

# Sancti Thomae Aquinatis

## *De Ente et Essentia*

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**Anglice** – a translation and interpretation adapted and html-edited by Joseph Kenny, O.P.

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### <PROLOGVS>

Quia paruus error in principio magnus est in fine secundum Philosophum in I Celi et mundi, ens autem et essentia sunt que primo intellectu concipiuntur, ut dicit Auicenna in principio sue Methaphisice, ideo ne ex eorum ignorantia errare contingat, ad horum difficultatem aperiendam dicendum est quid nomine essentie et entis significetur, et quomodo in diuersis inueniatur, et quomodo se habeat ad intentiones logicas, scilicet genus, speciem et differentiam. Quia uero ex compositis simplicium cognitionem accipere debemus et ex posterioribus in priora deuenire, ut a facilioribus incipientes conuenientior fiat disciplina, ideo ex significatione entis ad significationem essentie procedendum est.

### CAPITVLVM 1

Sciendum est igitur quod, sicut in V Methaphisice Philosophus dicit, ens per se dupliciter dicitur: uno modo quod diuiditur per decem genera, alio modo quod significat propositionum ueritatem. Horum autem differentia est quia secundo modo potest dici ens omne illud de quo affirmatiua propositio formari potest, etiam si illud in re nichil ponat; per quem modum priuationes et negationes entia dicuntur: dicimus enim quod affirmatio est opposita negationi, et quod cecitas est in oculo. Sed primo modo non potest dici ens nisi quod aliquid in re ponit; unde primo modo cecitas et huiusmodi non sunt entia. Nomen igitur essentie non sumitur ab ente secundo modo dicto: aliqua enim hoc modo dicuntur entia que essentiam non habent, ut patet in priuationibus; sed sumitur essentia ab ente primo modo dicto. Vnde Commentator in eodem loco dicit quod ens primo modo dictum est quod significat essentiam rei. Et quia, ut dictum est, ens hoc modo dictum diuiditur per decem genera, oportet ut essentia significet aliquid commune omnibus naturis per quas diuersa entia in diuersis generibus et speciebus collocantur, sicut humanitas est essentia hominis, et sic de aliis. Et quia illud per quod res constituitur in proprio genere uel specie est hoc quod significatur per diffinitionem indicantem quid est res, inde est quod nomen essentie a philosophis in nomen quiditatis mutatur; et hoc est etiam 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 Auicenna in II Methaphisice sue. Hoc etiam alio nomine natura dicitur, accipiendo naturam secundum primum modum illorum quatuor quod 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 Methaphisice quod omnis substantia est natura. Tamen nomen nature hoc modo sumpte uidetur significare essentiam rei secundum quod habet ordinem ad propriam operationem rei, cum nulla res propria operatione destituatur: quiditatis uero nomen sumitur ex hoc quod per diffinitionem significatur. Sed essentia dicitur secundum quod per eam et in ea ens habet esse. Sed quia ens absolute et primo dicitur de substantiis, et per posterius et quasi secundum quid de accidentibus, inde est quod etiam essentia proprie et uere est in substantiis, sed in accidentibus est quodammodo et secundum quid. Substantiarum uero quedam sunt simplices et quedam composite, et in utrisque est essentia; sed in simplicibus ueriori

et nobiliori modo, secundum quod etiam esse nobilius habent: sunt enim causa eorum que composita sunt, ad minus substantia prima simplex que Deus est. Sed quia illarum substantiarum essentie sunt nobis magis occulte, ideo ab essentiis substantiarum compositarum incipiendum est, ut a facilioribus conuenientior fiat disciplina.

## CAPITVLVM 2

In substantiis igitur compositis forma et materia nota est, ut in homine anima et corpus. Non autem potest dici quod alterum eorum tantum essentia esse dicatur. Quod enim materia sola rei non sit essentia, planum est, quia res per essentiam suam et cognoscibilis est, et in specie ordinatur uel genere; sed materia neque cognitionis principium est, neque secundum eam aliquid ad genus uel speciem determinatur, sed secundum id quod aliquid actu est. Neque etiam forma tantum essentia substantie compositae dici potest, quamuis hoc quidam asserere conentur. Ex hiis enim que dicta sunt patet quod essentia est illud quod per diffinitionem rei significatur; diffinitio autem substantiarum naturalium non tantum formam continet sed etiam materiam, aliter enim diffinitiones naturales et mathematice non differrent. Nec potest dici quod materia in diffinitione substantie naturalis ponatur sicut additum essentie eius uel ens extra essentiam eius, quia hic modus diffinitionum proprius est accidentibus, que 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. Non autem potest dici quod essentia significet relationem que est inter materiam et formam, uel aliquid superadditum ipsis, quia hoc de necessitate esset accidens et extraneum a re, nec per eam res cognosceretur: que omnia essentie conueniunt. Per formam enim, que est actus materie, materia efficitur ens actu et hoc aliquid; unde illud quod superaduenit non dat esse actu simpliciter materie, sed esse actu tale, sicut etiam accidentia faciunt, ut albedo facit actu album. Vnde et quando talis forma acquiritur, non dicitur generari simpliciter sed secundum quid. Relinquitur ergo quod nomen essentie in substantiis compositis significat id quod ex materia et forma compositum est. Et huic consonat uerbum Boetii in commento Predicamentorum, ubi dicit quod *usya* significat compositum; *usya* enim apud Grecos idem est quod essentia apud nos, ut ipsemet dicit in libro De duabus naturis. Auicenna etiam dicit quod quiditas substantiarum compositarum est ipsa compositio forme et materie. Commentator etiam dicit super VII Methaphisice "Natura quam habent species in rebus generabilibus est aliquod medium, id est compositum ex materia et forma". Huic etiam ratio concordat, quia esse substantie compositae non est tantum forme neque tantum materie, sed ipsius compositi; essentia autem est secundum quam res esse dicitur: unde oportet quod essentia qua res denominatur ens non tantum sit forma, neque tantum materia, sed utrumque, quamuis huiusmodi esse suo modo sola forma sit causa. Sic enim in aliis uidemus que ex pluribus principiis constituuntur, quod res non denominatur ex altero illorum principiorum tantum, sed ab eo quod utrumque complectitur: ut patet in saporibus, quia ex actione calidi digerentis humidum causatur dulcedo, et quamuis hoc modo calor sit causa dulcedinis, non tamen denominatur corpus dulce a calore sed a sapore qui calidum et humidum complectitur. Sed quia indiuiduationis principium materia est, ex hoc forte uideretur sequi quod essentia, que materiam in se complectitur simul et formam, sit tantum particularis et non uniuersalis: ex quo sequeretur quod uniuersalia diffinitionem non haberent, si essentia est id quod per diffinitionem significatur. Et ideo sciendum est quod materia non quolibet modo accepta est indiuiduationis principium, sed solum materia signata; et dico materiam signatam que sub determinatis dimensionibus consideratur. Hec autem materia in diffinitione que 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 hec caro, sed os et caro absolute que sunt materia hominis non signata. Sic ergo patet quod essentia hominis et essentia Sortis non differunt nisi secundum signatum et non signatum; unde Commentator dicit super VII Methaphisice "Sortes nichil aliud est quam animalitas et rationalitas, que sunt quiditas eius". Sic etiam essentia generis et speciei secundum signatum et non signatum differunt, quamuis alius modus designationis sit utrobique: quia

designatio indiuidui respectu speciei est per materiam determinatam dimensionibus, designatio autem speciei respectu generis est per differentiam constitutiua que ex forma rei sumitur. Hec autem determinatio uel designatio que est in specie respectu generis, non est per aliquid in essentia speciei existens quod nullo modo in essentia generis sit; immo quicquid est in specie est etiam in genere ut non determinatum. Si enim animal non esset totum quod est homo sed pars eius, non predicaretur de eo, cum nulla pars integralis de suo toto predicetur. Hoc autem quomodo contingat uideri poterit, si inspiciatur qualiter differt corpus secundum quod ponitur pars animalis, et secundum quod ponitur genus; non enim potest esse eo modo genus quo est pars integralis. Hoc igitur nomen quod est corpus multipliciter accipi potest. Corpus enim secundum quod est in genere substantie dicitur ex eo quod habet talem naturam ut in eo possint designari tres dimensiones; ipse enim tres dimensiones designate sunt corpus quod est in genere quantitatis. Contingit autem in rebus ut quod habet unam perfectionem, ad ulteriorem etiam perfectionem pertingat; sicut patet in homine, qui et naturam sensituiam habet et ulterius intellectuiam. Similiter etiam et super hanc perfectionem que est habere talem formam ut in ea possint tres dimensiones designari, potest alia perfectio adiungi, ut uita uel aliquid huiusmodi. Potest ergo hoc nomen corpus significare rem quandam que habet talem formam ex qua sequitur in ipsa designabilitas trium dimensionum, cum precisione: ut scilicet ex illa forma nulla ulterior perfectio sequatur; sed si quid aliud superadditur, sit preter significationem corporis sic dicti. Et hoc modo corpus erit integralis et materialis pars animalis: quia sic anima erit preter id quod significatum est nomine corporis, et erit superueniens ipsi corpori, ita quod ex ipsis duobus, scilicet anima et corpore, sicut ex partibus constituetur animal. Potest etiam hoc nomen corpus hoc modo accipi ut significet rem quandam que habet talem formam ex qua tres dimensiones in ea possunt designari, quecumque forma sit illa, siue ex ea possit prouenire aliqua ulterior perfectio, siue non; et hoc modo corpus erit genus animalis, quia in animali nichil erit accipere quod non implicite in corpore contineatur. 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 quecumque forma esset: siue anima, siue lapideitas, siue quecumque alia. Et sic forma animalis implicite in forma corporis continetur, prout corpus est genus eius. Et talis est etiam habitudo animalis ad hominem. Si enim animal nominaret tantum rem quandam que habet talem perfectionem ut possit sentire et moueri per principium in ipso existens, cum precisione alterius perfectionis, tunc quecumque alia perfectio ulterior superueniret haberet se ad animal per modum compartis, et non sicut implicite contenta in ratione animalis: et sic animal non esset genus. Sed est genus secundum quod significat rem quandam ex cuius forma potest prouenire sensus et motus, quecumque sit illa forma: siue sit anima sensibilis tantum, siue sensibilis et rationalis simul. Sic ergo genus significat indeterminate totum id quod est in specie, non enim significat tantum materiam. Similiter etiam et differentia significat totum, et non significat tantum formam; et etiam diffinitio significat totum, uel etiam species. Sed tamen diuersimode: quia genus significat totum ut quedam denominatio determinans id quod est materiale in re sine determinatione proprie forme, unde genus sumitur ex materia - quamuis non sit materia -; ut patet quod corpus dicitur ex hoc quod habet talem perfectionem ut possint in eo designari tres dimensiones, que quidem perfectio est materialiter se habens ad ulteriorem perfectionem. Differentia uero e conuerso est sicut quedam denominatio a forma determinate sumpta, preter hoc quod de primo intellectu eius sit materia determinata; ut patet cum dicitur animatum, scilicet illud quod habet animam, non enim determinatur quid sit, utrum corpus uel aliquid aliud: unde dicit Auicenna quod genus non intelligitur in differentia sicut pars essentie eius, sed solum sicut ens extra essentiam, sicut etiam subiectum est de intellectu passionum. Et ideo etiam genus non predicatur de differentia per se loquendo, ut dicit Philosophus in III Methaphisice et in IV Topicorum, nisi forte sicut subiectum predicatur de passione. Sed diffinitio uel species comprehendit utrumque, scilicet determinatam materiam quam designat nomen generis, et determinatam formam quam designat nomen differentie. Ex hoc patet ratio quare genus, species et differentia se habent proportionaliter ad materiam et formam et compositum in natura, quamuis non sint idem quod illa: quia neque genus est materia, sed a materia

