive powers - and can also be considered absolutely. Of itself, it does not involve and shows no preference for any particular mode of existence. The mode in which it exists is determined, not by itself but by the kind of recipient which it informs. In the object known the form has an entitative function making that object such a kind of thing, but in the knower it has an intentional and immaterial function by means of which the knower is united to the known. It would seem, therefore, that the identity between the form in the object and the form in the knower is of the strictest kind.

However, the doctrine of the soul and its powers which we set forth in chapter three presents a difficulty for this interpretation. The soul must be capable of continued existence after its separation from the body, and must also be the form of a material substrate wherein it is the principle of life and of cognitive activity. It therefore acts entitatively so that the species, which is a form representing the object, is received entitatively into a passive potency of the soul. Ontologically it has the status of an accident actuating an accidental determination of the soul. It is in a sense individuated by this reception. The problem is that this kind of entitative information seems to imply a mode of existence different from the kind of intentionality suggested in chapter two.

The tradition of Thomistic thought is well aware of this tension. We have already mentioned John of St. Thomas’s concept of the formal sign which is an attempt to get around the problem. Jacques Maritain held that two quite different functions of species have to be considered.

On the one hand, these immaterial forms, these species, are modifications of the soul, and by that title they determine the faculty in the same way as any form determines a subject. On the other hand, precisely as means of knowing, presentative forms [species] are purely and formally vicars of the object, pure likenesses of the object (i.e. in the soul, they are the object itself divested of its proper existence and made present in an immaterial and intentional state).

This distinction of function of or of status belonging to species, namely, ontological and intentional, might seem to have solved the problem we have raised. But it itself is in need of justification. The situation is a most peculiar one. Peifer, following John of St. Thomas, sees the necessity of a twofold character for the species because ‘the cognitive power could not be determined and specified by the entitative inherence of the species as an accident.’ Such an explanation is really a shifting of the question which must remain as a topic for further study. Granted that the Thomistic theory of knowledge seems to demand a twofold role of species, how can such a role be justified?

A second tension in Thomas’s theory of knowledge is found in the relationship between the discussion of intentionality in chapter two and the analysis of the process of coming to knowledge in chapter four. By a remarkable change in the knower, a form existing in a physical object comes to be in a completely new way, namely, intentionally. Thomas’s analysis attempts to show

individuation is had through matter will have to be addressed. In De unit. intelli cap. 5, p. 310, while defending the plurality of the human possible intellect, Thomas says that separate substances have individuality not through matter but by being substances. They are, therefore, simply or numerically one as being one. On the other hand, he agrees with Aristotle that if Platonic Ideas were separate substances, they would be individual and hence not able to be predicated of many individuals. What does it mean for a form to maintain numerical identity through changes in mode of existence?

243 See Joseph Owens, ‘Soul as Agent in Aquinas,’ The New Scholasticism 48 (1974): 40-72. For Thomas, such a description is a concern prior to any gnoseological considerations.

244 Quaest. disp. de anima art. 2, ad 5, p. 289. ‘Ad quintum dicendum quod anima humana est quaedam forma individmma; et simili potentia eius quae dictur intellectus possibilis et formae intelligibiles in eo receptae.’

245 Maritain, Degrees, p. 117.

246 Peifer, Mystery of Knowledge, p. 83.
how this change in mode of existence of the form takes place. A physical object acts on a medium which in turn causes a physical change in the organ of sense and initiates the reception of a spiritual or intentional form in the knower. A further spiritualization of form takes place under the influence of the agent intellect.

Two problems arise. Firstly, from the point of view of the form, how is the change from physical or natural existence to intentional or spiritual existence to be accounted for? Indeed, can it be accounted for? Is the principle ‘whatever is received from another is received after the manner of the recipient’ sufficient? Thomas's analysis might seem merely to give this problem more precise loci in the process of knowledge - at the interfaces between object and medium, medium and sense, and sense and intellect. We noted earlier that Cajetan was led to posit the intervention of separate substances which spiritualize species in the medium. We are unlikely to accept his solution, but perhaps his attempt at a solution indicates that the problem is real. If one is to insist on the strict identity of a form in two modes of existence, and if one is going to attempt to describe the process that takes place in knowledge, one's analysis needs to account for that change in mode.

