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ST. THOMAS, METAPHYSICS, AND FORMAL CAUSALITY

Lawrence DEWAN

I. THE PROBLEM OF THE CAUSES

AS we have elsewhere had occasion to remark, St. Thomas Aquinas' *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* can, if carefully controlled, provide precious indications of how a Thomistic metaphysics ought to be constructed.¹ In the present paper I wish to expose and to some degree explore one such indication. Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* 3, presents problems which the metaphysical inquirer ought to have in mind, so that in his thinking he will aim at a definite goal and thus will be able to see when the task has been truly accomplished.² The first problem presented is whether the consideration of the four types of cause pertains to one science or to many and diverse sciences. This question presupposes what had been said in the introductory books, namely that the sought-after science of wisdom would be knowledge of the first and highest causes. St. Thomas also relates it to the last words of Book 2, which raise the same issue. And this, says St. Thomas, is to ask whether it belongs to one science, and especially to this one, to demonstrate by means of all the causes, or rather is it the case that diverse sciences demonstrate from diverse types of cause. St. Thomas sees this problem raised in first place because it deals with the very method³ of the science itself. Aristotle had said in Book 2 that before undertaking to learn a science, one ought to be clear about its method.⁴

After giving a list of the problems, Aristotle undertakes to spell them out as problems one by one. Our question, on the method of the science, is discussed by St. Thomas in *lectio* 4. St. Thomas, in all his discussions of the problems of Book 3,

1. Cf. my article, "Being *per se*, Being *per accidens* and St. Thomas' *Metaphysics*", *Science et Esprit* 30 (1978) 169-184.

Henceforth we will refer to St. Thomas' *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* as "CM", citing book, *lectio*, and the paragraph number from the Cathala-Spiazzi edition, Rome/Turin, 1950: Marietti.

2. Cf. CM 3.1 (340-341) and ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.* 3.1 (995a34-b2).

3. The Latin word is "*modus*". I use "method" somewhat reluctantly to translate this word. Method, as involving the notion of pathway, would be more the "*ordo*" of the science. *Modus* is a more qualitative conception.

4. CM 3.2 (346).

concludes each one with a brief statement of the solution eventually taught by Aristotle later in the *Metaphysics*. Needless to say, these brief presentations of the Aristotelian conclusions make most interesting reading. However, the presentation as regards the first problem is of special interest because St. Thomas tells us that Aristotle never expressly answers it. He says one can gather the answer from what Aristotle says in various places, and he proceeds to explain what he has gathered to be the answer:

“For he determines in Book 4 that this science considers *ens* inasmuch as it is *ens*: and so it belongs to it to consider the primary substances, and not to natural science, because above mobile substance there are other substances. But every substance either is *ens* through itself, if it is form alone, or else, if it is composed out of matter and form, it is *ens* through its own form; hence, inasmuch as this science undertakes to consider *ens*, it considers most of all the formal cause. But the primary substances are not known by us in such a way that we know about them what they are, as can in a way be had from those things which are determined in Book 9: and thus in the knowledge of them the formal cause has no place. But though they are immobile according to themselves, nevertheless they are the cause of motion of other things after the manner of an end; and therefore, to this science, inasmuch as it undertakes to consider the primary substances, it especially pertains to consider the final cause, and also in a way the moving cause. But [it pertains to it to consider] the material cause, according to itself, in no way, because matter is not universally⁵ a cause of *ens*, but rather of some determinate kind, i.e. mobile substance. But such causes pertain to the consideration of the particular sciences, except perhaps that they are considered by this science inasmuch as they are contained under *ens*. For in that way its consideration extends to all things.⁶

This then is the basic statement from which we take our start. In order to bring out its decisive features, we will note our disagreement with the discussion of it found in James C. Doig’s book, *Aquinas on Metaphysics*.⁷ Doig discusses it principally in his comparison of the doctrine of St. Thomas in *CM* 4.1, on metaphysics as the study of *ens* inasmuch as it is *ens*, with what Avicenna, Averroes and St. Albert had taught.⁸ Since both Averroes and Albert had looked on the doctrine of Aristotle at this point as a reply to the first problem posed in Book 3, Doig is led to speak of it. But since, in *CM* 4.1, St. Thomas makes no reference whatsoever to this issue, Doig is obliged to look back to where St. Thomas treats it, viz in Book 3.

Doig presents Averroes as saying that metaphysics treats of the formal and final causes only (p. 127). He then presents Albert as saying the same thing (p. 128), on the

5. The text reads “*convenienter*”, i.e. suitably. I am conjecturing the reading: “*communiter*”, i.e. universally.

Concerning this doctrine about the limited, particular nature of matter’s causality, cf. ST. THOMAS, *De substantiis separatis*, c. 7 (Leonine ed., lines 91–102).

6. *CM* 3.4 (384). For “*ens*” (that which is), we retain the Latin.

7. James C. DOIG, *Aquinas on Metaphysics*, The Hague, 1972: Martinus Nijhoff. We will make references to this work in the body of our text, by page.

8. It is to be noted that in his *ex professo* review of *CM* 4.1, Doig (pp. 102–110) omits all mention of St. Thomas’ paragraphs 540–543, on the reduction of all the things Aristotle has mentioned to four modes of being [*modi essendi*]. One would have thought this would have some importance.

basis of Albert's *Metaphysica* 4, tr. 1. However, he notes that Albert also attributes to metaphysics the study of the efficient and material causes as well; this is inasmuch as metaphysics studies all beings (among which are efficient and material causes) (p. 129, using texts from Albert, *Metaph.* 3, tr. 2).

Doig goes on to contrast St. Thomas with these positions. He says that, in his presentation of *CM* 4.1, he has already mentioned that Thomas earlier in *CM* "explained that metaphysics studies all four causes" (p. 129). Now he turns to *CM* 3.4, St. Thomas' *ex professo* treatment of Aristotle's first problem. Doig stresses the importance of the question at issue:

"Obviously, the answer given to the difficulty will completely determine the science of metaphysics: the object, the method, the relationship to the other sciences — all is affected." (p. 130)

He points out that Aristotle has given no answer in Book 3, but he never alludes to the fact that, for St. Thomas, Aristotle *never* explicitly answers the question. St. Thomas says he has been able to gather a solution from doctrines in various parts of the *Metaphysics*.⁹ Doig speaks about how elaborate St. Thomas' treatment is, but when he comes to tell us what the doctrine is, he says:

"As Albert, so Thomas too says that all four causes are studied. As both Averroes and Albert, Thomas says that to study being as such means above all to study the formal cause; yet unlike his predecessors, Thomas does not hold that one studies especially form because the form is the principle of our knowledge; rather one studies form because beings have their perfection from the formal cause... And finally, Thomas parts company with Averroes, but joins Albert, in nothing [read: noting]¹⁰ that metaphysics studies the material cause due to the fact that some beings are material." (p. 131)

As he goes on, Doig examines the merits of Albert's and Thomas' diverse reasons for metaphysics' study of the formal cause. He says that Thomas' reason goes deeper than Albert's (which is supposed to be that the knowledge of the formal cause gives us the greatest knowledge of a thing), implicitly explaining Albert's reason. Thus, Doig continues:

"... because the form of a thing is the source of what the thing is. Thus Thomas says, we study the formal cause of being as such. As Thomas indicates, Book Γ (IV) explains that it is the metaphysician who studies being as such, and not the natural philosopher, since some beings are not natural, that is not material. Now it would follow from this — and this is Thomas' point — that to study what all beings have in common is to study the formal cause... only by studying what is common to all substances (namely form) can one study being as such." (pp. 132-133)¹¹

⁹. *CM* 3.4 (384). Doig (p. 132, n. 3) does quote the Latin text as part of a larger whole.

¹⁰. Doig's book abounds in scribal errors.

¹¹. Doig postpones (at p. 134) his remarks on the efficient and material causes, and the reasons given by St. Albert and St. Thomas concerning them, until his ch. V. Concerning the efficient cause, cf. pp. 202-210. At p. 202 Doig asks: "As a philosopher did Albert prove God was cause of being?" He does not refer to, and seems entirely unaware of, Albert, *Metaphysica*, bk. 5, tr. 1, c. 3 (ed. Cologne 16/1, p. 213, lines 60-75), where there is a proof of the first efficient (and creative)

In his resumé (pp. 139-140) Doig unites the materials from *CM* 3.4 and 4.1. He says:

“Metaphysics studies all four causes: the formal cause because the form is the source of a thing’s perfection; the final cause, because first substances are to be studied and they are the final causes of other beings; the efficient cause, again because one studies first substances; the material cause, because some beings are material.”

The first thing to be noted (we intend to speak only of St. Thomas and St. Albert, not of Averroes) is that in treating of this first Aristotelian problem, Doig has failed to use the *third* tractate of Albert’s *Metaphysica* 3. In tr. 2, used by Doig, Albert presents a first discussion of the problems. Tr. 3 is a second, more ample treatment of the same problems, and is written entirely in the “digressive” mode, i.e. dispenses with the paraphrase format in favour of a more comprehensive discussion.¹²

In tr. 3, the first chapter is on the first problem. In the course of presenting the difficulty, Albert introduces the opinion of Avicenna that cause and caused are a division proper to *ens*, and so belong properly to the first philosopher: and so Avicenna says that the knowledge concerning all the causes belongs *only* to the first philosopher.¹³

Albert further wonders why Aristotle, in Book 1, first inquired into the number and sorts of cause, and then, in Book 2, showed that they were finite, and now here asks whether all this is really his task or not. The implication is that the question must have something else in mind than the study of *causes as beings*.

Albert accordingly judges “without prejudice to a better opinion” that the knowledge of causes can be inquired into by one same science in three ways: (1) as something sought and eventually concluded to (we may suppose, as in Book 1), and (2) as part of the subject, or the subject, concerning which something is concluded (we may suppose, as in Book 2, where it was shown that the causes are finite), and (3) as a means or principle, through which one concludes that which one concludes concerning the subject or part of it. Now, says Albert, in this present question, we are not asking about the causes in the first or second way, though Avicenna’s argument seems to suggest that we are. Here, the issue is solely about the third way. Albert says that this was the way he treated it earlier, in tr. 2, in accordance with Aristotle’s own intention.¹⁴

cause of being, prior to all moving causality (the whole of 213.33–214.56 should be noted). Doig (p. 202), in beginning his own reply to his question, says of Albert: “If he did, he has certainly left no trace of his proof in his exposition of Book Λ ”. This does not seem correct. At bk. 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (ed. Cologne, 16/2, 482.39–71), on Aristotle at 1071b4–6, Albert takes the single sentence of Aristotle as a complete argument and spells it out, just in itself. This is not an argument from motion, but from substance, generation and corruption. And it seems to prove a cause of being. Cf. also our forthcoming paper, “The Distinctiveness of St. Thomas’ Third Way”, to be published in *Dialogue*.