sumptum ut significans totum; neque differentia forma, sed a forma sumpta ut significans totum. Vnde dicimus hominem esse animal rationale, et non ex animali et rationali sicut dicimus eum esse ex anima et corpore: ex anima enim et corpore dicitur esse homo sicut ex duabus rebus quedam res tertia constituta que neutra illarum est, homo enim neque est anima neque corpus. Sed si homo aliquo modo ex animali et rationali esse dicatur, non erit sicut res tertia ex duabus rebus, sed sicut intellectus tertius ex duobus intellectibus. Intellectus enim animalis est sine determinatione specialis forme, exprimens naturam rei ab eo quod est materiale respectu ultime perfectionis; intellectus autem huius differentie rationalis consistit in determinatione forme specialis: ex quibus duobus intellectibus constituitur intellectus speciei uel diffinitionis. Et ideo sicut res constituta ex aliquibus non recipit predicationem earum rerum ex quibus constituitur, ita nec intellectus recipit predicationem eorum intellectuum ex quibus constituitur: non enim dicimus quod diffinitio sit genus aut differentia. Quamuis autem genus significet totam essentiam speciei, non tamen oportet ut diuersarum specierum quarum est idem genus, sit una essentia, quia unitas generis ex ipsa indeterminatione uel indifferentia procedit. Non autem ita quod illud quod significatur per genus sit una natura numero in diuersis speciebus, cui superueniat res alia que sit differentia determinans ipsum, sicut forma determinat materiam que est una numero; sed quia genus significat aliquam formam - non tamen determinate hanc uel illam -, quam determinate differentia exprimit, que non est alia quam illa que indeterminate significabatur per genus. Et ideo dicit Commentator in XI Methaphisice quod materia prima dicitur una per remotionem omnium formarum, sed genus dicitur unum per communitatem forme significate. Vnde patet quod per additionem differentie remota illa indeterminatione que erat causa unitatis generis, remanent species per essentiam diuerse. Et quia, ut dictum est, natura speciei est indeterminata respectu indiuidui sicut natura generis respectu speciei: inde est quod, sicut id quod est genus prout predicabatur de specie implicabat in sua significatione, quamuis indistincte, totum quod determinate est in specie, ita etiam et id quod est species secundum quod predicatur de indiuiduo oportet quod significet totum id quod est essentialiter in indiuiduo, licet indistincte. Et hoc modo essentia speciei significatur nomine hominis, unde homo de Sorte predicatur. Si autem significetur natura speciei cum precisione materie designate que est principium indiuiduationis, sic se habebit per modum partis; et hoc modo significatur nomine humanitatis, humanitas enim significat id unde homo est homo. Materia autem designata non est id unde homo est homo, et ita nullo modo continetur inter illa ex quibus homo habet quod sit homo. Cum ergo humanitas in suo intellectu includat tantum ea ex quibus homo habet quod est homo, patet quod a significatione excluditur uel precluditur materia designata; et quia pars non predicatur de toto, inde est quod humanitas nec de homine nec de Sorte predicatur. Vnde dicit Auicenna quod quiditas compositi non est ipsum compositum cuius est quiditas, quamuis etiam ipsa quiditas sit composita; sicut humanitas, licet sit composita, non est homo: immo oportet quod sit recepta in aliquo quod est materia designata. Sed quia, ut dictum est, designatio speciei respectu generis est per formam, designatio autem indiuidui respectu speciei est per materiam, ideo oportet ut nomen significans id unde natura generis sumitur, cum precisione forme determinate perficientis speciem, significet partem materialem totius, sicut corpus est pars materialis hominis; nomen autem significans id unde sumitur natura speciei, cum precisione materie designate, significat partem formalem. Et ideo humanitas significatur ut forma quedam, et dicitur quod est forma totius; non quidem quasi superaddita partibus essentialibus, scilicet forme et materie, sicut forma domus superadditur partibus integralibus eius; sed magis est forma que est totum, scilicet formam complectens et materiam, tamen cum precisione eorum per que nata est materia designari. Sic igitur patet quod essentiam hominis significat hoc nomen homo et hoc nomen humanitas, sed diuersimode, ut dictum est: quia hoc nomen homo significat eam ut totum, in quantum scilicet non precludit designationem materie sed implicite continet eam et indistincte, sicut dictum est quod genus continet differentiam; et ideo predicatur hoc nomen homo de indiuiduis. Sed hoc nomen humanitas significat eam ut partem, quia non continet in significatione sua nisi id quod est hominis in quantum est homo, et precludit omnem designationem; unde de indiuiduis hominis non predicatur. Et

propter hoc nomen essentie quandoque inuenitur predicatum de re, dicimus enim Sortem esse essentiam quandam; et quandoque negatur, sicut dicimus quod essentia Sortis non est Sortes.

### **CAPITVLVM III.**

Viso igitur quid significetur nomine essentie in substantiis compositis, uidendum est quomodo se habeat ad rationem generis et speciei et differentie. Quia autem id cui conuenit ratio generis uel speciei uel differentie predicatur de hoc singulari signato, impossibile est quod ratio uniuersalis, scilicet generis uel speciei, conueniat essentie secundum quod per modum partis significatur, ut nomine humanitatis uel animalitatis; et ideo dicit Auicenna quod rationalitas non est differentia sed differentie principium; et eadem ratione humanitas non est species nec animalitas genus. Similiter etiam non potest dici quod ratio generis uel speciei conueniat essentie secundum quod est quedam res existens extra singularia, ut Platonici ponebant, quia sic genus et species non predicarentur de hoc indiuiduo; non enim potest dici quod Sortes sit hoc quod ab eo separatum est, nec iterum illud separatum proficeret in cognitionem huius singularis. Et ideo relinquitur quod ratio generis uel speciei conueniat essentie secundum quod significatur per modum totius, ut nomine hominis uel animalis, prout implicite et indistincte continet totum hoc quod in indiuiduo est. Natura autem uel essentia sic accepta potest dupliciter considerari. Vno modo secundum rationem propriam, et hec est absoluta consideratio ipsius: et hoc modo nichil est uerum de ea nisi quod conuenit sibi secundum quod huiusmodi; unde quicquid aliorum attribuitur sibi, falsa erit attributio.

Verbi gratia homini in eo quod homo est conuenit rationale et animal et alia que in diffinitione eius cadunt; album uero aut nigrum, uel quicquid huiusmodi quod non est de ratione humanitatis, non conuenit homini in eo quod homo. Vnde si queratur utrum ista natura sic considerata possit dici una uel plures, neutrum concedendum est, quia utrumque est extra intellectum humanitatis, et utrumque potest sibi accidere. Si enim pluralitas esset de intellectu eius, numquam 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. Alio modo consideratur secundum esse quod habet in hoc uel in illo: et sic de ipsa aliquid predicatur per accidens ratione eius in quo est, sicut dicitur quod homo est albus quia Sortes est albus, quamuis hoc non conueniat homini in eo quod homo. Hec autem natura habet duplex esse: unum in singularibus et aliud in anima, et secundum utrumque consequuntur dictam naturam accidentia; et in singularibus etiam habet multiplex esse secundum singularium diuersitatem. Et tamen ipsi nature 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 conueniret homini in quantum est homo, numquam esset extra hoc singulare; similiter etiam si conueniret homini in quantum est homo non esse in hoc singulari, numquam esset in eo: sed uerum est dicere quod homo, non in quantum est homo, habet quod sit in hoc singulari uel in illo aut in anima. Ergo patet quod natura hominis absolute considerata abstrahit a quolibet esse, ita tamen quod non fiat precisio alicuius eorum. Et hec natura sic considerata est que predicatur de indiuiduis omnibus. Non tamen potest dici quod ratio uniuersalis conueniat nature sic accepte, quia de ratione uniuersalis est unitas et communitas; nature autem humane neutrum horum conuenit secundum absolutam suam considerationem. Si enim communitas esset de intellectu hominis, tunc in quocumque inueniretur humanitas inueniretur communitas; et hoc falsum est, quia in Sorte non inuenitur communitas aliqua, sed quicquid est in eo est indiuiduatum. Similiter etiam non potest dici quod ratio generis uel speciei accidat nature humane secundum esse quod habet in indiuiduis, quia non inuenitur in indiuiduis natura humana secundum unitatem ut sit unum quid omnibus conueniens, quod ratio uniuersalis exigit. Relinquitur ergo quod ratio speciei accidat nature humane secundum illud esse quod habet in intellectu. Ipsa enim natura humana in intellectu habet esse abstractum ab omnibus indiuiduantibus; et ideo habet rationem uniformem ad omnia indiuidua que sunt extra animam, prout equaliter est similitudo omnium et ducens in omnium cognitionem in quantum sunt homines. Et ex hoc quod talem relationem habet ad omnia indiuidua, intellectus adinuenit rationem speciei et attribuit sibi;

unde dicit Commentator in principio De anima quod "intellectus est qui agit in rebus uniuersalitem"; hoc etiam Auicenna dicit in sua Methaphisica. Et quamuis hec natura intellecta habeat rationem uniuersalis secundum quod comparatur ad res extra animam, quia est una similitudo omnium, tamen secundum quod habet esse in hoc intellectu uel in illo est quedam species intellecta particularis. Et ideo patet defectus Commentatoris in III De anima, qui uoluit ex uniuersalitate forme intellecte unitatem intellectus in omnibus hominibus concludere; quia non est uniuersalitas illius forme secundum hoc esse quod habet in intellectu, sed secundum quod refertur ad res ut similitudo rerum; sicut etiam si esset una statua corporalis representans multos homines, constat quod illa ymago uel species statue haberet esse singulare et proprium secundum quod esset in hac materia, sed haberet rationem communitatis secundum quod esset commune representatiuum plurium. Et quia nature humane secundum suam absolutam considerationem conuenit quod predicetur de Sorte, et ratio speciei non conuenit sibi secundum suam absolutam considerationem sed est de accidentibus que consequuntur eam secundum esse quod habet in intellectu, ideo nomen speciei non predicatur de Sorte ut dicatur Sortes est species: quod de necessitate accideret si ratio speciei conueniret homini secundum esse quod habet in Sorte, uel secundum suam considerationem absolutam, scilicet in quantum est homo; quicquid enim conuenit homini in quantum est homo predicatur de Sorte. Et tamen predicari conuenit generi per se, cum in eius diffinitione ponatur. Predicatio enim est quiddam quod completur per actionem intellectus componentis et diidentis, habens fundamentum in re ipsa unitatem eorum quorum unum de altero dicitur. Vnde ratio predicabilitatis potest claudi in ratione huius intentionis que est genus, que similiter per actum intellectus completur. Nichilominus tamen id cui intellectus intentionem predicabilitatis attribuit, componens illud cum altero, non est ipsa intentio generis, sed potius illud cui intellectus intentionem generis attribuit, sicut quod significatur hoc nomine animal. Sic ergo patet qualiter essentia uel natura se habet ad rationem speciei, quia ratio speciei non est de hiis que conueniunt ei secundum absolutam suam considerationem, neque est de accidentibus que consequuntur ipsam secundum esse quod habet extra animam, ut albedo et nigredo; sed est de accidentibus que consequuntur eam secundum esse quod habet in intellectu. Et per hunc modum conuenit etiam sibi ratio generis uel differentie.

