

A History of Philosophy

22 Early Medieval Philosophy

By Dr. Arthur Holmes of Wheaton College

Alright, today we want to talk about early medieval philosophy. And I anticipate that this will last today, probably next time as well. The agenda for this early medieval stuff is on the board, and I want to start with a couple of generalizations.

The first is that you'll find Platonic and Aristotelian influences not only in Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages, but also in Jewish and Muslim philosophy. Now, understandably, because those three faiths are the three major theistic religions. That is to say, religion with a personal transcendent creator God.

And by virtue of that commonality across the three major theistic religions, they faced many of the same philosophical problems. How to explain the relationship between time and eternity? God and creation. How does the theory of universals, of forms, fit within that? What about the relationship between faith and philosophy? When the two appear to conflict, or do they? So many of the same philosophical issues arose in all three traditions.

And arose in all three traditions in relationship to the pervasive influence of Platonism and Aristotelianism later in the Middle Ages. So that's the first generalization. The second is that the main contribution, the main lasting contribution, of this early medieval period, say up to about 1000 AD, is in defining and exploring philosophical issues having to do with the relationship between religious faith and those philosophical traditions.

Exploring and defining issues that therefore had to be more concentratedly and constructively treated in the late Middle Ages. Later at least. By people like Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and William of Arles.

The four major figures that we'll be talking about later on. Now I don't want to imply that there is nothing that is valuable in and of itself in the earlier Middle Ages. There is.

But in the long view, the long historical view, it's in large measure preparatory for what comes later. And let me add the footnote that you will find the two chapters in Stumpf that are assigned for today, chapters 7 and 8, very helpful in surveying the matters we're going to be talking about. All right.

The Platonic influence, and as I indicated before, by Platonic at this juncture in history, we mean Neo-Platonic as much as Platonic. Platonic influence became so mingled with Christian, Jewish, and Islamic thought that it's very hard at times to

disentangle the two. The basic distinction, of course, turns out to be the distinction between a creation that emanates from the very being of the divine, the Neoplatonic theory of emanation, as distinct from a creation that is brought into being out of nothing.

Creation ex nihilo. That basic distinction. But it took a long time for the crucial nature of that distinction to pervade the whole philosophical movement of the period.

And we see that in a number of the figures involved in the Platonic developments. One individual you'll read about is Dionysius the Areopagite. At least, that is the pseudonym which he gave himself.

Dionysius the Areopagite, that name drawn from the account in the New Testament of Paul's visit to Athens, where, after he had preached about the resurrection of the dead, the philosophers present took a rain check, and among them was Dionysius. So this medieval figure takes his name from that and calls himself Dionysius the Areopagite. And for those pains, he assumes the label, in other people's language, of Pseudo-Dionysius.

So Pseudo-Dionysius, Dionysius the Areopagite, one and the same. Around 500 AD. What he has is almost predictable in the light of what I've said.

A hierarchy of beings emanating from the one. Yeah, that's the Neoplatonic party line. A hierarchy of beings emanating from the one.

With varying degrees of unity and order. And because then of the relationships of resemblance increasing as one goes up the hierarchy, it's possible to talk of the one, God, in positive ways. That is to say, God, to a much greater degree than we, is good.

And also in negative ways. Saying that God is not. Because he is, in degree, vastly different from things below.

So you get the positive and the negative ways of speaking about God. And for Dionysius, the outcome of this religion is a mystic path that again sounded very much like what we found in Plotinus. Dionysius, in that way, Neoplatonic type mysticism, establishes a precedent which is followed by a number of later mystical writers.

One of whom, in the 13th century, you'll meet later in your reading, is the German writer Meister Eckhart. Meister Eckhart. Who thought of God as beyond all rationality.

And the mystic path leads to a oneness with God. Sounds very much like Plotinus. So Dionysius is one example of this influence.

Another example is John Scotus Erugina. And I say John Scotus to distinguish him from a late medieval figure of considerable importance, namely Duns Scotus. All they have in common is the appellation, which indicates they come from where? Ireland.

The Scots in Ireland. But John Scotus Duns Scotus. Now the significant thing about John Scotus Erugina, again, is in that Neoplatonic tradition.

So he distinguishes various levels in which we can talk about the divine when we consider the process of emanation coming out from the one and epistrophe returning to the one. He speaks of God, the one, as the uncreated creator. The source of all.

Who is beyond goodness, truth, being in any sense in which we can speak of being. And so you can only speak of the one by using negative terms via negativa. The way of negation.

