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## Form, essence and matter in Aquinas' early work *De ente et essentia*. Notes to the metaphysical foundation of Aquinas' psychology

The question of the character of the essence of material beings is one of the basic topics of Thomas Aquinas's metaphysics. We could even say that answering this question and developing an adequate term for the essence of material beings is fundamental not only for metaphysics, but can also play a considerable role in Thomas Aquinas's philosophical psychology, which makes it important to everybody who is engaged in Thomas's psychological legacy. The importance of the topic of the essence of material beings arises from Thomas's psychology, primarily because Thomas Aquinas advocates a noticeably anti-dualistic anthropological position, which forces him to properly explain the metaphysically complex being that man is, which may on the physical level alone seem impossible.<sup>1</sup> The topic of the essence of

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<sup>1</sup> Compare with E. Stump, *Non-Cartesian substance dualism and materialism without reductionism*, "Faith and Philosophy" 12 (1995), p. 505–531; R. Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on human*

material beings is, however, still not elaborated sufficiently. In other words, there are still two questions which have not been properly answered as far as my knowledge of literature extends: a) how matter is comprehended in the essence of concrete beings; b) how it is possible to combine the presupposition of a soul which is indivisible and at the same time the intellect and the form of the body. We consider that without a thorough analysis of the first question, we cannot reach a satisfactory resolution of the second question, which is key to all Thomas's psychology.

The purpose of this article is to suggest an interpretation of the term of the essence of material beings in the larger context of Thomas's psychology that complies with these requirements: a) historical-philosophical coherence, by which we mean primarily a meaningful categorization of the elaborated concept into the historical-philosophical framework; b) metaphysical coherence and c) philosophical-psychological coherence. These requirements create at the same time a perspective on the concept of the essence of material beings that we will engage in while limiting our examination to the early work of Thomas, *De ente et essentia*.

### Basic term definition in *De ente et essentia*

Each examination of Thomas's work that tries to take the development of his system into consideration has to start with a short but extremely meaty tract, *De ente et essentia* (here referred to as *De ente*).<sup>2</sup> This early work mirrors most of the prime decisions on fundamental philosophical questions that further define the overall character of his philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

*nature*, Cambridge 2004, p. 19: "Human beings are part spiritual and part physical (...human beings, who are composed of a spiritual and corporeal substance": STh, q. 75. pr.), which gives us a theoretically perplexing kind of dual status – we are metaphysical amphibians, to borrow Eleonore Stump's apt phrase. This unique dual status makes us especially interesting in many ways [...]"

<sup>2</sup> Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, t. 43: *De ente et essentia*, Roma 1976, p. 315–381; all other works of Thomas Aquinas are quoted according to the online edition at [www.corpusthomicum.org](http://www.corpusthomicum.org).

<sup>3</sup> We believe the most important topics of *De ente et essentia* are mainly: a) establishment of a real distinction between *essentia/esse*; b) critical (logical-metaphysical) analysis of the theory of the form pluralism. As concerns the form pluralism theory compare: R. Zavalloni, *Rich-*

The study of *De ente* is, however, important not only from the meta-physical point of view as the title may suggest but also from the logical-semantic and also psychological-anthropological view.<sup>4</sup> It is important for the latter for three reasons. First, the psychology inspired by Aristotle will to a certain extent always be a part of physics and metaphysics. The theory of the structure of a being working with the concept of a form then always testifies to the composition of man and the soul itself again from two points of view – from the metaphysical point of view, where we ask in what relation the concept of form is to the concept of essence and being, and from the physical point of view, where we understand form in relation to matter. Second, in *De ente* we can already find the basic double relation to the human soul according to Thomas Aquinas (soul as form and soul as *motor*). It is certainly not completely distinct and obvious at first glance, but in the context of further examinations it makes sense to register these allusions. We could also describe it in the following way. The dualistic tendency in the concept of the soul that Thomas criticizes most radically in *Questiones disputatae de anima*, where he refuses to define the soul as simply *hoc aliquid*, can point to the fact that already in *De ente* distinct differences in the understanding soul are ignored in

*ard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes*, Louvain 1951; C. B. Bazán, *The human soul: form and substance? Thomas Aquinas' critique of eclectic Aristotelianism*, "Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge" 64 (1997), p. 95–126.

<sup>4</sup> *De ente*, pr. 1–15: "Quia parvus error in principio magnus est in fine, secundum philosophum in I caeli et mundi, ens autem et essentia sunt quae primo intellectu concipiuntur, ut dicit Avicenna in principio suae metaphysicae, ideo ne ex eorum ignorantia errare contingat, ad horum difficultatem aperiendam dicendum est quid nomine essentiae et entis significetur et quomodo in diversis inveniatur et quomodo se habeat ad intentiones logicas, scilicet genus, speciem et differentiam. Quia vero ex compositis simplicium cognitionem accipere debemus et ex posterioribus in priora devenire, ut, a facilioribus incipientes, convenientior fiat disciplina, ideo ex significatione entis ad significationem essentiae procedendum est." Compare with J. Lehrberger, *The anthropology of Aquinas's "De ente et essentia"*, "The Review of Metaphysics" 51 (1998), p. 829–47; p. 831: "Clearly, the standpoint in these early chapters is natural philosophy, while the horizon of the later chapters is metaphysics. Any interpretation of Thomas's teaching on the human soul in the *De ente et essentia* which neglects the developmental character of the work, ignores its shift from physics to metaphysics, or treats its initial formulations as final syntheses, distorts his understanding."

various contexts. Third, metaphysics provides a point of departure and principles for all other theoretical sciences.<sup>5</sup>

From this it arises that even our analysis of this paper will be guided by two main standpoints: a) from the point of view of a change in the concept of form in Thomas Aquinas's work in comparison to his predecessors; b) from the point of view of the relation of form to the metaphysical question of the real distinction between essence and being.

In the introductory part of *De ente*, where Thomas Aquinas introduces us to the possible meanings of the concept of essence (*essentia*) which we can come across in the older philosophic tradition, he is highly instructive and he points to the bounds within which our contemplations on essence should move.<sup>6</sup> The term essence thus has mainly the following meanings: a) the essence belongs to the being (*ens*) that we explain in the first way, i.e. categorically. In this sense, something positive is defined in contrast with privation (*privatio*), which can however be thought and thus their concepts may play the role of a subject in terms of judgment, but their ontological status lies only in the limitation of the essence defined only positively;<sup>7</sup> b) the essence moreover gained in the tradition the following terms and meanings:

<sup>5</sup> Compare with *Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 25: "Hoc autem modo se habet philosophia prima ad alias scientias speculativas, nam ab ipsa omnes aliae dependent, utpote ab ipsa accipientes sua principia et directionem contra negantes principia, ipsaque prima philosophia tota ordinatur ad Dei cognitionem sicut ad ultimum finem, unde et scientia divina nominatur."

<sup>6</sup> The topic and the method of its elaboration as found in *De ente* refers to and resembles in many aspects the teaching of Avicenna. We should not forget that Thomas Aquinas did not see the origin of the teachings on the plurality of forms in Avicenna as contemporary scholars do, although for instance in *Summa Theologiae* I<sup>a</sup>, q. 76 a. 4 ad 4 we can read: "Ad quartum dicendum quod Avicenna possuit formas substantiales elementorum integras remanere in mixto, mixtionem autem fieri secundum quod contrariae qualitates elementorum reducuntur ad medium. Sed hoc est impossibile."

<sup>7</sup> *De ente*, c. 1., 14–26: "Nomen igitur essentiae non sumitur ab ente secundo modo dicto, aliqua enim hoc modo dicuntur entia, quae essentiam non habent, ut patet in privationibus; sed sumitur essentia ab ente primo modo dicto. Unde Commentator in eodem loco dicit quod ens primo modo dictum est *quod significat essentiam rei*. Et quia, ut dictum est, ens hoc modo dictum dividitur per decem genera, oportet quod essentia significet aliquid commune omnibus naturis, per quas diversa entia in diversis generibus et speciebus collocantur, sicut humanitas est essentia hominis, et sic de aliis." Here Thomas mentions two methods out of three that define being in Aristo-

i) *quiddity* (*quidditas*) – to what extent it is palpable by definition and intellect, and to what extent it defines being in its due genus and species;<sup>8</sup>

ii) “*whatness*” (*quod-quid-erat-esse*) – to what extent the being has an existence through it;

iii) *form* – to what extent it is a certainty (*certitudo*) of every thing;<sup>9</sup>

iv) *nature* (*natura*) – to what extent it is a principle of being, that we can recognize by intellect.<sup>10</sup>

Before giving his own definition, Thomas considers it important to mention these meanings that are similar in some aspects but different in others. Let's focus first on what should be considered as a common feature that is characteristic for any understanding of the concept of essence. This feature is primarily intelligibility. Each of the mentioned meanings considers certain ways of understanding essence by intellect. Their common base is, however, always the intelligibility of this principle. This feature is a trivial acknowledgment in relation to essences but below we can

tle's work: a) from the point of view of categories; b) from the point of view of possibility and reality; c) from the point of view of truthfulness. For Aristotle and his concept of being see Aristotle, *Metaphys.*, IX, 1045b 32–3.

<sup>8</sup> *De ente*, c. 1., 27–31: “Et quia illud, per quod res constituitur in proprio genere vel specie, est hoc quod significatur per diffinitionem indicantem quid est res, inde est quod nomen essentiae a philosophis in nomen quidditatis mutatur.”