#### **CAPITVLVM IV.**

Nunc restat uidere per quem modum sit essentia in substantiis separatis, scilicet in anima, intelligentia et causa prima. Quamuis autem simplicitatem cause prime omnes concedant, tamen compositionem forme et materie quidam nituntur inducere in intelligentias et in animam; cuius positionis auctor uidetur fuisse Auicebron, actor libri Fontis uite. Hoc autem dictis philosophorum communiter repugnat, qui eas substantias separatas a materia nominant et absque omni materia esse probant. Cuius demonstratio potissima est ex uirtute intelligendi, que in eis est. Videmus enim formas non esse intelligibiles in actu nisi secundum quod separantur a materia et a condicionibus eius, nec efficiuntur intelligibiles in actu nisi per uirtutem substantie intelligentis, secundum quod recipiuntur in ea et secundum quod aguntur per eam. Vnde oportet quod in qualibet substantia intelligente sit omnino immunitas a materia, ita quod neque habeat materiam partem sui, neque etiam sit sicut forma impressa in materia ut est de formis materialibus. Nec potest aliquis dicere quod intelligibilitatem non impediatur materia quelibet, sed materia corporalis tantum. Si enim hoc esset ratione materie corporalis tantum, cum materia non dicatur corporalis nisi secundum quod stat sub forma corporali, tunc oporteret quod hoc haberet materia, scilicet impedire intelligibilitatem, a forma corporali; et hoc non potest esse, quia ipsa etiam forma corporalis actu intelligibilis est sicut et alie forme, secundum quod a materia abstrahitur. Vnde in anima uel in intelligentia nullo modo est compositio ex materia et forma, ut hoc modo accipiatur essentia in eis sicut in substantiis corporalibus. Sed est ibi compositio forme et esse; unde in commento none propositionis libri De causis dicitur quod intelligentia est habens formam et esse: et accipitur ibi forma pro ipsa quiditate uel natura simplici. Et quomodo hoc sit planum est uidere. Quecumque enim ita se habent ad inuicem quod unum est causa esse alterius, illud quod habet rationem cause potest habere esse sine altero, sed non conuertitur. Talis autem inuenitur habitudo materie et forme quod forma dat

esse materie, et ideo impossibile est esse materiam sine aliqua forma; tamen non est impossibile esse aliquam formam sine materia, forma enim in eo quod est forma non habet dependentiam ad materiam. Sed si inueniantur aliquae forme que non possunt esse nisi in materia, hoc accidit eis secundum quod sunt distantes a primo principio quod est actus primus et purus. Vnde ille forme que sunt propinquissime primo principio sunt forme per se sine materia subsistentes, non enim forma secundum totum genus suum materia indiget, ut dictum est; et huiusmodi forme sunt intelligentie, et ideo non oportet ut essentie uel quiditates harum substantiarum sint aliud quam ipsa forma. In hoc ergo differt essentia substantie composite et substantie simplicis, quod essentia substantie composite non est tantum forma sed complectitur formam et materiam, essentia autem substantie simplicis est forma tantum. Et ex hoc causantur alie due differentie. Vna est quod essentia substantie composite potest significari ut totum uel ut pars, quod accidit propter materie designationem, ut dictum est. Et ideo non quolibet modo predicatur essentia rei composite de ipsa re composita: non enim potest dici quod homo sit quiditas sua. Sed essentia rei simplicis que est sua forma non potest significari nisi ut totum, cum nichil sit ibi preter formam quasi formam recipiens; et ideo quocumque modo sumatur essentia substantie simplicis, de ea predicatur. Vnde Auicenna dicit quod "quiditas simplicis est ipsummet simplex", quia non est aliquid aliud recipiens ipsam. Secunda differentia est quod essentie rerum compositarum ex eo quod recipiuntur in materia designata multiplicantur secundum diuisionem eius, unde contingit quod aliqua sunt idem specie et diuersa numero. Sed cum essentia simplicis non sit recepta in materia, non potest ibi esse talis multiplicatio; et ideo oportet ut non inueniantur in illis substantiis plura indiuidua eiusdem speciei, sed quot sunt ibi indiuidua tot sunt ibi species, ut Auicenna expresse dicit. Huiusmodi ergo substantie, quamuis sint forme tantum sine materia, non tamen in eis est omnimoda simplicitas nec sunt actus purus, sed habent permixtionem potentie; et hoc sic patet. Quicquid enim non est de intellectu essentie uel quiditatis, hoc est adueniens extra et faciens compositionem cum essentia, quia nulla essentia sine hiis que sunt partes essentie intelligi potest. Omnis autem essentia uel quiditas potest intelligi sine hoc quod aliquid intelligatur de esse suo: possum enim intelligere quid est homo uel phoenix et tamen ignorare an esse habeat in rerum natura; ergo patet quod esse est aliud ab essentia uel quiditate. Nisi forte sit aliqua res cuius quiditas sit ipsum suum esse, et hec res non potest esse nisi una et prima: quia impossibile est ut fiat plurificatio alicuius nisi per additionem alicuius differentie, sicut multiplicatur natura generis in species; uel per hoc quod forma recipitur in diuersis materiis, sicut multiplicatur natura speciei in diuersis indiuiduis; uel 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. Si autem ponatur aliqua res que sit esse tantum ita ut ipsum esse sit subsistens, hoc esse non recipiet additionem differentie, quia iam non esset esse tantum sed esse et preter hoc forma aliqua; et multo minus reciperet additionem materie, quia iam esset esse non subsistens sed materiale. Vnde relinquitur quod talis res que sit suum esse non potest esse nisi una; unde oportet quod in qualibet alia re preter eam aliud sit esse suum et aliud quiditas uel natura seu forma sua; unde oportet quod in intelligentiis sit esse preter formam, et ideo dictum est quod intelligentia est forma et esse. Omne autem quod conuenit alicui uel est causatum ex principiis nature sue, sicut risibile in homine; uel aduenit ab aliquo principio extrinseco, sicut lumen in aere ex influenza solis. Non autem potest esse quod ipsum esse sit causatum ab ipsa forma uel quiditate rei, dico sicut a causa efficiente, quia sic aliqua res esset sui ipsius causa et aliqua res se ipsam in esse produceret: quod est impossibile. Ergo oportet quod omnis talis res cuius esse est aliud quam natura sua habeat esse ab alio. Et quia omne quod est per aliud reducitur ad illud quod est per se sicut ad causam primam, oportet quod sit aliqua res que sit causa essendi omnibus rebus eo quod ipsa est esse tantum; alias iretur in infinitum in causis, cum omnis res que non est esse tantum habeat causam sui esse, ut dictum est. Patet ergo quod intelligentia est forma et esse, et quod esse habet a primo ente quod est esse tantum, et hoc est causa prima que Deus est.

Omne autem quod recipit aliquid ab alio est in potentia respectu illius, et hoc quod receptum est in eo est actus eius; ergo oportet quod ipsa quiditas uel forma que est intelligentia sit in potentia respectu

esse quod a Deo recipit, et illud esse receptum est per modum actus. Et ita inuenitur potentia et actus in intelligentiis, non tamen forma et materia nisi equiuoce. Vnde etiam pati, recipere, subiectum esse et omnia huiusmodi que uidentur rebus ratione materie conuenire, equiuoce conueniunt substantiis intellectualibus et corporalibus, ut in III De anima Commentator dicit. Et quia, ut dictum est, intelligentie quidditas est ipsamet intelligentia, ideo quidditas uel essentia eius est ipsum quod est ipsa, et esse suum receptum a Deo est id quo subsistit in rerum natura; et propter hoc a quibusdam dicuntur huiusmodi substantie componi ex quo est et quod est, uel ex quod est et esse, ut Boetius dicit. Et quia in intelligentiis ponitur potentia et actus, non erit difficile inuenire multitudinem intelligentiarum, quod esset impossibile si nulla potentia in eis esset. Vnde Commentator dicit in III De anima quod si natura intellectus possibilis esset ignota, non possemus inuenire multitudinem in substantiis separatis. Est ergo distinctio earum ad inuicem secundum gradum potentie et actus, ita quod intelligentia superior que magis propinqua est primo habet plus de actu et minus de potentia, et sic de aliis. Et hoc completur in anima humana, que tenet ultimum gradum in substantiis intellectualibus. Vnde intellectus possibilis eius se habet ad formas intelligibiles sicut materia prima, que tenet ultimum gradum in esse sensibili, ad formas sensibiles, ut Commentator in III De anima dicit; et ideo Philosophus comparat eam tabule in qua nichil est scriptum. Et propter hoc quod inter alias substantias intellectuales plus habet de potentia, ideo efficitur in tantum propinqua rebus materialibus ut res materialis trahatur ad participandum esse suum: ita scilicet quod ex anima et corpore resultat unum esse in uno composito, quamuis illud esse prout est anime non sit dependens a corpore. Et ideo post istam formam que est anima inueniuntur alie forme plus de potentia habentes et magis propinque materie, in tantum quod esse earum sine materia non est; in quibus etiam inuenitur ordo et gradus usque ad primas formas elementorum, que sunt propinquissime materie: unde nec aliquam operationem habent nisi secundum exigentiam qualitatum actiuarum et passiuarum et aliarum quibus materia ad formam disponitur.

