

## Natural Law: Understanding the Church's Teaching

### Part II<sup>1</sup>

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True law is *right reason* in agreement with *nature* [my italics]; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions...It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and at all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst punishment.<sup>2</sup>

Given what the Church has said or how the Church has spoken about the nature, the condition, and the state of our natural human reason<sup>3</sup> – in other words, reason apart from its possible misuse through all the disruptions which can exist through the culpable fault of sin (and thus reason apart from the possible entry of grace within the life and the condition of our concrete human existence in the exercise and the life of our reason); or, in other words, reason as, allegedly, it would exist apart from any kind of temporal or historical manifestation; or reason as, allegedly, it would exist apart from any kind of grace which could be coming to it from God (although, admittedly, in fact: “a pure nature [that is] independent of any grace of God has never [in fact] existed” within the context of our current world and history)<sup>4</sup> - on the basis of this hypothetical context, from this standpoint, as our initial point of departure, if we are to move through the self-transcendence which is endemic to the life and the being of our human reasoning toward a proper understanding about the nature and the being of natural law (the so-called *lex naturalis*), as this has been taught to us by the Church's Magisterium and as this law

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<sup>1</sup>In the discussion which follows in this analysis and treatment, please note that, unfortunately, it has not been proofread by a third party although, at times, errors were later found and corrected. It would be an act of charity to raise questions and suggest the need for corrections when faults are noticed. A great debt is owed to the love and interest of friends who have sought to understand the grounds of Catholic moral teaching and how it differs from other possible approaches. To you as a reader who is trying to grow in a spiritual and moral understanding of these difficult things, may God bless, keep, and govern.

<sup>2</sup>Marcus Tullius Cicero, <http://right-reason.com/about/> (accessed December 27, 2015).

<sup>3</sup>See “The Church's Teaching about the Nature of Natural Law and how it begins with the Church's Teaching about the Nature of the Human Mind.” Cf. <http://loneragan.org/2020/05/22/book-the-human-mind-and-how-it-relates-to-the-churchs-teaching-on-natural-law-16th-ed/> (accessed November 10, 2020).

<sup>4</sup>*Sacramentum Mundi An Encyclopedia of Theology*, s. v. 1969 ed., “Natural Law,” by Rupert Lay, p. 158.

is understood and as it is currently taught to us by the Church's Magisterium (as best as we can determine it), in a preliminary way, we begin this inquiry by first attending to the wording of the Church's official teaching as we can find it at times in various magisterial texts that have been issued now and then, over the course of time, since the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These texts exist for us as our primary sources. From them we work and, toward them or by referring back to them in various ways, we find a basis and a ground for what we are seeking to understand and know.

By way of a precautionary or an introductory note however (to explain why we begin with texts that come to us from the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century): on inspection, examination, and judgment, we find that earlier references to the being of natural law on the part of the Church's Magisterium tend to be somewhat rare and, in addition, they principally refer to simply their being or their existence (apart from any teaching that would speak about the nature, the meaning, or the intelligibility of natural law) although, on the other hand however, when natural law has been invoked in the context of the Church's magisterial teaching, it is to be noticed that natural law has been frequently joined to moral proscriptions of one kind or other that have come to us from the Church's teaching about our proper conduct as this refers to our human sexual behavior.<sup>5</sup> The conjunction or the association between the two that we find accordingly suggests that some kind of intimate relation exists between the meaning and the being of natural law and a right understanding of human behavior as this applies to questions about the place and role of sex in the living of our human lives. To natural law belongs the urging or the sense of some kind of transcendent moral imperative that we cannot ignore. It has a significance or a clout which transcends every other kind of ethics that could be geared to questions that would want to ask about the rights and wrongs of our human sexual behavior. If, at one level, in its details, the Church's teaching indicates what is right and what is wrong about certain types of sexual behavior, it would seem, according to her teaching, that we can always turn to natural law for an understanding and an explanation which indicates why, in matters of sex, certain things can be said to be intrinsically right and other things, intrinsically wrong. To some extent (apart from other sources and causes), the truth of the Church's teaching is grounded in the nature and the being of a naturally existing law which exists apart from revelation. It cannot be denied or gainsaid without risk of contradiction if, within the operations of our human cognition, an inherent law governs our cogitation. It indicates both how we sense, think, understand, and know and how we ought to sense, think, understand, and know. The fullness of our cognitive activity points, the same time, to the rightness of the

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<sup>5</sup>See, for instance, Pope Innocent XI, decree of the Holy Office, *Various Errors on Moral Subjects* [sometimes cited by other sources as *Errors of Laxist Morality*], March 4, 1679, as cited by *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, pp. 325-329, #1151-1216. In reiterating earlier teaching about the impropriety of extramarital intercourse, "natural law" is mentioned for the first time in teaching which condemns a proposition which had said that masturbation is "not prohibited by the law of nature." Hence, according to the law of the excluded middle which exists within the order of deductive logic, the contrary is to be admitted as a truth and fact: "masturbation (*mollietas*) contradicts the natural law." Cf. Josef Fuchs, *Natural Law: A Theological Investigation*, trans. Helmut Reckter and John A Dowling (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 4, n. 4. Masturbation exists as an unnatural or as an improper act. Its irrationality points to its wrongness; the absence of an intelligible, rational principle according pointing to an inherent absence of good (hence, its intrinsic wrongfulness).

activity which exists in us as human subjects.

Moving on thus: the first or the earliest *explicit extended discussion and teaching* about the *meaning and the teaching of natural law* appears to come to us from Pope Leo XIII in the context of an encyclical letter that was issued on June 20, 1888: in Latin, *Libertas praestantissimum*; in English, *On the Nature of True Liberty* (although, as noted, earlier references to the normative existence of natural law predate the kind of teaching and the articulation that comes to us from Pope Leo XIII in 1888).<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the explicit teaching of Pope Leo that comes to us in 1888 and briefly referring to some

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<sup>6</sup>See footnote n. 3 above. See also Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 11, who argues similarly, in the context of his own work, that, allegedly for the first time, in this encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, natural law is considered in terms of what exactly it is: how, in its own right, it has a meaning or an intelligibility that is proper to it and how also, at the same time, it is ordered or it is related to other orders of meaning and being which exist as other kinds of law or as other specifications of right, obligation, or norm which exist whenever we refer to the kind of ordinance which exists as the reality or the being of law.

In all cases, as Aquinas would have it, law *as law* exists as an ordinance of reason or as an ordination or as an ordering of reason. It exists as an immaterial principle, and as an immaterial principle, from the intelligibility of things, we can move toward the being and the life of many different things or, more accurately, we can begin to know about the being and the life of many different things. We are tempted to argue thus that, from the intelligibility of a thing, we derivatively get the being of a given thing although, more accurately with respect to the meaning and the role of intelligibility, intelligibility exists in its own right as a distinct kind of being (it exists as an intellectual, a mental, or a conceptual type of being) and, only in certain cases, can it exist in terms of real being. In other words: truly existing being or real being exists with the intelligibility that it properly has; or, in other words, truly existing being or real being exists by and through and with the intelligibility which, in truth, it happens to have. No being or, in general, being (reality) does not exist apart from the intelligibility which informs it (and which properly belongs to it), and in and through the kind of determinate being which exists as the form or the structure of intelligibility, we have the being of many different kinds of things. Intelligibility always exists as a specification of being or as a qualification of being. Things exist as this or that kind of thing (even if a given intelligibility is not well understood or known by us) and so, if the intelligibility of law (in its being) is but as an effect or if it exists as a consequence of an ordering which occurs within understanding and the intelligent kind of work or the cooperation and gathering which exists within acts of understanding, then, in general, natural law exists in the wake of some kind of understanding that has yet to be fully grasped and understood by us. It springs or it comes from prior acts of understanding and, as it is then grasped by us through our individual acts of understanding, this law or these laws reflect an intelligible order of things which is the term, the issue, or the grasp which also exists within us through the kind of apprehension which exists within our own acts of understanding where, in the experience of partiality, when we discover laws that we do not construct or produce, then, within the ordering and the specification of this law within our acts

of the earlier teaching which the same Pope would have known within the context of his own life and times: under Pope Pius IX, on December 8, 1864, the Congregation of the Holy Office issued a teaching document that was cited by many as the *Syllabus of Errors* (or, by others, as the *Collection of Modern Errors*). A list of propositions indicates teachings which are to be regarded as errant. They are to be proscribed and argued against. According to the thesis thus of one proposition which is to be rejected in a wording which explicitly refers to the being and the reality of natural law: [We err in holding that] the laws of morals by no means need divine sanction, and there is not the least need that human laws conform to the *natural law*, or receive the power of binding from God.<sup>7</sup> [*italics mine*]

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of understanding, through our knowing of this ordering, in some way, we must refer to an order which exists beyond ourselves or which exists independently of ourselves: an order which transcends the being of our individual acts of understanding even as this same order is known by us through our individual acts of understanding.

In other words, objectively speaking and subjectively speaking, this order (of natural law) exists as the term or as the terminus of our self-transcending acts of understanding (it is that toward which our acts of inquiry and understanding are ordered by us through an ordering of external stimuli, intentions, and acts which exists within the dynamic of our human inquiry). But, at the same time too, as it is grasped or as it is apprehended by us through our acts of understanding, this same order reflects or it points to an objectively existing subjective order which exists within ourselves, within the interiority of our thinking and reasoning: within our acts of reasoning which, relative to the kind of deliberation which exists within our human acts of reasoning and thinking, can be completed or perfected by our later acts of understanding that give to our reasoning and thinking a perfection that would otherwise not exist. The completion or perfection is absent if we should only refer to our acts of thinking and reasoning in terms of how they are geared toward possible receptions of understanding that can solve problems or which can answer any pressing questions that, perhaps, we could be asking and pondering.

Simply put: within this context of objectivity and subjectivity, no real distinction accordingly exists between (1) the greater, higher, transcendent order which is grasped by us through our acts of understanding (the apprehensions which exist for us through our acts of understanding: our acts of direct understanding existing in conjunction with the subsequent verification which exists in our acts of reflective understanding) and (2) the interior ordering which is constitutive of that which exists for us within our cognition in all our acts of understanding. The interior ordering within ourselves lives and folds or it participates in the exterior ordering which exists outside of ourselves while, also, at the same time, the exterior ordering lives or it exists or it is expressed within the manifold of our interior human ordering. Each, in its own way, reflects and points to the other. As a species of universal, the identity which joins these two orders with each other or which exists between these two orders applies to all of our acts of understanding wherever or however they exist: whether as human acts of understanding, or as angelic acts of understanding, or as divine understanding which exists as an uncreated act of understanding which only belongs to God and which is constitutive of who and what God is as he exists in himself (God existing as an unrestricted act of understanding). The intelligibility of being subsumes or it includes the intelligibility of our understanding and this intelligibility informs and it is expressed by the intelligence of our understanding in the

Subsequently, in the later context of his own pontificate, in a decree of the Holy Office (“On the Reception of Converted Heretics”) which was issued on November 20, 1878, Pope Leo XIII similarly referred to “natural law” in terms which simply refer to the reality of its being and existence where he says here that, in fact, two kinds of law exist: “divine [law] and natural law.” Two kinds of law are to be distinguished from each other in a context which pejoratively refers, implicitly, to the being of our civil human order and to any “decisions of legislators and princes” which could possibly “order something that is contrary to [the being of] divine and natural law [in its prescriptions and proscriptions].”<sup>8</sup> In subsequent years and in later pontificates, other texts will more frequently allude to the existence and the reality of natural law (sometimes referred to, in other words, in translation, as the “law of nature,” or less explicitly, as that which simply exists “by nature,” or that which exists “according to nature”). In themselves, the terminological or the linguistic differences do not point to any differences or distinctions that would exist either as real distinctions or as mental, conceptual distinctions.

To explain a bit about the meaning of distinctions (to clear up any possible confusions): if, within the order of our human cognition, acts of sensing exist in conjunction with later acts of understanding which grasp ideas and in conjunction with later acts of judgment which determine if understood ideas exist as true ideas, then, in general, as regards the being of any differences or distinctions, we can speak about an ordering of distinctions and about three different kinds of distinctions: least importantly and firstly, material or linguistic differences (which exist as material or as linguistic distinctions; we know about them through the kind of consciousness which belongs to our acts of human sensing); more importantly and secondly, mental, conceptual, or intellectual differences (which exist as mental or as intellectual distinctions; we know about them through the kind of consciousness which belongs to our initial acts of understanding); and, most importantly and thirdly, real differences (which would exist as real or as substantive distinctions; we know about them through the kind of consciousness which belongs to our acts of reflective understanding in the judgments or the evaluations that we affirm and make). Sensed objects in their reality differ from objects which exist as grasped, understood ideas and both differ from the kind of object which emerges when ideas are judged and are known to be true, right, and valid.

In general thus, when speaking about the wording of the Church's teaching: if it is said about anything that, in fact or allegedly, it exists in a natural way or that it exists in a way which is determined, circumscribed, or governed by its nature (whether we should know or understand this nature or whether we do not know or understand it), in either case, in speaking about an alleged “nature,” we would be employing and referring to a principle of explanation which is determinative of the “natural law” which properly belongs to the being and the life of a given

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acts which are proper to it.

<sup>7</sup>Pope Pius IX, “Syllabus,’ or Collection of Modern Errors,” as cited by *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari from the Thirtieth Edition of Henry Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2007), p. 440, #1756.

<sup>8</sup>Pope Leo XIII, “The Reception of Converted Heretics,” as cited by *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 461, #1850.

thing.<sup>9</sup> The intelligibility of a thing or the nature of a thing points to a normative or to a proper pattern or order of behavior which specifies the kind of natural law which properly belongs to the being of a given thing. The nature of a thing, in specifying the kind of being which belongs to the being of a given thing, at the same time points to how it should exist if it is endowed with any kind of self-movement or motion which, in some way, properly belongs to it.

Subsequently thus, in a later encyclical, in *Rerum novarum* (which was issued on May 15, 1891), Pope Leo refers to the nature or the meaning of our human labor in words which begin with words that refer to “labor by nature” (according to one translation that has been given of it).<sup>10</sup> The nature of our human labor refers to the intelligibility of that which exists for us as our human labor (our human work) and, in the context of the Pope's discussion, two elements or “two marks” are distinguished from each other in a way which relates and which orders them to each other if we are to speak more fully about the nature of our human labor. A “reason of personality” is joined to a “reason of necessity.” We exist as human beings with personalities or enjoying a kind of being which exists as personhood because we are endowed with a rational nature and a consequent freedom of choice that is conditioned by the rationality of our desiring, our thinking, and our understanding. We can make our own decisions and so, as human beings, because of our nature, it can be said that we exist as human persons. We can choose to live in a certain way and not in some other way and, as incarnate beings, we find that we are ordered toward a number of different things that, in some way, we must do and accomplish if our current condition of personhood is to move from the actuality which it currently has toward the realization and the actuality which it could begin to have in a greater, larger way.

Reasons of necessity, on the other hand, point to an order of limitation that is joined to reasons of personality which, as we have noted, point to an order of freedom. Two kinds of law accordingly exist together (freedom and limitation) and both exist, in each their own way, as determinations of natural laws: as a compound that is constitutive of the nature of our human labor. On the basis thus of that which exists *by nature* or, appositely, that which exists by way of a *natural law* or a *law of nature*, we can then speak about the rightness or the legitimacy of that which exists as our “natural rights” with respect to our human labor (our natural human rights with respect to the posing of this question). In general, these natural rights exist also as combinations of freedom and limitation where, here, in terms of necessity, no natural right exists as a kind of option for us and then, in terms of freedom, the exercise of our natural rights or the fostering of our natural rights is such that it varies and grows with the extent of our understanding and knowledge. That which exists as a “natural right” is grounded in that which exists for us as a “natural law” that is peculiar to us as human beings or, appositely as regards law, that which exists as our natural needs (or that which exists as our natural tendencies and necessities) given the kind of nature which properly belongs to us with respect to the kind of

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<sup>9</sup>The Latin of *lex naturalis* can be translated or it has been translated as either “natural law” or as the “law of nature.” For instance, in Pope Leo's encyclical, *Sapientiae christianae* (issued by on January 10, 1890), according to one translation, we are told that “we are bidden by the *law of nature* especially to love and protect the land in which we were brought forth and raised into this light, so that the good citizen does not hesitate even to encounter death for the fatherland.” Cf. *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 481, #1936a. Italics mine.

<sup>10</sup>*Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 485, #1938c.

being which properly belongs to us in our humanity as human beings.<sup>11</sup> Prescriptive and proscriptive right supposes law; prescriptive and proscriptive right supposes need; and so our rights suppose our nature (nature, law, and need existing together as a whole). A “right of nature” that belongs to us as human beings (how we should behave and how we should be treated as human beings) is explained (or it can be explained) if we should begin with an already existing pertinent, relevant “law of nature” which somehow properly applies to us as human beings, rightfully belonging to us because, in our nature, because of who and what we are, we exist as human beings and because we do not exist in some other kind of way (or, if we were to exist in some other kind of way, it would remove or it would take us away from the humanity that we happen to have and we would exist as something which is distinctively other).

For an example of this in his *Rerum novarum*, as Pope Leo moves toward a practical conclusion which exists as a preliminary, prescriptive moral determination (within a sphere of being which refers to moral actions which could be possibly put into effect by us as human agents): on the basis of currently existing natural law, by way of an inference from it, as a general conclusion, it can be said that “it is permitted man by the right of nature to enter private societies,” societies which would exist as “associations of citizens.” *A fortiori*, as the Pope argues, in a shift which moves from the being of a given natural law to the being of a consequent natural human right - natural law to natural right - it is right for workers and manual laborers that they can organize themselves into societies of their own in order to pursue their own interests and goals just, too, as it is right that other kinds of economic organization can also possibly exist through the agency of persons and groups who decide to work together to achieve common goods and aims which all can somehow participate in and, in some way, benefit from and enjoy.<sup>12</sup> From the being or the reality of things (from an understanding which knows about the being or the reality of things), we can move from the metaphysical kind of understanding which exists in this kind of knowledge toward a moral kind of knowledge which exists in terms of that which properly belongs to us as human agents (existing as we do as conscious human subjects, with degrees of control over what we could be doing in any given context of one kind or another). The greater our metaphysical knowledge of things, the greater should be our moral understanding and knowledge of things which would know about activities and obligations which properly belong to us as human subjects and what, in given circumstances, we should effectively and concretely do and realize and, at the same time, effectively and concretely avoid and shun. Our human history exists as the fruit of an ongoing form of interaction which must always exist between, on the one hand, that which we decide to do and do and, on the other hand, that which we fail to do or decide not to do.

### **Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*: Some Initial, Prior Reflections**

With respect then to the magisterial teaching which we have about the nature or the intelligibility of natural law as this first comes to us from Pope Leo's encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum* and which becomes the ground of all later, subsequent teaching, before we

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<sup>11</sup>Mortimer J. Adler, *Ten Philosophical Mistakes* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985), p. 127.

<sup>12</sup>Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum*, as cited by *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 486, #1938d.

quote and examine this text in a way which can point to a number of key terms and passages which should point, in turn, to a specific meaning about that which would exist for us as natural law, let us begin initially by adverting to two points of departure that are related to each other. We first take a preliminary or a cursory look at the wording of the text in question before we begin then to move into a technical or a philosophical discussion which initially asks about ourselves as human beings before it can move into inquiries which can attend to the being of other things. In our first step, we first get a sense or a glimpse of the subject matter in question. We come up with an anticipatory summary which reflects the sum of our initial partial impressions and also the gist of a number of interpretations that can be found within expositions that have come to us from reflective texts that exist within the secondary literature which we can find as it pertains to the question and the meaning of natural law. On the basis of an initial summary, we can then use this as a basis for later comparisons when, in our subsequent study, analysis, and inquiry, we can attend more fully and move more deeply into the full text and meaning of the Church's teaching about the meaning and the intelligibility of natural law as we find this initially within the wording of the exposition which comes to us from Pope Leo XIII in 1888. For purposes of illustration at this point and as a way of foreshadowing some of the meanings and issues that we will be attending to, we cite, below, a differentiated exposition that comes to us from a secondary source about the meaning and the being of natural law:<sup>13</sup>

The Catholic theory of the natural law is contained in three propositions. First: the natural law is an absolute order [that is] inherent in an ontological Absolute. Second: the natural law is immediately knowable in the structure of the rational creature. Third: the natural law contains the qualification of all possible human acts and that quality is recognized by a practical science. This practical science is followed by each agent in his own moral choices, but it also constitutes a systematic whole [that is] known as casuistry [which is defined according to one commonly accepted definition as a branch of applied ethics: as “the application of general ethical principles to particular cases of conscience or conduct”<sup>14</sup>].

However, in addition to taking an initial look at the materiality of the Pope's teaching and in conjunction with the kind of articulation that we can provide through the wording of a preliminary summary (or, if we should wish, prior to engaging in any kind of articulation that we can provide through the wording of a preliminary summary), as a second part or second major subdivision, let us also attend to a number of observations or to a number of first principles which should serve and which must serve as a heuristic for us in our inquiry: governing and directing our inquiry and so helping us in our need to distinguish and to introduce a number of different questions which we should be asking if our purpose is some kind of fuller or more adequate understanding about that which should exist for us as natural law and that which exists as the Church's teaching about the meaning and the being of this natural law. An initial apprehension of meaning which exists within an order of meaning which belongs to common sense and the kind of apprehension which exists in common sense

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<sup>13</sup>Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum: A Study of Changes in the Catholic Church in the XXth Century*, trans. John P. Parsons (Kansas City, MO: Sarto House, 2012), p. 391.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/casuistry> (accessed September 2, 2017); <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casuistry> (accessed September 2, 2017).

gives way, as a point of departure, to a lengthier or to a more involved explanatory apprehension of meaning which transcends the immediate or the ready kind of thinking and interpretation which commonly belongs to the order of apprehensions which exists within the pragmatic kind of understanding which exists within common sense.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout, in these parts one and two (or from these parts one and two), we can then try to move from an initial understanding and apprehension of words and sentences that exists in the word of the Church's teaching toward an understanding of the realities to which these same words and sentences refer (or can possibly refer). We begin with a kind of prior understanding or a pre-comprehension of things in a reflection which would have to exist as a species of prior or fore-understanding but which, as grasped, understood, and thematized, should lead us toward a better or a more advanced kind of understanding which should emerge for us if, through the mediation of our later inquiries, study, and conclusions, we should find that we have been working or perhaps not working from a set of positions or a set of theses that have been functioning for us as a set of suggestive, fruitful, salient, first principles. Together, they lead us toward a more nuanced species of understanding that, ideally and always, we would prefer to have. The more fertile our prior understanding of things, the more fertile should be the reception and the enjoyment of any later acts of understanding that can come to us. The greater the one, the greater the latter. The intelligibility of things that are understood leads us toward the reality and the being of other existing things.

By way of an apologetic that we would like to propose at this point: please note that an earlier, proleptic understanding of things *as understanding* (or, *if our earlier understanding exists indeed truly as understanding*) - as understanding, this prior understanding does not subtract or it does not separate us from the possibility of a later and a fuller understanding of the same things that we can also later possibly have. Many problems are solved, or they are forestalled - they do not emerge at all, if we can begin from a more adequate point of departure whose scope should exclude no variables that are to be regarded as constitutive elements for the sake of an apprehension and an understanding of things which would exist for us as a better or more adequate explanation. We want to move from the kind of order and signification which tends to exist within the terms of a possible, proffered description of things toward another kind of

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<sup>15</sup>See Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J.*, eds. William F. J. Ryan, S. J. and Bernard J. Tyrell, S. J. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), pp. 104-105, and how he refers to the thought of Wilhelm Dilthey where Dilthey distinguishes between the kind of data that belongs to the natural sciences and the kind of data that belongs to the various human sciences. While the data of the so-called natural sciences are simply given to us and meaning is attributed to the data as a consequence of our later acts of understanding, the kind of data which belongs to the human sciences already possesses an evident meaning. We begin with this immediately known meaning (we reiterate, we repeat it to ourselves to distinguish it from other meanings) and then, from there, we can move toward other orders of meaning that can possibly provide an adequate explanation for the kind of meaning that is encountered by us through our initial apprehensions of it although, in the process of apprehension and interpretation, a deepening of meaning occurs or it is supposed to occur through changes of apprehension which occur within us and which can lead to revisions or expansions in the kind of world which exists for us in our human world as a construction of meaning that, in turn, reveals the being of a greater, more wonderful world of existing things.

order which would exist as the apprehension and the relevance of an explanation.

### **Part 1: Natural Law in the Teaching of Pope Leo XIII: a First Reading**

In part one then, for ease of reference purposes, let us first cite the text of the Pope's teaching about the nature or the meaning of natural law:

[The most fundamental of all laws is the *lex naturalis*, the natural law]...which has been written and carved into the individual souls of all human beings, because it is *itself the human reason insofar as it commands the carrying out of right action and forbids wrongdoing*. Now this *prescription* of the human reason could not have the power of law, unless it were the voice and interpreter of a higher reason, to which our mind and our freedom ought to be subject...It therefore follows that the law of nature is the very *eternal law* implanted in those who have the use of reason, inclining them to a right action and goal, and it is also the eternal reason of God, the Creator and Governor of the whole universe.<sup>16</sup>

In terms then of a summary that we can initially give and supply, bluntly put (in the choice of words that we are citing and quoting): natural law is to be identified with the workings of our deliberative, practical human reason (our acts of moral human reasoning);<sup>17</sup> or, in other words, with particular applications or specifications of our natural human reasoning (among its various operations and activities, as it moves from one set of circumstances to another) whenever we move from the order of our human knowing which exists within our reasoning and cognition toward the order of our human doing and execution which exists within the order of our practical human actions, transitioning from one order of variables to a second order of variables. Our knowing provokes our doing (our cognition, our morality) just as, in its own way too, by a converse motion, our doing provokes our knowing (our suffering, our questions and inquiry). While our human reason exists as a kind of cause or agent (relative to the causality of our acts of inquiry and our search for understanding and knowledge), it also exists as a species of effect to reveal a tension which exists (within us) between our willing and our knowing and how each touches the other in some way to influence the other in the hope or in the likelihood that each can perhaps grow and develop with the other (in possibly a good way where good knowing should lead us toward good willing and good willing or good doing, toward good knowing). If, on the one hand, we can think about our knowing or our cognition

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<sup>16</sup>Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*, as cited and also as it is italicized by Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 11. Everything which is given within square brackets refers to interpolations that I have introduced into the text of Rhonheimer's translation.

<sup>17</sup>See Josef Fuchs, *Natural Law: A Theological Investigation*, trans. Helmut Reckter and John A Dowling (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 7, who summarizes the Pope's teaching in terms which aver that "in a sense reason itself is called natural law in that it ordains that good be done and evil avoided...Reason is the voice that speaks to us distinguishing between good and evil," citing Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*, in *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 20 (1887 ff.), 597.

as a *particular species of cause*, it always exists in its own right as a species of effect.

More specifically (or in other words), with respect to the content of natural law, it refers or it points to the activities and the functioning of our human reason as it moves beyond judgments of fact and determinations of truth toward judgments of value and determinations of possible courses of action which our reasoning and our conclusions urge us to put into effect through the potential agency of our possibly engaging in outward, external actions (of one kind or another) if, in a given case, we should decide to move from that which we intelligently happen to understand and know toward that which, intelligently and rationally, we might be able to do and to effect, the content of our knowing indicating or delimiting, as a kind of prior condition, the possible content of our subsequent acts of human making and doing. In words which point to Thomist origins and to a Thomist understanding about the meaning of natural law (as, seemingly, this teaching is reflected in the teaching of Pope Leo XIII): natural law exists as a dictate or as a precept of our practical human reason as this reasoning judges “the *should be* of [our] human activity.”<sup>18</sup> The rationality of our judgment reveals or it points to a species of compulsion which exists within the deliberations of our practical human reason. If, in our practical human reason, judgments are made about what we should do or how we should behave to a given set of circumstances, in the life of our theoretical or our speculative human reason, judgments have been also made although they are restricted to determining the truth of things which is to be identified with the reality or “the *being* of [existing] things.”<sup>19</sup> A compulsion of a kind can be determined within both contexts although not a compulsion which takes or which subtracts from our human freedom but, instead, a compulsion or an experience of inner or internal necessity which adds to the depth and the extent of our human freedom, the absence of any form of outer, external necessity pointing to a creative dimension that exists within the kind of inner necessity which belongs to the revealing of a connection, a way, or a path which is unseen but which is made known to us whenever, through an act of understanding, something is being grasped and understood for perhaps the first time.<sup>20</sup> The freedom which exists initially within the possibility of our making a choice is transcended by a freedom which refers to the rationality of a possible choice (a freedom which is generated by the rationality of a possible choice that we have come now to grasp and understand). The rationality points to the goodness and the appropriateness of a possible choice and so to the lack of goodness which would belong to selecting some other possible choice.

With respect to a question which would want to ask about the relevance of any verbal or any linguistic differences which are to be noticed if we take a brief look at how natural law has been spoken about over the course of time: where Aquinas, in his conceptuality, had spoken about the work of our theoretical human reason and the work of our practical human reason (the difference between them and the relations which exist between them), a conceptuality which belongs to our own time and day prefers to speak in a phenomenological way or in an existential way about our judgments of fact and about how our judgments of fact are transcended by our judgments of value that are intended whenever questions arise about how we should respond or act, given what we have come to understand and know within a given

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18Amerio, *Iota Unum*, p. 391, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2.

19Amerio, *Iota Unum*, p. 391, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2.

20E. F. Schumacher, *A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p.

context or situation which exists within the world of our human experience.<sup>21</sup> If, in our knowing, we move from the concreteness of our external sensing experience toward a new kind of concreteness which exists within the depths of our inner understanding and judgment, in our subsequent acts of acting and doing, we move from the inner kind of concreteness which exists within our understanding and judgment toward a newer and a different kind of concreteness which we can bring into being within the order of external conditions as these are given to us in the givenness of our empirical human experience. In other words, we find ways to transform the kind of given that was initially given to us when we refer to our prior acts of human sensing (the kind of world that exists if we should only refer to the givens of our sensing experience) and we convert or we turn this world (allegedly) into a human world or into a more human kind of world which is now more fully emerging, changing, and shifting within a world which exists, for us, as an already existing world. A prior world is constituted by determinations which refer to properties, elements, and variables that belong to the questions and concerns of physics, chemistry, and biology. However, our practical human reason and our practical human doing builds and constructs our human world on a basis that works from these prior determinations which exist as givens within an order which belongs to a physical, material world of many existing things.

In other words: from within a world or a universe of contingently existing nature, we transcend this order as soon as we move into our acts of inquiry, understanding, and deliberation as we move into a new world or into a new universe which exists as a world or as a universe of freedom since, as a condition or as a precondition, no given order of things which exists in terms of physical, chemical, and biological conditions is such that it entirely determines the kind of human world that can emerge for us on the basis or from the foundation of these prior determinations and conditions.<sup>22</sup> From the same set of conditions or within the same set of conditions, human beings can decide to organize themselves in different ways, differing apprehensions about goods and values pointing to differences in how a society should be organized and how, in fact, it is functioning and working in a given way. The influence and the sway of conditions is to be distinguished from the press and the compulsion of any determinations which are said to exist within these conditions. Between them, a real distinction exists. Depending on the circumstances which exist within a given context, a condition is to be distinguished from that which exists as a cause.

## **Part II: Heuristic Determinations and Anticipations**

Launching now into a part two and into a larger discussion of a number of related issues: from an initial look at the teaching of Pope Leo XIII that we have attempted, if we should now attend to a number of considerations that touch on the positive teaching of Pope Leo XIII which would serve to indicate how we can then move into a better understanding of the depth

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<sup>21</sup>Lonergan, *Second Collection*, p. 232.

<sup>22</sup>Jacques Maritain, *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1942), p. 10. For a concrete, documented sense of this, look at the discussion that we find in Francis Fukuyama's *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011). The human order of things contains apprehensions, meanings, and decisions that cannot be explained if we should only attend to conditions which exist as in a material way.

and the compass of Pope Leo's teaching, let us speak about three distinct variables that can be related and combined in a way which points to how they exist as general considerations that can guide our inquiry as we attend to the data of the Church's teaching as an initial understanding and apprehension of meaning that is given to us by Pope Leo XIII when he speaks about the nature and the intelligibility of that which exists as natural law. The initial or the common meaning of the Church's teaching is to be distinguished from a deeper meaning which is to be sought if the initial or the common meaning is to have more punch (more power or more significance in the understanding which we are to have). First, let us speak about how we exist as human beings in a context which initially works with two distinct variables that are related to each other in a positive manner: we begin with (1) an understanding of our human cognition which attends to the data of our cogitation and which serves to move us from the apprehensions which we have of this data in our experience of self towards degrees of self-understanding and self-knowledge which creates a kind of inner world or a kind of inner space which exists within us as a distinct order of meaning and being and hence as a basis for thinking new things: asking new questions and cultivating an openness to new acts of understanding about the being of things that have yet to be known;<sup>23</sup> and then from there (2), we move into an expanded understanding of self which is to be equated with apprehensions of anthropological knowledge which attend or which are informed by a good which belongs to us in the form of metaphysical reasons and causes that we are to know and identify in ways that are both reflected and grounded in the labors and the mission which belongs to the good of attending to the primacy of enhancing our self-knowledge and the necessity of somehow growing in the depth and the width of this self-understanding. Each vector leads to the other, mutually (cognition and metaphysics), since, in both cases, despite differences in approach, the object is a better understanding of ourselves and of the kind of creativity and the kind of receptivity that properly belongs to us in how we live or can live our lives as human beings. As a general principle: "I must first know myself;...to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous."<sup>24</sup> "Before you establish who you yourselves are, do not think that you will ever become capable of acting as judges or trustworthy witnesses in...other matters."<sup>25</sup>

Further elaborating our point: who and what we are as human beings determines the kind of cognition and the understanding that properly belongs to us (the nature of our being effecting, determining, or limiting the extent of our cognition) and, on the other hand also, the kind of understanding which we have points to the kind of being which we have and it also determines the kind of being which we can have in terms of how we are to live and to exist as human beings (our cognition effecting, causing, and limiting the extent of our being). A being or thing which exists as a metaphysical determination or principle (having a stability or an absoluteness which belongs to the nature of metaphysical principles) determines another kind of being which exists as an expression of itself (as an historical manifestation of itself with respect to the cognition which belongs to us and the kind of living which also belongs to us).

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<sup>23</sup>Maurice Nicoll, *Living Time and the Integration of the Life*, Chapter X (London, 1952), as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup>Socrates, *Phaedrus*, as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup>Philo of Alexandria, as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 63.

We refer not to how we exist simply as a thing or substance but to how we also exist as actors, as agents, or as the subjects of our history (we have a variability or a relativity which belongs to us in terms of how, as human beings, we can change ourselves and others within an order of conditions which is informed by coordinates that initially belong to external determinations that are denominative of space and time).

Then, from there, to conclude, let us attend to (3) an anthropology which also knows about reasons and causes which point to a *theology* of human personhood and to how, within the order and the penumbra of belief and religion, we have indications and clarifications of one kind or another that can lead us toward a better understanding about how we exist as human beings and how, as religious subjects, we can best think and understand ourselves for how we live and exist as human subjects.

To cite a case in point: if, first philosophically and then theologically, we should argue that the order and the striving of our human understanding points to something which is mysteriously transcendent within us (hence, the sense or the intelligibility of a belief which says and argues that our minds are made in God's image; they exist as a reflection of how God is and exists), this same teaching in turn explains why, as human beings, in our currently existing life, we are forever always striving and seeking and never reaching a satisfactory conclusion. We can never have an entirely adequate understanding and knowledge of ourselves as much as it is good and right and necessary for us that we should grow in an understanding and a knowledge of ourselves as human beings and subjects.<sup>26</sup>

Philosophical considerations gain in significance and meaning if they can be associated or as they are associated with the meaning and the significance of theological considerations (of one kind or another) and, conversely, theological considerations grow in meaning and significance through a manner of procedure which joins philosophical and theological reasoning into an integrated whole that is cognizant of differences and distinctions but which avoids acts of reasoning that try to separate these acts of reasoning from each other. Simply put (and in a way which points to our chief point of departure): if we can think of philosophical acts of reasoning as a kind of inner moment which lives and acts within the work and the discipline of theology, can we also think about how our theological acts of reasoning exist also a kind of inner moment which exists and which lives within the work and the tasks of our inquiry in philosophy?<sup>27</sup> An exhaustive account of the order of things which we find in our world cannot

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<sup>26</sup>St. Augustine, tr. H. Browne, as cited by Leszek Kolakowski, *Religion: If there is no God...On God, the Devil, Sin and other Worries of the so-called Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 76.

<sup>27</sup>In this context, see how Bernard Lonergan speaks about the kind of relation which should exist between the work of philosophy and the work of theology in his *Method in Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), pp. 337-340. It is one thing to distinguish between the kind of reasoning that exists within philosophy and the kind of reasoning that exists within theology but to separate these two kinds of reasoning from each other leads to a decline in the quality of both kinds of reasoning (if we can rightly assume here

do without explanations that pretend to turn toward the being of higher things and which suppose, at some level, the being of these higher things and how, in our thinking and living, by our striving, we participate in the being of these higher things.

As our concrete point of departure in thinking about the being and the reality of theological considerations: on the one hand, an intimate connection exists between a familiarity which belongs to an implicit or to an unthematized sense of religion or, in other words, a pre-conceptual sense of religious experience that can be given to us as a kind of undertow or undercurrent in our experience of self and world and, on the other hand, a structure, a form, or a content that can be given to this undercurrent through an understanding and an apprehension

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that a common desire in both is to be adverted to where, in either case, each seeks to move toward an understanding of things in terms which would refer to the richness and the quality of ultimate reasons, their being and reality). The one kind of reasoning in philosophy or theology would not be able to help or to encourage the other if it is believed that these two kinds of reason are to be properly distinguished in a way which draws them apart from each other and which tries to keep them apart from each other. In the wake of this kind of thinking and in the wake of the conceptuality which has arisen from it, natural theology (or philosophy apart from religion and revelation) would be seen to exist apart or independently of the kind of work that belongs to the tasks of systematic theology and a climate of imagination and thinking is engendered which assumes that, between these two orders of thinking, deeper bonds or deeper links cannot be found (they cannot be said to exist) and so, in the wake of this kind of assumption and belief, nothing is done to determine any number of possibly relevant connections and then, from there, the extent of their possible value and relevance (their plausible applicability). If, on the other hand however, the intelligibility of a differentiated whole can be adverted to, grasped, and known, its meaningfulness would not only point to its truth (to the likelihood or to the probability of its truth) but, at the same time also, to the truth and to the value of all the different parts which are constitutive of the larger, greater whole.

For purposes of illustration and as a kind of proof, the following text adverts to the existence of inner connections or inner relations which exist between philosophy and theology or, if we should choose to use other words, the inner relations which, in fact, exist between the kind of inquiry which exists within natural theology and the kind of inquiry which exists within systematic theology. If we should move into a deeper understanding of modern philosophy in terms of the origins of its principal teachings and tenets (its conclusions or its assumptions, or its assumptions rather than its conclusions), we should see and know that, in its own way, modern philosophy exists as a kind of derivative, as a kind of effect. It does not stand on its own as an independent kind of inquiry and reflection (apart from the kind of thinking which has been occurring within the work and the reflections of theology in the minds of many of its practitioners):

...four assumptions of modern philosophy...all derive from late medieval, largely Franciscan-inspired currents [in theology], besides [the kind of theology which exists in] early modern scholasticism and Baroque Augustinianism which themselves lie within their slipstream. These are: (1) the univocity [of being] rather than [the] analogy of being; (2) knowledge by

of things which, initially, should always work with or from an *a priori* kind of awareness and knowledge which is specifically religious (it refers to a knowledge or it belongs to a knowledge which points to the reality of transcendent origins in a manner which differs or which prescind from how, as human beings, we exist as our own causes or as our own points of origin for the existence and the being of many other things that, as causes, we bring into being). In this other kind of knowledge, we can attend to beliefs and to apprehensions of meaning which, at some level, sense or know about the truth or the relevance of prescribed religious teachings (be they one or many or of one kind or another) that, in some way or in various ways, we have all received and imbibed (in an indirect fashion) through intersubjective, symbolic apprehensions of meaning that, willy nilly, have been given to us. They have been given to us through the receptivity which exists for us in sense and imagination and by means of the instrumentality of external sources and means (of one kind or another). Amid many differences, all point to a kind of reception which belongs to us as human beings and also to a communication and to a diffusion of religious traditions as these have come down to us at times, however dimly, through prefigurations and intimations of meaning that, in some way, have been surrounding us in our lives before we can begin to ask any questions about them in a way which could best point to a budding forth and to a further emergence of our human reason and reflection in changes which could differentiate (perhaps more fully) the matter, form, and operations which belong to the stream of our human consciousness.<sup>28</sup>

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representation rather than [by] identity; (3) the priority of the possible over the actual [potency over act or potency over actuality]; and (4) causality as ‘concurrence’ rather than [as] ‘influence’ [as first cause and subordinate effect]. These assumptions are all profoundly linked to the equally important invention of a novel space of ‘pure nature’, [which is] independent of the human natural orientation to the supernatural as [this was] taught by the Church Fathers and the high Middle Ages, but then largely abandoned by late medieval and early modern theology.

Cf. John Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), p. 3; Roland Krismer, email correspondence, August 1 and August 2, 2018. Theological reasons or theological preferences can lead to changes within the order of philosophy as much as, in other ways, philosophical reasons or philosophical preferences can lead to changes within the order of theology in terms of the type of reasoning which can begin to occur within its practice.

<sup>28</sup>At this time of writing, a story has been given to me by a friend who tells of recently visiting a tavern in Antwerp, in Belgium (the visit occurred sometime in July 2018). The interior was decorated with Catholic religious artifacts: statues, crosses, crucifixes, paintings, icons – these items had all been purchased on the open market and they had been used to create an environment where non-religious activities are supposed to be occurring. I refer to what occurs in taverns in terms of food and drink and why persons usually frequent taverns that offer food and drink. Despite the strangeness of the décor which is presented – and for some persons the décor points to a sacrilegious use of religious images – on the other hand, it is to be admitted that, by this means, immaterial spiritual truths can be possibly communicated. The misuse of a thing does not imply or necessitate a situation where only an absence of good is to

The subsequent and later addition of linguistic apprehensions of meaning effects a change since, with a greater degree of charity or a greater degree of precision, it can reveal or, in fact, it does reveal the beliefs and the teachings of a given religious tradition that, in some way, indirectly, we have been receiving and enjoying (a tradition which we have been inheriting). In some way thus, before we begin to think and reason and to ask questions, this tradition has been functioning for us as our point of origin or locus. It has been existing as our locus or home. It exists as our milieu. In some way, it has been sustaining and supporting us and so, for us, it has been functioning as our fundamental point of reference if we should admit to ourselves that the sufficiency of our human reason is a notion which is to be regarded as a misapprehension (or, more strongly and perhaps more accurately, it is to be seen as a myth or error) because, falsely, it ignores how, in the life of our human reason, this reason exists within a greater context of things which do not exist or which do not come from ourselves as if they are the products of our individual questioning, thinking, and reasoning since, instead, they exist as prior conditions which make for the later kind of life which we can have as we begin to move into the life of our human reason. The life of our reason exists as a later, subsequent thing and so, in its own way, it exists as an effect even if it happens to exist also in its own right as a species of cause. To illustrate our point a bit with examples:

Compare, for instance, the kind of philosophical analysis which we find in Averroes (an Islamic philosopher of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century) with the kind of philosophy which we find in Maimonides (a Jewish philosopher also of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century) and then compare them with the kind of philosophy that we find in St. Thomas Aquinas (a Catholic theologian who engaged in philosophical analysis in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century). In addition, look at the kind of philosophy that we have from persons who, allegedly, profess no religious allegiance of any kind even if, with degrees of plausibility, we can argue that, at times, they are working from theological assumptions of one kind or another that they are unwilling to acknowledge or to admit. For example, think about the kind of eschatological thinking that we find in the eschatological futurism which exists within the thought of Karl Marx in the context of his economic analysis. If few persons reject the notion and the fact that developments in philosophy have influenced developments in theology and religion (and this continues to be the case), can a serious study of developments in philosophy ignore the notion and the fact also that developments in theology and religion have had an effect in how, in

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be alluded to. In a given case, it is always possible (though it might not be too probable) that, for a given person, he or she will look up from his or her sorrow and concern and, in an unexpected way, be moved and touched by an empowering immaterial meaning or an empowering immaterial significance that, in some way, is being suggested by a configuration of color and shape that belongs to the contours of a religious image and which this image presents to the perceptive consciousness of a would be perceiver. As a general principle: what a given person perceives depends on the quality of perception that belongs to the life of a given person. To some extent, yes, this is true. We know this. But, it is not the only variable if external variables have a role of their own to play in terms of how, mysteriously, they can elicit the subjectivity of other persons in ways which can awaken the content of this subjectivity or in ways which can enhance the subjectivity which belongs to the life of a given human subject.

philosophy, an understanding of things has been brought into being? If the life of our human reason exists in the way that it does because it exists within a prior context of meaning and being (which refers in a way to a prior order of existing things), this fact urges us or it points us toward the need of our moving toward a higher and a wider viewpoint that can acknowledge both a proper autonomy which belongs to the life of our human reason but, at the same time too, a reason that is lacking in the kind of independence and sufficiency that, at times, has been ascribed to it in the context of other philosophies of cognition that have tended toward a monist understanding of human cognition which excludes the place and the role of other variables that, if acknowledged, would have to point us toward a way of thinking which would assume or which would argue that our questioning and understanding exists as but one component within the life of our human cognition.

Our current understanding of things always supposes a prior or a given understanding of things that we already have and any additions that can come to us through later growths in the extent and in the depth of our prior understanding (although it is to be admitted that, in our cognitive causality, or to the degree that we experience our personal agency in our acts of cognition and to the degree that we deliberately exercise this agency, we can lose our awareness and, more strongly and more truthfully, we might not be too aware about the kind of constitutive role that is played by our *a priori* apprehensions of being within the dynamic of our performative human cognition). Only as we turn to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and as, self-reflectively, we begin to ask questions about causes and conditions and about how these apprehensions of being exist as a species of cognitive effect can we shift into a new or a heightened form of cognitive awareness which can then speak about how our *a priori* apprehensions of being exist as a distinct species of cognitive order, as a “pre-knowledge” of things that is somehow always supposed or which is presupposed whenever we ask questions about anything (since the intelligibility or the rationality of our questions always supposes or it presupposes a prior apprehension of meaning and being which makes for the intelligibility or the rationality of our proffered questions). A given question exists as a good question or it exists as an intelligent, reasonable question only within a given context of understood things (in a context that, in some way, is already understood and known, however implicitly and inarticulately at the start of things) although, on the other hand too or at the same time, if the same question is simply taken and inserted into an extraneous or a foreign context, the result will be an immediate loss of meaning and intelligibility. The question is robbed of its relevance (its point or significance).<sup>29</sup> Before some questions can be asked or, in fact, before, in general, any questions can be asked, a prior context needs to exist or it needs to be brought into a condition of meaning,

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<sup>29</sup>Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968), p. 181; and Emerich Coreth, *Metaphysics* (New York: Herder, 1968), p. 76, as respectively both cited by E. L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being: Natural Theology Today* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), p. 70; p. 77.

being, and recognition where then, from this new apprehension of meaning, we can move further into new apprehensions of being.

By way of special pleading: in contrast with discussions or a kind of reflection which could seek to know about the being of a nature or an intelligibility which would exist as an abstracted nature or as an abstracted intelligibility (in this case thus, it would exist on its own; it has been separated from the conditions of its concrete instantiation), the givenness of our religious experience or the apprehensions that we have within our religious experience of things are such that they cannot be fully understood if we should assume and suppose that they exist within a species of void or vacuum (in a condition of isolation). To some extent, more or less, our religious experiences (as experiences) have always existed within a larger context of things which is conditioned by teachings and beliefs that belong to the orientation or to the sense of a received religious tradition, giving to our experience and to the manner of its reception a particular slant, an orientation, or a direction that, perhaps in our self-knowledge, has yet to be grasped and understood in terms of all its effects and implications. Simply put, we recall or we remember a teaching which avers that “what is received by a receiver is received according to the manner of the receiver [the condition of the receiver].” *Quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur*.<sup>30</sup>

The distinction that we can draw between the being of an abstracted nature in cognition and the being of an instantiated nature in application is accordingly drawn for purposes of our moving into an order of explanation that can join a larger number of variables. Three orders or three grades of explanation can be distinguished. If, immediately, in a first order of explanation, the abstraction of a given nature moves us from an order of description that exists in sense into an order of explanation that exists within our understanding, the association and the connections of this nature with other natures or with other intelligibilities in turn leads us to a second order of explanation and then possibly to a third order of explanation. In the second order, a greater comprehension exists as apprehensions of meaning that belong to a theoretical or to a scientific type of apprehension are all taken and joined together to form the context of a larger, coherent whole; and then these explanations (once they are grasped and correlated) – in turn they can move us into a third order of explanation which emerges when our theoretical understanding is turned toward or upon our ordinary apprehensions of meaning and so, by a kind of reaction upon them, into and within our ordinary apprehensions of meaning, we can introduce a clarity and a precision that had not been known before. It leads to a reshaping of our ordinary apprehensions of meaning or to a re-interpretation of them, and so, in the end, to a reforming or to an enhancing of the content of our ordinary apprehensions as these exist for us within the kind of experience which belongs to us within the apprehensions which are endemic to the nature and the experience of our ordinary common sense (as this type of apprehension differs from apprehensions which belong to us when, in our science or in our theory, we move into a critical form of human consciousness).

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<sup>30</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 75, a. 5; 3a, q. 5. See also Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 89, a. 4, as quoted and translated by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 212, n. 20; and also John F. Wippel, “Thomas Aquinas and the Axiom ‘What is Received is Received According to the Mode of the Receiver,’” *A Straight Path: Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture*, ed. Ruth Link-Salinger, et al (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988): 279-289.

In general thus, as we look back and as we attend to the manner of our procedure in an outline of its general form: initially, we move from the experience of ourselves in our cognition toward an understanding and a knowledge of metaphysical realities and components (the being of things which exist apart from our understanding and knowledge of them). From effects or by attending to consequences that in some way we already know, through an analytical kind of reasoning, we move toward the being of likely, probable causes (we assume, as proper first principles, [1] that what is changed or brought into being is changed or it is brought into a condition of being by something that is not lacking in being and existence [“whatever goes from potential to actual has a cause” if, in potentiality, actuality is absent]<sup>31</sup> and we also assume [2] that, in some way or to some extent, effects exist within their originating causes in the context of a proportionate order).<sup>32</sup> Then, secondly, as a second step or as a second movement,

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<sup>31</sup>Edward Feser, *Five Proofs of the Existence of God* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017), p. 49. Please distinguish between the kind of argument which exists in empirical science and the kind of argument which exists in metaphysics given the greater abstractness which exists in metaphysics (in an abstractness that transcends the kind of cognition which exists in empirical science and in an abstractness which also transcends the kind of cognition that exists in mathematics). If causality is to be understood for what it is or how it exists, we need to refer to the difference between that which exists as potential being and that which exists as actual being and to the fact that the realization of every kind of potency is to be regarded as an instance of change or alteration which can only occur through a principle of movement or change which exists as causality (potency and actuality together exist and the relation which exists between them explains causality): hence, if A, as actual, acts on B, as potential, it confers on B or it brings B into a condition of actuality which originally or initially exists at A through a participation that would exist with respect to the actuality of A (however great or small is the participation which exists with respect to the actuality and the being of A). As Feser illustrates his argument: we can use ice cubes to cool a hot drink but, on the other hand also, the temperature of a cooled drink is not to be equated with the coolness of the ice cubes that had been used to induce a lower temperature. The participation in actuality is both partial and incomplete but, at the same time, is appropriate and apt in the degree of its effectiveness.

<sup>32</sup>See Feser, *Five Proofs*, p. 32, where he speaks first about the principle of causality and then about the principle of proportionate causality which would exist as a consequent derivative. A given type of cause produces a given type of effect and one better understands an effect in the fullness of its reality if we can determine or better understand its proper, appropriate, proportionate cause. If, for instance, by way of an example: if, in the liturgy of the Catholic Mass in the consecration of proffered bread and wine, the reality of bread and wine is turned or it is converted into the reality of Christ's body and blood, and if we are to avoid all ambiguity or, in other words, if we are to point to the reality of a complete or a radical kind of change as we now move from the contingent, created, natural order of things that exists in bread and wine toward the supernatural order of things which exists in the being of Christ's body and blood, then we best speak about the reality of a fundamental or a substantial kind of change and not about the reality of other kinds of change which could speak about a symbolic type of change or which could suppose that the reality of bread and wine is not changed into anything else at all, Christ's body and blood being present in some other way through a kind of reception and a juxtaposition that would allegedly exist within the bread and wine: possibly as

from causes which would exist as first principles, from an apprehension of these causes and then through a synthetic or a compositive kind of reasoning and thinking, we then move toward the possible being of effects and consequences in a general ordering of many things which emerges for us among a number of many different variables which, in their own way, can be seen to exist as causes (as subordinate causes; hence, as secondary causes). This comes after that, or this exists in relation to that, or this leads to that. Each movement, in its own way, influences and causes the other as a purported knowledge of effects leads us to a purported knowledge of causes and a purported knowledge of causes leads to a purported knowledge of effects. Forever, our overarching desire is the grasp of a larger, greater whole of things.

Throughout in our thinking and understanding however, as a species of fundamental presupposition which functions for us as a fundamental first principle: we hold that, to the degree that the Church's Magisterium gives us an understanding of natural law as this relates us to the being of divine things (the natural law, as a created thing, allegedly exists as an effect; it comes from the being and the reality of divine things), by the same degree also, within the context of this understanding and belief or from this understanding and belief, a greater degree of intelligibility (or more light) should be shed for us on who and what we are as human beings and how we should exist as human beings within our world. The contingency of our being points to the divinity or the uncreatedness of our origins since, as human beings, we all come from an earlier or a prior order of secondary and primary causes: initially, from the nearness and the proximity of other human beings and an order which exists among these causes and also, remotely, from a kind of proximity which belongs to the greater power or the greater causality which belongs to the being and the causality of God's being (God who exists as an unrestricted, immaterial principle). If, in human terms, an artist makes himself more present to

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a change or alteration which exists as “companation” or as “consubstantiation”; or possibly through a change which exists as “impanation” where, akin to how, in Christ's incarnation, human flesh and blood has been assumed and joined to the being and the reality of Christ's divine nature, in a similar way, at Mass during the celebration of the Eucharist, it is said that bread and wine is also assumed and joined to the reality of Christ's divine nature.

For details and further understanding, see James T. O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), p. 119, and how, by hypothesis, he points to the possible existence of different types of changes that can possibly occur and thence to the possible being of different types of causes and how, for a better understanding of certain effects or if one type of effect is to be brought into being rather than another type of effect, then we must think and speak about the being of a more appropriate species of cause. In terms of proportionate reality or proportionate causality, if we are to speak about the reality of Christ's body and blood and the givenness of this reality within the context of the Eucharist and if this reality exists as an effect, then its proportionate cause must be the reality of a species of presence that would encourage us to think of how it can be said that, in the context of the Mass and the celebration of the Eucharist, an officiating, sacrificing priest is to be regarded as an *alter Christus* (as an “another Christ”) and that, in the sacrifice of the Mass, the reality of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary is perpetuated into the narrative and the events of our subsequent human history through how this same reality exists within the sacrifice of Christ which is given to us and which occurs at every Mass (through its celebration, portrayal, and enactment).

us through the work that he does and the work which he creates (employing secondary means and causes), the same thing, more urgently, can be said about God as the great creator. God's proximity is increased or it is enhanced through secondary causes in a way which more fully manifests God's presence to us in a way which points to the immediacy and the relevance of God's presence. The things of God enter more fully and more directly into the circumstances and the details of our human order in a way which points to how, from a greater understanding and knowledge of divine things that can be given to us, more can be understood about the intelligibility of things as this refers to the being of lesser things and the natural laws which are specific to the being and the life of these things. To understand a natural law requires an understanding or a form of inquiry which attends to the being of supernatural laws.

However, if, cognitively, our growth in understanding develops or if it expands in the wake of a higher order of things that transcends the being of our individual concrete existence, at the same time too (although in another distinct way), our growth in understanding develops or it expands if and as it is informed by a related kind of growth which can occur for us within the praxis and the content of our concrete human living (the order of our human willing) as we work with the givens which exist within our concrete human circumstances. If, for instance, between the "mind of the Church" as a transcendental principle, and our individual selves and our individual minds, an interactive relation exists as minds adjust and respond to each other (within an order of dependence which exists on the part of our individual minds with respect to the greater "mind of the Church": the individual to the community, the unit to the whole),<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Please note here that the "mind of the Church" does not exist within any kind of vacuum or void. To the "mind of the Church," on the one hand, a species of absoluteness is to be admitted and ascribed. However, if we move into the history of Catholic theology and also into a history of the elaboration of the Church's magisterial teachings, we should soon notice that the framing of magisterial teachings is conditioned by developments within the practice, the progress, and sometimes the regression or the confusion of Catholic theology as this can exist at any given time. Dialectical aspects frequently combine with genetic aspects (in a combination or a mass of tensions and resolutions). Yet, and somewhat inevitably, an understanding of things that has arisen initially or subsequently within the minds of some theologians does gradually become a part of later magisterial teaching in ways that, for some persons, were not entirely expected (within the context of their own time and condition).

In the kind of witness which exists within the narrative of Catholic theology and in the development of the kind of reflection which exists within the work of theology, different phases or different vectors can be distinguished from each other and so, to avoid confusion, they should be distinguished from each other. Where for instance, as a vector, one phase or aspect can point to developments which exist within a context of meaning which can be indicated in terms which best speak about a "hermeneutics of continuity" (if we should refer to a genetic development of conditions and beliefs and a genetic type of understanding which points to this type of development), a second vector can point to developments and shifts which exist within a "hermeneutics of discontinuity" (as this exists if we should refer to clashes which exist between differing points of view). Dialectical kinds of development can be adverted to when, within theology and sometimes within the articulation of the Church's teachings, experiences of incoherence seem to present themselves to us and, by their appearance, urge or occasion a need or a demand for a higher kind or a higher order of reflection which can lead to

similarly also, an interactive mutual relation exists if the fruit of our understanding is joined to the fruit of a species of faithful, pious practice which can exist for us within the manner of our concrete human living. For religious reasons or on the basis of our religious observance if it is a good type of observance, we can grow in the being and in the condition of both our common humanity and our individual humanity: growing here with respect to the kind of human cognition which belongs to us as human beings, and growing also with respect to the kind of being which we can have and become (as human beings) as we are faced with the necessity of trying to find our way toward the being of higher, transcendental things (within circumstances and conditions that are determined by properties which belong to variations which belong to shifting configurations of time and space). As our religion enters into the concreteness of our human existence (in a way, from above downwards, if we can use a spatial metaphor as an apt designation), the concreteness of our existence is brought up into the order of our religion in a manner which serves to turn all things toward goals and objectives that transcend the kind of life which exists for us initially within the order of our spatial temporal world and the determinisms which exist within this world of space and time. Within the order of these variables that we experience, we come to know more about the being and the meaning of laws which are inherent within it or which are natural to it since, within the order of these many variables, we find laws or specifications of intelligibility which exist (for all intents and purposes) as suggestive, preceptive, directive norms because, as a kind of prior, conditioning type of understanding (relative to the emergence of any later understandings on our part), it serves to shape the course of our subsequent inquiry and life and it leads us toward the kind of

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larger, more comprehensive acts of understanding (insights and understandings which have yet to emerge as generative of a greater, higher point of view). We are not happy; we are not at peace if, from a sense and an experience of incoherence, we cannot move toward a larger view of things that, in some way, finds an inner unity among a number or a mass of conflicting variables.

To give but one example: in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, in the wake of the Council of Constance, it seemed that a conciliarist thesis about the nature and the order of church government had become normative within the life and the belief of Catholics, although, in the wake of later conflicts, controversy, trial, and suffering, belief in the reasonableness and in the truth of this thesis was soon questioned and re-examined and, in time, it was eventually overturned and then more clearly rejected than what had been known or held in the past. In the resolution which was effected and through an enhancement that was given to the development of earlier church teaching: no council can claim to exercise an authority which is independent of the kind of authority which belongs to the office of a reigning Pope. Apart from the necessity and the reception of some kind of papal approbation, no church council can claim to exercise any kind of legitimate teaching authority. In some way, all authority to teach, govern, and sanctify must come from the center of unity which exists in the office of the Pope: from an authority of office that is less the decisions of a particular, individual Pope and more an authority which exists at a higher level as we distinguish between the person of an individual Pope and the jurisdiction of office which is wielded by the Pope but which in fact belongs to a higher authority which exists in terms which speak about the government of the Holy See: the Apostolic Holy See. In a similar way, within a monarchical order of human government, we distinguish between that which exists as the sovereignty of a reigning Crown and the sovereignty which belongs to the person of a King or Queen. The lesser serves the greater; the person, the office.

reflection and the kind of understanding that, ideally, we should have if we are to move from lesser degrees of understanding that we already have as *a priori* conditions toward attainments of understanding that are larger and more ample and which would exist for us as *a posteriori* apprehensions of meaning and truth. Goods, of many different kinds, all work together to bring an even greater good into a condition of existence and each type of good exists with its own species of priority.

To illustrate our point a bit (albeit briefly at this point and only along one particular line) if we attend to an interactive order of things that exists between a religious order of things and an earthly, mundane, or human order of things, it can be argued that, in a number of ancient cultures, conceptions of the world have existed which have mitigated against engaging in inquiries that can discover how, within the contingent order of things which exists within our world, there exists laws that can be understood and known in a way that can rightly help us in terms of how we are to order our human behavior. It is one thing, for instance, to believe in the being of a transcendent God who has created the world in an entirely rational way (sufficient that it points to laws within our world which are other than God and how he exists in himself; laws that, in their regularity and normativity, we can understand and know and invoke),<sup>34</sup> and it is another thing to believe in a pantheon of many gods who dominate the world in an arbitrary, capricious way where, within this stage and setting, the world exists as some kind of body or organism and where, continually, all things are passing “through endless cycles of birth, death, and rebirth”<sup>35</sup> in a way which points to an absence of contingency and so, in ascribing a divine status to the things of our world, we soon think and assume that no other kind of intelligibility exists.<sup>36</sup> No other kind of intelligibility is to be found by us in any inquiries that we would make. Our theological misapprehensions and our theological misjudgments lead us to philosophical misapprehensions and philosophical misjudgments as, at the same time too or, in another way (albeit conversely), philosophical misapprehensions and philosophical misjudgments lead us to a lack of theological understanding and to a series of theological misjudgments.

Arguments can be constructed however to the effect thus that, if a good philosophy is grasped and understood as a fundamental point of departure, it will make us more open to an understanding of divine things as these things come to us initially from rites and forms that belong to the practice of religious observance and from teachings that come to us from the inheritance of a received religious tradition.<sup>37</sup> For instance, in the context of controversial

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<sup>34</sup>Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2005), pp. 11-12.

<sup>35</sup>Thomas E. Woods, Jr., *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2005), p. 77.

<sup>36</sup>Woods, *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*, p. 218.

<sup>37</sup>See Charles Morerod, *Ecumenism & Philosophy: Philosophical Questions for a Renewal of Dialogue*, trans. Therese C. Scarpelli (Ann Arbor, MI: Sapientia Press, 2006).

discussions between Thomas Cajetan and Martin Luther that were held for three days in October 1518 (in Augsburg in Germany) and in opposition to the grounds or the bases of Luther's religious teaching, the Dominican theologian and recently appointed cardinal, Thomas Cajetan (also known as Cardinal Tommaso de Vio) was to note that “where another metaphysics would obscure the Gospels [the kind of metaphysics that Luther would seem to be assuming and holding in the context of his theology with respect to his understanding of causality]...this metaphysics [the metaphysics of Aquinas, on the other hand] provides the basis for a peaceable understanding of the relationship between causalities, as [this is] expressed in the Gospels and in the life of the Church.”<sup>38</sup> Luther's notion of causality as concurrence differs from Aquinas's notion of causality as subordination and, in the context of a notion of causality as concurrence, one cannot understand how the Church can exist as a divinely created effect and as a species of instrumental cause that God is using and which he has brought into being for purposes of effecting our redemption and salvation.

In other words, theological difficulties can be surmounted if we attend to the possibility of philosophical misunderstandings that are operative in some way: if we work to uncover unnoticed philosophical assumptions; if we put these assumptions into communicable words and concepts; and if we subject our findings to reflection, inquiry, and criticism that is turned toward possible judgments about the truth or the rightness of an assumed position or the truth or the rightness of a proffered thesis. If problems within the order of our theological reasoning are not moving toward some kind of adequate solution, these problems can be possibly surmounted and transcended if we move into philosophy: if we can raise philosophical questions and if we attend to philosophical considerations and suppositions that, perhaps, a given theological argument is supposing but which have not been admitted and stated in words that can be understood by others who live within the context of another philosophical tradition.

### **Our cognition**

With respect then to how, in fact, we exist as human beings as this refers to how, factually and normatively, we determine our possible courses of ethical action that we can possibly implement and put into effect within the parameters of our physical and temporal world: it is to be noted that, prior to the realization and the implementation of any possible courses of doable, practicable action, these courses of action (as determinations) always exist initially within us (as another species of determination) within the contours of our prior understanding and judgment. We refer to a species of effect or to the likely consequence of a prior ordering of

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<sup>38</sup>Thomas Cajetan OP, as quoted by Georges Cardinal Cottier, in Morerod, “Preface,” *Ecumenism & Philosophy*, p. xi. See also Brad S. Gregory, *Rebel in the Ranks: Martin Luther, the Reformation, and the Conflicts That Continue to Shape Our World* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2017), pp. 54-59, for an account of the discussions which occurred between Cajetan and Luther.

originating acts which would exist for us as our prior acts of moral thinking and reasoning that exist within the flow and the shape of our human cognition. Through our reflections and our deliberations, our thinking and reasoning leads us toward decisions about what, in a given case, we should in fact do and also what we should also in fact avoid if we are to exist and live as responsible human agents.

These possibilities (as determinations) are, however, first known by us within the actuations or the experience of our understanding if we should attend to how, always, through our moral questioning, our moral reflections, and our judgments, we initially determine possible courses of action which could be implemented by us to the degree that we would want to move beyond our initial judgments of fact and value into another and a higher kind of realm (another order of being) which is constituted by us if, as moral agents, we move into effective actions of one kind or another: bestirring ourselves to move into the kind of self-transcendence which emerges for us if, now, in our lives, we bring something into being which had not existed before. Our moral self-transcendence is preceded and it is conditioned by an intellectual kind of self-transcendence that, ideally, properly belongs to us; and it is conditioned and normed by the varying degrees or the kind of health and vitality which can be said to exist for us within the dynamic of our intellectual life. The self-transcendence in understanding which exists in a given person is not always the self-transcendence which exists in another human person.

As the agents and makers of our own human history, much depends thus on how we should order ourselves in terms of how we should exist as attentive, intelligent, rational, responsible moral human beings as one type of activity points to another type of activity, or as it is succeeded by another type of activity, in an unfolding of events and acts which moves us outwards or upwards from an interior order of knowledge and understanding toward another kind of self-transcendence and another kind of self-expression which always exists for us through the accoutrements and the implementation of our outer external activity whenever, proactively, we engage in actions and deeds that determine how, concretely, we are to live with ourselves and with other human beings and what, effectively, we are to do as effective moral subjects. If being or truth and rationality exist together as an initial or first unity, similarly too, goodness and rationality exist together in a second unity. The one leads to the other: the goodness or the soundness of our understanding to the goodness of being and reality (that is known) and then, from there, on to the goodness of our possible moral behavior. The morality of an act is defined by its intelligibility: the extent of its reasonableness or the extent of its rationality. In words that have come to us from Pope Leo XIII in the teaching of an earlier papal encyclical: “since it is in the very nature of man to follow the guide of reason in his actions, if his intellect sins at all his will soon follows.”<sup>39</sup> Moral failure is conditioned by cognitive, intellectual failure (one does lead to the other) although not according to a one to one kind of relation that is determinate or which is causal in a strict sense since it can be argued (against the legitimacy of a Socratic point of view) that a true knowledge of things is not itself a sufficient cause for determining any actions that would follow and which would have us move from the self-transcendence which exists within our understanding (our cognition)

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<sup>39</sup>Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, August 4, 1879, as cited by Charles Morerod, “All Theologians Are Philosophers, Whether Knowingly or Not,” *Theology Needs Philosophy: Acting Against Reason is Contrary to the Nature of God*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), pp. 3-4.

toward the kind of self-transcendence which can exist for us within our subsequent acts of willing and doing. To know the good is not always to do the good and to not know the good is not always to do what is wrong, evil, or unjust. A real distinction exists between our understanding and our willing even as one type of act tends to lead to the other and, in some cases, directly lead to the other.

If we should then turn to the kind of indefectibility or the kind of integrity or the kind of norm which properly belongs to us as human beings as a species of vector or as an inner principle that exists within us as human beings in the context of our human cognition (apart from any effects that can be caused by the interference of sin and malice and apart from any kind of healing that can come to us from the reception of grace and forgiveness), initially, two interpretations, two specifications, or two explanations have been given about the nature and the identity of this type of perfection which exists within us with respect to the indefectibility or the inerrancy of our human cognition: interpretations, specifications, or explanations that do not necessarily collide or conflict with each other if, in each case, a given person can identify (within his experience of self) the relevant operations that are constitutive of the indefectibility in question, the absence of simplicity in the manner of our indefectibility accordingly pointing to a complexity which reflects and which points to how, as human beings, we exist as a composite unity of acts and elements which differ from each other but which exist together in a unity which transcends the peculiarity of any individual part.

Hence, with respect to ourselves as cogitating human subjects and the nature or the order of our human cognition, despite a kind of fallibility or a proneness to error which always belongs to us in how we function and exist both in our activity and in our passivity as potential human knowers (the contingency of our human knowing reflects the contingency of the kind of being which also properly belongs to us as human beings), within the kind of cognition which properly belongs to us as human beings, different degrees or different kinds of infallibility can be alluded to and discovered within ourselves within the exercise or the experience of our cognitional operations as these are given to us within our consciousness of self. The infallibilities which are found point to the particular kind of indefectibility which (in general) properly belongs to us as human beings, an indefectibility or a stability that is not lacking in any perfections that properly belong to it and which does not require any improvements or amendments that could come to it from sources of being which are quite other in transcending the kind of being that properly belongs to us with respect to the nature and the manner of our human cognition and existence.<sup>40</sup>

As our point of departure then (according to one possible line of reasoning and manner of analysis), infallibility or inerrancy in our human cognition is to be associated initially with (1) our acts and data of sense perception (the givens of our perception) and then with (2) our direct acts of understanding although not with our reflective acts of understanding which exist whenever we try to move from reasons, intelligibilities, or causes that are grasped by our initial, direct acts of understanding toward the kind of understanding and knowledge which exists in apprehensions of relevance that, in judgment, are joined to apprehensions of evidence. In affirming or in making rational human judgments with respect to the validity or the reality of

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<sup>40</sup>See Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 185-186.

our grasped reasons or causes, our judgments exist (in their own right) as acts of understanding if, in their own way,<sup>41</sup> they can join or connect or, in some way, point to reasons or to grounds that are other in some way than the truth of an idea that we would like to affirm or a truth that, possibly, we would like to deny. In some way, alleged reasons or grounds are defensible in terms of the kind of weight or the kind of urgency which belongs to an experience of reasonableness and rationality which distinguishes the kind of consciousness which belongs to our experience of rational consciousness as this exists whenever we move into an act of understanding which exists as a judgment. For want of better words, with respect to the being of a real distinction, our intellectual consciousness differs from that which exists as our rational consciousness. The experience of reasonableness in our apprehensions exhibits or it points to a compulsion or, analogously, to a necessity which exists within the grasp of our reflective understanding (within our judgments) whenever the reasonableness or the relevance of an idea or thesis is grasped by us through a distinct type of intellectual experience that is now being enjoyed (even as other kinds of necessity exist whenever we refer to how we experience our acts of sensing and our initial acts of understanding).

With respect then first to our direct acts of understanding before we should speak about our prior acts of human sensing, within the order of cognition which exists for us with respect to these initial acts of understanding, in moving from the givens of our sense perception and the acts of our human sensing toward the possible enjoyment of direct acts of understanding: within the context of this order and relation, a species of instrumental material cause is to be alluded to if we should refer to the role and the place of images and the arts of our human imagination as we move from questions about meaning toward experiences which would exist for us as our initial acts of understanding. If an apt image is found or if it is given to us in some kind of way, a pregnant suggestive image suggests or, from us (from our subjectivity), it

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<sup>41</sup>Please distinguish here between the kind of connection that is grasped by us through an act of direct understanding and the kind of connection that is grasped by us through an act of reflective understanding. We refer to the being or the reality of a real distinction. If direct acts of understanding transcend the givens that belong to the kind of plurality which always belongs to our received data of sense by grasping an intelligible or an otherwise hidden connection or unity which exists between or among a set of distinct variables which exist, in their own right, as intelligible specifications or as intellectual determinations of meaning that are also grasped and identified through the reception of a direct act of understanding, on the other hand however (similarly and yet differently), our acts of reflective understanding grasp an intelligible connection which exists although it is one which joins and connects the givens that are present in our hypothetical acts of direct understanding and the givens that come to us from our acts of human sensing. Hence, in this context, in making judgments, a universal is always joined to a particular or it is found to exist within the particular. In other words that we can quote: in judgment, “no antinomy [exists] between the universal and the particular, no contradiction between the singular and the species and genus to which it belongs.” Cf. Matthew L. Lamb, “Bernard Lonergan, S.J.: The Gregorian Years,” *Lonergan's Anthropology Revisited: The next fifty years of Vatican II*, ed. Gerald Whelan (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2015), pp. 66-67. In a better way or in a more explicit way, we know about how, in our cognition or by the very nature and the operations of our cognition, the possibilities and the reality of self-transcendence exists in a way which is always proper to us as contingently existing human beings.

elicits an act of understanding which, as soon as it is given to us and received, immediately then grasps or it immediately apprehends the form or the contours of an immaterial connection that joins immaterial parts or elements into an immaterial relation which, in some way, exists within a conglomeration or an assembly of apprehended sensed data or a conglomeration or an assembly of sensed objects. In an act of understanding, an immaterial act grasps the form of an immaterial term. A given image, if it is pertinent or to the point – as given, it suggests or it points to a relation that is not sensed but which is grasped by us within our understanding if, in fact, an act of understanding is given to us. Apt images encourage the reception of an act of understanding without directly causing or producing a given act of understanding (since the image of a thing is not itself the idea or the intelligibility of a thing) where, in this type of cognition as understanding, perhaps for the first time, a relation is directly grasped or now it is understood by us through an act which differs from an extroverted act of sensing.

Hence, within this context, we understand how or why our initial acts of understanding are to be regarded as direct acts of understanding. Change or refashion the suggestive image or the phantasm and, if it is apt or suggestive in some other kind of way, then another kind of intelligible relation will be suggested to us with respect to the possible reception of a new term or new content which would belong to a new, direct act of understanding that is given to us. As a kind of moral lesson or moral precept that can be gained from an understanding of this relation: changes in the kind of understanding that is to be enjoyed by one or more persons are best encouraged (the chances of acceptance are far greater) if we can effect changes within the materiality and the kind of denotation (or denotation) which belongs to a symbolic order of things and the kind of communication which belongs to an order of symbolic significance.<sup>42</sup> On the one hand, an imagined image is to be distinguished from a sensed image although always, in our experiences of sense or through and from our experiences of sense, imagined suggestive images are given to us or they can be given to us within the context of our sensed experience (both to ourselves in the manner of our cognition and also to others in the possible experience that can be enjoyed by other human beings within the context of their individual cognition). On the basis initially of sensed images, an imagined image exists as a species of refinement or selection and so, in order to move toward a desired set of imagined images that is to ground the possible reception of new acts of understanding, one best begins with effecting changes in the configuration of sensed images. From a gross image which exists in our acts of sense, an imagined image can be suggested through a sensible form or pattern that exists for us through the apprehension of a sensed image that, in some way, attracts or arrests our interest and intention.

In the tightness of fit or in the tightness of relation which accordingly exists between sensed, imagined, apt images and elicited direct acts of understanding, a species of infallibility is to be

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<sup>42</sup>For evidence to this effect, see Eamon Duffy's history of religious change in England as this is given to us in his work, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*. Changes in the being and the practice of rites and rituals point to changes in belief and faith without the necessity of our having to conclude that one order is to be equated with the other even as one order suggests or points to the propriety of the other. If, peaceably, we are to change the religious beliefs of a given society, initially change the manner of worship and devotion since, in the wake of these changes and with time, doctrinal changes will become more likely. They will be suggested and, in time, they will be accepted.

distinguished and affirmed, a species of infallibility that is arguably more human (given the interaction between sense and understanding) than the first or a prior kind of infallibility which is said to exist initially if we should refer to our prior and our different acts of human sensing and the terms or the content which belongs to these acts of sensing. In point of this first or this prior kind of infallibility: no act of sensing can exist without its term or an object that is sensed by us through the act in question. Act goes with term and term, with act. No seeing can exist apart from the presence of illuminating light and an experience of color, shape, and perspective that is revealed to us whenever light fills a given space to banish the presence of any darkness. No hearing can exist apart from the sounding of a sound which eventually will be heard if the sound that is sounding is sufficiently loud and audible.

Hence, in the initial givenness of sense data as this is given to us through our acts of human sensing as our fundamental point of departure for the species of cognitional movement which peculiarly belongs to us as human beings in the knowing that we can move towards (as we move from a kind of knowing which exists in sense and which would exist for us at the start as an *a priori* apprehension of otherness or as an *a priori* apprehension of being that is turned toward a later kind of knowing which would exist for us as an *a posteriori* apprehensions of being) – in all our acts of sensing, an infallibility can be arguably adverted to (a first kind of infallibility) and then, from there, we would move to a second kind of infallibility if we should refer to our direct acts of understanding and to the relation which exists between the utility of heuristic, suggestive images and the reception of acts of understanding which would exist for us as our direct acts of understanding. As we have been noting, absent the presence of a suggestive apt image; absent the presence of a suggestive apt image which would exist for us as a phantasm (not every image exists *per se* as a phantasm or apt image), then absent the presence or the experience of the direct act of understanding which would always come with it. Similarly too now, for our different and our prior acts of sensing: absent the presence of external stimuli which elicit or which activate in us a given act of sensing, then absent the operation or the actuality of a given act of sensing. In a vacuum, in the absence of any kind of stimulation and reception, then nothing of sense can ever occur or happen (there is no act) if we should want to speak about the possible actuation of our different acts of human sensing.

To avoid difficulties and any possible misinterpretations: by way of a qualification which needs to be adverted to in the light of skeptical objections that have been proposed at various times by various philosophers against the truth of an affirmation which would speak about the condition of undoubtedness or the likelihood of indefectibility in the context of our human sensing experience, it is to be noted that some arguments have been proposed to the effect that the indefectibility of our sense experience is not to be regarded as entirely certain or self-evident (existing, allegedly, for us as a conclusion or as a datum that we cannot question or doubt). In our experience of dreams for instance, within our experience of them, it is evident to us that our dreams exist as sensed data. So real are they. It is only later, with a shift of consciousness as this occurs through our entry into waking consciousness and through our subsequent evaluations and judgments, that a realization dawns on us to the effect that the content of a dream is not to be regarded as truly a datum of our sensing experience. A real distinction is to be adverted to even if this real distinction had not been initially experienced or sensed within the context of our

different acts of dreaming.

Similarly too, in our possible experience of apparitions and visions that would seem to point to the possibility of some kind of likely supernatural event and its likely supernatural origin, within the enjoyment or the givenness of this type of experience, it would be evident to all participants that the givens of their experience are to be regarded as sensed data. So real again is the experience. So obvious does it seem to be. Visions are seen; voices are heard and, for the persons in question who see certain things and who hear certain things, all denials would exist as a performative form of self-contradiction as we can find this, for instance, in the case of St. Joan of Arc who, in the end, could not deny hearing her “voices.” And so yet again, in all these cases, as with our dreams, through a change or a shift in our human consciousness and by means of later reflections and judgments, it is possible to speak about a content which is not to be simply equated with the kind of given which exists as sense data (sense data as the kind of object which is the proper correlative which belongs to all of our acts of human sensing).

Likewise too, it has been argued, from the viewpoint of another perspective, that some forms of sense data exist as misleading illusions. Physically, some illusions are caused by refractions of light which convey an image or an impression that does not refer to anything which, in fact, exists; the reference is to something which does not, in fact, exist. In some cases, a sensed image exists as a mirage. On the other hand also, as a hypothesis, it can be said or argued that other illusions exist because, extraordinarily, they are caused by mischievous spirits or by an intervening God who, for reasons of his own, chooses to place an image or a sound into a person's experience of them although, again, what is seen or what is heard could be lacking in any kind of objective reference as this objectivity is defined by criteria which would refer to the kind of fulfillment which exists with respect to our different acts of human sensing.

All these considerations accordingly point to degrees of caution which should be adverted to if we are to attend to our human acts of sensing and if we admit, as we must, that all perceptions vary in their content as we move from one person to another. What is perceived depends to some extent on the condition and the quality of the perceiver (the health and the posture of a given perceiver). As we move from sensing through understanding towards articulate concepts: if we should accordingly speak about the possibility of self-evidence and if we should claim that, in our acts of sensing, a form of self-evidence is operative, this claim is not itself self-evident (it is not self-evident in the same kind of way) because, in itself, the self-evidence is not an act of perception as this exists in our acts of sensing but, instead, it is a conclusion which comes to us from an act of self-understanding which has been finalized or which has been concluded to through a judgment that we have been able to make. Something is so for these reasons, whatever, within this given situation.

These truths aside however, in conjunction with a kind of self-evidence (and so a kind of indefectibility or a kind of certainty) which is grounded in our awareness of self as a self (in an awareness which knows about a form of interiority which belongs to us as individuals: we cannot doubt that we exist and that we are thinking about the meaning of our existence), the first kind of self-evidence, as this exists in our acts of sense, can be admitted if we should refer to a form of primitive, sure awareness which knows, through sense, that something exists which is other than ourselves (a something that we might not understand and know or a something that we have yet to understand and know). Whether, in fact, we speak about our acts of sensing or about the being of other acts as this exists in our dreams or visions of things, despite these classifications and the differences which exist among these classifications, our awareness of self in our experiences that is already given to us in our subjectivity is always tempered by an awareness which also knows, at the same time, that things exist which are not to be identified with who we happen to be as human beings. To reiterate: it is not that we know what these other things are or why they exist in the way that they do. This kind of understanding has yet to be given to us (if it can ever be given to us in an entirely satisfactory way). And yet, in our having an initial awareness of things that are somehow other than ourselves, we have a kind of self-evident knowing that cannot be truly doubted or denied, however we might want to speak about the fallibility of our acts of sense perception: a fallibility that can only be known in individual cases in this act or that act if precautions are taken and if prudent judgements are made about how we can test the truthfulness or the reliability of a given act of human sensing. To the degree that we can speak about fallibility as this could exist with respect to our acts of sense perception, the fallibility exists as but an exception to the truth of a general rule.