<sup>9</sup> *De ente*, c. 1., 31–36: “Et hoc est quod philosophus frequenter nominat *quod quid erat esse*, id est hoc per quod aliquid habet esse quid. Dicitur etiam forma secundum quod per formam significatur certitudo uniuscuiusque rei, ut dicit Avicenna in II metaphysicae suae.” For the concept of *certitudo* compare with e.g. Avicenna, *Metaphysica*, ed. Van Riet, Louvain 1977–1992, III, 5; *Metaphys.* I, 6: “Redeamus igitur et dicamus quod de his que manifesta sunt est hoc quod unaqueque res habet certitudinem propriam quae est ejus quidditas [...] unaqueque res habet certitudinem qua est id quod est.”

<sup>10</sup> *De ente*, c. 1., 36–45: “Hoc etiam alio nomine natura dicitur accipiendo naturam secundum primum modum illorum quattuor, quos Boethius in libro De duabus naturis assignat, secundum scilicet quod natura dicitur omne illud quod *intellectu quoquo modo capi potest*. Non enim res est intelligibilis nisi per diffinitionem et essentiam suam. Et sic etiam philosophus dicit in V metaphysicae quod omnis substantia est natura.” Compare with. Boethius, *De Persona at duabus naturis*, [in:] *Manlii Severini Boetii Opera omnia*, tomus posterior, accurate J.-P. Migne, Parisiis 1847 (Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina [=PL], 64), c. 1, col. 1341 BC: “Nam si de omnibus rebus naturam dici placet, talis definitio dabitur, quae res omnes quae sunt possit includere. Ergo erit hujusmodi: Natura est earum rerum quae, cum sint, quoquomodo capi possunt.”

see that it makes sense to always keep this basic feature in mind.<sup>11</sup> The manner itself by which Thomas Aquinas introduces us to the topic also seems to suggest that he emphasizes mainly the fact that no matter how we understand essence, it is always what is primarily related to the intellect.

Let's now focus on the differences in each of the meanings. We should add here that these differences must be understood rather as different aspects of the same concept. What they have in common is that they do not so much accept intelligibility alone but rather the manner of its realization in beings. The *quod-quid-erat-esse* together with the *form* refers to Aristotle's theory of hylemorphism. Here Thomas Aquinas clearly demonstrates that he is aware of the identity of essence and form in Aristotle's work. We should not forget this fact while analyzing *De ente. Certitudo* in Avicenna's work plays a similar role as the principle of being, form.<sup>12</sup> No less important is the connection of the meaning of essence with the concept of nature (*natura*). Here Thomas Aquinas states first the Boethius definition – what is important, however, is its development and specification, which relates the principle of intelligibility to the concrete existence of being.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The first sentence in the foreword contains the following assertion: "...ens et essentia sunt quae primo intellectu concipiuntur, ut dicit Avicenna in primo libro suae Metaphysicae, ..." It seems then that the aspect of intelligibility cannot be overrated, especially when we realize that not only the human intellect is involved. For the topic of the first concepts of reasoning see É. Gilson, *Éléments d'une métaphysique Thomiste de l'être*, "Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge" 40 (1973), p. 7–36. Worth mentioning from the point of view of the first concept is mainly the work of Jan A. Aertsen who provides the following interpretation of the concept of essentia in Thomas's introduction in *De ente et essentia*. According to Aertsen we need to understand the concept of *essentia* in the sense of the term *res*, which of course belongs to the transcendental. From our point of view it is important that the terms *ens* and *res* define the same but *secundum rationem* differs. This in our context means that being is taken in the aspect of its existence (*ens*) and also in the aspect of its definiteness (*res*). The aspect of the definiteness of things is defined with the term *essentia*. This means that we always talk about the principle of being and not about being. Compare with J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval philosophy and the transcendentals: the case of Thomas Aquinas*, Leiden 1996, p. 159–160.

<sup>12</sup> Compare with fn. 10.

<sup>13</sup> *De ente*, c. 1, 45–53: "Tamen nomen naturae hoc modo sumptae videtur significare essentiam rei, secundum quod habet ordinem ad propriam operationem rei, cum nulla res propria

The mentioned meanings that Thomas Aquinas provides before his own examination of the concept of essence are oriented towards two areas. We need to understand essence as an intelligible principle of the definiteness (*certitudo*) of every being and at the same time we need to understand it as a principle that ontologically founds each individual being.

This introduction will allow us to evaluate one of the most important terminological settings in *De ente*, where Thomas Aquinas claims that neither form nor matter is essence. By this he unambiguously stands in contrast to Aristotle's theory, which considers form and essence identical to a certain degree.<sup>14</sup> This thesis is completed further on by another one. Because in the definition of natural beings we need to lay down matter, the essence of these beings has to contain matter too:

Patet ergo, quod essentia comprehendit et materiam et formam.<sup>15</sup>

In his reasoning of this thesis, Thomas Aquinas builds on Aristotle's problem of the definition of material beings and its resolution in

operatione destituatur. Quiditatis vero nomen sumitur ex hoc, quod per diffinitionem significatur. Sed essentia dicitur secundum quod per eam et in ea ens habet esse.”

<sup>14</sup> As it usually is with the precise definition of meanings of terms in Aristotle's work, we can for instance mention here the term substance, here we have to point out the fact that essence also can be understood in two ways: a) one where essence identifies with form, which in this paper we consider from the methodological point of view as the base, as it enables us to capture the changes in the understanding of the concept of a form in Thomas Aquinas, which then happened in connection to overpassing the physical framework by means of the real distinction and also by accepting Avicenna's concept of corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*); b) the second one where we find such notes in Aristotle's work that at least complicate the mentioned identification. Compare with Aristotle, *Phys.*, III, 192a9; 194a12; *Metaphys.*, VII, 128b33.

<sup>15</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 24–25; *In Metaphysic.*, lib. 5 l. 10 n. 5: “Quartum modum ponit ibi amplius quod dicit quod etiam quidditas rei, quam significat definitio, dicitur substantia uniuscuiusque. Haec autem quidditas sive rei essentia, cuius definitio est ratio, differt a forma quam dixit esse substantiam in secundo modo, sicut differt humanitas ab anima. Nam forma est pars essentiae vel quidditatis rei. Ipsa autem quidditas vel essentia rei includit omnia essentialia principia. Et ideo genus et species dicuntur esse substantia eorum, de quibus praedicantur, hoc ultimo modo. Nam genus et species non significant tantum formam, sed totam rei essentiam.” Compare with É. Gilson, *Éléments d'une métaphysique Thomiste de l'être*, p. 15; J. F. Wippel, *The metaphysic thoughts of Thomas Aquinas*, Washington 2000, p. 203.

Avicenna's<sup>16</sup> and Averroes's work.<sup>17</sup> Like Aristotle, Avicenna also realized that the definition cannot be constituted from components that do not create a unity. This incentive then outbalanced the other problem Aristotle's theory cannot cope with, which Avicenna's can but at a price that he has to pay for in introducing corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*). The main problem of Aristotle and Avicenna was how to combine the following two requirements: a) the definition of natural beings must contain matter; b) the form of material things is captured in a definition through intellect, which is of course immaterial. It seems that a paradox is created, which in Aristotle's system, is very difficult to resolve. Averroes, on the other hand, followed the line *form-concept-definition*, but at the price of breaking the unity of the resulting definition of material things.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Compare with *De ente*, c. 2, 14–17: “Diffinitio autem substantiarum naturalium non tantum formam continet, sed etiam materiam; aliter enim diffinitiones naturales et mathematicae non differrent.”

<sup>17</sup> Compare with *De ente*, c. 2, 17–25: “Nec potest dici quod materia in diffinitione substantiae naturalis ponatur sicut additum essentiae eius vel ens extra essentiam eius, quia hic modus diffinitionis proprius est accidentibus, quae perfectam essentiam non habent. Unde oportet quod in diffinitione sua subiectum recipiant, quod est extra genus eorum. Patet ergo quod essentia comprehendit materiam et formam.” Compare with *In Metaphysic.* lib. 7 l. 9 n. 8.: “Ad evidentiam autem horum, quae in hoc capitulo dicuntur, sciendum est, quod circa definitiones rerum, et earum essentias duplex est opinio. Quidam enim dicunt, quod tota essentia speciei est ipsa forma, sicut quod tota essentia hominis est anima. Et propter hoc dicunt, quod eadem secundum rem est forma totius quae significatur nomine humanitatis, et forma partis, quae significatur nomine animae, sed differunt solum secundum rationem: nam forma partis dicitur secundum quod perficit materiam, et facit eam esse in actu: forma autem totius, secundum quod totum compositum per eam in specie collocatur. Et ex hoc volunt, quod nullae partes materiae ponantur in definitione indicante speciem, sed solum principia formalia speciei. Et haec opinio videtur Averrois et quorundam sequentium eum.”

<sup>18</sup> Averroes interprets Aristotle in a way that is substantial for us. That is that form is systematically related to matter and not with its intelligible content. Thomas, in his Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, to a certain extent advocates Averroes's position in the interpretation of Aristotle's text, but we as philosophers should go beyond the mere interpretation. According to Thomas, this step was done by Avicenna, which he shows by leaning towards his teachings in this question. Compare with Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysic.*, 7 l. 9 n. 8: “Et haec opinio videtur Averrois et quorundam sequentium eum. Sed videtur esse contra *intentionem* Aristotelis.” Compare with A. A. Maurer, *Form and essence in the philosophy of St. Thomas*, “*Mediaeval Studies*” 13 (1951), p. 175: “However, even though Aristotle identified quiddity with form, we find tendencies and suggestions in his



According to him, the definition of a material thing takes matter as the subiectum, as something that introduces into the definition of material things a relation which is between substance and accident.

