Kenny on Aquinas on Being

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Throughout the course of his career, Anthony Kenny has remained in dialogue with Thomas Aquinas. In his introduction to *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1969) – a book intended to make the medieval Dominican intelligible to philosophers brought up in the analytic tradition – he argued that although superseded in regard to the philosophy of nature and logic, Aquinas's work in metaphysics, philosophical theology, philosophy of mind and moral philosophy entitles him to rank with the greatest of philosophers, in fact as 'one of the dozen greatest of the western world' (p.1).

Just over ten years later he presented a similar assessment. In logic, linguistics and scientific methodology Aquinas's contribution is slight, he says, and his 'most rewarding work' is to be found in metaphysics, ethics and the philosophy of mind (*Aquinas*, 1980, p.30). The compliment is not as straightforward as it might seem, since Kenny goes on immediately to add that Aquinas's 'theory of Being involves philosophical confusions which not even the most sympathetic treatment can eradicate' (pp.30-31). Not only confusion, though, since the chapter devoted to 'Being' concludes by charging Aquinas's account with 'sophistry and illusion' (p.60). The significance of this, Kenny says, is that this is precisely the part of Aquinas's philosophical work that is most cherished by his admirers and, in particular, by his theologian-admirers.

Kenny has recently returned to this question, complementing his earlier work *Aquinas on Mind* (1993) with a companion volume, *Aquinas on Being* (Oxford University Press, 2002). The charge of 'systematic and thorough confusion' on the question of Being is once again laid at the feet of Thomas Aquinas (although Kenny himself immediately moves between 'Being' and 'being': pp.vi and viii) whose teaching on this question is 'one of the least admirable of his contributions to philosophy' (p.viii). It is true, as Kenny says, that Aquinas never wrote a systematic treatise on 'being' (if we discount *De ente et essentia*, important as that first exploratory work of the youthful theologian still is). Whether 'ambiguity and equivocation' (p.ix) is a fair description of the ways in which Aquinas seeks to distinguish and analyse various questions relating to being is another matter.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06323.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

But admirers of Aquinas should not be put off immediately by these strongly worded negative judgements. Before one gets to the end of this book, it is clear that Kenny also greatly admires Aquinas, and that his judgement that Aquinas is one of the greatest of philosophers even if he is thoroughly confused on a question central to philosophy, is sincerely meant. (How many important philosophical questions one can be confused about while remaining a great philosopher is itself a question worthy of philosophical consideration!) For who is not confused about being, Kenny almost comes to say, since '[c]ontemporary philosophers are still a long way from having solved the problems connected with the conceptual network surrounding the verb 'to be' and its equivalents in other languages' (p.193).

Contributing to Aquinas's particular difficulties, Kenny believes, is the speed with which he worked and the fertility of his mind. The difference in sheer quantity between the output of Aquinas and that of Descartes, for example, means the latter is much less likely to be inconsistent (p.194). Perhaps of significance too is a change in the way philosophical thinking is understood and undertaken. Where modern and contemporary philosophy has moved in the direction of more systematic and quasi-scientific presentations of thought, Aquinas's questions and articles, although superficially 'systematic', are in some ways closer to the dialogical forms of Plato and Cicero or to the aporetic forms of Aristotle and Plotinus. An earlier generation of 'Thomists' may have been taught to try to reduce Thomas's admirably simplified texts even further by extracting the syllogism present in each paragraph. And one expects from philosophers arguments that are logically valid whatever the genre in which they choose to present them. It may be helpful, though, to understand each article of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, for example, as a short, formalised dialogue: space is given to a range of voices, there is an appeal to one or more authority, there is time for the teacher to present his own understanding, as well as responding to the earlier speakers in the dialogue ... and so on. Rather than a monological discourse, the context is always dialogical: other voices are being heard even as one voice is speaking, and in this way the truth is pursued.

A further difficulty for Aquinas, says Kenny, and another negative consequence of his gifts, is his anxiety to give a favourable interpretation to whichever authority he is interpreting at a particular time. It is easy to see how this can lead to confusion: at one time it will be Avicenna, then Boethius, then what he knows as 'Plato', then Aristotle ... wherever there is doubt Aquinas gives the benefit to the text he is working on. He also tries, as much as possible, to use the language of the author whose work he is commentating and to integrate it with

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06323.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

what he values in other authors. It is not surprising that Kenny opts for *Summa contra Gentiles* as a text which contemporary philosophers might more easily approach: it is written as a series of essays, a kind of systematically expanding argument, each essay developing from the conclusions of the previous ones. It is more like the way philosophy will be written up nowadays.