The second problem arises from the point of view of the process of change. How can identity of form be preserved through such a series of changes? We have already alluded to the fact that Thomas was aware of this problem. Its solution will involve an examination of each step of the process and of how superior forms are potentially contained in inferior forms. For example, how is an intelligible form contained in a phantasm? This problem is increased by the representative nature of species. Not only is a more spiritual form contained potentially in a less spiritual form, but a form identical to the object has to be had through the mediation of a representation of it.

The Doctrine of Species

It should be clear by now that the doctrine of species has an important bearing on the question of the kind of identity existing between the form of the thing known and the form had by the knower. If one were to consider the metaphysical treatment of intentionality found in our second chapter alone, one would conclude that the identity was of the strictest kind with a distinction in mode of being. But the theory of how this comes about, that is the doctrine of species, must also be taken into account.

This doctrine has, in the history of philosophy, attracted much, oftentimes humorous, ridicule. Thomas Hobbes, in Leviathan, criticizes species in the following way.

But the Philosophy-schools, through all the Universities of Christendom, grounded upon certain texts of Aristotle, teach another doctrine; and say, For the cause of Vision, that the thing seen sendeth forth on every side a visible species (in English) a visible shew, apparition, or aspect or a being seen; the receiving whereof into the Eye, is Seeing. And for the cause of Hearing, that the thing heard, sendeth forth an Audible species, that is, an Audible aspect, or Audible being seen; which entering at the Eare, maketh hearing. 247

Some say that Senses receive the species of things and deliver them to the Common-sense; and the Common Sense delivers them over to the Fancy, and the Fancy to the Memory, and the Memory to the judgement, like handling of things from one to another, with many words making nothing understood. 248

Hobbes thus makes two criticisms. Firstly, the scholastics have filled the air with these aspects radiating from bodies. In this he sees a needless multiplication of entities for whose existence there is no reasonable basis. Secondly, that these species are passed from faculty to faculty, something like a football in a rugby match, is, for Hobbes, very strange. He links the doctrine of species with insignificant speech249 and with the ‘superstitious fear of spirits.’ 250

Hobbes' criticism can, to some extent, be appreciated when one reads the following text of a modern Thomist.

The action of bodies on the senses is explained by the radioactivity of forms into the space around them. Each form radiates an emanation resembling itself. This emanation contacts the sense organ and causes sensation. The activity of the form depends on the fact that it is an act and, naturally, a cause: ‘Omnis forma, inquantum huismodi, est principium agendi sibi simile; unde cum color sit quaedam forma, ex se habet, quod causat sui similitudinem in medio.’ (In II De anima, Lect. 14, n. 425)251

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248 Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 93.
249 Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 87.
250 Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 93.
251 Gilson, Christian Philosophy, p. 471, fn. 11.
None of this is to admit that these criticisms are necessarily valid and certainly not that critics like Hobbes or Descartes were able to give us better theories of knowledge. One difficulty with which we are faced is the episodic nature of Thomas's treatment of knowledge. Not only are the relevant texts scattered throughout his works but even when he raises issues concerning knowledge, it is very often done in other contexts - the soul, the Trinity, and so on. He does not really set down his theory from beginning to end in all its complexity. Evidence of this is found in the degree of development left open to Cajetan and John of St. Thomas. What Thomas does have, however, are certain gnoseological principles on which he is unchanging and which themselves deserve special investigation. Characteristically, he is also extremely careful in stating these principles. The difficulties with which we have been concerned arise in the working out of his theory.

It is significant that Aristotle did not have a doctrine of distinct intelligible species. Averroes, likewise, had no such doctrine.\(^{252}\) Among Thomas's contemporaries neither Siger of Brabant\(^{253}\) nor Godfrey of Fontaines\(^{254}\) held to a doctrine of species. Hence resolution of our question will require a detailed examination of Thomas's reasons for requiring intelligible species and, if possible, of the sources of this doctrine. It will also look at the contributions of Cajetan and John of St. Thomas and ask why they found it necessary to make the further precisions that they did.\(^{255}\)

**The Question**

We have attempted, in this dissertation, to focus on some of the problems one faces when trying to understand Thomas's account of the identity between knower and known in knowledge. To solve these problems we would have to begin the discussion of knowledge again and to reconstruct Thomas's theory on the basis of his texts. The first major question would be what is the relationship between a perceived form and a sensible quality found in the thing itself? Is it identity or similarity? Of what kind is it? Such questions would have to be answered within the contexts of Thomas's metaphysics of existence, his physical theory, and his theory of the soul and the human composite, all of which are of prior development to his theory of knowledge. It would have to take careful note of the meaning of *species* and this would make an investigation of the origin of the notion of *species* necessary. The role of the medium and of the successive changes in degree of immateriality of the *species* would have to be given special consideration.