You can say that God is not. You can't say what he is in any literal or precise sense. On the other hand, he speaks of the Logos.

As representing the unity of all forms, like Plotinus and Zeus. And the Logos is in his language the created creator. Notice the term created creator.

Rather than co-eternal or co-existence. But the forms that make up the Logos are the archetypes, the patterns, the exemplars according to which all of the world of particulars is fashioned. So the world of particulars then participates in those forms and is spoken of as the created non-creator.

But by virtue of the teleology involved, there is this return to the one. And so God is the final cause of the whole process, which seeks to maintain its identity, order, and unity. God as the final cause is known as the uncreated non-creator.

And by the time you get those four designations, you at least see that Scotus Erugina took the law of excluded middle in logic pretty seriously. That is to say, anything you speak about is either creator or non-creator and is either created or uncreated. So he runs the changes.

Uncreated creator. Created creator. Created non-creator.

Uncreated non-creator. But it's his attempt to speak of God, you see, in that sense as the formal cause as well as the final cause as well as the material cause of creation in a Neoplatonic emanation framework. And you'll find John Scotus Eriugena is a figure of a certain amount of interest still to medievalists.

Okay. Do you see the Neoplatonism in Dionysius and Eriugena? Dionysius I died around 500, and Eriugena died in 877. 877.

But the third figure I want to make note of is a little bit more significant than that, and I refer here to Saint Anselm. Anselm of Canterbury. Purportedly the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

Looking for my sheet of notes. Notes. Looks like a page got lost.

Isn't that convenient? Looks like it is. Well, I'll have to wing it for a little while. Anselm, around 1000 AD, moving into the 11th century.

Very much a platonic influence, but with a theory of creation rather than emanation. This is because he follows Augustine much more closely than he followed Plotinus and, therefore, emanations. But following Augustine, you still find a kind of hierarchy in which there are degrees of being corresponding, of course, to degrees of goodness down through the entirety of the creation.

And God is, yes, the one, and God is the good, as we find also in Saint Augustine. Evil is a privation of the good, and the good for things in creation is that they should seek to fulfill their natural end. Everything has its own God-given nature because of the theory of forms.

Everything has its own God-given nature, which, being in the same hierarchy of being and goodness, you see, its nature is not simply to achieve its goodness but to that degree to be like God. So the imitation of God in that degree is appropriate to every particular creature and is good for all creation. To be like God in his unchanging perfection.

There are degrees of that increasingly throughout the entire hierarchy of being. Now that is his overall framework. And Anselm, in his writings, keeps that in mind and combines two things that are implicit within it.

One is the metaphysical scheme, and the other is the religious devotion. So that as you read Anselm, his philosophical treatise you find that there runs through his philosophizing moments of outbursts of prayer or praise or whatever as the case may be. At first, it struck me that this was in the tradition of some of the Greek classic writers and poets who would start what they were doing with an ode or praise to the gods.

But it becomes very evident as you read further in Anselm that this is the method of reflection that went on in the medieval monastery. You see. So that the work was an activity of praise to God.

And if the work was philosophizing, that was an activity of praise to God. And so punctuated throughout with spontaneous expressions of that praise. The point being that every creature seeks to imitate and praise the good which is God.

Now the thing for which Anselm however is best noted and you have a selection in Kaufman in this regard the thing for which Anselm is best noted is his attempt to develop an ontological argument for the existence of God. And it's an ontological argument which works with the metaphysical framework that he had developed in that Augustinian, Christian, Platonist way. By virtue of the fact that we have degrees of being, degrees of goodness, you see, it follows that that which is the highest of all beings on the hierarchy is identical with that which is perfect goodness on the hierarchy.

So granted that framework, his ontological argument goes like this. I have the idea of a perfect being than which no more perfect could be conceived. And that being necessarily exists.

Now you see that rider, that conclusion at the end wouldn't make any sense apart from this framework. Because granted the conception of goodness, you've got the conception of a perfect being. The necessary being of goodness is involved in the whole nature of existence.

Everything is involved with its nature and its ends. So his ontological argument is simply an application of the metaphysical scheme. Now you can certainly say that the argument is system-dependent.

And it is. We'll see when we get to Aquinas' arguments that they, too, are system-dependent. That is to say, dependent on a framework of thought within which he's working.

System-dependent arguments. I doubt that there is any argument that isn't system-dependent. Certainly arguments for the existence of God, but I think arguments for anything else.

Always have presuppositions of some sort. But in Anselm, it becomes particularly noticeable. And it's this sort of thing which leads me to think that the value of the arguments is not so much in proving from a neutral starting point the existence of God.