## **CAPITVLVM V.**

Hiis igitur uisis, patet quomodo essentia in diuersis inuenitur. Inuenitur enim triplex modus habendi essentiam in substantiis. Aliquid enim est sicut Deus cuius essentia est ipsummet suum esse; et ideo inueniuntur aliqui philosophi dicentes quod Deus non habet quidditatem uel essentiam, quia essentia sua non est aliud quam esse eius. Et ex hoc sequitur quod ipse non sit in genere; quia omne quod est in genere oportet quod habeat quidditatem preter esse suum, cum quidditas uel natura generis aut speciei non distinguatur secundum rationem nature in illis quorum est genus uel species, sed esse est diuersum in diuersis. Nec oportet, si dicimus quod Deus est esse tantum, ut in illorum errorem incidamus qui Deum dixerunt esse illud esse uniuersale quo quelibet res formaliter est. Hoc enim esse quod Deus est huiusmodi condicionis est ut nulla sibi additio fieri possit, unde per ipsam suam puritatem est esse distinctum ab omni esse; propter quod in commento none propositionis libri De causis dicitur quod indiuiduatio prime cause, que est esse tantum, est per puram bonitatem eius. Esse autem commune sicut in intellectu suo non includit aliquam additionem, ita non includit in intellectu suo precisionem additionis; quia, si hoc esset, nichil posset intelligi esse in quo super esse aliquid adderetur. Similiter etiam quamuis sit esse tantum, non oportet quod deficiant ei relique perfectiones et nobilitates. Immo habet omnes perfectiones que sunt in omnibus generibus, propter quod perfectum simpliciter dicitur, ut Philosophus et Commentator in V Methaphisice dicunt; sed habet eas modo excellentiori omnibus rebus, quia in eo unum sunt, sed in aliis diuersitatem habent. Et hoc est quia omnes ille perfectiones conueniunt sibi secundum esse suum simplex; sicut si aliquis per unam qualitatem posset efficere operationes omnium qualitatum, in illa una qualitate omnes qualitates haberet, ita Deus in ipso esse suo omnes perfectiones habet. Secundo modo inuenitur essentia in substantiis creatis intellectualibus, in quibus est aliud esse quam essentia earum, quamuis essentia sit sine materia. Vnde esse earum non est absolutum sed receptum, et ideo limitatum et finitum ad capacitatem nature recipientis; sed natura uel quidditas earum est absoluta, non recepta in aliqua materia. Et ideo dicitur in libro De causis quod intelligentie sunt infinite inferius et finite superius; sunt enim finite quantum ad esse suum quod a



superiori recipiunt, non tamen finiuntur inferius quia earum forme non limitantur ad capacitatem alicuius materie recipientis eas. Et ideo in talibus substantiis non inuenitur multitudo indiuiduorum in una specie, ut dictum est, nisi in anima humana propter corpus cui unitur. Et licet indiuiduatio eius ex corpore occasionaliter dependeat quantum ad sui inchoationem, quia non acquiritur sibi esse indiuiduatum nisi in corpore cuius est actus: non tamen oportet ut subtracto corpore indiuiduatio pereat, quia cum habeat esse absolutum ex quo acquisitum est sibi esse indiuiduatum ex hoc quod facta est forma huius corporis, illud esse semper remanet indiuiduatum. Et ideo dicit Auicenna quod indiuiduatio animarum et multiplicatio dependet ex corpore quantum ad sui principium, sed non quantum ad sui finem. Et quia in istis substantiis quidditas non est idem quod esse, ideo sunt ordinabiles in predicamento; et propter hoc inuenitur in eis genus et species et differentia, quamuis earum differentie proprie nobis occulte sint. In rebus enim sensibilibus etiam ipse differentie essentialis ignote sunt; unde significantur per differentias accidentales que ex essentialibus oriuntur, sicut causa significatur per suum effectum: sicut bipes ponitur differentia hominis.

Accidentia autem propria substantiarum immaterialium nobis ignota sunt, unde differentie earum nec per se nec per accidentales differentias a nobis significari possunt. Hoc tamen sciendum est quod non eodem modo sumitur genus et differentia in illis substantiis et in substantiis sensibilibus, quia in substantiis sensibilibus genus sumitur ab eo quod est materiale in re, differentia uero ab eo quod est formale in ipsa; unde dicit Auicenna in principio libri sui De anima quod forma in rebus compositis ex materia et forma "est differentia simplex eius quod constituitur ex illa": non autem ita quod ipsa forma sit differentia, sed quia est principium differentie, ut idem dicit in sua Methaphisica. Et dicitur talis differentia esse differentia simplex quia sumitur ab eo quod est pars quidditatis rei, scilicet a forma. Cum autem substantie immateriales sint simplices quidditates, non potest in eis differentia sumi ab eo quod est pars quidditatis sed a tota quidditate; et ideo in principio De anima dicit Auicenna quod "differentiam simplicem non habent nisi species quarum essentie sunt composite ex materia et forma". Similiter etiam in eis ex tota essentia sumitur genus, modo tamen differenti. Vna enim substantia separata conuenit cum alia in immaterialitate, et differunt ab inuicem in gradu perfectionis secundum recessum a potentialitate et accessum ad actum purum. Et ideo ab eo quod consequitur illas in quantum sunt immateriales sumitur in eis genus, sicut est intellectualitas uel aliquid huiusmodi; ab eo autem quod consequitur in eis gradum perfectionis sumitur in eis differentia, nobis tamen ignota. Nec oportet has differentias esse accidentales quia sunt secundum maiorem et minorem perfectionem, que non diuersificant speciem; gradus enim perfectionis in recipiendo eandem formam non diuersificat speciem, sicut albius et minus album in participando eiusdem rationis albedinem: sed diuersus gradus perfectionis in ipsis formis uel naturis participatis speciem diuersificat, sicut natura procedit per gradus de plantis ad animalia per quedam que sunt media inter animalia et plantas, secundum Philosophum in VII De animalibus. Nec iterum est necessarium ut diuisio intellectualium substantiarum sit semper per duas differentias ueras, quia hoc impossibile est in omnibus rebus accidere, ut Philosophus dicit in XI De animalibus. Tertio modo inuenitur 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 uel quidditas earum est recepta in materia signata. Et ideo sunt finite et superius et inferius; et in eis iam propter diuisionem signate materie possibilis est multiplicatio indiuiduorum in una specie. Et in hiis qualiter se habeat essentia ad intentiones logicas dictum est supra.

## **CAPITVLVM VI.**

Nunc restat uidere quomodo sit essentia in accidentibus; qualiter enim sit in omnibus substantiis dictum est. Et quia, ut dictum est, essentia est id quod per diffinitionem significatur, oportet ut eo modo habeant essentiam quo habent diffinitionem. Diffinitionem autem habent incompletam, quia non possunt diffiniri nisi ponatur subiectum in eorum diffinitione; et hoc ideo est quia non habent esse per se absolutum a subiecto, sed sicut ex forma et materia relinquitur esse substantiale quando componuntur, ita ex accidente et subiecto relinquitur esse accidentale quando accidens subiecto

aduenit. Et ideo etiam nec forma substantialis completam essentiam habet nec materia, quia etiam in diffinitione forme substantialis oportet quod ponatur illud cuius est forma, et ita diffinitio eius est per additionem alicuius quod est extra genus eius sicut et diffinitio forme accidentalis; unde et in diffinitione anime ponitur corpus a naturali qui considerat animam solum in quantum est forma physici corporis. Sed tamen inter formas substantiales et accidentales tantum interest quia, sicut forma substantialis non habet per se esse absolutum sine eo cui aduenit, ita nec illud cui aduenit, scilicet materia; et ideo ex coniunctione utriusque relinquitur illud esse in quo res per se subsistit, et ex eis efficitur unum per se: propter quod ex coniunctione eorum relinquitur essentia quedam. Vnde forma, quamuis in se considerata non habeat completam rationem essentie, tamen est pars essentie complete. Sed illud cui aduenit accidens est ens in se completum subsistens in suo esse, quod quidem esse naturaliter precedit accidens quod superuenit. Et ideo accidens superueniens ex coniunctione sui cum eo cui aduenit non causat illud esse in quo res subsistit, per quod res est ens per se; sed causat quoddam esse secundum sine quo res subsistens intelligi potest esse, sicut primum potest intelligi sine secundo. Vnde ex accidente et subiecto non efficitur unum per se sed unum per accidens. Et ideo ex eorum coniunctione non resultat essentia quedam sicut ex coniunctione forme ad materiam; propter quod accidens neque rationem complete essentie habet neque pars complete essentie est, sed sicut est ens secundum quid, ita et essentiam secundum quid habet. Sed quia illud quod dicitur maxime et uerissime in quolibet genere est causa eorum que sunt post in illo genere, sicut ignis qui est in fine caliditatis est causa caloris in rebus calidis, ut in II Methaphisice dicitur: ideo substantia que est primum in genere entis, uerissime et maxime essentiam habens, oportet quod sit causa accidentium que secundo et quasi secundum quid rationem entis participant. Quod tamen diuersimode contingit. Quia enim partes substantie sunt materia et forma, ideo quedam accidentia principaliter consequuntur formam et quedam materiam. Forma autem inuenitur aliqua cuius esse non dependet ad materiam, ut anima intellectualis; materia uero non habet esse nisi per formam. Vnde in accidentibus que consequuntur formam est aliquid quod non habet communicationem cum materia, sicut est intelligere, quod non est per organum corporale, sicut probat Philosophus in III De anima; aliqua uero ex consequentibus formam sunt que habent communicationem cum materia, sicut sentire. Sed nullum accidens consequitur materiam sine communicatione forme. In hiis tamen accidentibus que materiam consequuntur inuenitur quedam diuersitas.