D. L. Paul in a recent doctoral dissertation, *Intentional Identity: An Analysis of the Metaphysics of Perception in Contemporary Thomistic Thought*,\(^{256}\) raises some of these issues. Paul argues that the kind of identity under consideration is neither identity proper, by which he means an essential identity belonging to one substance, nor specific identity, which, he says, reduces to similarity, but rather 'strict identity of quality.'

Strictly speaking, [to refer to identity] is to make reference to numerically one entity, a universal, the universal, e.g. redness, which the act of the perceived and the act of the perceiver just are. Consequently, to say that one material being perceives another material being is, on Thomistic principles, to imply that both beings quite literally share numerically one qualitative determination.\(^{257}\)

The specific question of the dissertation is: 'Does the notion of intentional identity provide adequate grounding for epistemological realism within the framework of contemporary Thomism's ontology?'\(^{258}\) Paul's conclusion is that it does not but he suggests some changes of metaphysics which would make the position tenable in his view. Unfortunately, for our purposes, Paul's analysis is of the positions of modern Thomists and in all he quotes Thomas himself only seven times. Nevertheless it has to be taken into account.

**Some Key Texts**

Before concluding this dissertation we will note some texts that will be crucial in answering the question raised. At this point, all we can do is give a text and a brief discussion of its significance. A full treatment would have to be the subject of another study.

That sensation involves a dimension beyond mere physical change is made clear by the dictum 'the act of any sense whatever is one and the same in subject with the act of the sensible, but reason


\(^{256}\) Ibid., pp. 439-46.


\(^{259}\) For a modern Thomist's explanation see Peifer, *Mystery of Knowledge*, pp. 65-69.


\(^{255}\) Ibid., p. 100.

\(^{255}\) Ibid., p. 15.
can consider them apart. Thomas is not saying that objects cease to exist when they are not known, nor that all the physical changes involved in sensation, viz., light, transference of heat, movement of air, etc., do not happen all the time. Thomas is extremely careful in referring always to the object of sensation as the sensible (sensibile). It is this that is brought into act only in sensation when it is assimilated to a sensing being, which, in turn, is actuated as a sensing being only by union with the sensible.

Underlying all this is the discussion of motion or change in Physics III, 3. Having defined motion as ‘the fulfillment of the moveable qua moveable, the cause of the attribute being contact with what can move (i.e. cause movement)” Aristotle goes on to explain a previous difficulty, namely, where does motion reside? He concludes that motion exists in what is moved, i.e. in the patient, and that the actuality which causes the motion is the same actuality which is possessed by the patient.

A thing is capable of causing motion because it can do this, it is a mover because it actually does it. But it is on the moveable that it is capable of acting. Hence there is a single actuality of both just as . . . the steep ascent and the steep descent are one . . . although they can be described in different ways.

Applied to sensing, this means, for instance in the case of hearing, that actual sounding as well as actual hearing remains as a potency in the hearer because these cannot be said to be actual sound until it is actually heard. Something vibrating is not necessarily actually sounding although it may be potentially sounding. The hearer is always in potency towards hearing but only actually hearing when receiving sound from something that is sounding. Actual sounding and actual hearing are, therefore, the one actuality although their definitions are different.

Thomas here stresses that only one object is sensed by many people but that the immutations, namely, species in the medium, by means of which they do this, are many.

Thomas conducts a similar discussion in De unitate intellectus on the role of intelligible species in intellectual knowledge. There he concludes that it is therefore one thing which is understood both by me and by you. But it is understood by me by one thing and by you another, that is, by another intelligible species. And my understanding is one thing, and yours another.

He gives an example of knowledge which is had both by a teacher and by a pupil.

Now from this it is clear in what way there is the same knowledge in the pupil and in the teacher. For it is the same in relation to the thing known, but not, however, in relation to the intelligible species by which each one knows. For in this respect knowledge is individuated in me and in him.