12. Cf. ALBERT, *Metaphysica*, bk. 3, tr. 3, c. 1 (ed. Cologne, 16/1, 138.7–16).

13. That the study of causality as such is proper to the metaphysician is taught by St. Thomas, *In Phys.* 2.5 (ed. Maggìolo, Rome/Turin, 1954: Marietti, #177).

14. Cf. ALBERT, *Metaphysica*, bk. 3, tr. 3, c. 1: in *ed. cit.*, concerning Avicenna, cf. 138.66–72; on Aristotle’s order of procedure, cf. 139.1–9; on the three ways, cf. 139.10–23.

In his ultimate resolution of the problem, Albert says that since the mathematician considers things conceived with matter according to being [*esse*] and separate from matter according to notion [*ratio*], and the efficient and final causes are causes of *esse* rather than of *ratio*, neither the efficient nor the final cause is used in mathematics. But in metaphysics [*in divinis*] there is consideration especially of *esse*, and the principles of *esse* are prior to *esse mobile*, and all the kinds of cause are principles of *esse*. Thus, the metaphysician demonstrates through all the kinds of cause. Though the cause “whence motion” and the matter and the end seem to be principles of the mobile as mobile, nevertheless there is an immobile cause “whence motion”; and there is a matter not determined through the subject of change and motion, but rather through this, that it itself is constituting the foundation of that which is [*fundans ens*], and individuating and standing under entity [*individuans et substans entitati*]: and these roles are prior to the subject of motion, since only that which is founded [*fundatum*] and an individual and something standing under is subject to change and motion, but the converse is not true, i.e. that every founded and individuated thing, every intrinsically substantive thing [*substans in seipso*], is subject to change and motion. And Albert continues by presenting the properly metaphysical conception of the final cause.¹⁵

Thus, Albert has made the genuine meaning of the question: what kinds of cause does the metaphysician use in order to demonstrate his conclusions. And to the question as so understood, he gives as the proper answer: all four causes. And he has provided this answer by presenting properly metaphysical modes of all four causes. Whereas in the earlier presentation, in tr. 2, he brought in the material cause through using what he has in tr. 3 described as the first two ways of understanding the question,¹⁶ here in tr. 3 he brings matter in in the way that the question is really meant.¹⁷

We are now in a position to appreciate St. Thomas’ treatment of the problem. The first thing to determine is how he understands the problem. And he is quite explicit from the start:

“Therefore he [Aristotle] says that the first query is... whether the consideration of the four causes, according to the four kinds, pertains to one science, or to

15. *Ibid.*, 139.65–96.

16. Cf. *Ibid.*, bk. 3, tr. 2, c. 1 (ed. Cologne 16/1, 113.58–65). Albert uses the language of Avicenna here.

17. Cf. nevertheless Albert at bk. 3, tr. 3, c. 2. The problem is, in part, if both the physicist and the metaphysician demonstrate with all the causes, will not both have equal right to the title: “wise man”? The answer is that the metaphysician is the wise man. He *primarily* demonstrates with the ultimate end and the first formal substance and quiddity. And we read: “And though first philosophy demonstrates through the cause which is moving principle, nevertheless it then considers the first unmoved mover, which, through its own form which it has substantially within itself, acting towards form, makes substance known: as one knows the house from the form of the housebuilder as housebuilder, and the healthy [man] from the form of the healing doctor, as healer. — And if it uses matter in demonstrating, again it invokes it as related through proportion to form, which is in it [matter] confusedly, because otherwise it would not be a principle of knowing something. And thus it is clear how the first philosopher relates use of the mover and matter to the form and the end...” (ed. Cologne, 16/1, 141.47–59).

many and diverse. And this is to ask whether it belongs to one science, and especially to this one, to demonstrate from all the causes, or rather do diverse sciences demonstrate from diverse causes.”¹⁸

Again, at the beginning of the *lectio* in which he discusses the argumentative treatment of the problem, he says:

“First he [Aristotle] argues concerning the consideration of this science, as to the causes through which it is demonstrated.”¹⁹

Accordingly, St. Thomas’ presentation of what he has gathered together and constructed as “Aristotle’s answer” is to be read in the light of his quite definite understanding of the question. Thus, we cannot accept Doig’s judgment that “as Albert, so Thomas says that all four causes are studied” (p. 131). What we read in St. Thomas is:

“Causam autem materialem secundum seipsam *nullo modo*...”²⁰

The science of metaphysics considers the material cause, as such, in no way. The reason is that matter is not universally²¹ a cause of *ens*, but is a cause of some determinate genus, namely mobile substance. Such causes pertain to particular sciences, not to metaphysics.

Following this, in the text of St. Thomas, comes the “*nisi forte*” remark. Of course, one can say that such causes, i.e. particular causes, are considered by this science inasmuch as they are contained under *ens*: in that way, metaphysics talks about all things.

This last remark is clearly outside the proper mode of the question — i.e. by what causes does the metaphysician demonstrate? We have dropped into the Avicennian (or an even more remote) treatment of the question.

What emerges here is quite a definite opposition between St. Thomas and St. Albert. Both are very clear on the sense of the question. St. Albert provides a notion of a strictly metaphysical material cause. St. Thomas quite definitely refuses to accept it. Albert proposes a matter prior to the subject of change, a cause of *esse*. St. Thomas will have none of it.

Now what about Doig’s treatment of St. Thomas and St. Albert on the formal cause? First, we might note that St. Albert does not limit himself to saying that the formal cause is primary because it is the principle of knowledge. He says that the reason for it being principle of knowledge is that it is the principle of substance as substance, and of “*ens in eo quod ens*”.²² Albert says he himself has often said this, and one of the places to which we are referred by the editor shows us Albert, in the very act of paraphrasing Aristotle, including the reason why form gives more knowledge, viz:

18. *CM* 3.2 (346).

19. *CM* 3.4 (369).

20. *CM* 3.4 (384).

21. Cf. above, n. 5.

22. ALBERT, *Metaphysica*, bk. 3, tr. 2, c. 1 (ed. Cologne 16/1, 113.54–56).

“For though someone may know the same thing in many ways, we say indeed that he more fully knows who through demonstration says that thing in its own formal *esse*, what the thing itself is according to substance, which is the ‘what’ and the ‘on account of what’, than he who does not know such substantial *esse* of the thing.”²³

Doig at least once uses the following formula to express what he sees as the deeper reason stated by St. Thomas for the study of form in metaphysics: “... because the form is the source of what the thing is.” (p. 132) Now, this is very close to Albert as quoted above.

Indeed, what one might wonder about in Doig’s presentation is the way he treats St. Thomas. He constantly *paraphrases* St. Thomas on the reason for the study of form in metaphysics; thus, “one studies form because beings have *their perfection* from the formal cause” (p. 131); “because the form is the source of *what a thing is*. Thus Thomas says, we study the formal cause of being as such” (132);²⁴ “because the form is the source of a thing’s *perfection*” (p. 140, also p. 335).

Let us look at what St. Thomas says. He begins his gathering of Aristotle’s position by a reference to Book 4:

“For he determines in Book 4 that this science considers *ens* inasmuch as it is *ens*: and so it belongs to it to consider the primary substances, and not to natural science, since above mobile substance there are other substances.”²⁵

Here, then, we have metaphysics and “two things” to consider, so to speak, viz *ens* and primary substances.

Next, St. Thomas settles the question of the cause used to demonstrate, as regards the consideration of *ens*:

“But every substance either is *ens* through itself, if it is form alone, or else, if it is composed out of matter and form, it is *ens* through its form; hence, inasmuch as this science undertakes to consider *ens*, it considers most of all the formal cause.”²⁶

St. Thomas gives no reference here, probably because it is too clear that this is the doctrine of Books 7 and 8.²⁷

The argument of St. Thomas is clear also. The cause (hence the repeated use of “through” [per]) of *ens* is *form*: i.e. if a thing itself is *form*, then it is *ens through* itself,

23. *Ibid.* (113.27–31).

24. What St. Thomas says is that every substance is *ens* through form, i.e. form is the cause of *ens*. I call it “paraphrasing” to say “form is cause of *what a thing is*”. Doig does immediately add: “we study the formal cause of being as such”, and if he takes this as the *primary* statement of St. Thomas, he is right. But his “thus” makes it look as though form is cause of *ens* because form is cause of what a thing is. This is not true. Rather, form is cause of what a thing is because form is cause of *ens*.

25. *CM* 3.4 (384).

26. *Ibid.*

27. Cf. especially ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.* 7.17 (1041b25–28) and 8.2 (1043a1–12), as regards the causality of form in composite substances; and 8.6 (1045a36–b7) (cf. *CM* 8.5: 1762–1764), as regards the role of form in substances which are form alone.

and if a thing is a composite of matter and form, then it is *ens through form*. Thus, a survey of the modes of *ens* (simple and composite) reveals the universal *causality* of form vis-à-vis *ens*.²⁸

Doig's account of this passage (quoted above, p. 287, end n. 11) I find inadequate. St. Thomas is not speaking about the mere *community* of form (".. what is common to all substances...") but about the community of form's *causal* role vis-à-vis *ens* inasmuch as it is *ens*.

Thus, two features of Doig's presentation here seem objectionable: (a) he loses sight of the importance of the notion of cause in his account of St. Thomas' solution, and (b) he substitutes some other item for St. Thomas' "*ens*". St. Thomas does not say in the solution that form is cause or source of a thing's *perfection*, or of *what the thing is*. He says that the form is the cause of *ens*.

It is our intention in the rest of this paper to follow out to some extent this doctrine of metaphysics as using the formal cause especially, insofar as metaphysics is *considerativa entis*: as this can be seen in *CM* 7 and 8. But before leaving the solution to the first problem, let us note the brief remarks made about the final and moving causes St. Thomas (see the text as quoted above, p. 286), having dealt with metaphysics as *considerativa entis*, then directs his attention to the other target of metaphysical investigation established in Book 4, namely the primary substances: and the point is that we cannot know them in such a way as to know what they are. He says that this is had *in a way* [*aliqua liter*] from Book 9.²⁹ Going on to say, then, that accordingly formal causality has no place in metaphysics as it undertakes to consider the primary substances [*considerativa primarum substantiarum*], St. Thomas puts the main insistence on the final cause of motion, just as one finds in Aristotle's Book 12, though once again St. Thomas does not bother to give a reference.³⁰ The addition concerning the moving cause "in a way" [*aliqua liter causam moventem*] could hardly be more cryptic.³¹

It is clear enough from what we have seen that St. Thomas' position is that metaphysics makes no use of the material cause for demonstration, and that as *considerativa entis* metaphysics is primarily knowledge through *formal causality*. This at any rate is St. Thomas' interpretation of Aristotle. One would expect, then, that

28. If this picture contains any difficulty (and I do not consider it a major difficulty), it is in the notion of the "through itself", which gives a cause-effect or dual schema to what is one. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *Summa theologiae* 1.39.2.ad 5: the formal cause as such does not imply diversity of cause and effect.