If thus, in a manner of speaking, we can then begin to refer to apprehensions of being or reality which would exist in a consequent or in a subsequent way (after the onset of our inquiries and questions which can lead us toward new apprehensions and toward new experiences of verification; we would have to speak here about *a posteriori* apprehensions of being), on the other hand however, the sense or the experience of otherness that is also given to us within the data of our consciousness of self is something which exists for us also as another point of departure or as also a species of *a priori*. Relative to our acts of inquiry and our later acts of understanding, we have the *a priori* of our outer sense of things that belongs to our different acts of sensing and also an *a priori* in terms of our inner sense of self that belongs to us in our consciousness (and also a connection which exists between the two since our acts of outer sense always suppose a prior inner sense of self which, in some way, must exist as a precondition; we must be conscious if, as subjects, we are to have and to retain an awareness of outer or external things that are initially given to us from our various acts of human sensing). The consciousness exists before we can advert to it in the wake of later acts of sense that can be given to us and in the wake of later acts of understanding which can be also given to us.

Depending then on the kinds of questions that we would like to ask and what we would like to choose as our best or as our most convenient point of departure, instead of beginning with a sense of external objects as this is given to us in our acts of sense, we can begin with our inner sense of self that is given to us through an initial form of self-evidence or an initial form of self-presence which also implicitly belongs to us in our consciousness as conscious human subjects and so, from it, from this consciousness or as we differentiate or analyze this consciousness into parts in our experience of it, if we choose to employ one species of language which has been used to speak about it, we can refer to *a priori* apprehensions of being that are given to us and also to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that are given to us in a manner which must reject a notion of subjectivity or a notion of consciousness which would want to claim or think that our human subjectivity is to be regarded as a self-enclosed kind of thing. It would allegedly exist in a self-enclosed kind of manner and so, on the basis of this errant assumption, through the conclusions and in the language of a philosophic form of solipsism, we would end up with a philosophy of cognition which would falsely have us argue that our knowledge of anything which exists outside of ourselves (outside of our minds) is entirely unsure and uncertain (it is not probable; it is not possible; it is not to be trusted and assumed) and so, from this, we would have to deny the being and the truth of an externally existing world that would be said by some to really and truly exist and so the possibility of our participating in the being of this world through the kind of knowing which properly belongs to us as human subjects.

These considerations aside thus, apart then from the grounding kind of self-evidence which exists in our consciousness of self and the kind of self-evidence which exists also in the primitive awarenesses of things that (for mysterious reasons) are other than ourselves (the kind of awareness that we initially have in our acts of sense and from which we can move toward the awareness which exists in our direct acts of understanding), if we should turn now to our reflective acts of understanding which exist as judgments, a difference can be found which points to a real distinction which exists between our acts of judgment, on the one hand, and our acts of sensing and our acts of direct understanding, on the other hand. Since the truthfulness of conclusions exists as a function of the available evidence that has been grasped and apprehended by us within a given context of thought and inquiry, the truthfulness of a given conclusion does not exist (it cannot exist) as a species of absolute which could be utterly lacking in any form of connection or dependence on the givenness and the fulfillment of conditions that would have to be attendant and present in some way. Hence, in these cases, the necessity of evidence (the necessity of apt and sufficient evidence) points to the possible being of restrictions that would exist within a given mass of evidence that would be available to us. Contingently existing absolutes or conditioned absolutes differ from the being and the reality of unrestricted absolutes if we should admit and acknowledge the fact that the manner of our human knowing differs from the kind of knowing that belongs to a being who has not to move through any kind of process or transition in order to move from a possible knowledge of things toward a true knowledge of the same things: moving from acts of sensing toward acts of understanding and then moving from acts of understanding back toward acts of sensing (hence, knowing according to a manner which would not be divine if, for divine knowing, no movement of any kind is needed that would have to move from acts of sensing toward acts of

understanding or from acts of understanding toward acts of sensing as this occurs for us in our judgments, according to the manner of our human cognition). The kind of rationality which belongs to us in our human judgments depends on the kind of evidence that we are grasping within a given context of inquiry and so, if we attend to our knowledge of conditions, we should notice (within the context of our self-experience and our self-understanding) that, in general, not all conditions are necessarily experienced or grasped by us at any given time and context although, on the other hand, yes, certainly, definitely, some conditions can be grasped by us within the experience that we are having of them. They can be known. Some can be adverted to. They can be experienced either as data within the content of our sensing experience or also as data within the experience that we are having of ourselves within our intellectual and rational consciousness of self. As possibly we have been noticing: the sureness which exists with respect to our knowledge of other things is conditioned or, more accurately, we would say that it is known by us in a way that avoids self-contradiction if our point of departure is the kind of evidence which belongs within us in the experience of self that we have in ourselves (whenever we experience our own acts and the terms which belong to our acts) and more so in light of the fact that this kind of data is more complete or it is more accessible to us that the kind of data that we are to associate with the givens that belong to our different acts of human sensing.

In any given case or incident thus, in our acts of judgment, through an immaterial kind of proceeding which exists within our consciousness of self, our knowledge and our experience of conditions and data is always pointing us toward the reasonableness of a conclusion that we would be drawing and affirming in the emergence (in the proceeding) of a new act of understanding which would exist for us as an act of reflective understanding (and not as an act of direct understanding). Through the experience that we could be having of a species of compulsion which exists as another species of intellectual necessity, the reasonableness that we could be experiencing in our apprehensions of evidence impels and it moves us in our judgment toward a conclusion, a decision, or a verdict which we cannot not draw or avoid. However, as we have been also suggesting and implying, our partial and our limited knowledge of conditions needs to be distinguished from an unrestricted knowledge of all the many conditions which could possibly exist for us in a given case (all the conditions which, ideally, we could possibly know, or the conditions that others could come to know about in the context of their own cognitive experience). An infallibility, a rightness, a security exists with respect to the conduct of our human cognition as this cognition moves into the deliberations of judgment; but, the infallibility or the security is partial and relative if we distinguish between limited or restricted judgments that, in some cases, we can make and which we do make and other judgments that could be lacking in any kind of restriction and limitation. In its own way, the requirements of evidence in judgment always point to why our judgments exist as a species of conditioned and why they do not exist as absolute absolutes. Restrictions always exist for us with respect to our acts of reflective understanding whenever, in some way, in a given case, new acts and data of sense are needed and whenever they are required in cases where again, in a given case, the meaning of a given predicate is other than that which is initially given to us with respect to the meaning of a given subject, synthetic judgments being other than that kind of judgment which exists as analytic judgments of being where, in analytical judgments, nothing is predicated about a subject in terms of how it could be related to something which could be other than the term or the meaning of a given subject. Within the context of our synthetic judgments, always, potentially, these judgments can exist as misjudgments despite

the experience of rationality that is given to us in our acts of reflective understanding where, here, the issue or the term of each act is always the proceeding of a reflective grasp of understanding in a judgment (a conclusion) that, in a given context, we are making or which we are seeking to grasp and to make if we should engage in the kind of inquiry that is peculiar to us in the reception of an act of understanding which would exist for us as an act of judgment.

Summing up and also by way of drawing a conclusion: in all our acts of cognition, the qualifications and distinctions which exist all point to where or how the reliability of our human cognition is to be known and acknowledged; and this same order of qualifications and distinctions also points toward an ordering of like qualifications and distinctions that must be drawn if we are to attend to the nature of our being (our human being) as, through our cognitive self-transcendence, we move from cognitional considerations and causes toward the kind of order which exists for us as we attend to the being of metaphysical considerations and the kind of causality or the kind of explanation which belongs to the aptness and the goodness of metaphysical considerations. The kind of knowing that we have points to the kind of being which we have (the knowing displays the being or it instances the being; it exists as a specification of being) and so, from the knowing that we have of our own being and of the being of other things, in the understanding of that we can have of this knowing and in our seeking to move toward a more complete understanding of how or why this knowing exists according to the form or the manner which belongs to it), we find that we must attend to another kind of priority which belongs to the being of metaphysical considerations and to how these exist as explanations (as causes) with respect to the being of our cognitional considerations. The being causes the knowing and so an understanding of our knowing supposes or it requires an understanding of our being as now we move from one species or order of understanding to another order of understanding that would encompass a larger number of variables.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Neil Ormerod, *Faith and Reason: The Possibility of a Christian Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), p. 126. As Ormerod states his argument and as he also refers to the kind of analysis that we find in Bernard Lonergan's *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, in our self-inquiry and self-reflection, we seek to understand something that belongs to being or something which exists in terms of its beingness or its reality although, in this instance, this being or the object that is to be understood is ourselves in terms of the nature and the intelligibility of our human cognition (its elements and parts and the relation which exists that joins these elements and parts with each other). However, this being said, through a process of extrapolation, the focus and the attention that is given to ourselves in this species or type of being points to what can be said in general about the nature of being *as being* or, more specifically and more accurately, the kind of being that is adequate or proportionate to the nature and to the activity of our human cognition. The kind of cognition that we have allows us to participate in being or it allows us to be in communion with that which exists as being (enhancing how it can be said that we belong to the being of other things) although, admittedly, in our speculations and in our thinking, we can suppose that, if we were to have another kind of cognition, a cognition which is to be regarded as an advance or as an improvement on what we presently have as human beings, then we would be able to assume and hold that it would lead us to a communion or to a relation with being that would be more intimate and more extensive than we have or can hope to have in our present life as human beings. Our relation to the being of other things would be more immediate and, possibly, in a way, no real distinction would

## Our being

These things being said thus, as we now begin to move from a cognitional form of analysis toward a metaphysical form of analysis and as we also work from an understanding of self which knows about how (in some sense, both as a cause and also as an effect) our cognition and our understanding exists with a degree of freedom and a degree of autonomy, in a self-assembling kind of way (doing this and doing that while receiving this and receiving that), then, on the basis of the kind of self-knowledge which we have of ourselves as cogitating, active, receptive, human knowers, we can begin to move from this initial point of departure toward conceptions which can now begin to speak about how our cognition exists as perhaps more of an effect and less as a cause (or as merely or simply a cause). Prior to our cognition and as the condition of our cognition, the being of something other exists and this is an other that should be alluded to if our object is an understanding of things which can attend to a larger number of variables that can be possibly known. An incomplete type of understanding is not an understanding that, in the end, we can be happy with.

In the kind of causality which accordingly belongs to our cognition in terms of how it functions to produce effects within the order of our understandings and our apprehensions (as this kind of knowing moves from our acts of sensing through our acts of inquiry toward our acts of understanding toward an apprehension of something which is understood), an overemphasis on the autonomy and on the causality of our cognition tends to obscure or to blind us from a larger understanding and conception of things which can begin to know about how our cognitive causality exists also or, in fact, *as primarily an effect*, existing at the same time thus as both a cause and an effect but existing more fully and more properly as an effect rather than as a cause if, in our analysis, we should search for an ordering of causes which transcends not only the kind of being which belongs to us with respect the being and the operations of our human cognition but also the existence of any causes and conditions which would be existing at an even lower level as conjugates that belong to determinations that are joined to configurations of space and time. The causality of a given cause within an order of contingently existing things does not detract from how it can exist more primarily as an effect if a wider understanding of things is attended to and appreciated and if, to some extent, this understanding is grasped and known by us within the context of our inquiry as we turn now toward a kind of priority which belongs to the being of already existing things, relative to an ordering of things which exist as possibilities or potencies: in this case, potencies which would refer to the potency of our human cognition (whether we should refer to active potencies as these exist in our acts in the questions that we are asking, or passive potencies as these exist in acts of understanding which we already have as a given or in acts of understanding which can be given to us as receptions, at a later date and time and in a manner which escapes any kind of complete control that we would want to exercise on our part in the conduct of our cognition). Certain things exist only if they are brought into an order of being through a condition or an operation or a movement which exists as a species of being that acts on something else as an other where the something else as

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exist between the order of being and the order of our cognition (although, in such a situation, we would cease to exist with the kind of humanity which typifies us as human beings and which properly belongs to us as human beings). To change the nature of our cognition is to change the nature of our humanity and the humanity that we currently have would be lost.

an other exists as something that is acted upon. An acting from without effects an acting from within (in terms of cause and effect); or, in other words, a transcendent act, an immanent act.

For an example and an understanding which can reveal how, in its own right, a cause can exist as a cause and how, yet, it can exist more primarily and principally as an effect, we can look more closely at how, in the context of studies about the Protestant Reformation, we can distinguish between two rival theories of causality.<sup>44</sup>

On the one hand, Luther had borrowed and he had adopted a theory of causality that he had taken from the earlier theology of Gabriel Biel (d. 1495): a causality which thinks in terms of concurrence where two causes or two events occur at the same time. God does one thing and the Church or the priests do another. But, on the other hand, in the context of commonly accepted teachings which were held by Catholics within the life of the Catholic Church, Luther's interlocutor, Thomas Cardinal Cajetan, had argued against this notion of causality. He cited Aquinas to the effect that causalities relate to each other within an order of conditioning influence and effect if, on the one hand, primary causes are to be admitted in terms of how they exist as primary or as first causes and if, also, secondary causes are to be admitted in terms of the kind of causality which properly belongs to them. Relative to the being of primary causes, lesser causes (all secondary causes) exist as instrumental causes (or, in other words, as caused causes).<sup>45</sup> In their causality, they exist as means, as tools, and so, in their own way, as both effects and causes where, in the simultaneity of operation, the cause exists in the effect and the effect exists as a cause. *Actio est in passo* ["action is in the recipient"].<sup>46</sup> The primary cause exists in the secondary cause in a relation of dependence (in the dependent dependency of a secondary cause) where "A [as primary cause] operates by moving B and B [as secondary cause] cooperates by being moved."<sup>47</sup> No essential tension needs to be stipulated or assumed with respect to the action and the being of primary causes (the primary causality of God) and the action and the being of secondary causes (the secondary kind of causality which, for instance, is to be ascribed to the conduct of our human behavior and so, if or as we move from a general case to a

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44Charles Morerod, *Ecumenism and Philosophy: Philosophical Questions for a Renewal of Dialogue*, trans. Therese C. Scarpelli (Ann Arbor: MI, Sapientia Press, 2006), pp. 59-79.

45Aquinas, as cited by Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 88.

46Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 264, as cited by Joseph C. Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning: Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2014), p. 118.

47Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning*, p. 118. See also Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 68.

particular case: to the experience of our understanding and the conduct of our inquiries which could lead us to the experience and the reception of our understanding). Primary and secondary causes can be fully operative in each their own way (if they are seen to exist at different levels and because they exist at different levels) and so one type of cause does not have to infringe or detract from the other. Each helps or serves the other. The operation or the complete functioning of a secondary cause, in its cooperation, does not have to lessen or to take away from the kind of causality which belongs to a greater, primary cause and the power and full functioning of a primary cause does not have to lessen or to take away from the power, the causality, the cooperation of lesser, secondary causes. To the contrary in fact: the kind of power which exists in a secondary cause can be understood in a way which points to the greater kind of power which exists with respect to the being of a primary cause. A secondary cause enjoys the agency which it has or it is given an agency which properly belongs to it and the creation and the coordination of very many secondary causes points to the greater power and the greater kind of authority which belongs to the being of a primary cause. The immanence of secondary causes points to the transcendence of a primary cause and the attribution of transcendence to causes immediately points to the being of secondary causes.

In a hierarchal order of things or within a larger conception of things which accordingly points to a hierarchal order of things - if this order is grasped by us within our thinking and understanding - it is able to understand how, in the relations which exist among many different causes and how also, in conjunction with causes that would seem to fail in the manner of their conduct and operation, a grand scheme of things exists where, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, nothing exists in our world in a way that is not being used in some way to achieve a greater good that only God fully understands and knows and administers through the infinite kind of understanding and knowledge that alone belongs to God and which is constitutive of the very being of God in the manner of his being and existence. A simplistic understanding of things or a lack of depth in the extent of our possible understanding of things probably best explains why, easily, we can believe or assume that, necessarily, some kind of tension or opposition would always have to exist between the operation of primary and secondary causes. If the power of a primary cause is truly great, then, why should we have secondary causes? Why acknowledge their being and influence? And then too, if the power of a secondary cause is truly great, then how less must be the influence and the power of a primary cause. Why speak about an ordering of primary and secondary causes?

However, for us, if we should try to think these two kinds of causes together in a way which can fully acknowledge the reality of both primary and secondary causes, a nuanced and a subtle understanding of things can begin to emerge for us and it would be required of us if we are to understand how these two kind of causes can exist together in a complementary way: in a way which points to a kind of mutual reinforcement which exists where, here, the power or the authority of one type of cause would point to the power and the authority of the

other kind of cause, vice versa. Simply put in a way which points to the truth (or the reasonableness) of this thesis: through a kind of analogy that we can use if we are to move toward an understanding of divine things, amongst us as human beings, as secondary causes, we best function as effective productive causes if, consciously and deliberately, we try to coordinate and to cooperate with the being of other operative causes. At one level, we work with other secondary causes in order to achieve a greater number of effects or effects that are more wonderful and powerful. The more we empower and inspire other persons in the kind of work that we do and in the causality that they themselves do and apply, the greater or the more wonderful is the causality that belongs to us in the kind of work that we are doing. Each helps the other.

Turning now to the greatest causality of all (to the kind of causality which alone belongs to God), with respect to our secondary causality, we best achieve results and effects if, freely and consciously, we try to work with the causality which belongs to God where, in God, in his transcendence, a causality exists which exists only as a cause and never as an effect. The unrestricted kind of causality which alone belongs to God points to how God exists as an almighty, unrestricted act of understanding and so, if we should turn ourselves toward this almighty, unrestricted act of understanding and if we should seek it and love it and yearn for it, we immediately create conditions that touch us in our individual causality through a sharing that can begin to exist between ourselves (in our limited understanding) and the kind of understanding which alone exists in God and which, in fact, exists as God. No kind of union with God can exist apart from some kind of union or communion that would exist between ourselves in our understanding and God in terms of how he exists as an unrestricted act of understanding who, in this unrestrictedness, exists as an unrestricted act of willing and as an unrestricted act of desiring and loving. Our understanding receives a kind of increase or a kind of elevation which makes it possible for us that, in the context of our individual moral lives, we can engage in acts and actions that, before, had not been thought possible or likely. The more fully we join ourselves to the causality of God, the fuller or the greater becomes our own causality as we achieve results and effects that cannot be otherwise attained or achieved. God begins more fully to act within ourselves and our human living becomes a greater thing as, more fully, God lives and exists within ourselves as his humble servants.

Simply put (as a first but negative point that we would want to suppose and reiterate) as we move from a consideration of cognitional conditions to a consideration of metaphysical conditions: the quality of our human cognitive subjectivity is such that it does not exist essentially as a function, as a product, or as an effect of material causes which would exist as external conditions that are invested with qualities which belong to the properties and attributes of space and time (despite a proper role which belongs to the play of external material conditions). As we know on the basis of our own experience, apprehensions which exist in our acts of sense do not simply produce apprehensions which exist within our acts of understanding (this type of mechanism, this kind of physicalism is to be excluded) even if we can properly argue and admit that, in their arresting suggestive influence or in a material way, our acts and

data of sense elicit acts which emerge as questions, suppositions, and inquiries which could then possibly lead us toward the possible reception of an order of cognitive acts which would exist for us as our acts of understanding.

Hence, if we attend to the progress and the perfection of our cognitive activities (as, in its own way, in a relative sense, our cognition moves from a condition of potency toward a condition of act), if we are to account for the being or the causation of these activities and receptions as we move from an understanding of cognition as an effect toward an understanding of cognition in terms of its likely or probable causes, we must advert to a higher order of reasons, a higher order of considerations or, in other words, a higher order of being which exists in terms of principal causes (a higher or a transcendent order of reasons, considerations, and causes) which, as higher and transcendent, would have to exist in an immaterial way as realities (apart from any kind of participation or immanent union that they could have with us, especially with respect to the being of material things). The givenness of the immateriality in question (as this exists for us within our acts of cognition as a species of effect, our acts of understanding existing here as immaterial receptions and not as immaterial activities) – this immateriality, for its explanation, immediately supposes or it points to a higher order of immaterial things: an order of causes which transcends the being of every kind of corporeal material cause and condition (whatever the kind and type) and which would also transcend the created or the contingent kind of immateriality which also belongs to us within our acts of cognition and the kind of experience that is given to us within our human cognition in terms that refer to our received acts of understanding. We remember that, before we can get or move toward an act of understanding that could be given to us, a question is asked and it is posed as a kind of effect or response since its proximate source and cause is the actuality of our curiosity which, in its being, does not exist as a material thing. As Socrates had taught: “Wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins with wonder.”<sup>48</sup> Our wonder, our curiosity does not exist as an act of sensing and it does not exist as a term which comes from an act of sensing or which belongs to an act of sensing unless, later, materially, a question is put into communicable words that can be apprehended in a manner which points to an instrumentality which belongs to our acts of human sensing and to the kind of functioning which exists within these same acts. The immaterial precedes the material in terms of how it exists as a species of prior condition.

The immateriality which accordingly exists with respect to the being of higher, explanatory causes accordingly points to an immateriality which, in some fashion, extends itself down to us into the being of our concrete human lives: an immateriality which moves into the kind of immateriality which emerges and which presents itself to us within all the consequent effects which exist within us and from us (both within the contingent manner of our human knowing, despite its contingency, and also within the contingent manner of our human being and living)<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Socrates, *Symposium*, Jowett translation, (Oxford, 1871), as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup>For an illustrative interpretation about how we can think about the being of such a downward movement (apart from an explicit reference to religion and the purpose or instrumentality of revelation) and how we can speak about it in terms that would move into the articulation and the presentation of a metaphysics, see how we can adapt arguments which have come to us originally from the neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus in the context of his

and so, from these associations and correspondences, we can understand why, by a kind of participation and communion (hence, by a kind of cooperation and through forms of self-questioning which are elicited from us and which yet belong to us in the manner of our human knowing), our cognition (in its transcendental) is something which exists as a self-transcendent, self-transcending kind of thing (or as a self-transcending kind of power, or as a self-transcending kind of orientation, direction, or movement). Necessarily, our acts and potencies exist together. We experience, on the one hand, a sense that our cognition does not exist as a totally passive, inert type of thing (hence, it does not exist as an essentially passive, inert kind of thing). We exist in our own right as cognitive agents (as active, cognitive subjects). But also, on the other hand, through our self-reflection and analysis, as we move

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own day and time.

If, as a metaphysical or as a transcendental principle, our human knowing exists as a *function* of our human being (the kind of being which we happen to have in how we exist as human beings), the immateriality of our cognition (in its attempt to move from an experience of multiplicity in sense toward an experience of unity in understanding) and also the indefectibility of our human knowing can be explained or it can be traced to its legitimate grounding basis if we were to claim and argue that, as human beings, we exist as fragments of an uncreated supreme principle which exists as an unclassifiable, undifferentiated, ultimate Unity (an indefinable supreme One, as Plotinus speaks about this one through the conceptuality which he uses). Our souls, in their immateriality and in their transcendence, cannot be conceived in terms of how we would think and how we would speak about the being of material things. Hence, in terms of their being, they exist or they must exist because they are emanated or because how they have been emanated from some transcendent source. They come, they proceed, and they belong to a greater, larger thing which exists in a non-contingent, uncreated way and so, as we move into the order and the context of our individual human knowing (as this knowing enters into the quality and the performance of our individual human lives), we are saved (or we are enlightened or we are brought into a higher form of life and being) as soon as we simply realize who and what we are as human beings. Our metaphysical knowledge (our self-knowledge) is salvific in terms of its nature and outcome. Because we exist as parts or as fragments of something that is not lacking in any kind of perfection, the kind of perfection which properly belongs to the indefinable, unknown One cannot differ from the kind of perfection which properly belongs to us although, admittedly, in our world or in the context of our present life, we exist in a distributed, fragmented way as human beings. Consequently: a transcendence and an indefectibility exists with respect to the manner of our human knowing (this transcendence and this indefectibility exists within us) and, at the same time too, this transcendence and this indefectibility surpasses or it transcends the restricted kind of transcendence and the restricted kind of indefectibility which also belongs to us as human beings if, with Plotinus, we admit and argue that, within the experience of the transcendence that exists within us, we find agreement and identity and, at the same time, distinction, separation, and difference. The transcendence of the One transcends the degree of our human participation in it and this difference points to how this transcendence can exist within us in an individual, idiosyncratic way (with degrees of limitation) despite, at the same time, enjoying a quality of sameness and identity which points to how everything exists together within the unbounded being of an originating, common source (cited by Plotinus as “the One”). The existence of limitations is explained by an unhappy, unsuitable, unnatural relation with material

from a cognitional kind of knowledge toward a metaphysical kind of knowledge, from a cognitional kind of self-knowledge toward a metaphysical kind of self-knowledge, we experience a sense too that, in the potency of our cognition (as in all potencies), our cognition is not able to move or to change itself. It cannot effect or realize a condition which would have us move from an initial condition of potency toward a later condition of act (from an absence of being or from a condition of nothingness toward an existence of beings or, in other words, toward an experience of understanding and knowledge which can reveal the being of a thing or the enjoyment of a thing - in its intelligibility - for perhaps the first time). Potencies as potencies differ from acts in a radical way because they cannot bring themselves into a condition of act which would eliminate how, in fact, a potency exists as a potency. Hence, no potency can be known apart from the being of some type of act.

Transcending the being of material conditions (although existing at times within the givenness of many material conditions), from an activity or a movement which exists from within the order of our cognition (through a movement, as an active potency, which is always seeking to move toward realities that emerge with a degree of fullness and being that can never be adequately measured in terms which belong to material coordinates), in supposing that this activity of ours exists as more an effect and less as a cause (since, in the manner of our human being and living, we do not create this cognitive activity *ex nihilo* ["out of nothing"] although, through our decisions, we can nourish this activity and we can encourage it even if we can deny it and starve it), it follows from all this that the immateriality which exists within the cognitive effects which exist within us as our understanding of things - in terms of its immateriality - these cognitive effects exist as created, contingent things which, in their contingency and createdness, would have to point us to a like and yet, at the same time, a greater or a different kind of immateriality which would have to exist as its likely, probable cause (its sufficient explanation). The immateriality of our understanding points to an as yet unknown immaterial principle (that we would want to understand and know) although, in transcending the variability which belongs to material conditions and in also transcending the variability which belongs to our contingent, created, received acts of understanding that are given to us, the transcendence that we experience within us (if it is to be properly explained) in turn suggests that we need to attend to a principle which would have to exist in a way that is lacking in any kind of contingency if the proffered explanation is itself not subject to change in any kind of fundamental way (and so be lacking in any kind of contingency). It would have to exist as some kind of constant: it can never be changed, ignored, or discarded (given the lesser influence and the lesser kind of power which belongs to the being and the mechanism of material causes and also the lesser influence and the lesser kind of power which belongs to immaterial causes if we should refer to our own acts of understanding and how they exist in a contingent, created, received way). We discover, within the ups and downs of our subjectivity (in both our sensing and our understanding) that something other and permanent is to be

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conditions where, in the Platonic conception of things, it is said that our souls are entombed or they are imprisoned with the being of our bodies which exist as material things (having only a material form of determination). We are liberated by how, within the circumstances of our current life and despite the limitations which exist within circumstances, we can yet find ways that will turn our souls and which will join our souls toward the being of immaterial, transcendent things. Our union with higher things grows through our knowledge of these higher things as this emerges within the depths of our self-understanding.

attended to as a primary effective cause and, in some way, it is to be identified and known in terms of how it exists with respect to the kind of causality which properly belongs to it in terms of how it exists and lives.

In each of us thus although, *in an individual idiosyncratic way*,<sup>50</sup> something unvarying and constant exists (as much as it engages us in our subjectivity and as much as it works with the being and the flow of many external temporal conditions, whether the givens of sense or the givens of our individual understanding in terms of its different occurrences). Its transcendence to some extent, in each of us, explains the orientation and the transcendence of our cognition in all of its various operations and so, in this transcendence or by this transcendence which exists

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<sup>50</sup>For a fuller understanding of this question in a way which reduces the possibility or the presence of any ambiguity, see the arguments of Aquinas in his treatise, *On the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists*. If the transcendence of an inner principle is understood in a way which denies its individuality or how it exists as a created kind of transcendent thing within the life of individual human beings (relative to the being of individual persons), then it can lead us to an understanding of it which would want to argue that it enjoys a unity or a oneness which transcends the being or the oneness of individual human persons in a way which points to separation and division. If we should use a traditional way of speaking which comes to us from the conceptuality of Aristotle's philosophy in order to delineate and to state the tenets of a proffered Averroist thesis (which Aquinas questions, argues against, and rejects): as human beings, we are all endowed with passive intellects (each of us has a passive intellect, a passive or a possible form of understanding which exists as a potency within us); but, on the other hand also, if we are to move from the particular kind of knowledge which exists in sense toward the universal kind of knowledge which exists in understanding, the active or the agent intellect is something which must exist outside of ourselves (it is beyond us or it is other than ourselves given our passivity) and, when it is active or to the degree that it exists as a transcendent cause, we are its recipients and its beneficiaries (although in a way which admittedly varies from person to person when we notice that some persons have an understanding of things which surpasses the understanding of other persons). In any case, despite these differences, our human understanding presents itself to us in a way which suggests that it exists in us as a borrowed kind of thing. It comes to us from another agent (and not from ourselves) because its source is a subject or a person who exists more fully as an understanding, knowing being or, in other words, as an Agent Intellect that is entirely in a condition of act and which is entirely lacking in having any kind of passivity or potency. As a consequence thus: it is not we who properly understand anything at all or it is not we who do any kind of understanding which is strictly our own in an individual sense since, in some way, a transcendent active agent intellect is understanding within us (it is present in varying, differing degrees within us as we move from person to person or from individual to individual). Despite these differences or amid all these differences, only one eternal understanding subject can be said to properly exist and not a plurality of understanding subjects. Cf. Peter Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 190-193.

Within the framework of this kind of thinking, if our acts of understanding are not entirely our own, a number of consequences follow. First, we cannot assume or take any kind of responsibility for the acts of understanding which we could be having and so, if we have not to take any responsibility for the acts of understanding that we could be enjoying, in the same

within each of us in an individual way (as a greater or lesser thing, relative to how each person exists with a unique subjectivity), we come to a mode of being or we encounter a mode of being which points to a hiddenness or an internality which belongs to the manner of its presence or how, in fact, it is given to us. The internality is foundational in terms of how, interiorly, it allows us to stand apart from the being of every other kind of existing thing. Although it is related to the being of external conditions and although it experiences the being and the impact of external conditions (a knowledge of external conditions implies an experience of these conditions within itself), yet, in its otherness or in its transcendence, it cannot be governed or ruled through the application and the impact of external conditions as these can be given to us and which are communicated to us in terms which belong to the being

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vein then, when we turn to ethical considerations and to the manner of our human living, as a second consequence, we have not to take any responsibility for the acts of willing and the doing that could possibly exist for us in the wake of the acts of understanding which we could be enjoying and experiencing. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, "Preface," *On the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists*, trans. Beatrice H. Zedler (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), p. xi, citing William of Tocco, an early biographer of St. Thomas Aquinas. As a case in point that was mentioned by William of Tocco: in Paris, a soldier was claiming or arguing that we have not to repent for any wrongs or sins that, allegedly, we have committed since lack of responsibility on our part in our understanding points to a consequent lack of fault in our acts of willing and doing and so, as a further and third consequence, an absence of sin in our acts of willing and doing. If, as human beings, we are to be saved, if we are to be redeemed, then this happens apart from any kind of personal involvement on our part. Our salvation is given to us or it is imputed to us.

In another way of speaking which touches on the point or the gist of this Averroist thesis, a created type of transcendence (in terms of transcendence) cannot be said to belong to us or to exist within us as part of the fabric of our being (in its contingency): a transcendence which would exist as an imperfect kind of participation although, in some way, it participates in the being of higher transcendent things (if, in fact, it is what it is as a created, transcendent thing). As a general principle, it is admitted that an effect, as an effect, is related to its cause and, in some way, it points to its cause. In some way, as an effect, it participates in that which exists as its originating cause. In this context thus (if we should speak about the being of a created, transcendent thing), then, it is implied and it is suggested that some other things exist in an utterly transcendent manner. They have no beginning or end while, on the other hand, other things exist which are transcendent in a limited or lesser way. On the one hand thus, these lesser things have no end or term; they exist in an eternal way; they cannot be destroyed (if, truly, they are transcendent). But, on the other hand also, they have been created. At some time or point, they have been brought into a condition of being in a transition which has moved from a condition of potency to a condition of act. The transcendence exists as a created thing and this transcendence belongs to each of us as individual human beings. Its individuality explains why, in some ways, it varies among us and why it differs as we move from person to person although these differences can never be used as a basis for arguing against the being of a greater type of transcendence which would exist in an unrestricted, uncreated way. To the contrary, the experience of variability points to the need for some kind of explanation that can transcend the being of any kind of contingency and the variety which always exists in contingency. Always, within our understanding, as we move in our understanding, as we

of spatial and temporal conjugates nor, consequently, can it be governed or ruled by any acts of understanding which could be coming to us (in various ways, through the mediation of our acts of sense and the experience of external conditions) from the kind of understanding that belongs to all of us as human beings.

Hence, as, increasingly, we shift into a metaphysical type of reasoning and reflection and then, from there (subsequently), for purposes of further explanation, as we later move toward a higher kind of thinking which would exist within the parameters and the articulation of a theology (as, for instance, we find this within the kind of theological teaching which initially comes to us from the influence of St. Augustine in his thoughts and reflections with respect to the kind of being and the kind of freedom which properly belongs to us as human beings), a metaphysical understanding of the conditions which account for the kind of knowing which belongs to us as human beings necessarily leads us toward our possibly postulating a species of cause or reason which is to be identified with an ultimate ground that is basic for the actuation of our cognitive activities or which would exist ultimately as a greater, greatest transcendental object and subject (it would be active in its own way, in its objective subjectivity, although it would radically differ from the kind of subjectivity which properly belongs to us through the kind of apprehension which exists within us within the actuation of our intellectual life).

Hence, accordingly, as we move toward an understanding which can begin to know about the being or the nature of this higher highest cause, we can begin or suppose that we should refer to the being of an immaterial principle which, heuristically, we can conceptualize in terms which can speak about how, for instance, it exists as a soul. If, in solving a problem in algebra, we say that “x” designates a known unknown whose value we would like to find and determine through our operations and the gathering of information here and there, in a similar way, we can refer or say that the “soul” refers to the being of an immaterial principle that we have yet to understand and know. Where a body or where matter refers to the givenness of a material principle that is sensed in some way (although it is not understood); the soul refers to an immaterial principle that is understood or which is postulated in the hope that, possibly, we can move toward a proper or an adequate understanding of it.

In terms of arguments and a train of thought, as we move from point to point, we can begin with an Aristotelian kind of understanding which points to how the soul exists as both an active and a passive subject of different acts. In our thinking and questioning, yes, we exist as actors (we exist as agents, as performers, as subjects, as doers). We can think about whatever we would like to think about. No restrictions exist. But, in our understanding, we exist as pilgrims, as recipients, or as patients since no amount of thinking is able to produce any of our desired acts of understanding. The understanding comes when we might not be expecting it even as we admit to ourselves (and others) that our questions are to be regarded as a species of catalyst (as a species of efficient cause or as an operative potency or active potency that is

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advance in our understanding, growing in our understanding, we are always moving away from something which exists in some kind of variable way in order to move toward something that would exist in an invariant way, without any kind of limitation. A finality exists in our understanding to the degree that our lesser understanding exists for the sake of a greater or greatest understanding which, in some way, exists though we know nothing about the manner, the form, or the intelligibility of the existence.

provisionally necessary since, without them, we might not begin to move toward the possible reception of a desired, given act of understanding and, in some cases, we cannot begin to move toward the possible reception of an act of understanding which would be desired and sought). Apart from our questions and our having of questions, we might not be open to receiving acts of understanding that we need or which, ideally, we would like to have and enjoy. Questions point to the relevance of acts of understanding which can be possibly given to us and, in an initial way, they indicate the identity of a given act of understanding that, in some way, we need to receive.

But, if our active passivity or if the active potency which exists in our inquiry points to a lack of sufficiency in us and to a contingency that belongs to us in the context of our understanding, we can move toward an immaterial principle that is fully active if we can think about how our cognition would exist or how it could possibly exist if we can take the receptive side of things which exists in us or the active and the passive potency which exists in us and then put these into a reflection where, from our active potency, we subtract all potential aspects. Through this kind of abstraction and separation thus, a conceivable immaterial principle emerges as a species of workable, thinkable thing: one which is entirely active and pure. There is nothing potential about it (nothing potential exists within it) and, as soon as we begin to think about this kind of principle, we immediately move or we fall back upon a notion or a meaning for soul which derives from earlier Platonic roots about the nature of a soul as an instigator of movement. In this context, a soul exists as a purely active principle and subject and its movements immediately effect changes in the passivity and in the givenness of material conditions (as these exist, wherever, in terms of both the being and also the creation of new material conditions from any prior absences of being). Nothing prevents a purely active immaterial principle from introducing immaterial conditions into a given set of material conditions to replace an order of things or to introduce a new order of things that had not existed before within a conglomeration of material conditions, effecting changes of one kind or another in a way which leads to a reordering of material conditions.

In other words, immaterial intellectual movements create conditions that can lead to a series of many changes or many movements that can effect many changes within the being of our externally existing material world. In Plato's understanding of the soul in the way that he derives it, according to the manner of his reflection (through the kind of simple contrast that he makes between a soul and its body), the body or a material substratum is moved (it exists initially as a potency until it is brought into some condition of act) and, apart from the body that is moved, "the soul moves itself."<sup>51</sup> It governs itself. It is not moved by another. And so, as we think about the primacy of a transcendent, independent form of self-movement and how, with Plato's notion of the soul, we can have an identifiable active immaterial principle that can effect changes in anything which exists as a passive principle, in this notion of soul thus we have the notion and the being of a purely transcendent immaterial cause which exists as a disembodied, separate soul and which exists also within a condition of complete or perfect act. From a differentiated notion of soul that belongs to us in how we happen to exist and live, we

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<sup>51</sup>Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c-e; Josef Pieper, *Leisure The Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), pp. 14-18; William E. Murnion, "Aquinas and Maritain on the Act of Understanding," *The Lonergan Review: The Journal of the Bernard J. Lonergan Institute* 4 no. 1 (2013): 54-55; 57.

can then move toward a monistic notion of soul or to an undifferentiated, simple notion of soul which does not consist of any parts or pieces since, here, no real distinctions of any kind exist to distinguish between the being of any parts or elements that we can possibly imagine or think about. The transcendence distances itself from any kind or condition of plurality and absolute transcendence can only be spoken in terms which have to refer to some kind of absolute oneness, ipseity, and unity that is not to be confused or compared with anything else since the condition of transcendence is such that it transcends the being of every other kind of thing.

By way of employing a point of contrast and by way of using a later kind of conceptuality that is given to us with the history of later reflection: with respect to our acts of human sensing, through the givenness of our corporality or through the givenness of our materiality, as sensing beings, we have our different acts of human sensing. In our materiality, we exist as living, sensing bodies. We exist as corporeal, sensing subjects. In this context, body and subject go together: body as a material, metaphysical principle and subject as a psychological or cognitional principle where, here, a subject exist as an empirical subject, as a subject of its acts of sense. However, in turning toward our acts of intellection as these exist within our different acts of inquiry, understanding, and judgment, their immateriality points to causes or to a first principle for them which would have to be identified with the being of an immaterial type of reality or the being of an immaterial type of subjectivity (as opposed to a material, a physical, or a mechanical type of subjectivity): we refer to a subjectivity which we encounter and which we find within ourselves as soon as we move from the being of our sensing bodies (which we all have as living human beings) toward the being of a thinking thing or the being of a thinking power (variously named as a thinking substance, a thinking subject, a thinking agency, a thinking mind, or a thinking intellect) which can be distinguished in words which have traditionally referred to it as the being or as the subjectivity of an immaterial rational soul which exists within us within our experience of self:<sup>52</sup> a soul which, for us, exists as both an

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<sup>52</sup>Please note that the rational soul of a human being is to be distinguished from other kinds of soul that belong to other kinds of living things. One type or kind of soul (as a postulation or explanation) goes with a given type of movement or action (we can refer, for instance, to transitive movements or transitive actions and a soul which accounts for a certain type of transitive movement) and, at the same time too, another type or kind of soul which goes with a species of reception or a species of passivity (as we have this with respect to certain intransitive movements or certain intransitive actions). Hence, one kind of soul accounts for movements and receptions which exist as intelligible actions although not for movements and receptions which would exist as intelligent actions or as intelligent acts: as causes, as producers, as originators, or as generators of an emanating kind of intelligibility which, for us (in our human condition), would emerge in the wake of receptions of understanding which exist in their own right as intelligent acts (as acts of intelligence which belongs to us and which exist at the origin of our experience of meaning and intelligibility). These acts discover and come upon the existence of possible intelligibilities which exist within things and, as needed and as desired, they can introduce a measure of intelligibility into a given context (where no intelligibility has existed before or where lesser degrees of intelligibility have existed up until a certain time), and so they can create an order that can be experienced and judged in a way which points to its appropriateness, its rightness or fitness, and so to its rationality and reasonableness. The intelligibility of things in our world (as an immaterial thing) suggests and it points to a likely source or to a likely cause which would have to exist as a species of higher,

active and a receptive center of cognitive activity (according to Aristotelian notions and conceptions of it) and so it would be existing as a center for our doing in all of our questioning and thinking and it would also exist as a center for our receiving in all of our different acts of understanding and judging. In the questioning and in the understanding that, mentally or intellectually, we participate in, our brains function as part of our bodies. They are apprehended by us through our acts of sensing although they are not understood by us through our acts of sensing since, instead, through later acts of understanding, we discover that they exist as fit means or as fit instruments for the sake of our possibly moving toward our desired acts of understanding. They exist in a way which points to how an intelligible order of things is joined with an empirical order of things and in a way which also points to the kind of brains that we happen to have as human beings and how they exist for us as a material cause or as a material substratum.<sup>53</sup>

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intervening cause or as a species of communication and manifestation which points to how it exists as a species of imputing act: from an act of understanding comes an intelligibility which goes out to exist in other things or in other conditions, or an intelligibility which is brought into conditions and circumstances that had been lacking in measures of meaning and intelligibility. The intelligibility of things (as an effect) points to intelligences which belong to the being of other things or to how, in some way, intelligences exist in their own right as existing things, as causes (where, in all cases and with a degree of necessity, we must distinguish between the intelligibility which exists in things and how, on the other hand, intelligence exists as another kind of power or thing where, by these means, we can realize and know that intelligence exists as a greater, more wonderful, different type of thing: as a cause, it introduces distinctions and differences in a reasonable and rational way and it is oriented toward outcomes which would exist as proper effects). Simply put: intelligibility exists as an effect; intelligence, as a cause, a catalyst, or broker.

<sup>53</sup>See Mortimer Adler, *Intellect: Mind Over Matter* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 56-57, where he argues that “no inconsistency” exists between admitting that the human brain functions as a necessary condition for the being and the life of our human understanding and admitting that, to our brains, a lack of sufficiency is to be attributed since, by means or through our acts of understanding, we come to know about beings and realities that have an immaterial nature and we come to know about immaterial conditions of one kind or another which must also exist (apart from material kinds of being and material conditions which would belong to the life and the functioning of our human brains). Our minds differ from our brains as the asking of a question differs from an experience of sense data if, by adverting to our minds (our understanding), we refer to the origins of one kind of act (an immaterial kind of act) and if, by adverting to our bodies, we refer to the origin of another kind of act (as much as we might not understand, in a fully explanatory satisfactory way, what a body is or what a mind is). Technically speaking, we sense our bodies but not our minds nor, in other words, our acts of understanding although, on the other hand, we experience our minds or we experience our understanding through another kind of awareness which is other than the given of our sensing consciousness. A real difference in consciousness points to a real difference in both subject and object (our empirical consciousness versus our intellectual consciousness) and so to the truth of an understanding and an affirmation which says that brains differ from minds in terms that refer to the appropriateness of a real distinction. No brain understands but, instead, it is we who understand, using that which exists as our brains. Cf. Roy Abraham Varghese, “The ‘New Atheism’: A Critical Appraisal of Dawkins, Dennett, Wolpert, Harris, and Stenger,” in Anthony

In conjunction thus with our acts of understanding, the soul that we have, in its rationality and because of its rationality, at the same time, it exists for us as a center or as a principle for the later emergence of another order of things which refers to our moral human activity. The mode of emergence points to how we can move from our experience and our growth in cognitive understanding toward a way of living that is specifically ethical and moral, the passing or the infusion of rationality into the manner of our human living effecting changes by converting our human living into something which exists as an ethical and moral kind of thing (perhaps, in some cases, ethical and moral for the first time; or perhaps, in some cases or in most cases, ethical and moral to a larger and a greater extent than what had been thought possible before).

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Flew, *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), p. 178; Robert Spitzer, *The Soul's Upward Yearning: Clues to Our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), p. 177.

If, articulately, we should want to think and speak about the specific role of the human brain (as this would differ from any other kind of brain), we can admit that “the exercise of our power of conceptual thought as human beings] depends on the exercise of our powers of perception, memory, and imagination, which are corporeal powers [that are] embodied in our sense-organs and brain.” Cf. Adler, p. 50; Spitzer, *The Soul's Upward Yearning*, p. 176. In the first instance of things in our human cognition, a positive relation exists between the outer surface, the cerebral cortex or the neocortex of our brains, and our acts and organs of human sensing. Bluntly put: no brain; or, specifically, no functioning neocortex which belongs to the outer surface of our brains, then no possible interface with perceptual or sensible objects and the kind of materiality that is to be associated with our different acts of human sensing; in addition too, no motor commands, no spatial reasoning, no conscious thought, and amongst us as human beings, no language that can allow us to express our thoughts. Cf. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/neocortex.htm> (accessed March 2, 2020).

However, on the other hand also, it is to be admitted that, if we attend to our desire for understanding as this exists within us as an interior movement, in itself, “the power of understanding far exceeds...what we would expect to be the intrinsic capacity of the [human] brain.” Cf. John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Clarendon Law Series, ed. H. L. A. Hart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 399, as quoted by Matthew C. Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding: The Functional Specialty, “Systematics,” in Bernard Lonergan's Method in Theology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), p. 78. We use our brains within conditions of space and time in order to think with our minds as we move from objects that can be sensed toward objects which can never be sensed (our perceptual objects differ from our conceptual objects). Cf. Adler, *Mistakes*, p. 53; p. 76. Our desire for understanding, in its immateriality, exists as an unlimited kind of thing and, if we think about this unlimitedness, it transcends the limitedness of all material conditions and so also the physical being of our brains which exist as a species of limited, material condition: existing thus as something less or as something that is lower (existing thus as a kind of substratum). It is man that “uses his brain, it is not the brain that uses the man.” Cf. Thomas Verner Moore, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity: An Introduction to the Spiritual Life and Mental Health* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1959), p. 152. As we age, as we move further into our middle years, our brains can

Our acts and actions are human or, appositely, they are ethical and moral to the degree that they can be informed by a reasonableness which should belong to them if we are to distinguish between acts which are simply done by us as human beings and acts which are done by us in a human way (some acts exist as human acts and not as some other kind of act).<sup>54</sup>

A more traditional way of speaking simply speaks about the being of a rational human soul which exists within a living human body (as spirit exists within matter or, in another sense, as a form exists within matter as the meaning or the intelligibility of the matter). This rational soul determines that a given body exists as a human body and, at the same time also, as an orientation and as a principle of limitation, it disposes the life of a given body towards ends or

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begin to fail in the quality of their physical and bodily functioning, but not so our minds which continue to have a life of their own and to pursue their own course and special interests. Apart or differing from the life of the brain, “it moves to its own fulfillment.” Cf. Wilder Penfield, *The Mystery of the Mind: A Critical Study of Consciousness and the Human Brain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 87.

Something more occurs or something else exists if we attend to the workings of our understanding and the yearning and the experience that we have within us within our desire for an understanding and knowledge of different things. A difference in intent and operation points to a difference in terms of form or a difference in terms of nature. If our acts of sense reveal their excellence (their acuity or the degree of their sensitivity) to the degree that they can be more closely joined and united to the data of sense which refer to the presence or the givenness of material conjugates (of one kind or another), acts of understanding reveal their own excellence (their own acuity or the degree of their intelligence) if they can turn from the givens of sense in a way which more fully joins them to conjugates and variables which exist as immaterial specifications of being. To understand the nature of our acts of understanding is to understand how, by its acts of abstraction, every act of understanding engages in an act of distancing or bracketing as this refers to the givenness and the presence of material conditions. An immaterial reality is grasped if it can be disjoined from how it is instantiated and joined to a given set of material variables and correlatives which refer to the kind of actuation which exists in our acts of human sensing. So operative is the transcendence of our acts of understanding over our acts of sensing that no immediate, positive relation necessarily exists between our understanding and any defects which exist in our acts of sensing and any defects which exist in the structure and in the activity of our brains. Defects in sensing and defects in the activities of the brain do not necessarily translate or carry over into any defects which would have to exist in the life of our human understanding nor any defects in the life which would belong to our human acts of desiring and willing. Cf. Moore, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity*, p. 175. If cortical destruction or cortical deterioration should occur with respect to the order and the structure of our brains and if irritable behavior results as a consequence in how sufferers should act and behave, these effects can be overcome through employing forms of therapy in the practice of psychiatry that can work toward finding other pathways in the brain in a way which leads to a healing and an overcoming of defects and difficulties that have initially arisen as a result of injuries or ill health that has afflicted the well being of our brains. Our moral behavior has not exist as a species of captive or prisoner. Cf. Moore, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity*, p. 151.

objectives that are conditioned by the kind of rationality which properly belongs to the being and the life of our rational human souls. This soul, as a source of movement and by its instantiation within the life of our bodies – both conditions, acting together, make for possibility of growth in our self-understanding. As a point of reference and through its subjectivity (its life), our rational souls explain why, by working with the sensing organs of our bodies and our acts of sensing, we can move toward any acts of understanding that could be possibly given to us if, through the posing of questions and the making of our inquiries, conditions are created and fostered in a way which could possibly favor the reception of new acts of understanding that would be added to our current acts of understanding in a way which encompasses the kind and degrees of understanding which we already have within our current

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In the kind of language and other arguments that we find in Aristotle, the form of the brain is not to be identified with the form of the mind or the form of the intellect since, as Aristotle argues, for our minds, our intellects, or our understanding, “everything exists as a possible object of thought.” Cf. *De Anima*, 3, 4, 429a18. No form exists that we cannot possibly think about and possibly understand where, in our acts of understanding, the form of some other thing comes to exist and reside within ourselves, existing now within our understanding in an identity which emerges between the form of our understanding and the form of a thing that is understood by us in our understanding. Hence, most crucially, our understanding lacks a form of its own which would be endemic or essential to the nature of its being and existence since, if it were to have a form of its own, its replacement, its displacement, its substitution, or the reception of some other form would imply the removal of itself in terms of its inherent form and so the absence and even the destruction of how our understanding exists as understanding.

As a general principle and as a species of first principle that is used within the context of this type of reasoning and thinking (the reasoning and the thinking that we do): the form of a thing always exists as its rational being, its rational qualification; it exists as the “whatness” or as the intelligibility of a given thing and so, obviously, if the form of a thing is replaced through the reception or the substitution of some other form or some other “whatness,” the mind, the understanding would cease to be what it had been. It would become something else. But, clearly, with respect to our understanding, this does not happen to us in the context of our understanding since the more numerous the reception and the enjoyment of new forms (the forms of things that are understood), the larger becomes our understanding. Our minds or intellects grow in their stature and reality in terms of how they exist (the growth does not exist as a material determination) although, on the other hand, our brains do not grow in any kind of size that we can know and determine. If we should speak about the form of our minds or about the form of our understanding, it is such - and as we reiterate – it is such that it can continually acquire new forms: forms which it has not had previously. But, if we should refer to our brains, its form exists at a lower level or its form differs from the form of our minds since, with respect to our brains, they cannot become something other without ceasing to be what they are as brains. Cf. Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, p. 190. The immateriality of our minds differs from the materiality of our brains and so a real distinction exists between our minds and our brains. The rational being of our minds differs from the rational being of our brains and, if we argue that no one form is uniquely denominative of our understanding (our minds, our intellects), if our understanding is such that it is always open to receiving new forms or ideas, through this type of thinking and argument that comes to us from Aristotle, we can

acts of understanding.

In point of fact, however: if we attend to the extent of our understanding, about the being of certain things, we have not to ask any questions. Some acts of cognition, some acts of understanding, are already given to us. We already have them. Some acts have not to be acquired by us through any inquiries that we would want to make or through a method which would move us, through questions, into a learning and a discovery which could possibly lead us toward new acts of cognition and understanding. Instead then of a priority which would seem to belong to our initial acts of human sensing and the givens of sense (relative to our acts of inquiry and the posing of our questions) and instead of a priority which would seem to

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refer to a form of transcendence that is basic to the nature and the operation of our human minds, the nature and the kind of operation which exists whenever we refer to our acts of understanding.

With our minds and through our understanding, we try to explain the being and the workings of our brains. We can turn our brains into a species of external object that we can think about and ask questions about since, as we have been noting, about no object or thing can we not ask questions about if we attend to how our understanding works as it tries to move from that which it already knows and understands toward that which it can possibly come to know and understand.

Along different lines however, if we can argue that, through our inquiries, we work with our brains as material causes or as instrumental material causes, in addition to the kind of self-transcendence which exists within us within the conduct of our human inquiry which leads us toward understanding, the survival or the continuing existence of our consciousness in the wake of our physical deaths also points to how our consciousness or how, ultimately, our subjectivity exists in a way which is apart or which differs from the materiality of our brains or, for that matter, the materiality of our bodies. In our experience of it, our consciousness exists as a species of trans-physical component: it exists as an immaterial power or force but, as a kind of exterior outer cause, since, from above downwards, if we can use a spatial metaphor, it uses our brains as a way of connecting to how we exist within the conditions of our incarnate human life, living within a world which exists as a conjunction of matter and form. By means of this consciousness, we have a way of making inputs, a way of channeling “the data of [our] consciousness [in]to our physical” bodies. Cf. Spitzer, *The Soul's Upward Yearning*, p. 177. Either way, in both cases, our brains exist within an order or a level of being which exists at a lower, subordinate level (relative to the being of higher levels or higher orders of being). Our brains exist for the sake of our understanding (the life of our minds) and our minds exist as agents and as subjects, relative to the life and the being of our brains. If we are to understand the form or the meaning of our brains, we must refer to the form or the meaning of our understanding as this understanding explains why we have the brains that, in fact, we happen to have.

54Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 1; 2. Cf. aa. 2-3. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 8 (as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 420): “the human act, which is called the moral act, obtains its specification from an object related to the principle of human acts, which is the reason.” Our human reason is the factor which explains how we can distinguish between the “actions of a man” and a man’s “human

belong too to our acts of questioning (relative to our acts of understanding and judgment), a new third priority presents itself to us in the context of our self-reflection if our point of departure is not the givens of sense nor the givens of inquiry and questioning where now, for us, in this other context, the givens of our current understanding of things serve as our new, our third point of departure. Purportedly, to some extent, they already explain how or why the things of sense exist in the way that they do (with the bodiliness and the juxtaposition that each happens to have) and, to some extent too, they explain why we are asking the questions that we are now asking.

Hence, as a conclusion that we can draw: if being or the reality of things is known through their intelligibility (if being or the reality of things is defined by their intelligibility and by a form of access which refers to subjective apprehensions of intelligibility which belong to us and which, in turn, point to the being or the reality of existing things, being and intelligibility going together; existing together; they cannot be properly separated from one another),<sup>55</sup> then the priority of intelligibility exists as a reflection or as an indicator which, in turn, points to a related but a second type of priority which belongs to the priority of being as an ontological condition (or as an ontological determination), relative to the type of priority which belongs to us in the order of our human cognition and within the kind of order which belongs to our human cognition. We refer now to the priority or the kind of ascendancy which belongs to an order of existing things which differs from the apprehensions of priority that, already, to some extent, we have been referring to when we have been referring to the kind of priority which exist within us within the order of our human cognition and so the kind of priority which belongs, in general, to the order of our human cognition. The priority of our cognition is given to us, relative to how we exist as human subjects. However, it is not given to us relative to how we exist as human beings (apart from how we exist as human subjects) since our cognition

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actions” (*actus hominis* versus *actus humanus*) or “human actions ordered to an end” (*operatio humana ordinata in finem*). This same point is stated in other texts that come to us from Aquinas: notably, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 5; q. 18, a. 8, ad 2; and *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 4 & ad 5. Citing a pertinent text from the *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 4 (as quoted by Rhonheimer, p. 423):

....good and evil in human actions is considered with regard for how the act accords with reason [*concordat rationis*] as informed by divine law, by nature, or by instruction.

55Giovanni B. Sala, “Lonergan on the Virtually Unconditioned as the Ground of Judgment,” trans. Donald E. Buzzelli, <http://lonergan.org/2020/07/25/lonergan-on-the-virtually-unconditioned-as-the-ground-of-judgment/> (accessed July 25, 2020), p. 23. In the example that Sala cites, since a “square circle” exists as a contradictory, unintelligible thing, there is no point in asking about its possible truth or reality (if such a thing can really exist) since, in itself, the unintelligibility of a square circle points to the absence of any kind of real being that it could have. Real being is precluded. Joseph Owens in his *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Houston, Texas: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985), p. 137, makes the same point. A “square circle” can be considered by us in our cognition but real being can never be predicated of it. Intelligibility, as a determination, is suggestive of being in terms its truth and reality since intelligibility in contrast to unintelligibility points to the possibility of a form of real being that it can have. Cf. Owens, p. 138.

presupposes first that we exist before we can begin to understand and know about anything: about how, in fact, we should happen to be and exist. No subject exists outside of being and the kind of order which belongs to being.<sup>56</sup>

As we go then from the kind of priority which exists within our cognition and the kind of priority which belongs to an order of existing things which transcend our cognition, two species of priority relate themselves to each other in a manner which accordingly points to a form of mutual implication. The priority of existing things or the priority of being (in its intelligibility) explains how or why things exist in the way that they do through or with a bodiliness that we experience and it also explains why we should think and reason in a certain way: why we ask certain kinds of questions rather than other types of questions. Relative to the kind of priority that points to the priority of being over any kind of becoming, a priority is known if we should think about the kind of primacy that would seem to belong to our sensed experience of bodies and so, from this, how the reality of a thing is to be understood or identified in terms which would want to think about it in terms which would refer to how it exists as a body. A thing exists as a body if, within the order of our cognition, to our acts of sensing, a primacy is attributed which lends itself to thinking that things exist primarily as bodies and not as some other kind of thing. A second, aforementioned priority is known if we should refer to the kind of order which exists within the order of our human cognition if the posing of questions is used as a principle of order for determining how or why we must move from our acts of sensing toward our later acts of understanding and how too we must engage in new acts of sensing that we have yet to enjoy if we are to go or move toward possible increases in the depth and the range of our understanding. As a principle of order which exists within the asking of our questions, a strategy and form which belongs to our questions points to how our acts of experiencing and understanding exist as a species of consequence.

However, relative to the priority of sensed bodies and relative to the priority of questions which point us toward *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that are proleptically known through intended apprehensions of being which exist within our acts of questioning, the priority of being relative to our implicit, current understanding and sense of things points to a species of *a priori* which exists with a degree of absoluteness which transcends the relevance or the application of all other priorities if, as we have been noting, and in a way that we have yet to fully understand and know, as a higher or transcendent cause, it explains how or why things exist as bodies in the way that they do and how or why we exist as knowers with a potency that is both passive and active in terms of how, through our questioning, we can move toward new apprehensions of being that, possibly, can be given to us. Necessarily, as an *a posteriori*, our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being point to *a priori* apprehensions of being in terms of how it exists as a conditioning, causal variable and how, from it, a consequent effect exists,<sup>57</sup> and so to a kind of necessity which must belong to our *a priori* apprehensions of being if *a posteriori* apprehensions of being are to be adequately understood in a way which can point to how, more

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<sup>56</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 401.

<sup>57</sup>Please note, at this point, that it is better to use language, terms, and concepts which refer to the intelligibility of probability since, in speaking about the being of intellectual or spiritual things, we should avoid a language which suggests that we should think about causation in physical or mechanical terms.

fully, they exist in their own way as a species of effect.

As Aristotle would speak about it and according to how, in fact, he spoke about it, something is known in terms merely of its being or its existence before it can be known in terms of what could be its nature, its meaning, or its identity.<sup>58</sup> The principle of form, as a point of origin, is preceded by the principle of being, as a point of origin or as *the point of origin* or, in other words, the principle of act as act of being (act before or prior to form as mode of being) in a principal insight or understanding of things that functions as a key point of departure for a different kind of metaphysics other than a metaphysics which would want to assume that reality or being is form and that it is not something which is distinct from the principle of form or idea.

If *a posteriori* apprehensions of being accordingly point to *a priori* apprehensions of being which condition the goodness, the importance, and the kind of form or shape that belongs to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, then, because *a priori* apprehensions of being point to a corresponding priority which belongs to an order of already existing things, prior to our moving toward an understanding and a knowledge of things which points to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, the prior being of things exists as our initial or our basic point of departure and so, if this is the case, we can begin to understand why the being of these prior things is such that, within our subjectivity and apart from our subjectivity, they establish and they delimit conditions that work for the later kind of being which can emerge for us when or as we would begin to move toward our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being as this can come to us when we find that we are lacking in degrees of understanding and if we want to move from our current condition of understanding toward a condition of greater, later understanding. If *a priori* apprehensions of being which exist within the order of our human cognition point to a like prior order which exists among the being of other existing things, we understand why we can understand later causes and conditions if we first attend to the being of these prior causes and conditions. Something more needs to be said about them beyond saying or stating that they simply exist.

As a consequence thus and through a kind of application which exists as we begin from the ruminations of our self-understanding, by a kind of growth and a self-transcendence which exists within the depths of our understanding as, discursively and analytically, we move from one conclusion to another conclusion (from one newly understood known truth to another newly understood known truth): an understanding and an argument about the nature of our acts of understanding leads us toward rational conclusions which would have us believe and speak about the prior being of our souls (relative, cognitively, to the being of our cognitive acts of understanding), and a kind of transcendence or a self-transcendence which belongs to the being of our souls relative to the transcendence which belongs to our cognitive acts of understanding) and so, from all this, on the basis of this type of prior being and on the basis of the transcendence and the orientation which belongs to the being and the life of our souls, we can conclude to a number of transcendent qualities which point to the unrestrictedness of our souls,

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<sup>58</sup>John Senior, *Death of Christian Culture*, p. 60, citing Aristotle, “the first thing to be said about something is that it is,” as cited by Francis Bethel, *John Senior and the Restoration of Realism* (Merrimack, New Hampshire: Thomas More College Press, 2016), p. 50.

the timelessness of our souls, or the immortality of our souls. These emerge as likely postulates where we refer both to the possibility and also to the necessity of this type of being (as a cause) although, admittedly, we refer to a species of transcendent cause which has been created (brought into being). But, whether created or not, its effect is (nonetheless) an actuation which enhances the self-transcendence of our souls if we attend to the kind of order which exists within the acts which belong to us in our human cognition.

We experience the self-transcendence of our souls in ways which vary and which build on one another as we move from our acts of sensing, through our acts of inquiry, and into our acts of understanding as this exists both within the order of our human cognition and also within the order of our right moral living. The self-transcendence which exists within our cognition points and leads us toward a fuller kind of self-transcendence which exists within us with respect to the actuation of our being and the actuation of our subjectivity since we exist as the subject of our sensing, questioning, and understanding in a unity which is grounded in how self-transcending acts are joined to how a self-transcending soul exists as a self-transcending subject. Act and subject go together. Between the contingency of our souls with respect to the character or the quality of their emergence and the destiny or the finality of our souls with respect to how they can enjoy a form of separation which sets them apart from the weight and being of spatial and temporal conditions,<sup>59</sup> no contradiction exists although, admittedly, in the absence of self-causation which exists with respect to the being of our souls, conditions present themselves to us or conditions are created for later reflections which would have us think and speak about the possible being of other causes that are external to us: another order of causation and the possible being of a greater, greatest transcendent cause that would be preeminently transcendent in a manner which would have to point to the absence of every kind of contingency (and so to the absence of any kind of restriction or limitation); a cause whose being is uncaused since it can never exist as an effect and because it exists as an overarching reason or explanation for things whose manner of being is such that it cannot be informed by anything which would exist as any kind or type of cause.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>See again Robert Spitzer where, in *The Soul's Upward Yearning: Clues to Our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason*, pp. 176-181, he speaks about how our souls survive physical death if we should speak about our souls in terms of how they exist as subjects of consciousness and the current evidence which we now have about how our human consciousness (or how, ontologically, our souls) survives the trauma and the disruption of physical death. Physical death exists as something which is quite other than any kind of psychological or psychic death. Physical death exists as a reality but the incidence or the occurrence of psychic or spiritual death is a different question, the survival of our consciousness pointing to a different type of meaning that we would need to give or know if we are to speak about the possibility of psychic death and how psychic death occurs.

<sup>60</sup>See Matthew L. Lamb, "Lonergan on Metaphysics in Theology," 2004.20.05.doc October 7, 2004, unpublished notes, and see how he distinguishes between what exists as a "formal constitutive" in metaphysics and what exists as a "formal constitutive" in theology. In metaphysics, formal constitutives refer to apprehensions and affirmations of determinative, technical meaning which exist as potency, form, and act. None of these things directly refers nor can be directly equated with the reality of a concretely existing thing. Something which exists as an intrinsic cause of an existing thing differs from the existing thing itself. A real distinction is to be alluded although, on the other hand, an inadequate real distinction if, here,

At this point thus, with respect to the transcendence of our souls, to understand this transcendence, for a larger or wider grasp of reasons, an argument and an understanding which pretends to be more adequate must attend to a number of parts or variables that are all related to each other (if, from a metaphysical perspective, the transcendence of our souls is expressed in different ways if we move from the transcendence of our souls as regards simply its being into the transcendence of its many operations in its different acts). Initially, in our discussion, in the first two parts, we deal with (1) our direct acts of understanding and then with (2) our reflective acts of understanding and with how these change or exist if we move toward the possibilities of our self-understanding and then, from there, move into a third part which refers to their ground or point of origin as this exists in (3) our desire for understanding and knowledge. In a way, we continually move from effects to causes while we also know that causes exist in their own way as effects and effects, as causes.

First, in our acts of understanding, as understanders, through the acts of abstraction which exist within us through all of our *direct acts of understanding*, in our awareness of self and by means of an implicit knowledge of ourselves, we find that, in our understanding, we are always moving ourselves, we are always distancing ourselves from that which is always already given to us within and through our different acts of human sensing (these acts, through their extroversion, direct refer to material conditions and to the being of spatial and temporal coordinates). In understanding however, through a shift which occurs within it, we move from something which exists in an external, material way toward something which has ceased to have a purely physical or a purely material form of determination. In our acts of understanding and, initially in our direct acts of understanding, through our desire for understanding and the questioning that we do if we are to move from our acts of sensing toward possible acts of understanding, in some sense or *intentionally*, in our understanding, we become something which is other than ourselves.<sup>61</sup> We move beyond ourselves. We become that which is being

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we are comparing a constitutive element which belongs to the being of an existing thing with the fullness of being which would belong to the being of the same thing (parts relative to a whole or parts composing a whole if, with restrictions and qualifications, we can use this metaphor as a suitably apt designation). However, if we should think about ultimately transcendent immaterial principle or, in other words, the being of God and what can possibly said to exist as a “formal constitutive,” no elements can be distinguished which can be said to refer to the being or to the reality of constitutive causes. As a cause of everything else, God exists as reason, rationality, or as effective understanding. No constitutives can be alluded to although it is possible to speak about the rightness of an equation which thinks of God solely in terms of rationality and understanding as this would exist in an entirely unrestricted way where, here, no real distinction would exist between God as understanding and God as willing (even as we know and admit that we cannot imagine the contours or the form that would belong to the being of such an existing being).

<sup>61</sup>Neil Ormerod, *Faith and Reason: The Possibility of a Christian Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), p. 14. To the same effect, see also Gerald B. Phelan, “Verum Sequitur Esse Rerum,” *Mediaeval Studies* 1, 1 (1939): 16 who argues, citing texts from Aquinas, that, through our cognitive intentionality and by its operations, we find that “to know is to be or to become what the thing known is in itself.” In knowledge or through our knowledge, “the object is in the knower [*cognitio est secundum quod cognitum est in*

understood through a cognitive form of identity which exists within our understanding and through the self-transcendence which immanently exists within the experience of our understanding.

Hence, from this, it follows that the contingency or the createdness of the human soul (in terms of its emergence) is such that the contingency of its origins is not itself a fit reason or a sufficient argument for supposing or arguing that the human soul is totally lacking in a species of transcendence which properly belongs to it, a species of transcendence which lends itself to a manner of thinking and speaking which would have us speak about its transcendental, enduring nature (its timeless existence in terms of act where what is known about the nature of our souls points to what is known about the being of our souls). On the contrary thus: to the degree that, in our self-understanding, we truly understand and know what exactly happens always in the abstraction which exists in every *direct human act of understanding*, to the same degree we should accordingly know and realize that, within the being of our human souls, a transcendent immaterial immortal quality or a transcendent immaterial immortal condition is to be alluded to (it is to be acknowledged and admitted) even if we should admit to ourselves that this transcendent immortal quality is not something which we can so easily grasp and know. It is not understood by us in a way which would refer to the datum of a direct act of understanding, sufficient that we can then adequately understand its cause or reason. While our desire for an adequate understanding of effects normally leads us toward a possible understanding of causes, at the same time, as a principle of limitation, no understanding of effects is to be equated with an understanding of causes since the nature of a cause always transcends the nature of an effect. The cause exists as a larger, greater thing.

In this case thus: as with our *a priori* apprehensions of being, by a kind of comparison between our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and our *a priori* apprehensions of being, in both cases, something is known to exist apart from an understanding which would adequately or more fully know what exactly is this thing that is being understood and known by us in its existence through the cognitive experience that we could be having of it within our consciousness of self (as we experience our cognition through how we experience the consciousness or the life of our cognition). A cause (as soul) is being identified as an originating cause and as an existing reality and so, as known, it presents itself to us as a new possible point of departure for our possibly asking new questions (even if it should be the case that the asking of additional questions will not lead us toward new acts of understanding that will reveal anything more about the nature of a soul which exists as both a cause and an effect). As a general principle that we reiterate: the nature of an effect is not to be equated with the nature of a cause. If we can understand the nature, the intelligibility, or the disposition of our human bodies by referring to the nature, the intelligibility, or the disposition of our souls and if, by this means, we can advance or grow in the extent of our understanding, it is another thing or another question to ask about the being of our souls and to think about how we can grow in a possible understanding of our souls. To understand our souls supposes causes and reasons that would obviously transcend the being of our individual souls if, within the order of our inquiry, our souls exist in their own way as effects and not only as causes.

Second, with respect to our *reflective acts of understanding* and to the kind of self-awareness

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*cognoscente]*” Cf. Aquinas, *Summae Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 1.

and the implicit kind of self-knowledge which we have of ourselves in enjoying our *reflective acts of understanding* (our acts of reflective understanding following our acts of direct understanding and possibly revealing a greater degree of self-transcendence), our point of departure in the context of our argument is first the difference which exists between the being of analytic propositions and the being of analytic principles and how we can distinguish between the two. First of all then, in all our acts of supposing and defining as this occurs in our acts of conceptualization, as our acts of supposing and defining move into our acts of conceptualization and the emergent being of new words and concepts, we can postulate or we can think about an infinite number of analytic propositions. Postulate or suppose the being of any given thing that we can imagine or think about; allude to its qualities or characteristics; and then, from these, articulate the predicates. Elucidate the predicates where the predicates exist within the thing or the subject that we have been imagining and supposing. A commonly cited example refers to the being of a unicorn. Our conception of it immediately infers or supposes its predicates: what exactly it is and what it can properly do. However, when we try to move toward concrete judgments of fact or toward possibly making any concrete judgments of fact that would require the kind of corroboration that would exist for us if we should refer to our acts of human sensing, we would move or, more strongly put, we would have to move toward apprehensions of evidence which, perhaps, will not be given to us within a particular line of inquiry that we are engaging in as, in a given case, we try to move towards prospective acts of reflective understanding. In a given case, the absence of evidence precludes our possibly moving from an understanding which knows about the content of an analytic proposition toward an understanding which would have us know about the truth of an analytic principle and, at the same time too, this absence of evidence would explain or it points to why, as potencies prior to judgment, analytic propositions exist as a larger set; or why, conversely, analytic principles exist as a kind of subset within a larger number of analytic propositions.<sup>62</sup> Apart from the being of existing things and the truth of propositions which refer to the being of existing things, we can always imagine a larger number of things which perhaps exist but for which we have no evidence to the effect that, in fact, it can be said that they really and truly exist.

Moving on thus: in contrast, allegedly, with a kind of judgment which attends to fulfilling conditions as these would exist already (they are given) within the terms of a proposed definition (they would be implied by our conceptualizations of meaning which would exist as determinations of meaning; for example, the law of deduction in logic which exists as the principle of contradiction), in judgments of fact which would refer to the being of our material contingent world and if there are to be any increases in the knowledge which we can have about the meaning and the being of this material contingent world, a reference to acts and data of sense is something that cannot be properly dispensed with. If, in a way, as from a kind of material cause, within the order of our cognition, our acts of direct understanding come from our acts of sensing through the agency of our inquiry and the asking of questions, in a way, our acts of reflective understanding return to the givens which belong to us in our acts of human sensing. However, when judgments of fact need to be made about realities that are wholly lacking in having any material components, in this kind of situation, fulfilling conditions cannot exist as a possible act or datum of sense and, in addition to this or to state our case a bit

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<sup>62</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 330.

more strongly, it would not be necessary that we would have to have fulfilling conditions that would have to exist as a possible act or datum of sense. In these situations thus, if we have to refer to any datum or data that can be given to us within the context of our personal individual experience, we can possibly refer to our inner experience of self (the acts and the data of our awareness of self, differing as they do from all the acts and the data of our sensing experience in having a different kind of immediacy and a different kind of object). The reality of an immaterial being can be known (it can be affirmed in a reasonable manner) if we can refer to an immaterial kind of evidence that can be given to us within our consciousness of self: if we can refer to a grounding species of experience which we cannot doubt in the experience which we are having of ourselves as human beings where, in its own way thus, this type of experience exists in an immaterial manner (it does not exist as a correlative that belongs to an act of sensing but, instead, it exists as a correlative that belongs to our acts of consciousness, our acts of self-awareness). Potentially and actually, it is common to all of us as human beings in the experience which we have and which we are able to have of themselves, an experience which exists as consciousness and which exists as our self-consciousness as soon as we attend to it as a kind of object or datum that is given to us when our consciousness unexpectedly, at times, shifts and changes and so falls into a pattern which exists as our self-consciousness.

Hence, in a shift which accordingly transitions, step by step, from an implicit degree of self-understanding and self-knowledge which exists in all our reflective acts of understanding toward a self-understanding and knowledge that is explicitly the desired, intended object of our understanding and judgment: while, on the one hand thus, the awareness which we have of external objects through our acts of sensing is always intrinsically conditioned by the play and the impact of spatial and temporal coordinates, on the other hand however, when we refer to the awareness or the consciousness that we always have of ourselves when we are engaged in our different acts of human sensing, we would have to refer to a species of awareness which does not directly refer to the being of external objects. Through our self-awareness and by means of this self-awareness, we detach an awareness that is directly related to an experience of external objects and we turn this extroverted awareness into a species of introverted awareness. In our self-awareness, our consciousness exists as an internal type of object (we are joined to the being of this internal object and, in a way, we exist as this internal object). It is our locus, our point of departure. Necessarily now, in our consciousness of self and in the self-understanding and knowledge of self that we can have, in another way and more radically, in another or in a more intense form of self-transcending activity, we would have to move from a world that is directly conditioned by the givenness of spatial and temporal coordinates and the kind of being which belongs to these coordinates toward a world that exists apart from the being of these spatial and temporal coordinates.<sup>63</sup> Hence, within this spatial temporal world and yet apart from the being of this world, another world endures and exists: a world that has a separateness, an autonomy, and an independence which is peculiar to it. To explain its being (how or why it exists in the way that it exists) as, again, we would move from effects to causes, a distinct species of inquiry is required: one which would have to attend to variables which would differ from variables which would be known by us in a direct way through our various acts of human sensing.

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<sup>63</sup>Roland Krismer, "Immortality.odp," unpublished power point presentation, July 13, 2012.

In the kind of transcendence which accordingly belongs to all of our reflective acts of understanding (whatever the context and purpose), we move from effects to causes with a greater degree of precision and a greater degree of significance if we should now work with a distinction which knows that the quality of our transcendence is something which differs (it is greater) or it grows as we move from judgments of fact that necessarily work with our acts of sensing toward judgments of fact that prescind from our acts of human sensing. They cannot work with our acts of sensing and it is not necessary that they should work with our acts of human sensing if, instead of referring to the data of sense, we work with the data of our consciousness (the inner kind of experience which exists within ourselves within our consciousness). A first kind of data is replaced by a second kind of data and inevitably thus, as we move from one kind of experience to the other, judgments of fact that require corroborative acts of sensing possess a lesser degree of transcendence than judgments of fact which forswear our acts of human sensing, having not to attend to our acts of human sensing (even if, indirectly, our later judgments of fact would continue to be related in some way to our different acts of human sensing). Although the knowledge that we can have of ourselves is not something which exists within a void or a vacuum, as we would want to argue here however: with respect to its direction or its orientation, in our self-inquiry and in our self-understanding, within another order of transcendence, we move from an understanding and a knowledge of external things toward an understanding and a knowledge of internal things where the internal things refer to the transcendental being of ourselves and to how, transcendently, we exist as cogitating subjects.

In this context thus, in attending to the data of our consciousness, in our acts of direct understanding and in our acts of reflective understanding, reiteratively, a heightening of transcendence is to be adverted to, a heightening of transcendence which needs to be admitted (it is experienced by us) because the heightening pertains both to how we exist interiorly in our sense of self as cogitating subjects and how, also, we exist as objects that can be known through a thematization or through an objectification of self which occurs as soon as we begin to form and to put our understanding of self into words and concepts about how, in fact, we exist as cogitating subjects. The subjectivity points to the objectivity or, in a way, it exists as the objectivity or it emerges as the objectivity.

To avoid confusion however as regards a meaning for objectivity, please distinguish between a notion of objectivity that is known and defined in a manner which is divorced from the being of subjective considerations in terms of our subjective condition (how a given person exists as a subject) and a notion of objectivity that is defined by how a given person exists as a subject and how he or she can speak about the subjectivity which he or she happens to have. If a real distinction is suggested by a way of speaking which divorces objectivity from subjectivity or which assumes that such a divorce always exists, then attenuations are suggested by a second way of speaking which attends to how, in our subjectivity, a kind of objectivity exists if we should notice and attend to how, in our subjectivity, a measure of self-transcendence exists within it and, with this or through this, a preliminary form of union or unity which exists between the life and the being of our subjectivity and an order of objectively existing things (as incomplete and as partial as is the enjoyment or the experience of this type of unity). To regard another as an object that is disjoined

from us is to move into a way of thinking which thinks that real distinctions would have to exist between who one is as an other and what the other is and that these real distinctions are entirely dominant. But, on the other hand however, if we should try to avoid this kind of thinking and speaking, a different kind of relation emerges: one which is more nuanced and which thinks less about the primacy or the dominance of real distinctions. For one person to know another as a subject (and not as an object) is to engage or to participate in a kind of communion which can begin to emerge more fully in a way which detracts from the primacy or the otherness of real distinctions. The real distinctions continue to hold and to exist but they are lessened or they are transcended in a way which qualifies or which detracts from an absoluteness which thinks in terms of separation, isolation, and withdrawal. Our understanding of things changes or perhaps we can say that our understanding of things deepens and grows if its basis is a relation or a connection which, in some way, already exists within us (within the data and the experience of our consciousness).<sup>64</sup> The already existing relation, in turn, grows and expands on the basis of increases of understanding which have been given to us or which can be given to us.

Common thus to both the matter or the substance of the subjectivity and the objectivity is an immateriality which belongs to our acts of inquiring, our acts of thinking, our acts of understanding, and our acts of reflection as these exist within our immaterial immanent operations and thus within the immaterial kind of verification that is needed if, truly, we are to move from the self-understanding that, implicitly, we have about ourselves already in our judgments toward any possible increments or increases in the self-knowledge that we can have on the basis of the self-knowledge that is initially given to us within our human experience of self as a prior condition and determination.

With respect thus to our *a priori* understanding and knowledge of self: as with our understanding and our knowledge of other things that are not ourselves (we refer to external objects and a sense which points to the reality of their existence), our desired or our intended self-understanding and our desired or intended self-knowledge begins with a species of self-understanding and self-knowledge that we already have (it already exists) since, in our

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<sup>64</sup>See Leszek Kolakowski, *Religion*, p. 165, and how he speaks about how, at times, progress in our understanding will suppose or require that, prior to our enjoying certain acts of understanding within a given context, some kind of belief will be needed in a way which points to the truth of an Augustinian principle which had advised that "I believe in order to understand." *Credo ut intelligam*. Some things cannot be understood apart from the initial kind of recognition and knowledge which exists in belief and through the reception and the life of belief which exists in us as human subjects. Joining and combining what is believed with what is understood is another, higher, elicitive, more fundamental species of act which is best known to exist as a participative, pregnant, communicative type of act which is first experienced and enjoyed (most probably or most frequently in the days of our youth) before, later, it can be understood, pondered, and questioned in ways which can then lead to differentiations and determinations of meaning that, respectively, can be cognitive, moral, or affective. Cf. Kolakowski, *Religion*, p. 167; p. 176; p. 182; p. 206.

judgments of fact that have pertained to the being of other things (those things which have existed as external, sensed objects), in making these judgments, a kind of self-measuring or a kind of self-estimation and judgment has been already occurring within us (a self-measuring and judgment that always exists within us in our evaluations and judgments of self). Simply put: implicitly in all of our past and current judgments, we have been asking questions about ourselves: we have been asking about the rationality which allegedly exists within us whenever we think about the questions that we have been asking and posing and whenever we think too about any understandings which have been given to us in the wake of the inquiries that we have been conducting and making. And so, to some extent, we have been always moving into degrees of self-understanding and self-knowledge whenever, in any given case, we have been moved to conclude in our judgments that, in our cognitional behavior and experience, we have been meeting all the requirements which exist and which have to be met and which point to the reasonableness or to the rationality of our tentative conclusions in the context of our cognitive behavior. Between and among our different acts of sensing, inquiring, and understanding, no contradictions can be found. None exist and then, in attending to any empirical implications which would follow from an act of understanding that we have been evaluating that can point to any corroborations which would exist in specifications of data that belong to our acts of human sensing, in adverting and in experiencing these required acts of sense, the givenness of the required data in turn points to the truth of an idea that we have initially understood and grasped.