Avicenna resolved this problem by introducing corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*).<sup>19</sup> As we need to determine matter within categories, it needs to have its form even if the form is not complete. In this way matter gets into the definition of material things without the full intelligibility of this definition and the ontological principle of form or definiteness being threatened. Here we also need to mention the relation between essence and form in Avicenna's work. The essence of all things corresponds to the forms that compose the given thing. The model of this composition is componential. It can be said that the logical order corresponds to the ontological one. At this point, we don't need to engage in the relation of Thomas Aquinas to this componential model, i.e. to the theory of plurality of forms. What is, however, important in this context is that Thomas Aquinas adopts the concept of corporeal form.<sup>20</sup>

philosophy which point to the integration of matter in quiddity. It is these which St. Thomas seizes upon and develops, leading the Stagirite into avenues unknown to himself"

<sup>19</sup> We believe that the concept of a *corporeal form* (*forma corporeitatis*) is key in understanding how matter can be a part of the definitions and thus also the essence of Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas. Avicenna is considered the father of this concept which, however, outside the context of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas signalizes the pluralism of forms. Avicenna introduced the concept of corporeal form mainly to be able to describe categorically the first matter. By doing this, he equipped it with a minimal level of intelligibility. Thomas Aquinas kept the term corporeal form but he liberated it from the pluralistic context. A corporeal form is then according to him all the forms that result in three dimensions. He preserved the term and definition of the concept but refused the pluralism of forms and the logical-ontological model of the reality from which it is formed. This is also one of the main topics in *De ente et essentia*. On the concept of corporeal form compare with A. Hyman, *Aristotle's 'first matter' and Avicenna's and Averroes' 'corporeal form'*, [in:] *Harry Austryn Wolfson jubilee volume*, vol. 1, Jerusalem 1965, p. 385–406; P. Slovácěk, *Corporeal form and the human soul in Thomas Aquinas' work*, "The Czech and Slovak Journal of Humanities: Philosophica" 1 (2001), s. 8–28; R. Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes*, p. 428: „La conception avicennienne de la forme corporelle, la doctrine de la permanence des éléments dans le mixte et celle de la hiérarchie des âmes nous permet de considérer le philosophe arabe comme un véritable précurseur de lathéorie pluraliste.“

<sup>20</sup> Compare with e.g. *De ente*, c. 4, 30–33: "Et hoc non potest esse, quia ipsa etiam forma corporalis actu intelligibilis est, sicut et aliae formae, secundum quod a materia abstrahitur." This thesis needs to be understood in a wider meaning of the word. We can find elsewhere the term for-

We have to say right away that he substantially modifies it but nevertheless he keeps one of its essential features – it is a concept that allows a closer relation of form and matter.<sup>21</sup> Their correlation is, with the help of this term, incorporated into the contents of each term that captures material being. This relation is shown not only by the fact that form as a form refers to matter but by the fact that the natural form or human soul itself, as a corporeal form, refers to matter. Thanks to this form we can consider materialness an essential feature which in Aristotelism came out of any form almost as a matter of fact.<sup>22</sup> Form and matter are correlative principles in Aristotle's understanding. Here we can also mention that this resolution has substantial consequences in terms of the paradox between Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology. If the concept of corporeal form enables us to make materiality the essential definiteness or

ma corporeitatis but it is not too common (9 cases in Index Thomisticus). It even seems that Thomas stops using it in his later work. However, this can be explained by the fact that it resembled too closely the theory of pluralism of forms and could easily lead to the thought that Thomas's teaching does not differ much. The term *forma corporeitatis* itself, however, is not important. What is important is the definition that captures this concept. Each form that results in three dimensions is a corporeal form as the corporeal form is defined exactly like this by Avicenna.

<sup>21</sup> This thesis must be understood in the context of the following considerations. We do not claim that matter was recognizable or had a form of its own.

<sup>22</sup> We believe that such preserving of the concept of *corporeal form* corresponds to what later on gained the name *transcendental relation* or *habitus essentialis*. These terms will have a special use mainly in the individuation of a soul after its separation. If our reasoning is correct, it shows that the same problem or relation can be interpreted by Thomas Aquinas from the point of view of various conceptual definitions in terms of resolving various problems. Here we should add that the term of *corporeal form* will be abandoned by Thomas in time. The main reason is obvious; it is too closely related to the theory of the plurality of forms. For the mentioned concepts of the individuation of the human soul, compare with R. A. O'Donnell, C. S. P., *Individuation: an example of the development in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, "The New Scholasticism" 33 (1959), p. 65–66: "Precisely what type of relation is it which we predicate here of the human soul? St. Thomas invents a special term to describe it: *habitus essentialis*. Some modern Thomists think that the term *transcendental relation* describes it with precision. But what is a *habitus essentialis*? What is a *transcendental relation*? It is surely not a predicamental habit or relation; St. Thomas uses the adjective *essentialis* seemingly to distinguish it from a *habitus accidentalis*. And all predicamental habits or relations are accidents. If it is not, then a relation which inherits accidentally in the separated human soul, it can only belong to the soul essentially. And since the soul is simple, this differs in no way from saying that it is identified with the essence of the soul."

essential feature, which could be expressed by making materiality one component of the contents of the concept and its definition, no relation to matter necessarily follows from form as such. We can of course argue that in Aristotle's understanding, no relation of a form to matter necessarily follows when the unmoved mover is a pure act. In this sense, we should, however, realize that it is primarily a possibility of thinking about more than one immaterial substance (intellects), mainly human intellect and the soul. This problem arose for instance in Avicenna's work into introducing matter to intellect.

While reading the definition of essence by Thomas Aquinas, we especially need to keep in mind the following thesis:

Unde oportet ut essentia qua res denominatur ens, non tantum sit forma nec tantum materia, sed utrumque, quamvis huiusmodi esse suo modo sola forma sit causa.<sup>23</sup>

In the text following this part we can find the actual explanation by Thomas Aquinas. We get acquainted with *materia signata* and *materia non signata*. The *materia signata* is a principle of individuation; it is concrete realized matter.<sup>24</sup> The *materia non signata* is a part of the concept

<sup>23</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 54–57.

<sup>24</sup> Individuation represents a very wide question which, like the question of a soul, can be interpreted from various points of view. A) On the level of accidents, the cause of individuality is the accidents of quantity – realization of three dimensions. Nevertheless, the accidental level cannot explain individuality on the substantial level. The being of accidents is founded in being that they gain from the form. The b) level is then the individualization of the substance regardless of its three-dimensional realization. The latter one is only its accidental expression. Here we can look at the question from the point of view of two perspectives: i) hylemorphical and ii) metaphysical. Compare with J. Owens, *Thomas Aquinas (B. CA. 1225; 1274)*, [in:] *Individuation in scholasticism: the latter Middle Ages and the counter reformation*, ed. J. J. E. Gracia, Albany 1994, p. 173: "It is partly logical, namely, in the Porphyrian tree in which the predicates descend from the most universal down to the most specific in relation to the individual subject of which they are asserted or denied. It is partly in the realm of natural philosophy, in which the substantial form is received into matter and multiplied numerically by that reception. It is also metaphysical, insofar as individuation means the unity of a thing in itself and thereby its differentiation from others, for unity is a transcendental property that follows upon being."

and definition. Thomas Aquinas places the *materia non signata* into the definition of man, if it is a man indeed.<sup>25</sup>

This explanation seems sufficient at first sight. However, it does not answer the question of how matter is in the essence of material things. This thesis seems to be in conflict with Thomas's text which places the *materia non signata* into the essence of a human being, to the extent that he is man. That is the one that is only the content of the concept and the feature of the definition. However, we still need to ask: is this answer really sufficient? Is the affirmation of essence in the sense of *whatness* (*quid*), which is in the sense of essence captured by reason, referring to matter enough for us? The answer to this question was indicated in the introductory description of the possible meanings of the concept of essence. We cannot forget that intelligibility is only the first of them. Our suspicion is confirmed below in the text where Thomas, following Avicenna, also differentiates three basic meanings of the concept of essence or the three basic modes of essence. If we remain, rather, at the second mode, by which Thomas and not tradition, presents to us the question of essence, the main modes are these:

a) essence as it is in itself;<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 43–87: “Et ideo sciendum est quod materia non quolibet modo accepta est individuationis principium, sed solum materia signata; Et dico materiam signatam, quae sub determinatis dimensionibus consideratur. Haec autem materia in diffinitione quae est hominis, in quantum est homo, non ponitur, sed poneretur in diffinitione Sortis, si Sortes diffinitionem haberet. In diffinitione autem hominis ponitur materia non signata: non enim in diffinitione hominis ponitur hoc os et haec caro, sed os et caro absolute, quae sunt materia hominis non signata. Sic ergo patet quod essentia hominis et essentia Sortis non differt nisi secundum signatum et non signatum.”

<sup>26</sup> *De ente*, c. 3, 26–41: “Natura autem vel essentia sic accepta potest dupliciter considerari: uno modo, secundum rationem propriam, et haec est absoluta consideratio ipsius. Et hoc modo nihil est verum de ea nisi quod convenit sibi secundum quod huiusmodi. Unde quicquid aliorum attribuat sibi, falsa est attributio. Verbi gratia, homini in eo quod est homo convenit rationale et animal et alia, quae in diffinitione eius cadunt. Album vero aut nigrum vel quicquid huiusmodi, quod non est de ratione humanitatis, non convenit homini in eo quod homo. Unde si quaeratur utrum ista natura sic considerata possit dici una vel plures, neutrum concedendum est, quia utrumque est extra intellectum humanitatis et utrumque potest sibi accidere. Si enim pluralitas esset de intellectu eius, nunquam posset esse una, cum tamen una sit secundum quod est in Sorte. Similiter si unitas esset de ratione eius, tunc esset una et eadem Sortis et Platonis nec posset in pluribus plurificari.”