In fact the positive evaluation of Aquinas's work seems to grow stronger as one moves through *Aquinas on Being*. The appendix compares Aquinas and Frege and shows clearly that for Kenny the medieval Dominican is well able to hold his own in a conversation with the 19th century philosopher of logic. Earlier he noted that '[i]t is in itself no criticism of Aquinas to say that his ontology contains items that do not fit neatly into Frege's categories' (p.146). Which does not mean that Kenny is not convinced that key parts of Aquinas's account of being are subject to serious criticism precisely from the perspective of Frege's categories.

Aquinas on Being: Kenny's Account

A first difficulty for the interpreter of Aquinas is to decide whether to try to extract from his various writings a systematised version of his teaching on a particular question or to move through his career chronologically to see how he deals with the question from work to work. The former approach is what 'scholasticism' in its various forms tried to do, eventually producing textbooks of 'Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics', for example, which seemed to make the reading of Aquinas's own text unnecessary. The latter approach is clearly better from a hermeneutical point of view, recognising the context of the text as relevant to its interpretation while getting a sense of the controlling ideas and abiding convictions that guide Aquinas's judgment as he works.

Kenny offers a combination of the two, moving chronologically from *De ente et essentia* of c.1254 to the Aristotelian commentaries from the end of Thomas's life, while also giving a clear summary of what he takes Aquinas's teaching to be and of the mistakes he sees in it. He identifies twelve different senses of the term *esse* in the works of Aquinas, the first two indicating types of existence and the remaining ten indicating types of being. These are: 1) specific existence (the famous 'existence is not a predicate' of Kant), 2) individual existence, 3) substantial being (which coincides with individual existence), 4) accidental being, 5) common being (a very thin and universal predicate), 6) actual being (marking the transition from potentiality to actuality), 7) absolute being (unique to God), 8) intentional being (things as known),

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9) fictional being (things that only 'exist' in the mind), 10) possible being, 11) predicative being ('is' used as a copula), and 12) identical being (pp.189-192).

Along with that Kenny submits that there are three principal defects in Aquinas's treatment of the topic: 1) there is no satisfactory recognition of the difference between being and existence, 2) a theory of pure forms continues to be countenanced by Aquinas (the remnants of an 'objectionable Platonism'), and 3) there is a 'deeply disturbing problem about (his) identification of God with subsistent being' (pp.192-193).

These conclusions gathered in the final chapter are supported by the detailed consideration of texts and arguments throughout the preceding nine chapters. Two chapters are devoted to *De ente et essentia*, two to *Summa Theologiae* and one each to the commentary on the *Sentences*, the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, *Summa contra Gentiles*, questions disputed in Rome, and the commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Other works are more briefly considered according to their chronological place and in relation to these major works.

Early in the book Kenny says that the first of Thomas's errors arises because he works with a dichotomy (being within the categories, and 'is' as a copula) and fails to recognise the Fregean trichotomy of existence, predication and identity (p.viii). We have seen that Kenny accepts that an adequate 'grammar of being' has not yet been worked out and implicitly acknowledges the difficulties in relating Aquinas's Latin terminology to Frege's German one while doing it all through English. I have friends and colleagues who will be greatly relieved to know that their failure to understand Aquinas's arguments on this matter may not be due entirely to their own obtuseness but follows from Aquinas's desire to enrol in his support a variety of authors using different terminologies in different languages (p.10).

The first text in which Thomas tries to do this is *De ente et essentia.* There he is still heavily reliant on Avicenna and although it is his earliest known writing it continues to be valued by both supporters and critics as a reliable guide to his metaphysics. A more substantial reason for confusion might be that Aquinas is working always within the tradition of 'Aristotelian aporetic ontology'. The phrase is Edward Booth's (*Aristotelian aporetic ontology in Islamic and Christian thinkers*, 1983), used in support of the view that the 'greatest difficulty (*aporia*)' spoken of by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* M.10 (1087a10-25) is about universal and individual essences. This is precisely the question Kenny regards as inadequately treated by Thomas in the early chapters of *De ente et essentia*. Of course just to recognise the ancient background of the

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question is not enough to absolve Thomas of his failure to give a clearer explanation of it, but it does place him in good company while clarifying that the intractability of the question is, one might say, 'objective' in some sense.

