

This file contains notes on problems that are strictly intra-Thomistic. See also the file "Essence Distinct from Existence.wpd."

xxx Prime matter, how to put the argument, 7/4/94

After Adler's death, quote his and John Wild's arguments. Then show how it should be done. The subject of substantial change can have only two kinds of characteristics, substantial or accidental. The subject of substantial change cannot have, in itself, actual substantial characteristics. It cannot be actually substance, because the subject of a change must be potentially, not actually, what it is to become. And it cannot have accidental characteristics, because accidents only exist in substance. So where there are accidents, substance must actually exist.

xxx essence and existence, June 24, 2005

I can conceive of the universe just popping into existence and popping out of existence. Doesn't that prove that the universe does not need a cause of its existence? No. When I conceive the universe as popping out of existence, I am conceiving of it as having an intrinsic potency for nonexistence, in other words, as having an essence distinct from its existence as a potency that receives existence and can lose it.

The opponent wants to say that even if there were a pure act of existence, that act of existence could pop in and out of reality, without positing in it an intrinsic potency for nonexistence that is distinct from the existence. But if the potency for nonexistence is not conceived to be intrinsic to that which exists, that potency is entirely a being of reason, a cognition-constituted object.

The same goes for a pure existence that would be conceived to just pop into existence. To conceive that there is not now anything that is a pure act of existence and that at the next moment there will be such a thing, is to conceive that what will exist at the next moment has an intrinsic capacity for not existing, since it does not exist at this moment. Again, if the capacity for nonexistence is not intrinsic to the thing, that capacity is purely a being of reason.

We can say that it is possible for a union of essence and existence to pop out of existence or into existence, but not possible for a pure act of existence. Possibility is a logical relation, but logical relations originally terminate in extra logical values. If logical relations did not have extra logical values for their terms, they could not be helpful in our knowledge of extra logical values. When we say that it is possible for a union of essence and existence not to exist, the reason that this statement about a logical relation of possibility is true is what a union of essence and existence is as an extra logical thing.

Correspondingly, it is not possible for a pure act of existence, if there is one, to have begun to exist or to cease existing. The illusion that it is possible comes from the fact that we can conceive of a pure act of existing popping into existence or popping out of existence. But the reason we

can conceive that is that in so doing we are hypothesizing a potency for nonexistence intrinsic to the pure act of existing as a extra logical thing. For if we are not hypothesizing that, then the possibility for non-existence that we think we are conceiving is purely a possibility at the level of a being of reason as opposed to the level of what is hypothesized to be real.

The preceding explains how I got out of a confusion that I will now try to describe, in case someone else might get into the same confusion. The confusion results from the way I was trying to use the phrase "logically possible". I was thinking that the fact that we can believe we are conceiving a pure act of existence's popping in and out of existence was equivalent to thinking that the pure act of existence's nonexistence was a "logical possibility." But that is a very slippery phrase in contexts like this.

For example, given that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, it is now a necessary truth that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo in the sense that the truth of that statement can never change. In that sense, we might say that it is not logically possible for Napoleon not to have been defeated at Waterloo, since it is not logically possible for the truth of that statement change.

But in another sense, we might say that it is logically possible that Napoleon was not defeated at Waterloo. For any necessity in that statement is dependent on the contingent fact of Napoleon's defeat, and at the time of the defeat it was logically possible (in the prior sense) that he not be defeated there.

This confusion arose from thinking about the Trinity. We cannot prove the "possibility" of the Trinity. Since we know there can be no accidents in God, if the Trinity is possible at all in God, it is necessarily real in God. It cannot be just contingently real in God. So if we knew that the Trinity was "logically possible" for God, we would know that there is a Trinity in God. So we cannot prove a logical possibility of the Trinity.

But that does not prevent us from proving something else, namely, that we cannot disprove the logical possibility of the Trinity. In other words, we might be able to prove that an opponent has no hope of constructing a sound argument against the possibility of the Trinity. And proving that there can be no sound argument against the possibility of the Trinity, is really all the defense faith in the Trinity needs.

We can describe the latter situation by saying that it is "logically" possible that there is a Trinity. But in this sense it would also be logically possible that there is no Trinity. The only thing that would not be logically possible would be a proof either way of the logical possibility or logical impossibility of the Trinity.

In this sense, the Christian could be perfectly consistent in her faith in the Trinity if she also believed that it was logically possible that there not be a Trinity. A logical possibility here refers to a strictly epistemological fact, not an ontological fact. Ontologically, there is no possibility that God is not whatever he is, whether we know what he is or not. Epistemologically, if we cannot claim to have ruled out a possibility by a sound argument, an argument showing the ontological impossibility of the opposite, we have to allow that possibility as a "logical" possibility.

But our faith in the Trinity implies the faith that there is not a sound argument showing the ontological impossibility of the Trinity. So a demonstration that there can be no such sound argument is a demonstration that the Trinity is a logical possibility in the epistemological sense of something whose nonexistence can never be known to reason. So when we are contemplating whether to put our faith in the Trinity were not, we would have the complete confidence of knowing that nothing can ever prove our faith wrong.

Back to essence an existence. There must be a being that is a pure act of existence. For the only two possibilities are something that is a pure act of existence, on the one hand, and things that are composites of essence an existence, on the other hand. If such composites exist, they must be caused to exist by a pure act of existence. Why? Because the existence of an essence/existence composite is a caused existence. It has the essence as its "material" cause.

But the essence cannot be the only cause of the existence; if it were, the essence would be cause of itself, since it must exist to be a cause. (I argue this in my dissertation.)

So the question becomes whether the universe can be considered a pure act of existence. Now if the universe is one substance, we do not have the advantage of knowing the truth of hylomorphism to demonstrate that a thing that changes cannot be a pure act of existence. At least we do not have the advantage of the argument for hylomorphism from the occurrence of substantial change, although there are certainly other arguments for hylomorphism, for example, the arguments from the universality of concepts and the divisibility of the continuum (see Phillips' "modern Thomistic philosophy" volume one).

If the universe is one substance, all changes are accidental changes, and a pure act of existence would be in potency to accidental changes. On ordinary hylomorphism, we know that cannot be true. But what if we do not have hylomorphism as a given?