29. One would think St. Thomas must mean ca. 9.10 (1051b17-1052a11), but in his comments on this, at *CM* 9.11 (1904-1919), one would gather more that we *do* know the *quod quid est* of simple substances. Cf. 1905: "Quicumque enim non attingit ad quod quid est rei simplicis, penitus ignorat ipsam..." (and cf. 1915); 1916: "... patet quod secundum sententiam Aristotelis humanus intellectus potest pertinere ad intelligendum substantias simplices..." (cf. also 1912: "sed oportet ut intelligantur si mente attingantur...").

30. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.* 12.7 (1072a26-30); and *CM* 12.7 (2519-2522 and 2528).

31. St. Thomas is here probably hinting at creative causality. The sliding from the moving cause to the divine mode of agency is a subtle process: cf. e.g. *CM* 7.17 (1660-1661).

this view of Aristotle's metaphysics would be readily apparent in St. Thomas' reading of *Metaphysics* 7 and 8, in which *ens* is considered as divided by the categories.³² Our aim, then, in what follows is to consider *CM* 7 and 8 from this point of view.

II. THE PROCEDURE IN BOOKS 7 AND 8

Questions of order are very important for St. Thomas.³³ Here in *CM*, if we ask for the order of Books 7 and 8, we find quite a definite approach different from that of, e.g., Albert the Great.³⁴ The point of doctrine which St. Thomas exploits to the maximum in presenting Books 7 and 8 is the distinction between the merely logical mode of consideration, and the mode of consideration which penetrates to the *proper* principles of things: let us call the latter the "philosophical" or even the "existential" consideration.³⁵ Thus, if we look at the introduction to Book 8, we read:

"After the Philosopher has determined in Book 7 concerning substance, in the logical mode, i.e. considering the definition, and the parts of the definition, and other such things which are considered according to reason [*secundum rationem*: following reason, or in the *domain* of reason], in this Book 8 he intends to determine concerning sensible substances through proper principles [*per propria principia*: through the *things' own* principles], applying what were inquired above logically to those substances."³⁶

This is St. Thomas' general picture, one which he takes the trouble to repeat in the very same paragraph when he begins the word by word paraphrase of Aristotle. Thus, he says:

"Therefore, he [Aristotle] says, firstly, that since many things have been said in Book 7, according to logical consideration, about substance, *it is necessary to syllogize from those things which have been said*, so that what have been said according to logical consideration will be applied to existing natural things."³⁷

32. *CM* 7.1 (1245-1246 and cf. 1269). We by no means wish to neglect Book 9, but we are inclined to think it belongs to a more comparative, less absolute, mode of consideration of *ens*, one already pointing us towards the primary substances. Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In Phys.* 2.10 (ed. Maggìolo, #240) as well as *CM* 5.9 (889). For an indication of the importance of Book 9 in St. Thomas' metaphysical schema, see our paper, "The Number and Order of St. Thomas' Five Ways", *Downside Review* 92 (1974), especially pp. 11-17.

33. Cf. our just mentioned paper, at p. 1. Also of interest in this regard are the remarks of St. Albert, *Metaphysica*, bk. 3, tr. 3, c. 1 (ed. Cologne 16/1, 139.1-9), concerning the order to be found (or not found) in Aristotle's procedure: who should be more orderly than the wise man? Doig, p. 240, speaking of "the numerous explanations of the connection between the various books, and even of the connections between the parts of individual books", judges that "points concerning method made in this regard are of little use in an attempt to grasp the metaphysics at work in Aquinas' mind when he wrote." The reader will see by our procedure how strongly we disagree with this.

34. Cf. below, n. 89 concerning St. Albert's opinion.

35. Such nomenclature is justified by the way St. Thomas speaks at, e.g., *CM* 7.17 (1658).

36. *CM* 8.1 (1681).

37. *Ibid.*

The words we have underlined represent what St. Thomas is working with in Aristotle. One can see that St. Thomas is taking it upon himself to contrast the two books on the basis of the modes of consideration.³⁸

This contrast is carried over into what comes next in Book 8, namely Aristotle's review of what has been seen about substance and his proposal of what remains to be seen. St. Thomas divides Aristotle's presentation of substances so that Aristotle is first speaking about "substances existing in reality" [*quae dicuntur substantiae in rerum natura existentes*].³⁹ Some of these all admit, viz sensible substances. Some are proposed by a few people, viz the Platonic Ideas and the mathematical. The other division of substance is "according to the viewpoint of the notion" [*secundum rationis acceptionem*].⁴⁰ One of these is the quiddity or "what it is" of the natural thing. The other is the substance in the doctrine that genus is more a substance than species, universal more than singular (which doctrine ties in with the argument concerning the Ideas).

This division having been made, St. Thomas understands Aristotle's statement of what has been done and what remains to be done in accordance with it. In Book 7 we have had the complete discussion concerning substance and notions [*de rationibus et de substantia*], i.e. the quiddity has been discussed, and the universal has been shown not to be substance. It remains to discuss substances existing in reality [*substantias... quae in rerum natura existunt*].⁴¹ The ones posited by a few will be discussed in the last books (13 and 14, presumably). Now (in the present Book 8), we will discuss those substances which all admit are, i.e. the sensible ones [*quas omnes confitentur esse*; ⁴² this is *esse* as *in rerum natura subsistere*].⁴³

Enough has been said to show the importance of this distinction between logical and concrete or existential consideration for the *Metaphysics* as read by St. Thomas. Let us now look at the way St. Thomas uses the distinction in various stages of *CM* 7 and 8. We should note first of all that St. Thomas had already announced that he understood the distinction between 7 and 8 in the way we have just seen. He did so at 7.3, in explaining for the first time the order of procedure in treating of sensible substances. He says:

38. It need hardly be said that our procedure of underlining the words of Aristotle in St. Thomas' paraphrase is highly approximative. Nevertheless, it serves to give the general picture of the commentator at work.

The words I have underlined represent what St. Thomas is working with in Aristotle, with the exception of the word "*itaque*" in "*Ex his itaque dictis syllogizare oportet*" (at #691, in the Latin Aristotle of the Cathala-Spiazzi edition of *CM*). That this word was actually in St. Thomas' text seems indicated by the rubrics at *CM* 7.3 (1306). I mention this word only because it is barely conceivable that St. Thomas is giving it the sense of "*ita*": "From the things *so* said..." This would be an opening to introduce the theme of the diverse modes of speaking and considering, as distinguishing the two books.

39. *CM* 8.1 (1683).

40. *CM* 8.1 (1684).

41. *CM* 8.1 (1685).

42. *Ibid.*

43. *CM* 8.1 (1683). Henceforth, we will sometimes make references to *CM* directly in the text.

“... it is divided into two parts. In the first he determines concerning the essence of sensible substances by means of logical and common notions [*per rationes logicas et communes*]. In the second part, through the principles of sensible substances, in Book 8, where it says: ‘Ex his itaque dictis syllogizare oportet.’”⁴⁴

Now, here, St. Thomas divides Book 7 (i.e. the remaining larger part, for he is now at Aristotle’s 7.4) into two parts:

“The first part is divided into two. In the first he shows us of what sort is the essence of sensible substances. In the second, he shows that this sort of essence has the role [*ratio*] of principle and cause, there [where it says] ‘Quod autem oportet’”.⁴⁵

Thus St. Thomas sees Aristotle’s 7.17, corresponding to his own *lectio* 17, the last *lectio* of the book, as a distinct step in Book 7.

And indeed, if we look at the beginning of *lectio* 17, we find a most interesting assessment of what has already been done and of what there remains for Aristotle to do. St. Thomas says:

“The Philosopher, in the beginning of this Book 7, was promising that he would treat of [that] substance of sensible things which is the ‘what is being’ [*quod quid erat esse*],⁴⁶ which he made known logically [*logice notificavit*], showing that those things which are predicated by virtue of themselves [*per se*] pertain to the ‘what the thing is’ [*quod quid est*]: from which [procedure] it was not yet manifest what is the substance which is *quod quid erat esse*. Now, this substance the Platonists said was the universals, which are separated species: which Aristotle disproved immediately above. Thus, it remained, that the Philosopher himself show what in reality [*secundum rem*] is the substance, which is *quod quid erat esse*. And with a view to showing this, he lays down as a preliminary [*praemittit*] that the substance, which is *quod quid erat esse*, has the role of principle and cause: and that is the intention of this chapter.”⁴⁷

Here, then, once more, we have the characterization of Book 7’s treatment, and most explicitly of its positive part, as a logical presentation. And it is made perfectly clear that St. Thomas regards what Aristotle has so far done as falling short of *knowledge of the real*. The chapter 17 itself is assigned the doctrine that the substance as *quod quid erat esse* is a principle and a cause, just as St. Thomas said in 7.3 (1306). And we see that this is regarded as a kind of preliminary point, preparatory for the treatment of the *reality* of quidditative substance.

But there is more here which pertains to our study, in the word-by-word presentation of Aristotle. St. Thomas says:

44. *CM* 7.3 (1306). On the significance of the word “principles” in this statement, cf. below, pp.312–315.

45. The text of Aristotle, as commented upon by St. Thomas, at 7.17 (1648) actually has “*quid*”, not “*quod*”.

46. We will generally leave in Latin this Aristotelian formula. On its Aristotelian sense, cf. J. OWENS, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Toronto, 1963 (2nd ed.): *Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies*, pp. 180–188.

47. *CM* 7.17 (1648).

“He therefore says firstly that now that it has been shown that nothing of things said universally is substance, as the Platonists held, *let us say what in truth must be called ‘substance’*, viz which is quod quid erat esse, and of what sort this substance is: whether, that is, it is form, or matter, or something like that; and this, I say, let us say *inserting* or announcing, *as it were*, a *starting-point other* than that logical starting-point, by which we entered, at the beginning of Book 7, into the investigation of the aforesaid substance... And he adds what that other starting-point is by which one is to enter into the proposed inquiry, saying that *from here one is to proceed* towards the manifestation of the aforementioned substance, that we know that in the *substance* itself there is [or: it is] some *principle and some cause*.”⁴⁸

Here we see that the new starting-point is not regarded as logical, and that its positive content is that *in* the substance (the composite, apparently), it (the reality which is, or which lies behind, the quiddity) is a principle and a cause. One can see to what extent St. Thomas’ procedure constitutes a definite interpretation by considering that for St. Albert, at this point, not only has chapter 17 been treated as part of the treatise on substance as non-universal (although as a kind of return to the truth at the end of it),⁴⁹ but we read this:

“Therefore, let us begin by saying that, certainly, of the composite sensible substance, which is the ‘this something’, there is some principle and some cause which is the quiddity of it. And though we showed this above through the definition, nevertheless now, in order that the doctrine be more certain, we will show the same thing through the natural question about anything whatsoever, and these two manifestations are logical. Hence, therefore, it will be clear that such substances have some substance [as] principle and cause.”⁵⁰

Albert has favoured the “*iterum*” in Aristotle’s text,⁵¹ thus understanding that the quiddity has *already* been shown *as principle and cause*. And while he says this was done by means of the definition, he regards the novelty of the present moment, not as the very doctrine of “cause and principle”, as in St. Thomas, but in the technique of using the doctrine of natural questions. Moreover, almost as if he meant to contradict the text of St. Thomas’ *CM*, he says that this second approach, like the first, is *logical*.⁵²

Turning back to St. Thomas, we have now seen that for him Book 7 differs from Book 8 in that the former uses logical consideration while the latter treats of the

48. *Ibid.* The underlining represents the text of Aristotle.