Quedam enim accidentia consequuntur materiam secundum ordinem quem habet ad formam specialem, sicut masculinum et femininum in animalibus, quorum diuersitas ad materiam reducit, ut dicitur in X Methaphisice; unde remota forma animalis dicta accidentia non remanent nisi equiuoce. Quedam uero consequuntur materiam secundum ordinem quem habet ad formam generalem; et ideo remota forma speciali adhuc in ea remanent, sicut nigredo cutis est in ethiope ex mixtione elementorum et non ex ratione anime, et ideo post mortem in eo remanet. Et quia unaqueque res indiuiduatur ex materia et collocatur in genere uel specie per suam formam, ideo accidentia que consequuntur materiam sunt accidentia indiuidui, secundum que indiuidua etiam eiusdem speciei ad inuicem differunt; accidentia uero que consequuntur formam sunt proprie passiones uel generis uel speciei, unde inueniuntur in omnibus participantibus naturam generis uel speciei, sicut risibile consequitur in homine formam, quia risus contingit ex aliqua apprehensione anime hominis. Sciendum etiam est quod accidentia aliquando ex principiis essentialibus causantur secundum actum perfectum, sicut calor in igne qui semper est calidus; aliquando uero secundum aptitudinem tantum, sed complementum accidit ex agente exteriori, sicut dyaphaneitas in aere que completur per corpus lucidum exterius; et in talibus aptitudo est accidens inseparabile, sed complementum quod aduenit ex aliquo principio quod est extra essentiam rei, uel quod non intrat constitutionem rei, est separabile, sicut moueri et huiusmodi. Sciendum est etiam quod in accidentibus modo alio sumitur genus, differentia et species quam in substantiis. Quia enim in substantiis ex forma substantiali et materia efficitur per se unum, una quadam natura ex earum coniunctione resultante que proprie in predicamento substantie collocatur, ideo in substantiis nomina concreta que compositum significant proprie in genere esse dicuntur, sicut species uel genera, ut homo

uel animal. Non autem forma uel materia est hoc modo in predicamento nisi per reductionem, sicut principia in genere esse dicuntur. Sed ex accidente et subiecto non fit unum per se; unde non resultat ex eorum coniunctione aliqua natura cui intentio generis uel speciei possit attribui. Vnde nomina accidentaliter dicta non ponuntur in predicamento sicut species uel genera, ut album uel musicum, nisi per reductionem, sed solum secundum quod in abstracto significantur, ut albedo et musica. Et quia accidentia non componuntur ex materia et forma, ideo non potest in eis sumi genus a materia et differentia a forma sicut in substantiis compositis; sed oportet ut genus primum sumatur ex ipso modo essendi, secundum quod ens diuersimode secundum prius et posterius dicitur de decem generibus predicamentorum, sicut dicitur quantitas ex eo quod est mensura substantie et qualitas secundum quod est dispositio substantie, et sic de aliis, secundum Philosophum IX Methaphisice. Differentie uero in eis sumuntur ex diuersitate principiorum ex quibus causantur. Et quia proprie passionem ex propriis principiis subiecti causantur, ideo subiectum ponitur in diffinitione eorum loco differentie si in abstracto diffiniuntur, secundum quod sunt proprie in genere, sicut dicitur quod simitas est curuitas nasi. Sed e conuerso esset si eorum diffinitio sumeretur secundum quod concretiter dicuntur; sic enim subiectum in eorum diffinitione poneretur sicut genus, quia tunc diffinirentur per modum substantiarum compositarum in quibus ratio generis sumitur a materia, sicut dicimus quod simum est nasus curuus. Similiter etiam est si unum accidens alterius accidentis principium sit, sicut principium relationis est actio et passio et quantitas; et ideo secundum hec diuidit Philosophus relationem in V Methaphisice. Sed quia propria principia accidentium non semper sunt manifesta, ideo quandoque sumimus differentias accidentium ex eorum effectibus, sicut congregatiuum et disgregatiuum dicuntur differentie coloris que causantur ex abundantia uel paucitate lucis, ex quo diuersae species coloris causantur. Sic ergo patet quomodo essentia est in substantiis et accidentibus, et quomodo in substantiis compositis et simplicibus, et qualiter in hiis omnibus intentiones uniuersales logice inueniuntur; excepto primo quod est in fine simplicitatis, cui non conuenit ratio generis aut speciei et per consequens nec diffinitio propter suam simplicitatem: in quo sit finis et consummatio huius sermonis. Amen.

# De Ente et Essentia

by  
Thomas Aquinas

translated as  
**Aquinas on Being and Essence**  
a translation and interpretation  
1965

adapted and html-edited by Joseph Kenny, O.P.

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1. A small mistake in the beginning is a big one in the end, according to the Philosopher in the first book of *On the Heavens and the Earth*. And as Ibn-Sînâ says in the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, being and essence are what is first conceived by the intellect.
2. Thus, to avoid making mistakes out of ignorance of them, and to become familiar with the difficulties they entail, we must point out what is signified by the words “being” and “essence,” and how they are found in diverse things, and how they are related to the logical intentions, genus, species, and difference.
3. Since we ought to acquire knowledge of what is simple from what is composed, and come to what is prior from what is posterior, so that, beginning with what is easier, we may progress more suitably in learning; we ought proceed from the meaning of the word “being” to that of the word “essence.”
4. We should notice, therefore, that the word “being,” taken without qualifiers, has two uses, as the Philosopher says in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*. (1) In one way, it is used apropos of what is divided into the ten genera; (2) in another way, it is used to signify the truth of propositions. The difference between the two is that in the second way everything about which we can form an affirmative proposition can be called a being, even though it posits nothing in reality. It is in this way that privations and negations are called beings; for we say that affirmation is opposed to negation, and that blindness is in the eye. In the first way, however, only what posits something in reality can be called a being. In the first way, therefore, blindness and the like are not beings.
5. So, the word “essence” is not taken from the word “being” used in the second way; for some things which do not have an essence are called beings in this way as is clear in the case of privations. Rather, the word “essence” is taken from the word “being” used in the first way. It is for this reason that the Commentator says in the same place that the word “being” used in the first way is what signifies the essence of a real thing.
6. And because the word “being” used in this way is used apropos of what is divided into the ten genera, as we have said, the word “essence” must signify something common to all natures, by means of which (nature) diverse beings are placed into diverse genera and species; as, for example, humanity is the essence of man, and so with other things.
7. And because that by which a real thing is constituted in its proper genus or species is what is signified by the definition expressing what the real thing is, philosophers sometimes use the word “quiddity” for the word “essence.” This is what the Philosopher often calls *what something was to be*, i.e., that by which it belongs to something to be what it is.

8. It is also called form, in the sense in which the word “form” signifies the full determination of each real thing, as Ibn-Sînâ says in the second book of his *Metaphysics*.

9. Further, it is given another name, nature, taking the word “nature” in the first of the four ways given by Boethius in his book *On the Two Natures*. In this way, whatever can in any way be grasped by the intellect is called a nature. For a real thing is not intelligible except through its definition and essence.

10. The Philosopher, too, says in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics* that every substance is a nature. But the word “nature” taken in this way appears to signify the essence of a real thing according as it has an ordering to the thing’s proper operation; and no real thing lacks a proper operation.

11. The name “quiddity,” however, is taken from the fact that what is signified by the definition is the essence. But it is called essence from the fact that through it and in it a real being has existence.

12. Because the word “being” is used absolutely and with priority of substances, and only posteriorly and with qualification of accidents, essence is in substances truly and properly, in accidents only in some way with qualification.

13. Further, some substances are simple and some are composed, and essence is in each. But essence is in simple substances in a truer and more noble way, according to which they also have a more noble existence; for they — at least that simple substance which is first, and which is God — are the cause of those which are composed. But because the essences of the simple substances are more hidden from us, we ought to begin with the essences of composed substances, so that we may progress more suitably in learning from what is easier.

14. In composed substances there are form and matter, for example, in man soul and body.

15. But we cannot say that either one of them alone may be said to be the essence. That matter alone is not the essence of a real thing is clear, since through its essence a real thing is knowable and assigned to a species or to a genus. But matter alone is neither a principle of knowledge, nor is it that by which something is assigned to a genus or to a species; rather a thing is so assigned by reason of its being something actual.

16. Neither can the form alone of a composed substance be said to be its essence, although some try to assert this. For it is evident from what has been said that essence is what is signified by the definition of a real thing. And the definition of natural substances contains not only form, but matter as well; otherwise natural definitions and mathematical ones would not differ.

17. Neither can it be said that matter is placed in the definition of a natural substance as something added to its essence or as something outside its essence, because this mode of definition is proper to accidents, which do not have a perfect essence. This is why accidents must include in their definition a subject which is outside their genus. It is clear therefore that essence includes matter and form.

18. Further, neither can it be said that essence signifies some relation between matter and form or something added to them, because this would of necessity be an accident or something extraneous to the real thing, and the real thing would not be known through it. And these are traits of essence. For through the form, which is the actuality of matter, matter becomes something actual and something individual. Whence what supervenes does not confer on matter actual existence simply, but such an actual existence; as accidents in fact do. Whiteness, for example, makes something actually white. Whence the acquisition of such a form is not called generation simply, but generation in a certain respect. It remains, therefore, that the word “essence” in composed substances signifies that which is composed of matter and form.

19. Boethius is in agreement with this in his commentary on the *Predicaments*, where he says that *ousia* signifies the composite. For *ousia* in Greek is the same as *essentia* in Latin, as he himself says in his book *On the Two Natures*. Ibn-Sînâ, too, says that the quiddity of composed substances is the

composition itself of form and matter. And the Commentator, likewise, in his considerations on the seventh book of the *Metaphysics* says: “The nature which species have in generable things is something in between, i.e., composed of matter and form.”

20. Reason, too, is in accord with this, because the existence of a composed substance is not the existence of the form alone nor of the matter alone, but of the composite itself; and essence is that according to which a real thing is said to be. Whence it is necessary that the essence, whereby a real thing is denominated a being, be neither the form alone nor the matter alone, but both, although the form alone in its own way is the cause of such existence.

21. We see the same in other things which are constituted of a plurality of principles, namely, that the real thing is not denominated from one of these principles alone, but from what includes both, as is evident in the case of tastes. Sweetness, for example, is caused by the action of what is hot dispersing what is moist; and although heat in this way is the cause of sweetness, a body is not denominated sweet from heat, but from the taste which includes what is hot and what is moist.

22. But matter is the principle of individuation. From this it might perhaps appear to follow that an essence which includes in itself matter along with form is only particular and not universal. And from this it would follow that universals would not have a definition, if essence is that which is signified by a definition.

23. We should notice, therefore, that the principle of individuation is not matter taken in just any way whatever, but only designated matter. And I call that matter designated which is considered under determined dimensions. Such matter is not placed in the definition of man as man, but it would be placed in the definition of Socrates, if Socrates had a definition. Rather, it is non-designated matter which is placed in the definition of man; for this bone and this flesh are not placed in the definition of man, but bone and flesh absolutely. These latter are man’s non-designated matter.

24. It is clear, therefore, that the essence of man and the essence of Socrates do not differ, except as the non-designated from the designated. Whence the Commentator says in his considerations on the seventh book of the *Metaphysics* that “Socrates is nothing other than animality and rationality, which are his quiddity.”

25. The essence of the genus and that of the species also differ in this way, i.e., as the non-designated from the designated, although the mode of the designation differs in each case. Whereas the designation of the individual with respect to the species is through matter determined by dimensions, the designation of the species with respect to the genus is through the constitutive difference which is taken from the form of the thing.

26. This designation which is in the species with respect to the genus is not through something in the essence of the species which is in no way in the essence of the genus; rather, whatever is in the species is also in the genus, but as undetermined. For, if animal were not the whole that man is, but a part of man, it would not be predicated of man, since no integral part may be predicated of its whole.

27. We can see how this comes about if we examine how body taken as part of animal differs from body taken as genus; for body cannot be a genus in the same way in which body is an integral part.