Can we argue that if a substance is in potency to accidents, the substance cannot be identical with its own existence, that is, that the substance is an essence in potency to existence? If so, how? (I have more to say about this elsewhere in these notes files.)

xxx Thomism, Metaphysics. Existence and Essence, Substance, Matter and Form, Apr 4, 00

Unless we can prove that there is more than 1 substance in the universe, Thomists have a problem. The big bang theory creates the possibility that the universe is one substance. If you ask how all the innumerable parts of the universe can be one substance, I will reply in the same way that the body with all its innumerable parts can be one substance. But there is this important difference. We explain the unity of the body by saying that the substantial form is present in every part. That is, that the whole of the substantial form is present in every part.

[I don't believe that what I'm going to be saying next has been said before, but it is worth saying. To get an idea of how the whole of the substantial form can exist in every part, compare the form's causality to God's causality of the universe. We say that God is present everywhere by

his causality. In other words, anywhere, that is any specific place we could point to, exists only because God is there making it exist. Likewise with the body.

The only reason all our extended body exists, on the matter form theory, is that the substantial form causes an extended body to exist. Here the causality is formal not efficient, as it is in the case of God. But other than that the analogy is pretty good. Any spot on our body, on our extended body, exists as such, that is, exists as part of an extended continuum, only because the substantial form causes that spot to exist as part of a continuum by causing the continuum to exist. The substantial form can only do this by existing in each part. If it did not exist in each part, only part of the substantial form would exist in each part. Then the substantial form would itself be an extended continuum, and we would have to explain how that continuum comes to exist as a unified continuum. The only way the substantial form can be an explanation of the existence of a unified continuum is by the whole substantial form's presence at every point in the continuum. And that simply means that the form is present by its causality, because that is what the form is, a cause. So where a part of the continuum exists, the cause of the continuum must exist, and so the substantial form must exist.]

To get back to comparing the universe as one substance to the body as one substance: the problem with using the matter form theory as the basis of the comparison is that the most common arguments for the matter form theory presuppose the existence of more than one substance. They either presuppose the existence of a multitude of substances existing at the same time (by explaining the relationship between universal concepts and their individual instances), or a succession of substances resulting from substantial change. If neither of those conditions is the case, what is the basis for the matter form theory? And if the universe is one substance, neither of those conditions is the case.

I can think of one possible way to argue for a multiplicity of substances that is very round about. If we can prove that intellectual activity requires a substantial form that is subsistent, we can argue that the existence of human beings constitutes the existence of a multiplicity of substances, and of substances that come into existence through substantial change. But how do we establish that intellectual activity requires a subsistent substantial form if we do not have the matter form theory as a given to argue from? Perhaps there is a way. We might be able to argue that what things are, that is, what individuals are, could not be truthfully expressed by universal concepts unless individuals were composed of substantial form and prime matter. Or even if there's only one individual other than human beings, namely, the universe, for us to be able to truthfully describe that substance by means of universal concepts might imply that this one substance was composed of matter and form.

(Actually, there is one other way, at least, to argue for the matter form theory: by quantitative division of the continuum. See Phillips's Modern Thomistic Philosophy, vol. 1.)

There is another problem for Thomists, if the universe is one substance. How do we argue for the real distinction between existence and essence? A common way of arguing for it is From the multiplicity of substances. Multiplicity requires a limitation. Limitation requires the reception all the act by a potency really distinct from the act; hence the real distinction between the act of existence and essence.

Another way of arguing for about real distinction occurs after we have proven the existence of God and established that he is pure act. But can we use the standard arguments for the existence of God if the universe is one substance? How do we know, for instance, that the existence of this

substance is contingent? In fact, how do we know that this substance's existence is distinct from its essence?

I am not saying that these questions cannot be answered. But I am saying that there is work to be done, philosophical work to be done, that cannot be done simply by commenting on the texts of Aquinas. In other words, to answer this question, or these questions, Thomists will have to do something they are unfamiliar with: work of a philosophical kind.

Also, if we cannot prove the universe is more than one substance, we might be able to argue that the existence of the one substance is contingent, or that its existence is distinct from its essence, from the fact that it undergoes accidental change. That fact proves that this substance is not pure act. If its existence were identical with its essence, that is, if its essence were an act of existing, could it be in potency to anything? If not, then it could not undergo accidental change.

August 9, 2003, big

Where there is potency in a being there is intrinsic multiplicity, because pure potency cannot exist as such. If substance is in potency to accidents, the substance itself is not pure act or pure potency and must be a mixture. So existence is distinct from essence in it, since existence is act relative to whatever else there is in it.

But can we analyze existence itself into a compound of act and potency? If so, is not the act part of that composite the real existence? Can it be replied that in fact any potency is identical with something that is a state of actuality in the different respect? So the existence would be identical with something that is in act in a certain respect and at the same time potential in other respects. In other words, it really wouldn't be a composite in the sense of having distinct parts, but only in the sense that the same thing is in act in a certain respect and at the same time in potency another respects.

In other words, is it possible that every form of act can be identical with a form of potency? Can every form of act also be a form of potency by its identity with itself? If not, then the act part of the "existence" must be the real existence.

And every time something is in act in a certain respect and in potency another respect there may be in that thing a distinction of two parts, by one of which parts it is in act and by the other of which parts it is in potency. It would be the unified thing that is at one and the same time in act in certain respects and in potency in other respects; but that one unified thing would be in act by reason of one element of its makeup and in potency by reason of another. It is not the element that is in act and in potency; it is the thing composed of the elements that is that the same time in act and in potency in different respects. (??Otherwise, it would not be true that every potency is identical with something that is a form of actuality in another respect.??)

So if there is an existence that is in act in some respect and in potency another respects, that existence itself would be composed of elements. And the element by reason of which the existence is in act is the real existence. So in the last analysis, existence would not be in potency in any respect, and anything that is in potency in any respect, for example, a changeable thing, could not be identical with its existence. Since it is not identical with its existence, there is a potency act relation between it and its existence, and its existence is therefore necessarily a caused existence, caused by an existence that is not itself the existence of an essence other than itself. And so a 1-substance universe would be distinct from its existence, and so caused by a

being not distinct from its existence, because the 1- substance universe undergoes accidental changes and so contains potency.