It is to be noted that Doig, who gives much prominence to “the logical method” in his reconstruction of St. Thomas’ metaphysics (cf. e.g. pp. 306–311), never cites or refers to this paragraph of *CM*.

49. Cf. ALBERT, *Metaphysica*, bk. 7, tr. 5, c. 8 (ed. Cologne 16/2, 383.73–384.3).

50. *Ibid.*, 384.10–20.

51. The Latin of Aristotle at 1041a6, in the Cologne ed. of Albert, 383.82, reads: “Quid autem oportet dicere et quale quid substantiam, *iterum*, aliud tamquam principium facientes, dicimus...” The word “*iterum*” does not figure in Albert’s paraphrase, but it seems to be reflected in the idea that the doctrine has already been taught.

52. We presume that Albert’s *Metaphysica* was written not much later than 1262–1263 (cf. B. GEYER, in ed. Cologne 16/1, p. VIII), and thus antedates *CM* in all probability (Cf. J. A. WEISHEIPL, *Friar Thomas D’Aquino*, Garden City, N.Y., 1974: Doubleday, 379).

principles proper to existing substances. And we have seen that 7.17 marks a transition to the new mode of consideration, seemingly by shifting the approach from definition to causality. However, we must now look further at Book 7, for while globally we can say it employs logical consideration, this is not the whole story for St. Thomas.

The most telling passage for the study of the situation is *CM* 7.11 (1535-1536). Aristotle, at an earlier point in Book 7, had concluded that the quiddity, and the thing whose quiddity it is, are identical, and even notionally identical. Non-identity of these means that one is faced with mere *ens per accidens*.⁵³ However, now, at *Metaph.* 7.11 (1037a33-b7), Aristotle says that things which include matter do not have identity of quiddity and thing. In explaining this change of doctrine, St. Thomas says that the earlier doctrine was true for the logical consideration of *quod quid erat esse*. Here, at 7.11, Aristotle has “descended to the natural principles which are the matter and the form, and showed how they are diversely related to the universal, and to the particular which subsists in nature”. And so, explains St. Thomas, Aristotle excludes from his previous judgment of identity of quiddity and thing “material substances existing in reality” [*substantias materiales in rerum natura existentes*].⁵⁴

From this, we can see that Book 7, though for St. Thomas it is dominated by the logical consideration, is not entirely uniform, but involves the introduction of the *real principles of things* (matter and form) as well.

Let us now examine the procedure of “logical consideration”, together with some statements of St. Thomas about it, to get a better idea of what is meant. We should begin with *CM* 7.3 (1308-1309). Paraphrasing Aristotle, St. Thomas says:

“He says firstly that one must speak first of sensible substances, and *quod quid erat esse* must be shown first in them: *therefore, first we will say some things logically about that which is quod quid erat esse*. For, as was said above, this science has some affinity with logic, because of the generality of both. And so the logical mode is proper to this science, and from it it fittingly begins. But he says he is going to speak more in a logical way about the ‘what the thing is’, inasmuch as he investigates what *quod quid erat esse* is, starting from the mode of predicating [*ex modo praedicandi*]; for this properly pertains to logic.”⁵⁵

If we look back at *CM* 4.4 (572-577), concerning Aristotle, *Metaph.* 4.2 (1004b17-26), we are told, in quite a long development by St. Thomas, that the dialectician and the philosopher cover the same field, but that the dialectician does so with less than scientific knowledge, treating things on the basis of their existence in notions, and not on the basis of the principles intrinsic to things themselves. The reason that the two cover the same field is that the intelligible roles [*intentiones intelligibiles*] which the dialectician studies coincide in extent with the beings of nature [*entia naturae*] which the philosopher studies, because all the beings of nature fall under the consideration

53. Cf. our paper concerning this notion, mentioned in n. 1.

54. *CM* 7.11 (1536).

55. The underlined words, except for the first and last instances of “*quod quid erat esse*” represent the text of Aristotle.

of reason. Examples of the intelligible roles are genus and species. St. Thomas explains that dialectic, called “tentative” by Aristotle, does have a demonstrative phase, i.e. it has a science of the use of intelligible roles for arriving at probable conclusions about the real. However, use of this science, as it takes place in the sciences of the real, is probable, not demonstrative, procedure: it is not scientific knowledge of the real.⁵⁶

It is clear, then, that in metaphysics, to the extent that we have genuinely to do with the use of logical consideration, while we have what St. Thomas calls a way of beginning particularly suitable for metaphysics, we do not have scientific metaphysical procedure.⁵⁷

Now let us consider the actual use of the logical consideration which begins the metaphysical study of substance as quiddity. We might remark that, in *CM* 7.3 (1308), quoted above on p. 297, St. Thomas speaks as though “*quod quid erat esse*” (“quiddity” for short) names something which might be considered logically, or might be considered philosophically. I.e. the very term “quiddity” is not seen as exclusively pertaining to the logical consideration of substance. And this is true also in *CM* 7.17 (1648), quoted above on p. 295. On the other hand, at *CM* 8.1 (1683–1684), discussed above on p. 294, the quiddity of the natural thing is classified as substance “according to the viewpoint of the notion” [*secundum rationis acceptionem*], and is contrasted with really existing substance [*substantiae in rerum natura existentes*].

Here is St. Thomas paraphrasing Aristotle as actually carrying out the logical consideration:

“But this firstly is to be known concerning the *quod quid erat esse*, that it is necessary *that it be predicated according to itself* [*secundum se*]. For those things which are predicated according to accompaniment [*per accidens*] of something do not belong to its *quod quid erat esse*. For by ‘*quod quid erat esse* of something’ we mean this, viz that which can fittingly be replied to the question posed by ‘what is it?’ But when we ask about something: ‘what is it?’ we cannot suitably reply the things which are in it according to accompaniment; as, when it is asked ‘what is a man?’, it cannot be answered that it is ‘white’ or ‘seated’ or ‘musical’. And thus none of the things which are predicated according to accompaniment of something pertain to the *quod quid erat esse* of that thing: *for ‘to be musical’ is not ‘for you to be.’*”⁵⁸

One can see how little in the above comes directly from Aristotle and how much is St. Thomas’ presentation of Aristotle’s logical consideration. It is to be noted that the term “*quod quid erat esse*” is from the start associated with the question: “what is it?” (which will be used in 7.17 in approaching quiddity as principle and cause).

56. *CM* 4.4 (576–577). Again, it is notable that Doig makes no use of these paragraphs; perhaps they have to do with the disappointment he expresses concerning 572–577 generally (cf. p. 251, n. 1). St. Thomas in this passage does not go into the question of why there is the diversity between things in reason and things in reality; cf., on this, *CM* 1.10 (158).

57. It is notable that nothing is said as to why one begins this way.

58. *CM* 7.3 (1309), on Aristotle at 1029b13–15. The underlined words (excepting all but the first “*quod quid erat esse*”) are Aristotle.

St. Thomas at this point undertakes to explain Aristotle's use of "esse" with a dative, as in "*tibi esse*", "for you to be". He says:

"But it must be known that in all the following, by the expression 'being this' [*hoc esse*] or 'being for this' [*huic esse*], he means the *quod quid erat esse* of that thing: for example, 'being for man' [*homini esse*] or 'being man' [*hominem esse*]: he means that which pertains to the 'what is man'."

And then he continues with the paraphrase:

"Now, *that which is 'being musical'*, i.e. the very 'what musical is', *does not pertain to what you are*. For if it be asked: 'what are you?', it cannot be replied that you are musical. And therefore it follows that 'to be musical' is not 'for you to be'; because those things which belong to the quiddity of the musical are outside your quiddity, though 'musical' is predicated of you. And this is *because you are not musical according to yourself*, that is, because 'musical' is not predicated of you according to itself, but according to accompaniment. *That therefore pertains to the 'what it is' of you which you are according to yourself*, that is, because it is predicated of you according to itself and not according to accompaniment: as, of you is predicated according to itself 'man', 'animal', 'substance', 'rational', 'sentient' [*sensibile*], and other things of this sort, which all pertain to the 'what it is' of you."⁵⁹

We are engaged in speaking of real things, but we are considering them as they are exhibited through predication. The focus is on predicates and how they are predicated, even though it is the *things* spoken of that one wishes to know. Obviously such a procedure implies confidence that these discussed differences in modes of discourse reflect differences in things themselves.

What is the general effect of the logical consideration of substance as quiddity, in that portion of Book 7 which most unquestionably involves logical consideration, viz *CM* 7.3–5?⁶⁰ We should note that, for St. Thomas, the target of attention in Books 7 and 8 is the formal natural principle, the substantial form. The study of quiddity is seen as an approach to the substantial form.⁶¹ The latter is distinguished from the concrete composite: it has some kind of real distinguishability.⁶² With the recourse to quiddity, or *per se* predication, we have before us a distinction between a thing and what that thing is. Our discourse takes separately the two, the thing as

59. *Ibid.*, on Aristotle at 1029b15-16.

60. We say this most unquestionably involves logical consideration because, starting with 7.6 we enter into a discussion of *generation*, which extends to 7.8 inclusively; St. Thomas says nothing to exclude this from logical consideration, but it can hardly be seen as the pure article, considering that in the next section, 7.9–12, which returns to the topic of definition, we are told that Aristotle has "descended to the natural principles which are the matter and the form..." (see above, p. 297). It is constantly the introduction of the natural principles (as in discussions of generation) which constitutes diminution of the logical consideration.