The second part of *De ente et essentia* contains Thomas's earliest treatment of the 'real distinction' between *essentia* and *esse* as well as an argument for the existence of God based on that distinction. This takes us to the heart of Thomas's account of being (according to the family of Thomists generally) and it takes us also to the heart of Kenny's criticisms. The 'real distinction', if it refers simply to the fact of existence which knowledge of the essence of something does not allow us to decide either way, is unproblematic, Kenny believes. He puts it in contemporary English idiom: 'I can grasp a concept without knowing whether the concept is instantiated' (p.35). As a way of speaking about things in the world it seems acceptable but 'when the doctrine is employed to mark a fundamental difference between creatures and God ... it becomes more difficult to comprehend' (p.37).

Much space in this book is devoted to addressing the difficulties Kenny sees in applying the doctrine of the real distinction to God (i.e., the doctrine that there is no composition of essence and *esse* in God, that in God, and in God alone, essence and *esse* are identical). Kenny believes this doctrine does not work in the way in which Thomas and his supporters want it to work (pages 104-105, for example). He argues that it can easily be shown to produce incoherent and even nonsensical conclusions (pp.41-42, 128, 144). It seems to depend on a failure to distinguish between individual and specific essences. In any case it does not serve to establish the distinction between creatures and the Creator that Thomas wants it to establish.

This is Kenny's main thesis and he develops it in the succeeding chapters as he reviews the relevant texts of Aquinas one by one. To consider adequately Kenny's detailed argumentation around the text of Thomas would involve writing a book of at least the same length and clearly that cannot be done here. (I can refer the reader to what seems to me the best recent general introduction to Aquinas's metaphysics, John F.Wippel's *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington DC, 2000).) What can be offered here are some thoughts on related questions, one to do with the history of philosophy and the other with the relationship of philosophy and theology.

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Platonism Bad and Good

There are many passages where Kenny assumes that the reader will agree with him in regarding 'Platonism' as a bad thing. In one place in Aquinas's reasoning he identifies 'a certain Platonism at one remove' (p.55). He speaks of the 'Platonic fantasy' of the determination of *esse* by essence (p.72). Again and again he argues that Aquinas's thinking presupposes or implies a Platonism that is 'objectionable' (see pp.109, 112-113, 121, 141, 146). For most of the book Platonism is to be taken to mean 'false'.

Towards the end, though, Plato is counted among the giants on whose shoulders the rest of us stand in our efforts to find our bearings in these arguments. In the appendix, Gottlob Frege – a touchstone of correct reasoning throughout the book – is regarded as more Platonist, more 'realist', than Aquinas (p.202). Kenny quotes Frege to the effect that alongside things and ideas there must be 'a third realm' in which mathematical objects enjoy some kind of independent and timeless truth (pp.202-03). This sounds a bit like Plato's later philosophy, the kind of approach dealt with in his *Parmenides* and other late dialogues. If there is anything like this in Aquinas, Kenny says, it can only be the divine mind and its ideas (p.204).

The reader might be forgiven feeling confused here. For most of the book Aquinas is criticised for being too Platonist. In its final pages he is criticised, it seems, for not being Platonist enough. It is true that Aquinas speaks of pure forms, of something like 'whiteness itself', for example, and that he does so in order to argue that if such a thing existed (which he does not believe it does) then there can only be one such thing. The same kind of argumentation is used in relation to the angels who are pure forms with no admixture of materiality but which nevertheless are not identical with God because the composition of essence and *esse* is found in them. They are not their being: like all creatures they have their being and so they are not absolutely simple as God is. (It is a very important point for clarifying that the most radical distinction is not that between spirit and matter but that between Creator and creature.)