- b) essence in intellect;
- c) essence in things.<sup>27</sup>

We can put this division into connection with the statement of the presence of matter in the essences of material things. It seems, then, that the reasoning we have seen in Thomas Aquinas's work so far relates rather to the first two modes. As far as the first mode is concerned, materiality undoubtedly also belongs to the essential features of material beings. Regarding the fact that this mode takes into account only what belongs to the being of a certain species as the being of this species, regardless of the modus of the being of this essence, regardless of whether we consider essence as capturable by intellect or essence as the ontological principle of the being, we can say that for this way of understanding essence the suggested explanation by Thomas on the presence of matter in essence is valid too. If we consider the essence of things as they are in intellect, then it follows that exactly this mode is the best suited for the explanation being explored. The third mode will then cause the biggest problems. The essence of a concrete thing is the principle accepting the concrete act or the principle of the concrete thing. We cannot consider it as common. In this sense, not even its potential parts, which are parts only because the essence as a whole is considered from a certain point of view, understood as undefined in the sense in which Thomas Aquinas places indefiniteness against individuality. The genus stands indefinitely against the species and the species is undefined against the concrete.

Compare with E. C. Sweeney, *Supposition, signification, and universals*, "Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie" 42 (1995), p. 282–283.

<sup>27</sup> *De ente*, c. 3, 52–67: "Haec autem natura duplex habet esse, unum in singularibus et aliud in anima, et secundum utrumque consequuntur dictam naturam accidentia. Et in singularibus etiam habet multiplex esse secundum singularium diversitatem et tamen ipsi naturae secundum suam primam considerationem, scilicet absolutam, nullum istorum esse debetur. Falsum enim est dicere quod essentia hominis in quantum huiusmodi habeat esse in hoc singulari, quia si esse in hoc singulari conveniret homini in quantum est homo, nunquam esset extra hoc singulare. Similiter etiam si conveniret homini in quantum est homo non esse in hoc singulari, nunquam esset in eo. Sed verum est dicere quod homo non in quantum est homo habet quod sit in hoc singulari vel in illo aut in anima."

These considerations can be summarized in the following method. Thomas Aquinas is aware of the disputability of introducing matter into the essence of material beings. He offers an explanation of this disputability, but only on the level of essence as an intellectually captured principle of being. We can consider the *materia non signata* a part of the definition or the feature defining the content of the concept. He provides an explanation of the presence of matter in essence that we understand as the principle of the concrete being only allusively in the currently analyzed place. However, it seems that we need to search for it in terms of his reception of the issue connected with the concept of corporeal form. The latter seems to correspond on the ontological level to the *materia non signata* or to essence, which we consider as *signata*.<sup>28</sup> We will focus on the reception and usage of corporeal form below. This will then enable us to answer the question on the relation between the essence of a thing and the form. It is obvious that if we talk about the form, in the case of man we also talk about his soul.

### **Corporeal form and related questions in *De ente et essentia* in connection with philosophical psychology**

One of the most important consequences of introducing the concept of corporeal form is undoubtedly the pluralism of forms. This, in the eyes of Thomas Aquinas, corrupts the unity of any being. In spite of this threat, Thomas Aquinas accepted the concept of corporeal form and used it. However, we must emphasize that his use gained a considerably modified shape. We will see this best if we draw our attention to Thomas's resolution of the question of the relation between the logical and ontological order.

<sup>28</sup> Compare with *De ente*, c. 2, 85–89: “Sic ergo patet quod essentia hominis et essentia Sortis non differt nisi secundum signatum et non signatum. Unde Commentator dicit super VII metaphysicae: *Sortes nihil aliud est quam animalitas et rationalitas, quae sunt quidditas eius*.” Here we should mention that we do not consider accidents on the substantial level and thus not even the quantity.

A. Forest, in his still inspiring and important work *La structure métaphysique du concret selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, described Avicbron as Thomas's main opponent, whom he had faced already in *De ente*. The work that we are now examining is, according to the mentioned author, aimed against Avicbron.<sup>29</sup> This critique leads the way to answering the question on the relation of common concepts to things. The fact that this question is the subject of examination in *De ente* is stated right in the introduction, where the relation between the essence of a thing and logical concepts represents one of the main issues.

Above we became acquainted with the concept of designation (*designatio*). Within the relation of essence and common concepts, this question has a privileged position. It differentiates the thomistic solution from the pluralistic solution. Thomas Aquinas continues the connection to the question of the presence of matter in the essence of material things. Like the *materia non signata* in the essence of material things, the species is also in genus in an unidentified way. The capturing of this point is crucial for the whole of thomistic logics and metaphysics. A concept of form and essence that goes back to the original source, meaning to Aristotle, announces itself. According to this theory, no species is formed in a "mechanical" way, by practically composing the form determined by the genus concept and the form determined by the concept of specific difference. The definition can surely be divided into these concepts or parts, but the ontological order does not correspond to this division.<sup>30</sup> This is something we could express differently. The concept of genus and difference do not designate the form of genus or the form of difference. The concept of body (*corpus*) that we predicate about men as well

<sup>29</sup> A. Forest, *La structure métaphysique du concret selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris 1956, p. 86: "On sait l'importance considérable que joue dans les discussions scolastiques la doctrine du *Fons Vitae*; le *De Ente* de saint Thomas est sans doute dans une très grande mesure une réponse au traité d'Avicbron qui venait d'être traduit."

<sup>30</sup> Compare with E. C. Sweeney, *Supposition, signification, and universals*, op. cit., p. 269: "For Aquinas the connection between language and being, specifically between signification, supposition, and different types of supposition, on the one hand, and the structure of the real, on the other, is not and could not be one of simple correspondence, partially because of the nature of language, partially because of Aquinas's metaphysics."

as about a stone does not designate in both cases the same form. If we take a look at a similar example in Avicenna's or Avicenna's work, we find that the concept of corporeal form, that is the concept that defines the form constituting any material being, to the extent that it is, designates unequivocally corporeal form, which according to Thomas leads to the result that all beings except for one are only accidents. Such a result is of course not acceptable, albeit only from the ethical point of view. From this statement it follows that only the species concepts designate unequivocally a definite form. However, we cannot forget the question of the matter we were discussing above.

The topic we are going through is as important from the psychological point of view as it is from the metaphysical and logical point of view. By refusing an unequivocal predication of the genus concepts and concepts of differences, Thomas, in his early work, stands evidently and substantively against such forms of dualism that arose from the eclectic Aristotelism. The form that constitutes every being in due genus and species is not *perfectio*, no addition of already formally defined being. In this way he is getting back to the legacy of authentic Aristotelism also on the psychological level.

In connection with the analyzed problem, Thomas then in *De ente* provides an example which is, especially from the philosophical psychology of Thomas Aquinas, extremely important. The example relates to the already mentioned concept of "body" (*corpus*). The body can be then understood in two ways according to Thomas:

a) The concept of a body designates the genus. In this way the concept designates every being regardless of whether any other perfection besides the three-dimensional realization arises from this body or not.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, the body is predicated about man and also about stone. A note specifying and emphasizing that three dimensions alone are the body belonging to the category of quantity is essential. This note is essential

<sup>31</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 135–140: "Potest etiam hoc nomen corpus hoc modo accipi, ut significet rem quamdam, quae habet talem formam, ex qua tres dimensiones possunt in ea designari, quaecumque forma sit illa, sive ex ea possit provenire aliqua ulterior perfectio sive non."



in the sense that it reminds us on what level of the structure of being we are. The subject of the examination is not accidental but a substantial definition of being. In this sense, we only understand materiality alone, we cannot imagine it as the realization of three dimensions; this is already a matter of quantity.<sup>32</sup> We will repeat what is important: the genus concept of the body can be predicated about each being that possesses the possibility of three dimension realization. This possibility alone is shown by substantial forms of various species, which by the genus concept of the body, are determined only in a non-defined way (*implicite*). If we performed an analysis of the concept of man for instance, based on how we see it in the Porphyrian tree, we would not do anything more than make a logical division which otherwise does not correspond to reality in the sense that every grade corresponds to a certain form adding additional perfection.

b) The concept of the body can be understood as designating only and exclusively the form out of which three dimensions arise.<sup>33</sup> In this sense then, everything, which is extra, is beyond this understood concept. It is most appropriate that Thomas, in relation to the body understood this way, uses the term *cum praecisione*. This tells us that this way of understanding the body is not original but derived, although it also has its justification. It also shows us that from the point of view of Thomas's theory of one substantial form, the body can be understood in this way only as *cum praecisione*. If we did the same in the system of Avicenna or Avicbron, we could not differentiate these two ways of understanding the body at all.

Now we can move on to the two related questions that Thomas observes from these two mentioned points of view – to corporeal form and

<sup>32</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 110–115: “Corpus enim, secundum quod est in genere substantiae, dicitur ex eo quod habet talem naturam, ut in eo possint designari tres dimensiones; ipsae enim tres dimensiones designatae sunt corpus, quod est in genere quantitatis.”

<sup>33</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 123–129: “Potest ergo hoc nomen corpus significare rem quamdam, quae habet talem formam, ex qua sequitur in ipsa designabilitas trium dimensionum cum praecisione, ut scilicet ex illa forma nulla ulterior perfectio sequatur; sed si quid aliud superadditur, sit praeter significationem corporis sic dicti.”

the soul. In the analyzed section, we can see interesting features. In terms of the first concept, the following applies:

Non enim anima est alia forma ab illa, per quam in re illa poterant designari tres dimensiones; et ideo, cum dicebatur quod corpus est quod habet talem formam, ex qua possunt designari tres dimensiones in eo, intelligebatur: quaecumque forma esset, sive animalitas sive lapideitas sive quaecumque alia.<sup>34</sup>

We should understand this in the way that a) corporeal form or form which constitutes three dimensions can be understood as any form of material being; b) this thesis is important especially when applied to man's soul. The soul of man is then the corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*), the same as the form of a stone. We can, however, say this only because corporeal form (or body) does not declare itself unequivocally. The soul of man constitutes a man as a unity, including his body. Here we can mention the terms *transcendental relation* and *habitus essentialis*. As the soul is indivisible, as we cannot point to any of its parts, it is as a whole corporeal form. This, however, does not mean anything else than that it naturally relates to matter. The character and the extent of this relation are not the subject of examination for the time being.