61. See below, pp. 304-305.

62. I take it that form does not *really* enter into the discussion of substance until *matter's* existence has been established (through motion, generation, and corruption). I.e., first comes substance, then generation and corruption reveal matter (cf. *CM* 8.1 : 1689), and then one sees that the *substantial principle* must have the nature of *form* (i.e. something analogous to the shape of the statue, but in the order of substance) (cf. *CM* 7.2 : 1277).

subject and the “what the thing is” as predicate. Moreover, what is exhibited in this way is the *unity* of such a predication. What is predicated is the very thing itself, i.e. thing and quiddity are one *in notion*, and not merely by accompaniment of some sort.⁶³ In this way, we are able to contrast what has a quiddity, a true definition, with such realities as fall short of this sort of unity and self-containment. There is no quiddity in the categories other than substance, or at least only quiddity in a secondary sense.⁶⁴

A notable feature of this discussion is that while at the beginning, with the talk about what can be predicated of “you” *per se*, one might think one was dealing with a predication such as “Socrates is a man”, in fact, in the fully developed logical consideration, the individual is not in the picture. The subject is the *definitum*, properly so called, i.e. the species. “Man” and “man is a rational animal”: these are the objects of logical consideration.⁶⁵ But once one descends to the material individual, one is no longer having to do with the sort of unity one observed in “man is a rational animal”. The thing and its quiddity are no longer identical. Thus, in *CM* 7.9–12, our attention is turned from the unity of definition with *definitum* to the compositeness of definition, and indeed to this as a kind of springboard to a consideration of the non-definable singular (locus of the “parts” which are not “parts of the definition”)⁶⁶ — i.e. the logical consideration itself is used as a means of directing attention beyond mere logic.

In general, the logical consideration serves to display the unity or self-identity proper to substance. Moreover, it displays this unity as a unity of *things*, fully conceivable realities such as we commonly name in subjects and predicates. It seems to be above all the need to take account of *matter* which forces the revision of this picture, and thereby forces us to the proper conception of substantial form (not a fully conceivable reality, not a predicable thing; not even a predicable thing taken abstractly, like “humanity”) as cause of the unity which is indeed found in sensible substances as they actually exist.⁶⁷

Let us look now at the *philosophical* consideration, in some of those passages in which St. Thomas is contrasting it with the logical. We will begin with St. Thomas’ treatment of the passage (Aristotle, *Metaph.* 7.3: 1029a20–27) wherein, in order to answer those who make substance primarily or even exclusively matter, Aristotle says what matter really is. In St. Thomas, we find:

63. *CM* 7.5 (1375).

64. Cf. especially *CM* 7.4 (1331–1341). The key notion in these discussions is that of *per se* unity: cf. 1340. And this in turn suggests that behind all the discussion of definition is substance as caught sight of in the theatre of generation and corruption: cf. *CM* 6.2 (1179). It is, therefore, we believe, too bad that Doig, in his meticulous exposition of *CM* 4.2 (at pp. 110–120), on the fact that the study of *ens* is also the study of unity, omits all mention of paras. 551–552, which use generation and corruption to establish the sameness of *ens* and *unum*.

65. Cf. *CM* 7.11 (1536); also, 7.5 (1378).

66. See below, pp. 307–308.

67. On the distinction between form and quiddity, see below, pp. 305–307.

“Because the aforesaid argument showing that matter alone is substance seems to have proceeded from ignorance of matter... therefore he [Aristotle] consequently says what matter is according to the truth of things, as declared in *Physics*, Book 1. For matter in itself cannot sufficiently be known, except through motion; and its investigation seems to pertain especially to the natural scientist. Hence the Philosopher accepts here, concerning matter, those things which were investigated in physics, saying: ‘*But I say matter is that which according to itself, that is, considered according to its own essence, in no way is either what, i.e. substance, or quality, or anything of the other genera by which ens is divided or determined.*’⁶⁸

St. Thomas thus bears down hard on the point that matter can be sufficiently known only through *motion*, and that Aristotle is here depending on what he has said in the *Physics*. And he continues:

“And this appears primarily through motion. For it is necessary that the subject of change and motion be other, speaking essentially [*per se loquendo*], than either of the termini of motion: as is proved in *Physics* 1. Hence, since matter is the first subject standing under not merely motions, which are according to quality and quantity and the other accidents, but even [under] the changes which are according to substance, it is necessary that matter be other, according to its own essence, than all substantial forms and their privations, which are the termini of generation and corruption; and not merely that it be other than quantity and quality and the other accidents.”⁶⁹

All this St. Thomas has *inserted* in his insistence that it is through motion alone that a sufficient knowledge of the essence of matter can be had. Nothing in the text of Aristotle demanded this clarification: on the contrary, as we are about to see.

St. Thomas goes on:

“And yet, for all that [*Attamen*], the Philosopher [i.e. Aristotle] does not prove the diversity of matter from all forms through the route of motion, which proof indeed is by the route of natural philosophy, but through the route of predication, which is proper to logic, which in Book 4 of the present work he says is akin to this [present] science.”⁷⁰

St. Thomas seems here somewhat taken aback by Aristotle’s procedure. He goes on to explain Aristotle’s argument, which supposes a real distinction between subject and predicate. St. Thomas has to relate this to what he calls “denominative” or “concretive” predication, rather than univocal, essential predication. But it is clear that for St. Thomas, Aristotle’s doctrine *really* depends on the physical argument.⁷¹

To this it should be added that later (Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.1: 1042a32-b8) we have matter actually presented by means of the doctrines of the *Physics*, and St. Thomas once more insists: “From this argument of Aristotle, it is clear that

68. *CM* 7.2 (1285). The underlining is the Aristotle text.

69. *CM* 7.2 (1286).

70. *CM* 7.2 (1287).

71. *CM* 7.2 (1288-1289).

substantial generation and corruption are the starting-point for coming to a knowledge of first matter.”⁷² Thus, the procedure of Aristotle in *Metaph.* 7.3 is seen by St. Thomas as provisional at best. Furthermore, while we found in the foregoing no explicit formula such as “philosophical consideration”, nevertheless we did have the contrast between Aristotle’s logical procedure and the other procedure, the only one which gives “sufficient knowledge” of matter.

Having looked at the text of *CM* 7.2 on matter, let us look again at *CM* 7.11 (1535-1536). What we mean to focus upon is what characterizes the properly philosophical consideration. Previously Aristotle had not excluded material substances from his judgment that quiddity and thing are identical. St. Thomas points out that the quiddity is what is signified by the definition,⁷³ and that the individual is not defined.⁷⁴ Thus, individual matter, which is the principle of individuation, lies outside the quiddity. But, says St. Thomas:

“it is impossible that the species be in reality [*in rerum natura esse*] unless in ‘this individual’. Thus, it is necessary that any real thing [*res naturae*], if it have matter which is part of the species, which pertains to the ‘what it is’, also have individual matter, which does not pertain to the ‘what it is’. Hence, no real thing [*res naturae*], if it has matter, is the very ‘what it is’, but is that which has it: as Socrates is not humanity, but is that which has humanity. But if it were possible for there to be a man composed of body and soul, who were not ‘this man’ composed out of ‘this body’ and ‘this soul’, nevertheless he would be his *quod quid erat esse*, though he had matter. [1536] But though man outside the singular does not exist really [*non sit in rerum natura*], he does exist in notion [*est, tamen, in ratione*], which pertains to logical consideration. And so above, where he [Aristotle] considered logically concerning *quod quid erat esse*, he did not exclude material substances, that in them also the ‘what it is’ be identical with that to which it belongs. For common ‘man’ [*homo communis*] is identical with his ‘what it is’, logically speaking. But now, after he has descended to the natural principles which are the matter and the form, and has shown how they are diversely related to the universal, and to the particular which subsists in nature [*particulare quod subsistit in natura*], he excepts here from that which he said above had ‘what it is’ identical with thing, material substances existing in reality [*substantias materiales in rerum natura existentes*]. But it remains that those substances which are forms alone subsisting [*formae tantum subsistentes*] do not have something through which they are individuated, which is outside the notion of the thing or of the species signifying ‘what it is’. And in them it is true unqualifiedly that any of them is its *quod quid erat esse*.”⁷⁵

What Aristotle has done, in moving, “descending”, from logical to philosophical consideration, is to introduce the natural principles, the matter and the form, and to show how they stand with respect to the universal, and to the particular which subsists in nature. Just as later, at 7.17, when St. Thomas wishes to exemplify what it would be finally to say what in reality the quiddity is, he says: “whether it be form, or

72. *CM* 8.1 (1689).

73. Cf. also *CM* 7.5 (1378).

74. Cf. also *CM* 7.10 (1493-1496); but also 7.15 (1617-1618).

75. *CM* 7.11 (1535-1536).

matter, or something like that",⁷⁶ so also here we have the reference to matter and form. Similarly, when we come to Book 8, which St. Thomas presents as the major shift to philosophical consideration, we see that we are to consider the substances through their own principles, matter and form.⁷⁷ And earlier, in *CM* 4.4, it was the mark of the proper demonstrative sciences of the real, both "philosophy", i.e. metaphysics, and the other particular sciences, that in their study of real things [*de rebus naturae*] they use the principles of things, whereas the tentative dialectic, or logical consideration associated with the science of the real, made use of principles "outside the nature of things" [*extranea a natura rerum*].⁷⁸

The field of consideration of the philosopher is given, here in 7.11, as the *res naturae*, that which exists *in rerum natura*, as distinguished from that which "is, in notion". It is the same contrast, between *ens naturae* and *ens rationis*, that we saw in 4.4.⁷⁹ The issue is not materiality as such, nor even individuality, but ultimately whatever conditions prevail as regards *being in reality*. Again, this agrees with 7.17: the philosopher considers the existence of *things*, the truth of *things*; ⁸⁰ and with 7.13, where it is said that the metaphysician, who considers things as *entia*, brings the conditions of actual existence into his discourse.⁸¹

It is to be noted also, concerning 7.11, that when St. Thomas speaks of "*res naturae*" and "*in rerum natura existens*", the word "nature", while it may very well relate to motion, is not meant to limit the consideration to the things studied properly by the physicist, the natural philosopher. What is meant is the field of beings outside the mind, whether material or immaterial, as is shown by the conclusion concerning subsistent forms. These are *res naturae*. Still, the reference to nature, with its association with motion, is not accidental. For us, motion is the route to knowledge of actuality.⁸²

Lastly, we should reflect that the metaphysical judgment involved here in Book 7 was that a thing and its quiddity are identical. Using the logical consideration, Aristotle showed this in a probable way, concerning all *entia per se*. Once matter and form began to make their presence felt, the judgment had to be revised, so as to exclude material substances in their real existence. From a metaphysical point of view, the probable judgment will find verification unqualifiedly only with the bringing on the scene of subsistent form.

We have said enough as to the philosophical point of view as contrasted with the logical. The general idea of St. Thomas' reading of Books 7 and 8 is a movement of

76. See above, p. 296.

77. *CM* 8.1 (1686 and 1681).

78. *CM* 4.4 (574-577). Notice also, in 7.2 (1280): "principia rei".

79. Above, pp. 297-298.

80. *CM* 7.17 (1658): "... existentiam rei... existentiam quaerit rerum... secundum rei veritatem..."

81. *CM* 7.13 (1576): "Hic enim accipit dici de subiecto, quod est *in se aliqua res* et inest alicui subiecto *existenti in actu*."

82. Cf. *CM* 9.3 (1805-1806).

the mind, from the mind as taking things on its, the mind's, own terms, to a greater and greater submission to things themselves. This is brought about primarily through the consideration of motion, generation and corruption.