The comment that Aquinas is 'an Aristotelian on earth, but a Platonist in heaven' (p.165) is not so far from Aquinas's own understanding of where the truth lies. In introducing his commentary on the *Divine Names* of Pseudo-Dionysius, Aquinas says that in what it says about the separated species of natural things, the Platonists' view is in harmony with neither faith nor truth but that in what it says about the first principle of things, their opinion is exactly right and in harmony with the Christian faith [Haec igitur Platonicorum ratio fidei non consonat nec veritati, quantum ad hoc quod continet de speciebus

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06323.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

naturalibus separatis, sed quantum ad id quod dicebant de primo rerum Principio, verissima est eorum opinio et fidei christianae consona: *In de Divinis Nominibus, proemium*]. Pierre Rousselot highlighted the point almost a century ago:

> ... it is in intuitive knowledge that St Thomas seeks the ideal and measure of all intellectual activity ... this ... allows him to 'Platonise' when he takes the whole universe into consideration while remaining very much Aristotelian in his explanation of the sublunary world (*The Intellectualism of Saint Thomas*, p.68).

Difficulties about Frege's 'third realm' took the form, for Aquinas, of developing an acceptable theory of the divine ideas. Kenny's question about the difference between the angelic pure forms that Aquinas accepts and the Platonic ideas or forms that he rejects is clearly an urgent one (p.30). In the first part of *Summa Theologiae*, for example, Thomas writes (in an article about whether human knowledge is to be understood as a knowledge in the divine ideas):

> Plato held that the forms of things subsist of themselves separate from matter. He called these ideas and said that our intellects know everything by participation in them; thus, as corporeal matter becomes stone by participation in the idea of stone, so, by participation in the same idea, our intellects know stone. However, since it seems alien to the Faith that the forms of things should subsist of themselves, outside things and without matter – as the Platonists held, saying that 'life as such' and 'wisdom as such' are creative substances (according to Dionysius, *On the Divine Names*, chapter xi) – Augustine substituted (*De Diversis Quaestionibus* LXXXIII.46) in place of these ideas which Plato posited the ideas of all creatures existing in the divine mind. All things are formed according to these, and in addition the human soul knows everything according to them (*Summa Theologiae* I 84 5 in c).

He continues by incorporating Augustine's substitution within a strongly Aristotelian account of human knowledge in which the work of 'secondary causes' is not by-passed while at the same time he insists that 'the intellectual light in us is nothing more than a participating likeness of the uncreated light in which the divine ideas are contained' (loc.cit.). In fact it is Augustine who is quoted in support of the empiricism of human knowledge 'through the actual history of places and times' (loc.cit., quoting *De Trinitate*, book iv).

Some have argued that Aquinas's interest in this third realm – the realm of divine ideas – survives in his work only on account of the weight of traditional authority behind it, that it is due to what Kenny

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would call 'residual Platonism' or a 'vulnerability to neo-Platonic theorizing' (p.194). For Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages, Pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine provided the classical texts on this question, the ones referred to by Thomas in the quotation given above. I have argued elsewhere that his consideration of the divine ideas is not just this kind of survival but is essential to his thinking (Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1996). Although Kenny's comments about Frege's third realm and Aquinas's account of divine ideas come at the very end of this book, they strengthen the hope that further dialogue between the two philosophers might yet be developed. (Kenny seems to hint at some future book on precisely this question: p.204.)

It is important to acknowledge also Thomas's constantly changing understanding of the history of philosophy, knowledge of which was expanding swiftly and radically. In particular, through the second half of his working life, Thomas was getting to know 'platonism' much better. The Latin translation of Proclus's *Elements of Theology* became available in 1268 and it enabled Aquinas to recognise (the first person to do so) the true provenance of *Liber de Causis*, already a significant pseudo-Aristotelian work. Later works of Thomas witness to his changing assessment of what was Platonist and what was Aristotelian. The ideas of Proclus were already available to Thomas mediated through the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius who was significantly affected by those ideas but now he saw things much more clearly.

My reason for bringing this in is to suggest that if we want to assess the justice in Kenny's claim that Thomas, in the case of being, is 'too vulnerable to neo-Platonic theorizing, and in particular to neo-Platonic interpretation of scripture' (p.194) then three important witnesses to call are his commentaries on neo-Platonic works, Boethius' *De Ebdomadibus*, Pseudo-Dionysius' *On the Divine Names*, and *Liber de Causis*. Kenny only considers the first of these and it may well be the least helpful for the kind of assessment being proposed: it is the shortest and has the feel of being a penultimate draft, never finally edited.