In terms of the second concept, we reach a completely different understanding. With regards to corporeal form, we gain it only from the operation of the intellect (*cum praecisione*), which turns away from everything except from the body itself. If we take a look at this question from the point of view of Thomas's theory, we will find that we are looking at, to some extent, an artificial operation and the concept, which designates the form of a body. Understood in this way, it does not correspond to any form that in reality constitutes a material being. This way of understanding the body, however, prominently resembles the theory of Avicenna and Avicbron. In these theories, it is absolutely natural to think about the body in the mentioned sense.

<sup>34</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 142–148.

We can summarize that the concept of the body can be described in two ways. We can define it as a general concept of all beings, which have such a form, or an essence which constitutes three dimensions. We can also define the body by defining it as a part of a whole. In the same way that the form of a human body does not consist of the sum of forms of its defined parts, the whole, which includes the body as its part, does not consist of such a constituted form. This means that the concept of the body understood in the second way does not designate corporeal form but only a part which is formed by a form of a whole (by a corporeal form, soul or other form of material beings), and if it designates a form, it is only indirectly through one and only of its features.

Let us now focus on the consequences that this understanding of a body has for the understanding of a soul. Let us compare two texts:

Et hoc modo corpus erit integralis et materialis pars animalis, quia sic anima erit praeter id quod significatum est nomine corporis et erit superveniens ipsi corpori, ita quod ex ipsis duobus, scilicet anima et corpore, sicut ex partibus constituetur animal.<sup>35</sup>

In substantiis igitur compositis, forma et materia nota est, ut in homine anima et corpus.<sup>36</sup>

Here we can think about their mutual relation. At first sight their mutual non-compatibility is obvious. The first text claims two things: a) the body is an integral part of man. The concept of the body however, as we shown above, defines *cum praecisione* as such a form which provides the possibility of realizing three dimensions and this only. In this sense, the body is a part which we can, with regards to the above said, define as consisting of form and matter. To be more precise, we could say that it consists of a form-soul and matter. This way of understanding the question, however, does not comply with the way of understanding the part

<sup>35</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 129–134.

<sup>36</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 1–2.

of the body, *cum praecisione*, and with the first text, b) against the body understood in this way stands the soul as something that is above the realization of the three dimensions alone. In this sense, the body does not contain the soul but it relates to it as to its part. Here it can be helpful to once again move this to the ontological level. If the soul is outside of what the body is, and the body is yet still a formed part, what is the relation between the soul and this form? Since we know we are moving in the derived mode of understanding the concept of a body, it is obvious at first sight that the asked question should be directed only towards emphasizing the non-authenticity of this understanding of the relation between the body and the soul. If we wanted to take it seriously though, we would have to answer the question by saying the soul is and is not outside of the body. This problem is, however, unacceptable on the level where we try to capture the parts of the authentic whole. We need to change not only our understanding of the body but also its part, i.e. the soul. In the same way as we understand the body as a part that we define by corporeality, we need to define the soul as a part which overtakes or even excludes corporeality, i.e. the realization of three dimensions. If we understand the soul in this sense, we do not have to deal with the contradictory answer to the asked question. The soul in this sense is not a form of a body but at the same time it is an integral part of a man. In the case of a man, the soul understood in this way will be the part of the man, which is the holder or the subject of the intellect and the will, i.e. the events which fully overpass the possibilities of the purely material subject.

Let us now focus on the second text. It shows us the unproblematic position of hylemorphism regarding the psychological question. Soul is form. If we accepted Avicenna's theory or the theory of his Latin followers of the first half of the thirteenth century, we could unite this view with the previous one. *Perfectio* has always been in a certain sense the perfect act of the body; it was in a certain sense accepted by a relatively passive and mainly material and already formed subiectum. In the case of Thomas, we are not offered this step though. We have to take the mentioned thesis seriously with all its consequences. The soul is form and

body is matter, or also the first matter.<sup>37</sup> The form in Thomas Aquinas's understanding cannot relate to anything already formed. Even here the soul is completely outside of matter, but it gives the foundation of the whole man including his parts – any parts, e.g. a part that is a composition of both these principles and nothing else, or a part that is only one of them. The fact that we are talking about the soul and the body as the subjects of activities is perhaps obvious.

Let us now compare these two approaches. The hylemorphical way of defining the soul and the body is most fundamental. This is apparent for two reasons:

a) with the help of the concepts of hylemorphical theory we can explain the concept of the soul and the body as integral parts. The body is a material part of man which is already a constituted whole of the form-soul and matter. The soul is then a form to the extent that three dimensions and also other potencies arise from it, especially intellect and will. The hylemorphical soul is then on both sides of the analysis, although understood differently, of the integral parts (soul and body) of a man.

b) the concept of the soul of man as a form designates unequivocally the species form of man which is something we cannot say about the concept of the form of the soul as an integral part. The concepts of soul and body understood as integral parts do not designate unequivocally any form. This is perhaps the aspect from which we understand man. This view will be quite precisely developed later on in the first question of *Questiones disputatae de anima*.

The analysis of the understanding of general concepts brought us to two topics which are important, as we have just observed, from the point of the widely understood psychological issue. For one thing, we again encountered the question of the unity and plurality of substantial forms, to which Thomas provided an explanation on the semantic-ontological level, and for another, we have already encountered an explicit definition of two different ways of understanding the soul and body of man. In the

<sup>37</sup> Compare with: B. C. Bazán, *The highest encomium of human body*, [in:] *Littera, sensus, sententia. Studi in onore del prof. C. J. Vansteenkiste*, a cura di A. Lobato, Milano 1991, p. 99–116.

context of *De ente et essentia*, however, we need to think through the partially analyzed relation between the soul as a form and the essence of man.

### Form, essence and soul

A good deal of what has been said seems to imply that essence cannot be identified with form. As the first argument against such an identification we can surely recall Thomas's already-mentioned words emphasizing that the essence of material beings is not only form but also matter. Another objection could take into account the difference of levels on which the individual principles find their use. We could also object, and this is closely connected to what was mentioned just before, that while form is related to matter, essence is related to its being. Essence is defined as a potentiality against its correlative principle; form is, however, in relation to its co-principle, an act. In the following text, we will try to answer some of these objections and point out the fact that none of them represents a major obstacle to understanding the essence of material things as identical to their form.

Although Thomas Aquinas, in *De ente et essentia*, in a certain sense places the essence of material things against their form, claiming that essence is more than just a form as it contains matter besides other things, it is also clear that their differentiation will not be totally distinct either for Thomas for the following reasons:

a) While defining various meanings of the concepts of essence that we can find in the philosophic tradition we became acquainted several times with how essence can be understood as form. This alone is certainly not very persuasive. We must however consider two facts. Thomas Aquinas did not deny any of the mentioned understandings as unjustified. Most certainly not the one which would identify form and essence. Furthermore, it is evident from the text of *De ente* that Thomas Aquinas hesitates a bit in how much these two concepts have a truly different meaning.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 83–291: “Et ideo humanitas significatur ut forma quaedam, et dicitur quod est forma totius, non quidem quasi superaddita partibus essentialibus, scilicet formae et materiae, sicut forma domus superadditur partibus integralibus eius, *sed magis est forma, quae est to-*

We can account for this by reasoning that Thomas, in *De ente*, overpasses the boundaries of hylemorphism to which, however, he still holds.<sup>39</sup> Finally, we could also add a certain terminological distinction of the forms, which Thomas implements later. Aristotle's form, which does not contain matter, is captured by Thomas as a *forma partis*, the essence or the form which captures the matter as a *forma totius*.<sup>40</sup>

b) In the case of spiritual beings, essence is the same as form. The soul of man is immaterial. The soul of man is a form of his body. The form of the human body is then the essence of man.<sup>41</sup>

c) The presence of matter, where matter is understood in the intelligible way, in essence – that means also in the human soul – can be explained by means of the concept of corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*).<sup>42</sup>

*tum scilicet formam complectens et materiam, tamen cum praecisione eorum, per quae nata est materia designari.*”; *De ente*, c. 4, 79–84: “Secunda differentia est quod essentiae rerum compositarum ex eo quod recipiuntur in materia designata multiplicantur secundum divisionem eius, unde contingit quod aliqua sint idem specie et diversa numero.”

<sup>39</sup> Let's add this comment here. The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas combines the theory of real distinction and hylemorphism on the basis of two presuppositions: a) the change in understanding of corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*) enables the understanding of materiality in an intelligible way which is expressed by the fact that essence contains also matter; b) by using the basic hylemorphical description of a form: *forma dat esse*. Compare with C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Thomaso d'Aquino*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Turin 1963, p. 341–342; E. C. Sweeney, *Supposition, signification, and universals*, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>40</sup> On terms *forma totius* and *forma partis*, see J. F. Wippel, *The metaphysical thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Washington 2000, p. 202; fn. 15; A. Maurer, *Form and essence in the philosophy of St. Thomas*, op. cit., p. 165–76; compare with *In V Metaphysic.*, lect. 9: “Quartum modum ponit ibi amplius quod dicit quod etiam quidditas rei, quam significat definitio, dicitur substantia uniuscuiusque. Haec autem quidditas sive rei essentia, cuius definitio est ratio, differt a forma quam dixit esse substantiam in secundo modo, sicut differt humanitas ab anima. Nam forma est pars essentiae vel quidditatis rei. Ipsa autem quidditas vel essentia rei includit omnia essentialia principia. Et ideo genus et species dicuntur esse substantia eorum, de quibus praedicantur, hoc ultimo modo. Nam genus et species non significant tantum formam, sed totam rei essentiam.”