If, in our self-understanding thus, if our questioning of self and our self-understanding is turned into a form of inquiry that exists on the basis of its own merits, in our subsequent inquiry that is turned toward ourselves, we should accordingly begin with the kind of data which already exists within the data of our self-consciousness and then, as we move toward our judgments, in our self-knowledge, we will return to the data which has been existing within the data of our self-consciousness. Our consciousness endures and, at the same time, it expands or it becomes a larger kind of thing as it undergoes change and as it shifts in its data and content (as we move now not from experiences that belong to our sensible awareness of outer things but, instead, from our experiences of intellectual consciousness as these have been given to us and then, from there, toward experiences of rational consciousness that are given to us as we move from the data of our inner consciousness through a heightened or an explicit form of self-inquiry and self-understanding toward a commensurate understanding and knowledge which belongs to our self-understanding and our knowledge of self).<sup>65</sup> In our self-knowledge and from a kind of

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<sup>65</sup>In the context of another viewpoint however, to understand how our subjectivity exists and how it endures despite any shifts or changes that can occur for us with respect to the data of our consciousness (our self-experience), see the literature which is now currently available about so-called “near death experiences”: stories about persons who have allegedly “come back” after experiencing a separation which occurs through the onset of physical or biological death. We refer to stories which come from persons who speak about their leaving life and union with a body and about a kind of traveling which occurs as these persons find that, joyfully, in their sense of self, they are moving along a road or a corridor toward a kind of “white light” that is drawing them toward itself. Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near-death\\_experience](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near-death_experience) (June 16, 2018). In other words, from this kind of testimony, evidence exists to the effect that, despite changes in the data or the content of our consciousness, at no time do we cease to be fully alive and conscious. In death, we would seem to experience a heightening

self-possession which exists in this self-knowledge, as we have been noting, we will exist with a greater degree of autonomy. To a larger and a further extent, we will be existing apart from or independently of any conjugates which could be belonging to determinations of space and time that can only be known by us in a direct fashion through our various acts of human sensing.

And so, from this, as a kind of basis or substratum, as we move from an effect which exists for us as an experience toward its most likely explanation or its most probable cause, as a third argument or as a third part of our argument, if we are to understand how or why, in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, we are always moving in a manner which moves from lesser degrees of transcendence toward greater degrees of transcendence, we must postulate or we can point to a kind of prior motor or vector which exists within us as this refers to the activity of an unrestricted inner principle which somehow mysteriously exists within us. We refer to a principle which tends to exist for us as an un-understood primary datum and condition although it exists for us as our fundamental point of departure if we are to appropriate and to subscribe to a way of thinking and reflection which knowingly moves from the being of an objectively existing subjectively existing infinite desire for growth in experiences of understanding and knowledge toward a likely or probable cause which would exist as a species of adequate explanation; or, in other words, toward an apprehension which knows about the being of an infinitely existing outer external object which, in its own way, acts as an infinitely existing subject or agent (as a point of origin), and so, from the context of this apprehension, toward conceptions that we can possibly have about the being of such an object and how it also exists as a subject. At one level and in terms of cause and effect (as this exists within us within our human cognition), the first implies the second: the desire (or the willing), the intended object; and more specifically, the legitimacy or the rightness of the willing and the desiring, the legitimacy, the propriety, or the rightness of the intended object which would be known by us through the mediation of a species of inquiry that would also exist as something that is legitimate and proper in its own right.

For an understanding that is able to attend to how it is possible to move toward a possible explanation for the being and the life of our right reason (in terms of its possible ground or basis if our right reason is to exist as right reason and not in some other kind of form or order), turn to Book 6 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and see how Aristotle attends to the role and place of right desire as this exists for us within the context of our human life and cognition. Right desire (as this rightness is determined by who and what we are as human beings, our nature as human beings pointing to the desires which are right and natural for us) – this right desire best leads us toward our acts of right reasoning in a form of inquiry which should lead us or which best leads us toward apprehensions of good which would exist initially for us as options or as possibilities that are known by us within the grasp of our understanding before they can be then brought into an instantiated form of being which would exist as soon as we move from a cognitive form of self-transcendence into a moral form of self-

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of our consciousness since, in death, we do not sleep. Our consciousness does not lessen. Instead, it exists in a new way through the correlation which exists between our consciousness and what is given to us in our consciousness.

transcendence that would exist for us through the externalizing kind of action which can proceed from us in our actions and deeds and which emerges for us as we move into the communication of our words and beliefs and the doing of our actions and deeds. The goodness of our desires moves into the goodness of our actions and into the goodness of an externally existing world (into the goodness of physical nature and also into the goodness of our humanly constructed world and nature).<sup>66</sup>

However, on another or further level, at a second level, as we would want to suggest in our argument: if our desire always implies an object of some kind that is being intended and also the possibility that our desire is being elicited by the object in question, an unrestricted object eliciting an unrestricted desire, this same desire (as it exists in us and as it bestirs us and comes from us) – this desire also implies or it also points to a like kind of subjectivity which mysteriously exists within us within our human subjectivity. An infinite desire in us implies an infinitely desiring subject which exists in us also or which exists as us (as, in a way, this infinity exists in us and as it determines how we live and exist) where, again in this context, we try to move from the principle of an effect toward the principle of a cause: to a first or a primary initial cause before we can begin to think about how we exist in our own right as possible causes in conjunction with the being of other causes. And so, as we attend to our experiences of self and as we notice how an unlimitedness exists within our desiring and yearning self (where an enduring unending appetite shapes and governs all of our subsequent actions and activities, imparting to them an activity which belongs to them), we find an appetite or a desire which can be conceptualized in terms which would have to have us speak about a transcendental proper seeking, a transcendental proper intending, or a transcendental proper intentionality that subjectively and infinitely elicits all of our subsequent human questions and other new possible acts of understanding that can be possibly given to us within or from an intending or an intentionality which, at times, will encourage us to engage in new possible acts of sensing that, possibly, we can have and about whose terms or data, new questions can be possibly asked. This striving which exists thus as a kind of infinite activity (as a restless pursuit that is never satisfied with the things of this world and the enjoyments that we can have from the things of this world) – this striving is such thus that, in its own way, it also points to the self-transcendence which exists in ourselves in our subjectivity (in a self-transcendence that, in a sense, we cannot control although, on the other hand, it is a self-transcendence that we can try to limit and cramp if we can possibly turn it toward an interest and a desire for things that are lacking in the transcendence which, ideally, they should have if the unlimitedness of our desires is to be mated with terms or objects that would be lacking in any kind of restriction which belongs to the nature of their reality).

As we attend more closely thus to the being of this subjectivity, it exists as a specific cause, as the responsible, proximate agent cause for how we are to live as human beings if we are to continue to live and to exist as human beings. It exists with a transcendence or a self-transcendence which, in its own way, points to a separateness or a freedom that exists within us: a freedom that we have in our humanity from the being and press of all spatial and temporal conditions, a freedom which essentially belongs to the life of our incarnate human souls (our souls as they are joined to our bodies) in a freedom which points to a species of immortality

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<sup>66</sup>Cf. Adler, *Mistakes*, p. 123.

which properly belongs to us as human beings with regard to the being and life of our souls where, in some strange way, as regards the life and the being of our souls, as we have been noting and suggesting, an incarnate contingent origin which belongs to our souls is no argument against an orientation and a transcendence which points to a species of everlastingness which uniquely belongs to the life and the being of our souls and to the manner of our human existence (an immortality that needs to be acknowledged and admitted as a species of first principle or point of departure if, in our striving for self-understanding and knowledge, we are to move toward an understanding of ourselves which pretends to be more fully adequate or complete).

Within our contingency or, if we should speak about the manner of our created condition, an immortal transcendent principle is to be alluded to (it lurks within us): a something which is bereft of contingency in terms of its finality or its orientation, an absence of contingency that we would like to understand if we are to understand how, in our own way, we exist with a kind of being which points to how, in us, a contingent kind of immortality is to be postulated and distinguished. Its createdness or its contingency does not jar or argue against the truth of its immortality. The contingency and the immortality exist together since an understanding of one leads to a better understanding of the other, vice versa. In its transcendence, in some way, a being which is born within time and which dies within time is able to move continually towards things that exist outside of time, death not existing as an exception nor as a sufficient bar if death exists essentially as a material or physical event. The death and the decay of our bodies does not suppose or entail the death or the decay of our souls (hence, not the death of our spirit nor the death of the kind of awareness which exists within us if we refer to our consciousness of self and our sense in this that we exist as living, incarnate beings).

If, at this point thus, we should advert to a way of speaking which is a bit more explicit (because it is a bit more technical), the operative potency which exists as a kind of incomplete act in our acts of desiring (or as a species of operative transcendence which exists within our desiring and our self-understanding) – this potency is such (given its potency) that it points to a species of prior condition which would have to exist as an ontological kind of transcendence: a transcendence which pertains to the prior transcendence or, in other words, to the prior immortality of our souls and so, from this, a conclusion which would have to realize that, from our souls or on the basis of our souls, our connatural or like kind of knowing exists as a function of our being: as a function of our souls. First the being and then the knowing, the self-transcendence of our being explaining the self-transcendence of our knowing even if, at the same time too, it is to be admitted that, as a cognitive cause (and according to the kind of argument which we have been using in the context of a logic of discovery and proof), the self-transcendence of our knowing leads us toward the self-transcendence of our being (the transcendence of our souls and possibly also the transcendence of our bodies through the union which exists between our bodies and our souls) and to how this being of ours exists in its own way, in its agency and in its receptivity, as a cause or as an agent of the kind of understanding which normally belongs to us.

Relative to the kind of being which is the being of our souls, our acts of cognition exist as consequence effects, as proper derivatives (as a distinct order of secondary causes). Because our souls exist in an emergent contingent manner (since they do not cause themselves), the kind of soul which belongs to us as human beings exists as a first species of secondary cause.

It exists as an act of being in terms of the reality of its existence and not as a second species of secondary cause in terms of any later acts of doing or any later acts of reception that could be given to it (which belong to it). In either case however, whether we should speak about an act of being which refers to how, as souls (united to bodies), we exist as potential subjects of different acts and operations (subjects which would exist here as merely or as simply things or substances), or whether we should speak about how we exist through our acts, our activities or our operations as subjects (subjects which are not to be confused with how we exist as substances, the mere being of substances) – we refer to acts which are not conditioned in an intrinsic manner by the being of temporal material conditions (we say only that they are influenced but they are not determined by the being of temporal material conditions) – these same acts are all conditioned in their contingency (they are brought into a condition of being) by immaterial conditions which would have to exist in an unconditioned manner if, in no way, can we refer to the play of spatial and temporal conditions. More about this later, however, as we now only refer to a line of argument and evidence which points to differing orders of transcendence and to how, through the principle of cause and effect, we are driven eventually to move beyond the immortality of our souls toward the immortality of a similar and yet greater soul-like cause which would exist, in its own way, as an effecting, effective, transcendent subject if we are to refer to this greater or greatest cause in terms of its operations and activity. The absence of any passive aspects accords with an insight which would know that the unrestrictedness of this subject is such that it would have to preclude any kind of thinking or characterization that would want to speak about a need for any kind of completion or reduction to a species of act.

In the conclusions then which can be drawn (in terms of a succinct summary): something stable, something abiding, something which is everlasting exists with respect to the being of our human souls because of the kinds of activities which properly belong to the life of our human souls as active and passive subjects (in contrast with the kinds of activities and receptions which properly belong to the life of plants and animals). Immaterial, transcendental operations point to an immaterial, transcendental subject which exists as both a cause and an effect. With respect to the immateriality of the human soul (as it exists as both an active and as a passive subject of predicates): by means of this contingently emergent soul, as an immaterial cause (as a detached, independent, immaterial principle), it accounts for the being of its detached, independent, immaterial, intellectual operations (as causes relate to effects) although, if we would want to move to a fuller understanding of things, we should want to think about the possible being of a cause which could be adequate for the kind of knowledge that we are always seeking to have (as human beings) and which we in fact have, where our object here is not only an understanding of immaterial operations (their form, their structure, or their intelligibility) but also an understanding which would want to move from the kind of immateriality which belongs to us as human beings to the being of an immaterial reality or the being of an immaterial subjectivity which would exist as a subjective objective center of unity for the being of all things (however or in whatever way we would want to speak about them). We refer to the good and to the necessity of a more comprehensive explanation of things and so to the being and the good of a greater, more comprehensive, most comprehensive cause. So comprehensive is the cause is that it cannot be an effect.

### **Our transcendence**

In turning now to a third variable which is constitutive of how we exist as human beings in our world, it is to be noticed with respect to the immateriality of our subjectivity (or, in other words, the immortality or the other worldliness of our subjectivity as regards the manner of its transcendent, incarnate functioning) that, if we admit the truth of these realities and as we experience these same realities, then, from this, comes questions and inquiries that would have us ask about the likely origins or causes which can most probably explain the strangeness of our currently functioning, existing human condition. As our point of departure, we refer to the kind of beingness which we happen to have with respect to the self-transcendence which exists within us as an orientation which belongs to the life of our human subjectivity and the consequent immortality which belongs to this subjectivity as this is reflected or as it comes from the kind of being which belongs to us as human beings, living within the parameters of our humanity or living in a manner which transgresses or which acts against the kind of intelligibility that would seem to belong to us with respect to the nature of our humanity. We admit the contingencies which surround us and which beset us: three different contingencies which refer to the contingency of our incarnate human emergence, the contingency of our incarnate existence as regards our life within this physical material world, and the contingency which also comes with our freedom and our ability to choose between differing possible courses of action among changing, shifting, contingent conditions which exist for us as a kind of *a priori* within the context of our human life.

As we have been noting thus, a species of contingency or a species of emergence (and createdness) is joined to an experience and a sense of our personal individual immortality and so, if this unity is to have an explanation which could properly belong to it, then within this unity, within its combination, conjunction, and compound of contrasting variables, pointers or suggestive conditions would seem to exist for us if we should try and look for some kind of grounding act of intelligence or some kind of grounding act of understanding and explanation which could be so great in its depth and effectiveness that it also functions and exists for us as an act of doing or willing: simultaneously, it is able to combine conditions and variables that would seem to oppose and to jar with each other (the combination, in turn, would exist as a new type of unity). We would be looking for an originating source of meaning and being, an absolute point of origin, or a fundamental point of departure that would appear, on the one hand, to be farther afield or more remote than any proximate causes which seem to exist more immediately about us in terms which are closely joined to properties which exist within conjugates of space and time (according to our point of view, depending on the line of argumentation and analysis that we could be using) although, on the other hand also, as a contrary point of view, we can also think about a possible absence of remoteness (or, conversely, about another kind of proximity) if we should decide to work with another line of inquiry and argument in a manner that would work from some other species of first principle in the manner of our analysis. So much depends on our choice of first principles or what we would make into an adequate species of first principle as our initial point of departure since, if it is well chosen and then put into effect, an apt first principle best leads or it best engenders a greater or a wiser order within the being of many things through a unity and comprehensiveness whose sway is able to connect a larger number of variables than the possible or the probable use of some other species of first principle. An apt first principle reveals not only the unity and the interconnectedness of very many variables but in a way which also points to the uniqueness of all the different variables and so the differences and the conflicts which exist among them.

An apt first principle, from our point of view, would accordingly have to exist as a dialectical principle of unity if, for us, it is to achieve both types of result although, from its own point of view, we would have to speak about a kind of unity whose transcendence is such that it cannot exist as something that we ourselves directly understand and know. Any understanding that we would have would be partial or, in some way, indirect.

To try and give some examples about what could be meant by referring to the being and the application of a dialectical principle of unity: from an understanding that is taken from an understanding of the human subject, try and think about how, in Aquinas, we can find a dialectical first principle if we should think about how our understanding moves our human willing and about how, simultaneously, our human willing moves our understanding.<sup>67</sup> From an intellectualist viewpoint and as a tradition that we find in a way of thinking that comes to us originally from Socrates, understanding is key. Understanding is primary. It is dominant. Our willing is moved by our understanding and knowledge or, in other words, if you know the good you will do the good. Our willing exists as a derivative (*appetitus naturalis sequens formam intellectus* [“natural inclination following the form that is presented by the intellect”]).<sup>68</sup> However, from the parameters of a voluntarist perspective and a tradition of

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<sup>67</sup>See, for instance, Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 5 for a quotation as this is translated by Frederick E. Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2000), p. 82:

...will and intellect have a mutual priority over one another, but not in the same way. Intellect’s priority over will is in receiving (*in via receptionis*), for if anything is to move the will it must first be received into intellect.... But in moving or acting (*in movendo sive agendo*) will has priority, because every action or movement comes from the intention of the good; and hence it is that the will, whose proper object is the good precisely as good, is said to move all the lower powers.

As we read into Aquinas, especially the *Summa Theologiae*, we will find that, whenever Aquinas attempts to explain the life of our intellects, our human understanding, he finds that he must refer to the order of our human willing and desiring. A moral or voluntarist consideration is used to explain a cognitional variable. However, whenever he then attempts to explain the life of our willing and desiring, for a complete explanation, he must turn to the life of our reasoning and understanding. A cognitional variable is used to explain something which exists within the order of our human willing. One explains the other. Hence, in discovering this dynamic, we can extrapolate an explanation which can think in terms of an order of mutual causation. Our thinking and our reasoning explains our desiring and our willing and our desiring and our willing explains our thinking and our understanding.

<sup>68</sup>Bernard Lonergan, “Essay in Fundamental Sociology – Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material: Early Papers on History*, eds. Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), p. 6.

thinking that comes to us from Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud, it is the willing, or our desiring, or our passions which move our understanding and knowing.<sup>69</sup> Willing is dominant and primary and our understanding and knowing exists as a function of our desiring and willing. Our understanding exists as an effect. However, a third alternative exists if we should think in terms of a form of mutual causality or a form of mutual priority which exists between our knowing and willing where, simultaneously, each acts on or causes the other: the knowing, the willing and the willing, the knowing. In one way, understanding and knowing exists as an *a priori* and, in another kind of way, our desiring and willing exists as an *a priori*. An interactive cycle exists between our knowing and our willing and, if we attend to the being and the activity of this interactive cycle and if we can understand how it exists as a dialectical specification of unity (two elements or two parts belong together though each differs from the other), we can come to a better understanding of ourselves in a way which jives with the many tensions that we experience within ourselves within the condition of our human life as much as we can also move toward a greater, richer form of unity which can emerge as, within our subjective life, we work with all the inner tensions and conflicts which exist within our lives. We move toward a greater unity but by working through our conflicts and trials in a way which converts them or turns them into experiences of blessing, life, and goodness. The unity to be achieved is both a task that awaits us and, at the same time too, in our receptivity, it comes to us as a gift which is freely bestowed.

To employ a second example, a dialectical principle of unity can be discovered if we should move into the science or the study of human economics and into an understanding of macroeconomic theory which moves away from a simple notion of cyclic movement with respect to the genesis and the maintenance of economic activity. Instead of a cycle which thinks in terms of one circular movement which moves from the needs of consumers to the labor of producers and then from producers back to consumers (the demands of consumers provoke a given kind of economic production and the satisfaction of initial demands by producers leads to the emergence of new consumer needs and wants), to explain shifts in our human economic activity, an explanatory grasp which attends to changes or accelerations in the movement of economic activity best thinks in terms of two cycles and an order of causation which exists between these two cycles. Each circuit of supply and demand causes or moves the other in a way which points to a differentiated type of unity which exists within the larger order of our human economic activity.<sup>70</sup> One cycle or circuit which exists as a

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<sup>69</sup>On Hobbes and the primacy of the human lust for power in our human life, see, for instance, Eric Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint: Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, vol. 5, ed. Manfred Henningsen (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), p. 307.

<sup>70</sup>Frederick G. Lawrence, "Editors' Introduction," Bernard Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, eds. Frederick G. Lawrence, Patrick H. Byrne, and Charles C. Hefling, Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. liv; Lonergan, as cited by Lawrence, p. lvii

scheme of recurrence is cited as fundamental or basic. It produces goods and services that maintain or enhance a given standard of living that is being enjoyed by a given number of consumers.<sup>71</sup> But, a second cycle, circuit, or scheme of recurrence is fundamental in its own way although it is cited as surplus. It refers to the production of goods and services that can be enjoyed by the producers of consumer goods. Technological changes, as these occur, facilitate the possibility of our being able to effect changes in how goods can be produced and distributed: conditioning the rate of their production, their availability, and what new goods can be possibly produced and marketed. The economy accordingly moves from a concern with the simple production of basic consumer goods into an order that is concerned with a different set of values and objectives as capital investments are now needed and as they are employed in a way that can lead to the emergence of a new productive order which, in turn, effects a change in the flows of exchange which would exist within the parameters of a basic, consumer circuit. In each circuit or cycle, allocations and transfers of money will differ and fall into different, distinctive patterns. When an economy moves from one order or circuit into another order or circuit, different decisions will be needed about how and where money is to be allocated and spent. Prices and wages will differ. In a given context or a given circuit, prices and wages will rise or fall and, in another circuit, they will rise and fall in a different way. In a given context, inflation will exist as a good and not as an evil. But, in order to make good economic decisions, judgments will be needed in terms of determining if a given economy is functioning more within one order or circuit than within the other. A given economy can be in a condition of equilibrium (relatively speaking) or it can exist within either a surplus stage which refers to the good of capital formation and development or a basic stage which refers to the good of consumer spending and acquisition. Changes in pattern that can be observed if we should attend to the kind of data which exists in financial transactions which point to flows of money (in prices, expenses, and income) become meaningful or understandable if, on the basis of these two aforementioned circuits, we can now understand why certain changes are occurring within the arena of our economic performance as, for instance, changes within the order of our human technology are raised or brought into a higher order of being which would refer to the production of producer and consumer goods. Different demands distinguish the being of each circuit and, through the actualization of a given circuit, new fresh demands are created that provoke the emergence of the second circuit, to and fro, back and forth.

To find and to determine this greater, higher, more condensed unity of things in a way which would obviously have to shun the temptations of any kind of reductionism, as we have been noting thus, this greater unity that we desire to understand and know would have to be of a kind that it can include or point to a dialectical understanding of things which is able to attend to all the differences and the oppositions which exist among a wide variety of many different things in our world and yet conceive and think about how these things exist and work together.

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<sup>71</sup>Sean Mcnelis, "A Prelude to (Lonergan's) Economics," *Lonergan Review* vol. 11 no. 1 Spring (2010): 113.

The unity would exist among the differences. But, to grasp this unity or to begin to know it is to suppose that a combination or a juxtaposition of many different things can be brought together and understood and so known in a way which points to how it exists as a lesser or as a subordinate type of unity, relative to the greater unifying activity of an originating source and cause.

Hence: in the context of our inquiry, in the way of our analysis and in our subsequent apprehensions, in finding and moving toward this greatest unity, a resolution would have to be effected both within ourselves within the parameters of our understanding and, to some extent also, within the parameters of our human moral living if it can be said that growth in our understanding promotes or that it serves for us as a species of conditioning agent (even if it cannot be said to act in any kind of strict way as a determining, effecting cause). Its discovery solves some problems for us although, admittedly, in a way which often also raises new questions that, in turn, point to the emergence of new responsibilities and an order of new demands and concerns. How are we to live in response to what we have come to understand and know if, by our self-reflection and inquiry, we move toward a clearer knowledge of things that, in a way, inchoately, we have been sensing and understanding? No growth in understanding can be devoid of consequences for us as human beings as, consciously and deliberately, we try to move toward a deeper and yet a preliminary understanding of things in terms that can identify the nature, the specifics, or the attributes of this larger, more comprehensive unity. Subjectively or interiorly, it allegedly first exists within us as an apprehended, understood unity which exists within the grasp of our understanding before it can begin to have an external form of existence which it would have if it is thematized in a way which can turn it into a communicable conceptualization about which new, further questions can be asked in terms that can move us toward additional acts of understanding and other acts of understanding that are geared to affirmations which can then speak about the reality or the truth of this greater unity which, in some way, has been grasped and understood and then put into the definition and the terminology of a concept. In some way, our understanding is touching on or it is influencing the manner of our human living as, in a way, the manner of our human living is influencing us in our questioning, our understanding, and our subsequent knowing.

With respect, however, to the question of truth, if we are moving toward a reality that is indeed truly transcendent and which is not limited by the requirements or givenness of any known conditions (within the being of our subsequent judgments in an ordering of our judgments), we work with this principle as an acceptable alternative. To the degree that a larger number of variables can be related and joined with each other by a unity which is suggested by the intelligibility and the application of an apprehended, proffered first principle which, in some way, has been discovered or selected from within a number of possible options, by the same degree, the truth or the reality of a given first principle can be experienced and known by us as a likely, legitimate conclusion (as a legitimate point of view). In this context, as we increasingly and as we transcendently move from the givens to sense toward and into the immateriality of our greater understanding of things, from meaningfulness or from comprehensiveness comes truth (the probability of truth); or from greater meaningfulness or from greater comprehensiveness, a greater probability of truth. The reality or the truth of things is intimated to us as an unavoidable conclusion. It is suggested to us. We say that its truth is verified (although indirectly) through an intellectual kind of probability that is grasped

by us through the comprehensiveness and the depth of our understanding; or its truth is vouchsafed to us through an enhancement which has been brought into an order of apprehensions which has come to us or which has belonged to us through our prior or our implicit understanding of many different things in terms of how all these different things are related to each other in a good and wise way. In an incremental way, or discursively, continually, we move from bits and pieces toward the assembly and the apprehension of a greater whole, and the finding of this greater whole is both a source of satisfaction to us and, at the same time too, a stimulus and even an excitement which elicits our wonder, our curiosity, and the posing and asking of many other new questions. A difference exists. It is one thing to begin to talk about the being of a greater unity which somehow exists for us but another thing to begin to enjoy it and to relish it in some way as something that, in its own way, also belongs to us. It is part of our lives in a manner which is refracted in a paraphrase or a mistranslation which has come to us in a way which says about ourselves (as human beings) that, in some way, “the glory of God is man fully alive.” More accurately: *gloria enim Dei vivens homo, vita autem hominis visio Dei* [“for the glory of God is the living man, and the life of man is the vision of God”].<sup>72</sup>

As an expanding understanding of things and the greater fruitfulness which accordingly exists in our understanding accordingly leads us toward other acts of understanding and judgments (in a kind of apprehension which exists for us within the comprehensive order of things which belongs to the virtue and attainment of human wisdom), and as we move into our acts of willing in ramifications which would exist for us through a kind of self-transcendence which would belong to our acts of willing relative to our acts of understanding whenever we move from the self-transcendence of our understanding into the self-transcendence of our willing and desiring, the truth of a selected first principle should emerge for us as a truth that should become increasingly obvious and evident. The obviousness, as this is experienced by us, points to why it can be regarded as if it were a species of foregone conclusion. Its obviousness explains why rival first principles cannot be regarded as sufficiently apt, appropriate, or true. Through a kind of pragmatism which would seem to exist for us thus within our general understanding of things, through a kind of pragmatism which would seem to govern our understanding of things in general if our criterion is the extent and the breath of our understanding, the truth of a suggestive first principle is grounded in ways which point to its relevance, its sufficiency, and also to its effectiveness. So many different aspects in our lives are found to be related to each other. So many different aspects begin to fall within the range and the compass of the manner of our human living. The interrelations, as they are discovered to a farther and greater extent – these all point to the reality and the power of an identifiable, originating unity which so successfully joins a multitude of very many parts and consequences in a way which, in turn, reveals what can be known and said about the being of this originating source. Always, to some extent, effects exist within their causes.

To understand the point of this thesis in a better way or in a manner which is less strange to us according to the manner of our apprehension, see how Alasdair MacIntyre speaks about the kind of moral inquiry that can be found within an Augustinian tradition of thinking if our point of departure is a methodology that comes to us originally from the strategy and the kind of

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<sup>72</sup>Cf. <https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Irenaeus> (accessed October 9, 2018).

inquiry which comes to us from the work of St. Augustine. According to St. Augustine, at the very beginning of things, a fundamental precept urges the value of our first believing in order that we can begin later to engage in our subsequent acts of understanding and knowing. Believe in order to understand or, alternatively, *Unless you believe, you will not understand*.<sup>73</sup> Humbly begin with belief and faith.<sup>74</sup> Accept. Surrender. Acquiesce. Respond with an obedience that we give to something which is being given to us in its own way as a species of gift,<sup>75</sup> and then reap the consequences. Go toward the possibilities of moving into depths of understanding which, previously, had not been expected, known, or sought. Within this larger context thus, “rationally unjustified belief” precedes the event or the occurrence of our subsequent acts of understanding (the reception or the achievement of our understanding).<sup>76</sup> Employing this type of approach thus, a certain type of understanding can only be enjoyed by us if we should begin from a supposition or a belief that, as belief, is bereft of the kind of rational justification which would belong to it if we were to try to work with arguments that would refer to apprehensions of pertinent evidence. The obviousness of telling evidence immediately points to a related kind of obviousness which exists in the truth of a conclusion to which the evidence refers although, from the context of this other kind of standpoint or point of view, from the kind of viewpoint which comes to us if we should refer to how our acts of understanding are moved by our acts of believing, we can come to another kind of obviousness which can be known by us in another way; an understanding or an apprehension of obviousness which comes to us in a retrospective way if we should think back and attend to how, in our having certain beliefs and from the pregnancy or the suggestiveness of our beliefs, another kind of light has come to exist both within us and for us. Another light is cast for us as it begins to point to another way of thinking or to another path that we can begin to follow later in our subsequent acts of inquiry, thinking, understanding, knowing, and living. Its place or role is such that it indicates

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<sup>73</sup>Isaiah 7:9 LXX, as quoted by St. Augustine, “Letter 120,” 100-155, *Letters: Volume 2*, ed. John E. Rotelle and Boniface Ramsay (New York: New York City Press, 2002,...131, as cited by Joseph C. Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning: Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2014), p. 174.

<sup>74</sup>Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), p. 60. Siedentop speaks about an intellectual revolution which is triggered in us by an invitation that, if it is accepted, places obedience, adherence, and acceptance within an order which precedes our understanding and knowledge. Cf. p. 56. Associate the condition of our human rationality not with pride but with the openness and the liberation which comes from the good of humility and meekness as a personal human quality and fundamental point of departure. We best grow in understanding and knowledge if we can move not from a sense of our sufficiency and self-possession but from a sense of our need and lack and from the good of somehow moving into a condition which is somehow more open and receptive.

<sup>75</sup>Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, p. 56; Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning*, p. 174.

<sup>76</sup>Alasdair Macintyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 91.

how we can work with the suggestiveness and the viability of a different orientation, seeking another kind of goal as we notice, within the context of our thought and self-reflection, that our acts of believing suppose our ability to understand something about what is being revealed or given through us through the kind of cognition which belongs to acts of faith and belief.<sup>77</sup>

If then, with Aristotle, we should say that, in our inferences and deductions from some kind of first principle, “the least initial deviation from the truth is multiplied later a thousandfold” in terms of errors that we will meet and encounter, then with him and yet conversely, we can also argue (with St. Augustine) that, in working from a position which is eminently intelligible, true, and right (however this intelligibility, truth, and rightness is known and grasped by us within the order of our cognition), our apprehension of later truths is multiplied in its own way a thousandfold.<sup>78</sup> The greater reach of our subsequent grasp and understanding of things points to the aptness of what has been functioning as our fundamental and seminal point of departure. In metaphorical terms: the proof exists within the pudding. The goodness and truth of our beliefs conditions and makes for the goodness and the truth of our subsequent acts of understanding and judgment. We can turn our acts of sensing toward other objects that we can begin to sense and feel. We can begin to ask different questions and the order of our cognition is turned into lines of inquiry that follow and move into other paths as we move toward truths that we have not been interested in coming to know about.

By way of an example that can be used to illustrate the point that we are trying to make here as we think about how we can move and work from a species of first principle that can reveal an order of subordinate relations among a large number of many different things: if we should speak about an “extremely fertile act of understanding” that is able to grasp and to employ a first principle as a means of introducing or finding a unity which exists among a large number of many different things, in the physics of Aristotle, in order to understand the movement of many different kinds of physical objects which we find in our world, we find that he employs a first principle which says that every physical object desires to be in its “natural place.”<sup>79</sup> Every object or “substance has its natural place in the universe.”<sup>80</sup> If any given object does not exist in its natural place, its movement will be such that it will try to return or turn toward its natural place. The weight of a stone, for example, inclines it to a downward movement so that it can come to a place of rest which is natural and proper to it.

However, in attending to this principle or notion which speaks about a “natural place” for the location of physical objects, it should be noted that this notion or thesis is not accepted because it has been proved or verified from an apprehension which exists outside this thesis in terms of

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<sup>77</sup>St. Augustine, “Letter 120,” as cited by Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning*, p. 174: “...we could not even believe if we did not have rational souls.”

<sup>78</sup>Adler, *Mistakes*, p. xiii, quoting Aristotle.

<sup>79</sup>Isaac Asimov, *Understanding Physics Volume 1 Motion, Sound, and Heat* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993), p 5.

<sup>80</sup>Asimov, *Understanding Physics*, p. 4.

the truths of any evidence which should belong to it. Instead, and somewhat simply, it has been postulated as a hypothesis which, as a heuristic, has been later used by us (although initially by Aristotle) as a chief organizing principle. It is an hypothesis which we have intelligently supposed or which we have rationally assumed in the context of our scientific inquiry and the asking of our questions. It is concluded to or it is derived as a theorem as we have looked about the world and as we have observed different kinds of motion which exist within it and as we have searched for a single principle which can be used to relate the motions of many different kinds of object into an intelligible whole that reveals a general order within all the different things that move within our moving, changing world (either through a form of self-movement that exists within things or through receptions of movement that have come from the being of other things, these two kinds of movement often existing together in a way where each causes the other). Although, in one sense here, we do not really know if a given hypothesis (as a first principle) is in fact true or false, in another sense however, we can speak about its truth in terms of its usefulness or its fruitfulness and so, by our applying it and by our working with it, we can relate a larger number of variables into a unity than would otherwise be grasped or known by us.

Other explanatory principles can be suggested and they have been suggested since possibly and even actually, in some cases, their use will lead us toward a larger number of related variables in a way that is to be preferred over the use of a prior or an earlier first principle which, to date, we have been using and which we have been applying. As an instance of this, we can refer to the postulation of Newton's first law of motion, his notion of inertia. *A body remains at rest or, if already in motion, [it] remains in uniform motion with constant speed in a straight line, unless it is acted on by an unbalanced external force.*<sup>81</sup>

On the other hand and similarly, within our understanding of human things, a proffered first principle that has been used as a fundamental assumption in discussions which have tried to speak about how a political form of human order can be constructed in a way which best avoids internal conflict speaks about the primacy of our human equality and the obviousness of

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<sup>81</sup> Asimov, *Understanding Physics*, p. 24. As an explanatory principle that is postulated but which was not proved or verified, it superseded Aristotle's earlier theorem which had supposed the existence of a "natural place" as a general explanatory principle from which many conclusions can be inferred about the movement of physical objects. As Asimov argues his case:

Newton's laws of motion represent assumptions and definitions and [they] are not subject to proof. In particular, the notion of "inertia" is as much an assumption as Aristotle's notion of "natural place." There is this difference between them, however: The principle of inertia has proved extremely useful in the study of physics for nearly three centuries now and has involved physicists in no contradictions. For this reason (and not out of any considerations of "truth") physicists hold on to the laws of motion and will continue to do so.

this principle.<sup>82</sup> It is said that “all men are equal” or that “all men are created equal” and so, if this is true, then, from this, we can speak about a species of political society and order which does not recognize the uniqueness or the difference of each human individual and how human beings differ from each other in ways which would have to detract from the possible being or the supposition of any kind of equality which is said to exist among them as living beings. The equality of human beings, as soon as it believed to be entirely and fully true – as soon as this type of thesis is accepted, it immediately changes our perspective or it grounds the emergence of a new perspective that is taken to be our new point of departure for envisaging how things should be and exist within our human political order and how human beings should properly relate to each other within this context.<sup>83</sup>

Hence, as we compare proffered first principles that have been used in certain ways in different contexts, now in this context and now in another context, in its possible or probable inadequacy or in its relative lack of comprehensiveness, the truth of a proffered, earlier first principle will soon lose its hold or its influence (its earlier explanatory power and so its earlier acceptance will soon pass from the scene in terms of our appreciation and our understanding of it and so our acceptance of it) even if, from within it, from within the terms of its meaning, it continues to retain a degree of cogency, a degree of explanatory power which, in fact, properly belongs to it and which cannot be entirely taken from it. In these matters, a limited degree of understanding is always to be preferred over what would possibly exist for us as a lack or as an absence of understanding.

In thinking then about how we can come to a species of first principle which best explains the strangeness of our incarnate material immaterial condition (to some extent, it would reveal how or where the truth of things would seem to exist), two options accordingly present themselves to us if, as a fundament, we should continue to work with the principle of cause and effect as

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<sup>82</sup>Harvey C. Mansfield, *A Student Guide to Political Philosophy* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2016), p. 37.

<sup>83</sup>For another possible example of a belief or a thesis which has been proposed and which has been used as an unquestionable type of first principle which has been supposed and assumed in order to create an order and also to initiate a human understanding of many different human things, see Augusto del Noce's, “Toward a New Totalitarianism,” in *The Crisis of Modernity*, ed. trans. Carlo Lancellotti (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), pp. 89-90. See how he speaks about the totalitarianism of scientism as a philosophic bias and as a species of cognitive first principle that is adopted by many persons. Assume and believe that scientific knowledge is the only valid kind of knowledge that we can have as human beings and so, from this, we would have to assume, argue, and deny that other kinds of knowledge do not really and truly exist. They exist only as prefabrications or as delusions and they are to be avoided by us at all costs (although, oddly enough, the thesis and the truth of scientism, as a conclusion or as a premiss, is something which cannot be scientifically known or scientifically argued if the correctness of our scientific methodology is to be known as a conclusion which does not itself suppose, participate, or in some way belong in the form of argument which belongs to the ways and means of our scientific analysis). No truth can be known in terms of its likely or probable evidence if the truth which is to be proved is something which belongs to the assumptions that one is already making in any arguments which one is attempting to employ.

our heuristic point of departure. We can work either from effects to causes or from causes to effects (to and fro, back and forth, as needed). A different type of thinking is required in either case in terms of our manner of procedure and inquiry, depending on the choice that we should happen to make about the point of departure that we would prefer to use at any given time (focusing on something which exists either as an effect or as something which allegedly exists as a cause) although, at the same time too, it is to be admitted that nothing prevents us from moving from one type of approach to the other in a manner which points to the intelligibility and the good of working with both approaches, the combination of the two leading us toward an expansion and a deepening of an understanding of things which we can possibly have and which can be given to us as we move toward an understanding about how transcendence exists as a constitutive element that, in some way, properly belongs to us in terms of how we exist and live as human beings since, from the transcendence, comes everything else (the immanence of our world and our experience of it); or, from the transcendence, comes both the order of our being and the order of our knowing (although in our knowing, in our mode of inquiry, we move from the order of our knowing to the order of our being and then, from there, to the being of transcendent things). An ordering of things in cognition takes us into a metaphysics and then, from there, into a theology (the one grounding the other) although, conversely and in a complementary way, an ordering of things within a theology grounds an ordering of things within a metaphysics and, from there, we move into an ordering of things as this exists within the ways and means of our human cognition.

### Analysis

As a first option thus, if we should choose to work with a line of analysis which wants to work from effects to causes: according to this point of view, can we move toward an explanation which accounts for the qualified kind of immateriality which belongs to us as human beings and the qualified kind of immortality (the qualified kind of transcendence) which also belongs to us as human beings? What could be the possible or the probable explanation which, in its own way, would have to exist as a governing, unrestricted, originating act of understanding, willing, and doing if our own acts of understanding exist in their own right as acts of understanding and if they are to be rightly regarded as effects (as effects with a reality of their own as secondary, effective causes if, from our acts of understanding, we have consequences or effects in terms of how we are to live or should live as human beings)? If, from potency, we cannot get act; if from possibility, we cannot get actuality: our acts of understanding cannot come from something which does not exist in its own right as an act of understanding (they would have to come from an act of understanding which would have to exist, in some way, as a superior or greater or unrestricted act of understanding if it determines conditions and limitations of any kind (in this case, for us, how something can exist in a restricted kind of way). The reality of an effect points to a greater reality which would have to exist in its actuating, originating cause.

In this context thus and as our point of departure, we all know (or we should know), through our self-understanding and our self-reflection, that our understandings exist essentially as receptions (they come from something that is other than ourselves); they do not exist as productions, as activities, or as projections of ourselves in our subjectivity (as things that we would hope to do, to accomplish, and to have through our mere willing and our desiring of

them).<sup>84</sup> How, however, can an understanding which somehow or which implicitly knows (through its self-understanding and knowledge) about the being of this greater, transcendent act of understanding and which is united in some way to this greater act of understanding (ontologically, in terms of an order of participation through the principle of effect and cause, and cognitively, in terms of an identity which always exists within our acts of understanding between a given act of understanding and that which the understanding grasps and knows as a species of other that is joined to the act),<sup>85</sup> at the same time also exist as the term of a limited or a restricted act of understanding which immanently exists within ourselves as human beings and which intimately belongs to us through how we exist as contingently existing beings? What is our ground here? How can we speak about union and difference, a species of

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84If we should want to understand the receptivity of understanding in a way which points to the truthfulness of this position, we best begin by engaging in exercises of our own where, through our acts of reasoning and thinking, we can try to move toward an act of understanding which can resolve a problem or overcome a difficulty. Mathematical examples best serve as test cases since, in our mathematical reasoning, we have an exact kind of thinking and reasoning which transcends the kind of fluidity and ambiguity which belongs to the kind of understanding which exists within the pragmatism of our ordinary operations as these exist within common sense. In dealing with difficult mathematical problems, we should find that, often, we can be stymied in our efforts to find an apt solution or answer. We draw lines and we can enumerate the bits and pieces that we know in order to distinguish between what we know and what we do not know. We can construct images and form equations that could possibly point us toward the being of a mathematical solution and, if we step back and reflect on our cognitional operations, we should notice that our understanding does not emerge in any kind of mechanical or physical way. No amount of effort produces the desired act of understanding. But, if we take time off, if we do something else, in unexpected ways, later, when we are often not expecting it, a solution is simply given to us within the apprehension of our understanding. We have our act of understanding. Our acts of inquiry indeed condition or they encourage our acts of understanding and they exist as causes only if we should refer to them as a species of material cause since, by asking questions, we introduce a form or an order into our cognitive consciousness in a way which inclines it or which disposes it to understanding something that, otherwise, would not be understood. Hence, for want of a technical expression, we can speak about how our acts of inquiry exist as active potencies. The asking of questions does not cause the understanding but the questioning must exist as a presupposition before anything can begin to happen if we are to move from an experience of incomprehension to an experience of understanding.

85Simply put: no act of understanding exists apart from its term which exists as an understood which belongs to a given act of understanding. Term and act cannot be separated from each other in terms of a real distinction since neither term nor act can exist apart from each other. Citing one frequently quoted quotation that comes to us from a tradition of earlier reflection: *intelligibile in actu est intellectus in actu* ["the intelligible in act is the intelligence in act"]. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 2, as quoted by Lonergan, *Verbum*, pp. 83-84. As Lonergan explains both Aristotle and Aquinas about what they mean in claiming that the intelligible in act is the intelligence in act and that the sensible in act is sense in act, he notes that, prior to any acts of understanding and prior to any acts of sensing which can exist in the life of a human subject, a real distinction always obtains between what can be understood or what can be sensed and any acts of understanding or intelligence which can understand or

sufficiency or a species of competence which belongs to our understanding and, at the same time, an absence of sufficiency or an absence of competence?

As understanders thus and as a kind of prior condition, within our understanding of things and within our self-knowledge, we know that we can reasonably and rationally assume (as a first principle) that every reason or every explanation that is known is something which exists as the term of an act of understanding. Absent the act, absent the term. Act goes with term (the understanding and the understood) and so the understood reflects the grasp which exists within us through the experience that is given to us in our having a direct act of understanding. But secondly, as another general principle that we would want to admit and to espouse as another species of first principle within the order of our human cognition: the greater a reason which is being grasped, the greater is the act of understanding which would have to be doing or experiencing the grasping and the understanding (whether the grasping is allegedly and incorrectly an activity or whether allegedly and correctly it is a reception; however we would want to describe or to determine it). The greater is the act which would exist as one's act of understanding (as our own act of understanding). Yet, in our experience of understanding, in the transcendence which exists within our understanding, we know or we can know about the being of other things without ourselves being the reality of these other, distinct things. Hence or similarly, as we move into our self-understanding in a way which leads to distinctions and differentiations that become familiar to us, we realize that we can know about the being of other acts of understanding without these same acts of understanding ceasing to exist in a manner which is beyond ourselves in terms of our being or which would be transcendent to ourselves with respect to the mode and the manner of our individual existence.

Other acts of understanding (as causes) accordingly exist with a reality that is proper to them also (apart from ourselves) even if we must admit that, in our own acts of understanding,

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any acts of sensing which can sense and exist in the life of a given subject. One is not the other. However, if an act of understanding is being enjoyed by a given subject, or if an act of sense is operative in the life of a sensing subject, an identity exists between what is understood and a given act of understanding and, with respect to our acts of sensing, an identity between what is being sensed and a given act of sense. If, for instance, a bell is ringing and if its sound is being heard in an act of sensing, we can say that “the hearing in act and the sounding in act are one and the same.” Similarly thus, if, through the mediation of an apt image (which exists for us as an “illuminated phantasm”), an immaterial meaning or form is being communicated to a potential knower and if, through the reception of an act of understanding, this immaterial form or significance is being known for what it is as an indwelling, immaterial principle, an identity will also exist between an act of understanding, on the one hand, and an intelligible content which is being understood, on the other hand. Each comes with the other and each stands or falls with the other. If, in sensing, sounding exists as an external variable (as an external agent or cause), in understanding, understanding or meaning exists in its own way as an external variable (as an external agent or cause). Each enters or belongs to our subjectivity in a way that we cannot entirely control, govern, or manage. From our side as subjects, degrees of cultivation in our sensing and our thinking can encourage receptions that belong to both our acts of sensing and acts of understanding and yet the sensing and the understanding can occur or come to us in a way which transcends the good and need of cultivation or, in some cases, put aside or ignore the need for the good of any kind of cultivation or encouragement.

through a kind of participation which exists within us, an act of understanding which exists within another's being or which belongs to another's being can come to exist and belong to ourselves in our understanding to an extent that would be proper to the kind of being which we enjoy as human beings. In terms of cause and effect (an understanding as a cause and then an understanding as an effect), in its own way (in a way which transcends our understanding of things), an unrestricted act of understanding can come to live and to exist within ourselves as a partial act of understanding or as a limited act of understanding since an unrestricted act of understanding cannot be received or enjoyed by a subject which is restricted in the manner of its existence and operation (the being of a thing reflects the manner of its understanding as, at the same time, the subjective understanding of a thing as subject reflects the manner of its being or the manner of its existence). On the one hand thus: if the same term or the same content is understood by more than two understanders (as subjects) through each their own acts of understanding; if, to some extent, the same idea is being grasped by them, then between two different acts of understanding, within the cognitive order of things, an identity is to be admitted (of a qualified type): an identity which would exist as an overlap or as a communion with respect to a kind of union which would have to exist between two different acts of understanding and a communion which would therefore exist between two different subjects. A real distinction, in a way, does not exist (a real distinction is not to be admitted to some extent) although, on the other hand however, a real distinction is to be admitted to some extent if we should refer to the being of two different distinct subjects where, for instance, an unrestricted subject enjoys an unrestricted understanding of things and a restricted subject enjoys but a limited understanding of things. However, each is enjoying an act of understanding which does not differ from the being of the other's act of understanding if we should refer to a common term, an idea, or an intelligibility that is being grasped and understood by both (although admittedly, in the existence of an unrestricted act of understanding, much more would be grasped and understood than that which would be given or grasped by a restricted act of understanding as regards the meaning or the intelligibility which it itself grasps and understands). Real identity and real difference exists together (in different ways).

Simply put according to the manner and mode of our analysis: we use our acts of reasoning and our acts of understanding in order to infer or in order to move toward the being of a greater act of understanding which would have to be of a kind (if it is comprehensive) that it can explain our own acts of understanding (as an immaterial transcendent principle, it would explain other immaterial transcendent principles as effects) since, like it or not, as individual beings, we exist within a larger order of things which includes ourselves (we refer to an order of things that we have not created through our own desires and efforts) and, yet, through our own acts of inquiring and reasoning, we can try to move toward a union of sorts and an apprehension that can identify the possible being of a greater or a greatest cause or the possible being of that which would exist as a greater or as a greatest act of understanding which, in its own being, would have to grasp both the possible being and the real being of all existing things and which, at the same time, through this grasping, would also have to effect the being of all existing things through acts of understanding which would exist as originating acts of being and so as originating acts of creating: through possessing an effective kind of unity which would have to exist as the greater or as the greatest kind of unity which would exist among an infinite number of many different, distinct variables. The being of this understanding (as an act) would exist in its own right as an originating unity and, as a reflection of this understanding, the term of this

understanding would exist as an unrestricted, originating relation among an unrestricted number of variables (existing thus as an overarching, general unity or as an overarching general relation) that, directly, we cannot grasp and understand and which we do not grasp and understand by ourselves through the acts of understanding that normally belong to us, in our contingency, as human beings.

As the unrestrictedness which exists with respect to an understood, intelligible unity that we postulate as an originating cause (or as an originating first principle) points to the unrestrictedness of the act of understanding which directly grasps this unity and which constructs this unity *as an activity*, the unrestrictedness of an unrestricted act of understanding accordingly precludes any ways of thinking that would want to assume or argue that this understanding would be something which is caused or that it can be effected by something else which would exist as some other kind of other (as some other act of understanding). Its actuality as understanding cannot exist as a species of passivity, potency, or reception (hence, its uniqueness, its originality, and its distinctiveness). If, by more acts of understanding, it can be said that more can be understood by us and if too, by fewer acts of understanding, it can be also argued that, in some cases, more can be understood, then we can understand why it can be argued that, by one act of understanding, everything can be possibly grasped and understood in a manner which, in its fullness and immediacy, transcends any parts or portions that can exist within combinations of spatial and temporal conditions. Increasingly, we move from quantities toward qualities: from acts of understanding which are more numerous toward acts of understanding which are fewer but which are more powerful, and then toward an act that stands alone in its uniqueness and unrestrictedness. It needs no help or supplement from anything that would exist as an act of understanding.

To explain a bit more here: for an understanding that can move from the restricted type of understanding which belongs to us as human beings to a conception which can speak about an unrestricted type of understanding which does not belong to us as human beings, look at how, in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas,<sup>86</sup> it is possible to move from a proper understanding of our human cognition toward an analogical understanding of angelic cognition and then, from there, toward an analogical understanding as this would refer to the divine type of cognition which alone belongs to God. With respect to how we exist as human beings, more acts of understanding tend to add to the extent and to the depth of our understanding (constituting our human knowledge of many different things). We associate levels or degrees of intelligence with quantities or the frequency of our understanding in terms of its many different acts. But, if we should turn to the being of angels as angels (who, by nature, exist as “separate substances” or, in other words, who exist as “disincarnate beings”), some angels understand more than others but not through receiving a larger number of insights through acts of understanding that are given to them but by receiving fewer acts of understanding which are given to them. The place, the role, or the order of an angel is best explained by the fact that a given angel

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<sup>86</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 10; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 98, 10; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 126, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 50, ad 1, ad 2; q. 55, a. 3. See also Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 65.

(instead of this other angel) is understanding more with less. More is understood and grasped through fewer acts of understanding. Recall here that, for human beings, some persons understand more on the basis of fewer clues than what happens to be the case with other human beings. But now, if we should attend to divine things and to the being of God as an unrestricted act of understanding, through the fewest number of acts or, in other words, through but only one act, God or in God, everything is grasped and understood at once, completely. The fewer or the least exists in terms of their being only one act of understanding that knows no bounds or restrictions; and the more or the most, in terms of everything which can be possibly grasped and understood. The absence of restrictions in the act points to an unrestrictedness that exists also in terms of its content or term, a perfect unity existing between the act and the term.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>To avoid confusion, it is best to speak about who God exists as an act of understanding (i.e., as an unrestricted act of understanding) than to speak about him in terms which would want refer to acts of reasoning or thinking or acts which could be described as intentional acts, acts which are done for the purpose of moving toward some kind of desired, intended goal. Although, frequently, many references to God within the conceptualizations of philosophical and theological literature refer to God in terms of thinking and reasoning (God's divine thinking, God's divine reasoning) and although many references also suggest, in an anthropomorphic way, that God acts in order to achieve desired goals and objectives (for instance, God wants to manifest his own glory), the completeness or the perfection which exists with respect to our acts of understanding versus the incompleteness or the imperfection which belongs to our acts of reasoning and thinking points to why the absence of potentiality which exists with respect to God and who God is is in turn best pointed out or it is best respected and spoken about if we should speak about God in terms of understanding rather than in terms which suggest that some kind of distance or gap is to be adverted to, allegedly between the experience of a given species of cognitional act and that which exists as the intended goal or the objective of a given cognitional act.

Within the context of our own lives, we think and reason in order to experience or to move toward the reception of an act of understanding and the understood which exists within the reception of a given act of understanding, an understood existing as the term of an act of understanding. Reasoning and thinking exist as incomplete motions or as imperfect motions because they exist as motions which are in process (*in via*, "on the way"). A separation exists between them as acts or activities and that which is intended by them through our acts or activities. Think, for instance here, about how, in walking or running from A to B, we have an activity, an act of locomotion, which is the activity of our walking or our running but, in our walking or running, we have not arrived at our intended destination. However, when an act of understanding is experienced by us at any given time within any given context, whenever an act of understanding is given to us, a perfect union always exists between that which is grasped by us in an act of understanding and that which exists within ourselves as an emerging act of understanding. Between act and term, no real distinction exists (no real difference is to be alluded to). We cannot have an act of understanding without having or enjoying its adequate, proper term (existing invisibly as an understood) and we cannot have an understood without that which exists as a responsible, invisible act of understanding. While it is unwise to argue

In our manner of proceeding here and as a first principle that accordingly belongs to us in our manner of human cognition – we refer to a manner of cognition which is so fundamental and so basic that it cannot be distinguished from the fundamental manner of being which belongs to the existence of realities which belong to a metaphysical order of things where, here always, within this context, a given truth cannot be proved or demonstrated from an external point of view through a form of discursive reasoning which would move us from what is known at A toward what can be known at B<sup>88</sup> - it is to be noted that a species of self-evident, indemonstrable first principle exists within all of our acts of reasoning and understanding as a fundamental law or precept. According thus to this law or precept, as an indemonstrable first

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that God, as an act of understanding, is exactly like our human acts of understanding, the kind of perfection or completeness which exists with respect to our own acts of understanding is something which cannot be rejected, denied, or cast aside if God exists with a completeness or a perfection which transcends any kind of completeness or perfection that is given to us as human beings within the context of our human experience (as we live within a contingent, conditioned world). Perfections which exist within the created, contingent order of things exist more fully or they exist more supremely, in ways that we cannot entirely picture or imagine, if we should try to think and speak about perfection as perfection allegedly applies to God, God existing as an entirely perfect being, as wholly complete in himself and as not lacking in any kind of quality or perfection as perfections or qualities would have to exist with respect to the nature and the existence of immaterial realities which, in themselves, exist as immaterial, spiritual beings.

<sup>88</sup>As an aid in our understanding here, please distinguish between (1) demonstrable first principles (whose conclusions have to be proved and argued on the basis of evidence which exists as a kind of external thing; or in other words, conclusions which can be proved and argued on the basis of evidence which exists as an external kind of thing where, here, we would move from what is best known at A to what can then be known at B) and, on the other hand, (2) indemonstrable first principles (whose conclusions or whose truth has not to be proved or argued for or whose conclusions or whose truth cannot be proved or argued in a way which would move from what is known at A to what is then known at B). Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 112, a. 5. In the case of indemonstrables, no evidence exists as some kind of other, external, better known thing. Where, with demonstrables, within this order of things, the truth of things can be proved or it can be demonstrated from a more certain knowledge of something else that is other, on the other hand however, in the case of indemonstrables, these other things cannot be proved or demonstrated or argued toward because, in some situations, we cannot work from a knowledge of something which is more thoroughly known and understood and which nobody can then possibly dispute or deny. Indemonstrables are foundational and basic. They cannot be proved by any arguments which would move us from A to B since the proof of an indemonstrable is something which exists within itself, within its own terms of reference in the meaning that belongs to a proffered indemonstrable that is put into words and concepts. Its truth is obvious, blatant, and indisputable. Its truth is so self-evident and primary that it is apodictically known. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4, 4, 1006a6-11; Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 4, 6, 609; *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 4.

Briefly, to cite but one example among many other possible options: as a proffered

principle that cannot be denied or rejected (without risk of implausibility that comes from self-contradiction), the intelligibility of things that are understood points to the being of things which possibly exists; or alternatively, through the intelligibility of things that are understood by us in the context of our understanding, by a kind of self-transcendence which exists within our understanding, we can then move toward the being of things which, in fact, would seem to really and truly exist. The two go together or, more accurately, they imply or they point to each other (intelligibility, being and being, intelligibility) if, reasonably or by merely asking questions about the possibility of meaning and truth, we are supposing that, somewhere or somehow, reasons and truths exist. They are to be found since, in some way, they explain why a given thing exists in the way that it does or how, in fact, it happens to exist in the way that it

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indemonstrable first principle, meaningfulness is to be understood and defined as “the capacity to be understood.” Cf. Mascall, *Openness of Being*, p. 30. To try to move toward a better definition that would be more basic or more fundamental would require moving toward a meaning or a concept which would be more inherently meaningful. It would have to be more meaningful and insightful than the heuristic definition or the heuristic conception that we have initially started with. But, in the act of doing this or in attempting any kind of better understanding, we would be supposing the truth of our initial definition which has spoken about meaningfulness in terms of its possibility, its pregnancy, its potency: in terms of how it exists as that which can be possibly grasped and understood by us through any of our acts of understanding that can be possibly given to us. To seek a better meaning or definition always supposes or it presupposes the pregnancy and the potency of meaningfulness and how, in general, meaningfulness exists as something that we would like to possibly understand and know and then put into a general definition that would exist for us as a new, communicable concept. In this context thus, the potency of meaningfulness as a metaphysical principle is to be identified with the possibility or the potency of our understanding which would always exist for us as a fundamental datum or as a fundamental point of departure that we cannot put aside or bracket if our questioning and inquiry and our yearning for meaning exists as a species of operative, active potency: as a desire and as a search for increases and additions to the apprehension of our understanding and for actuations of meaning which would always occur for us in all of our acts of understanding.

In this context thus, if we only attend to meaning *as meaning*, no relevant, real distinction can be alluded to between that which would exist (in us as knowers) as an act of direct understanding and that which would exist in us as an act of reflective understanding that would be given to us in an act of judgment if properly, in every act of judgment and in all our prospective judgments, meaningfulness always exists as a fundamental presupposition and potency since, in our seeking to make judgments, we are always moving toward possible apprehensions of pertinent or relevant evidence and then, from there, toward a conclusion which would exist as a true affirmation which, in some way, now knows a truth for how or why it exists as a truth that is true. The anticipation of reasons in our reflective inquiry exists in its own way as an experience of meaningfulness with respect to its potency and then, too, the experience or the reception of the reasons that exist in judgment exists in its own way as an experience of meaningfulness with respect to its actuation although, admittedly, these experiences of meaningfulness all point to how meaningfulness can be differentiated in a way which points to how it exists in terms of different species.

does with the kind of reality which it happens to have. Being comes with knowing and understanding or being comes through understanding and knowing; it is to be associated with knowing and understanding if to know about the being of a thing is to know something about what a given thing happens to be or why it is as it is or how it exists in the way that it happens to be.

To explain things a bit more fully at this point: from the intelligibility which exists within our inferences and a kind of necessity which exists within our acts of understanding (as a term or as the content of our understanding immediately proceeds from the reception of an act of understanding that is given to us, and as

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Hence, within this context, as we attend to the kind of self-evidence which exists with respect to the being of indemonstrables, in the absence or in the inapplicability of our having to turn toward a possible act of judgment if, discursively, we are to grow in our understanding and knowledge of things (where, in an anticipatory, prospective judgment, we would be moving toward apprehensions of externally existing evidence and arguments that can then speak about the truth of a given principle or thesis), a lack of distinction has now to be adverted to: the absence of real distinction between something which is immediately understood and known in a direct act of understanding and something which is believed and known to be true as soon as it is grasped and understood by us. On the one hand, a certain kind of knowledge exists when we refer to a coordination of different acts which exists among our various acts of sensing, our acts of understanding, and our acts of judgment while, on the other hand however, another kind of knowledge exists in those cases where acts of judgment are not appropriate, pertinent, or relevant. If the truth of some things is known apart from any arguments that would move us from effects to causes or apart from any arguments which would move us from apprehensions of evidence toward the rationality of conclusions and affirmations, then, from within this other kind of cognitive context, we can conclude and infer that the reception of our acts of understanding as knowledge is to be distinguished as a species of knowledge in conjunction with a second species of knowledge or a second mode of reception which also exists as true knowledge if, within the dynamic of belief and within the experience and acceptance of belief as knowledge, we have a knowledge of things that exists apart from our having to engage in any kind of argument that would move us toward evidence and proof and the kind of verification which exists within the possible context of rational judgments if, within this limited or restricted context, we try to move from a knowledge of one thing toward a knowledge of something else that would be known as an effect or result.

In a way which accordingly points to an inner connection or an inner relation which exists between our acts of human belief and faith and our acts of reason and understanding, we find that we are working with both the meaning and the being of indemonstrable principles in a way which can then point to how, from an understanding of these principles as a species of human knowledge, we can then move toward a partial understanding or an analogical kind of understanding that can be given to us if we should attend to how, in some cases, at a fundamental or primary level, our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding cannot be too clearly differentiated from our acts of faith or belief (the faith and the believing, in its own way, grounding the sensing and the understanding). So important are indemonstrables for us that they exist as conditions of possibility for our understanding and knowledge. The rationality of our judgments as reflective acts of understanding suppose their being and truth.

our acts of understanding are encouraged by our acts of questioning and inquiry and by our use of images in the hope of finding apt images which would exist as apt, suggestive phantasms), then, from this necessity which exists as a finite kind of necessity or as a created kind of necessity which exists within us within the order of our human cognition and understanding (the manner of our understanding is something that we have not created or brought into an initial condition of being and existence), a like necessity would similarly exist within the order of being or the order of existing things that have not brought themselves into the order of their individual existence. In its own right and yet, too, as a kind of reflection, understanding exists as a species or instance of being; it belongs to an order of existing things. A real distinction cannot be drawn between the order of our reason or the principle of intelligibility (sometimes known as the principle of sufficient reason)<sup>89</sup> and, on the other hand, the order of existing things which, in general, would refer to the content and the subject matter of the kind of science which belongs to us in our study and our perusal of metaphysics if, through our understanding and even as we ask questions that are geared to our possibly experiencing increases in the extent of our understanding, a union already exists between the order of our human cognition and the order of existing things which are known through the kind of inquiry and understanding which belongs to us (within our inquisitive, reflective acts of understanding).<sup>90</sup> An intellectual, contingent necessity in terms of truth

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And so, similarly, for the sake of possible growth in our understanding and knowledge of certain things, in our faith and belief, in the kind of apprehension which exists in our acts of faith and believing, we have truths or we come to know about truths where some exist in their own way as indemonstrables: they cannot be proved or demonstrated if our mode of procedure and our point of departure were to be limited to the kind of form or the kind of ordering which belongs to our reflective acts of understanding where, always, in the operation of these acts, we move from realities that are better known toward realities that can then be affirmed and known to exist in the fullness and reality of their truth. In some way (in a manner which has yet to be understood if, for us, an understanding is possible), faith and reason exist together within the parameters of a larger, greater, more fundamental unity that can only be appreciated and known if, in the context of a deeper form of self-reflection and thought, we can come to know about assumptions and determinations of meaning which exist as beliefs (whether they are good or ill) that have been operative for us in the context of our lives and in ways which point to how, for us, they have existed as first principles that have yet to be clearly identified and known by us within the context of our self-understanding and knowledge. In some way or in some cases (although, unfortunately, not always), they have been leading us toward fruitful increases in the depth of our understanding and toward the experience of very many good things that would not otherwise be given to us but for the sake and the causality of certain assumptions and beliefs that we have imbibed or which have been given to us (apart from any inquiries that we would want to make that can possibly move us from our acts of sensing through our initial acts of understanding toward the kind of understanding which would exist in our acts of reflective judgment).

<sup>89</sup>Feser, *Five Proofs*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>90</sup>Anthony M. Matteo, *Quest for the Absolute: The Philosophical Vision of Joseph Maréchal* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992), pp. 115-116; p. 139.

as this exists within us (within our understanding since truth exist only within our minds, our intellects, or our understanding and not outside of our minds, our intellects, or our understanding)<sup>91</sup> – this truth, in turn, points to a metaphysical, contingent necessity as this exists within the order of being (the being of contingently existing things which exists as more than the being of our understanding). Given what we are grasping and understanding within our acts of understanding and the reasonableness of our understanding as this reasonableness exists within our cognitive understanding of things as a species of inner norm and rule, it follows from this that this or that which is known by us would have to be either true or false. It exists or it does not exist and this existence or non-existence would follow or it would be known as if it were a species of foregone conclusion given the conclusions which, in a way, through reasoning, we have been forced to draw (conclusions which necessarily or which inherently belong to us through the kind of being which belongs to our acts of understanding).

For instance thus, if we can refer to a frequently cited example: if we were to try to argue for the truth of skepticism in our understanding and knowledge of things, we would be engaging in a form of performative self-contradiction since to argue the truth of skepticism is to argue against in favor of a universally valid thesis or a universally valid point of view. The incoherence of skepticism accordingly points to the truth of our cognition or to the trust that we should have in the reliability of our acts of cognition even as we need to note and to understand that, within the order of our cognition, a critical principle is to be acknowledged and adverted to. A critical principle exists and if this principle is to fully exist, be, and function in the life that it should have in us as human beings, then it needs to be acknowledged and, in some way, encouraged, pruned, cultivated, and practiced. The quality of its being or the quality of its life will naturally vary as, ontologically, we move from one human person to another human person and as, subjectively, we also move from one human subject to another human subject.

If a given thing accordingly exists as an intelligible thing (if a given thing exists in a way which points to some kind of formal determination which would differ from the possible being of any kind of material determination: a formal principle indicates an identity, what something is or why it exists in the way that it does, or why something is this and not that, or why this material determination differs from this other material determination), then the intelligibility of a given thing implies that it does not exist in the way that it does without this intelligibility existing as a suitable reason or, in other words, without an intelligibility which would explain how or why it exists in the way that it exists. Absence of meaning, absence of intelligibility or,

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For further information, see Bernard Lonergan, “The Mediation of Christ in Prayer,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, eds. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 160-161.

<sup>91</sup>Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *Christianity and Political Philosophy* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 181, citing Armand Maurer, “St. Thomas and Eternal Truths,” *Mediaeval Studies* 32 (1970): 91-142.

in other words, absences of rationality with respect to intelligibility always point to absences of being or to a proportionate absence of reality. Real being is never to be associated with material being. It is not to be associated with apprehensions of material determinations (and so, more specifically, not with any determinations that would exist as specifications of size or quantity).<sup>92</sup>

More specifically (and to the point in the manner of our analysis), the intelligibility of a finitely existing thing (the intelligibility of a contingently existing thing) points to how a given intelligibility exists as a species of conditioned if it is the intelligibility of a contingently existing thing (existing in a way which is ordered toward the being of a contingently existing thing). On the one hand, as an intelligibility or simply as an intelligibility, an intelligibility exists as an immaterial, transcendent type of thing. As an immaterial determination, it cannot be conceived to exist as an effect or as a consequence of material determinations (if material determinations *as material determinations* are essentially lacking in meaning and intelligibility) although, on the other hand, in referring to the intelligibility of a contingently existing thing and as this intelligibility is joined to the material determinations of a contingently existing thing, an intelligibility can be seen to exist as an immaterial type of effect and so, in this way, in its own right, it exists as a species of conditioned (as an immaterial effect) and so a full or an adequate explanation for it must exist in some way or, in other words, it would have to exist in some kind of unrestricted, unconditioned way if the assumptions or the presumptions of irrationalism are to be rejected as an inevitable, final, and ultimate conclusion, and if the quality or the character of the conditionedness in question is itself to be explained and understood in terms of how or why it exists in the way that it happens to be and exist (as a species of conditioned). A conditioned or a caused intelligibility (as an incomplete, limited, or imperfect type of intelligibility) points to the being or to the sufficiency of a higher kind of intelligibility: an effective, causing intelligibility that has yet to be discovered and known by us through our inquiries and questions and through any changes or progress which would exist for us within the self-reflection which exists within our acts of cognition. An intelligibility which exists at a proximate or lower level, according to the manner of its being and as it is first known by us, suggests or it points to an intelligibility that would have to exist in some other kind of way (at a higher, less proximate, and more remote level) if an adequate or a complete kind of explanation is to be attained by us as we begin to notice that, within us, there exists a desire that yearns for attainments or growths in our understanding that are not partial in any way and so they would not be lacking in any kind of restriction. We would be moving from effects to causes and, heuristically, the unconditionedness of our inquiry would be joined to the unconditionedness of that which exists as unrestricted understanding. A preliminary connection exists for us through our inquiry and, in this connection, a kind of unity or union between the kind of subjectivity that we have in our acts of understanding and a kind of subjectivity that we cannot imagine even if we suppose that it exists as an actuation of unrestricted understanding.

Accordingly, in our transitions, if and as we work from within a cognitive perspective in our reflections in order to move toward a metaphysical perspective in dealing with elements or objects which allegedly exist for us as immaterial effects, within the order of our cognition, we should notice an order of implication as we move from understanding and knowing one truth

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<sup>92</sup>Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 311, n. 1.

toward understanding and knowing a second truth and then, from there, toward a third truth. In determining this order of implication, we can refer to an ordering of three steps that we can try to follow as we delineate the parts or the form which exists within our understanding:

First, as our aforementioned basic premiss (and as we have been already noticing): being or the being of things can only be known by us through the principle or the agency of their understood intelligibility (hence, from our side, subjectively and intelligently, through the agency and the receptivity which belongs to our cognitive acts and operations: through the experience that we have of their intelligibility or their reasonableness as this is given and mediated to us through our acts of cognitive understanding). In the actuation of our intelligence, its intelligibility (or our intelligibility) exists operationally as a combination of movements: as both an effective and as a receptive movement (as a species of active potency and passive potency: something that we doing and something that we also receiving if we are to move from what is known at A to to what is known at B).

Secondly, if, through the experience of intelligibility and reasonableness that is given to us, we have an experience and an apprehension of being, then through our experience of intelligibility in terms initially of meaning and then through the addition of a new quality which would exist as the finality of rationality or reasonableness, then, within the order of our understanding, an object or a term emerges for us or it comes to exist for us as an insensible kind of being or as an insensible specification of being. The insensibility immediately points to its immateriality and so, from there, to its transcendence, relative to how, in our contingency and in our immanence, we exist as a union of matter and spirit, body and soul (as a union of material and immaterial conditions). Immaterial, transcendent being replaces the primacy or it displaces the primacy that we have been allotting to the givens of our material being and experience even if it is to be admitted too (from the context of an altered, changed perspective) that, in general, in its spatial and temporal dimensions and categories, material being first exists for us as a species of *a priori* in sensing before immaterial being can be conceived to exist for us as another species of *a priori*. In cognitional terms, some doubts or some questions cannot be alluded to and identified; none arise, with respect to inquiry, that can question the firstness or the apriority of sense, matter, and the existence of material conditions. But, when questions arise about the adequacy, the sufficiency, or the causality of sense, matter, and the existence of material conditions, we move toward a new priority that we discover: a metaphysical and an explanatory priority which belongs to the being of mind, spirit, and the existence of immaterial conditions if the material order of existing things is to have an explanation for the kind of being that it happens to have.

But thirdly, as we attend to a differentiation which is specific to our manner of human cognition with respect to the manner of its cognitive self-transcendence, as we find that we must move from (1) a first kind of transcendence which moves from our acts of sensing toward our initial acts of understanding and into (2) a second kind of transcendence which exists as, further, we move from our initial acts of understanding toward our reflective acts of judgment, we find that, increasingly, we are encountering objects or realities which transcend ourselves (in our cognition) with respect to our individual acts of sensing and with respect to our individual acts of questioning and understanding: an order of things will present itself to us in a way which points to how it transcends ourselves with respect to the order of our concrete, individual, human existence. In other words and as we have been noticing (to some extent),

the self-transcendence which exists within the order of our human cognition reflects or it points to a like kind of transcendence which exists within the order of existing things in general (where all these things exist in their being whether or not we should happen to exist or whether we should have any knowledge about how these different things exist), and the explanation or the basis of this insight of ours about the transcendence of existing things is an order of implication which is endemic to the form of self-transcendence which belongs to us in the context of our human judgments.

This transcendence is centered (it exists) within the operation of our reflective acts of judgments whenever and as these judgments exist (in their own way) as effects, or as derivatives, or as receptions: as consequences or as conclusions that cannot not exist in the wake of conditions or causes which exist as apprehensions and specifications of evidence that we experience within our consciousness of self and world and which, as cogitating subjects, we have not brought into a condition of existence if, always, in all our acts of sensing and in all our acts of understanding, these acts exist as receptions and not as activities or things that we do in order to get any desired result. On the one hand, our acts of questioning are elicited by what is given to us in our acts of sensing and by what is not given to us in our current acts of understanding and, on the other hand, these same acts are transcended by the reception which exists in new acts of sensing and by the kind of reception which exists in new acts of understanding.

As a consequence thus, in a further judgment that we can now make or move toward, the specification or the kind of being which exists in judgment or which is given to us in judgment in turn elicits our attention and interest if we should want to explain the quality of reality which belongs both to us, subjectively, through the apprehensions of our judgment and, objectively, to the being of things that transcend us in our being with respect to how we have been functioning in our acts of sensing and in our prior acts of questioning and understanding. Affirmed, real being differs from sensed, perceived being and both differ from understood, ideal being. If, to ideal being, we have immateriality (if ideal being is constituted by the quality or a specification of immateriality); to real being, a different kind of immateriality is to be alluded to in some way if this immateriality is also known through an act of understanding or if also exists through an act of understanding (a reflective act of understanding). An insensible, unseen, immaterial kind of reality belongs to the being of a known, apprehended truth where, through this type of immateriality, we come to know and to participate in an immateriality which belongs to realities which exist in their own right, apart from ourselves and the manner of our existence. We experience a transition which occurs within ourselves, within our consciousness of things, in a major shift which moves from the suggestiveness of an idea or the suggestiveness of our understanding toward the quality of reality as reality or toward the quality of truth as truth which belongs in its own way to the being of an immaterial thing (something which is now more ultimate or something which is greater and larger than either a datum of sense or an idea that has been grasped by us initially through our initial acts of understanding).

The difference in the manner of our apprehension accordingly acts upon us to effect a change in the form and the direction of our consciousness. It elicits a different type of inquiry and response from ourselves as we notice how, within ourselves, within our consciousness of self and things, an inner change points to a different kind of acceptance or enjoyment which exists

in us and so, from this, the experience of a different sense of unity of things which points to a new, heightened kind of human consciousness which, in turn, points to a new or a different ordering of things that we can ask about and ponder and, to some extent, possibly move towards. What is the meaning of this order of things? What is the meaning or the reality of being as being? What is the meaning or the reality of existence as existence? Or, more simply, what is being? What is existence? What is this thing which is more than intellectuality in terms of any kind of nature or intelligibility which is understood and which, in turn, accounts for the being and the quality of every kind of nature or intellectuality, nature or intelligibility existing here as a species of effect as also our acts of understanding which know about natures and intelligibilities? A more ultimate question presents itself.

In moving then, by our anticipation and our acts of cognition, toward truths or realities that are somehow always true or which must be true through a partial or a participative knowledge of these same realities that the apprehension and the being of truths reflects, an inner stirring manifests itself to us as we seek to move and speak about the reality or the truth of intelligible objects which, initially, have existed for us as intelligible, understood objects or as intelligible, understood unities before they have begun to exist for us as rationally affirmed objects (existing in their reality and in their unity as the truth of intelligible things and not as the ideas of a thing nor as the givenness of a sensed, perceived datum). What we have in the being, the reality, or the truth of an understood thing is some kind of other existing thing or substance (for want of better words) which differs from anything which would exist as either an idea in our understanding or an externally existing body (ideas refer to terms that subjectively belong to our direct acts of understanding; bodies, to the extroversion that belongs to our different acts of human sensing). Where in this context, within our understanding, an intelligible idea exists within our understanding minds, at the same time, in terms of truth, if we should refer to the transcendence of an idea as it would exist for us in a way which is more than our understanding of it, as an externally existing thing or substance, it exists in a way which is larger or which is other than ourselves in transcending both the kind of being which belongs to us in our humanity (in terms of how, contingently, we incarnately exist and live as human beings) and also the incarnate kind of understanding which also belongs to us if we should think about the being and the condition of our understanding and the basic unity or the basic identity which always exists within us between our understanding and that which exists as our understanding minds. Between our understanding and our understanding minds, only a verbal distinction is to be alluded to (a difference in the words that we use and not some other kind of difference).

Conversely now (from a metaphysical perspective which moves from the order of being toward the reality of a cognitive perspective as this exists within us in an order of knowing): if the experience of intelligibility within the order of our inquiries leads us toward the being of things which, in some way, transcendently exist (they really and truly exist whether we should happen to understand or know anything about them), the being of things that are already given to us within our current understanding of them *prior to engaging any kind of inquiry and discovery* in turn implies the intelligibility or the reasonableness of our concluding to the being of another kind of *a priori*. An *a priori* which exists in our understanding (relative to the being of our later understanding) points to an *a priori* which exists within the order of all existing things that are constitutive of that which exists as the order of being (our acts of cognition and understanding existing within this same order of being, the being of all existing things).

To reiterate our point a bit and to expand on it: an intelligibility or a reasonableness is somehow given to us on the one hand at the very start of things in our understanding and knowledge of things (although we have yet to fully grasp and to understand this intelligibility and knowledge), and then, as we are provoked or as we shift into an awareness of this intelligibility in our understanding and knowledge of it (as we encounter this reasonableness as a species of *a priori* within ourselves), it reveals an order of things which exists in its own right as an absolutely prior condition, as a precondition, or as a fundamental species of *a priori* and so, from an awareness of this order, acts of inquiry can follow or they can be elicited from us in a way which turns ourselves toward the possible reception of new acts of understanding. In a way, cognitively, we advance in being or we move toward being or, metaphysically, we move and life within being (within the order of its parameters). We begin with a dim awareness of things (a dim awareness of being) and we move toward an explicit awareness of things (an explicit awareness of the being of things). As, through the experience of intelligibility within the order of our cogitation, incrementally or discursively we move toward a being of things which is constitutive of an order of being or of an order of metaphysics which is proportionate to the kind of order which exists within our human cognition, on the other hand also, from a being of things which exists in its own right (or from a being of things that is informed by an intelligibility which somehow already belongs both to them and to ourselves in our current understanding of things), a prior being of things becomes, in its own way, a new point of departure for us as, now, we move from the absoluteness of this prior order toward the kind of order or into the kind of ordering which exists among the being of many other things in a way which would also include ourselves and all the various acts and elements that belong to the being and the functioning of our human cognition. We ask for reasons that can explain why we exist and why we know in the way that we happen to know and, in asking these questions, we are not limited to reasons or explanations that would refer to proximate cognitional variables that we immanently and directly experience since, now, through these variables, we want to move toward beings and considerations which are more fundamental: an apprehension and a knowledge of metaphysical or ontological variables that can explain why we sense, think, reason, and know in the way that we happen to sense, think, reason, and know. The being of things always transcends our understanding of things and our knowledge of these same things in the context of a self-transcendent orientation which always belongs to us in the order of our human cognition as we move, through our inquiry and cognition, toward things or beings which are both other than ourselves and the kind of cognition which happens to belong to us as human beings and which, yet, in some way, exist and belong to ourselves through the kind of self-transcendence which exists in us as human subjects.

To give an example with a concreteness that helps to illustrate our point a bit more fully, it is said about Thales, the first Greek philosopher, the first Greek scientist, that he was “the first man to have seen the cause of, and to predict, an eclipse of the sun.”<sup>93</sup> But, in doing this or in order to do this, he would have had to determine “that the heavens move in regular ways that accord with [the requirements and the flow of our] mathematical reasoning.”<sup>94</sup> In some way, “he

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<sup>93</sup>Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 270.

<sup>94</sup>Bloom, p. 270.

was able to reason from visible effects to invisible causes and speculate about the intelligible order of nature as a whole.”<sup>95</sup> In doing this however, in his performance and verification, “he...became aware [of the fact] that his mind was in accord with the principles of nature [and that he existed as a kind of] microcosm [of nature].”<sup>96</sup> As a human being, he exists (or we exist) as microcosms of a macrocosm which exists as a larger, greater thing. How we exist as human beings and how we understand and know as human beings reflects the being of this greater order of things and, through our self-inquiry and our self-knowledge, through the degree, the adequacy, or the *adaequatio* of our currently existing understanding of different things,<sup>97</sup> we best move or we best position ourselves for possibly receiving new acts of understanding that can then move us toward an understanding of things that are increasingly other than ourselves, transcending (to a greater degree) how we happen to exist as human beings. From a greater order of things that is known in some way, we can then move back or we can also move, with greater ease, into the parameters of a lesser order of existing things; and if, in a way, our being reflects the being and the qualities of a greater order of things that transcends ourselves in the manner of our being and living, in some way, we can then think and speak about how our being comes or how it descends from a greater order of things which differs from us in its greater transcendence, being possibly entirely or wholly transcendent in comparison to how we happen to exist as human beings.

In other words and as we would want to reiterate: the order of our cognition becomes an object of scrutiny and inquiry that turns toward causes that are entirely transcendent of it (causes which exist within a metaphysical or an ontological determination of things). An order of existing things that are somehow prior to ourselves and our acts of inquiry becomes our new focus and point of departure as we try to move toward another order of understanding and another order of existing things through the kind of mediation which exists for us within our self-reflection when we think about our acts of inquiry and how these acts are caused or how they are conditioned by an order of existing things which exists at a higher, a further, or at a more remote level as we move from things that we directly sense, understand, and know

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95Bloom, p. 270.

96Bloom, p. 270.

97Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 39. If “the understanding of the knower must be *adequate* [or appropriate] to the thing [which is] to be known,” so much depends on what exists within us as cogitating human subjects and how we can grow into the adequacy that is needed if we are to know about the being of certain things that, at the moment, we have little or no knowledge. Citing Plotinus to this effect: “Knowing demands the organ [that is] fitted to the object,” and elsewhere, “Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty unless itself be beautiful.” Cf. Schumacher, p. 39. Knowledge about something which is other than ourselves supposes something within ourselves which is connatural to that which is this other which is greater than ourselves. What is alive in us in some way senses or know if something else is also alive; what is conscious in us, what is conscious in another; and what is self-consciousness in us, what is self-consciousness in another. Cf. p. 50. Again, according to a traditional principle, like knows like.

toward other things that we can only indirectly sense, understand, and know: things which must exist, in some way, if both the order of our cognition and the order of things that are proportionate to the order of our cognition are to have some kind of adequate explanation through some kind of understanding that can be given to us in the context of our inquiry and reflections (although, in speaking here about the being of levels and grades within the order of our cognition and levels or grades within the order of all existing things in a philosophy of being, we best understand this notion of level or grade if we can avoid a pictorial notion of levels or grades which thinks and imagines things in terms of space and time and the kind of determination which belongs to apprehensions and determinations of space and time).

In other words, as we move from the order of our cognition into the order of existing things as this exists within the parameters of a philosophy of being (a metaphysics that is not restricted to terms or determinations of meaning and being that belong to a proportionate type of metaphysics), and as we employ and work with our self-understanding and refer to how our acts of understanding point to how the principle of intelligibility exists as an indemonstrable principle within the order of our cognition (anticipations and experiences of intelligibility in our cognition always imply or point to the possible being of things or, through the anticipation and experience of intelligibility, possible experiences of being) – this principle, sense, or experience of intelligibility within our cognition in turn becomes a metaphysical principle within the order of a metaphysics if our point of departure or if our focus is directed to the interchangeability or the convertibility of intelligibility and being where, necessarily, each implies or points to the other. As we have been noting and suggesting, if intelligibility or the experience or the anticipation of intelligibility implies being (reality is defined by intelligibility as a metaphysical principle and, cognitively, it is approached through an anticipation of intelligibility that exists within us), on the other hand also, the being of things in terms of their relevance and their impact on us implies an intelligibility which exists though we might not initially fully grasp it or have yet to grasp it as, within our human order of things, we move from a primitive or an undifferentiated<sup>98</sup> awareness of existing things which exist in a way

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<sup>98</sup>Please note here that I have decided to introduce a technical term in order to refer to a form of cognition which is best described in terms which refer to an absence or a lack of differentiation as regards the being and the combination of different cognitive acts. When we are engaged in forms of inquiry that require clear distinctions in what we do and experience when we are engaged in our cognitive activity and performance – when, for example, we try to solve a problem in mathematics or a problem in the order of empirical science, our acts of sensing, questioning, imagining, and understanding must occur in a way which reveals or which points to how all these acts differ from each other in their individual nature and purpose and how one kind of act supposes another but a different kind of act – the result of all this is a form of self-awareness which can lead to a form of self-knowledge which would be more exact and precise and so, in a way, more true or more real. The exactness and the precision tend to work against the possibilities and probabilities of our falling into errors of one kind or another as, through our cognitive acts, we advert to an understanding of things that differs from ourselves and kind of being that we happen to have. But, on the other hand, if, in our knowledge of transcendent things, our cognitive acts exist in a way which points to a mix or to a jumble (to an amorphous blend of many acts, terms, and relations when, at times, in our awareness of self, we do not know if we are sensing something or if we are understanding something else), the inevitable result for us is a knowledge of other things that can be both true

which is transcendent to ourselves toward a new, possible awareness that would be the fruit of our thoughtful inquiry and investigation as, consciously and deliberately, we try to move and relate ourselves to a world of existing things whose meaning and truth exists though we have yet to understand and know what exactly are these same meanings and truths. We move toward a greater intelligibility that, hopefully, in some way, can be more fully known by us amid circumstances that are not understood and known. Simply put thus: if being is defined in terms of intelligibility and if being is known through our experiences and our sense of meaning and intelligibility, then beings exist more fully for us or they begin to exist more fully for us in a manner which is most proper both to themselves and to ourselves if we can move from experiences of incomplete intelligibility toward a complete kind of intelligibility that would be lacking in any kind of limit or restriction.<sup>99</sup> A reason or an intelligibility that is initially known

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and, in some way, clouded or murky and prone to degrees of misunderstanding and the possibility of misjudgment. Our knowledge would be lacking in a desirable kind of clarity and specificity that we would want and so, in this lack of clarity and specificity, what is true or real is more easily joined to what could be false and so not true or real. The difference in apprehension and knowledge, on the one hand, points to *a priori* apprehensions of being which always belong to us in the context of our ordinary understanding of things (in the kind of understanding which ordinarily belongs to our common sense), relative to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that come to us later in the wake of questions and queries that can elicit a pattern or form of cognitive consciousness that would be more critical and exact in its employment and use of different cognitive acts and which would be more critical and exact in any determinations of being that could be given to us through any acts of understanding that could be given to us as we try to move toward apprehensions of being that are now probably more true than what, before, we had been knowing and experiencing. An undifferentiated understanding and knowledge of things commonly belongs to all of us as human beings and it is our point of departure for other kinds of understanding and knowledge that, possibly, we can have.

<sup>99</sup>Ormerod, *Faith and Reason*, p. 98, citing Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, p. 695. For the sake of a clearer understanding here, please advert to a distinction that can be drawn between the intelligibility of a thing or, in other words, an incomplete intelligibility which belongs to a thing that is grasped by us in a partial or in a limited act of understanding and the complete intelligibility of a thing that would be grasped by us through an adequate or through full acts of understanding. Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 700. Our apprehensions can be very partial or limited (often they are limited and partial) and if, in a given case, our understanding is limited or partial, its term or correlative is a species of intelligibility which is limited or partial and so, in other words, we would have to refer to an incomplete intelligibility as this would refer to the truth or the being of a given thing that, here, is being understood. In other words, if, about any given thing, we should want to move toward a completely adequate understanding of it, if we should want to understand the intelligibility of a given thing in a less restricted way, the intelligibility that would be grasped or the intelligibility that would be desired, in some way, would explain, contain, or, in other words, it would exceed the intelligibility of a thing that we have been currently grasping and understanding. The kind of understanding which we now want exceeds how or what we have been previously grasping and understanding. The initial explanation, the initial reason, or the initial intelligibility of an intelligibility would be other and less than the intelligibility that we would be understanding to a greater and a fuller extent. This new other explanation, this

in its meaningfulness is more fully understood and known if we can refer to the density or to the compactness of another reason that in some way exists (or to the density or the compactness of another intelligibility that can be possibly known and identified): a reason or an intelligibility that would contain a greater measure or a greater depth of meaning, significance, and truth.

Along these lines thus, as we move toward reasons which exist not so much within a thing (immanently) but which exist more fully in a way which is outside of a given thing (being transcendent to the being of a given thing): an exclusive disjunction can be proposed in a way which speaks about the viability of only two alternatives if we should attend to the possible being of any given thing and the rationale that would belong to the being of any given thing. We can say, with respect to the being of a given thing, that its adequate or its sufficient reason (or the basis of its existence) would have to exist either (1) within the being of the thing itself (a thing is itself, it is not caused, or, incorrectly, we would be tempted to say that it causes itself although, in fact and in truth, nothing causes itself in a transition that would have to move in a contingent manner from a condition of potency to a condition of act),<sup>100</sup> or, on the other hand, (2) the adequate or sufficient reason would have to exist within something which would have

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additional reason, or this experience of intelligibility would accordingly exist at a higher level or in a way which would be more remote than what has been given to us initially in our direct, our initial, and our partial acts of understanding. In the gradualness of our understanding or in the incremental nature of our understanding, hopefully, in our achievements and in our seeking and in our desiring, we would always be moving from initial, limited acts of understanding to an experience of later, fuller acts (and so in a way that would be necessarily and obviously transcendent to a larger and greater extent as one act succeeds another act and as each new act goes beyond anything which had been known in a prior, earlier act: incorporating what has been understood and known in the context of our prior, earlier acts).

<sup>100</sup>Feser, *Five Proofs*, p. 148. We recall an insight that comes to us originally from Parmenides: from non-being, we cannot get being. What does not exist cannot bring itself into a condition of being, a condition of its own existence. Being can only come from being: from something which, in fact, already exists. To think that being can bring itself into a condition of existence is to engage in a form of performative self-contradiction since we would have to suppose that a given thing already exists before it emerges into a condition of being.

As a reflection of this metaphysical philosophical insight that comes to us originally from Parmenides, we can find a reflection or an instantiation of it in the kind of inquiry and apprehension which exists within the ways and means of contemporary scientific inquiry in physics since it can be argued that, if we understand the nature of matter, if we understand the nature of mass-energy in terms of what exactly it is, then we cannot then conclude or imagine that mass or mass-energy can become conscious of itself or of the being of other things. In other words (as we cite and quote from Varghese, "Critical Appraisal," in Flew's *There is a God*, p. 163), it can never become "aware"; it can never "think"; it can never say "I" about itself. What is impossible cannot become possible. What cannot be cannot then be (apart from the possibility of some kind of unexpected, unpremeditated, effective external cause which can be spoken about in terms which could refer to a miraculous form of intervention that, perhaps, we can imagine but not too well think or conceive from a viewpoint which refers to the kind of cognition which properly belongs to us as human subjects).

to be other than the thing itself.<sup>101</sup> In the first case, something simply exists and, in the second case, a thing is caused by something which is obviously other than itself. Reiteratively and through an expansion which exists in our articulation of things, something exists either as a cause which causes other things but not itself (necessarily thus it exists, given its nature or its identity; it has not been brought into a condition of being) or, on the other hand, something exists as some kind of contingent effect which proceeds from the being of a greater active cause (a cause that might not be known, a cause that would exist for us initially as a known unknown, or, in mathematical terms, as an “x” that will need to have whatever properties are needed if it is to resolve a problem that we are trying now to grapple with, grasp, and

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101 According to the wording of one definition which points to a meaning for what can be said about the principle of intelligibility or, in other words, the principle of sufficient reason: “every being has the *sufficient reason* for its existence (i.e., the adequate ground or basis in existence for its intelligibility) either in itself and in another.” Cf. W. Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), p. 21. Alternatively, in other words: “everything that is, has its *raison d'être*, in itself, if of itself it exists; in something else, if of itself it does not exist.” Cf. Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 12, citing Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought* (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1952). If the reason exists in something which is other in some way, we have causality (a relation between cause and effect and a transition which moves from potency to act on the basis of an effective, acting agent cause which, by its being and through its influence, realizes the condition or the being of another being). But, on the other hand and in a way which distinguishes between causality and sufficient reason as two distinct principles of explanation, if the reason for the being of a thing exists or if it resides within the thing as it exists in itself, then, in the being or in the supposition of sufficient reason, we have another kind of determination. Cf. Feser, *Five Proofs*, p. 148. In sufficient reason, another kind of understood exists (it does not exist as a cause) and, from it, the rationality of another kind of argument which would suppose another kind of analysis or another way of understanding which is needed if we are to move through an ordering or a series of causes in a way which would then ultimately bring us to a cause which would exist as a cause in terms of its many, possible effects but which, at the same time, would exist, in another way, as a self-sufficient reason in terms of how or why it exists in itself in the way that it happens to be or exist. To adapt the wording of a teaching that comes to us from the common teaching of Aristotle: some things are good simply because they exist; hence, in their goodness, some things are intelligible simply because they exist. In some cases thus, in the being of analytical principles, no distinction exists between the meaning of a thing and the being or the reality of a given thing and so, in the context, we speak about the being of indemonstrable principles.

Hence, for these reasons, as we refer to the principle of intelligibility or the principle of sufficient reason and as we apply this principle, nothing happens in our world without some possible explanation which can somehow be found for it although, in some cases, if our object is an understanding of things (or an understanding of events) that are found to be lacking in some way in any kind of inherent, relevant reason, meaning, or rationality, then the only explanation or the only reason which can be alluded to or provided would have to be in terms

understand as we try to move toward an explanatory understanding of things).<sup>102</sup> We would know in some way initially that, yes, this “x” exists. Some kind of cause exists although, as yet, we do not understand or know it (what exactly it is and how precisely it lives and functions).

In our analysis thus, we suppose that the nature of a cause always exceeds the nature of an effect even if it happens to be the case that causes and effects can only be understood if they refer to each other or by way of how they are related to each other if the relation between cause and effect exists as an intelligible, rational thing. To understand the nature of a cause in its specificity requires understanding the nature of a consequent effect (what comes from a given

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of some kind of negativity or privation (a lack or an absence of fitting reasons; a lack or an absence of intelligibility) although, in drawing this conclusion as a consequence of our reasoning and thinking, paradoxically, we would be moving toward a species of reason. We would be anticipating, postulating, or moving toward a reason which, in its way, would performatively point to how or why the principle of reason, the principle of rationality, or the principle of sufficient reason is to be understood in a way which points to how or why it exists as a species of indemonstrable within the being of our world (it cannot be proved from a point of view that is external to itself, a point of view that would be external to the processes of our human reasoning and thinking).

And so, ultimately, in our thinking and reasoning, as we try to look for telling reasons and for an understanding of things that can detect or which can bring an order into a mass of many disordered, unconnected things (as we seem to experience the disorder which seems to exist among many things in our world), as needed and as, in our thinking, we move from one consideration to another, we accordingly move toward a postulation of higher reasons or causes which would have to exist for us as transcendental reasons or causes and so, as transcendental reasons or causes, our philosophical thinking shades or blends or, at some point, we say that, for the sake of fuller explanation, it must move into theological kinds of thinking and the possibility of a theological kind of understanding that begins to think about the being and the function of theological reasons and causes. As an expansion of our horizon accordingly moves into this larger greater context of things, through our inquiries, we move or we create an openness within ourselves that is able to appreciate or which is now able to know about the punch or the meaning of an insight, for instance, that comes to us originally from the earlier teaching and understanding of St. Augustine who had noted, in the context of his own day and time, that nothing occurs in our world that is not without some possible value. Nothing occurs that is not without some use that can be made of it through the administration of a providential form of government whose source is the activity and the dispositions of a mysterious higher power (a power which can be conceptualized in terms which can speak about an active, caring, provident God: God who exists as a unity or as a unifying center of things, who simultaneously exists as an unrestricted act of being, as an unrestricted act of understanding, and as an unrestricted act of willing and doing). This government then, from God, according to the manner of its application, is able to accomplish goods that we cannot understand or fathom; goods that, on our own, we cannot accomplish and effect (goods which only God understands, knows, and effects through the means that he uses). According to the wording of this teaching of St. Augustine's, as this teaching has been cited and given to us from the text of the *Enchiridion*, c. 11, and as this teaching has been reiterated and cited by Bernard Lonergan in

cause through a kind of proceeding that points to the intelligibility of a connection which exists between a cause and an effect and a difference which distinguishes a cause from an effect) and, conversely, understanding the nature of an effect requires understanding the nature of a cause since no effect can be understood apart from attending to the nature and the being of its responsible cause. Each defines or includes the other within a condition of mutual priority or a condition of mutual causality since, as is, causes as causes cannot exist without effects and effects as effects cannot exist without causes although again, from the viewpoint of our understanding of things, to the order of causes and not to the order of effects, an analytical kind of priority is to be attributed (a priority which cannot be denied or put to the side).

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his work, *The Redemption*, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 249), in a text that has been also cited by Aquinas, in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2:

The all-powerful God...who has supreme power over all things, since he is supremely good, would by no means allow anything evil in his works, unless he were so all-powerful and so good as to produce good even out of evil.

And so, in the wake of this kind of thesis and understanding, as, in a way, we bring a theological understanding of things into a philosophical understanding of things for the sake of a more fruitful, deeper understanding of things, we can conclude that only an unrestricted intellect or an unrestricted act of understanding is able to work with causes and sources that sometimes fail in their causality in order then to effect ends and objectives which would exist as a greater, more wonderful exemplification of good. As Aquinas was to argue later in the context of the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2: without the being or the emergence of certain evils, certain kinds of good would not emerge at all; they would not exist for us. In his own words:

Since God, then, provides universally for all being, it belongs to His providence to permit certain defects in particular effects, that the perfect good of the universe may not be hindered, for if all evil were prevented, much good would be absent from the universe. A lion would cease to live, if there were no slaying of animals; and there would be no patience of martyrs if there were no tyrannical persecution.

For purposes of illustration, for another sort of affirmation or proof about the reasonableness of accepting or turning toward the explanatory power of theological reasons or toward the explanatory power of theological categories and affirmations, see Alain Besançon's history and analysis as this is given to us in his *A Century of Horrors: Communism, Nazism, and the Uniqueness of the Shoah*. So great can be the absence of reasonableness and rationality in the story and conduct of human affairs in the narrative of our human history that the absence of humanity in our human actions begs and urges us to turn toward the value of interpretations that transcend categories which belong to our current determinations of meaning as these exist within space and time. The absence of reason in things (the absence of any

To explain a bit more about the kind of priority or the kind of intelligibility which belongs to the being of a cause and how this intelligibility is of help to us here: while, in anything which exists as an effect, a determination of its cause in some way exists (since how would we know that something exists as an effect?), at the same time also, “the effect receives from its cause only that which is necessary for the production of the effect [in question].”<sup>103</sup> Causes outstrip effects in their being and influence since, as we have been noting, a cause exists as a greater, more powerful kind of thing. While causes always come with effects or they immediately imply effects, to causes a priority, a role, or a status exists which cannot be compared to anything which would exist as some kind of subsequent, consequent effect. Causes always precede. They always transcend. They always come before effects according to a rational order which knows about a real difference that distinguishes between that which is prior from that which is subsequent, although, within the order of causes, in some way (or proleptically), the effects already exist (according to an order or a differentiation that can be known by us if, by analogies, we attend to how, in our human world of things, effects exist within causes in a number of different ways and in ways which point to differing orders of dependence and

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inherent meaning or reason), in its own way, as an abyss or as an unfathomable void – as a species of contradiction, it points to a plenitude or to an infinity which is the unrestrictedness of any limits or bounds (so great here is the evil which seems to exist in given contexts) and, by means of this sense or apprehension of unrestrictedness, we can think about the unrestrictedness of a transcendental principle, the unrestrictedness of a specific type of transcendental principle (since transcendence and unrestrictedness point to each other as determinations) and so, in this context, we can begin to think about a transcendental principle which necessarily and essentially exists as a complete void or complete absence of any kind of meaning. Within it, nothing of wisdom and nothing of goodness exists. The consequent morals or the relevant ethics that would follow is without any kind of worth or value. Something exists which exists as evil itself since it is intrinsically malignant and so, from the experience of great evils in our world, for a possible explanation of these things, so easily and, in fact, more easily, we can move toward the existence or the necessity, the relevance of an evil transcendental principle, rather than to the being and the existence of an inherently good transcendental principle although, on the other hand too, if evil exists as an absence of intelligibility and goodness and if we should refer to the completeness or the unrestrictedness of this evil, the reference to intelligibility and goodness (despite the supposed absence of intelligibility and goodness) supposes (or presupposes) the being of these qualities and so, from this, questions and understandings can begin to speak about how unrestricted intelligibility and unrestricted goodness exists in its own right as a transcendental principle. If no evil can exist apart from some kind of connection with goodness (or apart from the being of goodness), then intrinsic goodness emerges for us in a way which points to its priority, relative to anything which would exist as intrinsic malice or intrinsic evil.

102George McLean, “Analytic Philosophy and Language about God,” *Christian Philosophy and Religious Renewal* (1967), pp. 64f, as quoted by Mascall, *Openness to Being*, p. 102.

103See Gaven Kerr, *Aquinas's Way to God: The Proof in De Ente et Essentia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 61-62. The context of Kerr's discussion is an analysis about how it can be said that an effect participates within a cause in a way which does not confuse the two with each other. Something of a cause exists within a given effect if an effect comes from a cause.

descent).<sup>104</sup> Different effects, different causes. The differences which exist within our world, to the degree then that, in fact, they exist and to the degree that we encounter, understand, and know them – these same differences point to how these differences exist within a larger order or a larger scheme of things in general (if, by our inferences and by our analysis, we move, in our inquiring understanding and knowledge of things, from things which are known to exist as but parts, fragments, or elements toward something which would be known to exist as a greater, larger, more comprehensive whole: as a larger, greater unity of things that would be more real or more basic than the being of any part, element, or fragment).<sup>105</sup>

As an aside (or as a digression) however, please note at this point that this search for a greater or the greatest unity of things that would exist as an ultimate or final cause is an approach that is rejected by some persons or by many persons on the grounds that this approach is seen to be too intellectual. It is seen to be overly ambitious. Hence, according to this line of thought, we best proceed in our questioning and thinking if we should operate in a more humble way and so not try to move towards reasons and causes which are bigger than ourselves, transcending us in how we exist and live as human beings. To use a way of speaking that is rejected by this kind of skepticism because of a distinction that is implied by our current use of words: we should focus on the

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104See Feser, *Five Proofs*, p. 32, on the principle of proportionate causality: “whatever is in some effects must in *some* way or other be in the cause.”

105Feser, *Five Proofs*, p. 33. Effects exist within causes according to an order which also points to modalities of cause or to how one kind of causality differs from another (even if it should be the case that no differences exist with respect to what is doing the causing or who is doing the causing). A given cause exercises its influence in different ways. To work with the analogies and the suggestions that Feser employs, if I give you \$20 from my pocket, it can be said that this effect *formally* exists within me as an originating cause. But, if immediately I do not have \$20 in my pocket although I can go to a bank and then get the \$20 to you, then, in this kind of causality, a *virtual* form of causality exists. But then, and more radically, if I can create a financial order that is then able to produce \$20 bills and so then be able to give you \$20, then, in this sense, the causality exists in a higher, *eminent* way. The causality exists as a greater, more powerful, significant thing and, on the basis of this kind of causality, we can think about a causality that transcends the being of every other kind of cause if it can account for the being and the existence of all the other causes and how these same causes exist according to different modalities that all belong to them. Simply put: the greater the cause, the greater the effect. The more intelligent the cause, the wiser the cause, the more intelligent and the wiser are the effects though, from the point of view of our own understanding and knowledge of things, the intelligence of this cause and the wisdom of this cause is something which transcends that which we are able to understand and judge on our own in terms of intelligence and wisdom and so, in this transcendence or because of this transcendence, we can be tempted to put it aside: ignoring this transcendence or, in some way, discounting it since again, from our limited point of view, the intelligence or the wisdom of a cause that exceeds our being and understanding can come across to us as something that can be lacking in intelligence and rationality *if it is something that we do not directly grasp and understand*. Lack of understanding in ourselves encourages judgments and evaluations which can assume and believe that a lack of understanding exists more in others than in ourselves.

reality and on the being of secondary causes and not think about the being of primary causes and the reality of anything which could possibly exist as an ultimate kind of primary cause. If, in fact or if we should suppose that no kind of primary cause exists anywhere (if primary causes are not to be alluded to), then it is best not to distinguish between the being of secondary causes and the being of primary causes although, in the ordering of causes that our understanding attempts to determine because of the ordering which essentially exists within the desire, the intent, and the actuation of our understanding (our understanding exists as a principle and cause of order or it exists for the sake of order), the ordering of our understanding immediately leads us to a realization which knows that some causes are more important than others. Some causes come before others. Some exist as primary causes and some as secondary causes, relative to the impact which each has on the other. With respect then allegedly to the being and the order of primary causes - if our object is an understanding of these causes in terms of how they properly exist and relate to each other - they would have to exist within an order of orientation and relation which would have to point toward the being of some kind of ultimate primary causal principle from which everything else comes: something which would have to exist as truly the primary cause of all the many other things which subsequently exist in our world if, indeed, our object is a satisfactory understanding of all things that it is able to grasp, from within the context of one perspective or one point of view which, in turn, leads to an ordering of very many things.<sup>106</sup> In determining or finding an order among primary causes,

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106See Kerr, *Aquinas's Way to God*, p. 62, and the metaphysical type of argument that he employs in a way which differs from a cognitional type of argument that would directly refer to the kind of internal order which is experienced within ourselves and which belongs to the acts and the operations of our human cognition. As Kerr argues and as he interprets the teaching of Aquinas: if something of a cause exists within a given effect (in terms of a participation of one in the other: cause in effect and effect in cause), then we would have to speak about how, in every kind of effect, a limited act of being exists *qua* effect or, in other words, a limited participation in the reality of an effecting cause, or a limited participation in an act of being which would refer and explain a transition which would have to occur and move from a condition of potency to a condition of being or existence and so, from all this, we can move toward a real distinction which would rightly distinguish between, on the one hand, a limited or a restricted act of being as this exists in an effect (what a given thing is, in its nature or its properties, limits the act of being which it enjoys; something exists as a particular kind of thing, as a finite kind of thing) and, on the other hand, an unrestricted act of being or an unrestricted act of causing which, ultimately, would have to exist as the cause of all the limited acts of being which would have to belong, in different ways, to the being of contingently existing things. As effects, limitations in general or, in fact, all limitations in their being point to that which cannot exist as any kind of limitation. Yet, within this difference or despite this difference between that which is limited and that which is unlimited, all limited acts of being participate, to some extent, in the being of that which exists as an unlimited act of being or as an unlimited act of existence where throughout, always, as a general principle and presupposition, it is to be admitted that all effects, to some extent, participate in the being of their effective causes (whether these causes are limited or unrestricted) and that, at the same

immediately, some primary causes are converted and they are turned in a way which points to how they also exist as secondary causes. Everything but one cause becomes a species of secondary cause although, among secondary causes, in our understanding and knowledge of them, some exist in their own way as primary causes, relative to the being of lesser causes which would exist as secondary causes.

On the basis thus of the analytical kind of reasoning and thinking that we have been using in order to move from effects to causes, we can move from how we exist as a combination of material and immaterial conditions toward a species of cause which would have to exist with a nature that exceeds whatever we have and are both as conditioned effects and as conditioned causes. We can move toward an order of being which exists at a higher level (at only an immaterial level) because, mentally, in our reasoning, we engage in intellectual exercises which reflect or which resemble the kind of activity which always occurs in us in the context of our prior, initial acts of understanding whenever, through a process of abstraction which occurs in our acts of understanding, in understanding other things or in understanding other objects, we necessarily distinguish (we separate) material variables from immaterial variables in a way which points to the identity of these immaterial variables (hence, to their reality and being). We come to know about the being of immaterial variables through acts of abstraction which serve to set them apart in ways which isolate them and which distinguish them from the being and the relevance of other variables.

In order to move thus from an effect to a cause, we have subtracted any deficiencies or any limitations which have existed for us with respect to a lower level of things (as regards effects) in order then to move toward an order of being which, now, we can apprehend and identify through our acts of abstracting, abstractive understanding. We attend to an order of being which, now, we can ponder or ask about in the wake of how, in our understanding and through our formation of concepts, we have turned our ideas and insights into communicable terms of reference that we can use in the conversations that we can have with ourselves in our subsequent acts of reflection and in the conversations that we can have with other persons if we are to speak about new meanings that we have come to grasp, understand, and know. Necessarily, through the movement which exists in our understanding, this type of intellectual life or this type of intellectual being is found to exist at a higher level. It has moved from our acts of human sensing and what is known has been removed from what had been known through our various acts of human sensing. The new known exists beyond anything that can be

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time, the reality of a cause always surpasses the reality of anything which would exist as an effect and so, through all this or from all this, we can understand: (1) why the reality of an infinite cause or why the reality of an unrestricted act of being would always exist or it must always exist in the way that inherently, properly belongs to it (though we might know or understand this act); (2) why this same unrestricted cause, to some extent, would always exist or it must also exist within the being of all restricted, limited effects; and (3) why this same cause must always transcend the reality of finite causes or the reality of restricted acts of being even as or while the lesser reality of finite causes or the lesser reality of finite acts of being participate in some way or, in some way, they exist within the greater reality of an infinite cause or the greater reality of an infinite act of being. The transcendence, the subordination, and the participation of all belong together in the context of a differentiated whole.

grasped by us through our various acts of human sensing. We now realize and understand that we understand and know more to the degree that we can separate ourselves from the kinds of given that belong to us and which are given to us from our different acts of human sensing.

In our analysis thus, if, initially as human beings, we think in spatial and temporal terms or if we think initially within a context of spatial and temporal terms, within this same context however, we can imagine and we can think about the possibility of a primary cause which would exist in a way that is somehow allegedly prior or before, or which is somehow allegedly outside or external to ourselves in terms of the pertinence of any conditions that have to do with determinations of time and space. This cause can be conceived in a way which would initially speak about it as something which, metaphorically, is somehow farther away from us (spatially) or which is somehow more remote from us (temporally) although, on the other hand too, if, in our thinking and questioning, we should try to think in terms of conjugates that would belong to the being and the order of transcendent things or the being and order of transcendent nature (the kind of order which would belong to the nature of immaterially existing things), a kind of non-temporal simultaneity, or a kind of non-spatial co-presence, or a kind of communion and relation can be alluded to and discovered in terms of how, in fact, material and immaterial causes exist together within an order of cooperation and alignment since the one kind of cause having one form of determination does not necessarily exclude the other kind of cause and the form of determination which peculiarly belongs to it. One type of cause does not necessarily precede or come before the other if we should think about how determinations fall into different classes and categories: how one species of determination is constitutive of one species of cause and another species of determination, another species of cause.<sup>107</sup> Immaterial causes can work and exist with material causes (to some extent, in our use

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<sup>107</sup>See Kerr, *Aquinas's Way to God*, pp. 135-142, and how he distinguishes between two orders of causality or, in other words, an essential or a simultaneous type of causal relation among causes and a temporal or an accidental type of causal relation that can exist among a number of different causes. In one order, in an accidental order of things: a given cause can produce a given effect and the effect which is produced can then function as a cause in its own right to produce its own proper effect in a series or chain of subsequent causes (one following the other) although here, within this species of order, when a given cause exercises its causality, it ceases to exercise its causality as soon as an effect is produced. A cause is succeeded by an effect which, in turn, functions as a cause to produce another effect and, through the chain of causes that emerges, a given cause ceases to exercise its causality as soon as a given effect is caused. To illustrate our point a bit and as a way of pointing to the good of evidence: in the passage of generations among human beings, a father generates a son (or daughter) and he or she is succeeded by a son or daughter in an order of succession and causation which is lacking in simultaneity or which is not immediately given all at once since, instead, bits and pieces point to an intermittent form of succession and so to an intermittent form of causality. A given cause acts within time as it emerges within time and it ceases to exist and to act within a given specification of time. Part goes with part.

However, on the other hand and alternatively, in another order of things, in a second species of order, a cause can function as a first cause and it can order a number of causes into a whole which moves through an ordering of different causes and effects in a way which achieves an ultimate desired effect and, in this type of succession and causation, all the causes

of metaphorical language, they can exist within material causes) in a way which points to how, because of this, certain results can be achieved and so, as a result, material causes can be employed in ways which reveal the being and the power of immaterial realities that cannot be either sensed or imagined. A material order of things (in terms of order or by means of the order which possibly exists within it), in its own way in terms of order – this same order (if it is to be explained) - it necessarily points to an aptness or to the necessity of an immaterial order of things which must, in some way, exist since the materiality and the ordering of material causes points to its own relativity or, in other words, to its contingency which, in its meaning and reality, would have to differ from anything that can be said about the being of immaterial causes since, in their being or by their very nature, material causes are subject to

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are functioning at one and the same time (across time or apart from the being of any temporal differences and in a way which joins spaces together as if it exists as a continuum). All causes are operative in each their own way and if, in this chain of causation, a given cause fails to function or to operate, then the order of causation is broken and a desired ultimate effect is not brought into a condition of being. As a way of pointing to the intelligibility and to the reality of this type of cause, in borrowing an example that comes to us from Kerr, we can think about how a stone can be moved by a stick which is being moved by somebody's arm which is being moved by the understanding and the decision of a given human subject. Everything begins with the understanding and decision of a conscious subject (relatively speaking, this subject is the first or it is the primary cause) and, in the wake of decisions, an order of consequent causes is created which exist as secondary or as instrumental causes and so, with the primary and the secondary causes, all act together as a coordinated whole.

In this second type of causal order thus, temporal and spatial determinations are not ultimately definitive or ultimately determinative. They are transcended. The causation - in its integrity, its wholeness, or in its completeness – it is such that it does not occur within time (it is not limited by this or that parameter of time) even as it causes things to exist within the kind of ordering which belongs to us in terms of time and space since, in terms of transcendence, the first cause or the ultimate point of origin can be a cause which is itself productive or creative of time without itself existing within time or acting within time. Time and space both exist together as a continuum and as effects within an order of dependence which points to how it can be said that our current order of space and time exists as an effect which has been created and brought into being although in a way which prescinds from our having to speak about this creating as if it were a species of temporal act. By way of a *reductio ad absurdum* (through an “argument to absurdity”): if we were to argue that the act of the world's creation is itself a temporal act, we would want to ask further questions about why it should exist at a given time and not at some other time. What explains the temporality? How is the temporality to be understood? What is its likely cause? And so, by our asking this type of question, its posing directs us to consider a factor, a reason, or an act that cannot be temporal in any kind of way if this act or reason is to explain why temporality itself exists. The greater explains the lesser; the intelligence, lesser intelligibles if what is understood in terms of reasons or acts cannot be limited or bounded by considerations of space and time since the presence of limitations would detract from the thoroughness of a proffered, desired explanation in a way which would have to force, from us, the necessity of an admission which would have us say that, for the condition of temporality, to the degree that it exists as contingent thing, we cannot have a possible reason, no adequate explanation.

determinations of space and time while immaterial causes are not subject to this kind of determination and so, as a consequence, they are entirely lacking in the limitations which belong to the givenness or the being of spatial and temporal determinations. An absence of sufficient reason within material causes accordingly always points to a sufficient reason of some kind which must exist within some other kind of order that would have to differ from anything that would exist in terms of space and time. The difference, in turn, points to qualities or attributes which must belong to the being of immaterial causes if they exist in a way that is apart from any attributes which, as a set, properly belong to being of space and time and anything which exists within the conditions that belong to space and time.

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With respect then to the foundational act of the world's creation (if we should want to speak about the world's creation), in the creating which occurs, in the wake of this type of act: instead of a temporal type of generation, or a temporal type of inception, or a temporal type of origination, or a temporal type of emergence, or a temporal type of beginning that would allegedly belong to a world which exists in terms of space and time, the creating of this world would have to exist as an atemporal or as an eternal kind of creating where, apart from any determinations of space and time, everything is given all at once in terms of both creating the world out of nothing (from an absence of being) and in terms of sustaining the being of this same world as it exists now for us in the context of our current day and time. Instead of a temporal beginning that would belong to the being of our world, as a consequence of our analysis as we move from effects toward causes (or causes which exist as sufficient reasons), in this context, if we should speak, we would best speak about an analytical type of beginning, or a metaphysical type of beginning, or a logical kind of beginning. Admittedly, this type of beginning is something that we cannot picture or imagine. However, through our thinking and our reasoning, we can move toward notions, ideas, and then concepts that can be used as carriers of meaning for us as we try to think and speak about things that are grasped by us in our understanding in contrast with things that are known by us initially in a prior way through our different acts of human sensing.

For the sake of further understanding, see Kerr's *Aquinas's Way to God*, pp. 174-194, and how he distinguishes between questions that ask about the creation or the emergence of our world and questions which suppose that our world has had a *temporal beginning*. Beginnings have not always to exist as if they exist as temporal things. If we should suppose then that the world has had a temporal beginning, we can ask questions that can lead to changes in our current understanding of things. We can introduce changes or qualifications into the legitimacy or the truth of our initial assumptions. Hence, as a result: it can be said that, yes, the world has a beginning but it is not a temporal type of beginning. However, conversely, if we should suppose that the world does not have a temporal beginning but that it has always existed (in some way or other), we can still ask questions that ask about how or why it exists in the way that it happens to be and to exist. And so, by our acts of inquiry, either way, our questioning can convert a notion or a sense of givenness and necessity into something which would exist a species of conditioned, contingent necessity. Things exist in the way that they happen to be ("if Socrates is sitting, then necessarily he is sitting") but, on the other hand however, conceivably, things could have existed in some other kind of way or things can exist in some other kind of way and so, by our questions and our inquiry, we find that we are not

To illustrate our point a bit, as human beings, in our cognition, we use images as clues or as suggestive phantasms. They can lead others and ourselves toward our desired acts of understanding. And similarly, as artists, we can form and construct images in ways that can reveal higher orders of meaning and being. Through the kind of causality which accordingly belongs to us in how we think and live, our secondary causality existing at times as a species of primary causality (relative to the causing of other, consequent effects), the kind of relation which exists between primary and secondary causes in turn suggests that all lower or all secondary causes can be conceived in a way which would regard them as means or as fit instruments for the accomplishment of certain deeds or acts. They can be used or they are being used by higher causes as a way of expressing the being and the reality of these higher causes. Simply put, material and immaterial causes can be fully operative within a general scheme of things which thinks and knows about a of very many causes and so, from this, the being of a transcendent, immaterial kind of priority which belongs to the being of immaterial causes. The priority of immaterial causes transcends or it surpasses the kind of priority that belongs to an order of material causes, relative to the being of anything which would exist as a material effect.

The absence of a sufficient reason that exists thus within an order of things that is determined by spatial and temporal conjugates within an order of lesser causes accordingly points to a sufficient or apt reason that can only exist if we should refer to an order of being that is totally lacking in determinations which derive or which are grounded in specifications that belong to temporal and spatial conjugates. A species of cause is identified in a heuristic or preliminary way which, in its immateriality and in its unrestrictedness, is to be identified with a way of thinking which would exist as both a metaphysics and a theology which is connatural to us as human beings since, cognitively, its point of departure is a reflection and a manner of cognition which has been occurring within the *a posteriori* apprehensions of being which have been existing within us (within the order of our human cognition) as, through a species of self-transcendence which exists in this type of cognition, we have been moving from the givens and the data of our sense experience through our inquiry and questions toward the possible reception of new acts of understanding which can be given to us (first in our direct acts of understanding and then later in our reflective acts of understanding).<sup>108</sup> All of these acts have

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satisfied until we can come to a reason, to a consideration, or to an act of being which would be lacking in every kind of restriction or qualification, having itself a necessity that would have to be absolute and unconditioned if the conditional necessity of our world is to have some kind of reason or adequate explanation for the way that it happens to be and exist. Contingent necessities point to absolute necessities since no conditional necessity is able entirely to explain itself (or the being of other conditional necessities) since, to be adequate, a proffered explanation must differ from that which is explained if it is not to be confused with that which could possibly exist as an effect which, as an effect, is in need of an adequate explanation. Cf. Eric D. Perl, *Thinking Being: Introduction to Metaphysics in the Classical Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 2.

108Please note that the history of our human reflection in philosophy and theology points to very many arguments that have been proposed that can move persons toward affirmations and belief in the existence of God in a manner which is grounded in a way of thinking that moves from effects to causes (or from what can be first given to us in sense to what can be given to us in our understanding). With time and effort, we can possibly indicate

been adding to the extent of what has been our current understanding and knowledge of many different things.

Illustrating out point a bit through a kind of deduction which works from our prior inductions (be they few or many): if, through a form of *a posteriori* argumentation, we attend to the being of an insensible, immaterial cause, its transcendence and its causality points to its being an immaterial kind of subjectivity. However, as subjects, we know that we exist within conjugates of space and time. We can forget and we do forget about the being of certain things and we can remember and we do remember about the being of certain,

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why some of these arguments can be persuasive for some persons (depending on, one, the condition and the quality of the kind of intellectual culture which could belong to a given person and, at the same time too, two, the influence and the impact of moral considerations that can influence the kind of reception that is likely to be given to arguments which would speak about the reasonableness of belief that we should have about the being and the truth of God's transcendent existence). Some persons can be entranced by the kind of thinking which exists in the presentation and in the rationality of some arguments that can be offered to them and, at the same time, be not moved or too impressed by the kind of thinking that exists in the wording of other possible arguments. Absence of rationality at one level in our understanding (or within the order of one kind of being) encourages inquiries that can move us into another order of being and the kind of questions that must be asked if we are to move into a new order and a new knowledge of existing things. Hence: in arguments for God that attempt to work with the kind of methodology which belongs to the ways of empirical science, these can be succeeded by better arguments for God that would be more telling and persuasive if they are grounded in a more comprehensive type of inquiry and methodology which belongs to the ways of metaphysics and the kind of reflection which belongs to the kind of analysis which is proper to the kind of understanding which exists in metaphysics. The more comprehensive or the larger the object or the reality that is to be known, the larger or the more comprehensive must be the kind of inquiry that we should use if, reasonably and rationally, we are to reach our intended goal.

To give an example which attends and which points to the insufficiency of arguments that are allegedly drawn from the kind of thinking and the kind of argumentation which commonly exists within the ways and means of empirical science as this science exists in our day in terms of how it works with statistical determinations and how it can distinguish between the intelligibility of possibilities and the intelligibility of probabilities, it can be postulated by us that, in a purely random way or through the incidence or the occurrence of chance variations that can be randomly determined and postulated in any given case, if we attempt to use the principle of randomness as a sufficient explanation for the being of certain things, we will get into determinations and contradictions which will point to the irrationality of randomness as an adequate species of explanation.

To make our point, we can allude to a difference between two cases or two kinds of experiment (one realized and the other not) when, in both cases, randomness is a specific object of inquiry. On the one hand, an initial experiment involving monkeys comes to us from a study that had been sponsored and implemented by the British National Council of Arts in

other things. We can also cease to do and we do cease to do certain things that we have been doing or we can initiate and we initiate our doing of certain, other things. We can begin to do something else. But, if an immaterial subject cannot see or sense in some way, if the knowing of such a being is truly transcendent of conditions that belong to space and time, then it cannot forget or remember anything; it would exist as a being who is not able to cease doing whatever that it is, in fact, doing. Such a being would exist as a perennial active subject according to a way of knowing and willing that radically differs from how we exist as subjects or how any subject exists if it happens to exist within

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2003. Cf. Flew, *There is a God*, p. 76, citing Gerard Schroeder, “Has Science Discovered God?” <http://science.lenicam.com>. For additional information and a degree of confirmation, see also <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/may/09/science.arts> (accessed December 26, 2019). A keyboard has been placed in a cage with six monkeys and it is left there for a month to see if, by purely random hits on the inserted keyboard, an perceptible, intelligible word can be typed out: a word that would be separated from other marks by a space preceding it and a space following it where, for instance in English, the shortest words are *a* and *I*. But, after a month of hits and although the monkeys produced fifty pages of typed text, no word was ever typed by them. Since the keyboard consisted of 30 characters (there being only 27 letters in the alphabet that was allegedly being used), the probability of typing a one word letter was calculable in terms of one chance out of 27,000 (or, in other words, to explain this calculation: 30 times 30 times 30 or, conversely 1/30 times 1/30 times 1/30). A month of attempts produced nothing in terms of an English word although, admittedly, if the monkeys were to be given more time, say two months instead of one month, then possibly, from a larger number of random hits, they would possibly produce an English word that would stand out from what would be given in terms of any other texts or marks. We can argue thus that, if time is not factor, if time is indefinitely extended, at some point, through random strikes on a keyboard, a word should be produced although, as we all know and as we must admit to ourselves, while, through our experiments we can possibly allot larger measures of time, we are not able to frame an experiment which would suppose measures of time that would be unlimited or unrestricted. The time that would be needed could be longer than the age of our currently existing universe. Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinite\\_monkey\\_theorem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinite_monkey_theorem) (accessed December 26, 2019).

A general principle of limitation which exists both within the order of our cognition and the order of the world that we know through the order of our cognition accordingly points to a shift in our conception and knowledge of the physical world since, instead of our holding to Newtonian notions which had supposed a physical world or a universe that is infinitely extended in terms of both time and space and which is constituted by an infinite number of interacting events and content, current determinations in our understanding of the world and cosmos think and speak about a finitely existing, aging world and the necessity of positing some kind of originating “big bang” which, in turn, leads us to a finite way of speaking and thinking in the context of our science of the world and cosmos. We advert to the being of a *perceptible, observable* universe that is finite in terms of time, space, and the number of events that are constitutive of this world (as we refer to a universe that is bounded or, in other words, a universe that can be directly experienced by us through our various acts of human sensing as

conditions that are determinative of space and time.<sup>109</sup>

However, as we have been also noting, the givenness to us of a prior understanding of things is also entirely natural and proper to us as human subjects and its givenness explains why it is not true to say that our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being begin from a point of departure that is solely determined by the kind of given that exists for us within our various acts of human sensing as, through inquiry and our openness, we move from sense and matter toward form and meaning (or, in other words, from the data of sense toward the data of our understanding). If we can speak (in a qualified manner) about our understanding as something that emerges through questions and inquiry from our prior acts of sensing, we can also speak about how,

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opposed to a universe that we can only imagine, suppose, or presume when we think about a universe which exists beyond or outside the range of any of our different acts of human sensing). In the shift which has been occurring, our non-Newtonian universe comes to have a determinable age or, in other words, some kind of origin or beginning where, currently, it is said about our physical world that it is about 13.7 billion years old. Allegedly too, it has a visible mass of 10 to the 53<sup>rd</sup> power and a “finite amount of dark matter and vacuum (dark) energy.” Cf. Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), p. 6; pp. 48-49.

In the wake of this shift in understanding, if we then turn to think about a second possible experiment (an experiment which exists within our thought), we can point to a more complicated case of randomness (possibly also involving monkeys) and so ask about the possibility and the probability of producing or reproducing the wording of a Shakespearean sonnet in a purely random way, establishing and making calculations by working back from the number of letters which exist within a given sonnet and also the spaces that are needed if we are to distinguish one word from another. The letters and spaces all need to be in a certain order if, say, the result is to be one of Shakespeare's sonnets (say Sonnet 18 which is frequently cited as “Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?”). This sonnet consists of 488 letters (apart from any spaces that are needed between the words). Focusing just on the letters by themselves (apart from the manifold of complications which would exist if we were to refer to the necessity of intervening spaces that would have to exist between distinct words) and since our alphabet consists of only 26 letters, for each letter, 26 possible options exist. If we then take this determination of possibility and multiply it with the determination of possibility which would exist with the next letter, we would get a determination of possibility for two consecutive letters which would exist in terms of 26 by 26. Another way of expressing our position would say that 1/26 is to be multiplied by 1/26 if our object is a determination of probability which is grounded in a determination of possibility. The probability exists within the possibility. But, if we need to determine a possibility and a probability that would refer to all 488 letters (apart again from any spaces that would be needed), we would end up with 26 times itself 488 times or 26 to the 488<sup>th</sup> power or, in other words, through a mathematical form of conversion, 10 to the 690<sup>th</sup> power. The number 1 would be followed by 690 zeros. Comparatively speaking, a much larger number of trials would be needed and also a much larger amount of time if, in the end, the result is to be the reproduced wording of one of Shakespeare's sonnets; in this case, Sonnet 18. Cf. Flew, *There is a God*, pp. 76-77, citing Schroeder. More so than any experiment which tries to determine if monkeys can type a

with our acts of sensing, we always begin from something which, to some extent, we already understand and know. What is already understood and known exists also, in its own way, as our point of departure for increases in any possible acts of understanding that can be given to us.

### Synthesis

Turning now then to a second option and a second way of thinking and understanding which primarily moves us from causes to effects and a consequent ordering that can be found if we should move from causes to effects, it is to be admitted here (as another point of departure) that

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perceptible, English world, the time needed could be more than possibly the age or the duration of our perceptible, observable universe.

In other words thus, as we determine possibilities and probabilities and as we work with determinations of being that are increasingly complex, we will find that mere chance or happenstance becomes more and more improbable as a likely, sufficient explanation for the emergent being of things, the lack of probability accordingly increasing in a way which points to a trajectory or, in other words, to an accumulation and a sense of improbability and so, from this, a certainty and an assurance which exists within us in a realization which now knows and affirms that mere chance is to be regarded as an irrational, unlikely option and variable: as too much of an impossibility if, in the face of growing mounting evidence, we should want to try to continue to believe and to hold that random variations exist as a sufficient explanation for the being of existing things as these things exist within our world of space and time. The probability of some other kind of explanation accordingly becomes more likely and necessary. It outweighs the probability of our initial assumptions if we should admit to ourselves, as a general principle, that, in the ways and means of our cognition, from accumulations of data that add and build to each other, we have projections and determinations of probability which make for the truth of a prospective judgment which would have us say why a given idea, theory, or notion cannot be regarded as a reasonably true idea, theory, or notion or why, alternatively, a given idea, theory, or notion must be regarded as a reasonably true idea, theory, or notion.

From the viewpoint of our acts of cognition thus, we know or can know that, in fact, yes, chance variations do exist within our world of space and time. They play a role and we can establish conditions within a given context of time and space which point to a role for the random play of chance variations. Chance exists. Things happen in a world that we cannot entirely control or predict. But, at the same time too, we will find or we should find that chance variations play a role that is not only secondary or tributary but, in fact, it is a role that becomes increasingly secondary or less since, for a fuller understanding of existing things in terms of their complexity and intricacy, mechanical or physical types of explanations need to be put aside or they need to be placed within a larger context of meaning and being which would have to refer to the intelligibility of other kinds of explanation (we would have to refer to other kinds of causation) if given things are to be more fully understood in a way which can reveal new, hidden depths of meaning that would then help us determine how we should best act and respond in ways which would be better, more apt, and more intelligent than what would otherwise be the case if our point of reference were to be solely determined by the kind of causation which belongs to mechanical or to physical types of determination. Chance exists

while causes can be known by us through the kind of inquiry which works with *a posteriori* apprehensions of being (seeking *a posteriori* apprehensions of being as we move from what we know and do not know to what we can begin more fully to understand and know), it is to be admitted also that some causes can be known or they are known in a preliminary, earlier, or different kind of way or, if we should employ a technical way of speaking, in an *a priori* kind of way (apart from any kind of piecemeal, resolute analysis that would deliberately move us, allegedly, from a knowledge of effects toward a possible knowledge of causes). About some things and our knowledge of them, we do not need to work in any kind of inquiry that would have us move from effects toward causes (from an experience of things that are sensed toward conclusions and an experience of things that are understood).

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not only as a secondary type of cause but possibly also as a species of instrumental cause.

For the sake of our possibly growing in understanding or, in other words, for new arguments that work from effects toward causes in the context of our currently existing world, see Robert Spitzer's *New Proofs for the Existence of God*. In conjunction with the apodictic kind of demonstration which exists in metaphysics (if demonstration always exists as an apodictic type of argument), we have probabilities and improbabilities that can be known by us from the ways and means of empirical science if, in the manner of procedure which is used in this context, conclusions are made and drawn which tally or which adhere to the kind of evidence that inherently belongs to the methodology of modern science. From the ways and means of modern science, new arguments can be combined with old arguments about the truth of postulating an uncaused, infinite Mind or Intellect who we would have to refer to in terms which would have speak about God if we should want to speak about how God properly exists as God and not as something which is quite other and different.

To illustrate this point a bit, if we turn toward a possible understanding of anthropic conditions that are needed and which make for the subsequent being of life forms within the being of our world and universe, we discover a number of universal constants which are all needed within the order of our physical universe if, repetitively, certain things are to exist and occur. These constants exist as regularities or as constants that are more basic although, in turn, their coordination suggests or it implies that some kind of larger constant exists (a constant which would exist as a more fundamental basis or ground). In some way, it is more stable; it is more reliable; it is more dependable if so many good things are to occur and to recur in our world in a predictable and reliable way. Cf. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, p. 52. It is said about constants that they virtually control every kind of interaction which exists within our physical universe in terms of how space, time, and different kinds of energy are combined, joined, and related to each other.

To cite a few examples, one commonly known constant refers to the speed of light, *c*, as this exists *within a vacuum*, designated quantitatively as 299,792,458 meters/a second. In quantum physics, another constant (among other constants) refers to *h* as a rate of change which exists with respect to an idealized species of physical body which is known as a *black body* and determinations of radiation as this exists with respect to the movement or the radiation of protons where this radiation is solely linked or where it is solely conditioned by differences in the falling or in the rising of any given temperature. Hence, according Planck's law or the formulation of Planck's constant, *h* stands for a quantitative rate of change which



imputation, or a species of judicial act which would differ from the judgment of a discursive act of reflective understanding in two distinct ways. As another kind of affirmation: (1) it cannot be parsed into a temporally ordered set of distinct elements or parts that have been brought together in an incremental fashion (bit by bit) and which are normally constitutive for the kind or the type of judgment which exists for us if our point of reference is the good of a reflective act of understanding and (2) it cannot be understood from a viewpoint which supposes that its point of origin is necessarily the asking of a question which would suppose that, prior to the apprehension of a known truth or a known fact, something would be known to exist initially as but only a possibility before it can be known to exist as an affirmed truth or as a confirmed fact.<sup>111</sup>

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of self in all the acts and the experiences that we have as human subjects (to the extent that we exist and live as active, recipient, conscious human subjects). Admittedly, in our acts of sensing, as we turn to our acts of sensing, in our acts of sensing, an awareness of self exists (however primitively this awareness exists in our acts of sensing). We do not engage in our acts of sensing in an unconscious way. An implicit awareness of self is always to be found. It exists. But, this awareness of self (apart from our acts of sensing) exists as a larger, greater, kind of thing (relative to our acts of sensing, it exists as a transcendent kind of thing because it includes much more than whatever is included if we should refer to our different acts of human sensing) and so, in the immediacy of the known which exists in our awareness of self, in terms of designation, *intuitus* functions as an appropriately apt term.

111As we have been noticing or as we should have been noticing, in a context which refers to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, judgments exist in a certain way. They possess a distinct form or structure which indicates how, properly, judgments exist as a species of human cognitive act. The form points to the manner of being or the kind of operation which exists in every judgment (so conceived and understood). However, if we should turn to *a priori* apprehensions of being which exist prior to any inquiries that we would want to make about the meaning of any given thing or object, it is another kind of question to ask and decide if we can possibly speak about the relevance of a reflective act of understanding which would exist as a proper or adequate judgment and about the kind of role that would be played by any judgments which are conceived in terms that belong to the form or the nature of a reflective act of understanding. In this context, for instance, see how Frederick D. Wilhelmsen speaks about how judgments exist in a way which precedes or which predates the asking of any questions that can then lead to reflective acts of understanding in his "The Priority of Judgment Over Question: Reflections on Transcendental Thomism," *Being and Knowing: Reflections of a Thomist* (Albany, New York: Preserving Christian Publications, Inc., 1995), pp. 81-108. Do judgments of a kind, in fact, exist prior to the asking of any questions which exists in the conduct of our subsequent inquiries and, if so, do they exist as rational determinations? Do they exist as rational activities, as rational acts? In a context which is governed by *a priori* apprehensions of being, are our alleged judgments best known or are they known in a less misleading way if, in our words and concepts, we should refer instead to how they exist as postulations, suppositions, stipulations, assertions, professions, or beliefs that, as affirmations or as imputations, we must make and suppose in the context of our cognitive activity (whatever) if, through our self-reflection and through an orientation that is now geared toward an *a posteriori* apprehension of being, we can move into a form of cognitive consciousness and a way of speaking which would want to speak about how, allegedly and properly, judgments also exist within us within our *a priori* apprehensions of being?

Hence, within this larger prior context, we discover the possible value of an Aristotelian distinction where, in the terms of his language, Aristotle had distinguished between our knowledge of that which exists as “the mere fact” (*to hoti*) of a thing and a second possible knowledge of that which would exist as “the reasoned fact” (*to dioti*) of a thing.<sup>112</sup> The truth or the reality of certain things and the meaning of certain things can be so obvious to us or it can be given to us in so obvious a manner that we do not think about the necessity of our having to advert to them in order to ask questions and so find or, in some way, determine what can be known about them. Nor do we have to speak about them in a way which would have us think that, necessarily, we need to determine an exact meaning or an exact definition of some kind

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As regards judgments, we know, on the one hand, as a caution, that rash judgments are to be looked upon with suspicion. They are not to be regarded as rational things. They are not to be encouraged (as often as we are tempted to make them). In rash judgments, too quickly, we move into affirmations and negations of one kind or another. Our judgments tend here to exist as assumptions or as projections that can be explained if we should refer to our how bias exists within us as a species of expectation and anticipation. Hence, as an antidote, if we should attend to how our affirmations and denials should exist in the wake of our participating in reflective acts of evaluation and understanding (since these act exist with a certain form and their actuation points to a fulfillment of certain conditions), we can perhaps become less rash or less presumptuous within the practice of our cognitive performance in any judgments that we would want to make and which, at some point, we are called upon to make. The dangers of absurdity and irrationality are lessened or they are replaced and supplanted by an addition or an importing of rational, reasonable determinations which serve to point to the rationality of a prospective, incipient, reflective act of judgment. Hence, here, in our judgments, in this species or type of judgment, we have a larger measure of intelligibility and understanding. Our judgments are informed by our understanding to a greater extent and by our search for experiences of additions to our understanding.

However, on the other hand, if our context is the density or the compactness of a kind of known given which somehow already belongs to us and which is given to us in different ways as a species of unity or as a unified known thing (or as a synthesis of elements or parts in the being of a thing) through our *a priori* apprehensions of being (if we should refer to a kind of being that can be given to us in our awareness and knowledge, apart from any kind of desire or wish that exists within ourselves that yearns for new apprehensions of being of one kind or another that can be then possibly given to us for our later understanding and assent), then, how can we speak about the possibility of any judgments which would exist for us as a distinct species of reflective act if the being of a reflective act of judgment is determined or if it is shaped by questions which lead to our possibly having reflective acts of understanding that would exist as the form or as the fabric of our judgments? The posing of our question implies or it supposes also that, within our *a priori* apprehensions of being, judgments (of a kind) allegedly exist as distinct acts (as separable realities) and, yet, as we have noted as our point of departure, the kind of knowing which exists within our *a priori* apprehensions of being is of a kind or type that it exists apart from the kind of purposeful, deliberate intentionality that exists within us within our acts of inquiry and which, in general, belongs to all of our acts of human questioning (as this questioning leads us toward *a posteriori* apprehensions of being). In the

that we would use in our self-reflection and communication (whether with ourselves or with other persons). Some things are known in an immediately unquestionable kind of way and so, from within this context which consists of our prior understanding and knowledge of things, on this basis, we can then begin to move into new, subsequent acts of inquiry and questioning as we move into a posing of questions that can reveal new interests about the being of these and other things that we have scarcely understood and known but which we would like to begin to understand and know to a far greater extent (given what we already happen to understand and know). In the context of our self-reflection and inquiry, only then can our *a priori* apprehensions of being be turned into objects of inquiry in a way which points to how they can exist as objects which we intend to move towards and which, if attained, would then exist for

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kind of apprehension which exists within our prior apprehensions of being, our knowing is lacking in a certain type of deliberate, self-conscious control which, if present, would point to the likelihood of a number of inner differentiations, bespeaking the differentiations which normally belong to us with respect to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and the incremental kind of movement and reception which belongs to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being as we seek to move from potency to act toward a knowledge and an experience of these apprehensions.

The paucity of difference and the relative lack of differentiation amongst acts which is endemic to our *a priori* apprehensions of being (as a species of determination) accordingly points to a quandary or to an ambiguity which would seem to belong to our cognition with respect to our *a priori* apprehensions of being, and this condition explains why, none too easily, are we able to move into a reflective form of awareness which can so easily speak about real differences and distinctions that would seem to always hold if, for instance, we should want to speak about how, allegedly, judgments can possibly exist for us with respect to our *a priori* apprehensions of being. Within this context of *a priori* apprehensions, on the one hand, what exists as an affirmation or as an act of positing which avers that this “x” is so or that this “y” is so in any given instance would seem to point to some kind of decision, discernment, or judgment which, in fact, best points here to the viability of two options or a choice between two possibilities about how judgment exists within a context that is constituted by *a priori* apprehensions of being: (1) judgment as, in fact, an enhanced type of awareness which exists in us through our acts of recollecting, recalling, or remembering (as we recall or, in some way, we implicitly sense and know that this is not that; this “x” is not this “y”); or (2) judgment as, in fact, a performative, heuristic type of awareness which says, for the sake of growth in our inquiry and the better formulation of a pertinent apt question, that, certainly, this “x” is not this “y” and that this “y” is not “z” (this question, for instance, is not this other question and this question is the true or right question in contrast or in opposition to the asking of this other question) and only later, as we proceed and move into our own inquiries and as we ask our own questions, are we able to move into a situation or into a cognitive order where, now, distinctions and differences can be more clearly revealed and known by us and so they can be identified in a manner which should now be more obvious to us (both to ourselves as would be questioners and also to others who could be joined to us in some kind of way with respect to the inquiries that we are currently making).

Within this context and in the order of transition which exists as we move from *a priori* apprehensions of being toward *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, we notice that it is

us as an instance and species of *a posteriori* apprehension.<sup>113</sup> More can be known, later, through an *a posteriori* apprehension of being than through the givens of an *a priori* apprehension of being although, on the other hand, and as we have been noting when speaking about *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, our *a priori* apprehensions of being set conditions or they construct a framework for the later kind of cognition which will exist for us if we should refer to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being.

In psychological terms thus, we accordingly notice, if we turn to ourselves or as we turn to ourselves, that, as human beings, if we attend to our current understanding and knowledge of things, we should find that we do not live within an initial condition of total ignorance. In fact,

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one thing to associate an act of judgment with the thoughtfulness which exists in our acts of reflective understanding and another to associate it with the thoughtfulness of prior affirmations and negations in determinations of another kind which are required of us, in a preliminary way in our inquiry, if, later, we are to move toward judgments which would exist as acts of reflective understanding and so to any possible increments and enlargements in the depth and range of our understanding which can come to us if we are disposed and open to an orientation that would be geared toward the kind of reception which would exist for us if we should think about how our cognitive apprehensions can exist for us as *a posteriori* apprehensions of being. Knowing prior to inquiry or knowing as the condition of our inquiry (when determining the question that we should ask or in “getting the question right”) differs from knowing in the wake of our posing of questions and inquiries and this later, second type of knowing points to a different configuration in terms of how our acts of sensing and understanding are joined and related to each other. Cf. Wilhelmsen, “Priority of Judgment Over Question,” p. 97. To some extent, our acts of sensing and understanding in one context differ from our acts of sensing and understanding in another context in ways that need to be explicated and known if a number of misapprehensions and omissions are to be avoided. The differences, in turn, need to be understood in terms of how they suggest or how they point to a number of metaphysical implications which need to be known in ways which would then point to where, in each case, reasonable foundations are to be alluded to. Some kind of communion always exists between the order of our human knowing and the reality of things which transcends the kind of order which belongs to us in the manner of our human cognition if, ultimately, our human knowing exists as something that, in some way, is caused. It responds to things which are other and greater than ourselves.

As a case in point thus, if, in their execution, all our acts of inquiry presuppose affirmations or acts of positing within the order of our cognition which reflect the being of a metaphysical order of things and which if, as secondary causes, they exist in their own right as subsidiary, creative acts of being through their putting of something that is potential into a condition of being (in a making of this or a making of that from what had not been), then, at this point, for a fuller or a more rounded grasp of things in general, as we move through a form of self-reflective cognitive analysis into a form of metaphysical analysis which attends to an assortment of metaphysical implications and the aptness of a number of new metaphysical conclusions (or as we notice that our self-reflective cognitive analysis is to be identified as a form of metaphysical analysis), we should find that a kind of primacy which belongs to acts of postulating and positing within the order of our human cognition (preparatory to the formulation of any given question or inquiry) is a condition which points to a kind of primacy

in the awareness that we have of our own ignorance and of where or what we do not understand and know, a knowledge of certain things is immediately and obviously given to us. In advertent to the condition and the being of our ignorance, if we should advert to this ignorance,<sup>114</sup> this same knowing points to three consequences or three effects.<sup>115</sup> First, it reflects or it points to cognitive judgments or to cognitive affirmations which implicitly know about the extent of our current limitations. Second, knowing about our ignorance reveals a standpoint that points to an implicit, prior knowledge which, in some way, knows about later questions that, possibly, we can begin later to ask. Thirdly, knowing about our ignorance indicates how it is joined and how it points to things that, in some way, or implicitly, we already understand and know. Our prior, current knowledge of things exists as the ground of

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which also belongs to acts of being which exist within a transcendent order of existing things. The positing which exists within our cognition as the condition of our later acts of questioning *as itself an act of being* (if we say that this is so or that this is so in a way which avoids any contradictions) – this all points to a positing in terms of prior, conditioning acts of being or a positing in terms of a prior, conditioning act of being which, as a species of prior condition, in turn explains both the being and the order of our human cognition (as a differentiated but as a species of composite unity), and also the being and the unity of all existing things with regard to a differentiated but composite species of unity which also belongs to the being of individually existing things. The actuality or the being of our questions, as given (as actuality, as being, as an effecting of being, or as an act of being) – this all points to the primacy of being relative to our acts of cognition or the primacy of actuality which exists as a distinct reality (as a distinct metaphysical principle): being before or prior to our cognition since our cognition exists as a specification or as a species of being. It exists in its own right as an instance of the being of things and so, within this wider context, within the order of things in general, as a larger or more general principle that is to be admitted, we can say that being posits being (or more accurately through the use of Latin terms: *esse* [as act of being or as exercise of being or as act of existence or exercise of existence] posits or causes *ens* [as the having of being or as the having of existence]). Cf. Wilhelmsen, “Priority of Judgment Over Question,” p. 96; “Existence and Esse,” p. 112.

In the wake of these considerations thus: if an understanding of our human cognition is to be entirely adequate or more fully adequate, it must attend to causes and to realities that transcend the being of our cognition if, as a general rule, acts of being are known by us in a way which must point to the absoluteness of their primacy and so, on the basis of this primacy and as the condition or the precondition of our subsequent acts of human cognition, a primacy of being is to be acknowledged which would have to surpass or which would have to trump the primacy of our subsequent acts of cognition since the self-transcendence of our cognition *qua* act points to the greater transcendence which belongs to a higher order of existing things and to how a priority which belongs to the order of being (as regards the being of existing things) differs from a priority that belongs to the order of our human cognition.

In other words, the kind of priority which belongs to us in our cognition points to an order of being and an order of priority which is more fundamental and so the priority of our cognition exists as a subordinate or as a lesser kind of thing. It is determined by a priority that belongs to the being of existing things (the precondition of our knowing is the condition of our prior being, our prior existence) and so, to this order of being or to this order of existing things,

our current ignorance and so, as a fundamental point of departure: the extent, the contours, and the lacunae which exist within us with respect to our current knowledge of things (in all of its positive and negative aspects) functions as a contextualizing, conditioning variable for all the inquiries that, later, we would like to pursue or which we can possibly later pursue. This context here and now and not some other context in another here and now determines the kinds of questions that we would like to ask, giving to us a direction and a focus to our inquiries that, otherwise, they would not have.

To restate an argument that comes to us from Frederick Wilhelmsen: to argue that our philosophical inquiries or that all critical forms of inquiry must occur or

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we must turn and direct ourselves in our acts of questioning and understanding if, as a consequence, all other things in our experience, life, and world are to be properly understood in terms of how all these different things are related to each other in ways which point to a larger, comprehensive order of things which, if grasped and known, best reveals a greater fullness which belongs to the reality of the world which exists about us. In the unity and in the oneness of this order, a multitude is known in terms of a differentiation of very many elements and parts and in the apprehension of this oneness as this can be given to us through a dialectical form of inquiry and reasoning, the differentiation and the oneness can be both known in terms of how they exist together in the context of a unified whole. The kind of tension which exists within us as human beings reflects a kind of tension which exists within the greater world of existing things even as, through our inquiring and understanding, we try to move toward an experience and sense of unity that can transcend these tensions in a way that has yet to be fully grasped, understood, and appreciated.

112Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* 2, 2, 53b9-10; *Posterior Analytics* 1, 13, 78a22-79a24; 1, 33, 89a15-22; 2, 1, 89b24-31, as cited by Patrick H. Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 25. The use of a Greek term that is best translated in terms of fact and not in terms of data accordingly suggests, against some of our anticipations and expectations, that Aristotle is referring to *a priori* apprehensions of being which exist prior to our possible experience of “reasoned facts” and not simply to the givens of sense which we would prefer to refer to in terms which would have us to speak about “data” or the givenness of “sense data.” It is quite possible of course, in the context of his language, that, for Aristotle, the givens of sense are simply combined with *a priori* apprehensions of being in a way which does not need to attend to a differentiation in our analysis nor to a differentiation in our language that would be needed if we are to forestall the possibility of a confusion that can arise between these two types of cognitive familiarity. By attending to our experience of self in our cognition, in some cases, we find that we can distinguish our acts of sense from the being of our kinds of cognitive act although, in other cases, we find that we cannot so easily make such a distinction.

113See, for instance, how this occurs in the kind of analysis that comes to us from Frederick D. Wilhelmsen in his *Being and Knowing: Reflections of a Thomist* (Albany, New York: Preserving Christian Publications, Inc., 1995), pp. 81-108. In his study about “The Priority of Judgment Over Question”: when speaking about the conditions or the preconditions of our human inquiry, it is to be admitted that these conditions exist in a way that we might not be too conscious of. We tend not to advert to them in a way that would move us from a condition of consciousness to a condition of self-consciousness (or we assume or we presuppose that they exist in us in an unquestionable kind of way), and so our awareness of

that they must begin in a way which is bereft of all presuppositions is to voice a preference, a bias, or a point of view which exists in its own right as a presupposition. The claim contradicts itself (its own thesis) and so, in the absence of coherence and from the contradiction which is experienced and known, the only truth which can be known is the contradiction which is to be found within the claim that is made. Hence: if, in fact, our philosophical and critical inquiries always work from presuppositions of one kind or another, we best proceed in our inquiries and understanding if we can know about the presuppositions that, in fact, we are using at any given time and so be open to any changes or revisions that could be given to us in a way that can lead us

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them is only implicit, partial, or limited. Better put: we have an awareness but not a knowledge that has been discursively thought out and affirmed and then put into words that we can speak about in any conversations that we would have (with either ourselves or with other persons). Only in the wake of later inquiry and questions do we turn to our suppositions or to our presuppositions and so to our *a priori* apprehensions of being and so, from there, we can begin to speak about them and to have a knowledge of them that would hopefully surpass anything that, before, we have known or understood. In this type of context, in our self-reflections and inquiry, our awareness of things, as an *a priori* apprehension of being, is converted into an *a posteriori* apprehension of being that has been differentiated into elements, parts, terms, and relations as now, within our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, we advert to how, within our knowing, we have been working with an apprehension of being which has been initially existing for us as a species of *a priori* apprehension.

To give an example that is taken from Wilhelmsen: we function in a cognitive context which assumes, for instance, the truth of logical principles which exist as the principles of identity and non-contradiction and, performatively, we employ these principles in a way which governs the integrity or the intelligibility of our different acts of inquiry in cognition. Cf. Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, p. 94. We avoid contradictions as, in our cognitive activity, we join this type or specification of “x” with this other type or this other specification of “y.” A synthesizing activity also occurs in our acts of inquiry, our acts of thinking, our acts of reasoning (if, for instance, we should ask about “what is the origin of this?” or “how is this related to that?”) and, in its apriority as a species of act (relative to our acts of imagining and our acts of understanding), this activity points to a form of synthesizing in acts which precedes the synthesizing which also belongs to our acts of understanding as these acts grasp or point to a relation that can be said possibly to exist between say “x” and “y.” But then, to identify, to name, and to speak about the being of these principles of identity and non-contradiction is to move into an *a posteriori* apprehension of being which exists for us as a species of cognitive effect, relative to ourselves in our acts of inquiry, although, also, it is to be admitted that all of our acts of inquiry exist in a way which supposes or which presupposes a primitive form of awareness which exists, for want of a better term, as an *a priori* apprehension of being and which exists also, for want of another better term, as an apprehension, a recognition, or an *intuitus* and not as a term which exists as the fruit of a discursive act of understanding (whenever our acts of judgments about the truth of things are identified with the kind of deliberation and movement which belongs to our acts of reflective understanding). In the project or the enterprise of our self-understanding, we begin to know this understanding of ours not by “discerning or thinking about it...as an object,” but by recognizing its presence or its

toward presuppositions that it would be better for us to have and to use if our subsequent understanding and knowledge of things is to grow to some extent in any kind of depth or width.<sup>116</sup>

Hence: if we are to have an adequate understanding about the kind of inquiry which belongs to us in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, for a complete understanding about the nature of our human cognition and an understanding which would also attend to the metaphysical consequences that would be operative for us, we need to turn to our *a priori* apprehensions of being in a way which can lead us toward a fuller grasp of how, in us, as human subjects, in these *a priori* apprehensions, a transcendental dimension is to be adverted to: a transcendental

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activity (by an apprehension or recognition that, in its immediacy or in its prior givenness, it can be identified as an *intuitus*) as or while, within our cognition, we are discerning or thinking about something else that is other that we would like to understand and know. Cf. William E. Murnion, "The Meaning and Import of Aquinas's Philosophy of Mind," (paper presented at the Second International Lonergan Workshop, Regis College, Toronto, August 1-6, 2004), pp. 18-19.

In our consciousness, in our consciousness of self as self, and solely by means of the awareness which exists within our consciousness of self, a degree of self-knowledge already partially and tacitly exists for us. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript translated in 1989 by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), p. 182.

Perhaps more easily than how we might come to know about the being of things that are other than ourselves, in a thoughtful self-reflective way, we can come to know about a number of first principles that are basic for us in the functioning of our human cognition (they cannot be proven from any kind of viewpoint which would be external to the functioning of our human cognition) and, as I would like to argue also, in a similar way, we can come to know about the being of other first principles that are basic to us with respect to understanding the manner or the way of our human existence. We speak here about the accessibility of an "innate knowledge of first principles" or, in other words, about *a priori* apprehensions of being because, apparently, so easily and freely, we can begin to know about their meaning and identity (since, already, to some extent, they exist within ourselves, within our consciousness of self within the play of our current cognitive performance and so, in understanding and knowing them, as we seek to move toward a fuller or a more adequate knowledge of them, we engage in inquiries and in acts of cognition which can recall the aptness of a Socratic way of speaking where, allegedly, it is said that our cognition exists as a kind of reminiscing or as a kind of remembering that we always do whenever, to a greater and larger degree, we grow in our experience of consciousness (as we bring into the ambit of our awareness or into the experience of our consciousness something that can now be known more fully through a recalling or a knowing of truths or realities that, in some way but partially and dimly, we have been already understanding and knowing). Cf. John F. X. Knasas, "Why for Lonergan Knowing Cannot Consist in 'Taking a Look'," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* (2004) vol. 78, no. 1: 139, n. 17; also citing Pierre Rousselot, *The Intellectualism of Saint Thomas*, trans. James E. O'Mahony (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), p. 21.

dimension that is not limited to the kind of self-transcendence which exists within us if we should only attend to how later, through our inquiries and through our asking of questions, we can move toward realities that transcend the givens of our current knowing and the being of our individual existence. Instead, we now need to refer to this second, other transcendental dimension that is more prior to us than is the kind of priority which belongs to us if, relatively, we should attend to the priority of our questions and how our questioning, as a cause, can take us toward new apprehensions of being: toward a deeper understanding and knowledge of certain things that are understood and known by us already in some way (as we move from an understanding and a knowledge which is imperfect, partial, and so defective in some way; or, by another kind of moving, we recall or we remember certain things that, in some way earlier, we have already understood and known but which now requires that a prior act of understanding should be relived or re-enacted in some way within our consciousness of self through an order of invention and discovery that typically belongs to the kind of knowing that belongs to us in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being).<sup>117</sup>

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On the basis of our self-reflection, a prior experience and a prior knowledge of things is found to include not only the manner and the laws of our cognition and the manner and the laws of our human existence but, at the same time too, the manner and the laws of being which refer to the being of things that are other than ourselves whenever we think about things that, to some extent, we already understand and know but about which we need to grow in an understanding and knowledge that would want to surpass anything that, previously, we have understood and known.

114See Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, pp. 6-7, and how he quotes from Socrates in the *Symposium*, the Jowett translation, (Oxford, 1871). A man or woman who is satisfied with him or herself cannot be wise or good since, within this self-satisfaction or this self-contentment, nothing can be done. Nothing can be improved. Within it, ignorance exists as an evil.

115Emerich Coreth, *Metaphysics*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), pp. 53f, as cited by Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, p. 83: "There is within us a mixture of knowing and not-knowing...a knowing not-knowing, a knowing ignorance, aware of its own ignorance...we may call...[our knowing ignorance] the pre-knowledge of the question." A given question, as it is posed, points to whatever it is that is already known and, by an analysis of any given question, what is already known emerges with a greater degree of clarity and precision.

116Wilhelmsen, *Christianity and Political Philosophy*, p. 6.

117Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 7, Response, as cited by Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, p. 59, n. 52. See Wilhelmsen's endnote for a listing of many other texts in Aquinas which reiterate this teaching as it refers to the use and the value of apt phantasms that exist within the order of our human cognition. Phantasms lead to new acts of understanding and they also lead us to acts of understanding that are already given to us. In this context thus, please note and think about how we can possibly integrate a Thomist understanding of cognition with a Platonist understanding of cognition. In the terms of his language, Plato had spoken about our acts of understanding and knowing as if they exist as specifications of remembering and recalling. We recall something that, in some way, we already understand and know. We bring something into our consciousness that we have already understood and known and, in a given context, this may not be so easy a task when, from our point of view, we notice that the prior knowledge of one person differs from the prior knowledge of another

To understand this kind of apriority in its fullness and in its absoluteness thus, on the basis of one possible point of departure, one approach can refer to the actuality of our questions that, currently, we are asking. In the context of our current work, we are asking questions and we are referring to the kind of activity which exists in our questioning and any implications that can be properly drawn from the data of this questioning. Hence, if the asking of any given question supposes a prior order of existing things that, in some way, we already understand and know (our questions presuppose a kind of content that is known by us as this exists within a cognitional order of things and, on the basis of this content, an order of existing things as this exists within a metaphysical order of things), on the other hand however, our acts of questioning exist in themselves as acts (although, admittedly, as a species of act) and, as acts in their different variety and multiplicity, they presuppose an anteriority and a priority which would have to belong to the condition or the being of act *qua* act (as a species of act points to a genus of act) and so, from different kinds of act, we conclude to the condition of being or to the condition of actuality as this exists in its own right (with an autonomy or an independence which differs from the being of any species).<sup>118</sup> The species points to a genus or, in other words

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person. In Plato's own words however, as a species of universal principle that, later, was taken up and adopted by Aristotle and Aquinas: "the truth of things is always [somewhere or somehow] in the soul." Cf. Plato, *Meno*, 86b1-2, as quoted by Perl, *Thinking Being*, p. 48; p. 49. Truth exists within the kind of reality which exists as minds, intellects, or understanding and not outside of minds, intellects, or understanding. However, in Aristotle and Aquinas, the language which is used tends to refer to how apt images or phantasms function within the order of our cognition if we should refer to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being. Apt phantasms assist our understanding. As material causes, they can help trigger the reception of a direct act of understanding that knows something which is now new for us although admittedly, in other ways, they can also trigger an act of understanding which exists as a remembering of something which we have already understood and known. Again, with Plato, we reiterate his words and the teaching which it contains: "the truth of things is always [somewhere or somehow] in the soul." Cf. Plato, *Meno*, 86b1-2.

<sup>118</sup>Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, p. 87. See how Wilhelmsen reaches this conclusion by taking the anteriority that is allegedly ascribed to our acts of questioning within the order of our human cognition as the basis of a later understanding and a knowledge of metaphysics and then indicating how, as an act or by being in a condition of act, questioning implicitly exists as a species of act or actuality and so, as an act or *qua* act, it points to an anteriority which belongs to the condition or the quality of actuality or, in other words, the condition or the quality of act, or, in other words, the condition or the quality of being as being. Questioning, as act or as a species of act, always presupposes act or being as something which exists in a more general, more fundamental way. To speak about the priority of act, being, or existence or the priority of the being of act or existence is to speak about a principle or a reality that we come to through our acts of reasoning and analysis which have come to realize and know that act, being, existence or the being of act or existence is not to be identified with any given instance or any given form or mode if, from act we get form and not act from form. The priority of being *per se* accordingly points to the priority of metaphysics (as the science of the study of being), relative to the more restricted kind of priority which belongs to the order of our human cognition if our cognition exists as a species of being: if it is something which only exists for us through the condition of its being or through the condition

we would say that, in its transcendence, act, being, existence, or the being of act or existence exists with a priority of its own which is distinct and absolute (even as we must admit to ourselves that, in our experience of things which exist within our world of space and time, act, being, or existence does not exist or it cannot be known apart from how it is instantiated in terms of some kind of mode, form, or species). While, in our world, act is limited by mode, species, or form, no act comes from any mode, species, or form. An act of being can only come from another act of being or, in other words, act can only be explained by act (if act does not exist as any kind of form or nature) since, on the other hand or conversely, from nothingness or from an absence of act, we cannot get act. Alternatively: “from nothing, only nothing comes.”<sup>119</sup> Appositely, “a nature causing its own being would be a nothing making itself to be.”<sup>120</sup> Act *qua* act or act simply as act exists fundamentally as a non-derivative as regards the being of anything else (act *qua* act exists as an absolute) although, as a truthful conclusion it exists as a derivative within the order of our cognition and understanding. Hence to reiterate, in terms of its being, act *qua* act cannot be itself caused. Metaphorically speaking, it exists entirely or purely as a cause since, technically speaking or paradoxically, it cannot be explained through anything which exists as an other (it lacks any kind of form or nature). Even if we should speak about that which is or that which exists *in this way* (in terms of form) or that which exists *in this other way* (in terms of form) – to speak in this way is to admit that something could possibly not exist at all (in any kind of way, apart from the being of any kind of form). Transcendence in meaning or form is transcended by the transcendence of act or the transcendence of being as we move from the transcendence of formal causality to the transcendence of factive, efficient causality.<sup>121</sup>

The possibility or the potentiality of being or the variety of its givenness as this exists in many different things accordingly points to an absolute context or to an absolute horizon which exists in terms which would have us speak about an all embracing “horizon of being”<sup>122</sup> that can be noticed by us (to some extent) if we attend to how an unrestrictedness exists within our acts of questioning as regards an intention of being or a thirst for the being of all things and how, at the same time also, this “horizon of being” points to the being of an anterior, absolute, prior, general context: a context whose priority influences and touches us (in ways that we do not entirely grasp and understand and in ways that we have yet to entirely grasp or understand). It conditions and it explains the manner and the being of our human existence and so, as a consequence, the manner and the being of our human cognition. From the manner of our being, the manner of our knowing. A more general determination of being (to the degree that it can be known or the degree that it simply exists as a known unknown) sets conditions for all lesser determinations of being or for specifications that exist within the being of currently existing things. As we have been already noting, act comes from act. And so, as we apply this

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of its actuality and performance although in a way or through a form which points to its limitations and its restrictedness.

<sup>119</sup>Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God: Contributions of Contemporary Physics and Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), p. 45.

<sup>120</sup>Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *The Paradoxical Structure of Existence* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 118.

<sup>121</sup>Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 73; p. 76.

<sup>122</sup>Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 64, as cited by Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, p. 83.

principle to the manner and the actuality of our cognition, our questioning (and our prior knowing) exists as a derivative, as an effect, as a consequence, or as a function of an actualizing act of being since, in some way, in a way which needs to be acknowledged and understood, from being (as this exists in a larger, general sense) and then, from our particular acts of being, comes our subsequent acts of questioning; our cognition, our understanding, and our knowing. Act leads to act or, in a way which is less subject to misinterpretation, as we have been noting and reiterating, act comes from act and not from something which could be bereft of actuality, being, or act. As a species of analytic principle, primacy in terms of act points to primacy in terms of being. Act exists as being.