Existence and essence, eternal world, God, 7/ 6/94

Why couldn't being just appear out of nothing? What is it that appears? Is it an essence distinct from its existence? Then it needs a cause. Is it something that can be described as just an act of existence? If so, there can only be one of them. If there is more than one existent, at least one of them must be more than just an act of existence. For if they have in common being an act of existence and nothing more they could not differ in any way. Could the universe be just one act of existence? Then all its multiplicity must be "accidental" to it, where "accidental" is opposed to substantial. Or at least, where there is multiplicity of any kind, there is not just an act of existence. There must at least be accidents in addition to substance.

Can a being with undergoes change be "an existence"? If not, it is a composition of essence and existence and requires an efficient cause that is not a composition of essence and existence.

July 7, 2005

If the universe is one substance, it is **not** a mereological sum; it is an ontological sum. But it is a sum that has conditions non-identical with itself, its parts. It is composed of parts and so would not exist without its parts. Of course, its parts would also not exist without it.

Can we say that any composed substance is dependent for its existence? For since it has conditions non-identical with itself for existence, it is not identical with its existence. And since it is non-identical with its existence, its existence is caused.

A pure existence would have to be absolutely simple. If a being has any sort of multiplicity, we can say that the existence of this being is the existence of this and the existence of that. In that case, "this" and "that" cannot both be pure existences. For where there is multiplicity, there must be difference between what one part of the multiplicity is and what another part of the multiplicity is. But the universe, even if it is only one substance, is obviously multiple. That is, it is at least spread out into diverse continuous parts. So its existence is the existence of this part which is different from that part which is different from that part. So the universe is not a pure act of existence.

Truth is caused by something that must be really distinct from essences. In knowing truth we objectify that cause, and what we objectify must be really distinct from essence. If it was not really distinct, we would already know that cause, and hence already know truth, when we know the essence.

The opponent wants to say that the fact that existence is not included in what we know when we know and essence does not prove that existence is really distinct from what we know when we know and essence. Considered, for example, the fact that essence is universal but it is identical with what individuals are. The essence of man it is universal. It applies to both Socrates and Plato. But in Socrates it is identical with his individual nature; it is not identical with Plato's individual nature. So there is only a logical, not a real, distinction between the universal essence

of man and Socrates's individual nature. Perhaps existence relates to essence as Socrates's individual nature relates to the universal essence. That is, perhaps existence is simply abstracted from, where abstraction indicates a logical relation only and hence a logical distinction only.

The problem for the opponent is that abstraction can maintain that real identity within logical diversity only if there is some basis in reality for the distinction between the universal essence and individual essence. There must be some basis in reality enabling us to abstract universal essence from the individual essence. In other words, there must be a real multiplicity as the ultimate cause of the logical distinction. The real multiplicity is not identical with the logical distinction, but a cause is never identical with its effect.

In the case of Socrates's individual nature, the real cause of the multiplicity are the individual dispositions that are necessary parts of Socrates's individual nature caused by the dispositions of the matter into which Socrates's substantial form, its. For example, there is Socrates's blood type, skin pigmentation, their pigmentation, and all sorts of other individual attributes caused by his jeans along with the universal attributes caused by his jeans is. It is these that make up Socrates's individual nature.

But is it possible that Socrates's existence is identical, not what the universal essence, but with his individual essence? No, the concept "Socrates's individual essence" no more gives us knowledge of the real existence of Socrates than does the concept of the universal essence of man. So there is at least a logical distinction between Socrates's individual essence and his existence. And that logical distinction must have a foundation in some real distinction.

EAP and Cause, 1-5-93

Notice that causality not only requires the nature of the cause and effect but their existential positing, i.e., their being next to one another, which is something external to their natures. Can this be a proof of the distinction of essence from existence? Also, can existence be the cause of the truth of a predication if existence is not really distinct from that which is predicated?

Existence and essence, cause

Back to existence. Why does **this** existent occur and not some other? This question is different from the allegedly unanswerable "Why is there something rather than nothing?"

Is **this** equivalent to an existence as opposed to a capacity for existence? Why can't it be an existence? One reason: it is finite. Another reason, it is subject to change. While it remains in existence, it can undergo change. **Another reason, it can cease to exist.**

12-14-89-3, Essence, existence, cause

The fact that "Existence exists" is not a self-evident truth is irrelevant to the question of whether a pure existence could be contingent, and as a result, a contingent being would not need a cause. For a truth can still be necessary even if not self-evident. What needs to be self-evident is only a hypothetical proposition of the form "If a being is an act of existing, then ..."

In fact, a contingent being that is other than its existence has potentiality for non-existence. A being that is a pure existence has no potency for nonexistence in itself. The proposition "A

exists" appears to be potentially true or false; hence we think A potentially exists or does not exist. But the appearance that "A exists" is potentially false may result solely from a limitation of our knowledge. In fact, it may be necessarily true, even though we do not or cannot know this.

So the question "Can A exist or not exist" may mean two things. It may mean, "Does A have a potency for nonexistence in itself (is its essence distinct from its existence)?" or "Does a being that is a pure act of existing have a potency for nonexistence in itself?" The answer must be no. But the question can also mean, "Is it possible for the statement 'A, a being that is a pure act of existing, exists' to be true or false. As far as we know, it can be true or false, but in itself it may be impossible for it to be false. Or "If a being that is a pure act of existence exists, is it possible for the statement 'That being does not exist' to be true?" No, for in itself, that being has no potency for nonexistence. The conclusion: a contingent being (a substance), is distinct from its existence and so needs an efficient cause.

What if there is only one substance? If its essence is an act of existing, could it have any potency? Can the act of existing be in potency to anything else? If there is only one substance and it is an act of existence, can that substance change accidentally, or does it even have any accidents? If not, the universe is not identical with its existence.