Neither of the other two works is used here. Not just witnesses, it might be that they are the chief culprits in these latest charges levelled at Aquinas. The fifth chapter of *On the Divine Names* deals at length with 'being' and *Liber de Causis* throughout considers being as the primary perfection or cause presupposed in all other perfections or causes. It may be that consideration of Thomas's commentaries on these works would have given the impression of yet more confusion and so provided further grist to Kenny's mill. But they do offer the possibility of seeing whether the charges of vulnerability to neo-Platonic theorizing can be substantiated

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or whether the Aristotelian element in Aquinas's thought is sufficiently strong to defend a non-Platonist ontology of individual substances. In fact it is 'Aristotle' and 'the Catholic faith' together that help Thomas pick his way through this material (Boland, op.cit., pp.307-310).

Thomas on Being – A Theologian's Problem?

In his 1969 introduction, Kenny suggested that Aquinas's association with theology is a major difficulty in the way of contemporary philosophers engaging with his thought. In *Aquinas on Being* he writes about this again:

> The task [of demonstrating Aquinas's confusion about being] is all the more worth carrying out because many of the teachings of Aquinas that, if I am right, are most vulnerable to philosophical criticism are precisely those that are held up as models of metaphysical wisdom by many of his theological followers (p.x).

It is not clear exactly what he means by this and it may be important to note that Kenny is not necessarily negative about the impact of theology on philosophy. In another relatively recent publication he argues that the doctrines of the Christian faith not only raised philosophical issues but that their theological consideration contributed to the development of philosophical terminology in the patristic and medieval periods. (There does not seem to be any reason *a priori* why this should not continue.) Questions about death and immortality, about body and soul, about the nature and efficacy of signs, about free will and determinism, and about personal identity, were issues necessarily raised by Christian theology but whose consideration led to important developments in philosophy, at least in the development of philosophical terminology. Kenny's view is that Christian theology necessitates philosophical work and that the progress of Christian theology involves developments that are nevertheless properly philosophical (*A Brief History of Western Philosophy*, 1998, pp.101-104).

Such views seem reasonable and compatible with what Aquinas has to say about philosophy and theology. At the same time *Aquinas on Being* raises questions for theology, particularly connected with the sense of 'univocity' that pervades Kenny's assessments of Aquinas. He anticipates this criticism and devotes some space to the doctrine of analogy and to explaining why he thinks the criticisms theologians might bring on the basis of that doctrine do not affect the criticisms he is making of Aquinas (pp.152-55).

There seems to be need for a lot more to be said about all this. Take this paragraph from page 144:

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> When Aquinas says that God is the same thing as his own divinity, is he asserting the identity of a concept with an object? God, surely, is an object; divinity, surely, is a concept, since 'divinity' is the abstract noun formed from the predicate 'is divine'. So if Frege is right to see an unbridgeable chasm between concepts and objects, has not Aquinas fallen into nonsense?

There are a number of problems here, not least the startling statement 'God, surely, is an object; divinity, surely, is a concept'. The second part seems true enough but what meaning can we give to the first part? (Whether Aquinas actually uses a Latin phrase that can be faithfully translated 'God is the same thing as his own divinity' is another question.) Frege, as Kenny presents him, seems extraordinarily confident about what, within his categories, God is and is not allowed to be. Later, Kenny quotes Frege speaking of God but now as a concept rather than an object:

> Because existence is a property of concepts the ontological argument for the existence of God fails to conclude. But uniqueness is not a component characteristic of the concept God any more than existence is (Kenny, p.200; Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic*, paragraph 54).

Philosophers will speak for themselves about what they believe happens to language when one seeks to use it in relation to God (the God who is not in or of this world rather than one of the idols, whether deistic or otherwise, which might from time to time be venerated by human beings). Theologians are usually clearer, Kenny notes, that the incomprehensibility of God means that all theological language is subject to the rigorous qualification implied in the doctrine of analogy. Thomas Aquinas expresses this by appealing to criteria for 'god-talk' developed in the philosophical schools of antiquity and which he knew as the threefold way of causality, negation and transcendence (*via causalitatis, via negationis, via eminentiae*). Aquinas learned about this from Pseudo-Dionysius and this threefold way serves to structure *Summa Theologiae* I 13, on the names of God, his most famous treatment of analogy.