Because our *a priori* determinations of being accordingly lead us toward *a posteriori* apprehensions of being (since, as noted, they exist as objects that are already understood and known to some extent; they serve as our initial point of departure), an understanding of the objects that belong to our *a priori* determinations of being can emerge more fully if now, consciously and deliberately, in order to move toward a growth in understanding which would exist for us as an *a posteriori* apprehension of being, we advert to a new or a larger starting point (a base) which acknowledges or which combines that which we already understand and know in our *a priori* apprehensions of being with that which is already given to us initially through our various acts of human sensing. In this context, our understanding of things and our experience of sense data exist together in a way which points to how they exist as a tangled, amorphous whole. Our point of departure is no longer limited to the givens which belong to us in our various acts of human sensing since now, in conjunction with our acts of sensing and in a way which is somewhat indistinguishable from our acts of sensing, our *a priori* apprehensions of being are such that they combine and co-operate with a restless form of self-movement and an order of intentions which exist within us to the degree that we exist as possible, potential, active, seeking human knowers. New, possible, *a posteriori* apprehensions of being can be possibly given to us in a way which points to how, between the intelligibility of known objects within the order of existing things (which exists as a kind of *a priori*) and the experience of intelligibility that can be later given to us through the discursiveness of our questioning and understanding (which, in its piecemeal way, exists as a kind of *a posteriori*), a mutual form of causation is to be alluded to: a mutual form of causation which indicates how each type of knowledge can exist as a species of *a priori*, relative to the other. While, in general, *a priori* apprehensions of being exist as an absolute; they create a context for our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being (and so they exist as a species of absolute cause or as a species of absolute condition), on the other hand however, as another species of cause or as another species of condition and so as a second species of *a priori*, our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being move and touch upon our earlier, our prior *a priori* apprehensions of being in a manner that can give to them a greater determination or a greater meaning and significance than what had been given to us earlier through the givenness and the instrumentality of our initial, earlier apprehensions. In addition too, while our *a priori* apprehensions of being lead us toward *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, our new *a posteriori* apprehensions of being can also lead us toward new *a priori* apprehensions of being that somehow, dormant and potentially, have been existing within us within the order of our cognition. Partially or incompletely, in some way, they have been operative in us but in a way that has been escaping the extent of our apprehension and awareness. They have not been known or realized or, in some way, they have not been previously identified and so they have not been put within an order of cognition which has now become more conscious of itself in

terms of the contents that are known and experienced. As, performatively, through inquiry, we have come to know about how our *a priori* apprehensions of being are to be distinguished from our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being in a context which points to the primacy of inquiry and the primacy of our questions, in another way however and also at the same time, our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being have been pointing to a kind of primacy or to a kind of priority that in turn belongs to them, relative to the other kind of primacy or the other kind of priority that we have been discovering when we have come to know about the being of our *a priori* apprehensions. Each acts on the other in terms of relations and why an understanding of one cannot do without an understanding of the other.

In some way thus, through the raising and posing of new questions, in a manner that we will attempt to demonstrate and to prove through the questions that we are asking in the context of our current inquiry, our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being are revealed in conjunction with our *a priori* apprehensions of being. A knowledge of one leads more fully to a more complete knowledge of the other where, through the raising and asking of previously unasked questions, we create conditions that add to the content of that which we already come to understand and know.

To draw a comparison that can possibly help us in our current understanding of things, look at how Michel Foucault speaks about his notion of *a priori* as an *épistémè* in his book, *The Order of Things*. An *épistémè* exists as a species of fundamental *a priori* within the order of our human cognition and culture since, with respect to the being of any given human culture, a species of fundamental order or a fundamental set of beliefs governs what is seen and understood to be rational and what is seen and understood to be right within the terms of a given culture; and so, within the human order of things, the dominance of *épistémès* is such (it is so great) that, within any given culture, it is not possible for anyone to know how a given *épistémè* exists as one's context for determinations of meaning and truth. In Foucault's own words: "...in any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only one *épistémè* that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice."<sup>123</sup> Within a given *épistémè*, we cannot understand or grasp the reasonableness or the goodness that can exist within another *épistémè* that could be foundational for the life of another people and culture. For persons and a society to move from one *épistémè* to another *épistémè* requires some kind of abrupt, violent change in a shift of perspective and *épistémè* which escapes the

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<sup>123</sup>See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 168, as cited by <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episteme> (accessed December 6, 2018). See also Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* for a presentation and an explanation of things which argues a similar thesis and how major developments or major achievements occur in science through shifts of paradigm that are revolutionary. In one given context, we do a certain kind of science and then, in another context, a different kind of science which points to another kind of intellectual object or a different kind of intelligibility that is now the object of one's questioning, inquiring understanding. Cf. On the meaning of Kuhn's thesis, see Toby E. Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China and the West*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 25-32.

connectivity of our understanding since, allegedly, our understanding always occurs within a context that determines the parameters of our understanding and, from our current understanding of things, through some kind of development, we cannot create or move into a new context which would exist as a new basic *épistémè* unless, at some kind of prior fundamental level, the order of our understanding is destroyed or it is obliterated in some way. Hence, if our thinking is always governed by a dominant *épistémè* that we do not understand, know, or control, it is not possible to speak about this kind of *a priori* in a way that can be possibly free of any bias or distortion.

On the other hand however, as we make these observations and as we try and establish connections and links that move from A to B, performatively in our acts of doing, whenever we try to move and speak about the truth of things, we try to move toward a point of view that would be transcendent (allegedly, as a point of view, it would exist at a higher level). The questioning that we do implies that the truth of Foucault's thesis cannot be simply taken for granted or simply assumed since, in our understanding and in our comprehension of it and in our judging and in our evaluation of it, in some way, we must assume that we are working from a point of view that is turned toward a higher understanding of things. Truths exist in the arguments that Foucault provides when he refers to cultural forms that can be pervasive and dominant. A given culture lives and exists within a set of presuppositions that may not be fully understood and known from within. But, whenever we speak about a kind of *a priori* which exists within differing human cultures, we always speak and act in a way which seeks to transcend any limitations that can exist within the deposit of our understanding. To speak about the existence of any given limit is to transcend the being of a given limit. To argue a theory which claims that a series of *épistémès* are incommensurable is to argue for a point of view that transcends the being of any given *épistémè*.

Hence: a radical interpretation or, better put, a radical adherence to the truths which allegedly exist in Foucault's thesis reveals inner contradictions that tell against the truth of an absolute form of relativity that is suggested by Foucault's arguments and the illustrations that he uses in order to point to disjunctions and differences which, allegedly, are so absolute that they preclude the possibility of our having any acts of understanding that can join persons and cultures with each other in a way which can lead to genuine progress in the renewal of our personal and cultural lives.

However, within a larger context of things, if we should refer to expansions of meaning and understanding that are said by some to be revolutionary (for instance, the transition from Aristotelian science to the emergence of modern empirical science in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century), no legitimate advance in the depth of our understanding and knowledges necessarily requires any decisions that would have to deny meanings and truths that we have come to understand (meanings and truths that we have previously grasped and understood). To the degree, in fact, that we can move toward an understanding of the cultural changes that

have been occurring in the story of our human history, a more adequate understanding of abrupt shifts in our ways of imagining and thinking should succeed in indicating how, within inherited ways of imagining and thinking, new questions have somehow arisen and emerged. Some persons have begun to notice anomalies and discrepancies that, for them, are not too intelligible. They are not too understandable on the basis of the assumptions and the beliefs that, to date, they have been holding and assuming and so, for the sake of a better understanding of things, they have begun to ask questions that turn toward a different approach in a new mode of inquiry that could be possibly more fruitful and relevant.<sup>124</sup> The object, throughout, is some other kind of intelligibility that has yet to be known and discovered (on the basis of intelligibilities about which no questions have to be asked or posed).

If then, through our self-reflection and inquiry, we come to know about our *a priori* apprehensions of being and the effective role which they have been playing for us, the posing of our questions, through a kind of implicit criticism or a scrutiny that exists in our acts of posing questions – this posing leads to two kinds of effect with regard to our *a priori* apprehensions of being. Degrees of inquiry and scrutiny first lead to questions about the depth and so the truthfulness of our prior apprehensions (a given truth can be shown to be less obvious in its truthfulness or its truth can be admitted and adverted to only within a

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<sup>124</sup>For documentation to this effect and for an example that can indicate how developments within a given culture can lead to further developments which can change a given culture from within in ways that had not been expected or anticipated but which yet occurred in ways which point to a series of intelligible connections within a progress of sorts which has occurred within the genesis and the march of our human understanding, *pace* Foucault, see Toby Huff's *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China and the West*. Prior to the birth of modern science as this was achieved in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (as a consequence of the work of Galileo Galilei and Sir Isaac Newton), initial conditions existed within different orders of human thinking (within the natural sciences, within philosophy, and within theology), and an understanding of these dispositions and developments points to how later methodological developments were, in part, caused by an accumulation of earlier achievements and a kind of impetus which can be found to exist in how these earlier achievements were all joined and linked to each other. A trajectory or an orientation can be indicated and pointed to and so, to some extent, its intelligibility is revealed in terms of how it leads to a large number of inferences that can link a larger number of variables with each other in a way that would not be the case if we were to work from a more restricted or a more limited point of view. One good thing leads to other good things if the emergence of a given good makes for the probability that another good will, at some point, emerge and exist in a way that, in turn, effects a change in terms of the existence of new probabilities. Unthinkable, imaginable possibilities become probable or, more accurately, a possibility becomes a probability through a change of status which moves from a hypothetical kind of knowledge and apprehension toward a knowledge and apprehension that is turned toward determinations of truth and reality. For a brief summary of what can be achieved in terms of a possible understanding of these different things and the links which exist between different things, see, for instance, a paper by Tamer Nashef at <https://strangenotions.com/im-a-muslim-but-heres-why-i-admire-the-catholic-church/> (accessed December 7, 2018).

circumscribed set of conditions which can be determined in a way that had not been thought possible) and, on the other hand, degrees of inquiry and scrutiny also lead to questions which can confirm the truth or the reliability which properly belongs to some of our prior apprehensions. If one type of question raises the question of truth, the other attends to the fruitfulness or the goods of a given truth and to a series of other questions that can be asked about how an inherited understanding of things can be transposed into a way of speaking that is a bit more relevant because it is a bit more precise in a context that is conditioned by the asking of a different set of questions.

Two examples of the first type, as evidence, come to our mind. In our knowledge, for instance, of astronomy: traditionally, persons have tended to believe in the movement of the sun about the earth. The sun rises and the sun sets. However, on the basis of later questions and problems and from an apprehension of new images and then through the consequent emergence of new apprehensions which exist as *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, an *a priori* apprehension of being as regards the movement of the sun has ceased to possess much of its previous authority and the kind of status which it had once enjoyed despite a kind of obviousness which continues to exist for us in terms of why, even now, in the context of our daily day, we tend to believe and to hold that it is the sun which moves about us on earth and not the earth which moves about the sun. To solve some problems, we continue to assume that it is the sun which moves about the earth in a daily orbiting transit and that our earth exists as a stationary object.

A second example comes to us in the wake of the discovery of non-Euclidean geometry late in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It had been assumed, until then, that we can only draw one parallel straight line through a dot that exists beside another straight line. However, when it was concluded that, in fact, we cannot draw a line in a way which would indefinitely extend for us in a way which would allow us to see if it could possibly intersect with the being of another already existing line, it was concluded that other options are possible. Other options are conceivable. In the absence of contradiction, other options exist. Maybe, without contradiction, we can draw an infinite number of parallel lines through a given exterior dot or, without contradiction, no parallel lines can be possibly drawn through a given dot. Our physical space is accordingly not limited to an Euclidean geometry of flat surfaces since we can have geometries that are adequate for other kinds of space: one for inwardly curved space or one for outwardly curved space.

In both cases and in other cases also, some of our *a priori* apprehensions are subject to change, revision, and reevaluation as we encounter tensions which exist within the order of our apprehensions (our *a priori* apprehensions contending, at times, with each other and with some of our *a posteriori* apprehensions). We find differences and conflicts which exist within the apriority of our human knowledge as we find that the obviousness of one apprehension conflicts with the apparent obviousness of another apprehension<sup>125</sup> although, also, among our *a*

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125For a like parallel and an example that we can find if we should attend to the history of Catholic theology, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, Peter Abelard (d. 1142) compiled a text for his students (in his *Sic et Non*, his *Yes and No*) which pointed to contradictions which exist within the order of Catholic theology if we attend to the body of commonly accepted teachings that have been given to Christians or which have been passed on to them in a way which points

*priori* apprehensions of being, while we find that some differ as we move from person to person and if we move from one cultural context to another cultural context, on the other hand too, we find that other *a priori* apprehensions do not vary or change as we move from person to person or from one cultural context to another cultural context. *A priori* apprehensions of being differ in their stability and worth although we know that, in their own way also, *a posteriori* apprehensions of being vary and differ in the extent of their stability and their suitability.

For an apt example here: if the principle of contradiction in logic cannot be proved from a point of view that is external to the use and the application of this principle within our manner of thinking and analysis and if, consequently, this principle cannot be proved from any kind of external viewpoint that would be given to us through an ordering of our cognition which would attempt to move into an *a posteriori* apprehension of being, can we not find in the wording and in the meaning of this principle an *a priori* apprehension of being that can never be questioned or rejected without risk of falling into the irrationality of self-contradiction? A differentiation within apriority (one kind of apriority versus another kind of apriority) accordingly points to an unchanging order of things that is prerequisite and which is operative in some way within us within the apriority of our cognition if, subsequently, developments and growth in our understanding are to occur for us through later apprehensions of being which would exist for us as *a posteriori* apprehensions of being. The kind of ordering which exists within our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being is not entirely caused by itself as if it exists in an independent self-assembling kind of way - though we experience a kind of agency which belongs to us in our human cognition - if we should also admit to ourselves that the ordering of our cognition is grounded in a rationality of thought, operation, and proceeding which, in some way, already exists as a given within us as a kind of *a priori* dimension and norm. Its existence within us points to a sense or to an awareness of an order which invariantly already exists amongst and within all of us as cogitating human subjects (though the initial understanding of this order can be quite slight for us as we move from person to person although, admittedly, through our subsequent acts of reflection as this would exist through our acts of self-inquiry and reflection, we can move toward a greater degree of understanding and knowledge if we should try to work and move from a notion of order as an effect that exists among our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being toward a notion of order as this would refer to the *a priori* kind of structure or the *a priori* kind of order which also belongs to us with respect to the ways and means of our human cognition, and then, from there, possibly move toward a third notion of order as this would refer to the ordering of an originating, intelligent, productive cause). Our human reason, as an effect and as also a cause, exists as a “measured measure (*mensura mensurata*)” and not as something which would exist as “a measuring measure (*mensura mensurans*).”<sup>126</sup> In their distinctiveness, our *a priori* apprehensions of being do not exist

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to how they should be accepted by all believers. For example, we have the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood and the sufficiency of this priesthood. But, how are we to think about this priesthood if we attend to the kind of reality which exists if we should also refer to the priesthood of ordained priests as this exists within the visible, hierarchical life of the Church? How are we to relate these two realities if we accept the truth of realities that would seem to be in a condition of tension with each other?

126J. Brian Benestad, *Church, State, and Society: An Introduction to Catholic Social Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), p. 70, citing

without some kind of reason that can be possibly understood if an intelligibility of some kind exists with respect to the nature of their being and if we are to understand too, to a greater degree, why our *a priori* apprehensions of being are not to be confused with our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being. This exists because this exists.

In attending then to laws and principles which are constitutive of the kind of invariant apriority that accordingly belongs to us with respect to the order of our human cognition, as a verifiable, analytic principle, we accordingly discover or we notice (to a greater degree) that these laws and principles do not exist as products or as the constructions of our own understanding, thinking, and willing. They exist whether or not we have any personal knowledge of them or any personal understanding of them (although, as we discover and as we advert to the rationality of these rationally existing things and to how the order of our cognitive acts exist in an invariant way in an invariant form or pattern, in ways that we cannot change or effect, we can ask about how or why they exist as invariant terms or how or why they exist as invariant constructions if, in some way, as a cause, a source or a point of origin is to be alluded to and, in some way, found). The invariance in term of effect in an understood points to an invariance in terms of cause in an understanding (relative to the invariance of an apprehensive, generating, causative act of understanding) if always, in every act of understanding that is given to us, in every act of understanding that we would know about, the act cannot exist without its apprehended term and, conversely, the term cannot exist without its generating or grasping act (the understanding and the understood, the understood coming and existing within the understanding and the understood revealing and pointing to the givenness or the experience of the apprehensive act of understanding).

For purposes of illustration here (as we go into further detail), please distinguish between, on the one hand, an order of abstract objects or an order of universals as these exist, for instance, as predicates or as propositions that are found in our ordinary or our scientific language, our logic, our mathematics, and our metaphysics (they exist in an immaterial, transcendent kind of way and they do not exist as simply the products or as the constructions of our human minds and understanding even as they are discovered by us or even as they can become more fully known and understood by us through our inquiry and our acts of understanding) and, on the other hand, other forms of statement and denotation which are not to be regarded as belonging to the same order or the same class.<sup>127</sup> These others exist in a way which points to how they depend on us in the wake of the inventiveness and the creativity which belongs to the fertility of our inquiry, understanding, and knowledge. In a more precise way of speaking within this context: analytic propositions exist, for instance, as correlatives or as terms of meaning that come from our acts of supposition, understanding, and conceptualization that we can have and enjoy as cogitating human subjects. In every form of analytic proposition, in some way or other,  $A = A$ . The meaning of the predicate exists or it resides within the meaning or the term of the subject or; in other words, from the meaning of the subject comes the meaning of the predicate. The predicate exists within the subject and, if we should imagine or

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Hittinger, *The First Grace*, p. 97.

<sup>127</sup>Edward Feser, *Five Proofs*, pp. 94-95.

suppose the being of a certain kind of subject, from the meaning that we suppose, we have the predicates which point to the meanings that we are supposing. In the meaning, a species of closed circle exists.<sup>128</sup> Always in our suppositions and speculations, we can always construct new rules of syntax and grammar that can be used to combine terms of meaning into new propositions that we can relate to each other in ways that can be communicated to others in an understandable way. Nothing prevents us from constructing new languages that we can write and speak in a way which leads to different conclusions.<sup>129</sup>

However, as we turn to ourselves and to the apriority of our cognition in all of its many elements and aspects and to the kind of universality which exists with respect to the order or the apriority of our human cognition, if we should refer to the first principles of our human thinking and reasoning, we would have to refer to analytic propositions which would exist as cognitive analytic principles (analytic principles which would refer to the basic laws of our human reason that are not invented by ourselves) since, when we think about the form of our reason or the first principles of our reason as these exist for us whenever we think, for instance, about the principles of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle within the order of implication which exists within the ordering of a deductive logic, we will find that these principles exist as constitutive norms that are given to us for the proper conduct of our human cognition in any kind of intelligent human thinking and reasoning that we should want to engage in and do. The first principles of reason (which we refer to here) exist in a manner which is prior to any kind of thinking or conceptualizing that, later, we may engage in and do about the being of other things. Hence, these first principles exist as preconditions if there is to be the later existence of analytic propositions that would emerge when, from within our thinking, reasoning, understanding, and conceptualizing, we try to construct definitions for terms that are not lacking in meaning and significance and which are not afflicted by any instances of self-contradiction that would detract from the sense of a meaning that we would wish to consider by ourselves or to communicate to others for them too to consider and understand. While, through our thinking and our understanding

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128Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli; rev and aug. by Frederick E. Crowe with the collaboration of Elizabeth A. Morelli, Mark D. Morelli, Robert M. Doran, and Thomas V. Daly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 128.

129For instance and most tellingly, within the questioning and the thinking of mathematics, we can construct or select other sets of axioms, and while guarding against the possibility of any contradictions, we can use these axioms to reach conclusions that would properly follow from the new axioms which we have constructed in a context which can then point to a new kind of mathematics. As a case in point: from an Euclidean kind of geometry, we can move toward non-Euclidean forms of geometry. Instead of a notion or a heuristic of space which would exist in terms of straight lines, flat surfaces, and 90 degree right angles, we can think about curved kinds of spaces (a convex, outwardly curved space or a concave, inwardly curved space where, within each of these spaces, different laws of geometry would apply in a geometry which points to another kind of mathematics).

and our subsequent acts of conceptualizing, analytic propositions emerge into a condition of being which exists in terms of their appropriate words and concepts (and while, possibly, these propositions can be turned into analytic principles in the wake of telling evidence and right judgments), the first principles of our thinking and understanding *in their priority* fall into a class or a category of their own. As universals, they exist apart from all analytic propositions and other possible analytic principles which would exist for us as a consequence of what we do and what we could be receiving through our different acts of human cognition as, within the order of our human cognition, in attending to things or objects that are other than ourselves, we move through our experience of them in a way which proceeds from questions that we can ask which are directed toward the possible reception of new acts of understanding and a consequent conceptualization which, in its own way, would then serve as a new point of departure for any later acts of judgment that we can have within the kind of order which inherently belongs to the nature and the structure of our human cognition.

In attending then to the order of all the cognitive analytic principles which exist specifically with respect to the nature and the form of our human cognition, through many questions that we can ask about ourselves whenever we engage in cognitional activities of one kind or another, always and necessarily, as we have been noting and suggesting, we are always moving from an implicit sense of things or an inchoate awareness of things as this exists within ourselves with respect to ourselves in terms of how we think, understand, and know, when now, through engaging in self-reflection and inquiry, we isolate, we relate, and we thematize the parts and the order of our human cognition in ways that can distinguish between how, according to one order, we initially move from acts of sensing toward acts of understanding and how, in a second order, we move from a given understanding of something that we already have toward another possible understanding that somehow exists implicitly within the first understanding of something that has been somehow already given to us. As laws and norms belong to the order of a deductive logic that governs how we should move from premisses to conclusions and how, by this means, we can move from an antecedent which is initially understood toward consequences which can now be grasped and understood through a kind of progress which exists in this form of cognitive shift, other laws and norms belong to a larger or to a more comprehensive cognitive context if we should refer to an order of discovery which exists in its own way as a kind of priority or apriority for us within the prescribed order of our cognition if the larger or the greater context of our deductions and conclusions is an inductive, non-deductive logic of discovery which conditions or which sets the stage (it creates for us a new context) for understanding and knowing about a lesser, second order which exists within our cognition if we should refer to how, within the ordering of a deductive logic, a second logic of discovery is to be alluded to and known. While, according to one way of speaking, an order within deductive logic is to be distinguished from an order which exists within a logic of discovery which moves from the data of our experience through inquiry toward subsequent acts

of understanding, according to another way of meaning and speaking, within each order an invariant or a normative pattern of acts exists which cannot be ignored or violated (without risk of incoherence and contradiction) and, within each order, an order or a pattern of discovery exists where each order, way, or pattern acts on the other to encourage expansions and changes: further developments and additions to the extent and the depth of our understanding. In the employment or use of one or another, a greater clarity emerges in the context of our understanding and knowledge.

The absence of a real distinction between term and act in any act of understanding and so the absence of a real distinction between an invariance in term and an invariance in act in an act of understanding accordingly points to the necessity of adverting to an invariance in an act of understanding which, by its very nature, would have to immediately point to a species or to a differentiation in understanding that would always transcend every kind of condition and limitation that exists in our experience and enjoyment of human understanding and so, for these reasons, if we should try to move toward a greater understanding of things, we would have to refer to the being of an act of understanding that we cannot possibly have and enjoy by ourselves as human beings, as human subjects (though we participate in this act of understanding since we know that, endemically, in all of our acts of understanding, we experience measures of transcendence and, to some degree, we participate in the invariance which belongs to the nature of transcendent things). In understanding, we are forever transcending conditions and limitations as these exist for us as our initial, prior points of departure (prior to the reception of that which would exist for us as an enlightening act of understanding that would immediately move us from an experience and a condition of multiplicity, incomprehension, and incoherence toward an experience and a condition of newfound oneness and unity that is now given to us in the context of our understanding and which inherently belongs to us in and as an act of understanding).

Hence: in the context of our self-experience and our self-reflection, a tacit, an implicit, or a prior knowledge of transcendent things (in the manner of their being and transcendence) is to be alluded to (it is somehow always given to us) although, admittedly, it differs and it is to be distinguished from an explicit kind of knowledge that later we could be grasping and having or which, later, we can possibly grasp and understand through a more thorough form of self-reflection that can lead us toward judgments and an understanding about the nature of our cognition and why it exists in the way that it does as also, in a way, a species of effect (and not simply as a self-sufficient, self-justifying type of cause as something that we do and effect by ourselves as human subjects). “My mind, questioning itself upon its own powers, feels that it cannot rightly trust its own report,”<sup>130</sup> in words which tell about how, from our self-inquiry, an initial kind of self-knowledge is implied which points to a degree of skepticism about the competence and the sufficiency that we would want to have about the extent of our human cognition.

For purposes of illustration and as a performative example, please let us distinguish between acts of judgment or acts of reflective understanding that we engage in whenever we want to evaluate the truth or the validity of any given

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130St. Augustine, as quoted by Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, p. 102.

idea that, in some way, has come to us (either from our own understanding of it or from somebody else's understanding that we try in our own way to grasp and understand) and, on the other hand, acts of judgment or acts of reflective understanding that we can engage in whenever we want to understand ourselves in terms of the kind of rationality which belongs to us as cogitating human subjects (who and why it exists in the way that it does). Implicitly, as we try to understand anything which is other than ourselves, we reflect back on ourselves (we attend to the manner of our cognition) in a way which points to a primitive form of self-understanding and to a primitive form of self-knowledge that is implicitly operative in us within our judgments (it is implicitly given to us; it already belongs to us) and then later, from this basis or foundation, we can engage in another form of inquiry and reflection that seeks explicitly to thematize this process of self-understanding and knowledge in a way which has ceased to be merely implicit or tacit. Our tacit knowledge of self exists as a species of *a priori*, relative to a later or to an explicated kind of knowledge that we can have of ourselves in a knowledge of self that has ceased to be somewhat hidden and elusive as, now, we deliberately move toward an understanding of things that can be put into words and concepts that directly refer to a set of cognitive acts which are constitutive of the form and the structure of our human cognitive life.

Simply put, within this later context of self-reflection and the order of our reflections: an *a priori* apprehension of being which exists prior to our later reflections in some way already senses and knows about laws, norms, or intellectual demands (different kinds of them exist) that somehow exist within us as human beings and which belongs to us within the order of our human thinking and understanding; and later, as we work toward *a posteriori* apprehensions of being in the context of our self-understanding and reflection, we move toward an order of elucidation and determination which can know more about the being of these laws that are already operative within us (within the manner of our cognition and so also within the manner of our being). We distinguish one species or specification of prescriptive inner law or principle from other specifications of inner law or principle and we notice in this context how they are all ordered to each other in the context of a larger, more comprehensive whole (for example, the principles of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle lead to each other; or, more specifically, we can move toward a notion of excluded middle if we begin initially with a notion of identity and the law or the principle of identity; secondly, within the kind of order which belongs to a logic of discovery as we move from acts of sensing to acts of understanding, the laws which belong to the forms of deductive logic guide how we join the givens of sense and understanding with each other)<sup>131</sup> and so, on the basis of this growth in our

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131As regards these laws, to specify their individual identity, respectively, as regards identity, contradiction, and excluded middle according to an algebraic formula: (1) A is A (whatever is, is; or, alternatively, “a thing is always the same as itself”); (2) A cannot be B and not B, or appositely: “A is B' and 'A is not B” (a thing cannot both be and not be so and so at the same time and in the same way); and (3) A either is or is not B, or appositely: “either A is B, or A is not B” (a thing either is or is not so and so; a statement of fact is “either true or it is not true”). Employing an explanatory form of paraphrase: “...if we think about anything, then (1) we must think that it is what it is; (2) we cannot think that it at once has a character and has

self-understanding and knowledge, as we move from an experience of understanding toward a formulation of terms and concepts, we can begin to elucidate and to indicate how, properly, we can speak about the meaning and the being of all these different laws. The being of these laws, again, through an order of implication and a consequent order of relations that exists among them – this order of implication indicates where other laws are to be found and how, consequently, they can be known through an order of inquiry and thinking which points and moves through the discursiveness of our human thinking and understanding as we move from one known point to another point or principle that can then be known.

To reiterate a primary thesis and to expand a bit more with respect to an applicable determination of meaning, the kind of priority which accordingly belongs to our *a priori* apprehensions of being accordingly points to a lessening of the kind of priority which, at times past, has been attributed to the kind of role that is played by our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being: a lack of priority which has always in fact existed if we attend to the greater priority that must always belong to us in our *a priori* apprehensions of being and the formative kind of influence which is exercised by this kind of cognitive priority. In transitioning at any time to conditions that lead to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, we should immediately notice a difference between these two orders as, now, a greater degree of self-control (a greater degree of self-determination) is found to exist within us as we move toward *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and as we function within this new cognitive context, finding our way toward new solutions, answers, and questions. More accurately, we discover the extent and the limitations of our personal agency as we begin to ask our own questions and as we try to determine different strategies of one kind or another about how best we should proceed in the conduct of our inquiries, the mode of our inquiries determining the form and the content of that which we might begin to understand and know as now, with degrees of relativity, through a combination of different acts - through some acts which exist as activities and through other acts which exist as receptions - we can move and we are moved from a prior condition of potency toward a later condition of act.

In the context of our self-reflection and understanding and in the depth of our self-reflection, in the transition which occurs as we move from *a priori* determinations of being toward *a posteriori* determinations of being, we should find a greater givenness or an indebtedness which exists with respect to our *a priori* apprehensions of being and, at the same time too, a need and so a place and role for a different kind of receptivity which must exist within us (a more open kind of receptivity) if, more fully, we are to be informed or if, more fully, we are to participate in the kind of knowledge which can come to us and which, in some way, exists for us through our *a priori* determinations of being and if, from there, we are to participate and move more fully into *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that could then possibly come to us. The receptivity of one conditions the receptivity of the other as a prior condition (whether we move from the receptivity that belongs to *a priori* apprehensions or whether we work from the receptivity that belongs to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being).

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it not; [and] (3) we must think that it at once has a character or has it not.” Cf. H. W. B. Joseph, *An Introduction to Logic*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Cresskill, NJ: Paper Tiger, Inc., 2000), p. 18. About these laws, see also Stratford Caldecott, *Beauty in the Word Rethinking the Foundations of Education* (Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2012), p. 149.

While a lack of self-determination is to be associated with our *a priori* apprehensions of being, in general with respect to our human cognition, our lack of self-determination is always partially relative if we should attend to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being (it is not total or absolute) given the kind of influence or effect which comes upon us through our asking of questions and through our consequent *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and so a consequent reshaping which can occur for us with respect to our *a priori* apprehensions of being. Within certain circumstances, the absence of self-determination can be absolute and, at other times, relative. Within the order of sensing if we should refer to our acts of hearing, some sounds can be so loud that they cannot not but be heard by us in our hearing and, within the order of our understanding if we should refer to our direct acts of understanding, a given apt image points to the content of a specific act of understanding and not to some other content and act of understanding and nothing other than a change in image can lead to the reception of a new content and act of understanding.

The centrality of receptivity however (prior to any kind of inquiry) which accordingly exists with respect to our *a priori* apprehensions of being explains why, for us, a greater degree of passivity (or a different kind of passivity) is required of us than is otherwise the case if we should attend to our *a priori* apprehensions of being and so, from this, the relevance of a non-discursive type of human cognitive awareness which, for want of a better term, we can describe as something which is *pre-rational* or *pre-reflective*. It exists in an immediate kind of way if, on the other hand, for our understanding of *rationality* and *reflection*, we are supposing a meaning which would want to think of it as something which first begins with the stirrings of curiosity and inquiry as, gradually, we move toward questions in a way which could lead us toward possible increments in the extent and the content of our knowledge (as this would be given to us through new acts of understanding that would lead us into *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that are given to us if, in any given case, reasons can be adduced or evidence that can be indicated to the effect that it points to a fulfillment of conditions that are given in contents which belong to belong to an act of sensing).

However, in this other, changed context, as we attend to *a priori* apprehensions of being, a pre-rational condition or a pre-rational state is not to be identified in terms which would require that we should speak about the play or the presence of irrational conditions or about the play or the presence of an irrational, unintelligible state of affairs. As we have been noting, *a priori* apprehensions of being (prior to inquiry) exist and *a posteriori* apprehensions of being (subsequent to inquiry) exist and a real distinction does exist between them. The differentiations which exist within *a posteriori* apprehensions of being in turn point to why these apprehensions belong to a distinct genus or type. Hence, if our *a priori* apprehensions of being do not exist as a species but, in their own right, as a distinct genus which belongs to the nature and the activity of our cognition, and if we should begin to think about this genus and to ask questions about it, differentiations can become apparent to us as we move, through our self-reflection, from one discovery or from one act of understanding to another act. Differentiations exist in their own way within the order of this type of preliminary, basic knowledge and differences are found or they are introduced into this form of awareness which exists for us as a fundamental point of departure for all else that we do in the manner of our human cognition.

To the degree then that the implicit kind of knowledge which exists in our *a priori*

apprehensions of being conditions the explicit kind of knowledge which exists in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, the categories which exist within our *a priori* apprehensions of being (as causes or as conditions) in turn point to categories and differences which exist within our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being if the first or the prior kind of knowledge that we have exists as a basis for our moving into the other kind of knowledge that can be given to us through our subsequent acts of inquiry which, want to understand something more or something new about that which we already understand. To avoid any confusions that could creep into our understanding of things, we say that categories or differences which belong in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being exist more confusedly or in a manner which is densely joined to each other in a compact or in an undifferentiated apprehension of meaning that differs from the kind of differences which we come to know about and which belong to us with respect to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being.

To reiterate a key point, however, and to add a note of clarification about how we can distinguish *a priori* apprehensions of being from *a posteriori* apprehensions of being in a manner which is a bit more exact and which would seem to mirror our human condition in a manner which is more truthful and honest: as an initial first premiss (and as we have been noting), our *a priori* apprehensions of being always exist in a context that is other from any kind of inquiry that intends an unknown or an un-understood intellectual object that has yet to be understood and known by us through the possible reception of new acts of understanding that could be given to us as, through our inquiry, we move first toward a direct act of understanding and then possibly toward a reflective act of understanding. In our *a priori* apprehensions of being (and as we have been noting), we have an understanding and a knowledge of things which is already first given to us (however it is given to us). In this prior understanding and knowledge of things, a kind of fore-understanding is operative within the data of our cognitive consciousness: a kind of foreknowledge if we should choose language which works with turns of phrase that recall the kind of conceptuality that we associate with the name and the reputation of Martin Heidegger. We can think about this *a priori* knowledge as an infused kind of knowledge or as an inherited kind of knowledge whose source points to the life and the understanding of other human beings and so to a tradition which informs a way of life that is being passed on to us as both an inheritance and as also a limit:<sup>132</sup> as an enabling, facilitating, conditioning gift that is being given to us through the mediation of our parents, our family, our friends, associates, and a line of forefathers.<sup>133</sup> In the main (initially), we do not

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132Bernard Lonergan, "Essay in Fundamental Sociology - Philosophy of History," *Archival Material: Early Papers on History*, eds. Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), p. 8: "What differentiates one social epoch from another does not lie in the individual wills of the time but in the upper and lower limits set these wills by the previous age. No man can be better than he knows how, and no man can be worse than his temptations and opportunities."

133For a better understanding about the kind of good which exists in the inherited kind of knowledge which exists for us as an *a priori* apprehension of being, see how Hans-Georg Gadamer discusses, in *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 277-285, how, from one possible perspective, it is possible to distinguish between a negative notion of prejudice and a positive notion of prejudice. A negative point of view tends to regard inherited points of view as inherently and fundamentally deficient. They exist as limitations if they do not exist as a

work toward acquiring this kind of knowledge although later, through our training and our later acts of inquiry and understanding, we can come to know more about what has been given to us through this prior kind of knowledge and understanding. The kind of infusion or the kind of givenness that we associate with *a priori* kinds of knowledge accordingly points to how later, in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, we have a kind of understanding and a kind of knowledge which is quite new and distinct because it is acquired by us in a way which underscores the importance and the value of our individual efforts and personal initiatives and so, from this, the sum or the good of individual contributions and conclusions which emerge through a kind of collaboration which can arise amongst us as different individuals willingly join themselves to others in a way which points to the good of a common effort. Each can know more and each knows more as each is helped by the other in a way which points to why intellectual achievement exists amongst us as a shared kind of achievement which belongs to a union of persons which transcends the data and the particulars of our human individuality.<sup>134</sup>

However, and as a means of pointing how acts of understanding in *a priori* apprehensions of being differ from acts of understanding that belong to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, if we attend to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being with a greater degree of consideration and reflection, we should find that, between the intending that we could be doing in our inquiries and the acts of understanding which could be given to us in the wake of our inquiries and intending, a one to one relation is not always operative. It is not always given to us. In inverse insights or in inverse acts of understanding that reveal why we should not be asking a given question, acts of understanding are received which we have not been anticipating, expecting, or seeking. These insights point us or they can point us toward a new direction in our inquiries or to the possible being of other intellectual objects that need to be asked about and considered. The form or, better put, the content of our inquiry is necessarily changed. Perhaps, somewhat

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*a posteriori* apprehensions of being and, if we are to be rational and intelligent in how we are to think and understand in the context of our individual and corporate lives, we must discover these inherited understandings and apprehensions and, as soon as we find them, rid ourselves of them. In our understanding of things, it is best to begin with a lack of understanding which would exist as a kind of *tabula rasa* or “blank slate.” Instead of accepting and moving from a condition of act to a new condition of act, move more from a condition of potency toward a condition of act. However, on the other hand, a positive point of view on the place and role of prejudice points to its utility and good and to how inherited determinations of being initially relate and join us, as human subjects, to a world which transcends our individual human existence. Inherited determinations of being are not necessarily devoid of the good which exists in meaning and truth and, if we were not to have them, we would not be able to learn from what has been the experience and understanding of other human persons. Human progress, growth, would not be possible. A more adequate account of human cognition necessarily acknowledges both the good and the necessity of accumulated understandings which come to us from other persons and which is constitutive of a given human culture. What is deficient in earlier understandings of things can be discovered at a later time as *a posteriori* apprehensions of being function as salutary correctives, adding to the good which already exists in the good which belongs to inherited human traditions whether we refer to determinations of being which exist in inherited forms of technology or determinations of being which exist within the order of family life and human ethics.

<sup>134</sup>Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, pp. 9-10.

reluctantly, we have had to adjust our sights.

In addition however and in conjunction at times with the possible being of inverse insights or from some of our inverse insights as these are given to us, in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that can then follow, new direct acts of understanding can be given to us that are also a source of surprise for us: acts of understanding which we had not been anticipating or seeking in any direct kind of way (hence acts of understanding which would seem to exist as infused acts of understanding, relative here to our lack of control or responsibility or our lack of desire for the acts of understanding that could, in fact, be given to us) since the kind of determination which exists in the form of our inquiries is not functioning in a way which invariably points to a form of total control or any form of correspondence, solely determining what, in fact, we are grasping or understanding in the reception of a given insight. Our acts of inquiry always function as a heuristic. They normally condition or prepare the way for the acts of understanding which we would receive without, at the same time, determining, precluding, or excluding the possible reception of acts of understanding which would seem to exist for us as chance events or as chance occurrences (as insights or as acts of understanding which point to a kind of randomness which also belongs to the enjoyment of our understanding in terms of how we experience it since, despite the kind of self-control or the kind of self-direction which exists within us through our various acts of inquiry and our asking of different questions within the context of a prescribed method or procedure that we implement in order to move from what is known at A to what can be known at B, we cannot control that which could be given to us within the content and the reception of any given act of understanding). Intended acts of understanding which exist as condign or as expected receptions differ from infused or gratuitous acts of understanding which exist more radically as untoward receptions and so, to the degree that a given act of understanding is not desired or intended with respect to the particulars of its content or term, in its reception we can speak about it as if, to a greater extent, it exists as a species of infused act. As a general principle that we would want to admit: our ability to control our understanding is not given to us whether we would want to speak about *a priori* acts of understanding or about *a posteriori* acts of understanding.

To belabor our point a bit: in a colloquial way of speaking, a given act of understanding can exist as a kind of “wild card” or as a “fifth dimension” which, when given and received, can effect far reaching changes in our general perspective and outlook (changing our sense of reality or, in general, our “take on things”); at a more radical level, possibly also changing our customary and our comfortable ways of thinking, understanding, and believing (the “rules of the game” for a given person) with respect how we should be existing and proceeding in the manner of our human lives. The reception of an unexpected and an unplanned act of understanding can, at times, reveal a new order of things and so it can create an entirely new context for any new inquiries that we could possibly want to make and to have. If, in some way thus, we are always changed by any acts of understanding that could be given to us, more radically or more fully will we be changed if it is the result or the consequence of an act of understanding which, to a greater degree, is not subject to any inclinations which, in some way, we already have within the gamut of our desires and interests.

The reception of acts of understanding within a context that is conditioned by inquiries which intend condign or appropriate *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that could be given to us is thus not to be identified or confused with other possible acts of understanding which can be simply given to us in a way which points to another kind of transcendental dimension in cognition if we should refer to a kind of being or given which would exist as a kind of unanticipated infusion. It exists prior to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and also in the middle of our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being. Our acquired acts of understanding differ from our infused acts of understanding even if it is to be admitted that both kinds exist essentially as receptions and not as productions (as things that we simply do and effect).

As a mode of reception (and as we have been noting and as we reiterate), the infusion which exists with respect to some of our acts of understanding points to a greater lack of self-control or to a greater lack of self-determination and autonomy in our acts of cognition (or to a complete absence of self-control and self-determination in our acts of cognition) or, on the other hand (in other words), to a greater quality or a different kind of giftedness which exists in our cognition and, at the same time too, this lack of self-determination and this giftedness serves as a means for determining different categories or different species of givenness about that which can be said to exist within our *a priori* apprehensions of being (as long as our *a priori* determinations of being are distinguished from our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being in a way which points to how, in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, from a posing of questions to an experience and a reception of understanding and judgment, a linear relation is to be acknowledged and known as, through a repetitive chain or pattern, the experience of one act suggests or moves to a second act and then a third, as needed). If, through the asking of different questions in our inquiries, different categories or different species can be determined with respect to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being or within our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, by referring to differences in the manner of infusion, different categories or different types can be distinguished with respect to our *a priori* apprehensions of being and so, by adverting to these types and a kind of ordering which can be found to exist among them, a new or a larger context can be created for our possibly moving toward a knowledge of transcendental realities which, in their own way, would also belong to us as human beings, helping us in a way which constitutes our human subjectivity to a greater extent and in a degree which adds to our general knowledge of things in a way which points to the reality and the being of a larger, greater whole (a more comprehensive set of existing things which functions, at a more fundamental level, as our point of departure, whether we should refer to our knowing or whether we should refer to the kind of being which belongs to us as human beings).

If we should prefer to work with a metaphysical way of thinking and speaking: contingently existing things are only adequately explained if we should refer to realities that are wholly lacking in any degrees of changeableness or contingency. An explanation of contingent things, if it pretends to be entirely full and adequate, would have to point us toward realities that would have to be lacking in any kind or degree of contingency. An adequate understanding of contingency assumes or it would have to suppose that our understanding of it would have to be lacking in any kind or degree of contingency since the presence or the intrusion of contingency in a proffered explanation would have to point us toward some kind of variable or maybe more than one variable that is not being understood and known. These other variables are not fully understood and known so, from a lack of understanding or a lack of intelligibility which exists

in all our partial explanations of things, our awareness of things is not lacking in an awareness which knows that, in some way, something is missing. In our understanding, we would not be knowing as we would wish. We are not understanding. Something more needs to be known and understood if the restlessness which exists within us (as regards our understanding or our lack of understanding) is to diminish and to pass away from us and if, in the changes that we would want to experience, we can find that we are now in a condition of equilibrium or a condition of peace: both within ourselves and with respect to the world which happens to exist about us.

Categories of Transcendence in Human Consciousness in our *A Priori* Apprehensions of Being

### 1. Sensible or Sensitive Intuitions

In determining apprehensions of being that would exist in an *a priori* kind of way within a general order of things that works with apprehensions of sense and understanding in cognition (or from within a metaphysical perspective which speaks about how we exist as a union of body and soul): an initial approach to an apprehension that can speak about *a priori* apprehensions that would exist apart from the coordinations of method and inquiry (that belong to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being) often initially refers to a kind of cognition which allegedly exists as the immediacy of an intuition (or as the experience of an intuition) since this word “intuition” is often referred to and cited if we should wish to speak about a kind of knowing that does not go through any kind of deliberative, reasoning process. As we have been noting, in *a posteriori* apprehensions of being, we move (in an incremental fashion) from one kind of act to another kind of act: from and through a strategy of questions and answers, through the mediation of suggestive clues and images, toward an apprehension or an understanding of things that would be grasped by us, allegedly, in a direct act of understanding that could be given to us and which could then be evaluated by us through a subsequent act of understanding which would emerge as a reflective act of understanding (hence: our acts of cognition end in the kind of knowing which belongs to the being of a rational judgment). In the context of some philosophies of mind however, intuition has been associated with acts of cognition which exist as acts of sensing or which are to be understood in terms which are modeled on the kind of immediacy which belongs to us in our various acts of human sensing and in the givens or in the correlatives which are immediately given to us within the data of our sensing experience.<sup>135</sup> Mysteriously and yet commonly (apart from any kind of rational

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<sup>135</sup>For example, in the context of his study of human cognition, in his *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, p. 396, Bernard Lonergan had argued that Duns Scotus (d. 1308) had “viewed knowing, not as ultimately constituted by judging, but as essentially a matter of looking.” Knowing is “taking a look” or, if, conceptually, we would want to talk about judging and what happens in judging, we would say that the act of judging is “taking a look.” Being or reality is something which is seen or which is perceived by our taking a look at it (in our seeing of it). Accordingly, as in his philosophy of cognition, Etienne Gilson speaks about understanding (or judging) as a form of seeing (a judging which exists as a species of intuition and which can be referred to in terms which speak about the being of a judgmental intuition): it is said that “by our senses we perceive the sensible, but intellect can *see* being in the sensible.” Bernard Lonergan's italics. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method I*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,

explanation which can point to bits and pieces of reflection, verification, and evidence), in intuition we often guess, we surmise, or we allegedly intuit an answer, a truth, or a condition of affairs that we use, as a point of departure, for any subsequent decisions that await our care, choice, and selection.

On the basis then of this point of departure, if we should choose to speak in a way which moves into a related ordering of a number of consequent distinctions, among intuitions in general if intuition exists as a genus, sensible intuitions are to be distinguished from intellectual intuitions. Two different kinds exist although, on the other hand and as a kind of qualification, intellectual intuitions do not differ from sensible intuitions if they are conceived in a way

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2010), p. 119, quoting from Etienne Gilson, *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance* [in English: *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*], p. 225. See also Michael Vertin, "Rahner, Lonergan, Knowing, and Teaching," a paper presented to the Catholic Theological Society of America, June 2004, pp. 3-4, which distinguishes between the judgmental intuition which we find in the cognitional philosophy of Etienne Gilson and Joseph Owens and the judgmental finality which we find within the cognitional philosophy of Bernard Lonergan and Karl Rahner. In both Gilson and in the philosophy of Joseph Owens (and also in the thought of William of Ockham), if we would want to speak about judgment and our exercises of judgment, judgments of existence would say about reality that something is present or that it is given to the degree that something is directly seen or that it is directly perceived. Instead of a judgment which would say that "this is" or that "this reality exists," it is said instead, for instance, that "a reality is present there," "there is a particular reality there," a reality is "situated there," or "an existent reality is present there." Cf. Joseph Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992), p. 226. An act of judgment, an act of judging exists as essentially an act of sensing (as a species of extroverted act and not as a species of inner, introspective act) and so, within this context, our acts and data of sense would not be transcended by acts of understanding which, in a reflective act of understanding which exists as an act of judgment, would move us towards a "that which is" or a "that which exists" through a cooperative relation that would exist with our various acts of human sensing in a way which would move towards and which would grasp the truth of an understood reality that is only given to us *in a very initial and rudimentary way* through that which comes to us from our preliminary acts of human sensing. In terms about how we can relate the truth or the being of a thing to our acts of sensing and how we can relate the truth or the being of a thing to our acts of judgment, we can say in this context (in the quotation that we now cite) that "if you see a color, you see not non-being but being; but the being that you see, you see not under the formality of being, but under the formality of color; for being, or existence...is not found by taking a look with one's eyes, but by making a rational judgment." Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 163.

To distinguish between the kind of receptivity that exists in sensing and in the kind of receptivity that exists in the understanding of judgment, in first kind of reception which exists within our sensing, to the degree that our sensing differs from our understanding, we encounter a specification of being which exists as data (as sense or sensed data) and so the variability and the particularity which belongs to the data of our senses and not the kind of being which belongs to determinations of fact or to determinations which would refer to the being and the

which resembles sensible intuitions if the metaphorical seeing of our minds (according to the manner of language which is used) in fact resembles the kind of achievement or the kind of givenness which belongs to us in our physical acts of seeing which refer to something that is seen through the kind of ocular act which exists in all of our acts of visual seeing. Within this context thus, our intellectual intuitions, as these would seem to refer to our mental or our psychological acts – these are interpreted in a way which understands them as having a nature or a character that is akin to the kind of nature which belongs to the immediacy of our sensible intuitions (as these exist for us through our various acts and data of human sensing although, admittedly, among our various acts of sensing, seeing enjoys a kind of primacy because it is conceived in a manner which thinks of it as the primary model or as the primary form of our

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reality of truths that are known to be real and true. But, on the other hand or further on, in our understanding and through the understanding which exists later in our acts of judgment, we come to know about realities which exist as understood truths (they are known to exist as understood, affirmed truths) because, within these realities that are known, an immaterial, intellectual component exists (a component which has been first grasped and apprehended by a preliminary act of understanding before it is then confirmed and judged to be true by us in the context of a reflective act of understanding). Reality goes with intelligibility (and not with sensibility), and this intelligibility is first known by us through a second kind of reception which exists as a direct act of understanding that initially grasps a form or the content of this intelligibility which exists as a form, and then later this intelligibility as form is verified by us if we should choose to move into a reflective act of understanding which would advert to a number of fulfilling conditions and which, through a third kind of reception, would now grasp how all the fulfilled conditions point to the truth or to the reality of a conceptualized, understood idea. An act of understanding within judgment, in its transcendence, joins a first kind of given which exists for us in our various acts of sensing with a second kind of given which also exists for us in our prior acts of understanding which have been given to us in terms of how our initial acts of understanding exist as direct acts of understanding. If, through the discursiveness of our inquiry, direct acts of understanding grasp a form, an idea, or an intelligibility within varying configurations of sensed data, through the discursiveness of a second kind of inquiry, reflective acts of understanding grasp a sufficiency within the order of our apprehensions and experiences of data as these refer to our various acts of sensing (in conjunction or in a context which is created by how these acts lead or how they are explained by our subsequent acts of understanding, relative to our acts of sensing, and with how too these acts are suggested and implied by the kind of given which belongs to us in our direct acts of understanding). Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 308; *Early Works on Theological Method 1*, pp. 119-120; Marie-Dominique Philippe, *Retracing Reality A Philosophical Itinerary*, trans. Brothers of St. John (London: T & T Clark, 1999), p. 154; p. 156.

For illustrative purposes, in order the better to distinguish between a notion of judgment which thinks of it as essentially an act of sensing and a notion of it which thinks of it as an act of understanding, look at St. John Fisher's *Defense of the Catholic Priesthood Against Martin Luther* (first published in Latin in 1525). As a work of dogmatics in Christian theology, it sought to prove, against Luther, that Luther errs when he claims that there was no divine institution of a visible, external priesthood in the Catholic Church and that the teaching of such a thing is to be regarded as "set up by the lies of men and by Satan." To understand, however, how our acts of judgment differ from our acts of sensing, attend to how the

human cognition). To know is somehow to see. We often say in a given situation that we see when, more accurately, we should say that, in fact, we are grasping and understanding something that is other through means or acts which differ from the kind of extroversive which inherently belongs to us in all of our various acts of human sensing. To speak more accurately about a difference between sensible and intellectual intuition requires a form of analysis which should not assume that a difference in nature is to be postulated as a legitimate point of departure.

Moving on thus from here: if apprehensions of being accordingly exist within a context that is allegedly determined by the immediacy of intuition or by the immediacy of an *intuitus* in a

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phenomenon of judgment works within the context of Fisher's *Defense* when we read through this text since, as we notice in our reading of it, Fisher constructs and assembles a number of different arguments that are grounded in different points of view. Some arguments are grounded in scripture; others: in the teaching of the Church fathers, the teaching of Jewish rabbis, tradition as "the prescriptive right of existing truth," and a last source that can be referred to as the testament of our human reason. In constructing any given argument (and as Fisher constructs all of his arguments), the rationality which is constitutive of each argument points to a probability or it manifests a probability in terms of the extent of the intelligibility which is somehow being experienced. The probability which exists in each argument inclines us to believe in the truth of an allegedly foregone conclusion. The evidence that each argument refers to points to the rightness of a prescribed conclusion and the greater the rationality that exists within a proffered argument, the more likely or the more probable will be the aptness or the rightness of the assent, the *assensus*, that will be given to the truth of a given conclusion. Each argument, in its own way, in its manifestation of rationality, exists or it functions as an instance of probability; and if a number of different arguments are combined together in a way which adds probabilities to each other, the net effect on our reading and on our understanding will be a movement or a shift whose term will be an affirmative act of judgment. We are moved to a conclusion or to a decision by a species of intellectual act which grasps a sufficiency within all the assembled evidence and arguments: a sufficiency that is sufficient for moving our understanding from a condition of potency to a condition of act (or, in other words, from initial apprehensions of possibility and probability toward an agreement or an assent that can now be made with a degree of ease and comfort: in a way which points to a condition of certitude or the truthfulness of our conclusive judgment). While each argument comes to us from some kind of external source – something or somebody acts to give us reasons or a series of different arguments - the sufficiency that is grasped by us within our reflective acts of understanding exists within us as essentially a species of inward, internal act and so, from this type of act and on the basis of how it exists as an inner dynamic, the intelligence of different persons will be shown to vary and to change if, with less evidence or from fewer arguments or from fewer apprehensions of probability, a given person is able to move toward the reality or the truth of an affirmed truth through the truth or the rationality of the kind of judgment which is being grasped and understood. With less, some persons can understand more: either in terms of their direct acts of understanding or in terms of their reflective acts of understanding and, in some cases, with fewer persons, more with respect to both types of understanding. Intelligence and wisdom best exist together although they exist as distinct virtues since some persons can be wise but not too intelligent while others can be intelligent but not too wise.

choice of wording that does not lend itself to associations of meaning that are to be prescinded from (if we refer to a kind of pre-rationality that is only known and distinguished for how it exists in itself as a distinct thing if rationality is to be associated or defined in terms that relate to discursive forms of understanding and knowing), then, in an *intuitus*, something is known or something is said about A or B in a way which is determined by a species of cognitive response or a species of cognitive acknowledgement which does not move through some kind of rational, reflective analysis which would have us go from point A to point B and then to point C since, now within the immediacy of an *intuitus*, we adhere and attach ourselves to A, B, or C or we notice and we affirm something which exists at A, B, or C in a manner which refers to a species of reception and sensitivity which, in some way, we also happen to have. It is informed

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In contrast, however, and in opposition to this kind of self-understanding as this touches on our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding and how these acts relate to each other, to cite a prominent example: in the cognitional philosophy of Immanuel Kant (d. 1801), it is said that the appearances of things are directly seen or they are directly perceived by us only through our *Anschauung* (through our “taking a look” or by our “having a view” through an act of sensing which would point to an act of sensing which would exist as an act of seeing). Cf. Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method 1*, p. 120; p. 545. In Kant, the only cognitional operations which directly relate us to real objects in terms of objects which are other than ourselves are those which refer to our acts of sensible intuition (and so, in Kant's German text and in the language of his conceptuality, these exist as *Anschauung*: variously translated as “view,” “experience,” or “contemplation”). To know is to see; knowledge is seeing.

An intuitive understanding of judgement which accordingly speaks about it or which thinks about it as essentially an act of sense is a point of view which has thus come to us through a line of descent or a tradition which belongs to a history of philosophical reflection that can be found to date from origins that cannot too easily or too clearly distinguish between how the reality or the being of a thing is to be associated with an act of understanding and how the body or the materiality of a thing is to be associated with an act of sensing. In Plato, while in his thought, in the context of his metaphysics, being and becoming are clearly distinguished from each other (a transcendent, immaterial world is not to be confused with the being of an immanent, material world), in the context of his understanding of human cognition and with respect to how he tends to speak about it in the words that he uses, acts of understanding are understood to exist as if they seem to be akin to what we have in our various acts of human sensing. They would seem to resemble our acts of sensing (they would seem to have a similar nature). When we understand, when we move away from the data of our sense experience toward an Idea which exists apart from any kind of relation or union with that which exists in terms of material qualities and coordinates, we are remembering or we are recalling something that allegedly, in an earlier, un-embodied, transcendent life, we have somehow seen or espied when then, with the “eyes” of our soul or with the “eyes” of our minds, we have beheld an eternally existing pattern or an eternally existing form which points to the being of an Idea and how it enjoys a kind of being which points to its immateriality and thus to its transcendence.

In a commonly accepting reading of Plato's understanding of human cognition, understanding or knowing exists as this kind of recollection or remembering although, on the other hand also, other readings of Plato point to how our human remembering is to be

by an acuteness or by a receptivity which exists within the apprehensions and the functioning of our sensibility. We notice later, for instance, in the context of our self-reflection, that the acuteness of female sensitivity differs from the acuteness of male sensitivity. So great in fact can be the difference that, from a relative viewpoint, it would seem to point to a lack of sensitivity (with respect to one sex or the other) as we move from sex to sex and from one person to another person. What a woman immediately perceives within the context of our intersubjective personal human relations (as a woman moves from sounds of voice and appearances of facial expression toward judgments about another's mental state or condition, in a woman's ability to have "insights into another's emotional dispositions,"<sup>136</sup> in immediately knowing these emotional dispositions, in sensing what is conducive or what is amiss in the being of these dispositions), on the other hand however, a man perceives and senses other things within our cognitive contexts. What a woman can do in relating to other human beings, a man can do less readily (or he must wait until he achieves a later stage in his development) since, typically, male sensitivity is directed toward having a knowledge of other objects and things (through apprehensions which know, for instance, about lengths and distances and other determinations of space that point to a listing and an enumeration of spatial coordinates and about how also, within a given space, things exist together within a relation of order which points to a hierarchical arrangement of parts and elements that are constitutive of the form of a given order of different things). The cognitive immediacy which exists in women differs from

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understood as a kind of inward turning into the life of our souls where, within our souls, we encounter the truth of things. To speak about a pre-incarnate form of perception is Plato's way of using a mythical way of speaking that tries to speak about a kind of inward knowing or a kind of inward cognition that radically differs from anything which would exist as an extroverted act of sense perception. Evidence exists to the effect that, at times, Plato deliberately speaks in a mythical way when he finds that he is not able to find a better way of speaking if he is to speak about a kind of knowing that exists apart from our acts of sense and which differs from our acts of human sensing. See Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247C3, for text which apparently directly refers to the journey of the soul as a myth (a teaching which is not to be accepted as literally true), as this is cited by Eric D. Perl in his *Thinking Being: Introduction to Metaphysics in the Classical Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 48. It is one thing to have an insight which knows that true knowing occurs by way of an inward type of act that turns to the kind of interior life which exists within ourselves within the context of our self-reflection and our self-judgment and, on the other hand, another thing to move into an expressive form of intelligibility that can put the term of a grasped insight into some type of communicable proposition that we can all grasp and understand: finding the right words and phrases that are needed if we are to speak about the contours and the results of our self-reflection in so truthful way that it best indicates how our self-reflection and judgment differs from how we tend to think and speak if we should attend to the extroversions of our human consciousness and the type of extroversion which belongs to our various acts of human sensing where what is given to us in our sensing, in some way, intrudes into our awareness and consciousness of things and so, from us, it elicits an act (an act of sensing) that draws us or which pulls us away or toward points of origin or sources that, in their own way, exist beyond or outside of ourselves (whether we exist as human beings or as human subjects).

136David P. Fleischacker, "The Cosmological Foundations of Male and Female," lecture delivered at the Lonergan Institute for the "Good Under Construction", Washington, DC, December 16, 2017.

the cognitive immediacy which exists in men and this kind of cognition exists as a prior condition before other things can begin to happen in the manner of our cognitive life. An *a priori* in men and women sets the stage or it creates a context for later apprehensions which belong to a *posteriori* apprehensions of being.

## 2. Categories, *A priori* Apprehensions of Being

### 1. Intersubjective Sensibility and Intersubjective Apprehensions

In the positive relation which accordingly exists between our human sensitivity and our *a priori* apprehensions of being (as the two exist in combination with each other through a kind of inseparable union that exists between them), the existence of different sensitive patterns amongst us as human beings accordingly points to different kinds of *a priori* knowledge that are enjoyed by us as human beings within the unions and the combinations which exist between the givenness and the experience of our sensitivity in its immediacy and the *a priori* apprehensions of being which exist within the immediacy of this type of experience. Within a given pattern of sensitivity, a species or type of *a priori* kind of knowledge is to be distinguished as, immediately, we move from the immediacy of our sensitivity toward the immediacy of our knowledge (in referring to an object or a content which is other than ourselves if we should hold to an understanding of our human cognition which believes and knows about how, inherently within it, we have self-transcendence: differing forms of self-transcendence). As we have been noting, acts of sensing always exist as receptions.

In distinguishing these patterns thus, if the most immediate kind of sensible pattern accordingly refers to an intersubjective form of experience which refers to an un-thematized sense of how we all exist together as human beings within a common human social context (the awareness exists for us as a primary kind of datum and only by asking questions can we move toward possible acts of understanding and concepts and terms which can distinguish different parts and relations), then the most immediate kind of *a priori* apprehension is one which refers to a sense of the being and the action of other persons who are other than ourselves and who belong, in some way, to us. Often, we find that we are with other human beings. We could be walking or moving in some way, relative to these other human beings although, often, we do not know who these other persons are or how they are. But, if someone nearby begins to trip or to fall, immediately, without making any decision or judgment, we rush forward and we try and break their possible fall and so possibly prevent their hurt and injury. We immediately or automatically do this for other human beings although not necessarily for other kinds of living things.

Hence: these examples all point to the irrelevance or the inapplicability of a solipsistic sense of self and being since, despite the formulation and presentation of philosophical arguments that would want to argue for an individualistic, solipsistic sense of personal being and reality, we find that, in our human intersubjectivity, in our human performance and co-existence, a pre-reflective awareness of otherness and a pre-reflective awareness of community exists as a primary datum (as a kind of psychological, social indemonstrable). Its reality cannot be proved from an external, third point of view since, here, the prerequisite of any kind of argument would always be a shared sense that we all initially exist as human beings and that other persons are, in fact, other than ourselves (being not identical than ourselves). Though the other

is not known or understood in terms of what or who exactly he or she is, with us the other is an existing being who is truly other and we cannot but not have an awareness of this otherness (although, admittedly through arguments and forms of reasoning that we can try to offer and to construct, we can try to argue and to propose that our experience of otherness exists as a species of illusion although again, in the end, if the truth of an argument can only be secured if we should refer to a form of experience that another person can also possibly experience in the context of his or her personal being and existence, then the conditions and the requirements of proof and evidence point to the necessity of a conclusion which would have to say that their attempted use implies that the existence of otherness is to be regarded as something which is so real that its truth indubitable and unquestionable). The otherness exists in fact as a kind of species, relative to the being or the genus of all indubitable, unquestionable things.<sup>137</sup> Our subjectivity is such that within it, through our experience of intersubjectivity, it is implied or it is suggested that otherness exists as something which is other to us or, in other words, it belongs to an order of being which refers to the order or to the domain of objectivity. If subjectivity differs from objectivity (if some kind of real distinction exists between them), then otherness or the other belongs to that which exists as objectivity and yet, at the same time, in our subjectivity and as part of our subjectivity, otherness exists in a way which belongs to our subjectivity. In our subjectivity, we have objectivity. Understanding our subjectivity more thoroughly leads to a conclusion which knows that we cannot exist apart from the being of other things and an awareness of the being of these other things.

## 2. Aesthetic Sensibility and Aesthetic Apprehensions

As a context that, in its own way, envelops our intersubjective sense of self and the being of others (our intersubjective experience of things exists within a further, larger context of things which points to another form of conscious experience and another form of otherness which exists in its own right as an *a priori* apprehension of being), in the sensitivity which exists within our aesthetic sense of things and in the kind of reception which belongs to our aesthetic sense of things (in experiences of beauty that are memorable for us) and in the cultivation of the kind of sense which belongs to us in our aesthetic sense (as we move from one person to another within a complex social order and context which refers to forms of community that are not entirely or merely intersubjective), we encounter aesthetic apprehensions of meaning and being and, at the same time, shifts or degrees of apprehension in a way which points to *a priori* apprehensions of being that belong to a distinct order or class. Shifts and variations which exist within our aesthetic apprehension point to variations and differences which exist within the order of things that are aesthetically known. While, for instance, a dog (or any kind of animal) notices things that we cannot notice as human agents, amongst us as human beings, an aesthetic sense exists within us in a way which conditions or which shapes us in terms of a kind of cooperation that is elicited from us: a cooperation which spontaneously emerges from within the context and the flow of our sensitivity as it moves into a form of aesthetic appreciation. The appreciation can be said to exist as a species of judgment which exists as

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<sup>137</sup>See Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, eds. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 110: in Lonergan's own words, "...human persons spontaneously take care of one another. Just as one spontaneously raises one's arm to ward off a blow to one's head, so with equal spontaneity one reaches out to save another from falling."

aesthetic judgment (where here, allegedly, in this type of judgment, no questions or deliberations condition or lead us toward the kind of affirmation or negation which always exists in our judgments). The appreciation and the conclusion which exists in our aesthetic judgments exist together as a form of amorphous whole.

To cite an example that can be taken from the history of the Jesuit missions in South America and the founding of the Jesuit reductions within the South American interior, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century the Jesuits were experiencing difficulties in evangelizing a tribe of Indians, the Guaraní, who lived within the jungles of Paraguay. At the approach of any of the Jesuits (or other foreign Europeans), the Indians would flee and hide themselves from the possibilities of any encounter. And then, an idea came to one or more of the Jesuits. They had begun to notice how the Indians “were extremely sensible to the charms of music.”<sup>138</sup> When, from their boats, the Jesuits began to sing hymns and songs, the Indians would begin to creep out and to show themselves. “Bows and arrows fell unheeded from the hands of the savages and their souls received the first impression of a higher kind of existence and of the primitive delights of humanity.”<sup>139</sup> And so, when the Jesuits would travel further into the hinterland of the country and as they sought to meet more of the local Indian people, they would take their musical instruments with them and, through music, playing their instruments, they would touch the souls of the nature people that they were encountering. Music became a favored means of communication and, by means of musical performances and the composition of new pieces, certain truths and beliefs could be communicated to the local indigenous population in a way that could not be done better than by any other means.<sup>140</sup> In point of explanation: certain things are better sung than said. “What is too silly to be said may be sung’,”<sup>141</sup> although, in addition, “what is too subtle to be said, or too deeply felt, or too revealing or too mysterious – these things can also be sung and only be sung.” As a kind of primitive, inarticulate expression of the life of our souls, through our music and our choice of music and its performance, we can encourage the life of our imaginations in a channeling and a shaping of our feelings and passions in a way that can turn them toward a given kind of rational and moral life.<sup>142</sup> And so, from this or by means of these principles, apprehensions and experiences of meaning can be known, cultivated, and

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138Viscount de Chateaubriand, *The Genius of Christianity; or the Spirit and Beauty of the Christian Religion*, trans. Charles I. White (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1866), p. 574.

139Philip Caraman, *The Lost Paradise: The Jesuit Republic in South America* (1976), p. 213, quoting Chateaubriand, as cited by R. Fülöp-Miller, *The Power and the Secret of the Jesuits* (1930), p. 285.

140Caraman, *Lost Paradise*, p. 214.

141Kenneth Clark, *Civilisation: a personal view* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 243

142Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 71.

communicated for perhaps the first time (meanings and truths which cannot be so easily put into any form of linguistic expression which, in its linguistics, is limited to the use of words and the possible construction of new words and concepts).

Suggestively, apprehensions of beauty (as a good) point to intimations and apprehensions of things which are themselves good and then, from there, we have intimations and apprehensions of things which exist as the good of truths or as the good of realities which can be said to exist though we have yet to fully understand and know them. One leads to the other through a stirring and the awakening of a form or pattern of sensitive consciousness which points to how our aesthetic consciousness functions as a bridge or as a channel that can join us to a greater world of existing things: existing for us as a source of inspiration and as a conductor of information. Within this type of revealing activity and through its reception, realities are known in a pre-reflective, pre-conceptual kind of way. Something is given to us as a kind of gift that we have not been expecting.

With respect to an order of causes, as a proximate cause, our aesthetic sense is elicited or it can be stimulated and brought into a condition of act by combinations of different acts or activities which come upon us. They react on us within the order of our subjective human sensing and by means of the obvious kind of priority which properly belongs to us with respect to our human acts of sensing. Their combination or their external form enhances or sharpens our receptivity or we say that it distinguishes our aesthetic receptivity from other kinds of sensitive subjectivity through an attractive, evocative quality which happens to belong to them as a consequence of how sounds and light and other variables have been combined with each other to form a distinct pattern. We refer to the being and the cultivation of sensible forms. The effects or the net result is such that it distracts our attention. We are diverted and liberated from our customary ways of thinking and knowing. The pull and push of our ordinary concerns is taken from us. Our worries, our problems, our preoccupations would seem to disappear (for a time) as, now, they are relativized through the kind of experience which is given to us through the receptions which exist for us in our aesthetic experience of things. Changes in our subjectivity begin to occur as new conditions are created for us and our world undergoes a kind of enlargement or a kind of expansion (or perhaps a kind of conversion or revolution) which negates or which takes away us away from our sense about how things exist or about how they have existed. New realities and new possibilities are revealed as changes in imagery make us more open to asking new questions and enjoying new acts of understanding: finding of new, untried solutions that, until now, have been eluding our grasp despite what has been our desire for increases of understanding that we would like to have. Through a kind of surrender which occurs within us, our sensibility begins to assume a form of its own in a way which points to a kind of flowering which can exist in the context of our own lives as, now, we become our own artists with respect to the manner of how we live our lives.

In terms of an explanation that can be proposed for why aesthetic experiences are given to us to be sensibly received and through an explanation which points to an *a priori* that is operative for us in our aesthetic experience of things, a chain of causes that can be adverted to through arguments can be formulated in ways which can point to the role of primary and secondary causes. Within an order of space and time and within the kind of proximity that exists within space and time, as artists, we exist or we function as first causes. However, through the

creative sense or the creative ingenuity which belongs to us as artists (to some more and to other less), and through how our sense of things or how our consciousness has been captivated in some way by truths or beliefs that in some way have come to us (we hold them dear; they are true and real for us), something which is greater than ourselves expresses itself through us through the kind of surrender which exists in artistic work (which indicates how we exist as secondary causes). Some kind of greater thing communicates itself to us through our initial, through the appreciative apprehension that exists for us in our aesthetic sense and, through our own artistry and aesthetic expression in the course of our lives, it represents itself to us and to others through a kind of mediation which exists for us. It comes upon us from outside (from above or maybe from below). It enters and envelops our consciousness through a manifold or medium which refers to how the work of artists has an effect on us with respect to a given kind of world that we can begin to know and live within.<sup>143</sup> We are influenced in different ways and no adequate explanation can be given if it is solely concerned with attending to purely subjective variables as these refer to differences in subjectivity as we move from one person to another.

To end with a qualification, we know that while some persons seem to have an aesthetic sense of things that immediately leads them to positive evaluations and judgments and then to a kind of overflow which diffuses itself or which emerges and expresses itself within an externalized

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143For an extended discussion about these issues, see Gadamer's theory of aesthetics as this is to be found in the opening chapters of his major work, *Wahrheit und Methode*, cited in English as *Truth and Method*. If the causality of artists is to be regarded as a sufficient species of cause, then the work of artists is to be regarded as primordially an expression of the subjectivity which belongs to the artists in question. To appreciate and enjoy a work of art is to appreciate and enjoy the subjectivity of a given artist. Everything begins and ends with the causality of the artist. But, if the subjectivity of an artist is to be understood to exist also as a given or as an effect and not only or simply as a cause (if the subjectivity of the artist cannot entirely account for itself with respect to its life and the meaning and the being of its operations), if this subjectivity requires explanations that would be truly sufficient for it, then, by way of argument, inquiry, and discovery, in some way, higher causes need to be attended to and, in some way too, identified through an articulation of comprehension and meaning that leads to words and concepts: we come to know about causes which are other than ourselves and other than the subjectivity of a given artist. The causality of the artist exists within a larger milieu which, if adverted to and known, explains the purpose or the end or the finality of an artist's work: why a given artist acts as he or she does; why he or she engages in labors that join one kind of act to another kind of act where, in artistic endeavors and creation, an artist moves from out of him or herself in order to join bits and elements in a way which can move them beyond themselves toward a concreteness that expresses truths and realities that, in some way, endure and last and which, in some way, ferment and live within the mass or the flow of an artist's life and artistic creation. These transcend the limited kind of being which belongs to artists if they are conceived in a way which adverts to how, as human beings, they live within the kind of order which belongs to determinations of space and time, the creation of artistic works (in their being and production) outliving the life and being of the artists who had been their makers and doers and, in their way, functioning as seeds that can act within our human order in a way that can create or add to this order or, in some way, change this order, either for ill or good.

order of sensible, sensed things that are a source of joy and wonder to ourselves and to others, in some cases however, from our own viewpoint, other persons seem to lack aesthetic sense in a way which reveals a lack of appreciation and judgment and so, from this, a number of consequent actions which are bereft of a sense of the beauty and the wonder of things that can be enjoyed through an aesthetic sense that, in some way, we should all have as sensing, sensitive human beings. In some cases (for some persons), the goodness, the value, or the truth of a thing is perhaps not seen or it is perhaps not perceived by us if it is not presented to us in a way which can suitably startle us or arrest our attention and care, evoking from us a kind of sympathy or compassion (a species of fellow feeling) that takes us outside of ourselves into a new kind of communion and an experience of identity which is felt to exist between ourselves in our aesthetic sensitivity and the sensed being of a truth, a reality, or a person that is being represented or given to us in some kind of material way through an apt combination of material determinations that have come to us from without, from sources or points of origin that we might not know too much about, sources or points of origin that escape the scope of any kind of initial kind of control that, perhaps, we would like to exercise. The initial presence of taste (as an *a priori* kind of given, even if, in our judgment, it should exist as bad taste and not as good taste) – this taste always points to a mode of apprehension and reception which must always exist for us as an *a priori* before it can be developed and nourished through any later forms of education and training which can be conditioned by *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that can be given to us through means that differ from the kind of *a priori* that initially belongs to our different acts of human sensing.

### 3. Symbolic Consciousness and Symbolic Apprehensions

The emphasis on the priority of sense experience and the kind of role that is played by aesthetic consciousness undergoes a change or a shift if aesthetic consciousness is brought into an order of sensitive consciousness which presents itself as an expansion or, more accurately, as a kind of deepening which immediately belongs to our sensitive, sensing experience if the various aesthetic arts and if our aesthetic experience is turned toward a kind of preoccupation that exists within aesthetic experience if its focus is turned toward the good or the value of presenting representative figures or representative symbols that, as presentations or as representations, communicate a kind of meaning that belongs to a symbolic kind of reference, a symbolic kind of denotation. Hence, within the order of our acts of human sensing, we find *a priori* apprehensions of meaning and being that are pre-conceptual and symbolic. They are more than intersubjective; they are more than aesthetic since, from their vantage point as objects of concern or focus, we can have developments within both the order of aesthetics and the order of our human intersubjectivity and all redounds to changes or developments of one sort or another that emerge within the depths and contours of our subjectivity.

This third species of *a priori* knowledge emerges for us in its distinctiveness, through our *a posteriori* manner of inquiry and reflection, if we should think about how symbols function and exist: how, through them, immediately, an awareness is stirred up within us which, as an awareness, is to be regarded as an *a priori* apprehension of being that we can be given to us about the meaning and being of other things and the meaning and being of other persons (things not being the same thing as persons).<sup>144</sup> Symbols function as signs and, as indicators or

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<sup>144</sup>See the arguments to this effect in Robert Spaemann's *Persons: The Difference*

as pointers, we can think about them as objects that are sensed in a material way (given their materiality, their material configuration and dimension) although they exist in a way which primarily refers not to themselves but to the being of realities that cannot be sensed (in any kind of immediate way). Through the density or the compactness of a symbol, we are experiencing or encountering something in an indirect kind of way.

A symbol, in its connotative denotative symbolism, participates in the being or in the reality of that which it is symbolizing (that to which it is referring) and it has been argued that, within higher orders of existing things (whether we should speak about the being of political realities or the being of religious realities), a primary causality acts in a way which impinges on us or which is communicated to us through a kind of emanation or flow which comes from these same higher realities, leading both to the expressiveness or to the effectiveness of secondary causes which exist as symbols and also to the reality of these symbols as things that merit our care and respect if we should think and speak about a kind of overflow or projection which exists if we move from higher orders of being toward the kind of representation which exists for us in the use and the formation of symbols.<sup>145</sup> Through the arts of picturing or portraiture,

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*between 'Someone' and 'Something'*, trans. Oliver O'Donovan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 6. Simply put: "Persons are 'individuals' (*Individuen*), not in the sense that they are *instances* of a universal concept [or nature], but as the particular individuals [that] they are, who in an individual and irreplaceable way *are* the Universal." Cf. Spaemann, citing Hegel, p. 19.

<sup>145</sup>For simple examples that point to the truth of this position, think about the kind of role that is played by the use of national flags to represent the being of societies and states and also the role of official portraits that represent or which present to our eyes the images of rulers and heads of state. Apart from religion or, from within the context of a kind of political religion which can be constituted through the pledging of civic oaths that express our personal political commitments (of one kind or another), degrees of honor are given to the use and to the display of national, ethnic symbols and, if these symbols are vandalized in some way or if they are disrespected in some way, our human reaction is to believe that a kind of injury is being inflicted on what these symbols stand for or represent. A hurt that is inflicted on others or a hurt is experienced by us (if, through acts of vandalization, our society or if, culturally, our whole sense of being is being disrespected in some way); and similarly too, a hurt is felt, at times more keenly, if the disrespected object is the image or the portrait of a represented head of state. The being of a given person, in some way, exists within anything which images or which portrays the person in question and hence an association exists between acts of honoring a given image and honoring the person that a given image represents.

For a comprehensive understanding about the nature of this type of experience in a context which, in the end, points to a philosophy of being (a metaphysics), see Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, pp. 140-141, for an understanding of aesthetics that comes to us from the earlier philosophy of Plotinus (d. 270) which had spoken about how, in general, our world exists as an effect and as a kind of descent or flow from the being of first principles, the eternity of the world existing as a species of eternal effect. An eternal effect points to an eternal cause. If we assume that our world exists in an eternal kind of way and if we should want to move toward an understanding of this same world (if we should want to explain why our world exists in the way that it does), then we would have to think about the possible being

and through a kind of reflection which belongs to the imagery of a suggestive image or symbol (the picturing can be crude, or cryptic, or a species of mirror image), cognitive and affective dimensions can be combined in a way that, to a greater extent, draws and elicits our human attention in terms of both our cognitive and our affective dimensions. To a greater extent, these dimensions grip us or they capture our imaginations and our affections in a way that can leave a permanent mark on us (an enduring impression that forever lives within our consciousness of self and world and which forever informs us in our human behavior and in our sense of what could be right and wrong in both the individual and the collective management of our human behavior).

For examples or evidence to this effect, we can perhaps think about the aging process which occurs in us as human beings and how, with increasing age, our current memory of things soon begins to fade and to fail although our earlier memory of things continues to hold and to endure and so, as a reality which exists within us, these memories continue to influence us and to form the manner of our subsequent actions and behavior. An aging veteran soldier, in his dementia, can tell us to “keep low” (“beware of snipers!”) and the same man, when entering a church, immediately knows how to act and how to behave: genuflecting before entering a pew, making the sign of the cross, bowing his head, and changing his posture as needed when the rites of the Mass are being celebrated.

By engaging thus in a kind of autobiographical self-reflection, the reality of symbolic significance should become more apparent to us as, through our awareness of self and through an awareness of things which are quite other than ourselves, we become aware of a kind of depth (or, in other words, a kind of suggestiveness) which inescapably exists within the innuendoes of our sense perception. In our memories for instance, we can think back and recall the kind of family life which we have known in the context of our individual lives (some kind of family life which, possibly, each of us has had, among many differences, good and bad). We remember our family gatherings. We recall how persons were dressed and how they appeared and how they departed themselves with respect to each other, to other persons at table in a way which points to differences of time and outlook (differences in the age and generation of persons and sometimes differences in values and judgment, in the kind of current valuation

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of transcendent realities which would transcend the being of our world (and so the use and the application of all empirical categories that we would use within our immanent world) where, in their own way, these transcendent realities would have to exist as eternally existing things. We exist in the way that we do because of something that has been given to us and not because we have done anything to bring ourselves into our current condition of being and existence.

Hence, in the creation of symbols and in the enjoyment of symbols which point to a species of transcendent orientation which exists within us or which elicits a transcendent orientation that belongs to us in the manner of our human living and being, these symbols can be understood in a way which accordingly points to how they exist as responses to the being of higher realities that, however dimly, we are somehow perceiving and knowing. They reflect the being of these higher realities and they point us toward them within the manner and the being of our concrete human existence.

of things that was joined to beliefs and practices of one kind or another).

We can remember, for instance, the physical or the empirical setting of family meals and, from the perceptions and the experiences that have been given to us, we can perceive and, to some extent at that time, we can recall our own dim perceptions and apprehensions that, in their own way, at the same time, have pointed to an unseen world of other, greater objects and things (a penumbra of broader, larger meanings, a penumbra of broader, larger realities) which exists as a kind of general context and backdrop and so also as a kind of ground which points to an order of lesser and higher realities which exist as effective, conditioning causes. More so than anything else, we sense or in some way we know that these would appear to be more real and to be more true than any effects or any manifestations which, initially, partially, and dimly, we have been beholding within conditions that are informed in sense by determinations of space and time since, in time, as later we think back and remember things, as in time we grow in our own age and thoughtfulness, these other, greater, higher things now become more present to us. They begin to present themselves to us in a manner which is now more telling and obvious. They have become more noticeable as we attend to the kind of influence which, covertly, they have been exerting on us in the course of subsequent years (positively and negatively). No better explanations exist for what we have seen in our lives or what we have been seeing in our lives other than a larger world of things that we are now currently remembering and recalling: a world that continues to impinge upon us in some way, shaping and determining our sense of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, in a way that we cannot entirely forget or put to the side (despite negative evaluations that, possibly, later, we would want to make. Simply and loosely put: tangible determinations of being point to intangible determinations of being that are somehow more real than the givens which immediately belong to us in our different acts of human sensing.