Professor Doig has remarked that "Aristotle ends by rejecting the entire discussion of the logical investigation, but Thomas does not (p. 280, n. 1)". This hardly does justice to the situation. Whatever be the truth about Aristotle, St. Thomas makes it a major point that the logical consideration is inadequate, does not give us the real quiddity, and requires completion by the properly scientific metaphysical treatment.

III. ST. THOMAS AND SUBSTANTIAL FORM

Thusfar, we have seen that the science of metaphysics, as *considerativa entis*, is primarily demonstrative by means of the formal cause. We have also seen that, in his reading of the main treatment of material beings as beings in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, St. Thomas saw the movement of the discussion as starting with logical consideration and ending with philosophical consideration, i.e. with the presentation of the proper principles of sensible substances, the matter and the form and their unity. Clearly, since matter is in no way a cause of beings as beings, the primary consideration of Book 8 is of substantial form as cause of being. However, as we have also seen, the movement of Books 7 and 8 is not abrupt. Already, in Book 7, there is something of the philosophical consideration. What we wish to do in this section is to provide a few notes on St. Thomas' reading of Books 7 and 8 as a gradual manifestation of the formal cause.

a) *Substantial Form the Target*

It is remarkable that already, at the beginning of Book 7, St. Thomas sees the primary interest of Aristotle as bearing upon substance in the sense of subject.⁸³ Then, in the subject, it is the substantial form which is to be the chief target of investigation.⁸⁴ St. Thomas also speaks of it as the particular form [*forma particularis*].⁸⁵ It is this which is presented at the very beginning, albeit in barest outline, as the cause of *ens*: matter is not constituted as a being actually [*ens actu*] except through form; thus, form is the "because of which [*propter quod*]".⁸⁶ And already we note even in what is a rather "physical" discussion by Aristotle (*Metaph. 7.3: 1029a1-9*), a phenomenon we will be studying in more detail in a moment, namely St. Thomas' careful distinction between form and species. Aristotle is using the

83. *CM 7.2* (1274), concerning Aristotle at 1028b37-29a1. While the Latin of Aristotle in the Cathala-Spiazzi ed. has: "Propter quod *primum* de hoc determinandum est" and this is identical with the *translatio media* text in Albert, *Metaphysica* (ed. Cologne 16/2, 322.83), St. Thomas makes no mention of the "*primum*". He speaks rather as though substance as subject is what the investigation, not merely begins with, but is mainly about.

84. *CM 7.2* (1296).

85. *CM 7.2* (1276-1277).

86. *CM 7.2* (1278).

bronze statue to convey what he means by matter, form, and composite. Concerning the form, St. Thomas seems to have read: “the shape, as the form of the species”, and he is quick to paraphrase: “that is, *giving* the species”. The shape is the form, and the form *gives* the species. St. Thomas is distinguishing between form, the physical principle, and species, the effect of the form found in our intellectual conception of the thing (the species, as we will see, is a composite of form and matter, taken universally).⁸⁷ I.e., St. Thomas is already eager to distinguish what pertains more to logical consideration, the species, from what pertains to metaphysics in its properly scientific character, the substantial form.

While there is some ambiguity in the treatment of the division at *CM* 7.2 (1297 and following), the “third division” spoken of should be *particular form*. The parts of the third division should be sensible substances and non-sensible substances, i.e. forms in matter and forms subsisting by themselves. What is to be determined concerning sensible form is the *quod quid erat esse*, the quiddity and essence of the thing (1299). At 1302, it is clear that we are after “*formae sensibiles*” which are “*formae in materia*”, as less remote from sense than the separate entities, and so more knowable for us. But, again, we see that even our road to the substantial forms of sensible things must pass through such non-entities or near non-entities as accidents, motion, and privations (1304).

In fact, what we learn least about here is why we are going to study the quiddity (cf. 1299). It seems to be somewhat different from substance as subject, to judge by the list given in 1270–1274. It is to be noted that here at the outset, before we enter into the full logical consideration (it would seem), *quod quid erat esse* is explained (1275) as something which does not fall into the order of predicaments except as formal principle. Thus, it sounds like “humanity”, rather than “rational animal”. It will be taken as “rational animal” in the full-fledged logical consideration (*CM* 7.5: 1378).

It remains that, in the light of St. Thomas’ 7.2, we are prepared for a study of substantial form. We are not going to be altogether puzzled to find quiddity as the target in 7.3, since we have been forewarned in 1299. But we cannot be altogether content. Thus, St. Thomas himself, at *CM* 7.13 (1566–1567), when explaining the list of modes of substance given by Aristotle at *Metaph.* 7.13 (1038b1–8), says that while at the beginning of Book 7 (i.e. 7.3: 1028b33–1029a2) Aristotle divided the subject in three, viz the matter, the form, and the composite, here in 7.13 he uses *quod quid erat esse* in place of *form*, “because it is *now* clear that the *quod quid erat esse* stands on the side of form” (1567). Hence, it cannot have been all that clear where we are now, i.e. at 7.3, where, expecting a treatise on form, we get one on quiddity.

b) *Form and Species*

While the study is of quiddity, we are quickly obliged to turn our attention towards things in the concrete. Already in *CM* 7.6–8, on generation, this is so.

87. See below, pp. 306–310.

However, the passages to which I wish to call attention are in 7.9–11, which we have seen St. Thomas himself describe as a descent from the logical consideration into the natural principles.⁸⁸ In those passages we shall look at St. Thomas' (previously mentioned) careful distinction between the species or quiddity, and the substantial form. This care of his has the effect of keeping before the mind the secondary and derivative character of the issues in Book 7 (to 7.16). Beyond the quiddity lies the substantial form, which is the real target of our metaphysical quest.

At the very beginning of this section of *CM*, i.e. in 7.9, St. Thomas explains the distinction between quiddity and substantial form. He has already presented the problem which Aristotle has proposed (and to which we will refer later), but before coming to Aristotle's solutions, he introduces a lengthy note to the reader. Concerning the definitions of things, and their essences, he tells us, there are two opinions. Some say that the essence of the species is the form itself: e.g. that the entire essence of man is the soul. Thus, the words "humanity" and "soul" are understood to name exactly the same *thing*: it is called "form of the part" inasmuch as it perfects the matter and makes it to be actually; and it is called "form of the whole" inasmuch as through it the whole thing is given a place in a species. And thus these people maintain that no parts of the matter are posited in the definition indicating the species, but rather only the formal principles of the species. Averroes and others seem to hold this view.⁸⁹

This opinion, says St. Thomas, seems to be against the intention of Aristotle. Above, in Book 6, he said that natural things have sensible matter in their definitions. Nor can it be said that natural substances are defined by that which is not of their essences: substances do not have definition by addition (i.e. of things external to the precise thing defined), but only accidents are so defined, as was said earlier in the *Metaph*. Hence, it remains that sensible matter is part of the essence of natural substances, not only as regards individuals, but even as regards the very *species*: for

88. See above, p. 297.

89. Albert the Great seems to be among those who identify form and quiddity, to judge by his *Metaphysica* bk. 7, tr. 1, c. 1 (ed. Cologne 16/2, 316.28–41). Since this passage is Albert's view of the distinction between Book 7 and Book 8, we quote at length: "Furthermore, the principles of substance are matter and form, and especially form is the principle of substance, and it is necessary that this [the form, as principle of substance] be determined in two ways: in one way, according as it is the entire being [*totum esse*] of first substance and its quiddity, which is signified by the definition; and it is necessary that we inquire concerning substance in this way in this 7th Book of this first philosophy. But it is to be considered in another way inasmuch as it is a certain form and nature considered in itself, diverse from matter, which is the other part of the composite, as the soul is the form of man not predicated of him, and in this way it is also called 'quiddity' by some, speaking broadly but improperly. And in this way we will consider form in the next book, which is the 8th Book of this first philosophy." The form and the quiddity seem to be the same *thing* here. At *Ibid.* bk. 8, tr. 1, c. 1 (389.9–21), we seem to have the same position, and the sameness is rather explicit: "... ostendemus eandem substantiam ad quam refertur diffinitio, esse formam et actum et naturam diffinitivi..." (389.14–15). At bk. 8, tr. 1, c. 3 (391.46–61), however, we seem to be going to treat of form as predicable (391.60). — As regards the division of the two books, Albert's distinction between form as quiddity and form as form or nature or act contains no suggestion of St. Thomas' contrast between logical consideration and consideration of the proper principles of things; in St. Albert, there seems to be none of the diminishing of the ontological status of quiddity which is implied in St. Thomas' classifying of it as substance "from the viewpoint of reason" (*CM* 8.1: 1684).

definitions are given, not of individuals, but of species. — Here we see that St. Thomas does not depend on his reading of *Metaph.* 7.10-11 for his position, but on much clearer previous statements of Aristotle.⁹⁰

Thus, he continues, there is another opinion, followed by Avicenna, according to which the “form of the whole”, which is the very quiddity of the species, *differs* from the “form of the part”, as a whole from a part: for the quiddity of the species is a composite out of matter and form, but not, nevertheless, out of “this form” and “this individual matter”. Out of these, the individual, e.g. Socrates or Callias, is composed. This is the opinion of *Aristotle* here, says St. Thomas. Aristotle brings in this opinion (St. Thomas must mean: in a clear way) in order to exclude the opinion of Plato concerning the Ideas. Plato said that the species of natural things are existing by themselves without sensible matter, as though sensible matter were not in some way part of the species. Thus, once it is shown that sensible matter is part of the species in natural things, it is shown that it is impossible for the species of natural things to be without matter: as man without flesh and bones, etc.

Here, St. Thomas seems to be referring to what Aristotle says in 7.11, where the argument is to the point that not only in natural things, but even in mathematical, there is a matter in the definition. Cf. Aristotle at 1036b22-30. It is of some importance to pinpoint just where Aristotle so expresses himself according to St. Thomas, since in other places in the discussion (e.g. *Metaph.* 7.10: 1036a13-25) St. Thomas sees Aristotle as favouring neither opinion over the other (*CM* 7.10: 1498-1500). St. Thomas will, in general, interpret the discussion according to what he sees as the opinion of Aristotle, i.e. the distinction between form and quiddity of the species.

Since St. Thomas has himself called attention so explicitly and deliberately to this distinction, let us see how it shows up in his presentation of Aristotle. The phenomenon is difficult to present because of the instability of the vocabulary, as used by the two authors. The Latin Aristotle often has “*species*” where St. Thomas will wish to interpret by using the word “*forma*”. St. Thomas, on the other hand, uses “*species*” for the quiddity as a whole. Again, Aristotle reserves, for the most part, the word “matter” to refer to what belongs to the individual as such, whereas St. Thomas, exploiting some few remarks of Aristotle, makes constant use of a distinction between common matter and individual matter.