<sup>41</sup> This argument also applies when considering the dual understanding of a soul as a principle of the activities and form of a whole. As a form of a whole, the soul is material, of course only regarding the extent to which it is a corporeal form, and of course also immaterial, both to the extent to which it is a form and also to the extent to which it performs activities not dependent on matter. Being a subject of the activities of the intellect and the will to perform these activities is divergent.

<sup>42</sup> *De ente*, c. 2, 142–148: “Non enim anima est alia forma ab illa, per quam in re illa poterant designari tres dimensiones; et ideo, cum dicebatur quod corpus est quod habet talem formam, ex

d) With regards to various levels of philosophical discourse, the objection can be used to the benefit of our interpretation. The concept of form and essence, therefore, refers only to the context in which we are to examine the intelligible principle of the being. In the introductory part of *De ente et essentia* we observed that the basic feature of essence is intelligibility and thus also definiteness. In relation to this we also mentioned that although it is a trivial character of the examined principle,

qua possunt designari tres dimensiones in eo, intelligebatur: quaecumque forma esset, sive animalitas sive lapideitas sive quaecumque alia. Et sic forma animalis implicate in forma corporis continetur, prout corpus est genus eius.” The term matter understood in the intelligible way does not make a good impression at first sight. It seems a breakage of the basic thomistic principles related to the first matter and its feature seems to announce itself. We, however, have to emphasize several facts: a) Thomas Aquinas refused the pluralism of forms; b) he, however, in his thinking for some reason preserved the term corporeal form (forma corporeitatis) or its definition; c) even the first matter to the extent to which it is created must depend on the intellect of God. Compare with *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 5: “Quamvis materia prima sit informis, tamen inest ei imitatio primae formae, quantumcumque enim debile esse habeat, illud tamen est similitudo primi entis, et secundum hoc potest habere similitudinem in Deo;” *De Ver.*, q. 3, a. 5: “Nos autem ponimus materiam esse causatam a Deo; unde necesse est ponere quod aliquo modo sit eius idea in Deo, cum quidquid ab ipso causatur, similitudinem ipsius utcumque retineat. Sed tamen, si proprie de idea loquamur, non potest poni quod materia prima habeat per se ideam in Deo distinctam ab idea formae vel compositi: quia idea proprie dicta respicit rem secundum quod est producibilis in esse; materia autem non potest exire in esse sine forma, nec e converso. Unde proprie idea non respondet materiae tantum, neque formae tantum; sed toti composito respondet una idea, quae est factiva totius et quantum ad formam et quantum ad materiam.” This cannot be reached directly in any other way than by implementing the term of corporeal form, which would, however, capture the corporeal unequivocally. This is, however, something Thomas obviously refuses. The corporeal form is then understood as any form which is defined by three dimensions. In this sense, the pluralism of forms is excluded and what remains is a minimal recognizability, that is the intelligibility of the first matter, which is, however, only mediated. The first matter is not recognizable directly as it does not have a form on its own but it is recognizable indirectly to the extent to which various material forms provide it with being, to the extent to which it is its act. For more on this matter, please compare with A. Maurer, *Form and essence in the philosophy of St. Thomas*, op. cit., p. 175: “What is more, it now becomes possible to see that matter enters into essence even regarded from the viewpoint of intelligibility. The existence of each being is a gift of God, created out of nothing according to an intelligible pattern which is a divine idea. In the case of material being, matter forms a part of that intelligible pattern. So even though strictly speaking there is no divine idea of prime matter, for in itself it neither exists nor is knowable, still there is a divine idea of the composite, which includes prime matter. Although unintelligible in itself, prime matter is thus essential to the full intelligibility of the composite and enters in full right into the essence of a material being.”



we still have to keep it in mind. Here we can use this feature and also the role of essence. Essence corresponds to form precisely in its intelligibility. These are principles that are primarily determined as intelligible, recognizable and as defining being. There is no reason to distinguish them. Their diverse definition, be it with the help of the terms of essence or form, really relates to the level on which we examine this intelligible principle. Form belongs to the physical framework and essence to the metaphysical one. As the two frameworks are different, the context in which we find the principle of the *certitudo* of each being is also different. This interpretation corresponds to how Thomas defines the subject of metaphysics.<sup>43</sup>

These considerations empower us to think about the human soul as of an essence. This has one important consequence. The soul can be

<sup>43</sup> Thomas's understanding of metaphysics arises from Aristotle's understanding of this philosophical field. Aristotle, however, defined the subject of metaphysics in two ways: a) the subject of metaphysics is a being as a being – ontological concept of metaphysics; b) the subject of metaphysics is an immobile and separated being, God – theological concept of metaphysics. A traditional ontological definition was advocated by Avicenna and the theological one by Averroes. Thomas Aquinas then puts both concepts into a synchrony. The subject of metaphysics is a being as a being (*ens in quantum est ens*) and its principles (*principia*). Recognition of the principles is inseparable from the recognition of the examined subject. The principles of a being are then according to Thomas of two kinds: a) complete natures and b) incomplete natures. This division is important. Complete natures are a cause or principle of the being in the causal sense (*per causalitatem*). Incomplete naturalness is common through predication (*per praedicationem*), i.e. belonging to all the members of a species. Metaphysics thus, according to Thomas, deals with its subject – the being as a being – and its causes. These causes, that is immaterial beings and incomplete causes, are not alone this subject. Should that be the other way round, metaphysics would have lost its universal (and its ontological) character. For our examination of being, the principles in the sense of incomplete natures are also very important. By these principles we understand the essence and the existence which belong to all beings to the extent to which they are beings. The subject of metaphysics is the being to the extent to which it is a being, regardless of materiality, from the point of view of its principles which is in the aspect of causality the God and in the aspect of internal metaphysical structure or predication the essence and existence (*potentia et actus sunt prima principia in genere substantiae*). This way the soul enters the framework of the examination of metaphysics, to the extent to which it is the incomplete nature founding the being. In any case it is obvious that matter in metaphysics finds itself outside the principles. Matter does not belong to the being as a being. On the subject of metaphysics compare with Thomas Aquinas, *In Boeth. De Trin.*, 5, 1; *Qodl.* 3, 8, 20; J. F. Wippel, *Metaphysical themes in Thomas Aquinas*, Washington 1984, p. 55–67.

analyzed on the metaphysical level. To be more precise we can say that the real distinction gains an anthropological-psychological importance from the point of view of our understanding of the issue. It even seems that without this dimension of the psychological issue, some of its parts are not comprehensive at all in Thomas Aquinas' work. Here we mean mainly the problem of explaining the ontological status of the separated soul or also its two definitions as a form of body and intellect provided that the soul is indivisible. The analysis of this problem, however, overpasses the framework of *De ente et essentia*. From this statement it is obvious that we now need to turn to the purely metaphysical issue of the composition of being from essence and being. Our identification of form with essence uncovers this authentic space of the psychological examination without settling on the theses of subsistence.

### **Real distinction in *De ente et essentia***

The refusal of universal hylemorphism brought Thomas Aquinas to the original problem of founding and explaining the radical distinction between the creation and the Creator.<sup>44</sup> Avicenna's solution, as is shown by its dominant presence in *De ente*, which differentiates the thing in relation to itself and in relation to the necessary being (*necesse esse*), offered Thomas Aquinas a certain lead. However, it cannot be said that he accepted Avicenna's solution fully. Here we should mention especially the relation of essence and form which is distinctively different in Thomas's and Avicenna's understanding.

Certain indications of differentiating the aspects *quo est* and *quod est* had already occurred in the philosophical tradition since Aristotle's time. The distinctions in individual concepts are, however, extensive. The terms

<sup>44</sup> Compare with A. Forest, *La structure metaphysique du concret selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, op. cit., p. 128: "Mais il se voit obligé, pour marquer l'opposition entre la simplicité de la nature divine et les caractères des natures créées, de chercher dans les créatures une nouvelle forme de distinction qui ne se ramène pas à celle de la matière et de la forme."

*quo est* and *quod est* could define various aspects of being as, for instance, the relation to God or form and matter.<sup>45</sup> Avicenna's solution is from out