To illustrate this point a bit, please attend to the fact that each of us, usually, has a concrete sense of history that covers three and perhaps four generations. We remember our parents and we remember the stories that they have told us about their lives and where they have come from. However, usually, we also remember our grandparents and we also remember the stories that they have told us about their lives and the experiences that they had known within their lives. Hence, through the persons that we have known who were older than ourselves (going back two generations and maybe three generations), we find that we have a sense of our human history and story that extends some years prior to our own birth and emergence within the human order of things in our world.

The famous Anglo-French historian, Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), used to speak about this principle as a kind of *a priori* that we should remember and keep in mind whenever we look back to the past and as we try to put ourselves in the shoes of persons who have lived through a certain time and who have experienced certain changes (of one kind or another) in the course of their lives. Hilaire Belloc himself lived a reasonably long life. Because, for instance, I was born in 1951, I was alive when he was alive. We rate as contemporaries. But, when Belloc was a young boy, he once listened to an elderly French woman give to him her own personal eyewitness account of the fall of the Bastille in

1789. Belloc knew someone who was there (through her words and tone of voice, participating: seeing what she had seen and hearing what she had heard) and so he could not see or hold that the events of the French Revolution were things that had occurred in some kind of far distant past (things to which he had no kind of personal relation or connection).

However, in addition, through a kind of extension, because I happen to be a contemporary of Belloc's (because he lived while I was alive), the concreteness of his experience is something that, in a way, I can also share in and feel. Belloc belonged to the generation of my grandfathers; in age and life, he most belonged to the generation of my father's father and so, through Belloc and through the concrete memories that I have of my paternal grandfather (a French Canadian who lived in an English speaking world), the experiences that they knew and had, in a way, also belong to me through a kind of mediation that is not limited to words that are printed on paper but through a kind of mediation that is the more powerful to the degree that it comes to us from the experience and the love of another person to whom we are intimately connected and joined. Through our subsequent acts of inquiry and self-reflection, we discover our personal historicity and how we have been formed and marked by our historicity in a way that continues to shape and to form us, conditioning us in our historicity and influencing the kind of lives that we will live as we each move into our personal futures (whatever this future will be).

If, through a kind of summary, we should move now into a more technical form of expression, prior to the age of inquiry and reason which is said to emerge for us at about the age of seven, we have been touched by a world that continues to touch us for some time after the early age of seven (as we grow in age). Through our prior and our earlier reception of many sensible forms (apart from any kind of formal instruction), many intelligible forms are suggested to us before we can begin to grasp these forms in a way which would directly refer to our own acts of understanding and to the necessity of our having our own acts of understanding if we are to move from a world of sensible forms into a world of intelligible forms (from forms that exist within sense toward forms that exist within the apprehensions of our understanding). Our symbolic consciousness conditions our subsequent consciousness and the forms of our later consciousness as these arise in ways which point to the role and the place which belongs later to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being.

If, through our questions and inquiries, the finding of apt images and phantasms best suggests appropriate acts of understanding that can lead us toward new apprehensions of meaning and being, through the presentation and the communication of many symbolic images that combine sense with suggestion (some being more apt or more incisive than others), these suggest acts of understanding that we will tend to have or which we would like to have and which we would like other persons to have in the context of their own understanding and knowledge. At these levels, in its density or compactness, an *a priori* inchoate apprehension of being moves us in ways that we do not immediately know or recognize (in the absence of an articulate, self-reflective form of self-understanding that can be put into a form of articulate words) and so, according to a manner which points to the extent of its greater power and significance as it acts to cast a greater influence than would otherwise be the case as now, in our cognition, through

our inquiries, we move into the other kind of knowledge which exists for us as *a posteriori* apprehensions of being.

In terms of evidence that can be alluded to as a way of conclusively pointing to the kind of agency or the kind of power that is exercised by the use and the display of symbolic forms that exist within the displays and apprehensions of sense, look at Eamon Duffy's history of religious change in 16<sup>th</sup> Century England in terms of how he explains this change in his major work, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*. In the reign of King Henry VIII (d. 1547), the Reformation entered into a final break with Rome when all allegiance and communion with the papal apostolic see was severed in 1534 (through a number of legislative acts which eventually led to the Act of Supremacy that was passed by the so-called winter Parliament of 1534). A point of doctrine or a change in doctrinal teaching was admittedly introduced into English public legislation (a point of teaching that touched on the hierarchical order of the Church's supreme government). According to an amendment which was introduced into the Heresy Act of 1534. "No manner of speaking ... against the said Bishop of Rome or his pretended power ... nor ... against any laws called spiritual laws made by his authority and repugnant to English laws or the king's prerogative shall be deemed ... heresy."<sup>146</sup> However, in terms of what begins to happen to the fabric of ordinary parish life in England as this life was lived out on a day to day basis in towns and rural areas, changes were introduced with respect to the observance of popular cultic rites. Orders were issued over a number of years which banned the burning of candles before the statues of saints; the holding of processions in church and village; and the public recitation of the rosary in prayers that had been offered to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Rites and rituals were proscribed although (apparently) nothing was said about the truth of certain church teachings and the necessity of effecting changes in the content of the Church's teaching on the place and role of the Church's saints and the kind of honor that was to be given to Christ's human Mother. However, in time, as these outward, liturgical changes began to take root in the observance of English parish life and as, in their way, they endured and lasted, as instrumental causes, they began to suggest the good of moving toward a shift in cognitive religious apprehensions and so to the necessity of effecting changes in the content of the Church's official public teaching. With greater ease, major changes could be introduced into matters of belief and creed because of the implementation of a prior, conditioning policy which had initiated piecemeal changes in the liturgical observance of rites and ceremonies before major changes could be introduced into the order of the Church's official teaching (touching on matters of faith and belief and what could be known through the beliefs that one holds). For many persons (and perhaps for most persons), a Protestant profession of belief gradually supplanted Catholic notions and doctrines as, in time, these truths (as apprehensions of being) began to fade from the recollections of public memory and in the wake of

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<sup>146</sup>Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, vol. 1: "The King's Proceedings," (London: Hollis & Carter, 1950), p. 259, citing 25 Henry VIII, c. 14.

new, current practices that were prescribed for believing Christians in the England as a consequence of the Protestant reformation.

#### 4. Religious Consciousness and Religious Apprehensions

In conjunction and through a kind of extension or application as we work with a notion and a concept of intuition as an interpretation that can be given to the immediately given kind of knowing and knowledge which essentially belongs to us in our *a priori* apprehensions of being (it is to be admitted that philosophies of cognition which exist as philosophies of sense and intuition have often been inappropriately applied to elements and aspects that properly belong to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and to an understanding of our human cognition which should attend to its discursive nature),<sup>147</sup> a fourth species of *a priori* knowledge is to be identified if we should refer to a kind of knowledge which, to a greater or a heightened degree, is to be identified as a species of infusion. Its subjective source or its subjective, receptive precondition (its subjective point of origin, relative to ourselves) is not to be identified with an act of sensing nor with a content that is known through our sensing; and it is not to be identified with an act of understanding nor with a content that is known by us through how our understanding is being triggered in some way within us, within our cognitive consciousness (through the suggestiveness of an apt image or phantasm that we have come upon or discovered in some way). Instead, we are referring to sources, in both a subjective and an objective sense, which do not exist as some type of secondary cause, relative to ourselves and our cognition: for instance, how our cognitive acts exist in themselves as instrumental, secondary causes if, as aspiring active receptive subjects, we are to move from a lack of understanding and knowledge toward attainments or increases in the extent and depth of our understanding and knowledge.

To try and refer to objective sources in a preliminary kind of way or to try and suggest how we can possibly think about these things or conceive of these things, we can recall and borrow a teaching that comes to us from the metaphysical kind of language which had been used by St. Augustine: through operative grace, through the being and the communication and the entry of operative grace, God, at times, directly moves a person from within themselves, or God can directly move a person from within by directly changing their consciousness and sense of things and self in a way which prescind from having to use any kind or type of secondary cause or, in other words, by placing these causes to the side. In another way of speaking that we borrow from the conceptuality of another teacher, in words that come to us from St. Ignatius Loyola in the context of his prescriptive *Spiritual Exercises*, changes can occur within us that are unmediated and we can refer to this type of change as a

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<sup>147</sup>See Mortimer Adler's *Ten Philosophical Mistakes* for illustrative discussions about how, mistakingly, a supposed or a given understanding of cognition can be applied to all instances of cognition in a way which inevitably leads to distortions and a consequent narrowing of horizon and perspective even if it should be the case that our hope and object is a comprehensive understanding of cognition that, in no way, would want to omit any variables that are essential if our human knowing is to exist as truly the kind of knowing which properly belongs to us as human beings.

“consolation without cause” (or literally, a “consolation...without preceding cause”).<sup>148</sup> Something is simply given to us even if we have not been wanting it and what is given is something that we have not been able to produce on our own through our own efforts (something which, apparently, we cannot effect or produce). It could be something that we have not even been wanting or, in any way, expecting and desiring.

To reiterate, in this context, within the subjective order of things as this refers to ourselves and our cognition, we do not and we cannot refer to any role that is being played by our *ordinary acts* of sense perception nor to any role that is being played by our *scientific acts* of sense perception. Likewise, we do not and we cannot refer to acts of understanding which, as receptions, in the wake of our acts of perception and inquiry, we are trying to work toward and so, in some way, enjoy. We refer, instead, to an immediately given understanding and knowledge of things which transcends or which bypasses both our ordinary acts of human cognition and our scientific acts of human cognition in a way that is not understood if, with respect so far to our *a priori* apprehensions of being, we should only speak about gradations in terms of any differences of degree. Instead, something more needs to be known. Some other variable needs to be adverted to.

As we have been noting thus far, all of our *a priori* apprehensions of being exist apart from our having to ask any questions in any inquiries that we would want to make. We have been distinguishing between an *a priori* type of human knowing and an *a posteriori* type of human knowing. However, when, in explanation or through questions that seek some kind of verified ground or foundation, if some apprehensions cannot be simply reduced to the kind of given which would exist for us in our various acts of human sensing nor to the kind of given that would exist for us in our acts of understanding when these acts are conditioned and as they emerge from a ongoing, constant interaction that exists between our acts of understanding and our acts of sensing, then we must speak about a kind of knowledge that differs from our *a priori* and our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being in a way which must point to qualities that, in turn, point to the reality of an absolute difference.

From without, something happens to us. Using traditional language, something directly happens within the life of our cognitive souls. In less traditional language, something directly happens within us within the givens of our cognitive consciousness (with respect to ourselves and the world that we happen to live in) and no explanation can point to the adequacy or the sufficiency of contingently existing agent causes which, in some way, would exist outside of ourselves (whether we should refer to material objects or to formal objects); nor to causes that could be elicited from within ourselves (from our subjectivity) if we should attend to the ordering of our acts of sensing, reasoning, and understanding that are normally constitutive for us with respect to the kind of order which typically belongs to us whenever we refer to our cognitive subjectivity in a way which points to its uniqueness and its distinctiveness and how it sets us apart from the being of all other beings who can be said to exist also as knowing, cognitive subjects.

To give an example here which can perhaps create an apt picture or illustration

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<sup>148</sup>Cf. <https://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/seil/seil79.htm> (accessed May 31, 2019).

that we can work with within the play of our thought and our imagination, we can refer to stories and reports that have come down to us about a 15th Century Frenchwoman named Joan of Arc and what is known about the early life of this Joan of Arc (b. c. 1412) who as a young girl, at the age of 13, began to hear *voices* from without (she reports this) and then, later, receive *visits* of an extraordinary kind from three immaterial beings who can be regarded (for want of a better designation) as immaterial spirits: the first, calling himself, St. Michael the Archangel, and then later, allegedly, Saint Margaret and St. Catherine of Alexandria who became her constant companions in later communications and conversations that they began to have with each other (with Joan) until Joan's death at the age of 19.<sup>149</sup> Constantly, repeatedly, against her will, they were urging her to leave her country home in France and to go to the uncrowned King of France, cited as the “Dauphin,” Charles VII and tell him that she is to rescue him from his enemies. She was to drive occupying English military forces from the north and west of France and then take Charles to Rheims, to the cathedral there for his coronation as the rightful King of France. At that time, much of France was occupied by English soldiers who, with their Burgundian allies, were trying to subject the entire country to their control and government in order to unite the French throne to the English throne, subordinating the French to the English.

Compelled and even driven thus by her *voices*, finally, at the age of 16, she leaves her home and she goes to a local lord, Sir Robert de Baudricourt, who comes to believe in the truth of her mission when a prediction that she makes about a French military reversal at the Battle of Rouvray near Orleans is soon confirmed by the arrival of messengers (several days later). She is taken to the Dauphine. But, before meeting the Dauphine, deceptively, Charles puts aside his royal regalia and he hides among his courtiers, wearing humble clothing in order to disguise himself but, immediately on entering the Great Hall of Chinon castle, ignoring the directions and representations of other persons, Joan directly goes to the true Dauphine and she kneels before him, saying “God give you long life, noble king” to which he responds, “I am not the king” but then she rejoins, “In God's name, sir, you are the king, and no other! Give me troops wherewith to succor Orleans and to guard you to Rheims to be anointed and crowned. For it is the will of God.”<sup>150</sup> Then later, in private conversation with the Dauphine, when asked by him for a sign that she has been truly sent by God, she tells him about something that only he knew: about how “when he, Charles of Valois, Dauphine of France and true king, of the blood royal, had, in a memorable day, withdrawn from all other men and [had] prayed a special prayer in his oratory quite alone, doubting his own lineage and his right. If indeed he were not of the blood royal, but a bastard born as his base mother had proclaimed, then let God remove from his heart the desire for sovereignty. But at least let him not be killed or captured, but escape to safeguard in the court of Castile or of Scotland,

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149Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan\\_of\\_Arc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_of_Arc) (accessed May 6, 2019); Lucien Fabre, *Joan of Arc*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), p. 44.

150Hilaire Belloc, *Joan of Arc* (New York: Declan X. McMullen, 1949), p. 19.

friends from of old with the lilies.”<sup>151</sup> The Dauphine came to believe in the truth of Joan's strange mission and, after further examination and confirmation, he authorized her to lead an army to Orleans to relieve the siege of the city which she successfully accomplished. She later takes the Dauphine to Rheims, to his coronation there. Despite her later capture and death in 1431 (at the hands of the English in Rouen), the obedience that she had given to her *voices* rallied the disheartened French (of all classes throughout the country) and, subsequently, English control was soon ended throughout most of France (the city of Calais excepting; it fell to France later in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, in 1558).

The integrity of the French kingdom was accordingly secured on the basis of reasons, events, and considerations which point to their lack of probability: to reasons and actions that transcend the order of our human expectations and calculations as these refer to both our ordinary and our critical acts of human cognition when the rationality of our cognition and the rationality of our living is conceived in terms which can only think about what we can learn and know, by ourselves, through our different acts of sensing and our different acts of understanding (through the attentiveness and the life which exists in our acts of sensing and through the intelligence and the rationality which exists in our acts of understanding). For reasons that we cannot entirely grasp and know, for reasons which we have yet to fathom and understand, while, with reason, we can argue that our human history is constituted by an interaction between the decisions that we make and the decisions which we fail to make, this interaction does not exist in an absolute sense as a species of closed circle. It can be stirred and acted on from without. It can be turned toward other directions and purposes that act within our human history in ways which point to how our human history is not to be adequately understood if our sole point of reference is the kind of causality which allegedly belongs to us as contingently existing human beings if we assume, here, that our human knowing is solely our own work and responsibility and that, in our knowing, we enjoy a form of control or a form of self-government which is sufficiently absolute (as something that cannot be taken from us).

Explaining how we can speak about a possible infusion of knowledge that reveals to us a possible understanding of things that cannot be known in any other way where, necessarily, we must speak about a species of reception that differs from all other kinds of reception, a difference is to be alluded to and known if, as our point of departure, we should refer to both the ordering, the configuration, or the quality of our subjective consciousness and the kind of ordering, configuration, or quality which belongs to the presence or the action of impinging, effective causes that exist from without but which act upon our consciousness to impress a form which, as received, immediately re-orders the form of our human consciousness. Simply put: a difference in the manner of reception should immediately point to a difference in the manner or the form of our human subjectivity. Although we are attending to a species of *a priori* knowledge that, in terms of degree, is more unusual or more radical than intersubjective, aesthetic, and symbolic *a priori* apprehensions of being; although, like all other *a priori*

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151Belloc, *Joan of Arc*, p. 19.

apprehensions of being, this knowledge is given to us in a way which exists for us apart from any kind of deliberate, conscious control that we can properly exercise and implement in the manner of our cognitive operations through our asking of questions, no adequate explanation can be given for it if initially, in some way, we cannot identify the form or the structure of our cognitive acts as these are best joined or as they are best suited to the kind of knowledge which exists here as a species of infusion that transcends all of our cognitive expectations (whether within the order of common sense or within the kind of order which is determined by desires that yearn for apprehensions of scientific or philosophic understanding). The infusion is such that it cannot be enjoyed or acquired by our engaging or our participating in any our different acts of human sensing nor through any acts which would refer to our different acts of human understanding. So immediately and unexpectedly is this species of infused knowledge that is given to us. So quickly is it placed within us. So quickly does this knowledge present itself to us within the order of our subjective consciousness and in a way which disorientates us in the consciousness that we are having of ourselves and other things, reordering or reconfiguring us with respect to the form or the reach of our consciousness and the apprehensions of being which are now being given to us through the receptivity of our consciousness.

The immediacy or the directness of the infusion which exists as an effect accordingly suggests that, if we are to speak about a form of receptive consciousness that best suits us when dealing with this type of *a priori* cognition, then we can do no better than to refer to a species of passivity which, within us, would have to exist more radically or more deeply than other forms of passivity that typically belong to us as cognitive human subjects. Since our common and our scientific acts of sensing and acts of understanding play no essential or vital role in experiencing and receiving this type of knowledge and since, from these acts, we can only determine and refer to the kind of passivity which belongs to these distinct acts (one kind of passivity pertains to acts of sensing; another, to acts of understanding), from the immediacy of an infusion of knowledge apart from any necessity and activity which pertains to our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding, we can only conclude to a kind of passivity which exists in some kind of pure, absolute, radical way.

As we have been noting, it is not a passivity, an openness, a capacity, or an orientation that is geared toward receptions that would exist for us through our ordinary and our scientific acts of sensing and through our ordinary and our scientific acts of understanding as these would exist in tandem with our various acts of human sensing. Hence: if the object or if the givens which are received belong to a species, a type, or an order which transcends the kind of given which belongs to material determinations of data and the kind of given which would belong to intelligible determinations of being which reflect and which are reflected by the ordering or the constructions of our human reasoning and understanding, then the receptivity which we must have within ourselves (within our consciousness) is of such a kind and type that it must transcend the kind of receptive consciousness which exists for us if we should refer to the kind of order which belongs to our empirical consciousness and the kind of order which belongs to our intellectual consciousness. These both continue to be and to exist and to hold. Their being is not to be denied or gainsaid. But, on the other hand, their centrality is lessened. Their relevance is displaced or their relevance is replaced as, now, it is surpassed by the primacy of a sensible and an intelligible form that is acting from without and by means of an apprehension of it within our consciousness where this consciousness exists more radically within ourselves as a tangible but interior form of consciousness or, in other words, it exists through an

awareness or through an interiority which knows about the being of certain things that cannot be known in any other kind of way (since, here, as we have been noting, the being of certain things is being experienced and known but not in any kind of direct way through our having any acts of sensing that are conditioned by determinations of space and time, nor by any acts of understanding that, to some extent, are conditioned by acts of sensing that are conditioned by determinations of space and time).

As an aide in our understanding here, an apt analogy comes to us from theology, from the analysis and reflections of St. Augustine, where and when he speaks about how God, as a supernatural being, can act unexpectedly and directly within the depths of a person's soul (within the depths of our human consciousness, or within the depths of our humanity) to effect a change within the order of our human willing and desiring, or a change within our human understanding and knowledge of many things; hence, whether affectively or cognitively (or the two together), loosening, altering, and revealing new affections and possibilities that, before, had not been experienced or thought possible.<sup>152</sup>

The interiority which exists, the degree or the kind of interiority which can exist in us, in turn accordingly explains why, obviously, for purposes of communication and communion, we cannot so easily use or refer to images of one kind or another that can be sensed by others and why also this restriction includes any words or concepts that can be used by us as carriers of meaning for the sake of communicating any meanings or any knowledge that has been unexpectedly and gratuitously given to us within the order of our interior experience. Within this type of receptive consciousness, that which seems to be so plain and so obvious to ourselves (as the subjects of our consciousness) is not necessarily so for others who cannot, in any way, replicate (despite their desires and efforts) this same experience of things that we have within ourselves within the order of their cognitive experience.

In this context thus and as a conclusion that we can reach, as we attend to our self-experience in our experience of self, we can distinguish and we should distinguish between two kinds of interiority. An absolute or an extreme form of interiority exists within ourselves and an absolute form of self-transcendence belongs to this interiority of ours (it is to be associated with the aspirations and the desires of our self-transcending human spirit as, inwardly, we experience and live within or from out of this spirit in order to reach things that we do not entirely grasp and understand); and, on the other hand, a relative form of interiority and a relative form of self-transcendence also belongs to us in our interiority in the wake of determinations that we must make (at any given time) as here, within the mass or within the ambiguities of our empirical world, through our questioning, our reasoning, and our understanding, in different ways, we try to order and to organize anything that we might

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<sup>152</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 201-205. See also text that comes to us from a New Testament narrative where, in Matthew 16:17, it is reported that, in the wake of Simon Peter's confession that "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus says "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

happen to come to know and understand within our world, forming and employing categories of one kind or another, or selecting new, first principles of one kind or another which we can implement and use in order to order our understanding and our knowledge of many things in a way which points both to the inventiveness and also to the competence of our human cognition (the degree of its proper range and depth).<sup>153</sup>

The absolute type of self-transcendence, however, which exists within us as a potency (in some persons and probably in many or most persons, it exists as an active potency, as both an act and a potency, and not only or simply as a purely passive potency or as a pure potency) – this self-transcendence, as it refers to transcendental, preceptive operators which are constitutive of the form and the actuations of the human spirit, the human soul – this active possibility of self-transcendence exists as a potency which, if it is to be conceptualized in a way which can refer to how it exists as a radical kind of passivity – this passivity, if it is to be conceptualized, accordingly leads us to borrow and to adapt language which would have us speak about a receptive form of human consciousness which exists as a contemplative form of human consciousness. The use or the invocation of “contemplation” as an appropriate designating term suggests or it points to a kind of openness which exists as a profound form of attention that is joined to a profound form of acquiescence. The two go together. A deferential form of consciousness exists in an extreme or absolute way and, from its docility and submissiveness, we can speak about a consciousness which is obediential (if, in fact, it is not actuated by the intrusion, the influence, the movement of a contingent, finite cause but, instead, by a cause that is entirely lacking in any kind of contingency, in any kind of finitude).<sup>154</sup> We are led or, potentially, we are receptive to a sense of the goodness and also of the necessity of an attitude of mind and heart which would exist as some kind of praise, adoration, or worship. The desire, the love, the attachment is so great that we are led to think about how this kind of attachment would exist as worship and how worship exists as a distinct species of behavior through acts which are entirely proper to it and which are being elicited from us with respect to the being,

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153J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 147.

154See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 282, where he distinguishes between transcendentals and categories (the being of transcendentals versus the lesser being or the lesser primacy of categories). The transcendentals refer to invariant constituent elements or invariant constitutive vectors which permanently exist within us within the drive or the orientation of that which exists within us in our human spirits. These all point to the form or to the intentionality of this spirit and to a form of self-transcendence which is unique to us in our human spirit. It cuts across all of our human cultures and conceptions since it is productive of any new human cultures that, from potency and conditions of non-being, can be possibly brought into a new and an unexpected condition of being. Categories, on the other hand, exist as limited, finite determinations (as specifications and as instantiations of our moving, restless, expressive spirits). They are subject to revisions and to changes as the self-transcendence which exists within our spirit expresses itself in entirely new ways which can be eminently creative and which can be eminently good if no impediments or distortions hamper or block us as, in a contingent way, we move from one determination of meaning and being toward new determinations of meaning and being that can add to our world in ways that we had not previously known or expected.

the form, and the orientation of our human consciousness.

In our reasoning thus, we are working or we have been working from the kind of first or the initial form of primary passivity which exists whenever, autobiographically, we should speak about our different acts of human sensing (most especially, our acts of human seeing) and then, from this, we have begun now to speak about a contemplative form of human consciousness whenever or wherever, allegedly, we allude to a kind of interior seeing or to a kind of interior knowing which differs from and which yet resembles the kind of knowing that characteristically belongs to us in our different acts of human sensing. In our receptive, contemplative consciousness of things, a different type of disposition is operative in us: as an active potency, it orients our concern, attention, and focus. As another kind of primary potency (if we should refer how it exists in its absoluteness), it differs from all the other forms of disposition that exist within our consciousness and the orientations which exist within other forms of consciousness when we think about how these forms exist as different patterns and about how, often and easily, we can move from one pattern to another.

To introduce a clarification, however, about the form or the pattern of this consciousness with respect what kind of relation exists between its acts and the terms or the objects that belong to these acts: on the basis of an analogy that is grounded in the kind of dualism which already exists within the order of our human cognition (our acts of seeing differ from our acts of understanding although, at times, our acts of understanding are conceptualized in terms which would have us refer to how they exist as acts of seeing), within the order or the reception of our contemplative consciousness, visions of things are, at times, reported. These things (certain things) are allegedly seen (this is the wording of the language which has come down to us from others and which is commonly used in our own day and time)<sup>155</sup> although, apart from the seeing and the

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<sup>155</sup>With respect however to the status of visions that are seen and which are reported within a context which refers to mystical or religious forms of human experience, for the sake of our moving toward a better understanding and apprehension of these things, as a possible point of departure, a connection can be drawn or a connection can be alluded to between the reported seeing of apparitions in the context of our human mystical experience and the reported seeing of a kind of “white light” that is spoken about by many persons when they speak about their near death experiences and what is happening in their near death experiences. Cf. Raymond A. Moody, *Life After Death: The Investigation of a Phenomenon-Survival of Bodily Death* (San Francisco: Harper, 2000), pp. 49-55. If, in our visual bodily seeing of things, a necessary precondition for us is the physical presence of an illuminating kind of white light that moves our acts of seeing from a condition of potency to a condition of act, one wonders if, in some way, within our mystical or in our religious seeing of certain things, a transcendent kind of “white light” is to be admitted and adverted to (acknowledged in some way).

In passing from the life that belongs to the things of this world into a life and a dimension of things that belongs to the being of some other kind of world, we often find, reportedly, that persons are finding themselves (in their consciousness) in a condition of moving toward a luminous, warm, whitish light that is somehow being seen by them (they or we are drawn to move toward it and we find that, ineluctably, they or we are, in fact, moving

beholding of any visions or sights, somewhat more rarely and less commonly in the language and in the reports which have come down to us, an uplifting of the understanding is also referred to. An uplifting of the understanding is sometimes spoken about (perceiving or seeing being one thing and grasping and understanding, another) since, within the kind of order which belongs to the givens of our contemplative consciousness, a person can receive an *understanding* and a knowledge of certain things that he or she had not been expecting or seeking; an understanding and knowledge of certain things that, before, had not been understood or known, an understanding or an apprehension of knowledge which surpasses anything which had been previously understood

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toward some kind of union with it) although, within our consciousness of it and self, we do not know or sense that our seeing is no longer a visual kind of seeing as we have experienced this kind of seeing within our currently existing world of space and time through our physical eyes although, now, in our seeing within the context of near death experiences, as our consciousness of self is being separated from a bodily sense of self, a different kind of extroversion is being experienced by us.

Our visual ocular seeing, in its intensity or lack thereof, has been superseded or, in some way, it has been rendered inoperative or irrelevant because, now, fully and entirely, we are attending to that which we are now seeing through means that transcend or which, in some way, put to the side the kind of seeing that has been belonging to us if we should refer the kind of seeing that normally occurs for us through the use of our bodily eyes. A higher kind of seeing transcends a lower kind of seeing as this higher seeing proceeds and emerges and as it functions from the context of a vantage point that is now somehow outside of our bodies: now beholding us in our bodily existence with respect to how we have been living and existing within and through our human bodies.

In this higher seeing and through this higher seeing, we continue to encounter the other (we experience the indefinite other as other than ourselves) although now, with our whole being, we are moving toward this other within an order of things that has ceased to belong to fixed determinations of space and time that would have to exist in a manner that is tied an array of circumstantial conditions. Acts of sensing and acts of understanding have now no longer to be distinguished from each now where, previously, in our human cognition, one kind of act has always discursively followed the other as we would go from one act to another act. But now, mysteriously, everything is existing together or everything is existing and moving into a form of fundamental unity or into a kind of new undifferentiated whole that we cannot compare with any other undifferentiated whole that we might begin to know or think about and so, from within this sense or this experience of wholeness and completeness, we have come to an experience which can aptly explain why we are tempted to speak about this later kind of knowing (this transcendent knowing) in terms which best refer to how it exists as an intuition in its immediacy. Its immediacy differs from the mediation and the complexities of the species of dialectic which always exists for us within our ordinary, our scientific, and our philosophic human cognition as, within conditions of space and time, we move from one cognitive act to another cognitive act: asking questions here and asking questions there in the hope of possibly finding answers and solutions that, perhaps, later, will be given to us when, for us, all the conditions are right.

and known. The story of the experiences of St. Ignatius Loyola comes to us as a case in point.<sup>156</sup> If, within the order of our human cognition that is common to all of us as human beings, acts of seeing occur more frequently than our acts of understanding, in the context of the kind of knowing which belongs to the data and the form of mystical or religious experience, in a similar way, more is said or more is reported with respect to visions than what is said or reported about understandings.

If, in a given cognitive context, we should speak more about the kind of openness to knowledge that exists through the stirrings of our curiosity and through the heuristic structuring

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The transcendence of the kind of seeing which occurs in human mystical experience (relative to our acts of bodily seeing) accordingly perhaps best explains why, as acts, our acts of bodily seeing do not differ or, more accurately, they do not conflict in any kind of necessary way with the kind of seeing which exists within our mystical experience in terms that would have to have us speak about the inevitability of some kind of conflict or opposition. To have one or to enjoy one does not necessarily exclude the other (the higher, the lower) and, at times, in our operative cognitive consciousness and within an implicit sense of self that we always have within us in our consciousness of self in our being and living, we do not distinguish between them or, operatively, we are not able to distinguish between them; or we are not distinguishing between how we are seeing in an immanent or an incarnate way and how now we could be also seeing things in another kind of way (in a transcendental kind of way). Witness stories and reports that have come down to us from the testimony of other human beings (living and dead) where sometimes it is claimed or it is reported that divine things are being perceived by some persons through the mediation of their human senses. See, for instance, Josyp Terelya, *Witness to Apparitions and Persecution in the USSR* (Milford, Ohio: Faith Publishing Company, 1991), pp. 215-224; <http://www.divinemysteries.info/our-lady-of-the-ukraine-hrushiv-ukraine-1914-and-1987/> (accessed January 12, 2018). While the life of the senses exists within the life of religious believers (allegedly, we can always argue that the perception of the senses is being determined by the religious faith and the predispositions of religious believers), at other times however, we hear about perceptions that allegedly belong to non-believers and we have stories which tell us about the conversion of non-believers given, allegedly, what they have unexpectedly seen and heard through their own acts of human sensing.

To restate our conclusions through a kind of summary, while our acts of visual seeing play a prescribed role within the order of our cognition that can be identified as specifically human and specifically contingent, on the other hand, if their context changes and the change of context points to the entry or the ingress of a transcendent kind of seeing that can be given to us (or to other persons) as an unmerited gift or as an unmerited reception (for which or about which, in terms of secondary causes, no adequate explanation seems to exist for us; no adequate explanation can be so easily obtained if we cannot refer so easily to any acts and data of sense), then our acts of human seeing which exist at a lower level can be taken up in a way which merges them or which has them participate in a higher kind of seeing that, typically or frequently, does not belong to us within our current determinations of space and time but which, nonetheless, can be given to us without violating who we are as human beings and how

which exists within us through our asking of an order of distinct questions, we can now speak about the absoluteness of an obediential form of receptivity if we should refer to how this openness exists with a purity that points to its undifferentiatedness. The undifferentiatedness, in its own way, exists as an absolute and the absence of conditions points to why, as a transcendental, it exists as its own species of unconditioned and why, in turn, this absence of conditions points to the only type of actuation which it can possibly have as an unconditioned if we should now refer to some kind of act or cause which would have to exist, in its own right, as an unconditioned or, in other words, as an act or as a cause which would exist as an absolute absolute.

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we happen to exist as human beings within a contingent order of existing things. In us, this type of potency exists. It exists for us as the possibility of our experiencing an unlimited form of self-transcendence (a potency which can be known and identified in terms which would have us speak about an ultimate kind of potency which, in its own way, properly belongs to us as human beings; hence, a potency that is best signified if we can refer to it as a submissive or obediential potency as we move from a notion of it that increasingly becomes less active and which increasingly becomes more passive).

With respect in general to the status of religious apprehensions, while, on the one hand, we can argue, on the basis of a set of *a priori* reasons that we could be espousing, that religious apparitions are never to be credited as having any kind of truth or reality, it is to be admitted too that, in the kind of history which has come to us through time from other human beings, the testimony and the contrary claims of other persons is to be regarded as a recurrent datum or it exists as a recurrent variable which, minimally, would have to point us toward the possibility and perhaps to the necessity of our having to move toward a set of contrary conclusions or a set of contrary assumptions. In our judgments, so much depends on the kind of openness which can be said to exist within each of us (how much we know about the form and the structure of this openness) and the condition or the quality of the kind of intellectual and moral development which happens to exist within each of us as human beings. With respect to the being or the reality of religious apparitions and the kind of reality which is known through the cognition which exists within the experience of these apparitions, from a metaphysical perspective, nothing prevents an utterly transcendent being from being able to move into an image or assume an image or form which resembles the being of a material image or form if the object or the intention of this being is a means which can lead to a manifestation and to an apprehension on our part that would seem, to us, to exist as an act of sense which is to be associated or which is joined, in some way, to a revelatory species of sensed datum. As a cognitive principle that applies to us with respect to the kind of knowing which typically and which normally belongs to us as human subjects: an understanding and a knowledge of things is usually never gained if, in some way, the point of departure is not an image or a datum of some kind which would be given to us through the mediation of an act of sense which belongs to us as human subjects.

<sup>156</sup>See Ignatius Loyola, *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola with related documents*, ed. John C. Olin, trans. Joseph F. O'Callaghan (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 39, when he describes a key mystical experience that had been given to him when seated by the Cordoner River in Spain near Manresa, an experience which explicitly denies the seeing of any visions. Instead, he speaks about an uplifting of his understanding ("he experienced a

These things being said thus, if we should now turn toward any questions that would ask about how our contemplative consciousness can be encouraged in any way (or if we are to ask about how a contemplative consciousness can be brought into being for us in a way which is entirely suitable and appropriate for us), the emphasis that is given to the value of our having a pure or an undifferentiated kind of receptivity explains why this form of consciousness is best encouraged if, in some way, we can withdraw from our experience of differentiations: if we can pull ourselves away from the presence of other things and so move into a kind of isolation and seclusion which would be geared toward avoiding or reducing our acts of sensing, our acts of inquiring, our acts of imagining, and our acts of understanding that, normally, we receive or we engage in. The fewer, the better. However, suitable exterior conditions differ from suitable interior conditions if, in our consciousness of self, we should know about how we exist through an interaction which joins material conditions with conditions that exist in an inward, subjective way. In terms of our external actions, through locomotion and migration, we can separate ourselves from the company of other persons although in a way which would differ from how, ordinarily, we need at times to withdraw and to seclude ourselves from the company of other persons and tasks if we should be engaged in any acts of inquiry and cognition that are geared toward receiving *a posteriori* apprehensions of being. In order to grow in our scientific understanding of things or in order to grow in our philosophic understanding of things, some kind of detachment is always needed at given times, depending on the kind of understanding which is being sought in a given context.

However, if we should turn toward interior conditions and ask about any actions or any preparations that we could make that could possibly lead us toward a more radical form of openness that can then exist within ourselves (within the subjectivity of our consciousness), if our openness is to exist in an increasingly unconditioned way, if it is to be better geared toward receiving and experiencing beings or realities which would seem to exist in an unconditioned kind of way, then our openness needs to be encouraged through the use, the promotion, and the implementation of immaterial, spiritual practices and disciplines that, if put into effect, in some way, help us. They guard us or they protect us from any pressures and stresses that could be coming to us from faulty ways of feeling and thinking that could be diverting our attention, existing for us as distractions.<sup>157</sup> We begin by practicing the good of exterior silence and then,

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great clarity in his understanding”) in a way which distinguishes between the seeing or the beholding of any visions and a salutary change which has occurred within the apprehensions of his understanding. “He understood and knew many things, both spiritual things and matters of faith and of learning, and this with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him.” Naturally or obviously, one is to be preferred to the other; an uplifting of one's understanding over any visions that could be perhaps given to us (even if both exist as receptions and as gifts, or as graces, that are to be welcomed and enjoyed for the kind of familiarity or the kind of knowledge that exists within each of them). The greater good of understanding is found in the fact that, through our understanding and through changes that are effected in our understanding, we can redirect our focus in terms of how our acts of sensing are to be employed in new ways, possibly attending now to new possible objects and to the possibility of their perception and apprehension.

<sup>157</sup>For examples of these, please attend to the kind of order which exists in directives which come to us from the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* where, within it, directives are given which specify not only determinations of physical posture and position and suggestions

silently, we begin to speak or we attend to ourselves in ways that can lead us toward a questioning of ourselves as, now, we begin to turn our attention toward things that we should begin to think about, away from things that are troubling and besetting us and about which we should not be thinking about. As we put ourselves into a condition of quiet and non-activity, we desire to experience nothing in particular and we do nothing in particular. However, the interior turning toward the kind of self-transcendence which exists within our souls, the interior turning towards the being of higher things or higher causes soon turns into a kind of dialogue with these same higher things and, as an initial form of inner dialogue leads into a different kind of dialogue which would exist as prayer, in an immediate kind of way, we are consciously and immediately joined to a transcendent order of existing things – an order of things that we cannot sense or understand although, in some way, interiorly, through our consciousness, we sense these things, we know about them (the truth of their reality, the truth of their existence). We augment or we increase our availability through an attitude of mind which acts upon our emotions and our feelings in a way that moves us from an initial sense of quiet, perplexity, and wonder toward goods that become most worthy as the attractiveness of these goods elicits

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about the quality and quantity of diet and sleep that one should have but also how we are to make good evaluations and decisions within the order of our human reflection. Easily we can make many bad decisions but, if we work from a growing degree of self-knowledge that can distinguish between different interior movements that can be labelled and described in terms of good and bad spirits; if we can avail ourselves of the self-knowledge of other persons who have walked a similar path and journey, then we can move toward a more adequate form of self-knowledge within ourselves and so become less open to the interference of any kind of bias that could be distorting any judgments that we would like to make.

Apart from the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius however, in the earlier *Rule of St. Benedict*, although a greater emphasis was given to determining material conditions of one kind or another, we can find, for instance, in a prominent example, a lengthy discussion about differing degrees of humility and the steps that we can take which should lead us toward growth in our personal humility and so, by means of this kind of thematization, we can be advised on how best we should proceed and what kind of attitude we should adopt as problems and difficulties come to us in the conduct of our individual lives. As an initial point of departure, a suitable constellation of material conditions helps us in leading us toward a better ordering of our interior dispositions and conditions although, on the other hand, if the ordering of our interior conditions is our first and our primary focus, then the good ordering of these conditions transcends any deficiencies that can possibly exist within an external order of things that, often, we are not able to regulate or to control to the degree that we would wish and want. External deficiencies are not good in themselves although, on the other hand, they can exert a lower degree of influence if we work with our attitudes and change our attitudes in ways that can point to how the influence of external deficiencies can be discountenanced and put to the side. Despite the good which exists in possibly working with an optimum number of good exterior conditions, their influence is not ultimately definitive or ultimately determinative. See Viktor E. Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006) for an autobiographical account about how the goodness and worth of our living and being can be known within a very adverse set of material conditions and about how, through the experience of unmerited, unjust suffering, much good can be brought into being in ways that lead us toward experiences of love that, before, we had not known or had not thought possible.

hopes and desires from within us in terms of how, in our lives, we can be more fully joined and united with them. In their own way, more fully, these things begin to enter into the fabric (the consciousness) of our souls, altering and enhancing our sense of being, and the onset of internal changes in turn creates conditions that can move from an internal order of things into an external order of things in a refashioning of external conditions and circumstances which changes the content of our human sensing in ways that can turn our acts of human cognition into new paths, moving in new directions.

Increasingly thus, through an initial agency which has existed for us through how we can develop a habit of contemplative consciousness, we can be disposed or we are disposed toward effecting changes in the manner of our human living in a way which reflects this contemplative dimension and perspective as, now, to an increasing degree, our external actions reflect how, in our consciousness of very many things, a contemplative dimension is to be alluded to. It becomes and it begins to exist as our central point of reference. Where, bodily, we continue to see things through our eyes and so behold the things that we see and while, in addition too, through our picturing of objects which occurs within the arts and flights of our imagination, we can continue to behold objects and panoramas that we cannot see and behold in any other kind of way, through a life of prayer and through habits of quiet and recollection, we encourage a form of receptivity that is now more open to the degree that it is not lacking in an awareness of the reality of religious things and how, as human beings, in some way, we are disposed to having of religious beliefs and so, from this, a sense or an awareness of obligations which point to consequences which exist for us in the wake of our religious belief. Our obligations present themselves to us in ways which we cannot avoid or evade if, as human beings, we are to live lives that are fuller and richer.

And so, to the degree that we can acknowledge powers and sources which are greater than ourselves in a more absolute way, and to the degree that we can begin to rely on these powers and sources if we are to make sense of our own lives, the more we can find or the more that we can move into ways of thinking, living, and existing that, before, we had not imagined or had thought possible. The unimaginable becomes possible. The unimaginable becomes evident and certain since problems and difficulties that have had no adequate solution that we can contingently construct or make find a solution and an easement if, now, we should be turned toward things and realities that always hold and endure for us despite our current circumstances since our attachment to these things gives to us a personal stability or a personal standing and sense of life that cannot be taken from us by anything which exists within our contingently existing world. Through the kind of mediation that exists for us through our having a form of contemplative consciousness, from the context or the horizon of our individual viewpoints, our world becomes a different kind of place. New things are seen to exist within it for the first time. Shifts in our consciousness that have moved us into a transcendental form of consciousness have created a new, larger context that permits apprehensions of meaning and being which, before, had not been possible (or likely) and these changes can then possibly lead us toward new *a posteriori* apprehensions of meaning and being that can now result if we begin to ask questions about things that we had known about before.

## 5. Infusion as Revelation in Religious Consciousness

It is most improbable that God as Creator could have created us as wordy,

loquacious beings and yet not speak to us about who He happens to be.<sup>158</sup>

A fifth species of *a priori* knowledge is to be acknowledged if we should refer to a sense of divine things that is given to us (or which has been given to us), apart from our asking of any questions, but in a way that has ceased to be much less indeterminate if we should now refer to how an *a priori* apprehension of meaning and being is to be associated with a species or an instance of knowledge which exists as some kind of announcement or declaration that is made known to us through the mediation of a primitive word or concept which, in some way, has been presented or received by us (whether through the mediation of spoken or written words or/and also through the mediation of events which pertain to the life of other human beings). As a point of origin or first principle for the emergence of a plethora of later words and concepts, from a primitive word or concept or, on the basis of a primitive word and from a primitive apprehension of it, conceptual or linguistic determinations of meaning have been thematized, defined, and externalized in ways which have moved outwards into our human order of things: creating bonds between other human beings in a way which has led to the building of new human communities while, at the same time, serving more fully to express the sense or the ramifications of an initially received meaning which belongs to the intelligibility, the form, or the soul of a primitively known message or word. In time, within the sum or the mass of our collective humanity, suggested meanings and associations have moved within the orbit of our human consciousness in ways which have changed the form or the shape of our human consciousness as this consciousness has been distributed among many different human persons (effecting changes in them as human beings as our subjectivity is directed toward new interests and orientations and as our subjectivity is expanded in ways which point to new orders, ranges, and depths).

To this type of meaning (as this belongs to the order of religion), a greater clarity or a greater exactness has emerged as details or nuances of various sorts have become known for perhaps the first time. More punch or more significance is found to exist within its subsequent reception and acceptance than that which had been given to us earlier within our intersubjective, aesthetic, symbolic, and contemplative apprehensions of meaning and being and, from the context of its initial acceptance, new apprehensions of meaning and being have now become possible (new apprehensions exist) if we should attend now to both the kind of acquisition and the kind of given which exists for us if we should refer respectively to our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being and to our *a priori* apprehensions of being.

For purposes of illustration and illumination, see how, in his religion and in his theological reflections,<sup>159</sup> John Henry Cardinal Newman distinguishes between the presence of legitimate doctrinal developments and the presence of misleading or errant doctrinal developments which are to be regarded as perversions and corruptions of true dogmatic teaching. On the one hand, while it is a truism to observe that “while ideas live in men's minds, they are ever enlarging into fuller development,” on the other hand, it is a truism to observe

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<sup>158</sup>Paraphrased and adapted from E. F. Schumacher, *Good Work* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 139.

<sup>159</sup>John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), pp. 169-206

and also to argue that fundamental doctrines and beliefs grow in greater power and significance to the degree that other, supplementary doctrines become more well known and obvious. Cause to effect. For instance, contrary to the drift and the focus of Protestant objections, instead of taking away from the importance and the significance of Christ's Incarnation and Atonement, “the *cultus* of St. Mary and the Saints...[in fact] subserves, illustrates, protects the doctrine of our Lord's loving kindness and mediation.”<sup>160</sup> A good that is enormously great and which is infinitely beneficial leads to other, later, lesser goods in a way that more fully reveals the greatness of the initially known, accepted good (the lesser goods testify to the radiating influence of that which exists as the greater, most supreme good). Conversely also, mistaken ideas (as they move through our thinking and understanding, triggering our thinking and understanding), in their own way, they lead us into horizons and perspectives which exist as diminutions and contractions. Less is being grasped and understood and, from contractions and diminutions in our thinking and understanding, we are encouraged to move into contractions and diminutions that would belong to other orders of meaning and being.<sup>161</sup> A lesser kind of appreciation would then be reflected in how we think about how we should live and exist with respect to other aspects of life that rightfully belong to us in the manner and the form of our human living.

With regard to the kind of apriority which belongs to intersubjectivity, aesthetics, symbolism, and contemplation, the point of difference which separates them from this fifth species of *a priori* knowledge should emerge with a greater degree of clarity if we should attend to how, again in time, revelatory apprehensions with respect to the meaning and the being of transcendent, divine things have come to reside within the consciousness of human subjects in ways which ground and which determine the form of a given person's consciousness as this extends into the concrete details of their individual lives.<sup>162</sup> Words and phrases have been

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<sup>160</sup>Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 202.

<sup>161</sup>Along the same lines, see, for instance, F. S. C. Northrup's, *The Logic of the Sciences and Humanities* (New York, 1959), as cited by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 7. Quoting Schumacher but summarizing Northrup: in undertaking any inquiry, “if one makes a false or superficial beginning, no matter how rigorous the methods followed during the succeeding investigation, they will never remedy the initial error.”

<sup>162</sup>For an example of this type of formation or this type of construction, see how Peter C. Newman speaks about the personality and the mentality of a well known Canadian politician, the Hon. Edmund Davie Fulton (1916-2000), who served as Canada's federal Minister of Justice from 1957 to 1962 in the government of Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker. Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davie\\_Fulton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davie_Fulton) (accessed July 31, 2019). It is alleged by Newman that Fulton's mind was so deeply penetrated by the parameters and the strictures of Catholic doctrine that, in his thinking and in all of his subsequent decisions and actions, he was entirely unaware of the influence that was being exerted on him by the quality and the character of his religious beliefs. Cf. Peter C. Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), p. 105. The Catholic doctrine existed in him or, at some point, it had become something which existed in him as a kind of second nature (defined here as “the custom of living appropriately” which is developed through a formation which exists in terms of “education, speech, morality, and habit”): explaining who and what a given person is as a

coined at the beginning of things or words and phrases have been simply given in a way which has fallen or which has shaped a patterning of words and phrases that has not been lacking in a distinct species of rhythm or meter that has made for the easier remembering of an initially received, known message and so, from all this, an easier insertion of meanings and nuances into our human patterns of thought according to a means which points to how our words and phrases are pointing to things that transcend the being or the use of any of our words or phrases. The patterning has been making for a form of communication which is less subject to confusions and contradictions that can come from any deceptions that can be introduced by different persons or groups at different times and places (for reasons of one kind or another); or from any other deceptions that can occur in a purely material way as chance variations when, in a process of transmission, this or that word or phrase is passed on to later generations for their use and possible benefit. In its understanding and knowledge of things, allegedly, one generation succeeds another and, allegedly, nothing is lost in terms of any meanings and realities that are known.

By way of a point of contrast that we can find within ourselves if we move through our own shifts of consciousness in a way that can lead us toward the question and the possibility or the probability of our ever having received a divine message or a divine revelation that could be possibly given to us within the data of our religious apprehensions (how this could possibly exist for us within our world and how it could fit into our apprehension of things in general), we can note that, initially, through our symbolic apprehension of things which exist within our current world of things, mediately, indirectly, or instrumentally, unseen but sensible, imaginable realities can be brought to our attention and notice and we can know, from our experience of self, that this form of conscious experience can move us in certain ways in terms of how, as human beings, we should begin to feel and think about ourselves and the being of many other things which exist within our world. In time too, moral consequences can be alluded to in consequences and effects which cannot be understood if we should fail to attend to the kind of role that belongs to symbolic intimations of meaning as these act upon ourselves in our consciousness of them, bestirring and arousing our feelings and emotions in ways which can affect the contours of our thinking and understanding (reshaping the patterns and the form of our imagination). From our knowledge of self, we always know that a prior understanding and knowledge of certain things is to be regarded as a conditioning variable. In some way, it acts upon us. It influences our inquiry as, from our knowledge of certain facts and certain truths, we move into the kind of inquiry and reasoning which belongs to the subjectivity of our moral reasoning and consciousness as, inevitably, we begin to move from that which we think and know about certain things to how we should respond and what we should do in terms of how we are to relate to the being of these same known things.

Our knowledge always exists as a form of awareness that, to ourselves, is often a source of discomfort and unease. We can be challenged by our understanding and knowledge of certain things and by how we have come to have an understanding and knowledge of these same things. Our lack of equanimity or a lack of indifference points to a kind of sublation which necessarily (or essentially) belongs to us in our humanity if our desire for an understanding of things is itself a subordinate objective or an effect which is only understood if we can point to a

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human being. Cf. Robert Spaemann, *Persons: The Difference between 'Someone' and 'Something'*, trans. Oliver O'Donovan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 198.

higher kind of thing which refers not only or not merely to the truth of things but also to the good of the truth of things and a way of life that can be ordered toward realizing the goodness of many things and anything which can be done to achieve the possible goodness of many, different things. “The truth will set you free,”<sup>163</sup> as the good of truth and as the good of searching and seeking for the truth of things, leads us toward other goods which, as further goods, enhance the possibilities and the range of our human choice and the freedom which comes to us if more choices can be known than that, before, which had been thought possible.

But, on the other hand however and at a further or more remote remove, it is to be noted that when we encounter realities or if we should encounter realities that, normally, within our current world of things, *we can never sense or imagine* (if, in some way, they cannot be symbolically represented to us through means which are entirely adequate, fair, or sufficient), then we should find, as a consequence, that, in some way (apart from the instrumentality of any kind of contingent form of mediation), immediately or directly, we can know or we realize that we are joined to the being of a higher order of realities (be they one or more) despite the degree and the extent of their transcendence (although always, admittedly, our connection or our participation exists as but a partial, imperfect, limited kind of thing). As we have been suggesting and noting, from a metaphysical perspective, some realities enjoy a degree of transcendence which is so great that, in our relation with them, they would have to point us or move us into an order of things which belongs to the stuff of a believed religion and, as we have been also noting (although from a cognitional perspective), to our religious apprehensions of being belong apprehensions of transcendent, religious meaning and, through this, a sense of the being or the reality of things which are known by us through this type of familiarity. In some circumstances that can be acknowledged and recognized, our experience of transcendence loses, or it can conceivably lose, a degree or a measure of relativity as it enters or as it falls into a form of ultimateness or completeness which is absolute because it cannot be challenged or rivaled by the experience or the givenness of some other form of transcendence that would be higher (although, admittedly, in referring to this absolute kind of experience and how it would be joined to an absolute kind of transcendence, we have experiences or we can allude to experiences that, in fact, vary from person to person and for reasons that are not restricted to any variations in subjectivity which would always exist for us as we try to move from one human person to another human person).

Hence (to summarize our position a bit): an order of objects is first known or, more exactly, an order of objects is intimated to us in a way which initially precedes a later or a fuller kind of

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<sup>163</sup>John 8:32 (New Oxford Bible). See Bernt T. Oftestad, *The Catholic Church and Liberal Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 3-6, for an initial introduction on how or why, within our western culture, freedom has emerged as a dominant value within a frame of thinking and living that refers to the emergence of liberalism as a paradigmatic cultural norm. Freedom is seen to exist as a human good that needs to be always encouraged even if it is known that, from a multiplication of too many options and choices that can exist for some human beings, indeterminism can emerge as a moral problem for persons who find that they do not know what to do with their lives: what choices they should make (if so many choices are in fact available to them in ways that overwhelm our powers of human judgment given the kind of assessment which belongs to perspective judgments as acts of understanding that are not lacking in their own complexity and lack of simplicity).

knowing which always emerges for us if we should move from the experience of an apprehending, apprehensive act toward the experience and the sense of an apprehended object which exists as some kind of other. To explain our meaning here: if, in an initial apprehension of things, act and term inseparably exist together (one cannot exist without the other), through a difference in awareness that is also given to us through an emergent kind of proceeding which exists, for want of a better term, as a primitive form of conceptualization, an objectification or a separation of things occurs whenever we move from the immediacy or the intimations of our religious experience (however the form or content) toward a second proximity which also now immediately knows about a form, an object, or *an other* that is to be distinguished from the being of the prior, apprehending, apprehensive act. The other, when experienced and known *as other*, or the other when it is known to exist as an object that also differs from the self-transcending act of apprehension that belongs to us as cogitating, receptive human subjects (the other is not produced by our self-transcending acts of cognition; its reality transcends the being of our self-transcending acts of cognition) – in this way, we can work with a distinction which applies when we distinguish between the being of an implicit, initial act of faith and the being of explicit, later acts of faith and how this distinction possesses a relevance and an aptness for us as we try to speak about how, in our religious apprehensions, we can have an initial form of apprehension which knows about the being and the reception of a species of transcendent Word which differs or which has yet to be put into a conceptualized form which would exist as something which is somehow external or outer, relative to the initial and the prior act of conceptualization which always occurs whenever, in our understanding or apprehension of things, we find that we are in the presence of something which is greater than ourselves: something which exists as a greater, as an outer, other kind of thing, relative to us in our being in our acts of apprehension which always exist within us or which always belong to us in some way to the degree that we exist as living, human subjects. Prior to our acts of conceptualization, we always have our acts of understanding and prior to the proceeding of any kind of externalized, outer word, we have the proceeding of a species of inner word which exists as an outer, other thing, relative to the reception by us of an initial act of apprehension which would exist for us as an act of understanding.

An initial, implicit kind of faith accordingly differs from a subsequent, explicit kind of faith since, as simply given or experienced, it precedes a development which refers to our later acts of understanding and the kind of objectification which exists and which occurs as we move from the initial objectivity of a transcendent innerly experienced word toward the later objectivity of a transcendent outwardly existing, expressed word which emerges in the wake of our later acts of faith and the kind of reflection and thematization which belongs to our later acts of religious faith. As we have been noting, the distinct kind of other which belongs to implicit acts of faith exists as a kind of inner or internal thing to the degree that it has not been thematized or articulated and so put into some kind of external form or some kind of external format which belongs to the order of our human expressiveness and the kind of extroversion which belongs to the order of our expressiveness. However, as *an other* that differs from the immediacy or the experience of an apprehension that has been given to us through an initial kind of apprehensive reception, at the same time, it also points us or it directs us toward the possible being of an explicit kind of faith that will emerge in us as soon as we move from the immediacy of an inner word *as other* toward the mediation of this word as this is given to us through the use of externalizing words and phrases that we can form and conceive for purposes of effecting a better form of communication with both others and ourselves and also for

purposes of creating conditions which can make for the possibility of further inquiries and reflection as an inner word is turned into an objectified, outer word that can be questioned and examined in ways that are turned toward new apprehensions of meaning that can possibly add to what, initially, we have been receiving and knowing through the reception of understandings and truths that, in an infused way, have been given to us through our apprehension and experience of them.

As an aside, in order to understand more fully how or why we can talk about the being of inner words and how they exist for us in the wake of our initial acts of understanding and how they exist in a way which conditions the formation and the construction of outer words that belong to the order of our spoken and written speech, two ways or two routes are possible. As an external path or route, look at how St. Augustine speaks about the being of inner words in the context of his Trinitarian theology. Where, in the context of the earlier Stoic philosophy, the word or words of outer human speech are distinguished from the word or words of inner human speech which, as human beings, we use whenever we talk to ourselves in the context of our thinking and reflection, in his work principally on the meaning of the Christian Trinity (within the text of the *De Trinitate*), St. Augustine distinguishes and speaks about a third type of word when he speaks about a second kind of “inner word” which primarily refers to something which exists within our understanding as some kind of meant or term of meaning.<sup>164</sup> The meant is something which is intended by us if we should distinguish, on the one hand, between our acts of inquiry and our acts of understanding and that which exists as a meaning or a meant which has been grasped by a given act of understanding. Meaning as a verb differs from the meant as an object and, through our acts of meaning, we have that which exists as the meaning of a meant. The meant is a meaning which exists within our minds because it is something which had been understood and known by us within the context of our understanding minds. It differs from a datum which has been grasped by us through an act of sense.

While, at times, St. Augustine speaks about this inner word or meant (*De Trinitate*, 8, 9) as something which we can picture or imagine, usually he refers to how an inner word is experienced and known by us only through an act of understanding which transcends whatever is known by us through any of our acts of human sensing. An “inner word,” in its identity, can refer to either a definition or a judgment (which, as a judgment, would have to exist as a “true word,” or as a *verbum verum*). These inner words, as we move from the transcendence which exists within one human being to the transcendence which exists within another human being, exist in a way which cuts across all cultural divides and boundaries. To cite a precis of St. Augustine’s analysis as this is given to us in the *De Trinitate*:

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<sup>164</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 6; Gerard Watson, “St Augustine and the inner word: the philosophical background,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 54 (1988), pp. 84-85.

This word is neither Greek nor Latin nor does it belong to any other language (9, 19), and it has a better claim to the title ‘word’ than that which is heard aloud (9, 19). It is a faithful representative of the knowledge we possess, sense or intellectual (9, 22).<sup>165</sup>

As an internal path or route in a second approach, to discover in a more personal way how we can speak about a real distinction which exists between an initial act of understanding and the immediacy of an act of conceptualization which points to the immediacy of an inner word or concept that is known as an other (prior to any form of external conceptualization), take a mathematical problem and try and solve it and, as you solve it, go back and notice the changes that have occurred in your cognitive consciousness. To cite and borrow from a proffered example,<sup>166</sup> if you take a triangle and simply look at it, you will not see or discover in the seeing that “its three angles must equal two right angles.” We begin by posing a mathematical question or experiencing a mathematical problem. Do the three angles of a triangle equal two right angles? Now, since by simply looking at a triangle we can have no solution (no answer), if we begin to draw lines however; if, through the triangle's vertex, we draw a line which is parallel to the base, we should find that, by noticing the equality of the alternate angles, we should immediately grasp and understand that the three angles of any given triangle must always equal the sum of two right angles (in the context of an Euclidean form of geometry which attends to the being and the shape of flat surfaces). By drawing lines, by constructing a diagram, through an apt image that we create, our understanding goes beyond the givens of sense toward finding a necessity which is grasped by us in an act of understanding. Through an act of understanding that we have, we can solve a problem. We find a solution.

However, through the givenness that is given to us in the reception of an act of understanding, we immediately also notice and we should know that we are in the presence of an invariant mathematical law (within an Euclidean form of geometry) and the givenness of this law, in its objectivity, immediately points to how it exists for us as a species of inner word or species of inner concept. To take this inner word and to express it in words and phrases then turns it into a species of outer word. It exists for us now as a communicable mathematical law that we can query or ask questions about. In receiving any given act of understanding, from it, an act of conceptualization immediately follows in a proximity of one to the other which, however, cannot be used as an argument which would want to claim that no real distinction can exist between an act of understanding and an act of conceptualization since each act, in fact, intends a different term or content: an act of understanding, an idea or something which has been grasped or understood; an act of conceptualization, a concept or an

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<sup>165</sup>Watson, citing St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*.

<sup>166</sup>Lonergan, *Verbum*, pp. 27-28.

inner, mental word having an objectivity which points to its transcendent significance.

In moving then from an implicit kind of faith toward an explicit kind of faith and in moving from the simplicity of an inner word into the complexities of a formulated outer word (or, in other words, through a form of self-transcendence which would exist within us as a heightening of our human consciousness), a change in meaning occurs but of a kind which, as noted, invariably points to fuller ramifications and a form of greater exactness and how this exactness exists as a healthy corrective that is to be sought and encouraged (as it begins to improve both the denotation and the connotations of our initial, prior apprehensions). The experience of a greater specificity in meaning, through the selection and the formation of new words and terms, removes or lessens what ambiguities have come down to us in an initial apprehension of things because, now, the meaning of an inner word can enjoy a precision, a depth, and an orientation which, before, it did not have or know.

The ingress of determination enhances the power or the significance of an initially apprehended meaning in a way that can more fully touch the fabric of our thinking and understanding of things in ways which can then touch the morality of our human lives as our human living can begin to fall into a form and a shape that more faithfully mirrors or which more fully reflects the specificity which belongs to religious words of meaning and being which we have been receiving and accepting as a truer form of religious faith and belief or as, in fact, the true or the right form of our religious faith and belief. Through our decisions and our external actions, to a greater extent, we can move from an internal order of things which belongs to us within the life of our souls (the life of our human consciousness) toward and into an order of things that we create: an order of things which belongs to varying sets of external conditions that we can make and form through the mediation of ourselves, through any actions and activities which can come from us as agents and subjects (we, who are the makers of our human history): creating and effecting conditions which are quite other than ourselves (even as they come from ourselves), creating conditions which are endowed with limitations and parameters which belong to determinations of space and time but which are not to be identified with determinations of space and time since, within these determinations of space and time, the self-transcendence of our cognition encourages forms of self-transcendence within us which can seep into the fabric of our human life and history (within the ups and downs of our concrete human living, effecting these ups and downs, giving a new order to the ways and means of our concrete human living).

To try and speak more about the kind of determination which exists for us as some form of determinate, articulate word that allows us to distinguish one thing from some other kind of thing (as in “this” is not “that”), let us distinguish or borrow a distinction which contrasts an informal or a tacit kind of knowledge of certain things that belongs to us with a formal and an explicit kind of knowledge of these same things that can also belong to us. The reference to this kind of distinction obviously parallels the distinction that we have been drawing between an implicit form of faith and an explicit form of faith if, in explicit faith, we have inquiry, understanding, and reflection. An informal or a tacit knowledge of things accordingly exists, in its own right, as a species of *a priori*. Within the order of transcendent, spiritual, religious things, it would exist as a fourth species of *a priori* if we should refer to apprehensions and terms of apprehension which we have not questioned, thought about, or reflected on. We have

not raised it into any kind of higher, heightened form of awareness. And so obviously, as an *a priori*, it would differ from any understanding and a knowledge of things which would exist as an *a posteriori* species of knowledge and apprehension. If, for instance, we were to think or speak about the possible emergence of a theological understanding of things that can be given to us at a later date in our time and history, in this development we would be referring to *a posteriori* apprehensions of being that would exist within the kind of order of inquiry which belongs to the special province of theology, and if we were to refer to any consequent actions or works that we would do which would reflect what we have come thus to understand and know in our understanding of theology, our *a priori* apprehensions of meaning and being would be combining and joining with additional *a posteriori* apprehensions of meaning and being in a way or through an order which would be oriented toward creating a new species of larger unity that would exist as a kind of new, seamless web. Both types of apprehension would be existing together and, from one, one would go to the other, back and forth.

Hence: as we refer to a tacit kind of human knowledge and as we move from a metaphysical way of speaking which has referred to *a priori* apprehensions of being toward a more cognitional way of speaking which prefers to speak about a conscious, un-thematized, prior kind of human understanding and knowing, in this knowing we would be speaking about a kind of knowing that cannot be put into an exhaustive ordering of words, phrases, and propositions. It would exist prior to any kind of conceptual formalization which would emerge through the kind of externalizing activity which would exist, for instance, if we were to try to find and form words that we would speak to ourselves or to others, or words that we would try to write if we should take any of our writing skills and then put them into effect. This type of knowing always exists apart from any kind of dictation to others or it would also differ from the kind of understanding which would exist if we were to refer to how an understanding of things can exist as some kind of result or effect if, by our subsequent asking of questions, we are led toward new experiences and new possible acts of understanding. Hence, it is said about our prior, un-thematized knowledge of certain things that it consists of “skills, ideas and experiences that people [already] have but [which] are not codified and may not necessarily be easily expressed.”<sup>167</sup> Best put in another way: “we can know more than we can tell [or speak].”<sup>168</sup> Reiteratively, in our prior understanding of things, in its inchoateness and in its lack

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167Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacit\\_knowledge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacit_knowledge) (accessed January 16, 2018).

168Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 4. For a broader understanding of these things, compare how, in our human knowing of things, there exists a tacit, *a priori* component in our human knowing which resembles how John Henry Cardinal Newman had spoken about the role and the place of informal inference within the acts of our human cognition. If, in formal inference, we move from a number of premises that are known and stated toward a conclusion which would then be known and stated (we can think about the kind of inference which exists when we are engaged in the arts and skills of formal, deductive logic), then, in informal inference, we move from premisses that are not fully stated or fully known. Some premisses are known and some can be stated (as known) but they are not all given and stated as known and yet in some way, all together, an amorphous sum of inferences and innuendoes can lead us toward a truth that emerges for us as an *a posteriori* apprehension of being (a truth that would be known in terms of its likelihood or its probability and so, on the basis of this kind of cognitive probability, it would be enjoying a form of evidence which points to a form of certainty that is virtual although, in a sense, not

of determination and definition – we have something which exists as a larger, greater kind of thing. It functions, in its own way, as a conditioning context and, in its own way, it has a power and an authority of its own which differs from the kind of power and the kind of authority which belongs to the specificity of spoken and written speech.

A theological or, more properly, a religious example exists if we refer to what can be said about the existence of a *sensus fidei* (“sense of faith”) or the existence of a *sensus fidelium* (“sense of the faithful”) that belongs to all religious believers in terms of how they are all joined and united to each other in their profession of a common faith. According to one account, this *sensus* exists

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entirely absolute if, by absolute, an absence of conditions is intended). While some things are true because the conditions of their being are given and they are known, some things can be true apart the necessity or the being of any conditions and apart from acts of understanding which need to know about the givenness or the being of any conditions.

Citing text, according to how, in the manner of his rhetoric, Newman had spoken about the ways and the means of formal inference and the kind of control or method which exists through the arts of formal inference:

Let language have a monopoly of thought; and thought go for only so much as it can show itself to be worth in language. Let every prompting of the intellect be ignored, every momentum of argument be disowned, which is unprovided with an equivalent wording as its ticket for sharing in the common search after truth. Let the authority of nature, common-sense, experience, genius go for nothing.

Cf. John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, p. 263, as quoted by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “True Judgment and Science,” *Shorter Papers*, eds. Robert C. Croken, Robert M. Doran, and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 37.

However, in contrast, according to how, in his analysis, Bernard Lonergan speaks about the arts of informal inference (aping the kind of rhetoric which Newman had used) and how informal inference is synonymous with a natural kind of inference which, typically, we have and do as human beings:

Common sense, chance, moral perception, genius, the great discoveries of principles do not reason. They have no arguments, no grounds, they see the truth, but they do not know how they see it; and if at any time they attempt to prove it, it is as much a matter of *experiment* with them, as if they had to find a road to a distant mountain, which they see with the eye; and they get entangled, embarrassed, and perchance overthrown in the *superfluous* endeavor.

Cf. Lonergan, *Shorter Papers*, p. 37.

as "neither a teaching nor a magisterium, but only [as] the felt *conviction* of a truth." For purposes of clarification or if you should want further discernment and clarification, you must move to some other kind of authority whose task is to discern, discriminate, define, promulgate, and enforce. Because believers can add or mix in things that do not belong to the stuff and the truth of their believed faith, they need "to be helped, directed, [and] judged" by some other kind of authority whose task it is to discern and to confirm "what is pre-felt, indicated, and anticipated by [that which exists as] the *sensus fidei*."<sup>169</sup>

At one level thus, in a preliminary way, we can admit or we should admit that we can know more in tacit *a priori* apprehensions of being than about that which is given to us later when we move into *a posteriori* apprehensions of being. *A posteriori* apprehensions of being, in their specificity and precisely in their specificity, tend to be somewhat restricted in their denotation and meaning or they are limited in a context of things which allows us to say that *a posteriori* apprehensions of being tend to lend themselves to judgments and affirmations which say that, by means of them, we understand and know more about something which, in fact, happens to be less and less. Hence, through a contrast which presents itself to us, with respect to all of our *a priori* apprehensions of being, an implicit indefinite understanding of many things covers a wide range of subjects as, at the same time, it grounds our inquiry and an explicit understanding of many things that, to some degree, we already understand and know (albeit, imperfectly),<sup>170</sup> where, allegedly here, no concept or word can entirely exhaust the meaning of

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<sup>169</sup>Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensus\\_fidelium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensus_fidelium) (accessed August 9, 2019), citing and adapting words and language that comes to us from the thought of Cardinal John Henry Newman and Cardinal Charles Journet.

<sup>170</sup>Please note the qualification and circumspection. Questions indicate that something is not being understood (otherwise, we would not be asking any questions about it). Questions, in a heuristic way, through their internal order and through an order which they would have with each other - they all serve to determine or they initially specify the being of an unknown, immaterial, formal object (the contours of a possible answer and solution that is understood) which, at the moment, would have to refer to something which has yet to be grasped and understood. However, prior to the determination of any of our questions, in the context of our current understanding of things and the degree of our self-awareness and our self-understanding, our implicit understanding of many things refers to the being of a known unknown that, in some way, allegedly exists prior to our asking of any questions that can take this known unknown in a way which turns both it and us toward an intelligibility or form that this known unknown has but which we have yet to identify and to discover.

To give an example here from the history of physics in science, if, allegedly, falling objects near the surface of the earth fall at a greater speed in direct relation to their size of weight (a greater weight implies more speed), at some point, in his observations, Galileo Galilei (d. 1642) was noticing that small and big hailstones were hitting the ground at roughly the same time. Instead of heavier hailstones falling before lighter hailstones to form graduated layers of heavier and lighter stones, both were all falling together. And so, in this context, Galileo was already sensing and knowing that weight was not ultimately determinative in terms of rates and speeds of fall for falling objects (near the surface of the earth). Something else exists and this now needs to be discovered, understood, and, in some way, known. Something

something that, in some way, we already understand and know and, at the same time too, no concept or word can exhaust the meaning of something that we have yet to come to understand and know when, successfully, in some way, we have moved from an *a priori* apprehension of meaning and being into an *a posteriori* apprehension of meaning and being.

In any given instance, the fullness of our understanding (apart from any kind of expression) always exists as a vaguer, larger, greater kind of thing; and if this larger meaning is to be approached in a way which pretends to be somewhat positive, helpful, or more adequate, at times, our words and concepts will exist or they will need to be used in ways which can convert and turn them into symbolic carriers of meaning that are multivalent in their power and significance. Connotations best lead to new denotations (of meaning) if more than one meaning can be communicated at the same time (or if it can be suggested that one meaning properly leads to a second meaning that now needs to be more fully known). Enhancements in meaning become necessary for the sake of our having or our effecting a greater degree of meaningfulness through enrichments or additions which can refer to the good of other possible deeds and actions that can be employed in ways which can play with outer objects in ways which turn these same objects into forms and shapes that then point us toward an array of new significances which would exist at a further remove from us (at another level or possibly at a higher level). If some symbols point us toward things that, later, we can possibly sense or imagine, others exist as carriers of meaning even if or as they point us toward things that we can never sense or imagine within the kind of life that we now know and live without our current parameters of space and time.

For an example and a sense of what could be meant here, we can recall a story which comes to us from the famous English stage actor, Sir Alec Guinness (d. 2000), which he recounts in his autobiography, *Blessings in Disguise*. In this work, Guinness recalls an older, famous, English, American-born stage actor, named Ernest Milton (d. 1974), and how Milton had served as a kind of spiritual or religious mentor to Guinness when, for instance, on a given day at a nearby Catholic church, Milton took Guinness to the celebration of a Catholic Mass and where there, for apparently the first time, he introduced Guinness to the meaning of the enacted liturgical action. As Guinness later recalled the event years later, during the celebration of the Mass: “seriously, beautifully, tactfully and with great simplicity,”<sup>171</sup> Milton described and conveyed a sense of the drama of the Catholic liturgy in a way which could reveal its inner workings and the tension which accompanies this species of enacted drama and so, from this

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else, something other, needs to be identified. Galileo's implicit understanding of things accordingly encompassed two distinct variables: a knowledge that weight is not to be regarded as a crucial, explanatory factor; and, reflexively, a knowledge which knows that some other external variable exists as an appropriate, explanatory variable which we should be able to determine if we engage in a form of inquiry that can determine measurements where, here, other new forms of measurement need to be determined and, in some way, implemented if we are to find the missing variable that we are looking for and which, at the moment, is none too obvious.

<sup>171</sup>Sir Alec Guinness, *Blessings in Disguise* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 179.

or by this, invoking and pointing to the wonder and the being of an order of unseen realities which transcend our current world of things and the limited kind of contingent existence which belongs to us within our current world of space and time (as we exist and live as human beings). The higher or the greater the dramatic tension within the liturgy, the higher or the greater the being of a world that is being revealed to us (perhaps, now, for the first time). In the re-enactment or in the perpetuation of the Mass as an historical event, something which is everlasting and eternal in its significance is brought into our ordinary world of things in a way which takes these things and then, through a kind of play and work with them, through actions and words, these words and actions are converted and then brought into a higher order of eternal things in a manner which points to a kind of change which is being communicated to us in a way which points to the realizability of our redemption and the value of a kind of change that can begin to exist in us if we should ourselves participate in the drama and the play which belongs to the celebration of the Catholic Mass. If, in the Mass, a rite of sacrifice is enacted, in our participation or through our participation in it, some kind of sacrifice is being called and drawn from ourselves if, truly, we are to function as worthy participants (as concelebrants of a kind) in the liturgical action which belongs to the ministrations of a celebrating priest.

These things all being said, the kind of causative, formative power which belongs to our *a priori* apprehensions of being when they are combined or when they are brought into the kind of transcendence which belongs to how our *a priori* apprehensions of being can exist within the order of a received religious tradition (the greater power or the greater meaning which would exist with respect to transcendent *a priori* apprehensions of being) – the combination of all these apprehensions accordingly points to the value and also to the necessity of our engaging in a new line of inquiry which can begin to attend, in some way, to how, in a new way, we can conceive and speak about how we can move from a new order of effects, relative to a new order of causes. The transcendence which exists in our experience points to a greater transcendence which would exist as the likely, probable cause (the likely, probable source).

In some way, in a way that we have yet to understand and grasp, transcendent realities exist from without and the potency of our causality (whether of our being or our knowing) points to how they act upon us from without as external agent objects or, more patently or more accurately, as external agent subjects. In some way, they perform. They act and do in a way which goes beyond themselves towards goals or objects that are other than themselves and so, in some way, we sense or we feel this impact or influence or we notice and we advert to it in ways which would seem, at times, to escape the scope of our expectations and our sense of autonomy and self-control.<sup>172</sup> We are moved through the givens which belong to our various

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<sup>172</sup>Please note that we deal with a controversial, difficult subject. Persons who have no religious faith of any kind (who have no belief in a power greater than themselves) can find belief or, spontaneously, they can begin to have and to voice belief in God when in the midst of extreme life threatening dangers. Hence, from this, we can derive the saying which avers that “there no atheists exist in foxholes.” However, it is also true to say that, at times of great danger and crisis, persons who have religious belief and faith can lose their faith and belief.

acts of human sensing; we are moved through the givens which belong to our different acts of human consciousness and the kind of cognition which exists within the life of our consciousness; and we are moved through the kind of cognition which belongs to the degree of our self-consciousness and knowledge. These external causes, variables, or actors (call them what you may) – in some way, they touch us or they influence us in ways that escape the type of comprehension and understanding that, ideally, we would always like to have as cognitive, affective subjects and which is most operative for us if we should attend to the kind of cognition which belongs to us in our *a posteriori* apprehensions of being (even if we should admit and even as we must admit to ourselves and to others that, in fact, varying degrees of self-control properly belong to us in terms of how, as causes, in our cognitive and moral causality, we respond to our world in ways which acknowledge that a search for understanding does, in fact, typically exist within us and that, within this search for understanding and from this search for understanding, we can ask questions in order to think and speak about a causality of transcendent things that are known but which are not comprehended and understood in a way which can think of them as known knowns or as understood knows). In general, to move from any kind of known unknown toward a known known supposes an order of cognition which is able to receive all the acts of understanding which are required to effect this kind of transition. But, on the other hand, to understand anything which exists as the cause of all of our subsequent acts of understanding or which exists as the cause of every other kind of understanding which exists both within ourselves and within our world supposes an order of understanding or acts of understanding which are to be equated or, in some way, correlated with this principal source of understanding *in toto* and this is something that can never belong to us or to anything which exists as an effected or as a caused act of understanding. Between a cause and a caused, a real difference always exists despite a closeness of relation and a kind of intimacy which always, in some way, exists between a cause and an effect.

#### Revelation: its Probability or its Possibility

As an initial point of departure, from a species of juxtaposition or a tension which exists between the quality or the perfection of our understanding and, at the same time, the fragility or the contingency of our understanding (its proneness to error), two conceptions have arisen or two lines of analysis have emerged about how it can be said that, in some way, through a form of presentation and communication which exists as some form of divine revelation (it comes to us from above, it comes from transcendent sources in an *a priori* kind of way), transcendent realities exist with respect to ourselves in conjunction with how we live as human beings

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Within the psychological or the moral order of things, we can respond to the trials of life in two fundamentally different ways. We can become more loving and caring or we can move in an entirely opposite direction. We can become callous and we can cease to care about the welfare of other human beings. An externally existing painful set of conditions can be responded to in ways which can either add to the goodness of being which can belong to a given human being or in ways that can take from the goodness of being which can belong to a given human being. In this context, for purposes of further reflection, see Viktor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, for documentation with respect to the likelihood of these two possible outcomes in a context which refers to the time of the Second World War and the imprisonment of many persons who had been placed in German concentration camps. How a given person responds to the trials of life is something that none of us can control or program.

within a contingently existing, incarnate world. These higher realities relate to us within our world in a way which points to how, in a way, they are somehow present or they somehow exist within our world through a kind of presence or an indwelling which originates or which, in some way, comes from them as originating sources through a kind of participation which is given to us in a way which is constitutive of our world and with how we exist as human beings within this same world.

#### Necessity and Perfection, the basis of a first argument

In terms of one line of analysis, from a context of thought which points to origins that derive from the rationality and the reflections of Greek philosophy, if we should adapt arguments which have come down to us from Plotinus (d. 270) and a metaphysical philosophy that he has put into words and concepts, we can articulate the following argument. If, as a metaphysical or as a transcendental principle, our human knowing exists as a *function* or a *derivative* of our human being (the kind of being which we happen to have as human beings), then the security, the reliability, the indefectibility, or the perfection of our human knowing can be explained or it can be traced and grounded in a rational way if we should argue that, as human beings, we exist as fragments of an uncreated transcendent supreme principle which can be identified through words and phrases which can then point us toward a species of unrestricted, ultimate, supreme One (a One or a Oneness which, for want of a better term in our choice of language, transcends all categories, or a One or a Oneness which does not belong to any known class or category). In its own way, it does not exist as a species. The kind of perfection which accordingly exists in us and which is communicated through the manner of our human knowing points to how our souls exist in an uncreated fashion (in some way, they are emanated or they proceed in terms which allow us to speak about how, metaphorically and cognitively, light comes from light or how, metaphysically, being comes from being) because, in their being, our souls belong to a greater, larger thing which exists as an uncreated, eternal kind of thing or source and so, as we move from the primacy of this source into the order and the context of our individual human being and knowing (as this being and knowing enters into the quality and the reality of our individual lives), we are saved (we are enlightened or we are brought into a higher form of life and being) as soon as we simply realize who and what we are as human beings. Our metaphysical knowledge (through our self-knowledge) is essentially salvific in its actuation, import, and effect or, in other words, if we should have self-knowledge (albeit, a legitimate, true kind of self-knowledge), we will have revelation (an experience of knowing that we would want to conceptualize in terms which speak about an experience of knowing with an impact which is so great that we are tempted to speak about a showing or a revelation that points to the otherworldliness of a supremely effective divine source and a form of intervention which transcends the kind of cognitive experiences which we have had and which we have known in our individual pasts).

For corroboration here, reflect back and think about the earlier cognitive experiences of the Greek philosopher, Parmenides (d. c. 450 BC),<sup>173</sup> and his experience of a form of self-knowledge which are so great and profound that, in

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<sup>173</sup>William A. Stewart, *Introduction to Philosophy or Lonergan for Beginners*, unpublished text (Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1981), p. 132; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parmenides> (accessed August 10, 2019).

the poetic and in the religious form of conceptualization that he uses to express his insights and understanding (prior to the emergence of a technical form of expression), he is somehow drawn or he is forced to speak about a mystical kind of journey that he has undertaken and about how, in this journey, through encounters and teaching and words that come from a mysterious, unnamed goddess, he learns from her about the reality of a philosophic, cognitive, metaphysical principle which, as given, grounds and governs the rationality of our human thinking and understanding and so, in the same way or by extension, an order of things which, in its intelligibility and rationality, is constitutive of the world of our experience. The order exists within the concretely existing world which surrounds us. Simply put: from what is or from being, you cannot get non-being; you cannot get becoming or a transition which moves from being to non-being; and, from what is not or from non-being, you cannot get being. No transition exists from one to the other since being and non-being totally exclude each other in a manner which is not devoid of consequences in terms of conclusions which can be drawn. Hence, if “what changes, is not,” and if “what is, is beyond [the past, present, and future of] time,” then, if “there is nothing beyond time, [then] nothing exists.”<sup>174</sup> Becoming or change exists as only an illusion or as a mirage despite what we appear to be sensing or experiencing through our different acts of human sensing. Our understanding, in fact, tells us one thing and our acts of sensing, another; and if we are to move from how things seem to be to the truth and the being of different things, we must be guided by the thinking and the cogitation of our minds and the rules or the laws of our thinking and understanding if we are to avoid contradictions which erringly would have us say that A is not A; or that, in some way, what exists exists together or in union with what does not exist. Hence, on the basis of this seminal insight about the nature of intelligibility, we can know that, if something is, it cannot be something else (according to the principle of identity); and that either something is or something exists or it does not exist; it does not be (according to the principle of the excluded middle). According to the principle of contradiction which protects us from falling into any contradictions that would act to thwart our possible understanding and knowledge of different things, A cannot be not-A in the same way and at the same time. Something cannot be and not be at the same time, in the same way. Absence of understanding, absence of intelligibility, always points to absence of being or, appositely, to a condition of nothingness, or the referent of a paradoxical, oxymoronic expression which would refer to the alleged being of nothingness (something that we do not comprehend or understand and so cannot rationally affirm; something which in fact transcends our comprehension and understanding; and so something which would exist as a mysterious, hidden, indefinable, transcendent whole or One who, from our perspective, can be designated in terms of *ayin* or “nothing”).<sup>175</sup>

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174Kolakowski, *Religion*, p. 121, citing Parmenides and Heraclitus.