The denial that a contingent being needs a cause is a result of an epistemological fallacy. We (1) focus on the question of whether a statement, "A exists," can be true or false, and we (2) answer in terms of our knowledge of whether "A exists" is necessarily true or not. A double epistemological fallacy.

xxx essence/existence distinction, only one substance in the universe, July 16, 2004

If there is only one substance in the universe, that substance is in potency to accidental changes. So that substance is not pure act. Does this give a way of arguing to a distinction between existence and essence in that substance? If the nature of the substance were identical with its existence, an act of existence, a pure act of existence and a simple act of existence, would be in potency relative to other acts.

Elsewhere I say that a potency in a certain respect is identical with a state of act in another respect. The potency for 2 is just another way of looking at, just the other side of, the actuality of characteristic 1. This possibly can create the appearance of contradiction. For when the potency is fulfilled, 1 is still 1, but 1 is no longer identical with a potency for 2. 1 is now a fulfilled potency for 2. So 1 was initially identical with an unfulfilled potency for 2 and is now identical with a fulfilled potency for a 2. Does this mean that 1 is and is not what it was before. Does this mean that 1 both is and is not what it was before? Since what it was before was identical with something that it is not now.

One way to avoid the contradiction, a way that I also mentioned someplace else, is this. Assume that any limited mode of being is essentially imperfect. There is no such thing as a limited act that is without some form of potency or other. So there is no such thing as a limited act that cannot acquire further act. And that belongs to the nature of the limited act. So that fact would not cause the limited kind of act not to be identical with itself. It *is* the limited kind of act's identity with itself.

Another way of avoiding the contradiction, a way that may be relevant to the distinction between essence and existence in a substance, is this. It may be the case that wherever we find a substance in a state of act that is in potency toward some further state of act, we find within that substance a distinction between principles, a principle of act and a principle of potency. The nature of the principles would not be identical with the nature of the way in which that substance is in potency. The nature of the principles would be the ground of the way that substance is in potency. The nature of the principles would be the explanation of the way that substance is in potency.

So the substance would be in a state of act, which state was not identical with the principle of act that explains why the substances in that state of act. And the substance would be in a state of potency that was not identical with the potential principle that explains why the substance was in that state of potency.

Now return to the single substance that is alleged to be identical with its act of existence. Since that substance is in potency to accidental change, there would have to be within the structure of that substance a distinction of principles of act in potency. Therefore that substance could not be a pure, simple, act of existence. The only thing eligible to be identical with that substance's existence would be the principle of act within that substance. But the principle of act within that substance would not constitute the whole of the substance.

Still, it would seem that this argument can be carried further. For instance, in natural substances there is a composition of substantial form and prime matter, substantial form is the principle of act; prime matter is the principle of potency. But we do not say that the substantial form is identical with the act of existence of the substance. We say that the whole substance is in potency relative to the act of existence.

Does it make sense to say that something can be the actualization of an act of existence? Certainly not if there is a distinction between essence and existence. For in that case, existence is the act of all acts. But what about the case in which the essence and existence are allegedly identical?

April 15, 2005

The following comments are made after reading Sikora's "the Christian intellect and the mystery of being" page 121. From there I also read sections of Bobik's translation and commentary of the De Ente.

Some things are contradictory only when we attribute real existence to them. (De Ente's Phoenix?) So real existence is other than what we conceive if when we conceive their essence. But when I conceive of a Phoenix, there is as much present to my mind as when I conceive of a man. Or vice versa, when I conceive of man there is as much present to my mind as when I conceive of a Phoenix.

But what I conceive of when I conceive a Phoenix (or define a Phoenix) is other than real existence. So the essence of man is other than its existence. In fact, any nonexistent object is

really other than an act of existence. And there is as much in the objectification of the existent as in the conceptual objectification of the nonexistent. (Think of: “your mother is dead” in the Poinset article.)

But is it true that any nonexistent is really other than an act of existence? Existence belongs to the essence of a supreme being, if there is a being greater than which none can be conceived. But as far as we know from that argument, the being whose essence is existence may not exist. Still any nonexistent being is really other than an exercised existence. For being is really other than nonbeing.

From the inside back cover of Sikora: a supreme being must be really identical with existence ut significata. But it does not follow that he is really identical with existence ut exercita. But if something is really distinct from existence ut significata, it is really distinct from existence ut exercita.

You cannot go from thought to what something is, but maybe you can sometimes go from thought to what something is not.

Now I am reading from marginal comments in Bobik starting on page 165.

The reason that existence does not belong to the essence of man is the same as the reason it does not belong to the essence of a Phoenix.

In contrast to man and Phoenix, the concept of being does include existence, ut significata, not actual existence.

According to Bobik starting at the bottom of page 166: why does St. Thomas at this point assume the existence of a thing whose essence is identical with existence rather than a thing such that existence is part of what it is? If existence is part of its essence, one has to inquire about the character of the other parts. Whether one or more than one, the other parts will necessarily have the character of nonexistence; otherwise they will not be distinguishable from existence. Clearly nonexistence cannot be part of what a thing is. Thus, to say that existence is part of what thing is entails saying that existence is the whole of what that thing is. To say that existence is part of what a man is would entail saying that existence is the whole of what a man is. But what a man is would neither come to be or cease to be if existence were the whole (or even a part) of what a man is.

From the margins on page 168 of Bobik: truth exists. And truth depends on identity between what is in the mind when the nature absolutely considered is in the mind and something that is in the thing. So if existence is not included in the nature absolutely considered in the mind, truth requires that it not be included in the nature absolutely considered outside the mind. This does not violate Aquinas's distinction between abstracting one thing from another thing and asserting that one thing is separate from another thing. This argument does not say we cannot judge that the nature absolutely considered exists. But for that judgment to be true, what is abstracted from when we know the nature absolutely considered cannot be something included in the nature

absolutely considered. "x is a man" is false if "what x is" lacks a note belonging to man, for example, if X is Fido.

Or maybe the judgment in question should be something like "the essence of Joe is to be a nonrational animal." That judgment is false. "Joe is a nonrational animal" is false likewise, because the nature absolutely considered leaves out (actually separates from) a note belonging to what Joe is.

