

IV. Verbum and Species.

The relations of verbum and species in the writings of Aquinas are somewhat complex and obscure. In a very early period the species intelligibilis as formal principle of ~~knewin~~ understanding (species impressa) makes no definite appearance and seems, at best, to be in process of development. What then is named species intelligibilis is the definition which later is named verbum. Consequently, the verbum of the very early period is not simply the definition in itself but the definition as ordained to manifestation. Now this very early stage of Thomist thought raises a question with regard to later usage. The fact that the later verbum was in an earlier period named species makes it quite possible that in the later period Aquinas might say species yet mean verbum. But to what extent this possibility is realized, necessarily remains obscure when the immediate context fails to be decisive; for then interpretation has to fall back on more general considerations, and consequently becomes a function of the general view-point of particular interpreters or schools.

The Metaphysics of Species.

One has only to recall that species translates eidos to become aware of its Platonist origin and of its metaphysical significance. The fact is that a theorist of knowledge must also be a metaphysician, not only that ~~the~~ knowing, as analyzed, be real, but also that the reality, as conceived by the theory, be knowable.
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