175Rabbi Abba, *Book of Zohar*, tr. Gershom Sholem, as quoted by Kolakowski, *Religion*, p. 121.

Our human knowing in its subjectivity, as it is grounded in our being, exists through how it participates and shares in the objective kind of knowing and being which belongs to a single, higher, supreme, transcendent source of knowing and being which, in its transcendence, would have exist in a way which is without any limits in terms of the reality of its being and knowledge.<sup>176</sup> Because we exist as parts or as fragments of something that is not lacking in any kind of perfection or quality, the kind of perfection which properly belongs to the One cannot differ from the kind of perfection which properly belongs to us as human beings although always, admittedly, we exist in our way as human beings (we are not the One, we are not the supreme principle) since we cannot speak about the One or that which exists as the supreme principle in the same way as we would want to speak about ourselves and about how, currently, we exist within material conditions which refer to the being and the life of our bodies.

As a consequence thus of this type of analysis: on the one hand, through our self-knowledge or to the degree of our self-knowledge, a transcendent quality or a transcendent kind of being is found to exist within us already and this quality does not come from ourselves (through our own actions and achievements). Yet, at the same time too, a limited kind of self-transcendence can be said to exist within us since, in our actions or performatively as human knowers, we do not always achieve the kind of knowing and realization which we desire and which could possibly exist for us if, to some extent, we can come to know ourselves and to grasp who and what we are as human beings. The difference in achievement between aspiration and realization points to a dissonance or to a lack of correspondence, and so to the possible being of a real distinction which would seem to exist between us in terms of how we exist as human beings and how the supreme One or the supreme principle exists if we were to try to refer to the manner and the condition of its being (how it can be said to exist apart from the being of all material and temporal conditions) if, with Plotinus, we would like to argue that, as the source of being or as the cause of being, the One transcends being and any kind of becoming which could be possibly associated with being with respect to all the causes that can be said to exist within the orders of being and becoming. It, the One, is truly other than being or becoming. It is the condition of being and the condition of all categories of being, if the One transcends every kind of attribute which would want to speak about the being and the condition of existence as an attribute or predicate that, allegedly, applies (in various ways) to anything which would seem to exist within our world (whether we would want to speak about ourselves or about anything that is other which would seem to exist also within our world).

On the one hand thus, in a manner which seeks to work with the possible truth of the kind of understanding which exists within the lines of Plotinus's teaching, we can argue, as a presupposition that we can validly make, that the good which exists within an effect must exist most abundantly and most radically within the being of its responsible cause. Hence, the good or the quality of being which exists within ourselves as human beings must exist most abundantly and most radically in the One or that which which is simply greater than ourselves and the being of every other kind of thing. The One is other than ourselves even if, in our own way, as we have been noting, we participate or belong to the One who is other than ourselves or, in some other kind of way, we participate in the One who is other than ourselves. Hence, on the one hand, nothing that we can know about ourselves in our own being can be directly applied to that which exists as the One although, on the other hand, as we have been noticing

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<sup>176</sup>Ormerod, *Faith and Reason*, p. 13.

within ourselves with respect to the manner of our cognitive performance, rationally or intelligently, we cannot talk about the One apart from implying or assuming predicates which would have us suppose or speak about the being or the existence of the One as much as we would like to speak about the One in a way which transcends the kind of being that we can know about ourselves if we should speak about the kind or the quality of being which allegedly belongs to us as human beings.

All in all thus, if we should try to work with the kind of understanding that we find in Plotinus in a way that looks for coherence and which can avoid the annoyance and the incursion of any kind of contradiction, we can try to argue that, despite a possible sharing which would seem to exist in terms of a common nature and intelligibility (the possible having of a common nature), at another level or for other reasons, the personality of the One differs from the personality that we each have as human beings. A real distinction exists in terms of persons *although not in terms of nature* if, on the basis of a religious analogy, as we attend to an understanding and teaching that we have about the meaning and being of the Christian Trinity, no distinction in nature is to be admitted if we should compare God the Father with God the Son and these with God the Holy Spirit although, on the other hand, each enjoys a personality or a personhood which is unique to each (unique in terms of the being of a real distinction). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each differ from each other in terms which would have to refer to the relevance and the reasonableness of a real distinction if a different kind of relation exists between Father and Son than the relation which exists say, between Father and Holy Spirit. If, on the one hand, we can argue that a common band of being and understanding joins the One with us as human beings (if, indeed, as we have noted, we exist as emanations from a higher, common, transcendent source), on the other hand however, to the One and to its activity, a unique personality is to be ascribed. Its acts of understanding are perfectly joined to its acts of willing and no other being exists as the source of all the other things which exist within our world. No other thing has no need to grow in its understanding of things and no other being has no need to grow in its willing and doing of different things. Persons differ from each other if each performs a different role or if each engages in a different kind of task in a relation of persons that has not to speak about the necessity of a difference in nature.

To speak thus about revelation and any revelations of divine being in conjunction with that which is perfect or without flaw in the manner of our human being and knowing is to have or to move toward a knowledge of God that is predicted on the availability and ease of our being able to move into philosophic apprehensions of being through our questioning, thinking, and understanding. If we ask certain questions and if we engage in a certain type of analysis that can go from A to B, then, in the end, we should be able to come to a notion of God that we can then possibly situate within a context which could allegedly suppose that we are moving from an un-thematized *a priori* knowledge of divine things that somehow exists implicitly within us (within our consciousness) toward a new condition of knowledge which exists as an *a posteriori* apprehension of being. The good which exists within us or the competence which belongs to us explains why we can have a proportionate type of knowledge and so a proportionate type of relation can be said to exist between ourselves and that which exists as the unrestricted, supreme cause of everything which exists (everything which, to some degree, in its being, is entirely reasonable and intelligible). Our competence and our performance, as it stands or as it exists by itself, suggests or it points to our possible autonomy as cognitive, moral agents and, to the degree that we are attached to this way of thinking and how it exists as a

predisposition, it can preclude or it will forestall the good, the need, and even the necessity of our expecting, hoping, or receiving any other kind of help that could be given to us (apart from the kind of agency which exists within ourselves as human subjects). We can believe in the sufficiency of our understanding and judgment and so, to the degree that we believe in the soundness and in the aptness of our abilities and activities as human subjects, we are not open to another line of thinking that can ponder and possibly move toward a judgment which can allegedly know about the soundness of another kind of argument and approach which points to a different kind of revelation and how a different kind of revelation can exist for us if the manner of its reception is known and seen to exist for us as something which, in its own way, is proper to us as human beings. Its uniqueness does not tell against our humanity. It does not take from us the quality of our humanity and, in its own way, through its being, it adds to our humanity to the degree that, by our acceptance and our enjoyment of it, we move from our humanity as union of form and a potency to a humanity which has moved beyond itself into a greater condition of act.

#### Contingency and Imperfection, the basis of a second argument

Turning then now to our second point of departure and a second line of argument that can be made: if we advert to the contingency, the frailty, and the consequent lack of perfection which exists for us with respect to the manner of our human existence (because, for instance, we do not bring ourselves into our own existence and because, so far, we cannot prevent our own death and our eventual decline and demise); because this ontological imperfection points to a lack of perfection which, consequently, would have to exist with respect to the manner and the apprehensions of our human knowing and cognition (for instance, we do not move into our experiences of understanding by simply willing these experiences or by simply wanting these experiences), the receptivity of our understanding, in its contingency, in its own way, accordingly points to the receptivity of our being in the manner of its contingency (as the receptivity of our being in its contingency also points, in its own way, to the receptivity of our understanding in the manner of its contingent life). The receptivity of both, in terms of their contingency and so the place and the play of interferences that can come from chance variations of one kind or another, accordingly points to a different kind of relation that would have to exist between ourselves and whatever would exist for us as a supremely transcendent, effective, active cause or, conversely, a different kind of role or task that would have to belong to how we should speak about the agency, the activity, or the workings of an effective, transcendent cause that, as the ground, the source, or as the cause of our being and understanding, cannot be lacking in both the fullness of being which is proper to it and the fullness of understanding which would uniquely belong to it (if, for instance, the receptivity and the emergence of all acts of understanding which exist in our world is to be grasped and understood in a way which knows that acts differ from potencies and that no realization can ever occur apart from some kind of act that would always differ from the incompleteness of a given potency: an act which, as a mover or as a cause, we can never confuse with the quality or the status of any ascribed potency).

The contingency of both our being and our knowing accordingly points to questions which would have to ask about the intelligibility or the rationality of our emerging, emergent, contingent being and the intelligibility or the rationality of our emerging, emergent understanding and the conditions of emergence for both how and why, for instance, in our

understanding, we can move or, more accurately, we can be moved from a condition of non-being or a condition of potency toward a condition of being or a condition of act. In some way, if, undoubtedly, our understanding exists as a contingently existing thing and if our understanding exists as not essentially a product nor as an activity (as something that we would do or make on our own) but, instead, if it always exists as a reception of some kind (as a species of passive act), then it exists as an emergent, created, contingent kind of thing and so, from this contingency (from a contingency which would have to point to its fragility and hence to degrees of frequency, rarity, and partiality), we can then move toward a different kind of notion and a different kind of conception about how a supremely active, intelligible, intelligent act exists and functions for us as an unrestricted, transcendent, first cause. In its own way or according to its own lights, it exists and works within a multitude of contingent conditions as an effective, active, creative principle.

In this context thus, in referring to the being of contingent conditions (we have them; they belong to us) – their being, as effects which, if given, encourage or which can lead us to the possible discovery of new causes – their being compels us to think about them as stages or as points of transition: as means or as instruments that can be understood and known more fully if our point of departure can be turned toward thinking about the reality of a larger context of meaning and being. Among secondary causes, a combination or an ordering exists among them in a way which points to two realizations: to an understanding, firstly, which knows why these causes cannot be closed to varying degrees of relativity if, relative to any given secondary cause, another secondary cause can exist as a first or prior cause; and, secondly, to an understanding or a conception of primary causality which moves from simple determinations of it towards determinations of meaning which have moved into degrees of increasing complexity as an order of secondary causes becomes more fully understood in the manifold of its variety and function. The fuller an understanding of secondary causes, the fuller should be our understanding of primary causality; and conversely, the fuller an understanding of primary causality, the fuller should be our understanding of secondary causes and the kind of order which exists among them.

For a deeper understanding of this question, please attend to two variables: one, cognitional; the other, metaphysical. On the basis of our experience of self, we realize and know that apt images function as effective material causes. We experience how, from without, apt images or phantasms can trigger our interior acts of understanding. They elicit our acts of understanding. As we have been noting, a tight fit or a one to one correspondence exists between a pregnant, apt image and the experience of an act of understanding which properly comes with it, following and accompanying it.<sup>177</sup>

However, as a metaphysical principle or on the basis of a metaphysical principle, we also realize and know that, while material causes exist for us as

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<sup>177</sup>See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 7: “anyone may discover in his own experience [*experiri potest*] that when he is trying to understand something, he forms images for himself by way of examples, and in these images he, as it were, sees [*inspiciat*] the solution of his problem [*quod intelligere studet*],” as cited by Frederick E. Crowe, *Lonergan and the Level of Our Time*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), p. 19.

necessary causes, they lack sufficiency or adequacy if acts of understanding always transcend the being of a material cause (cognitionally: an act of understanding and the experience of an intelligibility is not to be equated with an act of sensing and the experience of a sensed datum; nor with an act of imagination and the experience of an imagined image). As we have been noting (as a species of general principle), nothing which exists in a state of potency is able to transcend its own potency through itself (allegedly, through the instrumentality of its potency). Potencies differ from acts where that which is less in being or reality cannot explain that which possesses a greater degree of being or a greater degree of reality. From any given potency, we cannot derive something which exists in a condition of act.

To belabor and reiterate our point a bit in order to clear up any ambiguities: if, in a potency, we have an absence of being or an absence of act, then from that which lacks being or act, we cannot get any kind of being or act. From non-being you cannot get being. Hence, with respect to the nature of our cognition: from a potency which exists with respect to the possibility of our understanding, we cannot get an act of understanding which changes or which moves a potency from how it exists as a potency to how it would exist as an act (within a condition of act). As Aquinas had explained things by referring to the difference between potency and act: “a potency is actualized by something that is already in a condition of act.”<sup>178</sup> No other option is possible. A potency is actualized by something that is not in a condition of potency, relative to the being of the potency in question. A real distinction exists between that which exists in a condition of potency and that which exists in a condition of act.

Hence, if we attend to the potency of our human cognition and also to the fact that the realization of our cognition is not entirely due to our own efforts in any actions that we would be undertaking (our understanding is not caused by our questioning and thinking nor by anything that we can make or do), for these two reasons, an adequate understanding of our cognition requires an insight which knows that, as a primary first cause, an act of understanding is needed which is somehow greater than ourselves, an act which exists beyond ourselves with respect to us and the being of our individual acts of understanding; an act of understanding which does not come from ourselves but which acts upon us, inwardly, from without, in a way which effects and which causes our individual acts of understanding (assisting our acts of understanding, facilitating our acts of understanding, enabling our acts of understanding). Its being (apart from ourselves and the being of other things) and its action (upon ourselves and the being of other things) points to its transcendence (to its transcendent nature and also to a form of transcendent action which belongs to it, even if this form is not directly grasped or understood by us in our individual acts of understanding) and why also, perennially, because of its transcendence and the kind of separation or otherness which exists in this transcendence (in its transcendence, nothing other can act upon it), it must always exist thus within an unlimited or

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<sup>178</sup>Aquinas, *Sententia Libri De anima*, 2, 11, 372.

unrestricted condition of act if, elsewhere or anywhere, acts of understanding are to emerge in anything which could be initially lacking in understanding in ways that can only point to the capability or the potency of our understanding and thus to the possibility of a change that can occur for us through the acquisition and the attainment of new acts of understanding that, in some way, are given to us or which can be given to us from sources and points of origin that are quite other than ourselves.<sup>179</sup> Acts of understanding which exist outside of ourselves escape the possibility of our conscious control through nothing prevents us from possibly participating in acts of understanding which are greater than ourselves.

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<sup>179</sup>See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 109, a. 1. According to Aquinas, in order to speak about the receptivity or the giftedness of our human understanding, we should speak about how, within the created, contingent order of things, we are receiving a species of divine help (cited as a *divinum auxilium*) which works inwardly from within ourselves as human subjects. Our potency to understand exists as one of the higher potencies which properly belongs to us as human beings (in referring to the potency of our souls, we are also referring to the potency of our consciousness in a way which points to the subjectivity or the life of our souls) and, in receiving any kind of divine help with respect to having individual acts of understanding that are given to us from within, we are always referring to internal movements or internal shifts which, as immaterial receptions, “are governed immediately by God,” God who exists in an immaterial way. Cf. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *De ente supernaturali: Supplementum schematicum*, p. 157, as quoted by Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 129. This kind of divine help that comes to us from God differs from the kind of divine help which is to be identified with God's grace (God's saving grace) since, if more radical changes are needed in the context of our human lives, if radical changes are to occur in how we are to live, question, and think as human beings, we need a salvific or a redemptive type of help which refers to another order of being or another order of causes or another order of causality as, now, we attend to a form of causality which relies on a different set of secondary causes, or which can rely on a fewer number of intermediaries, or which can sometimes dispense from the use of any kind of secondary cause that we could be aware of if we attend to a form of transcendence that, in its intelligibility and rationality, is entirely lacking in any restrictions. Within the depth's of our souls, within our minds and hearts, within our consciousness of self, as we have been noting in other contexts, as a effective, transcendent cause, God can directly and unexpectedly act in a way which, as transcendental, is necessarily incomprehensible and mysterious for us although, for us, it is most effective, helpful, transformative, and salutary. Certain changes can now occur that, otherwise, cannot possibly happen or occur. We distinguish here between God as our Creator and Sustainer and God as our Savior and Redeemer where the order of redemption, in its being, supposes the order of creation (or the order of created, contingent things) in a way which is geared toward effecting a kind of perfection which can exist within the order of creation but in a way that the order of creation is not able to bring about on the basis of the principles which belong to it.

As Bernard Lonergan argues in his *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, eds. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 619, Aquinas argues with respect to God as Creator and God as Savior that, on the one hand, in our living, “it belongs to [God as] the creator of the will [to sustain its being] to

On the basis then of a manner of procedure which prefers to work with notions of creation rather than with notions of emanation which deemphasize the relevance of real distinctions and the play of any differences, separations, or gaps that would be revealed and which belong to the play and the existence of real differences, we can accordingly begin to think about a transcendent cause in terms which indicate how it functions or operates in another kind of way: in a more sophisticated or in a more complicated, complex, and sometimes convoluted kind of way. It chooses to create contingent conditions and causes which are other than itself and that have a form of causality which uniquely belongs to them, and it chooses to work with these same conditions and causes in a way which points to an instrumental and so to a coordinated type of action or activity, the difference in manner accordingly pointing to a different notion, or to a different status, or to a different nature, or to a different kind of being that would have to belong to the reality of this greatest, highest, most transcendent type of cause. In other words, we would be referring to an agency, a subjectivity, or a personhood which exists or which

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impress forms upon the will, to infuse virtues in it, to change its disposition, and to bring about an exercise of its act.” The impression of forms upon the human will refers to the reception of understanding which comes to exist within us whenever, as human beings, we experience acts of understanding (our understanding always existing as a species of reception or gift whether or not it is acquired or infused). However, on the other hand, additionally, the infusion of virtues refers to another species of gift that is also given to us by God. In language which comes to us originally from St. Augustine, changes of disposition within the inner experience of the life of our acts of human willing refer to the stirrings and the work of a initiating form of operative grace and so to the beginnings of conversion as this can occur within the depths of our conscious lives as human beings. In the actuation of any acts of human willing which would move us from a condition of potency to a condition of act, human beings always will ends or goals that are already given to them from within the order of creation because, ultimately, these ends have been created by God for us to will (given the kind of nature that we have been given as human beings; who and what we are as human beings where to change or to alter our nature is to change the manner of our being in a way which takes us or which separates us from both the intelligibility and the possibility of our humanity). Hence: whenever, within our created order of things, any object is sensed or known by us as an object which should now be desired and attained by us through our acts of human willing, it immediately functions as a species of final cause. It elicits one or more actions from us in our lives as created, contingent human subjects and agents and according to a manner which seeks to join us, as human beings, to that which exists for us as a known object that, more fully and completely, we can intend and desire as we move from the kind of intending which exists within our cognition into the kind of intending which exists within our subsequent acts of willing and doing. However, if we are to act in a way which is truly habitual; if, more regularly or more constantly, we are to move from what is lacking in being toward what is not lacking in being; if, more swiftly and more fully, we are to exist as sources of goodness in the kind of causality which belongs to us with respect to our acts of loving and willing, then the better or the fit means is the greater or the more radical kind of help which belongs to an order of redemption and salvation and the ways and means that would belong to this higher order of existing things. The hope or the desired object is a form of help that, in some way, is sure; it can never be obstructed, lessened, or taken from us through the intervention of a variable which can somehow act upon it to change it or to lessen it in some way.

becomes more fully known if we ascribe and think about a causality which uniquely belongs to God where God exists as more of a creator (as a free, rational creator) than as an impersonal, mechanistic type of emanating cause or as a mechanistic type of emanating first principle where, in this context of thought and analysis, necessarily and eternally, God is always producing the world of existing things by continually transforming and changing himself into whatever emerges as an inevitable result.<sup>180</sup> Emanation, apart from any notion of choice which can be said to exist in God, accordingly points to a following, or to a proceeding, or to a form of emergence which automatically always follows or which automatically always comes from something else which is somehow prior, given the nature of what this prior thing is. Simply put: if A, then B. A is such that, necessarily, B must follow. No choice exists. No freedom; no options. Deviations are not to be alluded to since, within this context, their absence is to be admitted. Between God as an emanator and whatever is emanated, in the absence of an order of secondary causes that would be other than God, no real difference is to be alluded to in a way which points to a pantheistic point of view or which suggests that a pantheistic sense of reality is to be regarded as a potentially valid inference.<sup>181</sup>

But, if God is primarily a creator of existing things, if God brings a contingent, created, changing order of things into a condition of existence through some kind of effective understanding:<sup>182</sup> through a greater depth of understanding than what would be needed if creation were to refer to some kind of prolongation, elongation, or emanation (as light shines from a burning flame and as heat is radiated by a burning flame), then the depth, the ingenuity, and the infinity of God's intelligence and understanding points to a form of causality and action which would have to differ from any kind or form of compulsion which we commonly associate with necessity and the workings of necessity (when an external force or pressure of

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180Avicenna, *Metaphysics of the Book of Healing*, as cited by Massimo Campanini, *An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*, trans. Caroline Higgitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 85; Stanley Jaki, "The Physics of Impetus and the Impetus of the Koran," *The Absolute beneath the Relative, and Other Essays* (Landam, MD: University Press of America, 1988), pp. 146-147, as cited by James Schall, *On Islam A Chronological Record, 2002-2018* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018), p. 74. Allegedly, an Islamist understanding of creation in terms of emanation can be found to originate and so come to us from the thought of Avicenna (d. 1037) in the context of his reflections when, in the context of his day and time, he tried to cope with the inner tensions and difficulties which ensued if the religious teaching of the Koran is to be regarded with a critical eye and if, in addition, it is to be positively related to the teaching of Greek philosophy with respect to the insights of eminent Greek philosophers who were posing questions about the nature of the human mind and the kind of world which exists about us. Cf. Schall, *On Islam*, pp. 222-223.

181Jaki, as cited by Schall, *On Islam*, p. 74.

182See Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning*, pp. 118-119, citing both Aquinas and Lonergan in *Grace and Freedom*, which points to a real distinction which exists between God's creating and that which exists in terms of change. Change exists within our world because of creation which is not itself a change but which, instead, as a divine, transcendent thing or act is the basis or the ground of change. It is the explanation for why change exists since God has created a world where change becomes possible in a manner which is proper to the kind of being or the kind of incomplete being which alone belongs to change and the nature of change and the kind of transition which exists with respect to every kind and type of change.

some kind is somehow being applied from without in order to make certain things happen, allegedly, possibly from within). Necessity points to lack of self-control and lack of self-direction that would exist in terms of the possibility of choice:<sup>183</sup> to a kind of suppression of subjectivity as this would refer to any kind of action that could come from within, from the agent causality of a living existing thing.

However, from an alternative, second point of view, on a different basis, if the compulsion in question exists in a purely internal way as a species or instance of subjective act; if it exists as the fruit or as the act of acts of understanding and knowledge; if, by analogy to our human experience of understanding, we should notice how our understanding exists within ourselves in a way which points to a kind of manifestation or a kind of revelation which ensues in the wake of our acts of understanding and knowledge, then, between the kind of rational compulsion that, to some degree, we experience within ourselves as a source of freedom and the inner, constitutive freedom that properly belongs to God through his being and existence as an unrestricted act of understanding and willing, no significant difference is to be alluded to. Freedom, for us, exists in the wake of our understanding and freedom, for God, belongs or it is constitutive with God as understanding. The freedom that we enjoy (as we understand it), in its derivative expansiveness, points to the greater or to the absolute kind of freedom which alone belongs to God where, in God, a perfect unity exists between knowing and willing. The divine understanding and knowing exists also as God's divine willing and doing. If, perchance, we would want to speak about any restrictions, the unrestricted freedom and the goodness of God's divine willing is explained by the unrestrictedness of God's divine understanding (the depth and the infinity of this self-understanding which alone belongs to God and which alone exists as God). The rationality which exists as God explains the freedom which exists as God and why God's freedom can never exist if it were some kind of arbitrary, willful, capricious thing when functioning as the basis for the emergence and the being of all other things. From a context which refers to our experience of self, we know that mere willfulness in ourselves exists as an irrational datum (as something that is devoid of any reason and intelligibility that could possibly belong to it, existing in a way which instead points to why willfulness is to be associated with absence of freedom and not with any presence that it could possibly have).

God's free understanding and willing accordingly accounts for the kind of freedom which belongs to all created subjects of understanding and knowledge if always for instance, by means of understanding and the reflection which exists in acts of judgment, we enjoy and move into a kind of freedom which properly belongs to us as willing human subjects. The kind of understanding that we have, the kind of cognitive subjectivity that we have – these all point to the kind of freedom that we properly have through our willing of any choices that become known to us as options and possibilities that are first made known to us through an understanding of things which knows about reasons or about the being or the true truth of existing things. In us, our understanding and willing both exist as lesser things (as lesser determinations) and yet as realities which exist as participations in the transcendent actuality of divine understanding and willing if, prior to their emergence and their being in us, our acts of understanding and willing both exist essentially as potencies and if too, by our own acts, we cannot bring ourselves, in our understanding and willing, into a condition of existence. The necessity of participation on our part points to the fullness of understanding and willing which

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<sup>183</sup>Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, pp. 100-101.

alone belongs and exists as God and to how God, as the first cause of all things, is operative within our world in a way which points to a combination of immanent and transcendent operations; or, in other words and a bit more accurately, an immanent species of act in its action exists also as a transcendent species of act in its action if the effecting motion of a secondary cause is the same motion which is the effective motion which comes to us from God as transcendent cause.

Simply put: God, as a single, ultimate, transcendent type of cause (who is “subject neither to necessity nor contingency”),<sup>184</sup> works imminently as a transcendent type of creator, sustainer, and mover and so God exists as both a transcendent and an imminent creator, sustainer, and mover for the being of all other existing things. From within the being of existing things, for reasons that are best fully known only to God, as transcendent cause, God works with created, contingent things within an ordering of many things which, together, constitutes an ordering of secondary causes in a manner which points to the value and the good which belongs to a wide assortment of many different kinds of secondary cause, be they necessary or contingent (hence, the being of a larger and a greater world of existing things where, in various ways, all exist as causes of one kind or another). The greater power of God as this transcendent mover or as this transcendent creator is in fact more fully displayed or it is known to a fuller and a greater degree to the degree that, by its action or by its being, it works and coordinates both a larger or the largest number of possible causes (bringing a larger number or an indefinite number of many things into being in order to achieve a larger or an indefinite number of many different results and effects; accomplishing, say, through but only one act, a larger number of many, multiple goods) while, at the same time, also coordinating them in a way which points to a greater degree of understanding that would be needed than that which would be the case if fewer causes are used to effect any desired result. More causes, more motions; more movements, more results. Less is achieved in terms of results if, in the long run, fewer causes or fewer motions were to be effected in the movements which exist in terms of effects and results (if fewer are moved and placed within a condition of act). If, citing Aquinas,<sup>185</sup> the

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184Aquinas, as cited by Robert Joseph Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice: Domingo Báñez, Physical Premotion and the Controversy de Auxiliis Revisited* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 222. As we have been noting, God's freedom transcends predications as these would refer to actuations of necessity and contingency as these exist within both our physical and our human worlds. That which comes from within which differs from necessity differs from that which comes from without which exists as necessity. Contingently operative causes are as effective in accomplishing divine objectives as necessarily operative causes if, in point of fact, in the light of God's unrestricted understanding, neither species of cause can exist as a problem or as an impediment for God in his transcendence in whatever God does to effect and accomplish that which his understanding understands and knows and that which his will desires and wants.

185Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, 3, 4 (305-306); Aristotle, *Physics*, 3, 3, as cited by Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 219. As Matava, p. 219, avers: “the motion of the mover is the movement of the moved.” Whether we speak about motion or movement where one is an action and the other is a reception or a passion, both terms refer to identically the same act. The movement of a moved (as an effect and also as an active, effective cause or “caused causing”) is at the same time the motion of the initial mover which has been moving or causing the moved's movement and subsequent motion (which

motion of a mover (as its action) exists in the passion or in the movement of the things that are moved (motion, movement existing not within the effecting cause but within or in the effect that is caused, both with respect to its emergence and also with respect to its consequent action or, in other words, its effectiveness), the greater the multiplicity, the number, and the power of effects, the greater will be the unrestrictedness and so the greater will be the transcendence which would have to belong to that which exists as God: God as the perennially existing, originating first cause which effects the being of all things.<sup>186</sup> Infinity in one respect points to infinity in another respect: the infinity of causes and results, the infinity of an originating cause.

Parenthetically and a bit more concretely (for illustrative purposes): if, from an understanding of the limitations, the contingency, and the actuation of our human cognition, we move toward supposing and believing in an unrestricted, uncreated act of understanding that would exist for us as some kind of primary, active, cognitive cause, hence as an explanation (relative to our own acts of understanding which would exist as a species of effect), please also notice that a parallel type of analysis can be found if we should go back and retrieve an insight which has come down to us originally from the origins of monotheism in the Middle East, in an insight which seems to come to us from a man whose name has come down to us as Avram, Abram, or Abraham (fl. early 2nd millennium BC) who was regarded as the common patriarch or as the common forefather of three, derivative, distinct, monotheistic religions: we refer to the so-called Abrahamic religions as these exist with respect to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

According to the testimony that has come down to us from the Jewish priest, scholar, and historian, Flavius Josephus (37-c.100 AD) in his *Antiquities of the Jews* (1, 7, 1, 155-156), in Abraham's study and perusal of the outer physical

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exists as an action) although, admittedly, the movement, passion, and action of something which is being moved differs from the motion or the action of the initial, originating mover to the extent that what is being moved, as both an effect and a possible consequent cause of action, exists in a condition of dependence on that which exists as its mover. Cf. Matava, p. 220. A primary or first cause can exist, relatively, as another but prior secondary cause or again, relatively, as a cause which is absolutely primary. A secondary form of causation among moved or created causes differs from a primary form of causation which moves or which creates another as a secondary cause and effect. Throughout, as we proceed through an order or a chain of causes in causation, among many actions and receptions, it is possible to speak about the causality of one common motion and about an indeterminate number of many movements which exist as a multitude of receptions and which would exist also later, as an order of subsidiary actions, on the basis however of how, in fact, they have all initially existed as receptions before they have begun to exist as actions. Motions, actions, through their influence or impact, lead to movements which would then begin to exist as new motions and so as new actions.

<sup>186</sup>Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 253-254; p. 265, as cited by Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 217. See also Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 70, n. 23; p. 71; pp. 91-92, as cited also by Matava, p. 217.

universe, when Abraham noticed that the heavenly bodies were moving in patterns or in circuits that are subject to variability and so to degrees of irregularity, he concluded that the absence of perfection in their movements points to a lack of perfection in their being: how these bodies exist or how they can be said to exist or, in other words, to a contingency which exists with respect to both the manner of their movement and the consequent manner of their being. Hence, from a lack of sufficiency or perfection, or from the givenness of this kind of contingency which belongs to the life of heavenly bodies (contingency in movement pointing to contingency in being), we cannot look to these bodies in a way which would have us want to think that they would have to have a kind of transcendence that would be absolute, ultimate, or final. The things of nature do not exist as deities (as gods or goddesses). Instead, if we are to have a better understanding of things, we need to look further afield. We need to think about and then speak about an unrestricted causal principle of some kind that we do not directly sense or understand although its being can be inferred by us if we should try to look for an explanation that would be entirely adequate for us, an explanation that would be able to account for the contingency of all things as these things exist for us within the world of our ordinary experience (as this experience is given to us with respect to the being of these different things) and how, through the contingency of things, results are achieved. Good things happen.

Hence: the kind of religious belief which allegedly belonged to Abraham was not something that was entirely revealed to him (by God) if, with Josephus and others, we should try to argue and say that Abraham was working with his sensing, thinking, and understanding in a way which was able to move from effects to causes where, as a trace,<sup>187</sup> a given kind of effect points to something that is greater which would have to exist as its probable, likely cause.<sup>188</sup> The anticipation of our inquiry and the anticipation of our understanding points to the reality of this larger, greater cause if, by way of intelligibility and the sense or the experience of intelligibility, we come to know about the real existence of

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187See the teaching of Alcmaeon of Croton (c.480-440 BC) who is regarded as the first great doctor in Greek medicine and the author of a book on Natural Science where he dealt with questions that asked about the availability of certainty in knowledge, arguing that certainty best belongs to the gods and not to us. Hence:

Of things invisible, as of mortal things, only the gods have certain knowledge; but men can only follow the signs [the traces that are] given to them in the visible world [of things] and by interpreting them, feel their way towards the unseen.

Cf. Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, VIII, 83; Chester Starr, *The Awakening of the Greek Historical Spirit* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968), p. 113.

188Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, updated ed., trans. William Whiston, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), p. 38; Conversations with Samuel Pell, 11 February 2018; <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham> (accessed February 12, 2018).

things that cannot be known by us in any kind of direct way if we should entirely rely on the kind of given that belongs to us through our different acts of human sensing.

The *manner* of the kind of immanent presence that is being exercised by this transcendent cause or the *kind of immanent activity* which is being displayed within our world by this cause (if it is properly understood) accordingly points to the ascription of a greater value and a greater purpose that would have to belong to the use and the being of secondary causes (which exist in their own way as contingently operative causes) and it points also to how these causes exist with a greater degree of dignity and a greater degree of reality than, otherwise, they would have if we were to work with a notion of primary causality which only thinks in terms of haphazard, accidental, mechanical movements or a series of physical movements and processes that exist together in some kind of un-understood, haphazard way; if it is not able to think about the being and the reality of unseen, inner, intelligible, intellectual movements and about how, within secondary causes, intelligible, intellectual movements can exist in a way which points to an order of subordination and a species of cooperation that would then exist between (1) created beings that, to some extent, have an intellectual nature of their own and who are able to engage in intellectual operations that belong to them in terms of actions and receptions and (2) an uncreated being that, in an unlimited way, is not without an intellectual nature of its own and unlimited, intellectual operations that properly belong to it where no real distinction is to be ascribed to any difference that would exist between acts of understanding and knowing and acts of willing and doing.

The greater power of a transcendent primary cause is more fully revealed not only through (1) the multiplication and the coordination of many causes and effects but if it can also work with (2) causes that are endowed with degrees of freedom and choice and a variety of differing results that would result if choice exists in how a given thing or cause acts as a species of secondary cause; and (3) if it can also work with causes that would seem, at times, to be incomplete or defective in the manner of their operation through the manner of their actualization, application, and use. But, similarly or conversely, the greater power of secondary causes (their significance) is also revealed if they can be seen to meet a larger number of objectives and goals than those which are directly desired by them or which are intended by them through the means which exist through the operation of the causes in question. The goodness or the power of a secondary cause is best revealed if, in its own way, it can accomplish ends and objectives that had not been thought possible or conceivable. No essential tension would have to exist in any kind of necessary way between the power and the activity of a transcendent cause and the power and the dignity of anything which would exist as a secondary cause since secondary causes, if their agency is understood, are endowed with their own rational nature and with receptions and activities which, participatively, point to the greater being and the greater power of a transcendent primary cause; and, similarly also, the being of a transcendent primary cause, if to some extent it is understood - at the same time and in its own way - this same cause also points to an expressiveness and to a manner of functioning which is able to work with any kind and manner of secondary cause if, in their own way too, defective or incomplete causes exist in a way which points to a legitimate kind of potency which also properly belongs to them: to a potency which is also turned toward possibly achieving good ends and purposes. Each order reveals or each manifests the goodness and the power of the other in a context of understanding and through an interaction which

thinks in terms of an order of subordination and coordination instead of a context of understanding which would want to think about causes in terms of their concurrent simultaneity and a species of parallelism which is open to a notion of causality which thinks in terms of separations and oppositions and the kind of tension which exists if causes function in a way which is other or independent of each to the other.<sup>189</sup>

Bereft or apart from the being of secondary causes, it is not possible to speak about the being of a primary transcendent cause in its primacy since, in the absence of secondary causes, a transcendent principle would exist in a totally solitary way (in a self-enclosed kind of way) and so, it would exist in a way which would have to point to its impotence, to its uselessness, or to

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<sup>189</sup>Charles Morerod, *Ecumenism & Philosophy: Philosophical Questions for a Renewal of Dialogue* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Sapientia Press, 2006), p. 70; Feser, *Five Proofs*, pp. 234-235. For a deeper understanding about how we should think about the being of a primary transcendent cause and the being of subordinate, secondary causes and how we are to think about the manner of their possible relation, see, for instance, how Morerod speaks about a causality of subordination where secondary causes are entirely reliant on primary causes. They all depend on the kind of causality which ultimately belongs only to God as the primary cause of all things, although, at the same time too, each secondary cause produces its own effect. A given secondary cause has an effect which corresponds with it (in its operation) although, at the same time too, it is true to say that, in working with secondary causes, God, as the cause or the source of being, entirely achieves his own aims and objectives. Both causes are fully operative at exactly the same time although according to a difference in nature and order since the kind of nature which belongs to God as transcendent being and as the primary cause of all things or, alternatively, God as *ipsum esse subsistens* (or God as “the sheer act of to be itself”) - for these reasons, in his self-subsistence, God differs from the kind of subordinate nature which belongs to all secondary causes that he has called into being by giving to them the condition of their existence. Cf. Aquinas, as quoted by Robert Barron, “Governor Cuomo and God's Noncompetitive Transcendence,” <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/article/governor-cuomo-and-gods-noncompetitive-transcendence/27149/?fbclid=IwAR0n5OJCn1x300PqX-igXWZ0TK4yK6OgEKVz88qknIrQcuLlJqeCf3NoXbM> (accessed April 23, 2020). Within this context, we can understand the testimony that we have from Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, who says about our causality and God's causality: “O Lord, it is you who have accomplished all that we have done.” Cf. Isaiah 26:12, as cited by Barron.

A lack of understanding explains why we could be tempted to think that, if we speak about the kind of primacy which alone belongs to God, we would have to de-emphasize or to take away from the kind of competence or the kind of power which allegedly belongs to the efficacy of secondary causes (the consequent result, within the order of our philosophical thinking, would be a teaching about the *occasionalism* of secondary causes or, in other words, about their lack of causal efficacy). To secondary causes belongs an ephemeral reality or, in other words, an absence of reality. However, conversely, if we should speak about the kind of power and the kind of authority which alone belongs to secondary causes, a similar lack of understanding would explain why we would be tempted to take away or to put to the side the kind of power and the kind of authority which alone allegedly belongs to God as the supreme, transcendent cause of all things. The consequent result would be a teaching which speaks about the *conservationalism* or the *mere conservationalism* of God as primary cause. On the

its powerlessness and irrelevance or, in other words, through an analogy that is taken from our understanding of created things, to merely its possibility or its potency where, as soon as we should begin to think about potency and possibility and the meaning of potency and possibility, we would have to advert to notions and meanings which know that nothing in a condition of potency is able to realize itself (to put itself into a condition of act) and that the reality of something which exists within a condition of act is such that its being is grounded in itself in the being and the condition of act where act as act is such that it always surpasses anything which could be said to exist within a condition of potency and possibility.<sup>190</sup> A difference exists not primarily in terms of any degrees of being or any degrees of reality but, more radically, in terms of a difference in kind or a difference in substance or reality because,

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one hand, God brings and keeps things in a condition of being but, on the other hand, if secondary causes function independently (apart from the kind of causality that alone belongs to God), then we would say that God acts to create and to sustain but he does not act to govern or to administer. Cf. Feser, *Five Proofs*, pp. 234-235. God's government would exist as a lesser kind of thing and a basis is laid for thinking that God's government is something which does not exist (it is not applicable) or, on the other hand, it is something which causes problems for us if it is a form of government which is capricious and not providential and so, in some way, beneficial.

Apart from these conceptions, however, which point to the deficiencies which have existed in our understanding of things, the best kind of understanding that we can have accordingly points to how the power and the authority of one points and adds to the power and the authority of the other. God creates causes that have a causality of their own and, yet, the actuation of these causes requires the good of God's assistance on the basis of a metaphysical reason and principle which says that nothing in a condition of potency is able to move or to put itself into a condition of act. To the degree then that God creates causes and to the degree that he creates a large number of very many causes and also to the degree that he coordinates these many causes into a united whole, by the same degree or more fully, his power is revealed and so it is shown to us. It exists all the more greatly to the degree that God works with all the causes that he has brought into a condition of being and, even too, as he works with causes that, at times, fail in the manner of their operation. These causes are not able to bring a greater or a higher order of goods from an order of lesser goods (in a transition that, allegedly, would move from a condition of potency to a condition of act) since, instead, in an arrangement of things that transcends our understanding of these things, goods can be brought or they are in fact brought into a condition of being from a prior absence of good and from prior absences of being.

To bring something into being from what is entirely lacking in being accordingly points to acts of understanding which do not appropriately or exclusively belong to us as human beings and so, for a greater understanding of these things, we need to attend to acts of understanding which exist in a transcendent manner. They point to the being of an unrestricted, understanding subject and so to a divine kind of being who would have to exist as God and so be known in terms which would have us speak about God and about how he exists in a way which totally differs from how everything else exists within our world of space and time.

<sup>190</sup>Please note that, in this context, when we speak about the potency of a

between any absence or privation of being and any givenness or presence of being (non-being totally excludes being and being, non-being), an absolute disjunction exists.<sup>191</sup> Instead of a species of cause that, in some way, is restricted and turned in on itself and which would have to exist as but a potency that would be unlimited or unrestricted in the manner and the actuality of its potency (it can never exist in a condition of act), we have a species of cause or an actuality that is perennially fully active (perpetually in a condition of act). It freely exists and expresses itself in ways which are suitable to it (in ways that would be infinitely innumerable and, in other ways, incommensurable), exhibiting the full sway and the range of its power and influence.

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transcendent cause, we work with the utility and the sense of an analogical meaning. In our metaphysical understanding of things, we derive our understanding of potency and act from our experience and our understanding of changing things as these things exist within our physical, material, incarnate world and as we move toward a knowledge of these things from the givens of our sense experience. We encounter change through the givens of our sensing experience (if we should refer to the so-called “haziness of data” or to the “ambiguity of data”). However, if we attend to a kind of reality that exists apart from sense and the experience of material components, we find that we are attending to realities that are less subject to change and the experience of variation. The greater the transcendence, the less the change until, finally, we get to a species or to an instance of transcendent being that is devoid of any kind of change or any kind of alteration (devoid of the possibility of any kind of change or alteration since nothing which is other than itself can act upon it). Hence, technically speaking, a transcendent being which is completely or utterly transcendent is without any kind of potency. It is lacking in any kind or degree of potency. It cannot become something else and it cannot change from within itself in terms of how it exists since, in comparison to a condition of act or a condition of being, potency lacks being. It lacks reality. To it, potency cannot be ascribed. The fullness of being that this transcendent cause has suggests that it exists within a condition of act that is entirely complete and full; hence, in itself, it exists within a condition of pure act or, if we should choose to use a form of traditional shorthand denotation, we would simply say that it exists as pure act.

<sup>191</sup>Belaboring our point a bit, on the basis of logical principles, we cannot get being from non-being. According to the principle of identity within the prescriptive order of thinking which exists in logic, we would say that being is being or, appositely, through a double negation, that being is not nothing. Similarly but conversely, nothing is nothing or nothing is not being. If we should then refer to the principle of contradiction, we cannot say (it is a contradiction to say) that “being is nothing or that nothing is being.” Cf. McLean, “Analytic Philosophy and Language about God,” *Christian Philosophy and Religious Renewal*, p. 48f, as quoted by Mascall, *Openness to Being*, p. 102. However, we can move from nothing to being or we can get being from nothing if we attend to another order of principles that transcends the kind of order which belongs to the rules of logic: an order of becoming which refers to the relevance of operative metaphysical principles where, reasonably and rationally, through the kind of relation which exists between potency and act, we can move from x to y in a manner which transcends the rationality of a way of thinking that is solely grounded in the principle of identity where, here, x always equals x and where, from this principle, we can derive other logical principles which refer to the principle of contradiction and to the principle of the excluded middle.

The actuality of a transcendent being in how it functions thus within a created, secondary order of things (or the actuality of this transcendent being as a supremely effective cause) accordingly points us to a concrete fullness of being, a concrete fullness of activity, and a fullness of dynamic which inherently belongs to it in the manner of its being and operation and so it points us to a fullness of perfection that should allegedly belong to all the works or all the effects which exist within the created order of things as all these things emerge and come from a transcendent cause that is lacking in any kind of imperfection (being fully in a condition of act). We accordingly refer to a perfection or, in other words, to a quality of perfection that works from within this same order in a way which, by creating an order of contingent conditions, at the same time respects these same conditions and how they exist within this order as a species of good and so, in its own way, as a perfection (as a limited, created type of perfection) and how, at the same time also, this order exists in its goodness or perfection as an intelligent, intelligible ordering of parts and elements that, together, form an intelligible whole which is itself, as an order, a larger, greater good than what could be the good of any part or element. An unrestricted species of good is positively joined to contingent determinations of space and time in a manner which points to how this intelligible order exists with a life which points to a species of embodiment which properly belongs to it within the being of contingent determinations (an embodiment that can be described as a species of incarnation because its cause or explanation is the life and the activity of a transcendent, immanent first cause).

Material and immaterial variables are all joined together in a union of the two which exists as necessarily a greater thing (in both an ontological and a moral sense). What can be greater or more noble? A transcendent cause which exists by itself (causing nothing and lacking in any form of manifestation which would allow us to move from an effect toward a cause or from a cause to an effect), or a transcendental cause which exists and which works through a kind of union that it has with everything that it has created and brought into being, and as it draws all things toward itself through effecting and encouraging realizations of being that reflect the greater understanding and the greater willing which is to be identified with the being and the reality of this greatest, fully active, fully operative cause? In the goodness and in the perfection which exists, the created order of things is not lacking in the possibilities of further development, growth, and improvement that are in fact given to it as potencies (through changes which would not exist simply as changes or as alterations but as changes which, in some way, are directed toward the being of newer and better things even if or as, amidst some of these changes and contexts, privations of being or privations of intelligibility are experienced and known are known by us in the context of our cognition: privations which are to be alluded to where, in some contexts, privations of being and intelligibility are introduced for reasons that are not initially understood whenever the good of being or the good of intelligibility is removed or subtracted in given instances from the larger being and the larger existence of many things and the interrelation of a multitude of many things).

On how, in a genetic sense, we can have developments amid sets of varying, contingent conditions that are somewhat chancy and so given to us at times in unexpected ways: to illustrate and to argue our point a bit, let us begin with a concrete instance or a concrete incident. If a given atom has electrons that have a positive charge and if another atom has atoms that have a negative charge and if a given atom with a positive charge finds that it is near another atom which also has a positive charge, among these different atoms a kind of tension will be found to exist. Atoms having an identical charge will not join with each other in a way

which can form a bond between them (they will move away from each other in other, opposite directions). But, on the other hand, if an atom has a negative charge, it will join itself to a nearby or adjacent atom that has a positive charge (if this other atom is close enough) and, conversely or mutually, the other atom that has a positive charge will seek to join itself to the atom that has a negative charge. Some atoms move toward each other to form molecules while, on the other hand, others move away from each other to join themselves with other atoms to form other molecules. One rule explains or it says that, always, if a atom with a positive charge nears an atom with a negative charge, the two will bond although, on the other hand however, no rule that is known says that this atom must be near this other atom at this specific time and at this specific place: no rule that we can know through an interaction which exists between our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding if, in the data of sense and imagination, we cannot find regularities or create phantasms that point to the being of such a rule. An absolute disjunction exists between that which is strictly haphazard or random and that which exists in terms of rule if we should refer to the being of fixed norms or rules which condition the being and the occurrence of random events, making possible the being of random events and occurrences that would not otherwise exist in a way that occurs within a certain range of possibility with respect to the being of newly emerging things, creating conditions that favor the emergence of new forms of life and being that would not otherwise exist.<sup>192</sup> Simply put: random events cannot be understood apart from realities or determinations that are lacking in randomness. Both somehow exist together in a way which points to a bond or a positive relation which somehow exists between the two despite a real difference which encourages us to think and speak about the being of an absolute disjunction.

In terms then of contingent conditions and contingent determinations that belong to variations of space and time, on the one hand thus, as we have been noting, these lack determinacy in terms of how or why an atom, as a given determination of space, is near or proximate to another atom (as a determination of space at a given particular time) and, if we refer to this indeterminacy, we should notice that it exists as a prior or as an initial context in the constitution and in the makeup of our world if we should also notice that, in the growth or in the development of things within our world, shifts occur and move (with varying degrees of relativity) as we move from a given condition of un-differentiation that is relative toward an increase or an emergence of differentiation that is also itself relative. Compare the life and the being of a zygote with the life and the being of an embryo and attend to how an embryo emerges from what had been a zygote. Chance determinations of space and time condition or, in some way, they indeterminately prepare the way for the later emergence of new relations and connections that, in turn, condition the possible being and the possible emergence of other new things. Within, for instance, the sub-molecular order of things, some atoms (but not others) bond with each other in a way that forms a new kind of thing which would exist as a distinct kind of molecule (as a new kind of being, it has an intelligibility of its own; the intelligibility of an atom is not the intelligibility of a molecule and the intelligibility of one kind of molecule is not the intelligibility of another kind of molecule) and, in turn, or further on, some of these new molecules will find that they will bond with other molecules in a way that forms “more complex compounds” that can lead to the emergence of other new things as, now, complex compounds begin to bond with each other in ways that can lead to the being and

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<sup>192</sup>Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, pp. 5-6; pp. 45-46.

the life of new, living organisms.<sup>193</sup>

All along the line thus as we proceed, as we move from conditions that point to an absence of differentiation toward conditions of greater complexity and differentiation, a similar type of occurrence exists as, within relative conditions of indeterminacy, new bonds form to join new instances of a certain type of being in a way which conditions and which leads to the later emergence and the later being of new, other kinds of being that are endowed with a complexity or an intelligibility of their own that cannot be known or reduced if we were to try to think about a given thing as simply a sum or as simply an aggregate of its few or many parts. No molecule exists as essentially a sum of its constituent atomic parts. The intelligibility of a constituent atom cannot be added to the intelligibility of another constituent atom as if it existed as some kind of material, physical thing. If we attend, say, to the intelligibility of a water molecule - as with the intelligibility of all other molecules - we find that the intelligibility exists as the intelligibility of a bond or union (and not as the intelligibility of a conjunction, a sum, or a mixture of different elements), the parties to the bond losing the independent status which, formerly, they had enjoyed. Elements within a bond or elements which are constitutive of a given bond cannot be separated from each other without destroying the reality of the bond (both in terms of its being and in terms of its intelligibility, each pointing to the other) although, admittedly, through forming mental or conceptual distinctions, we can distinguish elements from each other in a way which points to a species of distinction which exists at a conceptual or mental level.

Relative however to the being of all the constitutive elements, the bond exists as a transcendent species of thing and, because it exists as a transcendent thing, it cannot be explained by anything which, in its being, is lacking in a commensurate degree (or in a commensurate level) of transcendence. Acts, actualities, realities, beings explain potencies, possibilities, capabilities, capacities, powers (whether, through our conceptuality and word choice, we should refer to acts of being in metaphysics or to acts of understanding in cognition) but no potency, any act; the possibility of something, the existence of something. A kind of dominance which, for some,<sup>194</sup> allegedly belongs to potencies, possibilities, and

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<sup>193</sup>Cynthia Crysdale and Neil Ormerod, *Creator God Evolving World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), p. 71.

<sup>194</sup>See D. C. Schindler, *Freedom from Reality: The Diabolical Character of Modern Liberty* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), pp. 56-57, for discussions about how, for instance, in the political and moral philosophy of John Locke, potency or power is not understood in a relative way in terms of how it is related to the principle of act, actuality, or end but, instead, it is interpreted or understood in terms of how it exists apart from any relation to the quality or the principle of act, actuality, or end. If potency is understood to exist independently of the principle of act and end and the kind of determination which inherently belongs to the principle of act and end, it becomes, in its own way, a species of absolute and a point of departure which suggests that what a given thing is is but a function of its willing and becoming: how or whatever it chooses to make itself into whatever it wants to choose or make. Being emerges as a function of becoming if becoming exists as a self-determinative type of absolute. Potency, possibility, capability, capacity, power exists for the sake of the mastery and the transcendence which allegedly belongs to it through what we can do through how we exercise our potency, our possibility, our capability, our

indeterminacies is to be understood only if a kind of dominance is to be understood if we should refer to that which exists in terms of acts, realizations, or determinacies of one kind or another. Again, with Parmenides, you cannot get anything which exists from that which could exist (from that which does not, in fact, exist) although, on the other hand, cognitively, if acts or things exist or if acts or things are known, derivatively, potencies can be known. They can be known to exist. They can be distinguished and differentiated and so, in this way, acknowledged and known in terms of an incomplete kind of being which belongs to the intelligibility of potencies.

To explain to a greater degree or, in other words, how indeterminacy somehow exists in general within our world as a good (with a species of intelligibility which somehow allegedly belongs to it), in Aristotle's thinking and conceptuality, a point of departure exists in terms of an explanation that is offered which tries to join indeterminacy with both the possibilities of intelligibility and all actualizations of intelligibility (if we associate intelligibility with act and being and lack of intelligibility with potency and any lack of being). Within the being and life of our world (our human world and also the other, external world of physical, material nature), a notion of finality is to be alluded to (where this leads to that) but in a way which refers to prior or to initial sets of conditions which exist as chance conjunctions or as chance relations which, in their fortuitousness, their chanciness, or their randomness, are to be regarded, oddly enough, as a distinct species of being or, in other words, as a distinct species of influence or cause which exists *per accidens* (accidentally, haphazardly, or circumstantially to the degree that, from our cognitive standpoint, an understanding of their intelligibility is something which does not seem to fall within the reach and the ken of our understanding, evidencing and pointing instead to limitations which accordingly exist with respect to the completeness or the adequacy of our human understanding).<sup>195</sup> We know that something exists without our fully understanding why it happens to exist and without our fully knowing why it happens to exist in the way that it happens to exist. Things exist apart from direct acts of understanding which would understand and know them; things exist within a context which refers to

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capacity, or our power. Cf. Schindler, *Diabolical Character of Modern Liberty*, pp. 49-50. If passive potency has some kind of role or place in how we exist as human beings, it tends now to be replaced by a greater emphasis that is given to the role and the place of active potency and, from within this context and perspective, passive potencies might not be acknowledged or known for what they are or how they exist (since, too easily, what exists as a passive potency can be interpreted in a way which suggests that it exists as an active potency). Understanding might be not too well distinguished from acts of thinking and questioning (if both are seen to exist as active potencies), and in a context which prefers to think in terms of how we exist and live as active potencies, the receptive side of our human life tends to be slighted or ignored and, in time, it would be increasingly marginalized in a way which believes that it exists as an inconsequential variable.

<sup>195</sup>See John Dudley, "Chance is a cause," *Aristotle's Concept of Chance: Accidents, Cause, Necessity, and Determinism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), pp. 27-31.

statistical determinations of one kind or another that are keyed to probabilities of events and occurrences which belong to the kind of order that is to be associated with calculations and determinations of statistical law.<sup>196</sup> Chance exists within our world and also within ourselves to condition our understanding and to condition how, through our willing, we might respond to any given situation that we encounter within our existing world.<sup>197</sup>

In a commonly cited example which Aristotle provides as a way to talk about the possible intelligibility of chance: a man goes to a particular place to achieve a given task (he can go, say, to a market to buy food) but, in going to a particular place, to accomplish a desired, intended task, he comes upon someone who owes him money and from whom he would like to recover this man's debt in order to obtain money for the purpose of doing something else (in Aristotle's example, host a celebratory feast).<sup>198</sup> Hence: as this example shows, if there had been no coincidental, accidental, unplanned meeting of two or more persons or, more generally, no coincidental, accidental, unplanned meeting of two or more things, then a given cause would not have been able to produce its proper effect (an agent acting on a patient, a cause existing in an effect). Some meetings and connections are intended by our acts of understanding and willing while others are not. As much as we might intend that certain things should happen in a certain way, we find that some things usually happen in a way that escapes our desire and intentionality and the kind of individual, conscious control which exists within the purposefulness and the teleology of our humanly conscious acts.

In other words thus, within an order of things that initially belongs to the study of movement within the science of physics, two kinds of motion can be distinguished from each other in terms of a real distinction where the being of one is such however that it allows or, in a way, it points to the being of the other. If, for instance, we attend to a burning flame, on the basis of a direct act of understanding, we can speak about how, in its proper movement or motion, it exists in its own right as an oxidizing, burning flame of wax. We can speak

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196Lonergan, "Philosophy of History," *Archival Material*, p. 26.

197Lonergan, "*Pantōn Anakephalaiōsis: A Theory of Human Solidarity*," *Archival Material*, p. 48; p. 67: "intellectual advance is...conditioned by chance discovery." As Lonergan states his case when talking about predeterminations which exist as both limiting and enabling promotions: "...we may regard mankind as a machine of low efficiency that receives from the objective situation specifications of intellect and promotions but turns out operations that only in a certain percentage are according to intellect and the rest as if there was no intellectual control whatever." Cf. p. 48. With Aristotle, we could possibly claim that "the world would be better were it not for human liberty." Cf. p. 67. If we were to exist as machines, our willing would always follow from our acts of understanding and insight. Our world would exist as a more orderly place but it would have an order that belongs to a lower or a lesser degree of quality.

198Aristotle, *Physics*, 2, 5, 142, 196b29-197a5. See also Dudley, *Aristotle's Concept of Chance*, p. 34.

about its intrinsic, formal intelligibility and about how or why it exists in the condition of being and activity which it properly has. And, in addition too, through another direct act of understanding, we can speak about combustible material and about the nature or the intelligibility which intrinsically belongs to it and so, if a burning flame is joined to combustible material, we have a new instance of oxidization and the manifestation of an intelligibility which belongs to the nature and the causes of oxidization.

However, if we attend to why in this particular instance, at a given time and not at some other time, a burning flame is being joined to a mass of combustible material, we will find, at a certain point, that we cannot find a completely adequate explanation (an explanation which, for us, would point to an intelligibility that would be entirely sufficient and determinative for the event in question). The motion and the activity of oxidization exists in its own right or, in itself, it exists as an intelligible thing (we understand it; we understand its nature; we understand its causes) while, on the other hand however, incidences, occurrences, or instances of oxidization exist, to some extent, as unintelligible, un-understood things. A given instance or act of burning is not entirely understood if we should only refer to the meaning and the nature of oxidization. More is needed if we are to have a fuller or an adequate understanding of things as these things emerge and exist within our contingent, concrete world. In our current understanding of things: if given instances of data in sense in our experience of things would seem to be bereft of meaning and intelligibility (again, from our cognitional point of view), then it seems that we would have to speak here about that which exists as simply the givenness of matter (or, in other words, that which is known and conceived apart from the principle of form); or, alternatively, matter (or materiality) is that which is known and conceived apart from its intelligibility; or matter is that which is conceived in terms which can speak about a kind of remainder or a leftover which would exist as the givenness or as the materiality of that which exists as a residual “empirical residue.”<sup>199</sup> Hence: if similarly bereft of intelligibility and meaning (again, from our cognitional standpoint), chance conjunctions or chance relations as these exist would seem to exist also as a species of matter (as a species of potency). Absent all intelligibility of any kind, chance conditions would have to exist as a specification of pure potency (or, in other words, as an unrestricted kind of potency).

In the kind of understanding which is accordingly given to us as human beings (as we attend to the range and the scope of our direct acts of understanding), we find that we cannot or we usually do not understand why, at any given time and place, a given mover is adjacent to something that is then moved or caused (as in a cause producing an effect). On the one hand, the action or the willing of a given mover on a moved or a willed exists as one type of motion. It is proper, given the nature of the mover or the source of the willing and the nature of that

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<sup>199</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 50-56.

which is being moved, or willed, or influenced in some way. An active cause is joined or mated to a receptive passive cause, positivity to negativity. The identity or the intelligibility of one immediately points to the identity or the intelligibility of the other, vice versa (this with regard to that). Complementarity in nature (even amid differences in nature) explains why a given event occurs as soon as “x” is adjacent to “y” or as soon as “x” is being applied to “y.”

However, on the other hand, with respect to a second kind of motion, if, temporally and spatially, a mover is *near or adjacent* to something that it can then act on or move in some way, then, according to a conceptuality that is adapted from the kind of conceptuality which is grounded in Aristotelian and Thomist roots and the kind of analysis that originally comes to us from Aristotle's physics,<sup>200</sup> some other kind of motion needs to be designated; some other kind of motion needs to be postulated to account for relations or connections if we are to think about grasping an explanation for things that could be somehow fuller or more adequate: a motion which, conceptually, within physics, would exist as, initially, a *praemotio* or a premotion (for want of a better, technical term)<sup>201</sup> if we are then to try and speak about prior conditions

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200Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 73-75; Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 220; Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, pp. 234-237; Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 198, n. 19.

201As both Lonergan and Matava note but in Matava's words, “the term '*praemotio*' never occurs anywhere in the corpus of Thomas's writings,” although, in the later history of philosophy, the insight or the idea that is grasped in the understanding of it is expressed as “preceding concurrence” (as *concursum praevius*). Cf. Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 220; Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 199. A prior cause moves an agent to action in a way, however, that is not limited to premissions which would exist as material determinations of one kind or another. Motions which exist within the order of space and time and which exist as the movement of bodies are constituted by material conjugates which refer to a species of premission which would exist as some kind of mechanical or physical premission (hence, as *praemotio physica*). Cf. Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, pp. 222-223; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical\\_premotion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_premotion) (accessed April 22, 2020). If, however, we should generalize and think not about spatial motions or spatial movements but about changes in general that would move a something “x” from a condition of potency into a novel condition of act (whether or not we would be referring to a physical change or to some other type of change), we would then be thinking in terms of another kind or species of premission which would exist as more of a genus than as a species as we try to think about premissions in terms of a larger or a more comprehensive notion of it. Material premissions exist in conjunction with immaterial premissions since acts can realize potencies by effecting and changing them in an immaterial way. Hence, for an adequate explanation of the being of all things with respect to the character of their material and immaterial being, we must begin to think in general about a larger, more extensive, prior order of preconditioning acts that are operative and then also about how, ultimately, a single act would have to exist in an unrestrictedly way (hence, as lacking in any kind of material form or determination): as an act

or prior acts which exist as indeterminate unknowns because, as simply given to us in a prior kind of way, they initially escape our understanding and knowledge and the degree that we can engage in any forms of planning and calculation that would be able to foresee all possible variables and, at the same time, know the role that each would play. Without prior shifts, movements, or connections of some kind or other, or without promotions as a distinct species of motion, cause, and condition, we cannot have proper motions or proper changes in the life and being of existing things and the intelligibilities that exist within the being of these motions and changes as the term or as the manifestation (in act) of that which exists in a way which points to the reality of realities which exist as internal meanings and causes.<sup>202</sup> The necessity of promotions (of one kind or another within physics and outside of physics) points to a kind of primacy which belongs to them in a way which transcends the other kind of primacy which belongs to proper motions or to the inherent kind of intelligibility which belongs to the being of existing things (be they living or dead, animate beings or inanimate objects). If matter or if, in a larger or more abstract sense, potency exists as a species of cause (if, allegedly in our case, it exists as a promotion) – if, in its potency as initially a given, if especially in its active potency, it exists in some way as a predetermining, active, causative principle (to some extent or in some way, as active, it would have to exist with a certain form or type of determination that we might not grasp or understand, and which we would have yet to grasp and understand, and which we can possibly understand at some

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or as a promotion which transcends all material determinations of any kind in having a kind of being (a transcendence) that is uniquely and entirely appropriate to it. Cf. Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 357, n. 74.

<sup>202</sup>Please note, however, that, as an option or possibility, nothing can escape the possibility of our having an explanation of things that does not directly belong to us in terms of our own acts of understanding but, instead, to acts of understanding which transcend the kind of understanding that normally belongs to us as cognizing human subjects. If we discover in ourselves that intelligibility exists in terms of connections and relations which, in turn, point to determinations which exist within the form or within the order of an apprehended intelligibility which belongs to us in an immanently existing direct act of understanding, accidental or chance relations or accidental or chance connections can possibly also exist for us although, on the other hand, as the proper term of some other direct act of understanding which would have to belong to another kind of subject where, from the point of view of this subject and its own act of understanding, absence of intelligibility or chance is absent. It does not exist. While an initial or an anticipated awareness of intelligibility can be given to us as a potency (through our experience of wonder and through our asking of questions which exist as acts), if we should want to refer to the being and the flow of chance variations as these exist within our world, the awareness that we have in our cognition exists as an incomplete act to the degree that it directs and points us to a variable which we yet to fully grasp and know. Hence, in our understanding, through our inferences, we can refer to something which, in some way, exists but which, for us, would exist as a known unknown. We have the act of a thing's being through our awareness of it but not the intelligibility which belongs to a thing's form or nature. The act which exists in the incompleteness of our understanding accordingly points to how our act exists as a species of potency.

other later point in time),<sup>203</sup> on the other hand however, form or intelligibility, if it is considered in itself as a motion or as a determining, proper motion – it would exist as an essentially active principle (in the kind of correlation that is to be found and which is distinguished for us within the context of Aristotle's analysis).

Simply put, chance conjunctions, in their intelligibility, exist as promotions or, in other words, as predeterminations which exist as a “statistically predetermined flow” of differing conjunctions and combinations of many different things that are constitutive of our world and how we live and exist within our world,<sup>204</sup> and so as soon as *A in a condition already of act* encounters *B in a condition already of act*, something *invariably* happens in terms that lead to the emergence and the being of *C* as the being of a new, distinct reality.<sup>205</sup> Through a universalization of the notion of promotion, as it can apply in other fields and dimensions of meaning and being (for instance, when we think about the causality of promotions with respect to our individual acts of human willing and about how, in turn, our actions invariably and unexpectedly lead to certain results of one kind or another, now within this context and now within another context),<sup>206</sup> we move toward a larger understanding about how things exist and

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203If a promotion exists as a physical promotion, it would have a numeric designation of some kind which would refer to a quantity of some kind (this quantity existing as a species of determination): whether, for instance, we should refer to a measure of distance or to a size of mass or weight.

204Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, p. 6; p. 26. See also the illustrative argumentation which comes to us from Lonergan's “*Pantōn Anakephalaiōsis: A Theory of Human Solidarity*,” *Archival Material*, p. 49. If, as a general principle, whatever is moved is moved from something else (*quidquid movetur ab alio movetur*), we have a situation which falls into the following order:

Will has to be promoted by intellect; intellect has to be promoted by phantasm; phantasm has to be promoted by an objective situation and environment; finally, the objective situation and environment is partly the determinate work of nature, partly the accumulated work of mankind acting now according to its limited knowledge and now against the knowledge.

205Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 86; p. 74, as cited by Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 221.

206Aquinas, as cited by Lonergan, as cited by Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 222. When Aristotle speaks about a man going to a nearby market to buy food and about how he unexpectedly meets someone who owes him money, this type of human interaction as a promotion exists as an explanatory principle within the human order of things in our world because it relates and, in its way, it creates a context or it sets a stage for the later making of ethical decisions and relations which are supposed to exist among us as human beings, determining and influencing how we are supposed to behave towards in each other in a way which is supposed to be always right and just. At a higher level or within a larger context, to supply another example, if we should refer to the kind of order which exists as the

occur within our world. “Every act has its premotion,”<sup>207</sup> albeit, in a way that is to be explained by a process of analytic resolution which finds that premotion originates as the premotion and act of an unrestricted, transcendent, active cause and agent which, in its own way, rationally and intelligently exists, in one act, as the source and as the principle of coordination for the being of all movements, motions, and connections which subsequently exist within our world as a descending, subordinate order of many secondary causes, passing from agent to agent and then from agent act to agent act<sup>208</sup> through a chain of lesser causes which points to how, among these causes, a single action exists.<sup>209</sup> Not only do promotions explain why many different causes are brought together in a way which, relatively speaking, brings order out of chaos (appositely, higher orders of being from lower orders of being), but, at the same time too, other promotions that are more specific explain why any given, individual cause (as initially a potency) is being brought from a condition of potency into a condition of act.<sup>210</sup> How do we account for the decisions that we make as we move into actions that belong to us as free moral agents? What are the promotions that are needed but which we do not control or put into place in any of the actions that we do or perform?<sup>211</sup> No potency can actualize itself and the free

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communion and the life of Christ's Catholic Church, if we should refer to the economy of salvation which exists within it and which joins its many members and participants into a hierarchal whole, we have a kind of prior context within which persons find that they live and exist, a context that very many persons are born into and so, in the end, the net result or the net effect is a mediation, an introduction, and a communication of spiritual goods which exist as determinations of meaning and being. They, in turn, exert an influence of their own on how we can understand ourselves as human beings and how we can begin, in a better way, to live and exist within the kind of world that we find ourselves within (a world that is marred by incidents and happenings that point to a lack of meaning and being and an unfortunate absence of ready solutions that can be immediately applied in a way which does not lead to further absences of meaning and being that could be more dire and irrational for us, leading us into a worsening of our human condition and lot as we should find this within the circumstances of our existing world). Cf. Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, pp. 29-30.

207Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, p. 30.

208Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, pp. 221-222; Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, p. 36; “*Pantōn Anakephalaiōsis: A Theory of Human Solidarity*,” *Archival Material*, p. 41; p. 68.

209Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 199.

210Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 445, p. 147; cf. pp. 116-118, as cited by Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 224.

211Please note thus that an inquiry that asks about all the promotions which are needed within the kind of order which belongs to us as human beings (as we move into the morality of our human decisions and actions) requires an inquiry which must attend to a much larger number of variables than, say, an inquiry within physical science which might want to ask about promotions which we would like to know about if, more fully, we are to explain why, at a given time and place, a given physical movement occurs when and in the way that it does (having certain effects and results). In our world, in our human world, immaterial motions and immaterial movements (a change, for instance, in our understanding and judgment of things)

expressiveness of secondary causes, in their actuation and exercise, requires actuations which suppose the unfettered freedom of God's transcendent, governing activity as this exists within the scope and depth of his knowing, willing, and doing.

While promotions or chance conjunctions within the physics of space and time accordingly lead to intelligible conjunctions which exist as directly intelligible motions (in a proper sense or in its proper sense, the intelligibility of a motion exists as a kind of inner component, a form, or a species of soul within the being of an existing, living thing), then, on the basis of this type of presupposition and

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presuppose motions and movements which belong to the kind of material order which already exists within physics, chemistry, and biology although, in addition, immaterial motions and movements which immaterially exist (as much as they are joined to many combinations of many, different, material conditions). An exhaustive account of prior causes or prior motions, to the degree that we would want to initiate this type of inquiry, moves into a complexity of detail which points to how, in our world, so very many different kinds of things exist and interact in ways which escape our conscious grasp and anything which could exist as our deliberate control.

In our objective being and within our subjective being as human subjects, as a net effect of our thinking and understanding, at some point we discover that we exist more as recipients and as beneficiaries than as makers, actors, or doers (we live within an undeniable condition of reliance and dependence); and the more that we know about all the pertinent, different levels of dependence which belong to us (however imperfectly and partially is our understanding and knowledge of these things), the more that we should know about how we exist in a condition of potency more than how we exist in a condition of act. How, as a given, we already exist in our objectivity and subjectivity points to how, in fact, in some way, we already exist as effects with regard to both the number and the character of our active and passive potencies and how our causality exists as but a species of conditioned effect that is already geared toward an order of ends and objectives that are proper to us if, truly, we exist as human beings and not as some other kind of living thing (having ends and objectives which exist before anyone of us individually exists, before we can begin to think and do anything in the context of our individual, human lives). The orientation which exists within our desiring and willing itself points to an order of created, effected promotion which is somehow already operative as an already existing thing (a promotion which differs from our individual acts of willing and choosing as we consider and think about how best we are to move toward ends and objectives which already exist within our desire for experiences of happiness and the good of many good things). As human beings, allegedly, regulatively, and normatively, we all want to be happy and joyful although, often, we may not know or, in fact, we often do not know about what we exactly want in order for us to be content and happy in the context of our individual lives. Hence, as our conclusion: *nulla est homini causa philosophandi, nisi ut beatus sit* [Man has no reason to philosophize, except with a view to happiness] in order the better that we can possibly move toward realizations of happiness that we could be possibly given to us. Cf. Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 6; also, elsewhere, previously quoting St. Augustine. Things are seen to be good if we should initially believe and sense that they will make us happy; if, often immediately, they can somehow satisfy our desires in a way which removes the

context, it follows from this that, from a greater frequency of chance conjunctions and a greater variety of chance conjunctions, a larger number of intelligible conjunctions can become more likely or more possible in terms of their possible emergence and success with respect to the incidences of their actuation. From a kind of flux of things within our world (whether or not the flux refers to an assembly of material or immaterial conditions, or to predeterminations which would exist as material or as immaterial promotions), from a non-systematic ordering or a non-systematic jumble of many different things, from an order of things that is not understood by us but which is charged with contingency and with varying degrees of variety and which, from our

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experience of want and deprivation which perennially exists within us whenever we experience our desires and so feel our different wants, privations, and needs. In our lives, we exist first as feeling, sensing subjects before we exist as thinking, reflective subjects. After initially desiring sensible joys and delights of one kind or another, later, we can begin to desire other goods or other pleasures as we move from bodily kinds of experience toward experiences which belong to forms and developments of consciousness that are not delimited or which are not restricted by anything which would exist for us as a datum or as an act of human sensing. In a teaching that comes to us from the conceptuality of Aquinas's language: "by the will's own essence or natural form – the human will is oriented to happiness or to the good in general." Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1; q. 94, a. 2, as cited by Matava, *Divine Causality and Human Free Choice*, p. 225.

An understanding of promotion accordingly begins with how, as our maker and creator, God exists in his being in terms of promotion; or, more accurately, God exists as promotion (*qua* promotion). The promotion exists first in terms of the initial creation of our being before it can then be said to exist with respect to the further and the additional creations which occur and exist when we then refer to the preservation and the sustenance of our created being and then, from there, to the cultivation or the flourishing of our created human existence (most simply and crudely put: "creation, conservation, and application"). Cf. Matava, p. 250. The promotions exist within an order which exists among them. In order to move, however, from a notion of promotion which would want think of it as solely an incident or an accident (as if it were an unintelligible, indeterminate, chancy kind of thing) toward a notion of promotion as if it exists as an intelligible, intelligent kind of thing, the needed context is a larger scheme of things that can only be understood and known from the perspective of a higher viewpoint (an elevated, superior vantage point) if we should refer now to the being and the activity of a transcendently operative, effective cause which would have to exist as God (God being God as this transcendently operative, effective, active, primary cause).

With respect then to the emergence or the creation of our being, if, in terms of act and as pure act, God is existence itself; or if God *per se* is itself the act of being or the act of bringing all things that are other into a condition of existence, then, from this, we can say about God's effective, creative promotion that, in general, "everything which in any way is, is from God [God existing as their direct cause]." Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 44, a. 1, as cited by Matava, p. 249. God is their responsible cause. If God is identically understanding, being, and causing, "God's proper effect is [therefore] the being of things [whether it is the begetting of "a being of the same nature" where for instance, God, as Father, begets God, as

viewpoint, is bereft of order, repetition, and regularity, an order of other things can also possibly begin to emerge that now, to some degree *or relatively*, is lacking in degrees of chanciness or in degrees of contingency or, in other words, it would be lacking in that which has been existing, relatively, within a condition of disorder: displaying degrees of flux and chaos and, within this chaos, measures of ambiguity.

About a given order of things (to cite a frequently mentioned example that is taken from our current understanding of physics): in the evaporation of water, a liquid is turned into a gas (a vapor) which rises into the air but then, with

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Son; or whether if it is the creating of “others to be” which are other and which differ from God].” Cf. Matava, p. 248; Aquinas, as quoted by Etienne Gilson, *The Philosopher and Theology*, trans. Cécile Gilson (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 148. More comprehensively and more simply put: “whenever God acts *ad extra* [‘towards the outside’], he acts creatively,” whether in firstly effecting a being of things which initially creates an order of dependence (of creatures relative to their creator); or in then effecting, on the basis of the given prior being of existing things, the life and the activity of these same things in transitions and changes which would necessarily differ from the first and the primary kind of creating which exists whenever we speak about God as the Creator of all existing things. The creativity exists in terms of two modes: (1) creativity as distinct from effecting any kind of change or transition in another or, in other words, creativity in terms of how, in its primacy and as a fundamental precondition, it creates a relation of total dependence in the being of all existing creatures, creating both creatures in their being as dependents, existing in a relation of total dependence on God as their conditioning and effective Creator; and (2) creativity as effecting a change or a transition in something which already in fact exists, altering the manner of how it happens to live and exist. Simply put: our dependence in being points to our dependence in terms of our activities, operations, and receptions. One follows the other; subjectivity, objectivity; or, in other words, subjectivity, metaphysics. Cf. Matava, p. 249, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 5. Adapting and citing Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 18, [2] in order to refer to the primacy of this distinction (which, in his “Creation as a Relation in St. Thomas Aquinas,” *Being and Knowing*, p. 136, n. 4, Wilhelmsen quotes in Latin):

For creation [God's creative action] is not a change [it is not an alteration, a transition, or a motion], but [instead it is] the very dependency of the created act of being upon the principle from which it is produced [in other words and less technically, God's action is to be equated with the being of a created thing, or it is to be equated with the createdness of a given thing]. And thus, [with respect to the being of any given created thing] creation exists as a kind of relation [which exists within a thing]; so that nothing prevents its being in the creature as its subject [in other words: nothing prevents its existing as an accident or as a property which belongs to the being of a given thing or which inheres in the being of a given, created thing although with a unique form of determination which refers to something which is other than the being of a given, created thing].

condensation, the same gas or vapor is turned into liquid water which then falls to the ground. A repetitive cycle points to an intelligible ordering of things which manifests or which points to the givenness or to the presence of a species of natural, normative, regulative law. Laws exist within the concyclic order of our physical world of things and also within the concyclic order of our human world of things wherever repetitive cycles or circuits exist, or to the degree that cycles become operative in a way which manifests the intelligibility or the form of their being and reality. If a given concrete good is to be repeatedly produced or given at a certain time at a certain place, some kind of order needs to be created which can repeatedly and reliably produce a given, desired good

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See Matava, pp. 270-274, for a fuller, more detailed explanation.

Reiteratively, God exists as *pure act* or, in other words, God exists as pure, unrestricted, effective causality since, in God's oneness and simplicity, as a simple, single, incomprehensible act, no real distinction can exist between God as causing, effecting, and creating and God as being or God as understanding. In the unrestricted being, the unrestricted creating, and the unrestricted causing of God, in the absence of any restrictions or, in other words, in the absence of any contradictions (or in the absence of any inconsistencies), God can be said to exist as someone who is always totally and properly wise. Or, in other words, if God is *pure act*, God is "wise already." Cf. Socrates, *Symposium*, as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 6. No thinking or deliberation exists. No deliberation is needed in order for God to effect anything in moving something from a condition of potency A to a condition of act B. No variation or indeterminacy accordingly exists within God (hence, nothing in terms of any form of self-determination) since the actuality of God's knowledge *in its fullness and completeness* precludes a divine knowledge of anything that would exist as not yet fully actual (hence, existing as only a possibility). God's knowing exists within a context that we cannot imagine or fathom. Cf. Leszek Kolakowski, "The Two Eyes of Spinoza," *The Two Eyes of Spinoza and Other Essays on Philosophers*, ed. Zbigniew Janowski, trans. Agnieszka Kokakowska (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2003), p. 4.

At the same time though, in the light of God's unrestricted rationality, God cannot create or invent any absurdities (nothing which would violate how God exists in Himself as an unrestricted act of understanding). For instance, God cannot create a world which can possibly combine the good that can come from possible exercises of human choice and any inability on our part to engage in any acts or deeds that could be privative in terms of their lack of goodness (hence, their wrongness or evil). In the freedom which peculiarly belongs to God, God cannot do anything which could possibly be wrong or evil in lieu of the fullness of the God's rationality and the infiniteness of this understanding. Cf. Kolakowski, *Religion*, p. 21. From the intelligibility of God's active creation comes the intelligibility of our passive creation (as a derivative) as the intelligibility or the intelligence which exists as God is expressed in ways which point to the intelligibility or the intelligence of all the created effects that are created all together at once in an general order or scheme which is constitutive of the being and the order of a fully existing, functioning universe.

The causing (or whatever could be the kind of causing) exists not within God but

(whether we should refer to a given staple of food or to the education of new generations of young people). The repetitiveness of a circuit points to its durability and stability (to a relative degree of durability and stability which it, admittedly, now enjoys and possesses) although, at the same time too, this stability is also relative if we should attend to absences of stability that we also find when we attend to possible intrusions and disruptions and the possible intervention of chance variations which continue to exist for us within our world as a larger context of things that we do not entirely control or govern through anything that we would want to imagine, think, do, or perform. New chance variations can also emerge in the wake of new patterns or new circuits which

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within the caused, created effects or within the changes which are being caused or effected in the wake of the emergence of caused, created effects; and the effects or the changes which are caused in the effects are not identical or equivalent to that which could exist as their originating cause (even if it is true to say and to admit that always, in some way, an effect exists within its originating cause). Cf. Matthew Lamb, "The Mystery of Divine Predestination: Its Intelligibility According to Lonergan," *Thomism and Predestination: Principles and Disputations*, eds. Steven A. Long, Roger W. Nutt, and Thomas Joseph White, OP (Ave Maria, Florida: Sapientia Press, 2016), pp. 215-216. The causing or the effecting of God is real and effective only within that which God has caused or effected. What is caused or what is created, as caused or created, exists in a manner or with a form of being or an act of being which is pointed or which is always oriented toward its responsible cause in the context of a real relation. As a general principle, whether we should speak about creation which exists outside of time (as generative of space and time), or about motion or change as this exists within the created order of space and time, the effects always exist in a way which is directed or which is pointed toward their responsible agent or cause. Cf. Wilhelmssen, *Being and Knowing*, p. 144. However, in the context of God's creation or in the context of God's creative creating act, this orientation explains why creation exists as a relation which exists within whatever has been created, giving that which has been created a certain mode or way of being. In God's creating, something first exists as a distinct thing before we can then speak about its mode or its way of being (its dependent, created character) in an order which accordingly points to two realities which are ordered to each other: (1) the priority in being of an existing thing over the priority of its created character as a relation, quality, or attribute (the dependency of a given thing is not created before, in fact, a given thing is created); and (2) the kind of terminus, telology, or end which is unique to creation where things are created with a dependency (or a createdness) which is ultimately directed and oriented toward God and the things of God: hence, some kind of union with God. Our created character, as a modification or determination of being, orders us or it points us toward God who exists as both our Creator and as our final end or destiny (our ordering toward God as our Creator, conditioning and facilitating how we can be properly ordered toward God as, subsequently, our Savior and Redeemer). Our dependency on God evidences or it points us toward an ongoing kind of need which exists within us for the being of God and the things of God. Cf. Matava, p. 273, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1ae, q. 45, a. 3, ad 3.