Before looking at the texts we might recall the problems which Aristotle is facing in this part of *Metaph.* 7. Whereas the earlier presentation of substance and definition had focussed upon the thoroughgoing unity of definition and *definitum*, the present section (Aristotle’s chapters 10-12) considers definition as *composite* discourse, as a formula composed of parts, e.g. “rational animal”. And the problem is that there does not seem to be thoroughgoing correspondence between the parts of the *definition* and the parts of the *thing defined*. Sometimes the parts of the thing *are* parts of the definition (as letters occur in the definition of a syllable), and sometimes they

90. *CM* 7.9 (1468). The point that the individual is not defined, it is true, is taken from a clear *subsequent* statement of Aristotle (7.10: 1036a2-5).

are not (the semi-circle is not part of the definition of the circle). Another problematic feature of the same situation is that some parts are prior to the whole (as letter to syllable) or at least simultaneous (as the heart or brain to the animal), and some are posterior (as finger to animal, and semi-circle to circle).⁹¹ — One of the results of the exploration of the situation so presented is that we see an ambiguity in our speech between two meanings of such words as “the circle”, and so are led to distinguish two targets of attention in thought — “the circle” as the *definable* thing, and “the circle” as the *concrete* thing.⁹² Another result is that we come to see that even within the definable reality as such, there is *composition*, there are parts, there is the structure of “this in this” (as form in matter).⁹³

We will look first at *CM* 7.10. We should note, in 1482, the reason given by St. Thomas for Aristotle’s having to repeat and clarify the already given solution. Aristotle has not shown how the parts are prior and posterior, nor again has he distinguished the universal composite from the particular composite, nor also the *species from the form*.

Then, commenting on Aristotle at 1035b27–33, St. Thomas says:

“Nevertheless, it must be known that this composite which is animal or man can be taken in two ways: either as universal or as singular. As universal: as ‘man’ and ‘animal’. As singular: as ‘Socrates’ and ‘Callias’. And so he [Aristotle] says that *man and horse and what so [ita] are in singulars, but said universally, as ‘man’ and ‘horse’, are not substance, i.e. are not form alone, but are a certain whole-together [simul totum quoddam] composed out of determinate matter and determinate form; not indeed as singularly, but universally. For ‘man’ says something composed out of soul and body, but not out of this soul and this body. But ‘the singular’ says something composed out of the ultimate matter, i.e. individual matter...*”⁹⁴

The universally-signified species are not “substance”, says Aristotle, and St. Thomas quickly identifies this “substance” as the substantial form. Then, in the next paragraph, where Aristotle might very well seem to be distinguishing various types of part, i.e. 1035b31–33, St. Thomas rather interprets this as a distinction of matters. He says:

“Thus, *therefore*, it is clear that matter is part of the species. But ‘species’ we here understand not as form alone, but as *quod quid erat esse*. And it is clear also that matter is a part of that whole which is out of the species and the matter, i.e. the singular [whole], which signifies the nature of the species in this determinate matter. For matter is a part of the composite. But the composite is both the universal and the singular.”⁹⁵

Once again, St. Thomas has Aristotle including matter in the quiddity, and setting it off carefully from the “form alone”. Then, subsequently, the quiddity or species is coupled with further matter to constitute the singular.

91. Cf. *CM* 7.9 (1460–1466).

92. Cf. *CM* 7.9 (1480–1481) concerning Aristotle at 7.10 (1035b1–3).

93. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.* 7.11 (1036b22–24) and *CM* 7.11 (1517).

94. *CM* 7.10 (1490). The underlining is the text of Aristotle.

95. *CM* 7.10 (1491). Aristotle underlined.

Later in 7.10, commenting on the fact that the definition is of the universal only, St. Thomas explains that by the definition a thing is supposed to be *known*; and it is clear that when they are absent, individual things are not known, even though we still possess the definitions. Thus, the definitions do not bear directly on the individuals. And the reason for this is that matter, which is the principle of individuation, is according to itself unknown, and is known only through *form*, from which the *notion of the universal is taken*. And so singulars are not known in their absence except through universals. — Here, we see the distinction between form and universal (i.e. species) maintained: the form is the principle of the universal.⁹⁶ We shall see more of this in a moment.

Still in 7.10, St. Thomas goes on to paraphrase and comment on the few words of conclusion of Aristotle at 1036a12-13. He says:

“He [Aristotle] concludes, *therefore*, that *it has been said how things stand concerning whole and part, and concerning prior and posterior*, i.e. of what is the part a part, and how it is prior and how posterior. For the parts of the individual matter are parts of the composite singular, but not of the species, nor of the form. But the parts of the universal matter are parts of the species, but not of the form. And because the universal is defined, and not the singular, therefore the parts of the individual matter are not placed in the definition, but only the parts of the common matter, together with the form or the parts of the form.”⁹⁷

Here again, we see how the analysis keeps the form clearly in view at all times, in distinction from the species. We might notice also that the form itself is conceived by St. Thomas as susceptible to having parts.

We move now to *CM* 7.11. For our present purposes, 1529–1532, wherein St. Thomas is commenting on Aristotle at 1037a21–33, is all of interest. Aristotle is recapitulating what he has done since the beginning of Book 7. If, in the interests of brevity, we begin at 1037a24, we have Aristotle saying:

“And that in the notion of the substance, what so are parts, as matter, will not be included. For neither are they parts of that substance, but of the whole. But of this there is in a way a notion and there is not. For, with matter, there is not. For that is indeterminate. But according to the first substance, there is, as of man the notion of the soul. For the substance is the species, which is within, out of which and the matter the whole substance is said.”⁹⁸

And here is St. Thomas’ presentation:

“Also, it has been said *that in the notion of the substance*, i.e. of the form, *are not placed the parts* which are parts of the substance *as matter*, *because* such [parts] *are not parts of that substance*, i.e. of the form, *but parts of the composite whole*. “[1530] *Of which composite, in a way there is a definition, in a way there is not. For if it be taken with matter*, i.e. individual [matter], *there is no definition of it,*

96. Cf. *CM* 7.10 (1495-1496).

97. *Ibid.* 1497. Aristotle underlined.

98. In the Cathala-Spiazzi edition of *CM*, the Aristotle text #639. — The text of Aristotle St. Thomas is using as close enough to this to give the reader the picture of St. Thomas’ commenting which I wish to convey. Obviously, the mere putting into English forces the addition of words here and there.

for singulars are not defined, as was shown above. *For* which the reason is that *such* individual matter *is* an unfinished [*infinitum*] and *indeterminate* something. For matter is not finished except through form.

“*But* the composite taken *according to the first substance*, i.e. according to the form, *has* a definition. For the composite taken in [its] species [*in specie*] is defined, not according to the individual. [1531] But just as the individual is individual through the matter, so each thing is placed in its species through the form. For man is not man because he has flesh and bones but from this, that he has rational soul in flesh and bones. Whence it is necessary that the definition of the species be taken from the form, and that in the definition of the species be placed only those parts of matter in which the form is primarily and principally. *As the notion of man* is that which is *of the soul*. For from this, man is man, that he has such a soul. And because of this, if man is defined, it is necessary that he be defined through the soul, and that nevertheless in his definition be placed the parts of the body in which primarily is the soul, such as the heart or the brain, as he said above.

“[1532] *For the very substance* of which matter is not a part *is the species*, i.e. the form, *which is within* the matter, *out of which* form *and the matter the whole substance is said*, i.e. is determined and defined...”⁹⁹

The reader can see how relentlessly St. Thomas maintains the distinction between species and form, with the idea that the species includes matter, and that thus matter is part of the definition. Even where the text of Aristotle has “species”, St. Thomas does not hesitate to say it means “form”.

The result of all this is that St. Thomas keeps a firm hold on the distinction between logical consideration, to which properly the species belongs, and philosophical consideration, to which belong matter and form as principles of the composite substance. The species is the individual composite taken universally. The real ground for so taking it is the particular form.

c) *Form and Causality*

We have done enough to illustrate how St. Thomas, even within *CM* 7, keeps in view the distinction between quiddity and form, between “substance according to reason” and “substance as it exists”.¹⁰⁰ We wish now to reconsider the second clear step towards the real principles of things noted by St. Thomas himself in his interpretation of Aristotle, viz the “new beginning” in 7.17.

Why is this such a new beginning? We have seen that it is a beginning other than the logical one, and that it consists precisely in saying that *within* the *substance*, there is a *principle*, a *cause*.¹⁰¹ While from our point of view (that of interest in the substantial form) the word “in” or “within” is highly interesting,¹⁰² nevertheless it is

99. *CM* 7.11 (1529–1532). Aristotle underlined.

100. Cf. *CM* 8.1 (1683–1684).

101. Cf. above, p. 296.

102. Cf. *CM* 9.5 (1828). Form is *in* matter.

the notion of cause and principle which St. Thomas seems to be regarding as innovative here. Thus, he divides 7.17 into the two points: that the quiddity is cause and principle; and what sort of cause and principle it is (1649). This point was mentioned at the beginning of Book 7, but our treatise has been dominated by quiddity as definition.¹⁰³ From this point of view, the quiddity seems to stand *by itself* in a sort of intelligible sphere. Its notional separability is exploited to the utmost, and rather than appear as cause or principle, it seems more to appear as substance itself, with the particular as something more like an attendant shadow than as an effect.

That the new approach, the causal, is new is illustrated in a way by the mode of exemplification now employed. Typical is the house and its construction.¹⁰⁴ We are in the domain of events, of generation and corruption. Even though it is the *intrinsic* cause which mainly interests us, it is by the consideration of the assembling and disassembling of things that we catch sight of the causal contribution.¹⁰⁵ Generation as an approach to *ens* as *ens* has been present in the background all along.¹⁰⁶ Now it is coming forward.

The challenge for the formulator of this doctrine is to put the notion of cause to work even *within* substance. This is a challenge because it would seem that substance involves simplicity whereas causality involves composition. Thus, as regards substance, one sees the problem presented in 7.17, that it does not *appear* to be a cause at all: this is presented by means of the *simplicity* of the question which inquires about the substance, viz “what is it?” (1662–1668). And yet there is already the clue, in the way the mere logician speaks about causes generally, i.e. “because of *what* is A B?”, thus using the “what” to name what are manifestly causes, namely the agent and the end, that the true “what”, i.e. the substance, has the nature of a cause (cf. 1656–1661).

That causality involves composition is brought out in *CM* 7.17 (1649–1655): that causal inquiry is always about a duality: why A is B.

The picture of the quiddity (still considered as that which corresponds to the question: “what is it?”) as cause already brings in the role of *matter* (1667–1668). And one might well wonder what more there is to say about the quiddity as cause — a sort of “influence” of form on matter. And yet St. Thomas designates the considerable passages of 7.17 which remain (i.e. 1672–1680) as treating of *what sort* of cause or principle quiddity is. The problem seems to be that once one *locates* the causality of the quiddity as *intrinsic*, one runs the risk of confusing its proper causal contribution with that of the matter. Thus Aristotle calls our attention to the mode of unity which is unqualified unity. And he points out that such a unit is not merely its elements, but that inasmuch as one can have the elements and not have the unit, it is seen that there

103. Cf. *CM* 7.5 (1378).

104. Cf. e.g. *CM* 7.17 (1657, 1658, 1659, 1660, 1666).

105. Cf. *CM* 7.17 (1672–1674).

106. Cf. especially *CM* 6.2 (1179); and cf. 7.1 (1256); even 4.1 (540–543): the realm of *ratio* is put in last place, though this is not quite what is said. For the way we have a hint of this even as the ground of definition itself, cf. 7.4 (1339–1340).

is “something else” within the unit. This something else cannot be conceived as an element, that is, as a cause after the manner of *matter*. (1675–1677) Rather, it is the principle and cause of being (1679).