Also, since a phoenix cannot really exist, the essence before my mind when I think of a phoenix is really distinct from any act of existence. But what is present to my mind when I think of a phoenix includes what is present to my mind when I think of bird, fire, ashes, etc. Their natures are as much present to my mind as the nature of a phoenix is; otherwise I could not think of a phoenix. So if the nature present to my mind when phoenix is present to my mind is really distinct from an act of existence, the natures present when I think bird, fire, or ashes must be really distinct too.

From page 170 of Bobik: subsistent existence: that which exists is existence; existence is the substance or nature that exists. There can only be one such thing. For there are only three ways you could multiply existence.

The first way is by adding a difference distinct from the existence. Then we no longer have pure existence but the existence of some differentiating factor. Second, existence can be received into diverse parts of matter. Then we do not have pure existence. We have material existence, that is, a composite of matter and whatever is received in matter. Third, there can only be one thing in a separated state; every other example of the thing has to be in a received state. For example, separated heat as opposed to something that has heat. What makes many things hot things, or what makes many hot things many, cannot be what makes them hot.

So there can only be one pure existence. In other things existence is received by something else which becomes that which exists. There are no other possibilities to multiply existence. To be multiple existences cannot be in a pure state, but one must have in addition to distinguish it from the other. Two pure existences could only be distinguished by nonexistence, nothing. Instead one must be distinguished by that which exists, essence.

Quoting Sikora, "the Christian intellect and the mystery of being," page 63, "existence is precisely that "more" which makes all a difference between the object in the mind and the object outside the mind."

On page 34 of his logic article Sikora says "through the proposition we know existence and the relations between essences." In the margin, truth is not just knowledge of relations between essences; division and trees also give us knowledge of relations between essences.

xxx the universe as one substance, fields in Harre and Madden, May 21, 2005

Also the reply to objection three in question five, article three of the commentary on "the Trinity" of boethius is perfectly consistent with the idea that the universe was originally one extended substance. For it says that the multiplication of substance presupposes the existence of extension so that substances can be divided from one another. And that can help us solve the problem of how there can be two different fields, the gravitational field and the electromagnetic field, existing in the same place at the same time.

July 30, 82

Originally, those fields can both be accidents of one substance, accidental actualization's of different potencies of that substance. When the substances become divided from one another and the universe is composed of multiple substances, universe still contains those original properties virtually. That is, the powers of the new substantial forms ensure that those original properties remain in existence. Nor need it be possible to say where one substance ends and another begins.

This may also solve the problem of action at a distance in quantum mechanics. The distinct effects that occur at distances from one another may just be manifestations of one accident of the original substance.

The fact that the fields have different intensities at different places is explained by the presence of higher substances in those places, just as mass changes the intensity of gravity. Higher substances contain a prime substance virtually for the extent of their extension.

This is one of those "mythical" philosophical hypotheses that Maritain and Rizzi talk about. They mean it's not really a "myth" but a likely story.

February 27, 86

Prior to the existence of anything imaginable or anything spread out into spatial parts, and unimaginable form unites with unimaginable matter to produce, as an effect distinct from either cause, that which is imaginable. In a sense, form is spread throughout the parts. But that sense is the opposite of what the imagination pictures. The form is spread out only because the spatially imaginable thing is caused to be what it is by the prior causality of something that in itself is neither spatial nor imaginable. It belongs to the order of the spatial and imaginable only in the sense that it is essential to it that it causes the existence of something spatial and imaginable, and causes the existence of it by being an intrinsic cause. So the form is essentially intrinsic to that which is spatial. That is the sense in which form is spatial.

March 29, 79

Can force fields be considered accidents that extend substances into space? Then could there not be many substances existing in one place. (Maybe there are. Substance is not extended in itself. So maybe there could be only one body in one part of space but many substances, and many suppositis exercising existence.) There need not be a multiplicity of substances existing in one place if force fields are relational accidents, formal or material, by which one substance is related

to others. Relations can "extend" between many substances. And as Dennis Corish showed in the "review of metaphysics" in the 60s, continuum itself is relational.

February 27, 86

How does the capacity to be a substance, prime matter, limit its act, if it is totally formless? The capacity to be a substance is the capacity to be an individual, because that's the only kind of substance there can be. But form as such is not restricted to being the form of this or that individual. (As Aquinas says early in the summa.) All matter has to be in order to be the cause of individuation is a potency for substance, and hence for being an individual substance, for being that which will become this individual substance, but is not yet this substance. When God first creates, matter does not pre-exist form. But an individual substance is created because form, which is not individual of itself, actually is received in a capacity for being a substance and hence an individual substance. Form is received according to the limits of the receiver, that is, in itself form is not limited to an individual but is received by a capacity for being one and only one substance at a time.

In all of this recall the distinction between individuation in the sense in which it is due to quantity and the other sense quoted by Bobik and Phillips in "modern Thomistic philosophy", I believe its volume two, namely, matter as the cause of the incommunicability of the form.

xxx religion, God, March 7, 89

The real issue is not atheism versus theism, but what kind of God you believe in. Either God is an impersonal, finite force or an infinite person. That is, one way or another we will be committed to the view that something is uncaused and is the cause of everything else.

Also, does our ability to solve the problem of evil at the intellectual level depend on our prior attitudes on the moral level? That is, the atheist says that if there were a God, God should arrange things according to my ideas about the way things should be arranged.

xxx secondary causality and God, June 24, 88

Does God directly cause our actions? God causes the existence of the eye and causes the existence of the light striking the eye. Given the natures that he causes to exist a third thing, the act of sight, emerges. Is any additional causality of God necessary for the emergence of the act of sight? If we answer no, are we making him only indirectly responsible for sight and so admitting into existence something he is not directly the creator of?