Kenny proceeds as if the term 'God' itself were quite unproblematic, obvious in its reference, and not in need of any explanation. Thomas feels obliged to question our use of even this term. In ST I 13, 8 he writes:

> God is not known to us in his own nature, but through his works or effects, and so ... it is from these that we derive the language we use in speaking of him. Hence 'God' is an operational word in that it is an

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> operation of God that makes us use it, for the word is derived from his universal providence [Quia igitur Deus non est notus nobis in sui natura, sed innotescit nobis ex operationibus vel effectibus ejus, ex his possumus eum nominare. ... Unde hoc nomen *Deus* est nomen operationis, quantum ad id a quo imponitur ad significandum. Imponitur enim hoc nomen ab universali rerum providentia].

'He who is' is an appropriate name for God also, Thomas says, for reasons explained in ST I 13,11 and the Tetragrammaton is even more appropriate as naming the mystery and – if one could say such a thing, he quickly adds – God's individual substance (ST I 13,11 ad 1). But Kenny is not convinced that appealing to this question on analogy will provide a way out of the difficulties he sees. He writes on page 155:

> The theory of analogy applies to predicates, and it is an explanation of the way in which analogical terms enjoy a peculiar semantic status (single dictionary entry, but diverse mode of application). But 'is' is something more complicated than a predicate; in my extensive close studies of the texts in which Aquinas seeks to explicate it, I have not found a consistent use of it as a predicate that answers to all his requirements of it. And the problems that we have encountered have been problems not of semantics but of syntax.

As he says later, philosophers are still a long way from having solved the problems connected with the conceptual network surrounding the verb 'to be' (p.193). To the extent that philosophy highlights the limitations of language in relation to important aspects of human experience it provides an essential service to theology.

It has been suggested recently, by Robert Jenson, that 'the concept of being is incurably theological' (*Systematic Theology,* Volume I: *The Triune God*, 1997, page 208). Perhaps it should be added to the list of themes whose theological consideration has contributed also to the development of philosophy. The clear side of the real distinction, Jenson argues, is what it says about creatures: clearly things are and clearly things have their being from beyond themselves (ST I 3 4). What it says about God is another matter but the suggestion from Fergus Kerr that God be thought of as event rather than entity, as verb rather than noun, might help to move us towards a fresh appreciation of what Aquinas, always the theologian, is trying to say (Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 2002, pp.181-206).

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2003.tb06323.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

Concluding Comments

Kenny begins with a bit of biography and perhaps I can end on the same note. The first task set us in our course in metaphysics some thirty years ago was to write a short paper on the topic '*Esse* is not a form'. This was the first stage in introducing us to what we knew we were not to think of as a concept, to something that became available only in the judgement (syntactically, perhaps, to use Kenny's term), to something which might at times seem like the thinnest of predicates but which at other times might help us to appreciate the intimate dependence of all things on God for their being. What we came to talk about was a meaning of *esse* that, I think, is not to be found among the twelve senses listed by Kenny. It is something like sense 6, 'actual being', except that it names not a transition from potentiality to actuality but the difference between there being nothing and there being anything. It indicates not just the fact of this difference but the act that establishes the difference. It indicates not so much J.L. Austin's 'breathing, only quieter' as the Psalmist's roaring waters, only louder.

From Head-trip to the Virtues

Jordan Bishop

The modern tradition in ethics has been under attack since the publication of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*.[1] One of the more fascinating aspects of all this is that the demise of virtue ethics, in the sense discussed by Professor MacIntyre, had relegated ethics to a peripheral question discussed by Aristotle in Book VII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

It is there that Aristotle considers what most translators have rendered as "continence" and "incontinence", *enkrateia* and *akrasia*, although one can also describe the *enkratic* man as *disciplined*. Mostly applied to question of temperance, *enkrateia* involves imposing the judgement of reason on unruly passions. Aristotle notes "we must now discuss incontinence and softness (or effeminacy) and continence and endurance; for we must treat each of the two neither as identical with virtue or wickedness, nor as a different genus." (Bk. VII, Ch. 1: 1145a35). If we are tempted, as people used to say, to do something

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