It simply shows how necessary the God concept is in terms of the systematic framework of thought that is dominant at that time. You cannot think metaphysically without the God concept. Seems to be what Anselm is saying.

Now, if you have Kaufman with you, take a quick look at page 522, and we'll see his argument there spread out very briefly. 522. He starts in the second paragraph by saying it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding and another to understand that the object exists.

And he illustrates, a painter first conceives of what he will make, having it in his understanding, but doesn't yet understand it to exist because he hasn't yet made it. But after he has made it, he has it both in the understanding and in existence. So that distinction becomes important.

And he goes on, even the fool is convinced. And he's referring to the claim of the psalmist that the fool has said in his heart, there is no God. So even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least.

Yes, it must exist in the fool's understanding for him to say there's no God. You see. Something exists in the understanding at least than which nothing greater could be conceived.

He understands it. Whatever is understood exists in the understanding. That than which nothing greater can be conceived cannot exist in the understanding alone, because if it existed in the understanding alone, it wouldn't be that than which nothing greater can be conceived, because it would be greater to exist independently than to exist in the understanding alone.

In other words, the idea of a perfect being that lacks existence is the idea of a perfect being lacking one perfection. And that's a self-contradictory idea. So if the idea of a perfect being that doesn't exist is a self-contradictory idea, then the only other alternative is the idea of a perfect being that does exist.

You see. And so the necessary existence of that perfect being having all perfections. So he goes on, if that than which nothing greater can be conceived exists in the understanding alone, the very being than which nothing greater can be conceived is one than which a greater can be conceived.

And that's impossible, self-contradictory. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being than which nothing greater can be conceived and exists both in the understanding and in reality. And then in the next chapter, it exists so truly that it cannot be conceived not to exist.

It's impossible to conceive of a being that can be conceived not to exist, such a being. Hence, if that than which nothing greater can be conceived can be conceived not to exist, it is not that than which nothing greater can be conceived. Irreconcilable contradiction.

There is then so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist that it cannot even be conceived not to exist. And this being thou art, O Lord God, and the peons of praise follow. Well, you see what he's doing.

He's saying, I have an idea of a perfect being that than which no greater, none more perfect could be conceived. To say that this being does not exist is to demote it so that it's no longer the idea of a perfect being. If you genuinely have the idea of a perfect being, it's one that must also have the perfection of existence.

Anselm's argument. Well, to that argument, there was a monk who replied, a man by the name of Gaunilo, who picked up on Anselm's figure of speech and called himself Gaunilo the Fool and said, I have an idea of a perfect island. That doesn't prove it exists.

To which Anselm replied very straightforwardly, of course it doesn't because a perfect island is not a perfect being. It's a finite, limited being. It does not have every perfection.

It has limits. So your response, Gaunilo, is irrelevant. You missed the whole point of the argument.

But that doesn't change the fact that the argument is system-dependent. It's an argument constructed within this hierarchy of being metaphysical framework, such that being, existence, is one perfection, unchanging, immutable existence, and any idea of a perfect being must therefore be the idea of a being that necessarily exists. So, a system-dependent argument.

Well, Anselm, any comments there? Yeah. Ryan. Explain to me how his concept and his argument for God relate to the value of idealism over empiricism.

Do you have a sense within that that... You mean by Platonic idealism? Well, it seems to me in that he affirms a high value of the ideal, almost giving it a... Yeah, yeah. You pit idealism against empiricism. I'm not sure that that's appropriate because there are some idealists who are empiricists.

George Berkeley. Perhaps what you really mean by rationalism over empiricism is that, independently of empirical evidence, you have an a priori argument to show, in this case, the existence of God. And your question is, how does this illustrate the superiority of? Yeah.

Well, I think all I'll say is that it indicates the superiority of, it indicates that some kinds of thinking are appropriate to some subject matter and other kinds to other subject matter. That is to say, if you're trying to find out what's wrong with you physically, I suggest you submit yourself to the empirical findings of medical science,

where I think empirical methods are very, very valuable. If you're trying to get at some non-empirical object, not accessible to sense data, such as God, you have to use some other method.

So, in a way, I'm responding simply in terms of the divided line, that if you want to deal with physical particulars, all right, use one approach. But if you want to deal with the eternal, the invisible, then obviously you need a different kind of approach. Why should we universalise empirical methods for every kind of subject matter? You see, that's a kind of reductionism.