A second important text is found in Thomas’s commentary on De sensu et sensato. Aristotle has raised the objection that if different organs (i.e. organs in different subjects) sense, they cannot sense the same thing. Thomas admits a certain truth to the objection insofar as what immediately moves the senses is concerned. But he says that what first begins the movement is one. He concludes:

But that, which properly comes to each and every individual, is other in number, but is the same in species, because all change of this kind are caused by the same form of the first active principle. Whence at the same time many see and smell and hear the same sensible; it comes to them by means of diverse changes.

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Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation has been to raise the question of the kind of identity that exists between knower and known or, more strictly, between the form of the object and the informed knowing power. If one were simply to take the metaphysical doctrine which we unfolded in chapter two, one would be able to claim that the identity is of the strictest kind. However, the doctrine of species complicates the issue. Before any definitive answer can be reached, further study of this doctrine is necessary. The kinds of questions which will have to be answered are as follows.

What are the sources and histories of both the term species and the doctrine of distinct species? What are Thomas's reasons for requiring distinct intelligible species? How can one justify the twofold entitative and intentional role of species? How is the change of a form from physical or natural existence to intentional or spiritual existence to be accounted for? How can identity of form be preserved through many changes in the cognitive process? A resolution of our question will require resolution of problems at the heart of these questions.

doctore. Est enim eadem quantum ad rem scitam, non tamen quantum ad species intelligibles quibus uterque intelligit; quantum enim ad hoc, individuatur scientia in me et in illo.’ Zedler translation p. 70.

Andrew © Murray, Identity of Knower and Known, page 40.
The Term Species

It is not easy to translate the term *species*. According to Maritain ‘the word *species* has no equivalent in our modern languages.’ 266 For this and other reasons, we have retained the Latin term throughout the paper.

*Species* are Thomas's solution to the problem of identity between knower and known. It is clear that a *species* is some kind of form and that it is used by Thomas within the context of intentionality. (We exclude here *species* as used in the species/genus distinction, although ultimately the two have to be related.) Maritain suggests *representative form* as an adequate translation. 267 Bernardo Bazán prefers *representative form*. 268 *Species* is frequently translated by its English cognate *species*. Although this has the advantage of rendering the original text very precisely, historically it has caused much misunderstanding since the English term is rather ‘heavy’, Latinate and lacking in clear reference to form.

*Species* was a medieval Latin translation of the Greek εἴδος which, in this context, is generally translated into English as *form*. Cicero saw no difference in meaning between *forma* and *species*

Nolim enim, ne si Latine quidem dici possit, specierum et speciebus dicere; et saepe his casibus utendum est; at formis et formarum velim. Cum autem utroque possit, specierum neglegendum. 269

Thomas was familiar with the *Topics* which he quotes, for instance, in ST I-II 7, 1, arg. 1 but a statistical analysis of occurrences of the various forms of *forma* and *species* in the *Index Thomisticus* shows no evidence that he adhered to Cicero’s advice.

Augustine in a text that Thomas quotes affirmatively in *De veritate* 3, 1 and 3, 3 exhibits a similar flexibility. ‘Ideas igitur latine possumus vel formas vel species dicere, ut verbum e verbo transferre videamur.’ 270

A comparison between the Greek text of the *De anima*, 271 an older medieval Latin text which was translated from the Arabic and can be found with Averroes’ *Long Commentary*, 272 and the later medieval Latin translation made from the Greek by William of Moerbeke 273 is interesting. Four words occur in the Greek text which can be loosely translated by *forma*: εἴδος, ἴδεα, μορφή, and σχήμα. Σχήμα which occurs in five places 274 is translated without exception in the old Latin text 275 and by Moerbeke 276 as *figura*. Εἴδος occurs in fifteen places 277 Moerbeke translates it exclusively as *species*. 278 The old translation uses *forma* 279 in

266 Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 115.
267 Ibid. See also Peifer, *Mystery of Knowledge*, pp. 64-5.