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Aquinas could follow at least a few sources: a) Aristotle in *Posterior Analytics* (*Anal. Post.*, II, 7, 92 b. 10; *Metaphys.*, VIII, 3, 1043; *Phys.* IV, 1, 208 and 29) distinguishes two different aspects in knowing certain things: the knowledge of what a thing is and whether it is; b) Boethius see Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet II*, q. 2 a. 1 co.: "Et ideo in qualibet creatura est aliud ipsa creatura quae habet esse, et ipsum esse eius; et hoc est quod Boetius dicit in Lib. de Hebdomad. quod in omni eo quod est citra primum, aliud est esse et quod est"; *Contra Gentiles*, II, 54; Boethius, *De Trinitate*, PL 64, p. 1250 c: "Sed divina substantia sine materia forma est, atque ideo unum est id quod est. Reliqua enim non sunt id quod sunt; unumquodque enim habet esse cum his ex quibus est id est partibus suis, et est hoc atque hoc, id est partes suae conjunctae, sed non hoc vel hoc singulariter: ut, cum homo terrenus constet ex anima corporeque, corpus et anima est, non vel corpus vel anima"; c) some thinkers of the 13<sup>th</sup> century as for instance Alexandr Halensis, Bonaventura, Philip the Chancellor. Bonaventura also differentiates *quod est* and *quo est*. However this distinction only captures the relation of a being to God. Compare with Bonaventura, *In II Sent.*, (Quaracchi, 1882–1902), d. 3., p. 3., p. 1, a. 1., q. 1: "Certum est angelum non habere essentiam simplicem per privationem omnis compositionis: certum est enim quod angelus compositus est compositione multiplici. Potest enim considerari in comparatione ad sui principium, et sic in tantum est compositus, in quantum habet ad ipsum dependentiam. Simplicissimum enim absolutum est, et omne dependens hoc ipso cadit in aliquam compositionem, quia differt quo est et quid est. Habet secundum considerari in comparatione ad suum effectum, et sic habet componi ex substantia et potentia. Habet nihilominus considerari ut ens in genere, et sic secundum metaphysicum componitur ex actu et potentia; secundum logicum vero ex genere et differentia. Item habet considerari ut ens in se: et sic, quantum ad esse actuale, est in ipso compositio entis et esse; quantum ad esse essentiale componitur ex quo est et quod est; quantum ad esse individuale, sive personale, sic in illo reperitur quod est et quis est. Cum ergo angelica essentia dicatur simplex, hoc non est per privationem harum compositionum, sed hic certum est aliquas compositiones removeri a substantia angeli, utpote compositionem ex partibus quantitativis, et compositionem ex partibus heterogeneis, et compositionem ex naturali corporali et spirituali, qualis est in homine. Sed de compositione materiae et formae, sive materialis et formalis de hoc dubium est."; Alexandr Halensis uses similarly to Bonaventura conceptual pair of *quo est* and *quod est* to express the dependency of the being on God. Compare with *Summa Theol.*, (Quaracchi, 1924–1948), IIa P. Inq. 1. Tr. 2, q. 3, cap. 3, a. 1. p. 75: "Sed adhuc posset objici loquendo de unitate aut forma secundum se ipsam accepta intelligitur enim forma creata non indigens materia: constat quod huiusmodi forma creata esset; aut ergo esset simplex aut composita. Simplex omnino non potest esse, cum hoc soli Deo conveniat unde Augustinus in libro *De Civ. Dei*: "Ideo simplex dicitur, quia quod habet, hoc est quod habet;" unde "natura dicitur simplex cui non sit aliquid habere quod possit amittere nec aliud sit habens et id quod habetur" (XI, 10). Forma ergo ista, cum non sit simplex, erit composita; ergo altero duorum; sed non est ex aliis constituta nec cum alio possita ad constituendum tertium; Ergo non est composita. Propter hoc addendum est ut compositum etiam dicatur non tantum uno duorum modorum supra dictorum sed cuius esse est dependens ab alio et intellectus dependet ab intellectu. Licet ergo partes non habeat nec pars alterius sit nihilominus tamen compositus dicitur propter sui dependentiam

of all of the others closest to Thomas. He consistently realizes that he overpasses the narrow boundaries of hylemorphism and establishes the metaphysical composition into every being outside of God. Already in *De ente* Thomas elaborates this distinction in his own way and keeps it as a constant part of his philosophy. We will now focus on his argumentation in *De ente* in more detail.

In chapter four Thomas provides his arguments to advocate the distinction of being and essence in intellects, i.e. in angels and souls. Here we should certainly mention two contexts mentioned by Thomas:

- a) The context of Aristotle's psychology and the theory of cognition which unequivocally defines intellects as essentially immaterial;
- b) Avicbron, who is defined here by Thomas as the father of universal hylemorphism, stands against this basic understanding of intellects.<sup>46</sup>

Thomas reserves a space for these two concepts in his further examination. If we want to explain a larger number of intellects and at the same time keep the requirement on their immateriality as is the consequence of Aristotle's noetic theory, we need to offer an alternative not only to universal hylemorphism but also to Aristotle's hylemorphism. This alternative is, then, the distinction between the essence of a thing and its being.<sup>47</sup> The fact that it is a distinction, which truly grasps the structure of being, is outlined already in the first argument, which proceeds in the following way:

in esse et intellectu. Accipiendo ergo compositum aliquo trium modorum, dicetur omnis creatura composita nec alio modo potest intelligi"; d) *Liber de Causis*, compare. *De ente*, c. 4, 33–40: "Unde in anima vel in intelligentia nullo modo est compositio ex materia et forma, ut hoc modo accipiat essentia in eis sicut in substantiis corporalibus, sed est ibi compositio formae et esse. Unde in commento IX propositionis libri de causis dicitur quod intelligentia est habens formam et esse, et accipitur ibi forma pro ipsa quiditate vel natura simpliciter."

<sup>46</sup> *De ente*, c. 4, 1–22.

<sup>47</sup> On justification of the real distinction compare with J. F. Wippel, *Aquinas route to real distinction: a note to "De ente et essentia"*, "The Thomist" 43 (1979), p. 275–295; id., *The metaphysical thought of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 138–145; J. Owens, *Stages and distinction in "De ente": a rejoinder*, "The Thomist" 45 (1981), p. 99–123; L. Sweeney, *Existence/essence in Thomas Aquinas's early writings*, "Proceeding in the American Catholic Philosophical Association" 37 (1963), p. 97–130; H. R. Klocker, *Two Quodlibets on essence/existence*, "The Thomist" 46 (1982), p. 267–282.

Omnis autem essentia vel quiditas potest intelligi sine hoc quod aliquid intelligatur de esse suo; possum enim intelligere quid est homo vel Phoenix et tamen ignorare an esse habeat in rerum natura.<sup>48</sup>

In this argument we need to keep in mind two things: a) Thomas had already shown, in relation to the plurality of forms, that the order of thinking does not unequivocally correspond to the ontological order. That is why not even this text can be considered a valid and convincing argument.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless b) the definition itself of essence and especially its modes is to a considerable extent connected with a certain specific understanding of being. Here we have in mind mainly Avicenna's definition of it as an accident.<sup>50</sup> With this being (*esse*) is placed outside and also against essence as its main correlative principle. But what does accidentality on the level of substance principles mean? Accidents are predicated by substance which is not, however, in the considerations of the substance principles constituted. It seems that Avicenna had in mind accident in the sense of not belonging to the content of the concept. We could speak of accidentality in the logical not the ontological sense. Thus, the mentioned argument can be also understood as logical not metaphysical. It seems that Thomas follows Avicenna in these boundaries and it is this character, which is common to all the concepts

<sup>48</sup> *De ente*, c. 4, 98–103.

<sup>49</sup> In the work of Thomas's later period, this argument, which is called *intellectus essentiae*, is not to be found, which can lead us to the idea that Thomas very soon realized the problem of passing from the conceptual level to the ontological level. In the evaluation of this problem, two more important views on the value of the *intellectus essentiae* argument arose: a) A. Forest evaluates it only as logical and in compliance with the ambiguous correspondence between the order of thinking and the ontological order. Compare with A. Forest, *La structure metaphysique du concret selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, op. cit., p. 148: "Mais cet argument, on le voit, ne permet pas à la rigueur d'affirmer l'existence d'une distinction réelle; on ne dit pas du tout que l'essence soit une réalité, ni qu'elle compose à ce titre avec l'existence; de tels textes pourraient fort bien s'interpréter dans l'hypothèse d'une simple distinction de raison fondée."; John F. Wippel considers this argument the first step in the framework of a wider argumentation. Compare with J. F. Wippel, *Aquinas route to real distinction: a note to "De ente et essentia"*, op. cit., p. 287.

<sup>50</sup> Compare with A. Forest, *La structure metaphysique du concret selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, op. cit., p. 148.

of beings, except for the non-created one, and he uses it in the second, this time full argument.

Being is thus accidental, i.e. it does not belong to any content of the concept of created beings. Here again we should emphasize that this alone does not have any ontological consequences in the sense that being would become an accident in the common sense of the word. Nevertheless, this thesis does not apply to being that would be being alone, absolutely sole and indivisible, i.e. where being and essence would be identical. Such a being could then be only one and that is because multiplying can be reached only by these three methods: a) by adding the difference, i.e. the way in which divided intellects multiply; b) by accepting matter, i.e. the way in which material beings of the same species multiply; c) by accepting what is otherwise absolute, i.e. in the way in which the features that have a foundation in one idea multiply.<sup>51</sup>

A thing which is the being itself cannot multiply according to these methods: a) by adding the difference it would not be identical with itself but a being and some form; b) accepting matter would be even more unreasonable if we realize that matter is a pure potentiality and mainly what is through something other, through a form; only c) seems to offer an answer. This one, however, does not tell us that it is possible to multiply absolute being but the other way round. Everything, which is absolute in relation to something else, as for example absolute heat would be in relation to hot things, can be only one. Everything else is then something which participates in the absolute and which accepts it in some way. The hot thing is then not only heat but something which has heat. It is the same with being. Only God is an absolute being which can be only one

<sup>51</sup> *De ente*, c. 4, 103–113: “Nisi forte sit aliqua res, cuius quidditas sit ipsum suum esse; et haec res non potest esse nisi una et prima, quia impossibile est, ut fiat plurificatio alicuius nisi per additionem alicuius differentiae, sicut multiplicatur natura generis in species, vel per hoc quod forma recipitur in diversis materiis, sicut multiplicatur natura speciei in diversis individuis, vel per hoc quod unum est absolutum et aliud in aliquo receptum, sicut si esset quidam calor separatus, esset alius a calore non separato ex ipsa sua separatione.”

and is absolutely indivisible. On the other hand, in this sense everything must be composed, it must be *quo est* and *quod est*.<sup>52</sup>

All these considerations, according to Thomas, are valid if we acknowledge that existence applies only to the concept of God. The introductory part was based on the hypothetical assumption, which is shown not only by the structure of the argument but also by the use of lexical means. It requires addition.<sup>53</sup>

Form is a principle of all features of things, accidental or substantial. If being was caused only by form in the sense that existence would belong to the content of the concept which captures this form, this thing would be the cause of itself, which is obviously impossible. So being cannot follow on from form as its principle but only from something else, which is the cause of all other beings. This cause must be, however, only one and existing alone otherwise we would go on endlessly in the case of many causes. This reason refers to the Originator of being which can therefore be only one.<sup>54</sup>

This argument can be summarized in the following way. Let us imagine such a being whose concept is identical with existence. It arises from the assumption that it can be only one. It cannot be multiplied by either adding the difference nor accepting matter, nor by the method of accepting

<sup>52</sup> *De ente*, c. 4, 113–119: “Si autem ponatur aliqua res, quae sit esse tantum, ita ut ipsum esse sit subsistens, hoc esse non recipiet additionem differentiae, quia iam non esset esse tantum, sed esse et praeter hoc forma aliqua; et multo minus reciperet additionem materiae, quia iam esset esse non subsistens sed materiale. Unde relinquitur quod talis res, quae sit suum esse, non potest esse nisi una.”