28. The word “body” can be taken in many ways. Body according as it is in the genus substance is so called from the fact that it has a nature such that three dimensions can be designated in it; but the three designated dimensions themselves are a body according as body is in the genus quantity. Now, it happens in things that what has one perfection may also attain to further perfection. This is clear, for example, in man who has a sensitive nature, and further an intellectual nature. Similarly, another perfection, such as life or some other such perfection, can be added to the perfection of having a form such that three dimensions can be designated in it. The word “body,” therefore can signify some real

thing which has a form from which follows the possibility of designating in it three dimensions, and signify this in an excluding way, i.e., in such a way such that no further perfection may follow from that form; in a way such that if anything be added, it is outside the signification of body. Taken in this way, body will be an integral and material part of animal because soul will be outside what is signified by the word “body”; the soul will be something over and above the body, in a way such that animal is constituted out of these two as out of parts, i.e., out of soul and body.

29. The word “body” can also be taken in another way, namely, to signify a thing which has a form such that three dimensions can be designated in it, no matter what sort of form it is, whether some further perfection can come from it or not. And taken in this way, body will be a genus of animal, because there is nothing in animal which is not implicitly contained in body. Soul is not a form other than the form through which three dimensions could be designated in that thing; thus, when we said that body is that which has a form such that because of it three dimensions can be designated in the body, form meant any form, whether animality or stoneness, or any other form. And so the form of animal is implicitly contained in the form of body, when body is its genus.

30. And such likewise is the relation of animal to man. For, if animal were to name only that thing which has a perfection such that it can sense and be moved by a principle within itself, and name this thing as excluding other perfection, then any further perfection would be related to animal as a part, and not as implicitly contained in the notion of animal; and so, animal would not be a genus. Animal is a genus according as it signifies a thing from whose form the senses and movement can come forth, no matter what sort of form it is, whether a sensible soul only or a soul which is both sensible and rational.

31. The genus, thus, signifies indeterminately everything that is in the species; it does not signify the matter alone. Similarly, the difference, too, signifies everything in the species, and not the form alone; the definition, too, signifies the whole, and so does the species, but in diverse ways.

32. The genus signifies the whole as a name determining what is material in the real thing without the determination of the proper form. Whence the genus is taken from the matter, although it is not the matter. And from this it is clear that a body is called a body from the fact that it has a perfection such that three dimensions can be designated in the body, and that this perfection is related materially to further perfection.

33. The difference, on the contrary, is a name taken from a determinate form, and taken in a determinate way, i.e. as not including a determinate matter in its meaning. This is clear, for example, when we say *animated*, i.e., that which has a soul; for what it is, whether a body or something other, is not expressed. Whence Ibn-Sînâ says that the genus is not understood in the difference as a part of its essence, but only as something outside its essence, as the subject also is understood in its properties. And this is why the genus is not predicated essentially of the difference, as the Philosopher says in the third book of the *Metaphysics* and in the fourth book of the *Topics*, but only in the way in which a subject is predicated of its property.

34. The definition, lastly, and the species include both, namely the determinate matter which the name of the genus designates, and the determinate form which the name of the difference designates.

35. From this it is clear why the genus, the difference, and the species are related proportionately to the matter, to the form, and to the composite in the real world, although they are not identical with them.

36. The genus is not the matter, but taken from the matter as signifying the whole; nor is the difference the form, but taken from the form as signifying the whole.

37. Whence we say that man is a rational animal, and not that man is made up of animal and rational as we say that man is made up of soul and body. Man is said to be composed of soul and body as some third thing constituted of two other things, and which is neither of them. For man is neither soul nor

body. But if man may be said in some way to be composed of animal and rational, it will not be as a third thing out of two other things, but as a third concept out of two other concepts. For the concept “animal” is without the determination of the form of the species, and it expresses the nature of a thing from that which is material in relation to the ultimate perfection. But the concept of the difference “rational” consists in the determination of the form of the species. And from these two concepts the concept of the species or of the definition is constituted. And thus just as the constituents of a real thing are not predicated of that real thing, so too the concepts which are constituents of another concept are not predicated of that concept; for we do not say that the definition is the genus or the difference.

38. Although the genus signifies the whole essence of the species, it is not necessary that the diverse species in a same genus have one essence.

39. For the oneness of the genus proceeds from its very indetermination or indifference; not however in such a way that what is signified by the genus is some numerically one nature found in diverse species, and to which another thing supervenes, namely the difference, determining the genus as form determines matter which is numerically one. It is rather because the genus signifies some form, not determinately this form or that form, which the difference expresses determinately, but which is not other than the form which was indeterminately signified by the genus.

40. This is why the Commentator says in his considerations on the eleventh book of the *Metaphysics* that prime matter is said to be one by reason of the removal of all forms, whereas the genus is said to be one by reason of the commonness of the designated form.

41. Whence, it is clear that when one adds the difference and removes that indetermination which was the cause of the oneness of the genus, there remain species which are diverse in essence.

42. The nature of the species, as we have said, is indeterminate in relation to the individual, as the nature of the genus is indeterminate in relation to the species.

43. Because of this, just as that which is a genus, as predicated of the species, implies in its signification, though indistinctly, everything that is determinately in the species; so too that which is a species, according as it is predicated of the individual, must signify, though indistinctly, everything which is essentially in the individual.

44. And it is in this way that the essence of the species is signified by the word “man”; whence man is predicated of Socrates. But if the nature of the species is signified as excluding designated matter, which is the principle of individuation, it will be as a part; and in this way it is signified by the word “humanity,” for humanity signifies that by which man is man; and it is not the case that man is man by reason of designated matter. And so designated matter is in no way included among the things by which man is man. Since, therefore, humanity includes in its concept only those things by which man is man, it is clear that designated matter is excluded from or is cut out of its signification. And because a part is not predicated of its whole, humanity is not predicated of man, nor is it predicated of Socrates.

45. Whence Ibn-Sînâ says that the quiddity of a composite is not the composite itself whose quiddity it is, even though the quiddity too is composed. Humanity, for example, though composed, is not man; it must be received into something which is designated matter.

46. As we have said, the designation of the species with respect to the genus is through forms, whereas the designation of the individual with respect to the species is through matter. This is why the word which signifies that from which the nature of the genus is taken, and signifies it as excluding the determinate form which perfects the species, must signify a material part of the whole, as, for example, body is a material part of man. But the word which signifies that from which the nature of the species is taken, and signifies it as excluding designated matter, signifies a formal part.



47. And thus humanity is signified as a certain form, and it is said to be the form of the whole, not indeed as something added to the essential parts, namely to form and matter, as the form of a house is added to its integral parts; rather, it is a form which is a whole, that is, a form which includes both form and matter, but which excludes those things by reason of which matter can be designated.

48. It is clear, therefore, that the word “man” and the word “humanity” signify the essence of man, but diversely, as we have said; the word “man” signifies it as a whole, inasmuch as it does not exclude designation by matter, but contains it implicitly and indistinctly, as we have said before that the genus contains the difference. And this is why the word “man” is predicated of individuals. But the word “humanity” signifies it as a part, because it contains in its signification only what belongs to man as man, and it excludes all designation by matter. Whence it is not predicated of individual men.

49. And this is why the word “essence” is sometimes found predicated of a real thing, for we say that Socrates is a certain essence; and sometimes it is denied, as when we say that the essence of Socrates is not Socrates.

50. Having seen what is signified by the word “essence” in composed substances, we must see how a composed essence is related to the notion of the genus, of the species, and of the difference.

51. Because that to which the notion of the genus, or of the species, or of the difference, belongs is predicated of this designated singular, it is impossible that the notion of a universal — e.g., of the genus or of the species — belong to an essence according as it is signified a part, as by the word “humanity” or “animality.” And this is why Ibn-Sînâ says that rationality is not a difference, but the principle of a difference. And for the same reason humanity is not a species, and animality not a genus.

52. Similarly, it cannot be said that the notion of the genus, or of the species, belongs to an essence as to some real thing existing outside singular things, as the Platonists held, because in this way the genus and the species would not be predicated of this individual; for it cannot be said that Socrates is what is separated from him. Nor, further, would this separated something be of any use in knowing this singular.

53. Whence it remains that the notion of the genus, or of the species, belongs to an essence according as it is signified as a whole, as by the word “man” or “animal” according as it contains implicitly and indistinctly everything that is in the individual.

54. Now, a nature or essence signified as a whole can be considered in two ways. In one way it can be considered according to its proper content, and this is an absolute consideration of it. And in this way nothing is true of it except what belongs to it as such; whence if anything else is attributed to it, the attribution is false. For example, to man as man belong rational and animal, and whatever else falls in his definition. But white or black, or anything of this sort, which is not of the content of humanity, does not belong to man as man. Whence, if one should ask whether the nature so considered can be said to be one or many, neither should be allowed, because each is outside the content of humanity and either can be added to it. For if plurality were of its content, it could never be one, as it is in Socrates. Similarly, if oneness were of its content, then the nature of Socrates and Plato would be one and the same, and it could not be plurified into many individuals.

55. In the other way an essence is considered according to the existence it has in this or that. When the essence is so considered, something is predicated of it accidentally, by reason of that in which it is; for example, it is said that man is white because Socrates is white, although to be white does not belong to man as man.

56. This nature has a twofold existence, one in singular things, the other in the soul; and accidents follow upon the nature according to either existence. In singular things it has a multiple existence in accord with the diversity of these singular things; yet the existence of none of these things belongs to

the nature considered in itself, i.e., absolutely. For it is false to say that the nature of man, as such, has existence in this singular thing; because if existence in this singular thing belonged to man as man, man would never exist outside this singular thing. Similarly, if it belonged to man as man not to exist in this singular thing, man would never exist in it. But it is true to say that it does not belong to man as man to exist in this or that singular thing, or in the soul. It is clear, therefore, that the nature of man, absolutely considered, abstracts from any of these existences, but in a way such that it excludes no one of them.

57. And it is the nature so considered which is predicated of all individuals. Yet it cannot be said that the notion of a universal belongs to the nature so considered, because oneness and commonness are of the notion of a universal. Neither of these belongs to human nature considered absolutely, for if commonness were of the content of man, commonness would be found in whatever thing humanity is found. And this is false, because in Socrates there is no commonness, but whatever is in him is individuated.

58. Similarly, it cannot be said that the notion of the genus or of the species attaches to human nature according as it has existence in individuals, because human nature is not found in individuals with a oneness such that it would be some one thing belonging to all, which the notion of a universal requires.

59. It remains, therefore, that the notion of the species attaches to human nature according to the existence it has in the intellect.

60. For human nature exists in the intellect in abstraction from all that individuates; and this is why it has a content which is the same in relation to all individual men outside the soul; it is equally the likeness of all of them, and leads to a knowledge of all insofar as they are men. And it is from the fact that the nature has such a relation to all individuals that the intellect discovers and attributes the notion of the species to it. Whence the Commentator says in his considerations on the first book of *On the Soul* that “it is the intellect which causes universality in things.” Ibn-Sînâ, too, says this in his *Metaphysics*.