It presupposes that everything that exists is of a particular nature and, presumptively, for some, a physical nature. You see? Why presuppose that methodologically, so that you shut out other alternatives? Yeah. Now, on the other hand, if what's in your mind is the value of abstract reasoning of this a priori sort, well, of course, the assumption is that there is some sort of correlation between logic and reality.

You see? Such that a logical conclusion must be true of reality. Now, that assumption is only valid if you buy the presupposition that reality conforms to the laws of logic, conforms, therefore, to logical thinking, which is precisely what the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition insisted on, the whole Greek tradition, and, I think, any theistic tradition insists on, that affirms the rationality of the creator, whose wisdom is evident in the creation. You see? So, in that sense, the laws of logic are not humanly devised.

They have to do with the structure of human thought, because they have to do with the structure of thought on God's part and the structure of being as God has made it. Now, if you say that is a very presumptuous assertion, I respond, no. The basic law of logic is that A equals A and not non-A, and that is a law of God's being.

God is God and not non-God. You see? And even God cannot be non-God. So the laws of logic apply to God.

Yeah. I think in the laws of logic, you've got something that's irreducible. Now, to justify that, metaphysically, you really have to have a rational structure to the ultimate being, which theism has.

So, in that sense, I think Anselm's right. Now, of course, it's not the case that it's further developed by virtue of Anselm's acceptance of real forms, real universals. Real universals which are operative in the mind of the logos, the creator, and which are operative in ordering the creation.

But by definition, universals are intelligible entities. You see? They are objects that can be known by abstract thought, dialectic. Therefore, an abstract a priori argument is very appropriate for dealing with the rational order of things.

And again, you come to the same conclusion that, granted his system, this kind of argument is very appropriate. Now, I still haven't said that, granted his system, it's valid. You know what I'm saying? But it's a very appropriate kind of argument.

If there is a problem in the argument, and I'm not sure the debate over it goes both ways, if there is a problem in the argument, I think it may be something like this. In describing his point, I put it this way: the idea of a perfect being necessarily includes the idea of existence. So it's the idea of a necessarily existing perfect being, which is the idea of a perfect being.

Now, you see, that then has to be adopted, that idea has to be adopted as the idea of a perfect being, over against the idea of a perfect being that doesn't exist. But it's one thing to adopt the idea, and so you cannot think consistently of a perfect being that doesn't exist. And it's another thing to think of whether, in fact, there is any correlation between such ideas of perfection and reality.

In other words, you would have to challenge the metaphysical framework. I think that's the centre of it. Just, I guess what brought this on is Kant's argument against it.

Is that pretty much what he said? Yeah, Kant takes a different line, at least the main line that he takes, is his claim that existence is not a proper predicate. And we'll run into this when we get to Kant's critique of pure reason next semester. Existence is not a proper predicate.

That is to say, existence is not another quality which you can predicate of God. Now, if that's the case, then adding existence is not adding another perfection. Saying God does not exist does not subtract a perfection from the idea of perfection.

Now, if Kant is right in that, then you have another problem. Then you have another problem. Is existence a perfection? Now, the medievals would all say yes.

And they'd say yes for this reason. And perhaps I can come at it best by saying how Kant thinks of existence in the aftermath of the scientific revolution. A world of bare physical facts.

You know, the line, can I take a thing so dead? A world of bare, inert, physical particles. Particles. Now, in that sense, existence is a value-free sort of thing.

Value neutral. It's not a quality thing. It's not a quality one has.

But for the medievals, being, existence, can be described in terms of unity. That gives something identity. Nothing exists that doesn't have identity.

It must have unity, therefore. Unity. Truth.

That is to say, it must embody some intelligible nature. Goodness. Yes, because if it embodies an intelligible nature, it's somewhere in the hierarchy of being.

In other words, the medievals are talking of transcendental qualities of all being. There is no such thing as bare existence. So why can Kant, then, contradict Anselm? Because he has a different metaphysical framework.

Different presuppositions about the nature of being. So again, it comes back to the metaphysical system. Do you follow? Well, I hadn't expected to get into a debate on the ontological argument, but it's a good one.

Important. Okay. Anselm, then, is a good representative of Christian thinking in this Platonic tradition.

And who else do we have? We have Dionysius. We have John, Scotus Eriugena. We have Anselm.

All right, now let me add two others. Avicenna. And Avesebron.

And if Anselm is a good Christian representative of this tradition, Avesenna is a good Muslim representative, and Avesebron a good Jewish representative. Okay. Avesenna, yes, emanations, intermediaries between the one and the many, the eternal and the temporal.