APPENDIX

270 Augustine, *De diversibus quaestionibus* LXXXIII, n. XLVI. (PL 40:30).
274 *De anima* 404a 2-11, p. 5, 405a11, p. 8; 418b21, p. 32; 418a8, p. 41; 425a18, p. 58.
275 *Commentarium* pp. 27, 39, 173, 226, 331.
276 Moerbeke, pp. 10, 17, 73, 99, 141.
277 *De anima* 402b3, p. 2; 403b2, p. 4; 411b21, p. 25; 412a8, p. 25; 412a10, p. 26; 414a14, p. 30; 414a15, p. 30; 414a17, p. 30; 414b27, p. 32; 415b7, p. 34; 424a18, p. 56; 429a15, p. 69; 429a26-28, p. 70; 431b28-a3, p. 77; 432a5, p. 77.
278 Moerbeke, pp. 1, 6, 53, 57(2), 69(3), 73, 80, 137, 163(2), 186(2).
all but three cases. It uses *species* in the sense of genus and species in 402b3. It uses *modum* in a discussion of definition in 414b27. Finally, it uses *species* in the sense of a form which is an object of perception in 432a5. Iōνα occurs only once and is translated from the Arabic as *forma* and by Moerbeke as *idea*. The phrase *siōs* κάτι *μορφῆ* occurs three times in the *De anima*. It is in each case translated by *forma* in Moerbeke’s text but is, in the older text, translated variously as *formam et creaturam*, *forma* alone, and *forma et intendo*. As a result of this investigation we can see that in Moerbeke’s translation there is a one to one correspondence between Greek and Latin terms: *εἰδος* – *species*; *μορφῆ* – *forma*; *ιδέα* – *idea*, *οὐγόμα* – *figura*. The older translation through the Arabic is much looser so that *forma* can correspond to each of *εἰδος*, *μορφῆ* and *ιδέα*. What we seem to have, then, are two words, *forma* and *species*, which of themselves have much the same meaning but which in the Moerbeke translation have been given the precise technical meaning of being equivalents of Greek terms.

It may seem from this that *species* is best translated simply as *form* and certainly some of the mystery is taken out of the term. However, to do so would be to risk obscuring the fact that Thomas does build a specific epistemological doctrine around this term. Bazán brings this out in the article already cited by comparing Averroes’ notion of the *intellectum speculativum* with Thomas’s notion of the *species intelligibilis*. For Averroes “the *intellectum speculativum* is the object known, the form or *intendo* which actualizes the material intellect and which constitutes the *content* of the act of knowledge.” The same universal form is in the image of the imagination where it is obscured by individual determination so that it must be illuminated and abstracted by the agent intellect. Averroes does not have the notion of *species*. On the other hand, in Thomas’s doctrine the intelligible species is no longer the object of knowledge, but a representation or *similitudo*. As such, it is simply *that* by which we know the object, the object itself being a form or quiddity which *transcends* the modes of being that it assumes either in the thing, the image, or the *species*.

Contrasting the two positions Bazán says that Averroes’ realism is more immediate. In his account the form that gives both being and intelligibility to things is also present in the image under cover of individual characteristics and in the act of the material intellect by means of the illuminating and liberating act of the agent intellect.

The doctrine of *species*, on the other hand, gives ‘the impression of being a medium, a reduplication device.’

It is worthy of note that no doctrine of intelligible species distinct from the act of knowing itself is found in Aristotle nor in some of the more Aristotelian medieval authors such as Siger of Brabant or Godfrey of Fontaines.

An interesting aspect of Bazán’s article is that it shows how noetic considerations are influenced in this case by other questions. Thomas’s primary dispute with Averroes was on the unicity of the intellect. By replacing Averroes’ *intellectum speculativum* with his own *species intelligibilis* Thomas was able to explain how the intelligible object or essence absolutely considered could be one, although known by many men, without appealing to a single separate material intellect as had Averroes. This guaranteed to every man an intellective and immortal soul.

280 *Commentarium* pp. 22, 124, 129, 130, 163, 165(2), 183, 316, 381, 413, 503.
281 Ibid., p. 10.
282 Ibid., p. 173.
283 Ibid., p. 504.
284 *De anima* 404b20, p. 7.
285 *Commentarium* p. 33.
287 *De anima* 407b24, p. 15; 412a8, p. 25; 414a9, p. 30.
288 Moerbeke, pp. 30, 57, 69.
289 *Commentarium* pp. 74, 129, 163.
290 Bazán, ‘*Intellectum Speculativum*’ p. 432.
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Andrew © Murray, Identity of Knower and Known, page 46.