

THESES

OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

**THE INTENTIONAL BEING ACCORDING TO
SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS**

SZEILER ZSOLT

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Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Arts

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SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

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1. The General Aim of the Thesis

This thesis aims to explore Thomas Aquinas's ideas about intentional being. The term *esse intentionale* covers the class of beings whose members are forms which show certain immaterial characteristics. However, inasmuch as one terms as „intention” (*intentio*) both an image reflected on a surface and a concept conceived in an angel's mind, the problem arises whether there is anything common shared by each and every intention. This problem constitutes the general aim of this thesis: it seeks *to explore what, in Thomas's understanding, pertains to each and every intention as such*. What this inquiry will yield are necessarily modest results; it cannot help pointing out only a negative characteristic. The only common feature shared by all intentions is that their being is not a “natural” one. In other words, the intention is such an atypical form which does not render its recipient something definite. The red colour's intention does not render the eyes red-coloured.

2. The Special Aim of the Thesis

The special aim of the thesis is to show what was Aquinas's approach to the immateriality of the intentions emerging in the medium and the organs. I will prove that it was within the framework of Avicenna's theory of multilayered abstraction that, in agreement with his teacher Albertus Magnus, Aquinas formulated the problem of the immateriality of intentions. This insight will enable me to develop my own position within the related debate on this topic by showing that the relevant question about the intentions does not concern their material *or* immaterial being. For the immateriality implied in the concept of intentional being has various degrees as it is an abstraction emerging in the course of cognition.

By extending its inquiry to the modern concept of *intentionality*, the final part of the thesis opens up a new perspective with the aim of achieving a new synthesis of its former results in order to set up a unified framework for its multifaceted topic. The thesis shows the way „intentionality” relates to the „intentions” on the basis of its former results by pointing out the whole unified structure of the „event” of intentionality in Aquinas. Since there is no proper terminology for it in the related secondary literature, I call this unified structure „double” or „reciprocal intentionality”.