Emanation, a necessary and eternal process. Sound familiar? A Muslim neo-Platonist. Avesebron, emanations, speak of God by way of negation, what God is not.

A mystical path to union with God, transcending thought. So the thing follows through. Now, later in medieval times, in the 13th century, we'll run into Bonaventure.

Bonaventure. I won't say more about him now except for this anticipation that after the rediscovery of lost Aristotelian books, when Aristotle was being presented as really the best philosophy in the last word, but with problems for a theist, Bonaventure repudiated Aristotle completely and tried to get back to a continuation of the Platonic tradition. And we'll get into that story in a little while.

Okay, so these people are then representing the Platonic influence. Now, easier to deal with and briefer, the Aristotelian influence. And here I want to note three people, Boethius, Maimonides, and Averroes.

Boethius, Christian, Maimonides, Jewish, Averroes, Muslim. Boethius died in 524. Back around the time, a little bit younger than, but around the time of Dionysius.

Is known to have been a translator of and commentator on Aristotle. And the work of his which is best known and has best survived, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, was incidentally written in prison. *The Consolation of Philosophy* is one that is still available in translation, of course.

But the most significant contribution of Boethius, historically, is his formulation of the problem of universals. Posing the key questions related to the theory of forms. And I want to hold that until we get down to item five on this agenda for the early medievals.

Okay. Maimonides, a Jewish writer, is best known for his work, *A Guide for the Perplexed*. It is said that he tries to do with Aristotle what Philo of Alexandria had tried to do with Plato in relation to the Jewish faith.

Remember that Philo developed a kind of Jewish interpretation of Middle Platonism. And Alexandria tries to develop a Jewish interpretation of Aristotelian philosophy. Maimonides does.

But it's Averroes that I want to comment on more specifically. Averroes also wrote a commentary on Aristotle. And it was in fact because of the Muslim interest in Aristotle that he became known again in the West, actually, through the interest of Muslim philosophers in Spain.

It so happens that both Maimonides and Averroes lived in the city of Cordova in Spain at the same time. Interestingly. The Jew and the Muslim.

Averroes developed his Aristotelian view, if you like, with a little bit of Platonic influence. Because he had a hierarchy of intermediaries. A hierarchy of intermediaries between the pure actuality, which is God, and the pure potentiality, which is prime matter.

Prime matter is elemental matter without the form of any particular element or kind of thing. So that in between God, who is pure actuality and matter at the bottom of the hierarchy, you have 100 intermediary intelligences. That hierarchy of beings still at work.

This is an emanation kind of process. And his view was that the human soul is, yes, part of this, but at death the individual human soul is united with a cosmic rational soul. So that there is no individual immortality.

There is no individual immortality. Now, it was Averroes' work that introduced Aristotle to Christian philosophy in the middle of the Middle Ages. The 11th and 12th centuries.

And Averroes recognized the fact that there are conflicts between the Aristotle that he saw and the religious beliefs of a Muslim. Emanation, rather than ex nihilo creation, meant that matter is eternal. The eternality of matter with its potential that is actualized by God in creating.

And, secondly, the loss of individual immortality. Now, in order to handle that tension, what Averroes does, and this introduces us to the problem of faith and reason, what Averroes does is to develop the notion of two-fold truth. Truths of faith are distinct from truths of reason.

Theological truth is distinct from philosophical truth. Now, the way in which he reconciled these, if you can call it that, was that the faith, religion, speaks allegorically, metaphorically, using imagery that the uneducated believer can appreciate and respond to. It is philosophy that speaks with precision.

And so, in the tension between the two, he seems to prefer the philosophical way of saying it. The philosophical way of saying it is his interpretation of Aristotle. And Aristotle, he was convinced, represented the very pinnacle of philosophical achievement forever.

Now, Averroes poses questions about the relationship between faith and reason in terms of the relationship between a particular religion and philosophy. And, as a result, the problem of faith and reason, it's called, became one of the major issues during the later Middle Ages. So, what I want to do, then, is to sketch in some of the alternatives that seem to be developing on the problem of faith and reason during this preparatory period, and anticipate what Aquinas is going to say in response.

First, go back to St. Augustine. Go back to St. Augustine, and you have there a tradition which says that faith seeks understanding. Or, as Anselm puts it, *credo ut intelligam*, I believe in order that I may understand.

And this seems to be the starting position for the medieval discussions. What Augustine meant, I think, is pretty clear in the light of what we did with Augustine. Namely, that while faith is understanding's step, because one must at least understand what one is believing in measure in order to believe it, and a certain kind

of rational case can be made, faith is understanding's step, yet understanding is faith's reward.

