

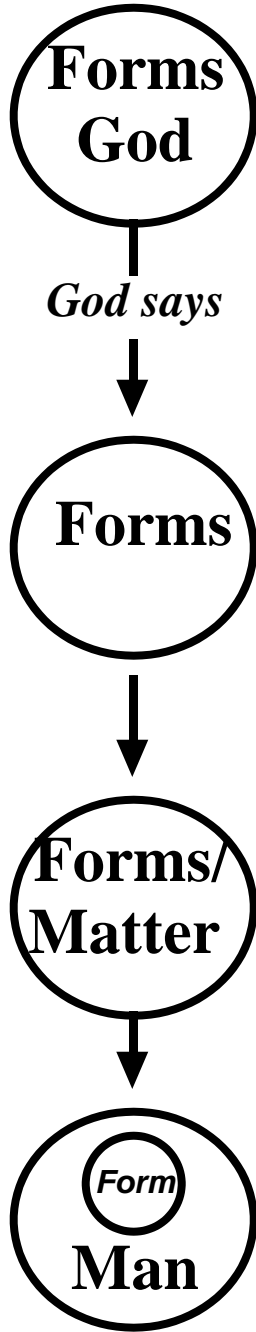
# The knower and known become one: Moderate Realism

Forms exist as ideas in the mind of God—who is Pure Actuality With No Potentiality: Essence is Existence.

Existence causes essences. An essence is caused to have actual being by an act of existing.

God imposes the form upon matter and creates a thing in sensible reality.

The mind extracts the form from the thing



Moderate realism holds that universals really exist, but only insofar as they are instantiated in specific things; they do not exist separately from the specific thing. In contrast, conceptualism holds that universals exist only in the mind and nominalism says they do not exist at all.

These forms exist as divine ideas in the Divine intellect. All things exist in God’s mind before their existence in the finite world of things. God created the matter out of nothing and imposed upon it form, thereby creating a thing in reality. This creative event is characterized in Scripture by the phrase, “and God said.” The resultant object is corporeal substance, composed of form and matter, and incorporeal substance—such as angels.

Angels (and souls) are incorporeal, matter-less substances. They are a composition of form and existence only (not form + matter), for they are not extended. Once created, they are (a) immortal, for having not parts, they can’t deteriorate; (b) Even though they have no matter, incorporeal substances still have potentiality; (c) They can only be one incorporeal substance of any given kind. Thus, there can be only one angel of any given kind—otherwise there is no way of telling them apart.

When a man knows an object in reality, the form of the thing comes to exist in the mind of the knower. Man imitates God in that, while God is all things by virtue of His Divine Intelligence in which all forms exist as Divine ideas, so man becomes all things by obtaining the forms of things that come to exist in the mind of man as ideas.

Consequently, it is not necessary for a man to go back into the mind of God in order to know reality. Rather, man knows reality by means of the form of the thing as it is in itself. Forms are given by the real thing. They are not supplied by the mind. The form is abstracted from the thing and recreated in the mind.

A. Aquinas believes there are 2 kinds of matter: Prime Matter & Signate Matter. Prime Matter is what form organizes & gives properties to, but prime matter itself, if it could exist (which it can’t) would have no properties at all. Signate Matter is what Aquinas identifies as principle of individuation (which distinguishes 2 individuals of the same species). Signate matter is prime matter plus the forms of quantity (where, how big, in what shape, etc). **B.** Every finite substance is constituted by 2 principles: (a) An essence or form determining what it is; (b) an act of existence (being;esse) determining that it is. An actual existing individual (*substantia*) is composed of 2 elements: (1) essence or nature (*essential, natura, quidditas*) & (2) *Esse* (existence; that it is). **C.** Except for God, nothing exists necessarily. No finite substance is such that what it is (essence) entails that it is (it’s existence). The essence of something consists in the characteristics that define or determine its nature, the sort of thing it would be if it existed. To consider the essence (nature) of something is not by itself to know whether any such thing actually exists. The essence of humanity represents the possibility or “*potency*” of the actual existence of human being. On other other hand, existence is the actualization of the essence, nature, or form of humanity. Existence is the act by which the form is. Existence (existential) was rarely used. He preferred “*esse*,” that is, the inf. verb meaning “*to be*.” But he also used it as noun: “*existence*.” Essence (what it is) & Existence (that it is) are distinct aspects of an actually existing individual substance. **D.** Hierarchy that is discernible among forms of things: (1) Inorganic substances; (2) forms of plant life; (3) animal life; (4) rational soul (humanity); (5) Angels; (6) God. **E.** We need angels between forms of God & humanity since God is uncreated, incorporeal, & simple; there are being which are like humanity in being created, but are like God in being incorporeal.