<sup>53</sup> The provided argument is followed by what seems to be the proof of the existence of God. There are different opinions in considering the importance of this step in argumentation to the benefit of the real distinction. Compare with J. F. Wippel, *The metaphysical thought of Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit., p. 295: “The impossibility of there being more than one being in which essence and existence are identical is sufficient ground for him to conclude to their factual otherness in all else.” J. Owens, *Stages and distinction in “De ente”: a rejoinder*, op. cit., p. 123: “[...] contrary to Wippel’s view Aquinas rather needs to and does presuppose the existence of God in order to conclude to real otherness of essence and existence in other entities.”

<sup>54</sup> *De ente*, c. 4, 127–137: “Omne autem quod convenit alicui vel est causatum ex principiis naturae suae, sicut risibile in homine, vel advenit ab aliquo principio extrinseco, sicut lumen in aere ex influenza solis. Non autem potest esse quod ipsum esse sit causatum ab ipsa forma vel quidditate rei (dico sicut a causa efficiente) quia sic aliqua res esset sui ipsius causa et aliqua res seipsam in esse produceret, quod est impossibile. Ergo oportet quod omnis talis res, cuius esse est aliud quam natura sua habeat esse ab alio.”

anything else which we could express by saying it is impossible that two absolute instances of the same would exist. Based on these assumptions, everything excluding the first being which is a being identical to itself has to reach a certain non-unity, a non-unity between being and essence. The reason why there cannot be more beings whose concepts would contain existence is the fact that such a being would then be a cause of itself. It would be and would not be at the same time. The reason for implementing a real distinction is the presumption of the identity of essence and existence in God and the impossibility of a similar identity being realized in more than one case. What is important is that the structure of being composed in this way is not bound to a hylemorphical theory. However, as it follows from Aristotle's theory of cognition, he must actually overpass hylemorphism in order to avoid a certain disharmony between Aristotle's psychology and metaphysics. It is also necessary to emphasize that although Thomas gives a basis to a real distinction within the ontological structure of separated beings, this structure does not apply only to these beings but to all of them, i.e. also the material ones.<sup>55</sup>

If we have the philosophical or metaphysical field of the analysis of a being widened in this way, there are certain consequences for the framework we went over, i.e. hylemorphism. Let us now focus on the changes that occur.

1) Its being is to the essence of a thing as the act is to the potency. Here we encounter an interesting problem which, however, helps us to rather confirm the necessity to differentiate between metaphysical and physical contexts. In the physical context it applies that form is what gives being, form is definitely defined as an act. Should we simplify the situation and forget about the difficulties of explaining more intellects within hylemorphism and consider only them, then only their forms, which are non-problematically identical with essences, to be at the same time defined as an act and also as potency. From the point of view of what has been said this does not seem to be very counterintuitive, always relates

<sup>55</sup> Compare with J. F. Wippel, *Aquinas route to real distinction: a note to "De ente et essentia"*, op. cit., p. 290.



the form to something else. This aspect is even more obvious in the forms of material things. If we consider form as an act, we relate it to matter, but if we consider it as potency, we relate it to being. This also shows us that the definition of form as an act which is principal within the framework of hylemorphism is literally highly relativized in Thomas's work. This brings us back to the common character of all forms and essences, to their definiteness, which is in *De ente* still further stated. This seems to be another significant change in the understanding of form. The dual definition of the intelligible principle of being defines two frameworks of considering things. The soul can be understood as an act in relation to matter. This way we situate it into the order of change, mainly nature. The soul can then be understood as potency, as a principle accepting being which this way founds on the most basic level a man in his entirety. On this level his unity, the unity of "nature", shows itself in the clearest way, i.e. non-problematically. The soul as essence regardless of the problem of inherence in matter founds all its potencies.

2) The potency allows grading. The hierarchical order of forms and essences alone is not new in the tradition and certainly not in the hylemorphical tradition. In our context, however, it is important that the corporeal form (*forma corporeitatis*) or corporeality can be captured on the metaphysical level as a rightly determined extent of potency. The corporeal forms of beings are in a higher potency than the forms of intellects. This potency of theirs reaches such an extent that it cannot be filled by only one representative of the given species. Their multiplication within species is then necessary. This can take place only through material realization. From the metaphysical point of view, we do not need to understand materiality in any other way than as a necessary condition for this multiplying. This of course narrows to a certain extent the gap between the spiritual and the material world. This is in accordance with Thomas's hierarchical view of reality. In any case, it is in accordance with understanding man as *horizon et confinium corporeorum et incorporeorum*.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, II, c. 68: "Est igitur accipere aliquid supremum in genere corporum, scilicet corpus humanum aequaliter complexionatum, quod attingit ad infimum superioris generis,

As mentioned above, *De ente* contains the basic and most general principles, which unchanged, will further on define the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. We can still, however, claim that in certain aspects we can find in him, in *De ente* at least, a slight hesitation. This relates especially to the relation of the concepts of form and essence. As we saw above, their distinction, although mentioned several times, is often literally obscured. This obscurity can be explained by the fact that in *De ente* Thomas confronts and also links two systems – hylemorphical and metaphysical – working with a real distinction. Within this endeavor, tensions necessarily had to emerge. This applies especially if we realize that both of them are preserved.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

In the introduction of this article we distinguished these three requirements: a) historical-philosophical coherence, b) metaphysical coherence, and c) psychological coherence. Now we can conclude that our interpretation complies with these requirements:

a) The identification of form with essence by Thomas Aquinas respects a wider historical-philosophical development of the question of the intelligible principle of being. It does not tell us that Aristotle's form is the same

scilicet ad animam humanam, quae tenet ultimum gradum in genere intellectualium substantiarum, ut ex modo intelligendi percipi potest. Et inde est quod anima intellectualis dicitur esse quasi quidam horizon et confinium corporeorum et incorporeorum, in quantum est substantia incorporea, corporis tamen forma. Non autem minus est aliquid unum ex substantia intellectuali et materia corporali quam ex forma ignis et eius materia, sed forte magis: quia quanto forma magis vincit materiam, ex ea et materia efficitur magis unum.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Above we were discussing how it is possible that essence as primarily the intelligible principle would contain matter. Thomas in *De ente* explicitly states that the essence of material things contains both, matter and form. In *De ente*, c. 5, 131–140 he, however, also writes: “Tertio modo invenitur essentia in substantiis compositis ex materia et forma, in quibus et esse est receptum et finitum, propter hoc quod ab alio esse habent, et iterum natura vel quiditas earum est recepta in materia signata. Et ideo sunt finitae et superius et inferius, et in eis iam propter divisionem materiae signatae possibilis est multiplicatio individuorum in una specie. Et in his qualiter se habet essentia ad intentiones logicas, supra dictum est.” The extensive semantic closeness of the concepts of form and essence is shown by the fact that being is considered to be accepted.

as Thomas's essence, it tells us that Thomas's concept of a form changes. It changes with regards to the widening of the framework of which it is a part. Aristotle's hylemorphism relates, as the name of this theory suggests, to material reality. All forms (except for the form of the unmoved mover) are forms forming matter. We could say that they are related to matter not with its intelligible content but with its system. In the case of Thomas Aquinas, the situation is a bit different. Form as a form of itself does not refer to matter. This relation must be expressed in a different way, by content. Material form is not material form because it is a form but because it is such a form. From the historical-philosophical point of view this step is ensured by accepting and transforming the concept of corporeal form which, as we have already mentioned, has a completely different meaning than in the pluralism of forms theory.

b) Thomas's thesis that the essence of material beings is not only form and not only matter is problematic. We need to ask how it is possible that the intelligible principle contains something from the definition of the non-intelligible. Here again the examination of the acceptance and modification of the concept of corporeal form has a distinct interpretation value. It is its modification that is especially important, as it tells us that the relation to matter can be expressed by the extent of imperfection of forms or essence. In this sense, all our interpretation of the essence of material beings falls into the context of Thomas' hierarchic and continual universe.

c) From the psychological point of view, it shows that if we identify Thomas's form with essence, we are identifying the human soul with its essence. The advantage of this interpretation is the fact that this corporeal and intellectual unity, this *horizon et confinium*, can be captured in a very unproblematic way on the metaphysical level as the materiality of man can be expressed by the extent of the imperfection of its essence which is fully in compliance with the concept of metaphysics which, besides others, deals with incomplete natures. We can also express this in a different way. The identification of the soul with essence on the metaphysical level will enable us to introduce in compliance the presupposition of the soul which is whole in the whole body and its parts (the souls as substantial

form), the presupposition of the soul which as the fundament of thinking cannot be form fully plunged into matter (*non est totaliter comprehensa ab ea*) and the presupposition of the indivisibility of the soul.

The contemplations above show that it is worth considering the outlined interpretation and that it can represent a starting point for further fruitful examination of Thomas's thinking.

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