Not necessarily. But causality of the higher and more universal cause can envelop, comprehend the causality of the lower cause. By giving the act of existence to the faculty of sight and to light, God's causality envelops, comprehends, the effects that emerge from these two natures, since they emerge from the existence of, the act of existence of, these two natures. The effects of the

lower causes are virtually but really contained in the effect of a higher and more universal cause. So no more causality is required of the bestower of existence for the bestower of existence to be the cause of the secondary effects.

xxx substantial change, November 6, 89

Can a multiplicity of the transitive actions combine to cause the evolution of a substantial form for a being capable of immanent actions? Why not? Because agents produce their like; they communicate their own forms. So they communicate form's capable of transitive action's. Yes, but combined agents produce per accidens results that are not the form of any of the agents taken singly. It may happen that the characteristics A and B resulting from transitive action can only exist (or only coexist?) in a being also capable of immanent action. So in causing A and B to exist, separate agents cause a single substantial form that supports A and B and also supports immanent action.

the agents can't do so if they only cause accidental forms A and B. but causing A and B may suppress the already existing substantial form and produce a new substantial form which is higher, because it combines A and B, and which, as an accidental result, also enables immanent action. So just transitive action alone cannot enable immanent action. But (1) because transitive action can produce a substantial form and (2) because the combining of two such transitive action's can produce a substantial form neither of the actions are capable of on their own, a higher substantial form can emerge per accidens, a form which by chance is also capable of immanent action.

xxx 11-9-89, Laziness of Thomists (LOT)

9-25-92, Humanistic method

Is Phenomenology the Only Alternative to Linguistic Analysis?

De facto, the answer is yes, because Realists (Thomists) have failed to live up to their responsibility. That responsibility is to make the treasures of the Realist tradition accessible to our contemporaries, to so present those treasures that our contemporaries can appreciate their worth. To do that, we must present those treasures philosophically, not textually or historically. The reason we have not done that is that we have not trained our grad students to do that. We have not trained our grad students to do that, because we have trained them to do what we were trained to do.

When I started teaching, I was unable to find Thomistic articles I could use in anthologies of competing views of philosophical questions. And almost all the articles I could find were by Maritain. This after the hundreds of thousands of pages the Thomistic renewal had produced.

If Edwards (see "On the Training of Thomists") were aware of Poinset's influence, she should have referred to him. And if she were familiar with the more prominent modern Thomists, she would have been aware of P's influence, and also have been referred to P.... It will be helpful to reflect on the factors that may have contributed to the historical approach becoming so dominant. There is no doubt that Aeterni Patris was a stimulant to the historical approach. Quote McCool. But it is doubtful that the authority of Aeterni Patris alone can explain the

degree of interest in studying the texts of Aquinas that earlier existed. (In particular it cannot explain how the historical approach could so dominate that modern Thomists were neglected.) For one thing (here quote McCool). Aeterni Patris imposed no obligation on Catholic philosophers to be followers of Aquinas, and there were prominent Catholic philosophers aware of Aeterni Patris who were not Thomists.

For another thing, Aeterni Patris had a further effect and one that itself can explain the earlier degree of interest in studying the texts of Aquinas. In response to AP, thinkers like ... did Thomism philosophically. These men provided a reason for studying Aquinas that Church authority alone did not. They were arguing with persuasion that Aquinas had a great deal to say to us today. They were explicitly inviting their readers to study Aquinas but they were giving their readers a reason for doing so that went beyond Church authority. They were supporting their claim that Aquinas should be studied with persuasive arguments, purportedly based on Aquinas, that claimed to solve modern philosophical problems. Students need a reason for devoting much of their careers to studying Aquinas, and together with AP, the work of these men provided a sufficient reason.

And their work was a stimulus to the textual study of Aquinas in a different way. As thinkers tried to deal with modern problems Thomistically interpretations of Aquinas multiplied. The existence of multiple interpretations supplied another reason for putting more emphasis on studying the texts. If you were already interested in Aquinas, you would have wanted to know what the correct interpretation was. And if you had an interpretation, you had to do textual analysis to justify it as the correct one.

As time went on imbalance...But something was missing necessary for the historical approach itself. If you were already interested in Aquinas, you wanted to know the correct interpretation. But the existence of multiple interpretations would not supply a reason for the historical study of Aquinas if you were not already interested in Thomism for some other reason. Having the correct interpretation would not generate new interest unless there were people around showing philosophically how Aquinas's position solved modern problems. In order for there to be such people, graduate students have to be trained in something in addition to historical method.

However, the question of whether AP alone, and not the existence of Thomists using the philosophical approach, stimulated the interest Aquinas formerly enjoyed is academic for us today. If it was ever the case that Church authority was a sufficient stimulus, it is no longer the case in the post-Vatican II world. Today we have to earn that interest by making Thomism work as a living philosophy. For that, we have to train students to do Thomism philosophically, and for that, they have to study models for doing Thomism philosophically.

Thomism 9-16-91

We approach Aquinas with a willingness to find an interpretation of an apparently false or inconsistent text that makes the text true or consistent. So we work at finding such an interpretation. When we find a text in Cajetan, Poinsot, or Maritain that is apparently false or inconsistent with Aquinas we do not give them the same courtesy. We accept the apparent falsehood or inconsistency at face value and look no further for an interpretation that might prove them not incorrect or inconsistent with Aquinas.

Thomism, 10-22-92

Maritain is unquestionably the best modern interpreter of Aquinas. Are his interpretations

historically perfect? Not at all. But! (1) They are more correct than any other modern interpreter and, more importantly, (2) the kind of historical mistakes Maritain made do not affect the overall philosophical value of his Maritain's views, nor do they affect in the most important ways the consistency of his philosophical views with those of Aquinas.

4-17-88 Thomism and Short Book

The Scandal of Thomism. This could be the theme of an appendix in the short book. M. E., at the 1988 ACPA, says the problems in ethics I am addressing are "not real problems". Perhaps they are not. But if not and if we know it, it is our moral obligation to try to explain to all those colleagues who think they are real precisely why they are not real. M. E.'s kind of thinking is why Thomism is in such bad shape.

xxx Aquinas on identity from "on the power of God" question seven, article 10, reply three, May 10, 2005

"A man is identical with himself really and not only logically (although such a relation is merely logical) inasmuch as the cause of the relation is real, namely substantial identity, which the mind considers in the light of a relation."

xxx father Owens on abstraction, December 16, 90

In "an elementary Christian metaphysics," Owen says that metaphysics uses total abstraction but not formal abstraction. However, formal abstraction differs from total only logically, not in that which acquires these logical characteristics, not in the non-logical value that is known by means of formal and total abstraction.