61. And although the intellectually grasped nature has the character of a universal according as it is compared to things outside the soul, because it is one likeness of all of them; still according as it exists in this intellect or in that one, it is something particular — a particular species grasped by a particular intellect. From this one can see the weakness of what the Commentator says in his considerations of the third book of *On the Soul*; from the universality of the intellectually grasped form he wanted to conclude that there is one intellect in all men. This falls short of the truth because the intellectually grasped form has its universality not according to the existence which it has in an intellect, but according as it is related to real things as a likeness of them.

62. What is true here is like what would be true of a corporeal statue representing many men: the image or form of the statue would have its own and individual existence according as it exists in this matter, and it would have the character of commonness according as it is the common representation of many.

63. Further, because it belongs to human nature absolutely considered to be predicated of Socrates, and because the notion of the species does not belong to it absolutely considered but is among the accidents which follow upon it according to the existence it has in the intellect, one can see why the word “species” is not predicated of Socrates, i.e., why it is not said that “Socrates is a species.” This would of necessity be said if the notion of the species belonged to man according to the existence which man has in Socrates; or, if the notion of the species belonged to man absolutely considered, i.e., to man as man, for whatever belongs to man as man is predicated of Socrates.

64. Still, to be predicated belongs to the genus in virtue of what it is, since this is placed in its definition. For predication is something which is achieved by the combining and dividing activity of the intellect, and which has for its foundation in the real thing the union of those things, one of which is said of another. Whence the notion of predicability can be included in the notion of that intention which

is the genus, which (intention) is similarly achieved by the activity of the intellect. Nonetheless, that to which the intellect, combining one thing with another, attributes the intention of predicability is not the intention of the genus itself; rather it is that to which the intellect attributes the intention of the genus, for example, that which is signified by the word “animal.”

65. It is clear, therefore, how an essence or nature is related to the notion of the species. The notion of the species is not among the things which belong to the nature absolutely considered, nor is it among the accidents which follow upon the nature according to the existence it has outside the soul, as whiteness or blackness. Rather the notion of the species is among the accidents which follow upon the nature according to the existence it has in the intellect; and it is in this way, too, that the notion of the genus and of the difference belong to it.

66. It remains, now, for us to see in what way essence is in separated substances, namely, in the soul, in the intelligences, and in the First Cause.

67. Although everyone admits the simplicity of the First Cause, some try to introduce a composition of matter and form in the intelligences and in souls. The originator of this position appears to have been Ibn-Gabirol, author of the book *Fountain of Life*.

68. But this is not in agreement with what philosophers commonly say, because they call them substances separated from matter, and prove them to be without all matter. The strongest demonstration of this is from the power of understanding which is in them. For we see that forms are not actually intelligible except according as they are separated from matter and from its conditions; nor are they made actually intelligible except by the power of a substance understanding them, according as they are received into, and are affected by, that substance.

69. Whence it is necessary that there be in any intelligent substance a total freedom from matter, such that the substance does not have matter as a part of itself, such too that the substance is not a form impressed on matter, as is the case with material forms.

70. Nor can it be said that it is only corporeal matter that impedes intelligibility, and not any matter whatsoever. For if this were so by reason of corporeal matter alone, then it would have to be that matter impedes intelligibility by reason of the corporeal form, since matter is called corporeal only according as it is found under the corporeal form. But this cannot be — namely, that matter impedes intelligibility by reason of the corporeal form — because the corporeal form itself, just as other forms, is actually intelligible according as it is abstracted from matter. Whence there is in no way a composition of matter and form in the soul or in an intelligence if matter in them is taken in the sense in which matter is taken in corporeal substances.

71. But there is in them a composition of form and existence. Whence it is said, in the commentary on the ninth proposition of the *Book on Causes*, that “an intelligence is something having form and existence,” and form is taken there for the simple quiddity or nature itself.

72. It is easy to see how this may be so. Whatever things are so related to one another that one is a cause of the other’s existence, the one which is the cause can have existence without the other, but not conversely. Now the relation of matter and form is such that form gives existence to matter. It is impossible, therefore, that matter exist without some form. But it is not impossible that some form exist without matter, for form, to the extent that it is form, does not depend on matter. But if some forms are found which cannot exist except in matter, this happens to them because of their distance from the first principle, which is first and pure act. Whence those forms which are nearest to the first principle are forms subsisting of themselves, that is without matter. For not every sort of form needs matter, as has been said; and the intelligences are forms of this sort. And therefore it is not necessary that the essences or quiddities of these substances be other than form itself.

73. Thus the essence of a composed substance and that of a simple substance differ in this: the essence of a composed substance is not form alone, but includes form and matter; the essence of a simple substance is form alone.

74. And from this follow two other differences. One difference is that the essence of a composed substance can be signified as a whole or as a part. This happens on account of the designation of matter, as has been said. And therefore the essence of a composed thing is not predicated of the composed thing itself in just any way, for it cannot be said that man is his quiddity. But the essence of a simple thing, which (essence) is its form, cannot be signified except as a whole, since nothing is there besides the form as receiving the form. Thus, no matter what way the essence of a simple substance is taken, it is predicated of the simple substance. Whence Ibn-Sînâ says that the quiddity of a simple thing is the simple thing itself, because there is nothing other receiving the quiddity.

75; The second difference is that the essences of composed things, because they are received into designated matter, are multiplied according to its division. And this is why it happens that certain things are the same in species and diverse in number. But since the essence of a simple thing is not received into matter, such a multiplication is impossible here. And this is why, of necessity, many individuals of a same species are not found among these substances; rather, as Ibn-Sînâ expressly says, there are among them as many species as there are individuals.

76. Although substances of this sort are forms alone without matter, they are not utterly simple so as to be pure act. They have an admixture of potency, which becomes clear in the following consideration.

77. Whatever is not of the understood content of an essence or quality is something which comes from without and makes a composition with the essence, because no essence can be understood without the things which are parts of it. Now, every essence or quiddity can be understood without anything being understood about its existence. For I can understand what a man is, or what a phoenix is, and yet not know whether they have existence in the real world. It is clear, therefore, that existence is other than essence or quiddity, unless perhaps there exists a thing whose quiddity is its existence.

78. And there can be but one such thing, the First Thing, because it is impossible to plurify a thing except: (1) by the addition of some difference, as the nature of the genus is multiplied in its species, or (2) by the reception of a form into diverse matters, as the nature of the species is multiplied in diverse individuals, or (3) by this: that one is absolute and the other is received into something; for example, if there were a separated heat, it would by virtue of its very separation be other than heat which is not separated. Now, if we posit a thing which is existence alone, such that this existence is subsistent, this existence will not receive the addition of a difference because it would no longer be existence alone, but existence plus some form. And much less will it receive the addition of matter because it would no longer be a subsistent existence, but a material existence. Whence it remains that such a thing, which is its own existence, cannot be but one.

79. Whence it is necessary, that in every thing other than this one its existence be other than its quiddity, or its nature, or its form. Whence it is necessary that existence in the intelligences be something besides the form, and this is why it was said that an intelligence is form and existence.

80. Now, whatever belongs to a thing is either caused by the principles of its nature, as the ability to laugh in man, or comes to it from some extrinsic principle, as light in the air from the influence of the sun. But it cannot be that the existence of a thing is caused by the form or quiddity of that thing — I say caused as by an efficient cause — because then something would be its own cause, and would bring itself into existence, which is impossible. It is therefore necessary that every such thing, the existence of which is other than its nature, have its existence from some other thing. And because every thing which exists by virtue of another is led back, as to its first cause, to that which exists by virtue of itself, it is necessary that there be some thing which is the cause of the existence of all things because it is

existence alone. Otherwise, there would be an infinite regress among causes, since every thing which is not existence alone has a cause of its existence, as has been said. It is clear, therefore, that an intelligence is form and existence, and that it has existence from the First Being, which is existence alone. And this is the First Cause, which is God.

81. Now everything which receives something from another is in potency with respect to what it receives, and what is received into it is its act. It is necessary therefore that the quiddity itself or the form, which is the intelligence, be in potency with respect to the existence which it receives from God; and this existence is received as an act. It is in this way that potency and act are found in the intelligences, but not form and matter, unless equivocally.

82. Whence, to *suffer*, and to *receive*, and to *be a subject*, and all things of this sort, which are observed to belong to things by reason of matter, also belong equivocally to intellectual and to corporeal substances, as the Commentator says in his considerations on the third book of *On The Soul*.

83. And because the quiddity of an intelligence is, as has been said, the intelligence itself, its quiddity or essence is identically that which it itself is; and its existence received from God is that whereby it subsists in reality. And this is why substances of this sort are said by some to be composed of “that by which it is” and “that which is,” or as Boethius says, of “that which is” and “existence.”

84. And because there is potency in the intelligences as well as act, it will not be difficult to find a multitude of intelligences, which would be impossible if there were no potency in them. Whence the Commentator says, in his considerations on the third book of *On The Soul*, that if the nature of the possible intellect were not known, we would not be able to find multitude among the separated substances. The separated substances, therefore, are distinct from one another according to their grade of potency and act, in such a way that a superior intelligence which is nearer to the First Being has more act and less potency, and so with the others.

85. This grading has its termination in the human soul, which holds the lowest grade among intellectual substances. Whence its possible intellect is related to intelligible forms in the way in which prime matter, which holds the lowest grade in sensible existence, is related to sensible forms, as the Commentator remarks in his considerations on the third book of *On The Soul*. And this is why the Philosopher compares it to a blank tablet on which nothing has been written.

86. And because it has more potency than other intelligible substances, the human soul is so close to material things that a material thing is drawn to it to share its existence, but in such a way that from soul and body results one existence in one composed thing; and yet this existence is not dependent on the body inasmuch as it is the soul’s existence.

87. And posterior to this form which is the soul are found other forms which have more potency, and which are still closer to matter, so close that they do not exist without matter. Among these forms, too, is found an order and a grading, down to the first forms of the elements, which are the closest to matter. These last are so close to matter that they operate only according to the active and passive qualities, and the other sorts of things, which are required as the means by which matter is disposed for the receiving of form.

88. From the preceding it is clear how essence is found in diverse substances. For we find that they have essence in three different ways.

89. There is a thing, God, whose essence is his existence itself. And this is why we find some philosophers who say that God does not have a quiddity or essence, because his essence is not other than his existence. And from this it follows that he is not in a genus, because everything which is in a genus must have a quiddity which is other than its existence. And this is so since the quiddity or nature of a genus or species, in the case of those things which have a genus or species, is not multiplied

according to the intelligible content of the nature; rather, it is the existence in these diverse things which is diverse.