So that for the Christian involved in the rational activity of philosophy, theology, and Augustine doesn't distinguish the two, nor does Anselm, for a Christian involved in those activities, the quest for philosophical and theological understanding is a quest motivated and guided by faith. That is to say, by what one already believes. And as we've seen in the case of Anselm, particularly, it could be an activity appropriate to be monastic, of praise to God, because of reflecting on God and his creation, even though it means getting into the complexities of metaphysics.

So, faith seeks understanding. Put in other words, Augustine and Anselm see philosophy not as a neutral understanding, not as a neutral activity, religiously neutral, but as a through and through religious undertaking, not starting from scratch, but starting with what one believes and from that perspective, exploring more fully the implications of what is believed. Now that's Augustine and Anselm.

Now you see, Averroes suggested that there is tension between the two and demonstrated it in his reading of Aristotle. That notion of a tension between the two was picked up by a Christian writer in the 12th century, Seeger of Brabant, who represents what became known as Latin Averroism. Latin because he wrote in Latin rather than Arabic, but basically also Latin because he was in Western Christendom.

Latin Averroism. The doctrine of two-fold truth was taken into Christian thought. The doctrine of two-fold truth was taken into Christian thought by Seeger of Brabant, who argued that religion and philosophy are about different kinds of truth.

Religious ways of talking are imaginative and dramatic rather than strictly logical. There's some suggestion that Seeger may have admitted that he and Averroes had misinterpreted Aristotle, and there wasn't a conflict, but at least this Latin Averroism has come down to us as the standard point of reference. Now the fact is that it was in response to this Latin Averroism of Seeger of Brabant, and the storm around Aristotle interpreted by Averroes, which led Bonaventure to reject all thought of a Christianized Aristotelianism, led Bonaventure to go back to Augustine and Anselm, and to the Platonic tradition of earlier years.

You see, one of the emphases that you get in Augustine and in Anselm, as we saw last time, is that the logos enlightens the mind. And said Bonaventure, without the light of the logos, it would be impossible for Aristotle to know the truth. Without the light of the logos, it would be impossible.

And Aristotelianism and Averroes and Seeger of Brabant didn't have any such concept of divine illumination in the human mind. That was left out. And so Bonaventure turned away from Aristotle.

Now, recall that one of the problems with Aristotle, according to Averroes, was the problem of individual immortality. The problem of individual immortality. But that isn't the only problem.

There's also the problem, by virtue of the theory of universals, as to why God could not be an efficient cause and create. Aristotle's God was just a final cause. Why not? Because Aristotle's God is simply thinking about his own thinking.

Aristotle did not see that the forms are archetypal ideas in the mind of God. If Aristotle had seen the platonic, middle platonic, neoplatonic, Christian platonic, if Aristotle had seen the crystal platonic teaching that the forms are exemplars in the mind of God, he would know that God wasn't just thinking on his own thinking, but was thinking about the exemplars, and in thinking about the exemplars, could give his mind to particular beings who embody those exemplars. Add to that this further consideration.

What is it that makes an individual? An individual. Well, a privation of form. That was the Neoplatonic tradition saying that.

But not so, says Bonaventure, and he goes beyond the Platonic tradition. What makes the individual the individual is that there is embodied in the individual the form not only of the species, but of all possible qualities which the individual will develop. And so God, by knowing the forms of species and all possible qualities, can think on the particular combination of qualities which identify the individual.

God could know individuals. And knowing individuals, God could act as a sufficient cause and create an individual. And so Bonaventure introduces a doctrine of individuality which makes it possible to talk of God creating individuals and individual immortality.

How come individual immortality? Well, Plato has taught us that there is body and there is soul in the individual. All right. But what is it that composes this body and soul in the individual? Well, what unites them is a common material basis that is neutral to both the physical and the rational.

What you have in addition to that common matter is the form of all bodily qualities that the individual has, and the form of the rational soul which the individual has. And so, because you have matter and form, matter and form, while now we're one, it's possible for matter and rational soul to survive death, and individual immortality is possible. So Bonaventure responded, you see, by developing the Platonic tradition further in ways that make it possible to say that God knows individuals, God creates individuals, and individual immortality is possible.

Now, we'll see that Aquinas disagrees with Averroes, disagrees with Bonaventure, wants to fly with Aristotle, but in order to do that has to modify Aristotle. You see? And so the other alternative develops. The plot thickens.