But how can being be a *part* the way a forma totius is? To form a concept as a "form of the whole" is not to judge that the object of the concept is in reality only a part. But we logically separate being from the subject as if the subject did not include being. Here "as if" does not mean that we believe that the subject is not include being. (See ST I q. 13, a 12 ad 3; q. 85, a 1, ad 1.) We know that it does. But we distinguish the subject from its being only logically, in order to say "Joe has being," as we can say "Joe is a being." "Things have being." We use a concept constructed as a "form of the whole" to inquire into the being of things the way we do to inquire into the humanity of thing's or the animalness of things.

What about "when God creates, there are more beings (forma partis, since existence is a form relative to another part, essence), but not more being (forma totius), being conceived abstractly in the sense in which humanity, triangularity, animalness, etc. are "abstract" conceptions, as opposed to so-called "concrete" conceptions like man, triangle, animal.

January 16, 89

Contrary to what Owens says about him, Maritain recognizes that existence is known by judgment in "the degrees of knowledge," chapter three. But he correctly declines to draw the conclusions Owens draws when he talks about metaphysical knowledge in chapter five, because

the concept of being, arrived at after the judgment of being, is what allows us to know the truths of metaphysics as opposed to truths about contingent existence, such as "Joe exists."

Where does Owens develop the idea, found in "an interpretation of existence," that we never deal with the nature absolutely considered?

In "an interpretation of existence," Owens says something to the effect that we use the concept of act to form a concept of existence as the act of all acts (and other examples of this sort). No, we use the concept of act to form the proposition, the judgment, that existence is the act of all acts. That proposition is composed of concepts, one of them being the concept of existence. So we have the concept of existence before we form that proposition, and without already having the concept of existence, we could not form the proposition uniting the concept of existence to the concept of act. So we need to already have the concept of existence to perform the operations that, according to Owens, gives us the concept of existence to begin with.

December 17, 89

Owens correctly says that the concept of existence does not inform us of the actual existence of anything. What he neglects to say is that it is the concept of existence that informs us of all the metaphysical truths that we know about the actual existence of things. The concept of existence allows us to know necessary truths about contingent existence of things. The concept of existence is what allows us to metaphysically analyze that which judgments of existence inform us of.

Also, Owens tries to derive ontological conclusions from the epistemological fact that existence is first known by judgment.

September 2, 87

Owens says there is no authentic concept of existence because concepts do not inform us of actual existence. But then there is no metaphysical knowledge of existence, since metaphysical knowledge informs us about conditions for the possibility of actual existence, not just about the contingent occurrence of actual existence.

xxx Gilson on the theory of knowledge, December 1, 90

By saying that realism is self-evident without giving a reduction to absurdity to defend that assertion, and by saying that idealism is not inconsistent, it is Gilson who borders on de facto common sense-ism or on intuitionism in the pejorative sense. No matter how much he may talk against such things, he practices them, acting contrary to his talk. When I read Maritain, on the other hand, he not only confirmed my intuition that direct realism was self-evident, but offered a way to defend this belief and show that it was true and had to be true by argument, reduction to absurdity.

Likewise Gilson is the essentialist, not Maritain, the one who makes an essence out of existence. He is the one who disparages abstraction because he cannot distinguish the state of abstraction

from that which we know by means of abstraction, namely, something that in itself is not abstract.

And he asks of the nature absolutely considered, the nature considered in itself, "where does it exist?" That is my point, not Gilson's. If the nature cannot exist without being either X or non-X, in itself is neither X or non-X. I can distinguish the nature from X or non-X. But to make that distinction abstraction (in another sense, since this second sense is explaining my knowledge of the first sense, namely, the distinction of the nature from X or non-X) is necessary.

April 8, 91

Abstraction, possible being, etc. these issues concerned the object of metaphysics, not in itself, but as object.

Gilson was looking for a single magic bullet. He found it in the act of existence, that is, extramental existence. But we need to understand and appreciate both existences of the De Ente to cope with philosophical fallacies and problems. We need to appreciate abstraction as well as the act of all acts, and we need to understand the unity-within-distinction of the two. We need to handle both sides of the distinction as well as appreciate their relation to one another. To avoid philosophical errors about the magic bullet, we need to be able to explain epistemological issues. We need to be able to explain "abstraction" and why it does not prevent knowing concrete being.

xxx Ashley, metaphysics and immateriality, October 12, 87

To prove the existence, for example, the "substance without quantity" of the commentary on Boethius, question for, article three, we must have a concept of substance capable of being so separated, that is, one in which the relation to quantity is not an essential note.

February 23, 91

Assume that we have proven the existence of God in the philosophy of nature. How do we learn more about God? We have to use a premise acquired from the philosophy of nature, namely, the existence of a prime mover. But we must use other premises that are known independently of that first premise, other premises that are known without using the prime mover's existence as a premise.

And before we prove the existence of God in the philosophy of nature, we can know the soundness of arguments to the effect that if there is such a thing as a prime mover, then he must be pure act, absolutely simple, pure form, not composed of essence and existence, infinite, good, etc. so we must be able to form whatever concepts are needed for us to know the soundness of those arguments without knowing the existence of an immaterial being.

May 23, 2005

I do not know where the following page references come from. They may come from Quinn's

book "the Thomism of Etienne Gilson." Whatever book it is, and whatever library I found it in, the catalogue number is B 2430 .G474Q5. Page 22: "if wholly deprived of its indispensable natural introduction, a metaphysics ... has to remain a sheerly dialectical study bearing on possible beings." No, it bears on real material being, telling us truths about them that philosophy of nature can't tell us. It tells us truths about real material beings insofar as they are beings, rather than insofar as they are material beings.

Page 21: "without a prior or science of nature, we could not be sure of the existence of immaterial being. Unless these entities actually exist, the need for a science of being qua being, that is, being common to both material and immaterial entities, would vanish ... natural philosophy would say the last word as well as the first word about the universe."