We should note, at this point in *CM*, on the very threshold of Book 8, and with the very words of Aristotle, the way St. Thomas insists upon the need to locate this sort of substance (i.e. the cause of being), not just anywhere, but in *natural* things:

“Therefore, he [Aristotle] says that *because some things are not substances*, as is particularly clear in the case of artifacts, *but whatever are according to nature*, as regards being, and *constituted by nature*, as regards becoming, are true substances, *it will be manifest that this nature* which we have sought is *substance in some*, viz in natural, things, and not in all. *Which nature*, also, *is not an element, but the formal principle...*” (1680)

We come strongly to the viewpoint of nature and generation.

d) Book 8

Lastly, in this section, we will consider a few aspects of Book 8. One is the use St. Thomas makes of the word “*principium*”. We have already seen that St. Thomas regards the move to Book 8 as a move “towards existing natural things” [*ad res naturales existentes*].¹⁰⁷ He says that here Aristotle intends to treat of them “through their own principles” [*per propria principia*], which, as we have also seen, is the procedure of the philosopher in his scientific or demonstrative phase.¹⁰⁸ The word “*principium*” is repeated surprisingly often in St. Thomas’ presentation of Aristotle here in Book 8. Thus, we read:

“... here the Philosopher begins to treat of sensible substances by inquiry into their *principles*.

“And it is divided into two parts. In the first, he determines concerning the matter and the form, which are the *principles* of sensible substances. In the second, concerning their union with each other.

“Regarding the first point he does two things. First he shows that matter is *principle* of sensible substances. Secondly he shows the same about form.” (*CM* 8.1: 1686)

Then, at the beginning of the next *lectio*, we read:

“After the Philosopher has sought out the *material principle* in sensible substances, here he inquires into the *formal principle...*

“... First, he investigates the differences in sensible things, which demonstrate the *formal principle...*” (*CM* 8.2: 1691-1692)

And, in the next *lectio*:

“After the Philosopher has sought out the *principles* of sensible substance, showing that the sensible substance is composed out of matter and form, now he

107. *CM* 8.1 (1681).

108. Cf. *CM* 4.4 (577).

intends to determine concerning *the material and the formal principles*, inquiring as to those things which are to be considered about each.

“And it is divided into two parts. In the first he inquires as to those things which are to be considered about the *formal principle*. In the second, those things which are to be considered about the *material principle*...

“And because Plato most especially touched upon the *formal principle*, therefore he determines concerning the *formal principle* according to those things which Plato held. Thus, the first part is divided into two parts.

“In the first he determines concerning the *formal principle* by comparison with the Ideas. In the second, by comparison with numbers.” (CM 8.3: 1703-1704)

At this point, as St. Thomas begins his explanations, this insistence on the full formula is left aside. However, as we begin the next *lectio* (4), “*principium formale*” and “*principium materiale*” (especially) come in for extraordinarily heavy use, extending right into the commentary (cf. 1729-1732). And, lastly, they are used once again in the introduction to the last *lectio* (CM 8.5: 1755).

This use of “*principium*” corresponds, it seems to us, not only to the “new beginning” we saw in 7.17, with quiddity now taken as formal principle of being, but also to the idea that we are now working with existing natural substance. The hope is to avoid the picture of form as a substance in its own right, a picture so much encouraged by the definitional approach. St. Thomas is here very much in accord with the doctrine he expressed earlier, in the part of Book 7 dealing with quiddity and generation:

“Matter and form... are not substances, except insofar as they are the principles of composite substance.”¹⁰⁹

Thus, also, here in 8.1, in explaining the division of substance into matter, form, and composite, and their status as substances, the composite appears to get the primary role:

“But the composite out of these is said to be substance as *separable unqualifiedly*, that is, capable of existing by itself separately in reality; and of it alone there is *generation and corruption*.” (1687)

St. Thomas thus paraphrases the Latin Aristotle’s “*separabile simpliciter*” [separable unqualifiedly] with the unusually explicit formula: “*separatim per se existere potens in rerum natura*” [capable of existing by itself separately in reality]. And our inclination is to see the reference to generation and corruption (which, of course, is in Aristotle) as a way of pointing out that this is the thing which *is*, in the primary sense of “is”.¹¹⁰

We see this aspect of the situation still more evidently when we consider that in Book 8 the first step is the presentation of the *material principle*. It is arrived at through the consideration of substantial generation and corruption. As St. Thomas says:

109. CM 7.6 (1386).

110. Cf. CM 7.1 (1256) and 6.2 (1179); also 4.2 (551-552).

“From this argument of Aristotle it is apparent that substantial generation and corruption are the starting-point for coming to the knowledge of prime matter.” (CM 8.1: 1689)

Clearly then, it is of substance as caught sight of with the help of generation and corruption that we have to do here.

We saw at the outset that matter is not a cause of beings as beings. However, it is only inasmuch as we distinguish between matter and form, as a composition *found* in existing substances, that we can have the duality required to see the *causality* of form. And in 8.2, we have the presentation of form, by means of the differences found among things. Aristotle’s approach to the question by using Democritus, and the subsequent use of examples in artifacts and natural things, puts us very much into the more “physical” realm. Nevertheless, the definitional approach is mixed in as well.¹¹¹ Thus, we find St. Thomas paraphrasing Aristotle as follows:

“He shows how the aforementioned differences are related to substances ; and he says : *from the foregoing it is now clear that in the aforementioned differences is to be sought that which is the formal cause of being [causa formalis essendi] of any of the aforesaid, of which they are the differences, if things are such that the formal substance [substantia formalis] or ‘what it is’ is the cause of any being [causa cuiuslibet essendi], as was shown in Book 7. For the aforesaid differences signify the form and the ‘what it is’ of the aforementioned things. However, none of the aforesaid differences is substance, nor anything near to substance (as pertaining to the genus of substance). But the same proportion is found in them as is found in substance. [1697] For just as in the genus of substance, the difference, which is predicated of the genus, and comes to it for the constituting of the species, is compared to it as act and form, so also in the other definitions.*”¹¹²

Here, St. Thomas is impelled to add:

“But¹¹³ one ought not to understand that the difference is the form, or that the genus is the matter, since the genus and the differences are predicated of the species, but the matter and the form are not predicated of the composite ; but this is said because the genus is taken from that which is material in the thing, while the difference is taken from that which is formal. For example, the genus of man is ‘animal’, because it signifies ‘something having a sentient nature’ ; which [sentient nature] indeed stands materially towards the intellective nature, from which is taken ‘rational’, which is the difference of man ; but ‘rational’ signifies ‘something having an intellective nature’. And thus it is that the genus has the differences potentially, and that the genus and the difference are proportionate to the matter and the form, as Porphyry says. And for that reason also it is said here that *the act*, that is, the difference, *is predicated of the matter*, i.e. the genus ; and similarly in the other genera”. (1697)

St. Thomas, as he indicates by the paraphrase quoted first, would have liked Aristotle to say that “the *difference*, which is predicated of the *genus*, ... is compared to it as act and form...” But what he finds in the text is that “that which is predicated of the

111. Cf. ARISTOTLE at 8.2 (1042b25–43a26) and St. Thomas, CM 8.2 (1694–1701).

112. CM 8.2 (1696–1697). Aristotle underlined (approximately).

113. The text here has “*enim*”, but we are reading “*autem*”.

matter is act". I.e. Aristotle said that the act is *predicated* of the matter. He is, in St. Thomas' eyes, mixing a way of speaking which pertains to the logical, definitional, or predicational approach, with the considerations (matter, and act or form) proper to the philosophical approach. St. Thomas puts first in his paraphrase what he would like to have found, then explains the situation to the reader, and lastly introduces the actual text. He painstakingly distinguishes the factors pertaining to the two domains.

St. Thomas is determined not to confuse what pertains to logical consideration with the knowledge of the proper principles of the existing natural thing. In insisting that he is speaking about the principles, St. Thomas never allows them to be envisaged as mere duplicates of the subsisting thing.

Besides the scrupulous use of "*principium*", another important point in Book 8 is the key role of the notion of matter for the conception of form as cause of being. Besides the already-mentioned fact that we begin the discussion with matter, this point can perhaps be heightened by a brief consideration of *CM* 8.3 (1713). There the Platonists are complimented for having said that the house is not stone *and composition*, as though the house were constituted out of these as out of parts of matter. If this were so, i.e. if the form were one of the parts of matter, it would *depend* on matter. And we see that this is false, says St. Thomas, because the composition and the mixture, which are the formal principles [*formalia principia*], are not constituted out of the things which are composed or are mixed, just as neither is anything else formal constituted out of its matter, but rather the *converse*. Being-a-threshold is constituted by position, which is its form, and not vice versa.

The point that the form is the cause of being is seen to the extent that the ontological indetermination of matter is seen. It must be grasped as the character of the effect as an effect, so that the form will be the cause of being. And it is the development of the notion of matter in the light of generation and corruption which brings about the vision of the required dependent nature. Thus it is seen that form is truly the cause, within the *ens*, of nothing short of its being *ens*.¹¹⁴ It is not at all necessary to have a form capable of separate existence, in order to see that the form is the cause of being. It is only necessary to grasp the ontological character of matter, and to see form, then, as something quite *distinct*. Even a form whose being is so inseparable from matter that it cannot be conceived without matter¹¹⁵ nevertheless appears as cause of being of the whole composite.

Lastly, concerning the final *lectio* of Book 8, in which the union of the material and formal principles is presented, we should note to what extent we have once again the problems of definition, as presented in Book 7, mixed in with the presentation. Of course, the same mixture was found in Book 7 itself: e.g. in *CM* 7.11, we had the same sort of presentation of the solution in natural things (1516–1519), then in mathematics (1520–1522), as we have here in 8.5: i.e. natural things in 1759, mathematics in 1760, and separate entity in 1762.

114. Cf., on the relation of form, taken as form, to matter, St. THOMAS, *De substantiis separatis*, c. 7 (ed. Leonine, lines 91–102).

115. Cf. *CM* 7.9 (1477).

But this very mixture in the Aristotelian text suggests the extent to which St. Thomas' insistence on the move from logical to existential consideration as the movement of the *Metaphysics*, is an interpretation, and probably involves a certain ingredient of what "ought to be found in Aristotle", in St. Thomas' judgment.