The Necessity of Logic

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There are two ways of approaching the necessity of logic. One way is to start from the statement that the human race lives by art and reasoning and apply this to the three acts of reason. This is what St. Thomas does in his Proemium to the whole of logic at the beginning of his commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*.

The other way is to show the necessity of an art about arguments and from this perhaps the necessity of the other parts of logic which are ordered to the art about arguments. Socrates or Plato in the *Phaedo* shows the necessity of an art about arguments. Albert the Great also shows the necessity of logic as the art of argumentation in the beginning Tractatus of his *Commentary on the Predicables* (Tract I, Cap. III & IV)

The first way is more universal than the second, but for that reason less proportioned to us. The second way seems to correspond to the way in which the Greeks came to see the necessity of the art of logic. This also is a sign that the second way is more proportioned to us. The Greek commentators also proceed in this second way

But how can one proceed from the necessity of an art of reasoning or an art about arguments to the art contained in the *Peri Hermeneias,* and the *Categories*?

First, in showing the necessity of an art about arguments or reasoning, one should make explicit the necessity of reasoning or arguing *about things*.

Then, it can be pointed out that we reason from and to statements. Hence, a knowledge of statements is presupposed to a knowledge of reasoning. Further, we can reason *about things* only if we make statements *about things*.

Again it can be pointed out that an argument is composed of statements and that from these statements is drawn a conclusion that is also a statement. Hence, again a knowledge of statements is presupposed to a knowledge of arguments.

But since statements are composed of names (in the large sense), we cannot make statements about things unless we place names upon things. Hence, a knowledge of names placed upon things must come before a knowledge of statements.

We can compare the above order to the order of intention in the practical reason. If we want to reason about things, we must make statements about things. And if we want to make statements about things, we must first place names upon things.

But the order in which these three things are to be achieved is (like the order of execution in the practical life) the reverse or the contrary order. We must place names upon things before we can make statements about them. And we must make statements about things before we can reason about things.

There is something like these two orders in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle shows first that wisdom aims at the first causes and then from this that it aims at being as being and from the latter that it aims at the axioms that all the sciences use. But the order in which he achieves all these goals is just the reverse.

We must understand how names are placed upon things before we can understand statements about things. And we must understand statements about things before we can understand arguments about things. If we misunderstand how names are placed upon things, we can misunderstand the statements about things. And if we misunderstand statements about things, we shall misunderstand the arguments from and to such statements.