This confuses different ways of defining natural philosophy and metaphysics. If I define metaphysics as the study of being qua being, I have not defined metaphysics as the study of being as common to both material and immaterial entities. Those two concepts of metaphysics may be coextensive, but they are not the same concept. "Being common to both material and immaterial entities" is a true statement about being as being, but it is not the definition of being as being. If it were true that there were no immaterial beings, the most he could conclude is that natural philosophy includes two different ways of looking at being, that the philosophy of nature includes both the study of being as mobile or material and the study of being in so far as it has existence.

We do not need to know the existence of immaterial beings to pursue metaphysics defined as the study of beings insofar as they have existence. For example, in a demonstration that whatever exists is one, there is no reliance on the fact that all of the existence that we may happen to be aware of include matter. In other demonstrations there is reliance on the fact that things include matter or other properties with an explicit causal relation to matter, for example, motion, extension, shape, etc.

So before knowing that there are immaterial beings, we already capable of knowing that some characteristics we find in material beings could not be found in anything but material beings and that other characteristics for example, existence, unity, instantaneous change, act, potency, etc. would be found in immaterial beings if and when we found that such beings existed.

How can we think of man as a material being without thinking of him at the same time as a being? Before our knowing that immaterial beings exist, metaphysics has something to talk about, material beings, but it talks about them as existents, not just as material existents. To know that metaphysics as something to talk about all we have to do is no that something exists, at least one thing.

Page 39: "if there are no proven immaterial beings, we cannot formulate a concept of being common to both material and immaterial beings." (ACPA, 1954) but if we did not have such a common concept to begin with, we could not even formulate the question. For example, we could not debate the question with someone who does not yet agree with us that immaterial beings exist; for she would not have the concepts necessary to even understand the assertion we

are making.

xxx Aquinas and the thing/object distinction, May 1, 91

Another doctrine of Aquinas that the thing/object distinction covers: the true meanings of "to know something otherwise than it is" in the section on religious language in the summa and in question 85 of part one.

xxx the laziness of Thomists, May 7, 82

As a working philosopher, I don't have the time to also become a historian. Philosophy is demonstrably the most difficult human intellectual endeavor from the point of view of achieving lasting consensus among so-called "experts." To also have to become an expert historian is to ask too much of people with just ordinary scholarly talent. You would have to be a genius.

Nor was this Leo the 13th's intention. He did not contemplate Catholic philosopher's having to divert hours, months and years to the reading of secondary literature of a non-philosophic nature.

His intentions are clear from the fact that he included Cajetan's commentary in his addition of the summa. That shows that he thought of the Thomism he was recommending not as and historical museum piece but as a progressive tradition. For what kind of Thomism had he been brought up in? Probably in John of St. Thomism. That was the kind of Thomism he was thinking of when he recommended Aquinas's philosophy to the church.

November 8, 90

For all that the followers of Gilson and the transcendental Thomists have said about judgment, none of them have given an analysis of judgment that even compares in its profundity with Simon's analysis.

November 14, 90

skills acquired in graduate school give us a feeling of power. I can read Latin. I can do paleography.

xxx Owens on logical distinctions, December 2, 90

Owens somewhere says that in God there is not even a logical distinction between essence and existence. But when I ask the question "are essence and existence distinct in God," I am using objective concepts that are at least logically distinct. And the answer to the question uses the same concepts, so they must be logically distinct in the answer also. If not, the meanings of the words in the answer are not the same as the meanings of the words in the question. So the supposed answer is not really an answer to the actual question that was asked.

xxx transcendental Thomism, November 10, 90

Enthusiasts of transcendental Thomism told me that it was relevant to contemporary philosophical concerns. In fact, however, this was a delusion. Maritain and Simon were much more relevant. Transcendental Thomism's starting point was subjective. The real issue concerning classical metaphysics and empirical knowledge was evidence. The historical approach, for example, requires empirical verification. And empirical verification requires regulatory principles of an Aristotelian, not Kantian, kind: every event has a cause; similar causes have similar effects; it is contrary to reason to posit more causes than are necessary. And to understand how such principles can verify in philosophy, we need Simon's analysis of order in analogical sets.

January 3, 91

And "from unity to pluralism," McCool opposes Thomism to hermeneutics in theology. If hermeneutics in theology means that the apostles, for example St. Paul, were only articulating their religious experience as opposed to passing on propositional truth about the things objectified by means of that experience, that is, if hermeneutics claims that "revelation" consists of undergoing religious experience as opposed to receiving truths, propositional truths, about extra objective things, then hermeneutics is making a thing/object fallacy, an epistemological fallacy.

xxx against Knasas on perceptual realism, May 23, 2005

"Realism" as in "critical realism" concerns propositional knowledge, not perceptual knowledge directly. Concerning propositional knowledge realism asserts our ability to know what exists independently of cognition as it exists independently of cognition. "Causal realism" adds the ability to know causal relations as they exist independently of cognition.

From the knowledge of causal relations comes the defense of perceptual realism, the explanation of perceptual realism. This is not the inference that perceptions are caused by real things but the inference that the proposition "we are directly and non-inferentially aware in perception of real things" is true.

And Does Owens's defense of perceptual realism amount to anymore than this?

Also, Ashley cites Harvey's syllogism as an example of demonstration in science. But the first premise, "Whatever fluid circulates" is not a necessary or self-evident truth; it is just a verbal definition of the word "circulates."

December 3, 87

"An appetite follows every form." Aquinas uses that statement to demonstrate the existence of a rational appetite specified by universal being. But why must the appetite be really distinct from the form? After all, the intellect is identical with an appetite for the physical existence of its act. Yes, but its act brings something into intentional existence. There must be a really distinct

appetite for the objects existing intentionally by means of the intellect's act.

[. . . specifically, by whether their objects include features that result from the causality of matter. Those features can abstract from the individuating effects of matter, the common sensible effects of matter, or from all effects proper to matter. The diverse immateriality of these objects depends on something true of them as things, their relation to the causality of matter. But that feature of things as things enters the distinction of the sciences only as a foundation for diverse immateriality in scientific objects; for ... the fact that objects are identical with things, that their distinction is not a separation, . . .]