90. Nor is it necessary, if we say that God is existence alone, for us to fall into the error of those who say that God is universal existence whereby each and every thing formally exists. For the existence which God is, is such that no addition can be made to it. Whence by virtue of its purity it is an existence distinct from every existence. This is why, in the commentary on the ninth proposition of the *Book on Causes*, it is said that the individuation of the First Cause, which is existence alone, is through its pure goodness. But as regards that universal existence, just as it does not include in its intelligible content any addition, so too neither does it include in its intelligible content any exclusion of addition, because if this were the case, nothing in which something is added over and above its existence could be understood to be.

91. Similarly, although God is existence alone, it is not necessary that the other perfections or excellences be wanting in him. Rather he has all the perfections which are in every genus. This is why he is called simply perfect, as the Philosopher and the Commentator say in book five of the *Metaphysics*. But he has these perfections in a more excellent way than all things because in him they are one, whereas in other things they have diversity. And this is so because all these perfections belong to him according to his simple existence. If some one could perform the operations of all the qualities through some one quality, he would have every quality in that one quality; so too God has all these perfections in his existence itself.

92. Essence is found in a second way in created intellectual substances. Existence in them is other than their essence, although essence is without matter. Whence their existence is not absolute, but received, and therefore limited and confined to the capacity of the recipient nature. But their nature or quiddity is absolute, not received in any matter. And this is why it is said in the *Book on Causes* that the intelligences are unlimited from below and limited from above, for they are limited as regards their existence, which they receive from above; but they are not limited from below because their forms are not limited to the capacity of a matter receiving them.

93. And this is why, as has been said, there is not found among such substances a multitude of individuals in one species, with the exception of the human soul on account of the body to which it is united. And although its individuation depends on the body as upon the occasion for its beginning because it does not acquire its individuated existence except in the body of which it is the actuality, it is not necessary that its individuation be lost when the body is taken away because that existence, since it is absolute, always remains individuated once the soul acquires it by being made the form of this individual body. And this is why Ibn-Sînâ says that the individuation and multiplication of souls depends on the body as regards its beginning, but not as regards its termination.

94. And because quiddity in these substances is not the same as existence, they are orderable within a predicament. And this is why they have a genus, a species, and a difference, although their proper differences are hidden from us. For even in the case of sensible things, the essential differences themselves are not known; whence they are signified through accidental differences which rise out of the essential ones, as a cause is signified through its effect; this is what is done when biped, for example, is given as the difference of man. But the proper accidents of immaterial substances are unknown to us; whence their differences cannot be signified by us either through themselves or through accidental differences.

95. But we must notice that the genus and the difference of these substances are not taken in the same way in which the genus and the difference of sensible substances are taken. In the case of sensible substances the genus is taken from that which is material in the thing, whereas the difference is taken from that which is formal in it. Whence Ibn-Sînâ says at the beginning of his book *On the Soul* that form in things composed of matter and form is the simple difference of that which is constituted by it;

but not in such a way that the form is the difference, but because the form is the principle of the difference, as the same writer says in his *Metaphysics*. And this sort of difference is called a simple difference because it is taken from what is part of the quiddity of the thing, namely, from the form. But since immaterial substances are simple quiddities, their difference cannot be taken from what is part of the quiddity, but from the whole quiddity. This is why Ibn-Sînâ says, at the beginning of *On the Soul*, that only those species have a simple difference whose essences are composed of matter and form.

96. Similarly, their genus too is taken from the whole essence, but in a different way, for separated substances agree with each other in immateriality, and differ from each other in grade of perfection, according as they withdraw from potentiality and approach pure actuality. The genus is taken from that in them which follows upon their being immaterial; for example, intellectuality or something of this sort. But the difference, which is unknown to us, is taken from that in them which follows upon their grade of perfection.

97. And it is not necessary that these differences be accidental because they are determined by greater and lesser perfection which does not diversify a species. For grades of perfection in the reception of a same form do not diversify a species, as whiter and less white in participating whiteness which is of the same nature. But a diverse grade in the forms or natures themselves which are participated does diversify a species. For example, nature proceeds by grades from plants to animals by way of certain things which are midway between animals and plants, according to the Philosopher in book seven of *On Animals*. Nor, similarly, is it necessary that intellectual substances be divided always by two true differences, because this cannot come about in the case of all things, as the Philosopher says in book eleven of *On Animals*.

98. Essence is found in a third way in substances composed of matter and form. Here it is both the case that existence is received and limited because they have existence from another; and that their nature or quiddity is received in designated matter. And so, they are limited both from above and from below. And because of the division of designated matter, the multiplication of individuals in one species is here possible. As regards the question how the essence of these substances is related to the logical intentions, we have explained that above.

99. What remains now is to see how essence is in accidents; how it is in all substances has been discussed.

100. And because essence, as has been said, is that which is signified by the definition, it is necessary that accidents have essence in the way in which they have definition. They have an incomplete definition because they cannot be defined unless a subject is placed in their definition. And this is so because they do not have existence in themselves free of a subject.

101. But just as a substantial existence results from matter and form when they are composed, so from an accident and a subject results an accidental existence when the accident comes to the subject. And this is also why neither substantial form nor matter have a complete essence because it is necessary to place in the definition of substantial form that of which it is the form; and so its definition is formulated by the addition of something which is outside its genus, just like the definition of an accidental form. Whence, also, the body is placed in the definition of the soul by the natural philosopher, who considers the soul only insofar as it is the form of a physical body.

102. But there is this difference between substantial and accidental forms. Just as substantial form does not have existence in itself, separately from that to which it comes, neither does that to which it comes, namely, matter. And thus from the conjunction of the two results that existence in which a thing subsists in itself, and from them is produced something essentially one; and because of this an essence is the result of their conjunction. Whence, although the form considered in itself does not have the complete nature of an essence, it is nonetheless part of a complete essence. But that to which an

accident comes is a being complete in itself and subsisting in its own existence. And this existence naturally precedes the accident which supervenes. And this is why the supervening accident does not, by its conjunction with that to which it comes, cause that existence in which a thing subsists, and through which the thing is a being in itself. It causes, rather, a certain second existence, without which the subsisting thing can be understood to be, just as what is first can be understood without what is second. Whence something essentially one is not produced from an accident and a subject, but something accidentally one. And this is why an essence does not result from their conjunction, as from the conjunction of form and matter. And this is why an accident neither has the nature of a complete essence, nor is it part of a complete essence. But just as it is a being in a qualified way, so too does it have essence in a qualified way.

103. Now, whatever is said to be most fully and most truly in any genus is the cause of the things which are posterior in that genus; for example, fire, which is unsurpassed in heat, is the cause of heat in hot things, as it is said in the second book of the *Metaphysics*. This is why substance, which has first place in the genus of being, having essence most truly and most fully, must be the cause of accidents, which participate in the nature of being secondarily and in a qualified way.

104. But this happens in diverse ways. For, since the parts of substance are matter and form, certain accidents follow principally on form, certain others follow principally on matter. There are forms whose existence does not depend on matter, for example, intellectual souls; but matter does not have existence except through form. Whence some of the accidents which follow on form are such that they share nothing with matter; for example, to understand, which does not take place through a bodily organ, as the Philosopher proves in the third book of *On the Soul*. But some other of the accidents following on form are such that they do share something with matter; for example, to sense. But no accident follows on matter which shares nothing with form.

105. Among those accidents which follow on matter we find a certain diversity. For some accidents follow on matter according to the ordering which it has to a special form; for example, male and female among animals, the diversity of which derives from matter, as is said in the tenth book of the *Metaphysics*. Whence these accidents do not remain on the removal of the form of animal, except equivocally. Other accidents follow on matter according to the ordering which it has to a general form. Thus, on the removal of the special form they still remain in the matter; for example, the blackness of an Ethiopian's skin is from the mixture of the elements and not from his soul; and this is why it remains in him after death. And because each and every thing is individuated by matter and placed in a genus or species by its form, accidents which follow on matter are accidents of the individual, and it is according to these that individuals of a same species differ from one another.

106. But accidents following on form are the proper attributes of the genus or of the species. Whence they are found in every thing which participates in the nature of the genus or of the species. For example, man's ability to laugh follows on the form because laughter takes place by reason of the fact that a man's soul has grasped something.

107. It should also be noticed that sometimes the essential principles cause accidents in a state of perfect actuality, as heat in the case of fire which is always actually hot. But sometimes they cause accidents which are only aptitudes, their completion being received from an exterior agent; for example, transparency in the air, which is completed by some exterior light-emitting body. And in such things the aptitude is an inseparable accident, but the completion, which comes from some principle which is outside the essence of the thing, or which does not enter the constitution of the thing, is separable; for example, being moved and things of this sort.

108. It should be noticed, further, that the genus, the species, and the difference of accidents are taken in a way which differs from the way in which those of substances are taken.



109. In substances something essentially one results from the substantial form and matter, a certain nature results from their conjunction, a nature which is properly placed in the predicament of substance. This is why concrete names of substances which signify the composite are properly said to be in a genus, as species or genera; for example, man or animal. But the form, or the matter, is not in a predicament in this way, though each is in a predicament by reduction, as principles are said to be in a genus. Something essentially one does not, on the contrary, result from an accident and its subject. Whence the result of their conjunction is not a certain nature, to which the intention of genus or species may be attributed. Whence names of accidents expressed concretely are not placed in a predicament as species or genera; for example, white or musical, except by reduction. They are placed in a predicament only according as they are signified in the abstract; for example, whiteness and music.

110. And because accidents are not composed of matter and form, their genus cannot be taken from matter and their difference from form, as in the case of composed substances. Rather, their first genus must be taken from their way of existing itself, according to which the word “being” is diversely predicated of the ten genera according to a priority and posteriority; for example, an accident is called quantity from the fact that it is the measure of substance, and quality according as it is the disposition of substance, and so with the other accidents, according to the Philosopher in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*. But their differences are taken from the diversity of the principles by which they are caused. And because proper attributes are caused by the proper principles of the subject, the subject is placed in their definition to function as the difference if they are defined in the abstract, which is the way in which they are properly in a genus; as when it is said that snubnosedness is the turned-up-ness of the nose. But the converse would be the case if their definition were taken according as they are said concretely. For in this way the subject is placed in their definition as a genus because they are then being defined after the manner of composed substance, in which the genus is taken from matter; as when we say that a snub nose is a turned up nose.

111. We have a similar case if one accident is the principle of another, as action and passion and quantity are principles of relation. And this is why the Philosopher divides relation according to these in book five of the *Metaphysics*.

112. But because the proper principles of accidents are not always manifest, we sometimes take the difference of accidents from their effects; as when *concentrating* and *diffusing* are called the differences of color. These effects are caused by the abundance and the scarcity of light, which cause the diverse species of color.

113. And so it is clear how essence is in substances and in accidents, and how it is in composed substances in simple ones, and how the universal intentions of logic are found in all of these, with the exception of the First Principle, which is infinitely simple, and to which, because of its simplicity, belongs the notion neither of the genus nor of the species, nor consequently definition. With this, let the discussion, its tasks achieve brought to a close. AMEN