To understand why or how this is so, as a point of departure, let us first talk about how God exists as first act or as first premotion where, here, God understands, loves, and wills goals and aims without any trouble or difficulty by creating and applying or using causes

can successfully emerge from within the being of both our physical and human worlds which, in turn, effect changes in terms of creating new indeterminate conditions that now belong to us within the being of our currently existing world. One sits within the other (chance and determinacy, or we can argue that, heuristically, chance exists as a species of determinacy *qua* promotion because, currently, we do not know what in fact is its proper form, content, or intelligibility). From the point of view of any given cycle or circuit which happens to exist in our world, chance occurrences or chance events (as an unknown form of determinacy) – these always exist as provocative, external, agent causes (or as external, agent objects) that, in some way, can upset or

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which can function either in a necessary way or in a contingent way. Our world exists as a greater, more wondrous thing if it can include every grade and species and mode of being which would have to include every kind and species and mode of effecting cause. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 4, as cited by Matava, p. 257. The preconditioning causes, relative to ourselves, and their proper effects, are all directly created and caused by God, as is also the order and the scheme of all these causes (working and functioning together as a species of promotion, as a promotive cause), relative to any given specific choice or decision that, individually, we could be making in the course of our individual lives, the freedom or the leeway that belongs us in our individual choices and decisions accordingly also existing as a divinely intended effect (and so as a means) that is caused by God and which has been created by God although in a manner which differs from how we experience our own being and making (our own causation and agency): hence, requiring a discussion and a differentiation that can move toward a clarification which can indicate how different aspects and parts can all possibly exist together within the parameters of a larger, unified whole (God's primary causality and all secondary causes working and existing together if we should want to continue to believe and to hold that our world exists as an intelligible thing: as a cosmos and not as a chaos, having an order which properly belongs to it). Despite resemblances and relations which can, in turn, point to a species of communion, God's universal causality or God's universal instrumentality in creating and effecting differs from the way of our created, human causality in its piecemeal making and producing of things and how, in turn, we exist and participate as lesser causes within the universal instrumentality which alone belongs to God if God's transcendental, universal causality precludes any kind of discussion or analysis which could possibly want to place it within a set of parameters that is bound by conjugates of space and time (space and time existing as a manifold which has been immediately created by God as if, at once, with respect to all the orderings, relations, principles, and causes that, *in toto*, are denominative of the entirety of space and time). Cf. Aquinas, *De Potentia Dei*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2, as cited by Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, p. 140, n. 37. Transcending the motions and changes which belong to us in the kind of making or creating that we engage in as human subjects is the absence of any motions and changes if we should think about how, in his uniqueness (or God as *sui generis*), God exists in the kind of creating which alone properly belongs and applies to God.

How then can we speak about our created human freedom and the reality of God's uncreated freedom? One order of freedom derivatively comes from God and the other exists as God. How can we speak thus about their order and interrelation? How can we speak about the reality of our human freedom if this freedom also exists as a divinely created effect? From our

perturb the running of an accepted, expected course of functioning things.

Repetitive cycles and circuits, as they exist or as they are known, accordingly function, in their own way, as kind of substratum or base. They point to occurrences or events which, relatively, would have to be regarded as random, fortuitous, other, and external. However, on the other hand also, as we have been noting, chance occurrences and random events also function as a kind of base or point of departure (as promotions) since, catalytically, they occasion or they can lead to the emergence of new orders or new cycles within a given context of meaning and being that can be grasped and understood by us in a

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side, we know that we do not cause or effect our own freedom (our ability, however limited, to choose either this or that option, whether to act or not to act). We simply seem to have this ability and facility as a species of contingently existing thing and so, given our condition of potency (our condition of reliance and dependency), we are moved to conclude that God directly creates our freedom or that God directly causes the freedom, the indeterminacy, or the kind of self-determination which properly belongs to us as contingently acting subjects (as contingently acting causes) in order, by these means thus, to achieve measures and qualities of goodness and reality that are somehow better or more wonderful because of how they have been effected and caused. To our freedom in terms of how it exists, God has given both a form or a species and an actuation or an act of being which belongs to the free or to the indeterminate type of causality which properly belongs to us as consciously deciding, choosing, human subjects. We have not necessarily to do this or that action or to avoid this other action since, through experiencing how we move toward our choices and decisions, we find that alternatives open up for us. We find and discover options of one kind or another when, unexpectedly, we discover that we can possibly think this or think that do or possibly do this instead of that and so we find that we can develop in a certain way and not develop in some other kind of way. Our freedom first exists as a created type of potency, form, and act before it can exist in a way which points to further realizations of it in terms of its potency, form, and act.

With respect to our freedom (since, as we have been noting, amid concrete conditions, we can decide either to act or not act and because we can also change our thinking and judgments and so decide to desist in any actions or motions that we are currently engaged in), the potency of our freedom (as this is discovered within the data of our preliminary deliberations) points to why it endures and remains in a way which points to why it endures and has a reality of its own. Our freedom exists, in fact, as a higher or as a superior kind of thing (as a created transcendent kind of thing) in a way which resembles the kind of freedom which alone belongs to God if, on our part (as also on God's part), *no amount of causing and changing in things which are other than ourselves necessarily changes who we are as human beings*. The causes or the changes exist in the produced effects. In effecting anything in terms of effects, individually for instance, Peter continues to be Peter and, similarly, Michael continues to be Michael whether or not Peter or Michael are doing this or doing that in actions which would exist in any subsequent effects. Cf. Lamb, "Mystery of Divine Predestination," *Thomism and Predestination*, p. 216. Within an ontological order of things, something in us or something about us does not change in any regard or respect (despite changes, however, which could be occurring within us with respect to fluctuations in the form and content of our human

limited way through the limited kind of understanding and knowledge which belongs to us as inquisitive, active, receptive, human subjects. The interrelation that exists between chance and determinacy, in a general scheme of things, points both to a larger notion of order which would be other than something which is purely or statically concyclic and also to a notion of chance that would have to differ from the presumptions and the vicissitudes of mere randomness if, indeed truly, it exists as an explanatory variable within this larger notion of order and change.

*A fortiori*, in a conclusion which follows that we can draw, a notion of chance as

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subjectivity); God differing here from us since, in God, no real distinction exists between the objectivity and the subjectivity of God. God exists as pure act (in a perfect form of self-unity) and we, as partial, incomplete acts.

We move from more the potency of our human freedom, as a divinely created effect, toward more the actualization of our human freedom, as also a divinely created effect, if we should now attend to how our freedom expands and grows through actualizations which begin in us through our initial acts of inquiry and decision (in a discursive, non-mechanical fashion) as now, participatively, as we come from God and as we depend on God, we begin to exist more fully in our self-determination as self-determining causes. As we have been already noting, our form of self-determination cannot exist apart from two preconditioning variables which exist in their own right as pre-motions: (1) how we already exist as created, willing agents or how we already exist as created, willing subjects (our actions proceeding from us for reasons which would want to allege that, in our actions, we are seeking some kind of good that would allegedly make us happy); and (2) how, at the same time, our actions cannot exist apart from how they are being directly caused by God who exists in a condition of pure act. The potency of our freedom as a would be decider or as a would be decision maker comes to us from God as specifically our Maker and Creator. But, if we are to move into actualizations of this first potency which would also belong to us as our divinely created, effected freedom, we must move beyond a notion of God as our transcendent Creator and Maker toward a notion of God as our transcendent Keeper and Sustainer, and then, from there, toward a notion of God as our transcendent Governor and Ruler. Differing orders of pre-motion are to be distinguished as we move from God as our Creator toward God as our Sustainer, God as our Benefactor, and, lastly, God as our Savior and Redeemer. In forming, constructing, and extending our understanding of things (as much as our understanding exists as always a species of reception), in agreement with Parmenides, we aver that, from that which is rational, we cannot get anything which is irrational. *Ex nihilo nihil* [literally: from nothing, nothing]. From a fullness of meaning and intelligibility that can never lessen, fail, or diminish, no absences of meaning and intelligibility can be alluded to or in any way obtained and derived.

In turning then from a notion of freedom which exists as more of a potency (than as an act) toward a notion of freedom which would exist as more of an act (than as a potency), as a point of departure, we can notice how our individual freedom exists in different ways or how partial it is as we move from person to person. Some persons seem to be more free than others. Beyond our simply having an ability or a freedom to make either this decision or that decision, as we now turn toward any choices that we might make in any actions that we would like to do,

chance *or as mere chance* needs to be distinguished from a notion of chance *as a determination of probability* (having at times a calculable, numeric form of designation). If our point of departure is initially the dominance or the prevalence of randomness within our currently existing world, in moving from apprehensions of possibility toward determinations of probability, we should find that a positive relation exists between a heightening or a multiplication of frequencies with respect to a growing number of chance conjunctions and the possible or the more likely emergence of a new order of things and events so that, among these things and events, a larger number of repetitive schemes, cycles, or circuits can begin to exist for perhaps the first time within the being of

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a second order of freedom is found to exist as a divinely created effect and yet free human act if we notice that our choices or our actions can exist in two radically different ways: either as liberating catalysts and so as causes that redound and add to the extent of our human freedom or, conversely, as truncating actions and maneuvers which subtract or which, in some way, diminish the extent and the breath of our human freedom. The initial potency of our freedom or, perhaps more accurately, the active potency of our freedom which exists as a divinely created effect that belongs to all of us as human beings differs (it is to be distinguished) from the kind of freedom which exists in us by way of any specific choices that we could be making or any choices that, in fact, we have already made. The difference points to why or when, at times, it cannot be said that God is existing or functioning in some way as a direct cause of all of our actions. If, for instance, a given concrete, human choice is *lacking* in the meaning or in the intelligibility that it should have, we know that, in its unintelligibility, it cannot be said to come from God as their reasonable, probable cause (as their reasonable, probable source), God being God. If, as human agents and subjects, we should ever do anything that could be lacking in meaning or intelligibility, then, in this context and only in this context, we would have to admit to ourselves that, here, we are entirely acting on our own behalf. We alone are being active in our actions and we have only ourselves to blame for what is not right, for what is not reasonable, or for what is not intelligible in whatever we could be doing. It is only we who are doing any causing in effecting or in causing anything else which could possibly arise, exist, or, in some way, happen (the lack of rationality in our causing existing in any effects which are somehow being caused) and so, in a way, we would be acting in a way that would subtract or which would diminish the degree of freedom that, currently, we could be having or enjoying. Cf. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 117-118, as cited by Lamb, "Mystery of Divine Predestination," *Thomism and Predestination*, p. 221. Instead of a freedom that, in its intelligibility, would have to come to us from God, we would have a defect or a corruption of freedom which comes from us as subjects because it exists as our willfulness; or, in other words, it would exist as a negative, self-denying kind of freedom. Our ability to ponder and to deliberate about different things in order to think about whether we should do this act or this other act (even as this facility remains or endures) would then itself lessen in its quality or in its acuteness if our ability to imagine, think, and ponder about the possibility of different options is, in some way, adversely affected. Lack of wisdom in our choices and decisions redounds, in its own way, to the kind of understanding (or to the lack of understanding) that we could be bringing to new situations which need to be understood if new decisions are needed about how, appropriately, we should respond in a given context.

The necessity of grounding the intelligibility of our human behavior in a way which

both our physical and human worlds (albeit within parameters or boundary conditions which pertain to determinate, fixed constants that universally apply within the dynamics of our currently existing world, given how our world happens to exist).<sup>212</sup> The existence of constants within the physics of our world in the movement of objects points to constants which exist within other dimensions (within other orders of meaning and being as we move beyond physics into other sciences and, from there, into recurrent schemes that pertain the life of plants, animals, and human beings). The larger the number of chance conjunctions or the larger the number of chance encounters over a longer period of time, the more likely or the more probable will there be the eventual

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somehow directly refers to God as the originator of all meaning and intelligibility accordingly explains why, as we move from God as our Creator toward God as ultimately our Keeper and Redeemer, we must attend to an ordering of other promotions which can be identified as we move toward other divinely caused effects which act on us to effect and to create the kind of freedom which properly belongs to us as human beings. One order of them facilitates a good maintenance of our human lives while another makes for the creation of other goods which enrich and add to the quality of our individual human lives. Intelligibility, being, and freedom – these are all added and joined to each other.

In general terms thus, our moving toward an order of other goals and goods supposes promotions which exist as: (1) an array of other subjective objective conditions that exist interiorly within us as these would refer, for instance, to the good of our having acts of inquiry and understanding that we must have if, on the basis of our cognitive ability as a potency, we are to move through acts from A to B toward a sound “knowledge of possibilities” that we can then consider and think about before, in the end, making any kind of decision; and (2) an array of trans-subjective, objective conditions which refer to external conditions and variables of one kind or another that touch on how we live and exist within our currently functioning social order (within a society which exists as the effect of an operative, functioning, social order). Our particular human context and its constitutive conditions and circumstances press and weigh upon us, or they have been pressing upon us in ways which have either increased the good and the value of our individual lives or, perhaps conversely, they have removed or they have taken us away from the good and the value of our individual, human lives. Cf. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 378, pp. 101-102; Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, pp. 245-248, as cited by Matava, p. 226. On the surface of things, in terms of appearances, some conditions seem to be more freeing for us than the influence and the impact of other conditions. Controversies and questions abound in any judgements that we would want to make. However we should decide any given case, whatever the means that we should choose to do this or that action – our deliberations and choices, their implementation, the results, the effects – these are all conditioned by promotions which point to varying degrees of influence and causation and so, from this, the rationality of coming to a self-understanding which realizes and knows that the expressiveness and the exercise of our human freedom is not able to exist and function as if it exists as some kind of unassisted, unrestricted thing. To ignore where restrictions and limitations exist encourages ways of thinking and living which will, in time, reduce the kind of freedom which, in fact, properly belongs to us as human subjects as abuses or misuses of our free human willing lead to forms of corruption that, in turn, enervate and then destroy the freedom of our created human agency.

emergence of a new constellation of chance conjunctions that could be eminently fruitful and productive. That which is initially unlikely becomes more and more probable. A new thing emerges either as a new order or as a new individual thing.

Within the being of all this variety and in the preparation and in the gestation which would exist within this variety, the randomness of every given event, in its randomness, accordingly points to some kind of useful role which each plays in a way which points to an intelligibility which, in some way, it has although, as we have been noting, we might not grasp what, for us, would be the form or

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To move then toward a solution that can reconcile conflicting realities (if we should tend to assume that God's freedom wars with the ups and downs of our created, individual human freedom), let us begin with an Aristotelian understanding of God as an immovable, immobile, first mover (or God as pure act in lacking any kind of potency) if we are to understand how God directly causes our human freedom in terms of that which we do in our different human acts (our many acts and actions, our choices and decisions which all differ from merely our capacity or our ability to make some kind of choose, whether to do this act or this other act).

An initial determination works from a principle that thinks in terms of act causing act or act effecting act and not in terms of potency causing or effecting any act (which exists as a contradiction since that which does not exist cannot cause something else to exist). Hence, along these lines, a direct line of causation can be found to exist between God as our first mover and pure act and we, as consequential human beings, since, given the materiality or the givenness of our created being and existence, as human subjects (in our activity and in our receptivity), we necessarily initially exist within a condition of incompleteness which is signified in terms of potency. A direct order of causes exists between our actions *qua* actions and God as the first mover or as the first act or first action (although, as we have been noting and suggesting, in God no change, action, or motion exists that would move from a condition of potency to a condition of act). "God operates in all things" on the basis of a principle which notes that, necessarily, "an agent is [present] wherever it operates [whether it is in the doing of 'great things' or in the doing of 'little things']." Cf. Matava, p. 254; also citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1ae, q. 8, a. 1, *sed contra*; and p. 255, n. 28, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, John 15:5. Hence, if, as first act, God moves all other things that move and act, then, from a divine point of view (and so from an explanatory point of view), our subsequent motions *as acts* properly exist as movements that have all been caused and moved by God. A motion causes a movement in its agency; and movements, as effects, can then become motions (or they serve as motions) to effect other movements that, in turn, can also exist as motions.

To illustrate our point with an example, an act of killing exists in itself *as an act, as an action, as a motion* and purely *as an act, as an action, or as a motion*, it can be said to be directly caused by God through an order of secondary, instrumental causes (God existing as first act and first cause). That which exists as initially a motion also exists as a movement or as an effect that has been caused by the motion since the act of the moving or the act of the motion of something else resides in the effects (in the results that are caused) and not in the

the content of this intelligibility (unless, by a change of perspective, we are able to move into another context of meaning and significance).

The lack of intelligibility aside however (or despite an apparent lack of order), in some way, in their individual concreteness, random events exist as intelligible potencies. Their potential meaningfulness points to their possible merit, some kind of greater purpose, or some kind of ulterior value if, within the context of our reflections here, we can recall and invoke the wording of a teaching which comes to us originally from the conceptuality of Aristotle's physics which had

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actuating cause or in the actuating first mover. Compare, for instance, God's causality with the causality of a burning flame. As given, a burning flame exists in a condition of act or in a condition of perpetual motion without its having to move from a prior condition of potency to a later condition of act. Movements exist, however, in terms of a consequential radiation of heat and light and, in addition, further movements if adjacent, combustible material should then burst into flame in a burning which exists as an effect.

But, on the other hand however, through an application that we can now make, if an act of killing should also exist as an act of murder, this lack of intelligibility and reasonableness will immediately explain and point to why, with regard to this aspect, we cannot speak about an act has been properly caused by God (God being God). Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 5, ad 3; *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 4. As we have been noting as a general principle, lack of intelligibility in an effect points to an absence of divine causality. An objectively existing situation exists (something which is other than ourselves, according to the manner which it possesses) but, because in its un-intelligibility or its irrationality, it cannot be understood through an intelligibility and so known as a rational intelligibility. If we are to speak about it, we must speak about how it exists as an unknown, unintelligible "x." An analogical use of language leads to designations which can refer to this "x" as a "false fact," or as an "irrational, objective falsity," or, in other words, as an irrationality which exists as a species of "surd." Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, revised and augmented by Frederick E. Crowe with the collaboration of Elizabeth A. Morelli, Mark D. Morelli, Robert M. Doran, and Thomas V. Daly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 236; *Insight*, pp. 45-46; *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 117-118, as quoted by Lamb, "Mystery of Divine Predestination," *Thomism and Predestination*, p. 221. See also Lamb, p. 222. The greater the lack of intelligibility in something which happens to exist, the less will be our understanding of it (despite whatever we might do to try to reach some kind of understanding which could be possibly adequate to something that, in some way, whatever, we are encountering or finding within the data of our human experience).

However, if an act of killing should exist not as an act of murder but as an act which exists as a legitimate form of self-defense; or, more poignantly and courageously, if it exists as a sacrifice of one's own life that is done to save the lives of other persons who find themselves within a very difficult, human situation, then we must speak about how a given act of killing exists as some other kind of act (as some other kind of action). Its moral quality, its moral attributes (as an intelligibility), points to its possible goodness, to its possible value and

noted about our world that “nature abhors a vacuum,”<sup>213</sup> nature, in one somewhat obvious case, referring to the dynamics of spatial, physical, chemical, biological nature; and nature, in another more relevant case, referring to the givenness of some kind of meaning or intelligibility which in some way exists for us that we can somehow understand and fathom but which cannot be directly correlated with anything which could possibly exist for us as a direct act of understanding. If, in the human order of things and possibly in the physical order of things, we can act or in some way (without our intending it), we can act in a way which increases the number and the variety of accidental, initially unintelligible conjunctions that can possibly arise and emerge for us within our

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appropriateness and so to its possible rightness and reasonableness; hence, the necessity of our having prior acts of understanding and judgment which can indicate to us why, in a given situation and context, a prospective act of killing can be regarded or, more strongly, it should be regarded as an act that it is right for us to do. Its reasonableness, its goodness, manifests itself to us through another kind of inner urging or inner compulsion (an inner demand or imperative) which now exists within our consciousness of self and world in a way which points to how, within and through our moral deliberations, as our moral deliberations require a completion which would exist in acts of understanding and judgment, God is also acting as a direct cause, facilitating and assisting us in causing and effecting the good that we can do in our moral actions in a way which adds to the goodness and the extent of our human freedom if, by our thinking and our inquiry and by our subsequent actions, we are acting in a reasonable and rational way and so are not refusing the good which exists through additional experiences of understanding and reasonableness that can be given to us (even as we know and admit that, through our actions, the goodness and the reasonableness of things is something which we can always refuse and deny). *To know* that which we should do does not force or compel us *to do* that which we should do. Cf. Aquinas, *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 2; *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 6; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 10, 17; *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 3; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14; and *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 81, a. 3, ad 2; q. 82, a. 2. Knowing is not willing. To know the good is not to do the good. The created freedom that we have either to do this or that action always remains as a divinely created effect although, on the other hand and by way of supplement and addition, as God acts to assist and to effect our understanding in matters which move from apprehensions of truth toward apprehensions of goodness and rightness (a truth exists, at times, as a good that can be implemented while a good also exists as a truth that has been put into effect), God directly causes the enhancement and the enlargement which exists for us in our later exercises of freedom if, in our living, we are formed and guided by an openness that is increasingly receptive to the kind of good which can begin to belong to us (through our appropriation of it) if the end term or the final result is the goodness or the rightness of a rational human act. Accordingly, as we cite and borrow words that come to us from another context, as a general rule and precept and as a defined point of religious teaching, it has been averred that “in every good action the first impulse [always] comes from God.” Cf. Second Council of Orange, as cited by J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1978), p. 372. As, in our self-understanding, we attend to a form of mutual causality or a form of mutual priority which joins our knowing to our willing (each acting or causing the other in this or that respect), we understand why, in both cases, God exists as the originating cause of all things that are both wise and good.

world, we could be creating conditions that could be leading us to the emergence of new orders of things and to new patterns of recurrence which can possibly arise with respect to the being of new things within our currently existing world.

In other words thus, lack of intelligibility which exists within a disorganized mass of initial conditions exists as an indeterminate type of good. The good, relative to us, exists as an unknown (as an un-understood, known unknown) although, nonetheless, mysteriously from our point of view, it exists as a favorable, or as a seminal, or as a provocative kind of thing since with respect to

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In moving from a condition of potency toward a condition of act, all of our acts (whether in the intelligibility which belongs to apprehensions of truth or in the intelligibility which belongs to apprehensions of goodness) – these all presuppose God in terms of the unrestrictedness of God's understanding and the unrestrictedness of God's goodness which, in turn, points to an unrestricted kind of solicitude which alone exists as God and which explains why God always helps us in all of our actions and deeds whenever we should be doing anything which could be truly right, good, and moral. Our own actions grow in intelligibility and goodness and also ourselves, in our being, as we grow in our own goodness in terms of how we live and exist as active and receptive human subjects where, to the degree that we understand how, together, our acts of understanding and willing exist as created participations in the joint understanding and willing which alone exists as God, we understand both the directness and the application of God's causality and also the directness and the application of our own causality: how each is manifested. On the one hand, in their origin and genesis, our acts of understanding (as joined with our acts of willing) come to us directly from God as their ultimate source, God existing as *actus purus* (through created, instrumental mediations of one kind or other) and, on the other hand, the differences in understanding and willing which exist among us as human subjects point to how we all differently share in the joint understanding and willing which alone belongs and exists as God. The differences point to variations in our human individuality and to varying degree of cooperation and acquiescence which exist among us as human subjects as, in all of our acts of understanding and willing (big or small), what is received by us proceeds from within us as something which personally belongs to us in our subjectivity as much as it is also received as a gift: as something that we do not give to ourselves but as something that has been given to us (something that we have not by our willing of it, not by our earning of it, and not by our meriting of it). Nothing exists in terms of force or external imposition where, as a general premiss or as a fundamental assumption that we have been employing in the context of our analysis, if God's freedom is explained by the unrestrictedness of God's understanding (hence, we can say that “with God all things are possible,” Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27), if the greatness of this freedom exists as a consequence or, in other words, as a reflection of God's being as unrestricted understanding (God's intelligibility or God's intelligence explaining the depth and the range of God's freedom), then, in a similar way, our human freedom is to be understood and explained. Restrictions or limitations in our understanding point to restrictions and limitations in the extent of our human freedom and yet to the reality or the substance of our human freedom.

To speak now, however, about how other additions can be made to the extent or to the depth of our understanding and willing in a way which, in its own way, adds to the extent or

that which is lacking in intelligibility (relative to our own acts of understanding and the kind of generation and reception which belongs to our acts of understanding) - in some way however, this same lack of intelligibility serves or, in some way, as a potency or as an incomplete type of being, it exists as an agent of change; or, in some way (analogously, as a material cause), it conditions things as a point of departure; or, in other words, it is open to the possible emergence of other things that would be new, relative to ourselves and to the being of other things which in fact already exist within our world, and so it would be open to the emergence of a greater or a fuller order of things which joins previously existing things with the being of newly existing things.

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the depth of our human freedom supposes another order of things and another dimension which is given to us in our human experience if we should notice how, in ways which escape our conscious grasp and control, abrupt changes can sometimes occur within the interiority of our lives: a new sense or notion emerges or a new sense or notion is felt about how we ought to live, how we are to understand, how we are to feel. Apart from any understanding and desiring which we could be doing in any given context, radical shifts and changes can unpredictably befall us as human beings in a way which points to another species of created, contingent promotion which, in religious contexts, has been referred to in terms of “grace” (as something which comes to us apart from any kind of conditioning, understanding, or desiring which could exist on our part as created, contingent human agents), or which can be referred to as “operative grace” if we should borrow language which comes to us initially from St. Augustine and how he had decided to speak about how God exists as an intervening, redeeming, saving cause: immediately working within our consciousness of self and world to reveal an unknown truth, to change a long standing attitude or desire, or to heal and forgive a hurt in a way which moves and directs us into another order of willing and desiring which, in turn, leads us toward changes in our thinking and understanding of things and consequent changes in the means that we could choose if we are to move toward new ends and objectives which differ from ends and objectives which, previously, we have been valuing and desiring in our lives in the hope of perhaps finding a happiness in life which, allegedly, properly belongs to us as human subjects. “Antecedent” or “prevenient” grace presents itself as another way of speaking if our point of departure is defined by official Catholic Church teaching as this comes to us from the Council of Trent in its *Decree on Original Sin* (dated January 17, 1546). “In adults the beginning of justification [the beginning of our salvation] must proceed from the [prior] antecedent grace of God [as this has been] acquired [for us] by Jesus Christ [literally, *a Dei per Christum Jesum praeveniente gracia*]. Cf. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Canon Bastible, trans. Patrick Lynch (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books, 1974), p. 227. As a general principle, a “supernatural intervention of God in the faculties of the soul...precedes the free act of the [human] will [to condition it and to act on it in some way].” Cf. Ott, p. 226. “God operates in us and [also] with us [*in nobis sine nobis*].” Cf. Second Council of Orange (529), as quoted by *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, ed. Henry Denzinger, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 1954), canon 9, p. 77. Free acts are caused (by us or from within us) but not through causes which are conditioned by necessity. God creates free acts without having to necessitate or to force them in some way. God's freedom precludes a form of causality and government that would take from the freedom or which would annul the freedom of anything which He has created in beings which most resemble and which are akin to how, in fact, He Himself exists. Cf. Joseph Owens, *Human Destiny: Some Problems for*

In some way thus, within the created order of things or within the contingent order of things which exists in our world, nothing is ever truly lost. Nothing is ever without some kind of finality if we compare absences of meaning and intelligibility with a kind of deflective role that is played by the kind of good which belongs to our inverse acts of understanding whenever, within an inverse act of understanding, we understand (for perhaps the first time) that, in a given line of inquiry, nothing exists which can be grasped and understood.<sup>214</sup> A desired or an anticipated intelligibility that is being desired should not, in fact, be sought or intended; and if, in fact, some kind of intelligibility is to be

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*Catholic Philosophy* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), pp. 36-37.

God accordingly creates and effects our freedom by employing, in general, two types of causes or two types of causal promotions in a manner which is most suited and which more fully reflects God's unrestrictedness in terms of how God exists as an unrestricted act of understanding, willing, and loving: employing promotions as causes, in one order, which exist as needed helps and aids for us to effect our human living and other promotions as causes which belong to another order which, in turn, exist as saving, redeeming graces (both exist as different species of gifts) as we move from God as our Creator and Keeper toward God as our Savior and Redeemer. Moving beyond an acquired kind of understanding and an acquired kind of willing which belongs to us as created, human subjects and which exists in its own right as a divinely created effect (the acquired kind of understanding and willing which we have points to a discursive form of operation and reception and so to a lack of immediacy which belongs to this species of understanding and willing), an infused kind of knowing and willing also belongs to us as human subjects when we try to speak about changes in understanding and willing which appear to have no created condition or cause. "Consolation without cause" or, more specifically, "consolation without a natural cause" has been one way to speak about this kind of human experience when an elevating, healing change immediately occurs within us in a way which brings us into a new horizon of things, revealing a new world to us which transcends the inherited or the customary kind of world or horizon that, previously, we have known and which we have been living in and accepting as the real and true order of existing things. Cf. St. Ignatius of Loyola, "Rules for the Better Discerning of Spirits," *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius or Manresa* (Tan Books, 1999), 8<sup>th</sup> rule, p. 212. If, into our ordinary or into our acquired understanding of things, a novel understanding is introduced and placed within it which, in fact, properly belongs or which properly exists as the term or the content of higher acts of understanding (these acts existing as transcendent acts of understanding), then, within us, within the order of our consequent understanding, knowing, and willing, we become more free as we become more capable of participating in achievements that are greater, by far, than all the other things that we have been able to achieve and effect in the course of our human lives. Cf. Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris: On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy*, August 4, 1879 (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1979), p. 4; Gilson, *The Philosopher and Theology*, p. 186; First Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, c. 4, as cited by Leo, *Aeterni Patris*, p. 10 ["Faith frees and saves reason from error, and endows it with manifold knowledge"]. As a result and as a divinely created effect, our individual freedom becomes a larger, greater, more potent, freer kind of thing where, in this context, its exercise points to how, within our subjectivity, a transcendent form of subjectivity has begun to live and to dwell

understood by us in some way, it requires that we should ask new questions and so begin to move into a new line of investigation and inquiry.

In general thus, nothing exists without having some kind of place, role, or purpose even if, admittedly, in the context of our understanding, we do not understand or know that which could be this place, role, or purpose. Augmentations and additions which exist at lower levels make for a contribution of their own that, in their way, lead to a larger number and to a larger variety of newer things that are better if they can be said to exist with a greater degree of sophistication through the extent or the greater degree of intelligibility which now exists within them (inherently belonging to them). Through a kind of transfer that we can imagine and postulate, within the scheme of religion and theology, another kind of finality can be said to exist. A finality is allegedly salvific if we should speak about a kind of flawed material basis, or a kind of uneven material ground, or an apt, connatural relation which refers to a related kind of finality which is somehow being presupposed and which, to some degree, is somehow already operative for us within the dynamics of our human history as we refer to how a created, contingent order of things exists within our world in a way which is somehow prior to us in all its ups and downs (prior to our individual and social selves). It exists too as a precondition, relative to the kind of being which we have as creatures and the kind of knowing which also belongs to us as human subjects. The complementarity or the overlap in terms of finality (or the mating and joining of one finality to another) accordingly points to the being and the action of some kind of common

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in communion with ourselves. As much as our human subjectivity continues to be and to exist with all of its limitations and restrictions (and as much as it paradoxically continues to grow and to expand), more fully does a transcendent form of subjectivity exist within it. Through a more perfect union which exists between ourselves and God, greater goods emerge - goods that are more wonderful and wondrous - as they emerge from conditions which had not been thought to be very likely or auspicious; conditions, in fact, which are far from being likely or auspicious.

212Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, pp. 52-57.

213“Horror vacui (physics),” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horror\\_vacui\\_\(physics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horror_vacui_(physics)), accessed October 18, 2019.

214See Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 43-50, and how he distinguishes between direct acts of understanding and inverse acts of understanding. A good exists if a given act of understanding knows that, for us as human subjects, a desired direct act of understanding cannot be properly enjoyed by us within the conditions and context of our current life. Other acts of understanding are needed and these can be given to us: whether as other, new direct acts of understanding, or as analogical acts of understanding, or as infused acts of understanding. We exist in a condition of potency whatever with respect to any possible receptions and if we were to expand our notion about what is indeed proper or natural for us as human subjects, we can argue that our potency in terms of its passive and active aspects points to a degree of openness and receptiveness that would seem to be lacking in any kind of restriction. The only possible restriction that we can advert to is the fact that we exist as human beings and subjects not as a higher type of being and subject.

law or principle or, in other words, the law or principle exists as an effecting action (it exists as an operative common principle); hence, from this, the absence of any kind of separation or mutual exclusion that can be said to exist with respect to the being of these two distinct orders. Each differs from the other while each is ordered toward the other.

Accordingly, in the kind of order which exists and in order to understand the nature of this ordering in a way which can both relate and which can more fully point to the fullness of existing things and the larger activity which would belong to the working of a supremely eminent, imminent, transcendental cause (this cause existing as God), it is to be noted that within a varying, indeterminate field of space and time but between or among individual, contingent determinations of space and time, a kind of order or a kind of finality is to be alluded to albeit for us, an indeterminate type of order or an indeterminate type of finality, since, from our side of things (from our knowledge of the world in term of how, in fact, it concretely exists), we cannot be certain about the ulterior or the further ends, goals, or results of any developments or changes that are occurring within our world or about how accidents and miscarriages exist in a way that can assist and add to the probabilities and the actuation of a fuller form of the being of things that would otherwise, without chance or contingency, not occur and so come into a condition of being and existence. We cannot know about how things will eventually turn out (what will be the ultimate term of all the changes, the developments, and the disruptions which have been occurring within our currently existing world). We only know about the existence of an ordering which exists in terms of an indeterminate teleology or an indeterminate finality and that it is an ordered dynamic of many different variables which, as an ordering, points to the emergence or to the introduction of many different kinds of new things (whether we should refer to a non-human world of existing things or to the kind of world which belongs to us as human beings). The emergence of bonds within a non-human world of things conditions or it points to how bonds can similarly but differently exist and emerge among ourselves, among the being of many different human things in a way that can add to both the quantity and the quality of our life as human beings.

Let us look at two examples. For an example of this that is primarily taken from the world of physical nature and which, to some extent, is also taken from the human order of things that attempts to work with the order of physical nature, we can look at what we have come to know about the role of wildfires or forest fires as this exists within the ecological life of plants and forests.<sup>215</sup> Up until the mid-1990s, the U.S. Forest Service had operated a system of forest management which attempted to detect and to suppress all forest fires. Forest fires were seen to exist essentially as disruptive, destructive events and, in order to save stands of timber and the life of many trees, one tries to detect the emergence of all forest fires and then attempt to suppress them as soon as possible with all the means that are currently available. However, in the late 1980s, a change of scientific thinking began to emerge when it was realized and known that forest fires exist as a helpful, natural phenomenon and that, without their occurrence,

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<sup>215</sup>See Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), pp. 457-458.

some species of trees would not exist at all. They would not be propagated. Lodgepole pine trees, for instance, “require fires to propagate their seeds.” If you create a system of forest management which tries to suppress forest fires, some species of trees will tend to dominate and they will soon take over a wooded area (for example, the tall Douglas fir) and if you get high tree densities and huge buildups of dry understory, the fires that occur will be more deadly and they will be far more difficult to control and manage. They will spread more quickly and they will do more damage as they burn the “larger old-growth trees” that exist within a given forest. Instead of trying to suppress forest fires, better forest management points to the value of allowing forest fires to burn of their own accord. In this case, it is best not to interfere.

In a second example but more as this exists within our human world, for an example of bonding (and its consequences) that is principally taken from the human order of things, we can attend to a notion and a practice of marriage which is characterized by belief in its permanence or in its indissolubility. In marriage (as opposed to a notion of it which would want to think about it in terms of a purely negotiable human contract, as something which is effected through our individual acts of human willing and which can be dissolved through our other acts of human willing)<sup>216</sup> – in a *sacramental marriage*, both persons mutually engage in a form of self-renunciation: it is now no longer possible for either of them to return to an earlier condition of things (to an earlier condition and way of life since now, morally, through the making of a marriage commitment, we all make a new start; we turn away from our past; we burn “our bridges” behind us)<sup>217</sup> and, in marriage, within this context, we cannot shield ourselves from any difficulties and trials that could possibly come to us in the later course of our lives. The specificity of future trials and difficulties is entirely unknown to us at the beginning of things. The bond or the union which exists between persons in a way which makes them “one flesh” explains why this union exists as a species of higher, transcendental kind of thing (as a higher, transcendent kind of reality). It differs and exists apart from the individual being and the individual life of a given married person since the transcendence of this bond becomes a common point of reference for both. It becomes a kind of anchor for the lives of the individual married persons: it encourages them and it strengthens them. It gives to them a willing, accepting patience that is open to enduring whatever difficulties could possibly come in the context of one's married life. If love is not itself a feeling, an emotion, or an instinct, then, through the sacrifice of marriage, it becomes more “than a feeling or an instinct.”<sup>218</sup> If its basis is a renunciation and sacrifice of self; if, in fact, love (or

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216Ramón García de Haro, *Marriage and the Family in the Documents of the Magisterium: A Course in the Theology of Marriage*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. William E. May (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), p. 82.

217Robert Spaemann, “Divorce and Remarriage,” *First Things* August 2014 p. 2: <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2014/08/divorce-and-remarriage> (accessed August 18, 2019).

218Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, “Testimony of the Power of Grace: On the

true love) is rooted in the acceptance and in the making of many different sacrifices, then, in this context, marital fidelity becomes something which is encouraged and fostered. It is somehow guarded and protected since, here, it exists apart from the sway and pull of any emotions, feelings, or moods and the kind of tyranny which can belong to the press and pull of these different emotions and passions.<sup>219</sup> The self-sacrifice which exists in marriage in turn acts on others. It communicates the possibility and the reality of this type of love to any children that can possibly come into the world through the parentage of a given marriage and, through this selfsame communication, it becomes a basis for the same kind of love that perhaps the children of a marriage can begin to know and to manifest to others within the course of their own lives when later, as adults, they begin to freely enter into marital commitments of their own that, perhaps, they will want to make and to keep.

This kind of order in things, as a distinct kind of ordering, accordingly points to a systemization of things that eventually grows through time and through circumstances in a way which points to a species of self-transcendence which dynamically and inwardly exists within the ordering of our created, contingent world of things (as an indwelling species of active potency) and which, in time and through circumstances, can begin to emerge with a greater fullness and a greater measure of concreteness if, at a greater and further remove from the haphazardness of material conditions (or apart from the being and the haphazardness of any material conditions), new intelligible orders or new intelligible relations begin to come into a condition of being that had not been anticipated or, in some way, known before. Given the kinds of regularity which exist initially (for us) within our physical and human world, through the kind of determination (or the indetermination) which belongs to the ordering and the play of statistical determinations which point to the being of statistical laws (hence: eventually something will happen or something will emerge within a given space of time) – the regularities which already exist for us within our world can be succeeded and, indeed, at some point, they are succeeded by new regularities which emerge and exist for us as we attend to the emergence of new repetitive orders which, in turn, point to the being of new classical laws and to the invariant stability of classical laws (given our grasp and our understanding of these laws). Simple put within the context of classical laws: this “x” always happens if this “y” happens, all other things being equal (if, in fact, no other variables intervene to offset or to effect any changes or cause any imbalances or disruptions).

The succession of regularities immediately points to a kind of direction or a finality which, in its indeterminacy, is always open to new possible changes or movements which can exist as the term or as the influence of uncontrollable outside forces, causing possible disturbances and disruptions while, at the same time, also creating new conditions and circumstances which, in their own way, exist as opportunities. While a given scheme of recurrence can be subjected to threats and challenges that come to it from without and which can lead to degrees of dislocation and disorientation (leading to their possible disintegration), the possibilities and

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Indissolubility of Marriage and the Debate concerning the Civilly Remarried and the Sacraments,” *Remaining in the Truth of Christ: Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church*, ed. Robert Dodaro, OSA (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), p. 160.

<sup>219</sup>Müller, *Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church*, p. 159.

probabilities of adjustment within a given circuit, at the same time, point to a vitality which exists in degrees of flexibility which, in turn, if given, point to the stability, the permanence, or the goodness of a given scheme of recurrence. One enhances or encourages the other; the flexibility, the stability. The fragility of a given scheme can exist or it can be experienced in a way which leads to its resurgence or its re-emergence (its staying power, its stability) or it can point to the stability or to the durability of some other possible scheme of recurrence. Within religious parameters or if we should turn to religious examples that can be verified, it is said that the “blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.”<sup>220</sup>

As new regularities accordingly emerge in the wake of already existing regularities that have been somehow disrupted or which have ceased to exist in the way that had once been for them, the disappearance of regularities that had once been and the emergence of new schemes of recurrence accordingly points to how, in our world (in both our physical and our human world), dialectical or conflictual elements properly belong and exist. To some extent, as catalysts, they exist as instrumental causes and they function within a context of necessity which points to a distinct kind of necessity which belongs to the life and the being of contingently existing things. Instead of an absolute kind of causality, we refer to a conditional, a contingent, or a hypothetical kind of necessity which exists whenever we speak and think about how, possibly, the world can exist in some other kind of way (since the kind of progress which exists in our world does not exist as an automatic or as a mechanical kind of thing but, instead, as an open ended, contingent kind of thing because, to some extent, in our world, it relies on the decisions and the actions that we do and make and on the decisions and the actions which belong to the being and the life of other living subjects). What we have and what emerges exists as a circumstantial, chancy kind of thing; at times, as a risky, troublesome kind of thing. If we should do this instead of that, then possibly we will have this thing instead of this other thing that which we have been desiring and expecting since, as we have been noting, a given cause can have a larger number effects than that which would exist for us as our intended, desired effect. The results always transcend the inward grasp of our understanding and knowledge and the kind of control that we would like to exercise as we try to move, through the mediation of our understanding, towards the possible actuation of new acts and activities as these can exist for us within both the kind of order which belongs to us within the structure of our human cognition and the kind of order which belongs to us within the acts of our human willing and doing.

To understand a bit more fully what we can know about the kind of necessity which is operative within our contingently existing physical and human worlds, attend to a distinction that comes to us originally from Aristotle when he distinguishes between the requirements and the conditions of absolute necessity and the requirements and the conditions of hypothetical necessity.<sup>221</sup> Absolute necessity refers to “eternal phenomena” or, in other words, to things which never change or alter; but on the other hand, hypothetical or contingent necessity, to things that are “generated by nature as in everything that is produced by [ourselves in] art [or artifice].” The productions of outer, physical

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<sup>220</sup>Tertullian, [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/tertullian\\_154818](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/tertullian_154818) (accessed January 7, 2020).

<sup>221</sup>Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, 1, 639b24-640a1.

nature which exist in a world that transcends ourselves in terms of our physical, human existence resemble the productions of art and technique which refer to what we can do as human agents in the things that we can bring into a condition of being from a prior condition of non-existence. If any kind of “final object [or goal] is to be realized,” then always “it is necessary that first this and then that shall be produced and set in motion” as a necessary, prior condition, and if these conditions do not yet exist, we can possibly work to bring them into an initial condition of existence before we can then use them for other purposes as a new point of departure in order to do or to create a newly desired, greater thing.

An indeterminate type of finality which exists within the external world of physical, chemical, and biological nature accordingly grounds (it conditions) while, at the same time, it points to a form of indeterminate finality which happens also to belong to us within the workings of our human world and so to a lack of primacy or to a lack of comprehensiveness and sufficiency which allegedly belongs to the kind of causality which properly belongs to us as human agents and subjects since, in the context of our lives and as the makers of our own human history, we accomplish certain tasks and we achieve results which are larger and greater than ourselves and which are more than that which we have deliberately known and more than that which we have deliberately desired or sought to achieve. A determinate form of finality which belongs to us in our causality (as a simple one to one relation that would exist between a given cause and a given effect: where, for instance, I do this in order to get that) – this finality is, in fact, conditioned and, at the same time, it is complemented and it is transcended by an indeterminate form of finality which also belongs to us as human beings as we discover how, in general, finality exists as more basically or as more fundamentally an indeterminate, loose kind of orientating vector. Apart from our personal agency or, more accurately, through the means, the materiality, or the instrumentality of our agency, greater things are accomplished than anything which we might want to desire or seek in what we might do or in how we exist as human subjects. Beyond the extent or the range of our deliberation and self-control, we find that, in some way, we are changing ourselves as human beings. Our subjectivity undergoes unforeseen, unexpected changes. We turn into another kind of human being through changes within our inner life (in our subjective functioning: through our acts of reception and through our acts of doing and making) and, so too and similarly, other persons undergo changes in their subjectivity that turn them into new persons or into a different kind of human being in terms of how they live in relation to themselves and to other persons and how they begin to understand themselves in ways which differ from what has been their past conceptions of self and being.

Hence, to the degree that we attend to the scope and limitations of our individual intentionality and also to the intentionality which generally belongs to us as human subjects, to a greater degree, we begin to know about how, in fact, we live within a larger scheme of things which, in turn, points to how, in our subjectivity, our causality exists as a species or as a distinct type of secondary cause (although in a manner which does not subtract from how we autonomously exist in our subjectivity: how our subjectivity works with both the active potency of our freedom and with the availability and incidence of chance, circumstance, fate, or luck which always exists for us as we experience and as we exercise the choices which are given to us to make within the order of our individual human freedom). Our freedom is not real if we should think of it as an unrestricted kind of thing or if we should think of it as some kind of fiction, mirage or illusion which would want to have us think that, within us, there exists no levels of

reflection and deliberation that can come to think about more than one possible option or act that we can possibly implement in order to fix or solve a given problem or difficulty before we judge and determine if a given option is to be preferred over some other option where, through our reflections, we determine that the intelligibility of one option is greater or larger than the intelligibility of some other, possible option.<sup>222</sup> On the basis of an analogy that we can readily understand and grasp: yes, many roads successfully lead to Rome, but some are better than others. Better reasons, as these are known, lead to better choices and decisions; good reason, to good action.

From a further or a deeper understanding of finality in terms of its role and place, two aspects

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<sup>222</sup>See Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas Praestantissimum* 1 [“On the Nature of Human Liberty”], 1888, where he cites Ecclesiastes 15:14 to the effect, as regards our human freedom, that God has left man “in the hand of his own counsel” to make his own decisions; however, “not as though it were lawful for him to do whatever he wills, but because, unlike irrational creatures, he is not compelled by natural necessity to do what he ought to do, but [instead] he is left...free choice as this proceeds from [the deliberation of] his own counsel,” quoting Michael Davies, “Pope Leo XIII on True Liberty: A Great Pontiff Condemns a Modern Error,” <http://www.catholictradition.org/Tradition/true-liberty.htm> (accessed October 23, 2019). Summarizing the gist of the Pope's teaching about the nature of our human freedom (as this largely comes to us from Davies's summary of it):

A crucial distinction must be made here in discussing the nature of free will [our human freedom]. This is the distinction between being physically and psychologically able (free) to choose evil, and having a natural right to choose evil. In the language of liberalism, to say that a man is free to do something means that he has a right to do it, subject to the requirements of public order... But papal teaching distinguishes between [the good of] mere public order and the [good of the] common or public good [of all]. An obscene or blasphemous play might not provoke a riot, and hence [it] would not disturb public order; but it could hardly be supposed that permitting it would promote the public [or the common] good... [As the Pope teaches in his encyclical, citing his own words]: “Nothing more foolish can be uttered or conceived than the notion that because man is free by nature, he is therefore exempt from [the requirements of adhering to the precepts and the proscriptions of any] law” [where, by law, we refer to obligations, norms, and requirements which exist in a way which transcends both our being and our desires in terms respectively of our individual, human existence and of the subjectivity which we each have as individual human persons].

Simply put: “God willed that man should be ‘left in the hand of his own counsel’ [Ecclesiastes 15:14], so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him,” citing text which comes to us from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in *Gaudium et Spes* 17. Our human freedom flourishes in the context

accordingly present themselves to us in consequences which touch on both the order of things which exist within the context of a general metaphysics and the order of things which exists within the context of a special metaphysics which refers to ourselves as human beings, our being and history, and how we live and exist in the context of our subjectivity. How we exist as human beings, on the one hand, points to why the metaphysics of our humanity exists as a kind of apex, crown, or summit although, on the other hand, at the same time, it exists as a particularization or as a specification of a larger, general metaphysics. It exists as a species of subset while it also exists as a point of departure for shifts that can begin to move us from the reality of our being toward the kind of reality which belongs to the being of every other kind of thing as these things exist within the terms of a general metaphysics. The general conditions the specific as the specific participates in the general.

First, on the one hand, in the context of a general metaphysics, where dialectic, development, and change exists, meanings and beings which exist at a lower level are succeeded and they are transcended although they are not obliterated by meanings and beings which would exist at a higher level or, relatively, at a second or third level, whatever. An ordering emerges which moves from level to level, or as we move from one set of normative laws to another set of normative laws in a way which connects these different levels or laws through an ordering of them which points to the being of a cosmos and a hierarchy of things which would have to exist within a given cosmos if, in fact, x exists in lieu of y (as an effect of x) and if, without x, we cannot have z. An understanding, for instance, of physical, chemical, and biological laws points to how chemical laws explain internal changes that cannot be explained by the postulation and the intelligibility of physical laws which point to correlations which would exist among or between external kinds of change if here, by external changes, we should refer to changes of position and location, relative to how external objects move and shift about with respect to each other's location and position. On the basis of physical and chemical laws (but as a new and higher ordering of meaning and being), biological laws in turn attend to explanations of replication and to the reproduction of physical and chemical processes as these exist in objects which, in their own way, exist as subjects of physical and chemical change. Biological laws account for biological changes as these occur in the being of biological subjects (these same subjects existing, in their own way at lower levels, as subjects of physical and chemical change).

On the basis of these changes thus and not apart from how these changes are occurring within the order of our world, if we should then move toward higher levels of meaning and being; if,

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of the obedience that it properly owes to the being and the intelligibility of larger things and so it differs from the possible caprice of our human willfulness since the goodness or the integrity of our freedom only really and truly exists to the degree that it is grounded in the condition, the extent, and the depth of our understanding and discernment of many different things (whether we should refer to the extent of our self-understanding or our knowledge of the being of other things). The intelligibility of a thing always points to some kind of inner law, inner principle, or inner rule or norm which exists within it, indicating the reason or the truth of a given thing: indicating what a given thing is in terms of its identity, meaning, and significance, or why it exists in the way that it does and not as some other kind of existing thing (having the qualities or the features which typically belong to it and which do not belong to some other kind of existing thing).

beyond the life of plants, we should attend to the phenomenon of locomotion and the kind of self-movement which belongs to animals, we should find that their type of movement is not to be equated with the kind of self-movement which properly belongs to us as human beings (even if it is to be admitted that, as human beings, we can always behave and move in ways which would seem to be more proper to the life of animals than to how we should exist in our humanity as living human subjects). Laws that account for the behavior of animals cannot always account for the kind of behavior which, at times, belongs to us as human beings and so the search for understanding creates conditions that, in time, should lead us toward an understanding and a knowledge of other laws which are more comprehensive to the degree that their meaning or their intelligibility presupposes ranges or orders of intelligibility which would exist for us at lower levels. The higher a given order of law, the more it understands and explains. The higher order of law, and the regularity that goes with it, becomes a new point of departure for our understanding of all other things since, from a lower order of law, we cannot deduce a higher order of law and, as we have been noting, all higher laws in the way that they exist necessarily presuppose the being and the intelligibility of lower orders of law if, through the revelation and the discovery of higher laws, lower orders of law can be intelligently related and ordered to each other in ways which can indicate how or why, in fact, they are ordered to each other in the way that they are joined and related to each other. The intricacy or the complexity of the ordering evokes a sense of wonder which comes to exist within us and, in our way, within us, a sense of respect and admiration which points to a form of appreciation.

Secondly, in the context of a special metaphysics, with respect to ourselves as human beings and as human subjects, we find that some human behaviors can only be understood if we should refer to another kind of normativity which particularly belongs to us if we should attend to the nature and the life of our intelligent or our rational human existence. For some of us more readily than with others, we can move from a world of objects that can only be experienced (if they are seen or sensed) toward another world of objects that can only be experienced if they are adverted to through the kind of mediation which exists for us through our acts of questioning, understanding, and judging.<sup>223</sup> A material object that exists in sense

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<sup>223</sup>We distinguish between a kind of stupidity or a kind of intelligibility that belongs to the self-movement of animals and the intelligent kind of self-movement that can belong to us as human beings and which would seem typically to belong to us as human beings. Bees, ants, and birds continually build their homes in the same kind of way wherever they are but, as human beings, we can vary and change in how we act and behave. We can make choices and move toward alternatives that we can devise by imagining, grasping, and postulating other, possible, alternative courses of action and so, for instance, we can build our homes in different ways, whether in this way or in that way. In terms of endless possibilities and options, no upper limit would seem to exist for us since we cannot know beforehand what this limit will be or how this limit exists: if one of us (as a human being) will not come up with some new way to do things, whether in building a house or in persuading other human beings that they should adopt a given policy rather than some other kind of policy. Cf. McCoy, *Structure of Political Thought*, p. 23, citing Aristotle and Aquinas on the kind of self-mastery or the kind of freedom which belongs to us as human beings in the context of movements which belong to us as active potencies.

As McCoy illustratively argues his case in a reiteration of traditional teaching as this

differs from a formal object that exists within our understanding. In order to move from absences of intelligibility and understanding which exist at a lower level, new apprehensions of meaning and being are needed in a way which can join us to realities which exist as a further remove (at some kind of higher level). New laws can be allegedly known or new laws need to be known if we are to change ourselves in order to effect improvements in the manner of our human existence: if we are to grow in our understanding of different things and if we are to grow in an understanding of ourselves in ways which can best point us to the kind of good which is most proper to us as human beings since the kind of good which is proper to the good of other living beings is not necessarily the same kind of good which most properly belongs to us in how we exist and live as human beings. Between the good of being or the good of existence, in its immediacy and givenness, and the flourishing of our being or the flourishing of our human existence, a real distinction needs to be alluded to and yet, at the same time too, a kind of mutual priority or a kind of mutual causality where each needs or requires the other. The flourishing necessarily presupposes the being while, in a way, the being presupposes the flourishing since the condition and quality of our flourishing facilitates or it makes for the being of certain things in a way which also includes the materiality of our human being and existence. Without some kind of flourishing, certain things cannot exist in any kind of way (they can never possibly emerge). A degree of flourishing is necessary if we are to exist in any way as human beings. The flourishing, in turn, brings the being which exists into a quality of improvement and perfection which surpasses the perfection and the goodness which exists if we should only attend to the materiality of our being or the mere givenness of our living, human existence. Simply put: mere being or mere existence is not real being or real existence. It is not adequate or ample being since, apart from flourishing, the possibility of being becomes a questionable thing: as a possibility that can only be realized within a requisite set of conditions. Lack of flourishing all too readily leads to lack of being.

The controversies, conflicts, and questions which exist about what exactly is our human good accordingly explain why, within the human order of things and within the shifts which occur within the human order of things, a genetic type of development is joined or, better said, more accurately, it is conditioned by a dialectical type of development that is to be found as a

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originally comes to us from Aristotle: “swallows would not build their nests over and over again in the same way if they acted by intelligence and art.” Hence, as we can suppose and extrapolate from the truth of this observation, repetition in our human behavior accordingly points to a lack of intelligence on our part in how we act and behave (at least in how some of us act and behave). However, on the other hand or contrarily, a lack of repetitiveness in our actions points to degrees of inventiveness and to a spirit and a practice of innovation which exists in how many of us can think, act, and behave through the kind of agency or the active potency which properly belongs to us as human subjects. In our own way, creatively, from something which does not exist, we can bring something which is other into a condition of existence through acts which come from ourselves and also through acts which we can receive from sources that are other than ourselves. The reduction of potency to act pre-eminently belongs to God as *pure act* if, in God, as *pure act*, nothing can move from a condition of potency to a condition of act; in other words, to the degree that we exist in a condition of act (whether it be the act of our being, or the act of our doing or, the act of our receiving), all of our acts as acts exist in a derivative, secondary way and so in a way which points to how we exist as secondary causes.

constitutive variable within the stuff of our human history. Amid a multitude of ups and downs as some things improve and get better while other things decline, worsen, and deteriorate, our incorrect assumptions and understandings of things at times lead us toward the good of fruitful conclusions and new ways of thinking that are joined to new apprehensions of reality, being, and truth.

To give an example, attend to how a discovery in the science of chemistry occurred in England when, from errant, mistaken determinations of multiple, different atomic weights, William Prout (d. 1850) was able to correctly infer that all atomic weights are to be understood to exist as integer multiples of hydrogen.<sup>224</sup> In the atomic order of things, the hydrogen atom is to be regarded as *the fundamental object*. It exists as “the only truly fundamental object” which, in his day, Prout had referred to in terms which had spoken about a *protyle* although later, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Ernest Rutherford (d. 1937) changed Prout's designation in preferring to speak about a *proton* in order to refer to that which exists as the nucleus of a hydrogen atom which, in turn, exists as the nuclei of all other atomic elements.<sup>225</sup> Hence, from premisses that are unknowingly false, at times a true conclusion can be grasped and it can be understood by us although conversely, from premisses that are true (or from premisses that are correctly known to be true), we cannot get a conclusion which would be false since, in respecting and in observing both the principle of contradiction and the principle of identity in any deductions that we would be making within the train of our logical reasoning and thinking, nothing can be given in a conclusion that is not already given in the premisses that we are using as the basis of our conclusions and deductions. The truths which already exist in a set of premises necessarily lead to truths which exist in the conclusions that are drawn.

As two types of development or change, genetic and dialectical developments act or they both condition each other (in each their own way). Genetic development, in its predictability or to the degree of its predictability and regularity, points to how it exists as a species of determinate finality; dialectical development, in its unpredictability, to how it exists as a species of indeterminate finality.

To try and give an example which points to the emergence of determinations from indeterminate specifications of finality within the kind of ordering which exists within our human world: if, for instance, within the cultural order of a society, a decision or a judgment is made at some point to the effect that the human good is to be defined in terms of experiences of pleasure and the exhilaration or the reception of many different, pleasurable sensations of one kind or another (according to a Freudian understanding of human personality and personhood),<sup>226</sup> then it is possible to think about how we can construct a technological and an

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<sup>224</sup>Vasily Grossman, *Life and Fate*, trans. Robert Chandler (London: Vintage, 2006), p. 62; cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Prout](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Prout) (accessed August 22, 2019).

<sup>225</sup>See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prout%27s\\_hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prout%27s_hypothesis) (accessed August 22, 2019).

<sup>226</sup>Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, trans. Ilse Lasch (Boston: Beacon

economic order of things that would be geared toward the achievement of these ends and objectives (the achievement of many different human pleasures). A cultural order can emerge as a kind of instigator and cause and, conversely too, it can also emerge as a form of rationalization and self-justification. One variable can act on another as images or phantasms suggest and point to alternative acts of understanding or to the necessity of perhaps abandoning acts of understanding that, in some way, we have received and inherited from other human persons.<sup>227</sup> We can try to find better reasons for our own judgments and beliefs that can then be used by us as our means of propagation and defense and also, through an expansion in our thinking and understanding, we can move toward a knowledge of other pleasures that we have yet to experience and to enjoy. A new economic order can emerge for us or major changes can be implemented within an existing technological and economic order and, as a consequence of all this, from the panoply of all these changes, a restructuring of our social order in a context that can lead to new instances of genetic development amid changes which can also point to a larger context of conflict and disengagement and a dialectics which inevitably emerges within the circumstances, the character, and the quality of our current human order.

Too easily or readily, a good that is believed to be good can also exist as an unintended evil as also, in another contrary way, an evil that is believed to be evil can also exist as an unintended kind of good. Misjudgments and misconceptions abound. If, for instance, some medical problems emerge in a way that is conditioned by changes and shifts in the manner of our human living (if the level of sugar consumption, for the sake of the pleasurable sensations which it gives, takes a sharp rise in the volume of our food consumption in a manner which however leads to medical complications with respect to the health of our digestive systems: for instance, a sharp rise in instances of diabetes), then, through the experience of these and other related problems (for instance, a sharp rise in instances of tooth decay), in attempting to find more adequate solutions for these many difficulties and problems, advances in medical research will be encouraged and then put into effect in a way which reveals and which points to new orders of causation. Advances will occur within a number of different, related fields and much good (or harm) can possibly result. In any given field, our growth in understanding or our loss in understanding will act on us in some way as, together, our understanding of things and our misunderstanding of things subsequently conditions the manner of our human living: our sensing, and our imagining and so, ultimately our ways of thinking and understanding in changes and developments that tend towards ends and objectives that are not necessarily known or foreseen by us as, in the middle of many different things, in the welter of our beliefs and values, decisions are made which prefer to achieve a particular, intended good instead of some other kind of particular good that is not being imagined in ways that could possibly point

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Press, 2006), p. 99.

<sup>227</sup>See Charles A. O'Connor III, *The Great War and the Death of God: Cultural Breakdown, Retreat from Reason, and the Rise of Neo-Darwinian Materialism in the Aftermath of World War I* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2014). Summarizing its primary thesis, as a major event within human history, the trauma of the First World War “shattered the Enlightenment's confidence in human reason and exposed the 19<sup>th</sup> Century myth of inevitable progress, it challenged traditional belief in a divinely ordered universe, and it fostered an emerging cosmic pessimism and purposeless materialistic reality.” Cf. Flyer, Saint Augustine Health and Homebound Ministry, 2019 Day of Recollection, Saint Anselm's Abbey, October 26, 2019.

us toward its comprehensibility and its intelligibility and so to the reality of its possibility and applicability and so, from there, to its conceivability as a species of external object that we can begin to ask new questions about in a way that can move us into new forms of human cooperation and the subsequent emergence of a new order of human goods, the kind of society that we would have which would exist, allegedly, as a human good.

The difference and the tussle in choices which accordingly exist amongst us as human beings and thus the kind of dialectical finality which belongs to us as human beings (as we have been noting, it resembles and it differs from the kind of dialectical finality which belongs to the world of physical, chemical, and biological nature) – this all accordingly points to a malleability or to a flexibility, a possible order of improvement, or an order of perfectibility which belongs to us as a *potency* or as a *capability* to the degree that we exist as human beings: an order of improvement or a way of perfection which, as an order, we cannot and we do not entirely bring about through our own decisions and actions (as an order or way that we directly and consciously control) even as we know that, by our decisions, our choices, and our subsequent actions, concrete improvements can be made about how things exist within our world through changes that can possibly add to the good of already existing things and the good of our concrete human living. In our freedom and in the element of chance or in the unpredictability which exists within our experience of the reality of options and choice, we can limit or expand our options and we can decide what we would like to focus on and consider: what we would like to question and to understand and what we would not like to question and to understand; and, in addition, we can also decide what we would like to do and make and what we would also like to avoid and evade.

Always, in our current human condition, from a lack of comprehension and an absence of understanding and from an awareness which knows that, indeed, to some degree, we are always lacking in degrees of understanding, judgment, and virtue, we have an awareness of self that experiences and knows about degrees of loss and privation which are constitutive of ourselves in our experience of human suffering. We know that things are not quite right. Things are not as they should be. We are not at peace with ourselves nor with others. We are not at our ease. We are not happy if we cannot move toward a possible resolution of things which would have to exist for us on two distinct levels (because of how, in our complexity as compound unities, we exist in our humanity as human beings). Firstly, through our understanding and knowing of things, we want to have an awareness which knows about the truth of existing things. Secondly, through our willing and doing, we want an awareness which knows about what actions are indeed good because of how, within a problematic or a troubled situation, they can add or introduce degrees or elements of meaning and intelligibility into a situation in a way which can lead to salutary changes in the life and being of other things and also in the kind of life which belongs to us as human beings. Something which exists in a condition of possibility and potency can be put into a condition of act but not by means that rest solely within the ambit and the power of our subjectivity (through means that we entirely govern and control through what we would like to understand and know and what we would like to have and to possess by our different acts of human willing). From absences of intelligibility and being or within absences of intelligibility and being, we can have intelligibility and being (intelligibility and being can be given to us) and, from absences of right and goodness or within absences of right and goodness, acts of rightness and propriety which, in their concreteness, would exist as a species of larger, greater good. In our desire to

ask questions and to try to move toward a better understanding of things – the pursuit of our inquires exists as a species of moral act, since without the goodness of our willing, we cannot have the goodness of inquiry and questions that can possibly lead us toward the good of a possible understanding.

A reduction to act from a condition of incompleteness and potency accordingly always belongs to us as human beings within the myriad conditions of our world *but, however, according to different forms, ways, or modes* if we should, for instance, distinguish between the being of different kinds of goods and the mode of acquisition that attends a given type of good. A commonly known distinction, for instance, speaks about external and internal goods. Some goods exist externally to ourselves in terms of how they exist. They are informed by spatial and temporal determinations and we can acquire them through employing the spatial and temporal means which properly belong to us within the ways and means of our spatial and temporal existence as this exists for us within a spatial and temporal world. These goods however, in their spatial and temporal externality, can then be taken from us through the interference and the action of other external causes and agents that are not lacking in the spatial and temporal determinations which properly belong to them in terms of how they exist and be (through causes which escape our individual, personal control as much as we would try to exercise some form of individual, personal control).

However, on the other hand, other goods exist but they are not informed by coordinates which point to the reality of spatial and temporal determinations. They are not constituted by the being of spatial and temporal determinations. Their immateriality explains why they can exist interiorly within ourselves (within a self that is lacking in spatial and temporal determinations), and this immateriality in turn explains why we must speak about a form of acquisition and a form of reception which works with immaterial means or with immaterial causes, whether we should refer to immaterial activities that we engage in and do or immaterial receptions that we can receive and accept through the kind of openness that *generically* belongs to us as human beings and through another or a circumstantial kind of openness that varies as we move from one person to another. The immateriality of the means immediately points to the insensibility or the transcendence of the means and so to the necessities of transcendence as a kind of habit or inclination that needs to be given to us or which must be encouraged and cultivated in some way within us if we are not to be restricted or, in some way, compelled to enjoy an order of goods which is necessarily circumscribed or which only belongs to us through the use and the implementation of material means.

To some extent, we know through what we do that we can form our habits or patterns of self in a way which governs how we would prefer to dispose ourselves in terms of our different acts of sensing, questioning, and thinking as these acts attend to the being of many different things. However, as, through our self-knowledge, we can move toward and from an understanding of receptivity as this exists for us with respect to our different acts of human sensing toward an understanding of the different kinds of receptivity that belong to our different acts of human understanding and judgment (insight exists in acts of tentative, speculative understanding and insight exists in acts of critical, reflective understanding), we encounter an ordering or a range of different goods that, to a greater and an increasing extent, are detached or they are removed from conditions that are chiefly determined or which are solely determined by empirical conjugates of one kind or another as these belong to the kind of order which belongs to

categories and determinations of space and time. As we have been noting, the interiority of goods, through their immateriality, explains why, reiteratively, we can say about these goods that they can never be taken from us through causes that are informed by spatial and temporal determinations even if we argue and admit that, by dispositions that exist within an ordering of material dispositions, we can become more receptive to an experience and reception of goods that exists within us in an immaterial way.

In other words, if, in a better way, we are to understand ourselves in ways that can possibly lead us toward our possibly living in some kind of better, happier kind of way, we can notice or we should notice that, in the middle of our trials and difficulties, the proper resolution or the apt solution, cure, antidote, or desired remedy is something which must come to us from an order of things that transcends our sense of time and space and the range or the kind of order which have been belonging to our desires and expectations. We can think here about the reception of an unexpected understanding or knowledge of things, or the reception of an unlikely or an unforeseen appreciation of something or someone who is quite other than ourselves (a respect which, for us previously, had been unthinkable and inconceivable). A different perspective is somehow given to us or a different perspective can be given to us and in a way which necessarily changes the apprehensions of our imagination in a way which overturns our prior or our current sense of existing things. New images, new phantasms come to us. They are given to us through our perception and imagination, or we see different things and aspects in our current apprehension of different images, and so, on the basis of new images and phantasms, we can be moved or we are moved and touched in unexpected ways: either within the order of our thinking and understanding or within the order of our desiring and willing (singly or together, the understanding and the willing as each acts to influence and to effect the other). A new way of thinking and understanding and also a new way of desiring and willing points to the possibility of a range of other goods which exist as new significances and meanings, or as new realizations and truths, or as new values and virtues that are being formed and offered to us from within ourselves, from within our consciousness of self (relative to ourselves and to how we have been relating to the being of other persons and things); or, on the other hand and in a complementary way, we are related to new purposes and tasks that we are to do and accomplish (relative to ourselves and to how, in the past, we have been living and doing different things). The changes and the consequences, through restructurings which point to radical forms of reorientation of one kind or another – these all reveal a new order of things which can exist for us or which now exists for us amidst and despite our experience of many trials and difficulties (within an order of things which we might not know about but for our experience of trials and difficulties and our patience and endurance in accepting the privations that accompany us in our experience of trials and difficulties).

The kind of experience that we speak about accordingly points to a form of inverse proportionate relation that is given to us where, in fact (or strangely speaking), the more that we experience our finitude and limitations, or the more that we know about our ineptitude, our insufficiencies, or our lack of competency in our knowing and willing (all these things often existing together), from all this, the more we can begin to know or the more that we should begin to know about the possibilities of things that possibly exceed our grasp and apprehension; the more we can begin to know about the possible being of other, greater things: things are transcendent relative to ourselves and the possibilities of transcendence which exist within ourselves. In other words, simply put, through an insight which can come to us from a

self-understanding of things that knows something about how we exist within the paradoxes of human existence, we can say that no trial, no difficulty, no sorrow, or no loss is ever without an inner meaning of some kind which, in some way, belongs to it and which awaits our personal discovery and apprehension: an inner meaning or sense of things which is not initially obvious to us in any way but which can be known in a way which transcends our current limitations and operations as, now, it moves into us and as it expands our personal horizons through a shift in our consciousness which reveals a higher, contrasting order of existing things (realities which, for us, would seem initially not to exist in any way but which, in fact, exist for reasons that are unfathomable; for reasons that we have yet to grasp and know; reasons which, perhaps, we will never grasp or understand). When, at times, it seems that all things are taken from us; when we no longer have the use of means that have protected us in the past and which have encouraged us from not asking certain questions or thinking certain thoughts, we find that we have been placed in a condition of receptivity and potency that can now be open to experiences of things that, seemingly, cannot be known in any other way or which have not been known in any other way.<sup>228</sup>

Some kind of meaning - an inner sense, an inner light, or an inner awareness of some kind which refers to a kind of fated undertow, if it is known and, in some way, inwardly sensed – as soon as it is somehow given to us, upon our reception and our grasp of it, it immediately changes and transforms us in the midst of our trials, our difficulties, our sorrows, our losses into something or someone who can now exist in light of or who can exist for the sake of our finding our way forward toward achieving some kind of higher noble task, a purpose, or deed that is somehow given to us in the middle of our trials and suffering: something that we can do if we can patiently receive our trials and difficulties or, in some way, accept these trials and difficulties in a way which lessens and which relativizes any experiences of darkness and enmity that have been given to us.

In point of illustration, citing words that come to us from the mouth of Socrates (d. 399 BC) which point to the presence of an extraordinary, transcendent type of uplifting, converting, liberating insight that was somehow given to him: “One who is injured ought not to return the injury, for on no account can it be right to do an injustice; and it is not right to return an injury, or to do evil to any man, however much we have suffered from him.”<sup>229</sup> *It is better by far to suffer evil than to do evil and, if one does evil, it is better to be punished for it than to escape one’s punishment so that a person can be encouraged to avoid future wrongs in the deeds that one does* [italics mine].<sup>230</sup> In its givenness and in its

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228See how, in three different books (in *To End All Wars*, *Miracle on the River Kwai*, and *Through the Valley of the Kwai*), Ernest Gordon speaks about how, during their imprisonment during the Second World War, British POWs survived and even, in a way, flourished when living within the brutal conditions which commonly prevailed in camps that, in southeast Asia, were administered by the Japanese army.

229“Socrates Quotes,” [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/socrates\\_163900](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/socrates_163900) (accessed October 30, 2019). See Plato's dialogue, the *Gorgias*, which portrays how Socrates speaks about good and evil and the merits of accepting evil and injustice rather than doing evil as a response to the injustice that we experience from another.

230See Plato's dialogue, the *Gorgias*, which portrays how Socrates speaks about good

context, from the context of a larger, higher viewpoint in our understanding of different things, suffering exists as both a good and also as a greater good because of a useful purpose that, mysteriously, it serves and points us towards.<sup>231</sup>

Through our patience and our endurance and our openness and receptivity<sup>232</sup> (as or if we turn our attention and begin to ground ourselves in the being of higher things or as we are comforted by the mere being and existence of higher things that we are interiorly sensing in some way, if we try not to think only about ourselves and the unjust circumstances of our current lot), we should find that we can move from a condition of mere being or a condition of mere existing toward a condition of fuller, better being (into a paradoxical condition of human flourishing) despite the unintelligibility and the irrationality of our current condition and circumstances or, in a way, and somewhat strangely, because of our difficult circumstances or though our difficult circumstances. As a consolation for us, as a truth which is to be admitted, whenever in fact good exists, it exists not directly because of any evil or as the effect of any evil influences that could be threatening us but for causes or because of reasons and understandings which exist in a manner which is somehow other or which is detached or external to the existence of any kind of defect or evil in the being of existing things.

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and evil and the merits of accepting evil and injustice rather than doing evil as a response to any injustices that we could be experiencing from another.

<sup>231</sup>How, morally, do we get something from nothing? See arguments and evidence to this effect in how Victor Frankl speaks about the meaning of suffering in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, pp. 112-115. In its autobiographical aspects and in its clinical or analytic aspects, the work points to how, in ordinary human terms, sense or meaning can exist within many innumerable, unfavorable, impossible conditions although only within a context which, at some level, admits and acknowledges that our human suffering exists as a normal or as a natural part of our human lives. Some meanings, some truths can only exist and be known by us if some kinds of suffering are given to us at a given time and place. Perennially, we suffer in experiencing our contradictions and limitations which exist within us as we understand and notice that, in the manner of our make and constitution, we exist within this world as a compound of contrasting principles that are somehow joined to each other (matter and spirit, body and soul, understanding and willing, knowing and choosing) and that, only by living and growing through these tensions and by fully experiencing them, can we then emerge more happily with both a deeper and a greater understanding of things and a deeper and a greater love of things which has come to emerge and dwell within us (however mysteriously and wondrously, within the consciousness of self which we happen to have as human beings and as human subjects when we refer to the stirrings and the movements that are given to us within the odd kind of collection which exists within us when we attend to the sway of our emotions and passions, the inclinations of our thinking and understanding, and the energy which exists within the beat of our hearts and the turnings of our minds).

<sup>232</sup>Plato, *Gorgias*, 468e-473e; [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/socrates\\_163900](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/socrates_163900) (accessed February 22, 2018). See also Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 6, ad 1. As similarly (although within a religious context) Aquinas argues in teaching which comes to us from the *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5: “when a man sins, God orders the sin to the sinner’s good, so that after his fall, upon rising again, he may be a more humble person; or it is ordered at least to a good which is brought about in him by divine justice when he is punished for his sin.”

Conversely, the goodness or the luminosity of reason and understanding as a reality is something which paradoxically points to the strange kind of presence or to the strange kind of givenness which exists for us if we should think about absences of intelligibility and being in any given human situation (absences of intelligibility which, in turn, point to how evil exists as an absence of being within the being of existing things, within ourselves and within things which are other than ourselves). An understanding and knowledge of existing things and an understanding and knowledge about what we ought to do in a given situation is met, at times, with our failures to act and respond in a way which points to how the unintelligible non-being of evil and sin exists within us within our actions (or, more properly, in our unintelligible lack of action).<sup>233</sup> We fail to do the good that we ought to do as we distance ourselves from the kind of pre-motion which exists for us and which exists within us as it emerges and comes to us from the depths of our understanding and knowledge.<sup>234</sup> Typically or normally, as a spontaneously operative inclination that exists within us as a cause and motor,<sup>235</sup> our understanding moves us into specific acts of doing and willing; but, on the other hand, if, in fact, there is no willing or doing, if the willing does not follow from the understanding and the knowing, then the explanation is a decision or an act of willing to not act at all. The effect is paralysis, instances of paralysis. A non-willing of our willing accounts for how, in us or from us as first cause or first defect, sin and evil arises and exists and so, in its own way, it communicates itself to us and to others through another kind or order of pre-motion which is constitutive of an order and government which refers to the reign of sin which exists within our world.<sup>236</sup> We can say about this order that Adam, as the first man, was pre-moved (tempted) by Eve, who had been pre-moved (tempted) by Eve, who had been pre-moved (tempted) by the serpent (Satan) for the sake of eliciting our cooperation through a corruption of our nature in order to create a Kingdom which rivals, denies, and works against the kind of life which belongs to us in the context of God's Kingdom which, later, is brought into our world by a rival, second Adam who has been identified as the unity and person of Christ incarnate (who exists as *primogenitus ex mortuis*, as the “firstborn from the dead”).<sup>237</sup> From the consequent unintelligibility or the irrationality of evil which exists comes an absence of concrete goodness and so a consequent lack of fruitfulness which follows and ensues from the non-being which is always to be associated with privations of intelligibility that, possibly, we find and encounter within others and, most dangerously, within ourselves.

In other words (but with greater point and a greater degree of precision): “...a happy event relating to evil is not an effect of evil [it is not caused by evil] but [instead it exists as] an increase in good which evil of itself is incapable of producing [hence, its impotence], just as

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233See Giovanni B. Sala, “From Thomas Aquinas to Bernard Lonergan: Continuity and Novelty,” <http://lonergan.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FROM-THOMAS-AQUINAS-TO-BERNARD-LONERGAN-2.pdf> (accessed on July 15, 2020), p. 3. Unintelligible non-being differs from intelligible non-being if good reasons exist for why something should not be or exist.

234Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, p. 35.

235Lonergan, “*Pantōn Anakephalaiōsis*: A Theory of Human Solidarity,” *Archival Material*, p. 50.

236Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, p. 35.

237Lonergan, “*Pantōn Anakephalaiōsis*: A Theory of Human Solidarity,” *Archival Material*, p. 54; “*Pantōn Anakephalaiōsis* (2),” pp. 71-72.

persecution does not of itself produce martyrdom, nor suffering itself produce wisdom ([despite the contrary teaching of] Aeschylus),<sup>238</sup> nor trial itself produce an increase in merit, nor heresy itself produce a clarification of the truth.”<sup>239</sup> However, in the positive and negative relation which exists between good and evil, and to use words that we borrow from the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas: “...if all evil were prevented, much good would be absent from the universe.”<sup>240</sup> Greater evils can possibly exist if some evils are not allowed to exist at all.<sup>241</sup> Mysteriously (and not derivatively), good can come from evil and good comes from evil to the degree that, as a catalyst, evil exists as a kind of irritant or as a provocative agent. Some kind of role belongs to it even as we admit, with respect to the being of all good things, that good can only come from causes which would have to exist in their own way as instances of

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238Citing words and an errant but inspiring, hopeful teaching that come to us from the Greek playwright, Aeschylus (c.525/524-c.456/455 BC), in his *Agamemnon*: “Zeus, who guided mortals to be wise, has established his fixed law--wisdom comes from suffering. Trouble, with its memories of pain, drips in our hearts as we try to sleep, so men against their will learn to practice moderation. Favors come to us from gods seated on their solemn thrones--such grace is harsh and violent” or, in another, in an alternative translation, “God, whose law it is that he who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep pain, which cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.” Cf. <https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Aeschylus> (accessed February 22, 2018).

239Amerio, *Iota Unum*, pp. 10-11.

240Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2. Citing the consequent text: “[physically] a lion would cease to live, if there were no slaying of animals; and [morally] there would be no patience of martyrs if there were no tyrannical persecution. Thus [as] Augustine says in the *Echiridion, sive De fide, spe et caritate*, c. 11: ‘God could have created a world without any evil whatever, but judged it better to bring good out of evil than not to permit evil to exist.’” Something better follows if we can bring good out of evil through a voluntary act which would exist from within ourselves as a cooperating, cooperative act that has been elicited and caused in a way which does not take from the freedom of the voluntary act in question but which, instead, adds to the freedom of the act which exists as a secondary, cooperative, causal act.

Please note, however, that the context of Aquinas's understanding is the relevance of a theological understanding that is joined to a metaphysical or a philosophical understanding of finality that is not estranged from a notion of finality that thinks in terms of the primacy of indeterminacy and the emergence and the development of things which, before, had not existed and which, on the basis of current conditions, had not been anticipated or expected. Cf. Patrick H. Byrne, “The Thomist Sources of Lonergan's Dynamic World-View,” *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, vol. 46, n. 1 (January 1982): 108-145.

Within a theological order of things, from Augustine comes an insight to the effect that nothing in our world exists outside of a providential, divinely ordered scheme of things. Cf. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 10. If evil exists, God, as an unrestricted act of understanding permits this evil to exist for some kind of reason that only it knows where, in some way, everything is being used by God to achieve a higher kind of good (a good which is greater to the extent that it is higher and more noble in the manner of its existence). Nothing in our world

good (through a connatural relation in meaning and intelligibility that would have to exist between a given good and some other kind of good: cause and effect). Good comes from good (if intelligibility comes from intelligibility or if it leads to intelligibility; reasonableness, from and toward reasonableness; a perfection, from and toward a perfection; or an act, from and toward an act) where here, within this general context, a given evil can be wisely and virtuously turned toward new and greater instances of good since we know, in terms of a prior context of existing things within our world, that, if we should attend to the being of our world and to how it exists, if we should attend to the contingent, created order of things as this exists within the order of our currently functioning human context, we should notice that, in an apparently random way and in a seemingly unexpected way, new things do begin to emerge or

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is ever lost. Nothing is ever omitted. Good is drawn from evil; it is brought out of evil which is not exactly to say, however, that good comes from evil in terms of cause and effect. In the transition which does occur as good is brought out of evil, only an unrestricted kind of understanding is able to take something that is utterly lacking in any kind of intelligibility and being and, by somehow working with it, change it or convert it into something that has intelligibility and being.

If God accordingly exists as the Creator of all existing things, then, from an absolute condition of non-being or from nothingness or nothing (*ex nihilo*), he has drawn being. He has created being in a manner which points to two specifications of it (one, negative; the other, positive). First, being cannot come from God as source in terms of any kind of emanation or proceeding since, if this were so, a common nature or a common intelligibility would have to exist between God and what God has effected and brought into the condition of being as this exists in the manifold of creation. Second, being comes from non-being but not in terms of cause and effect (as we have noted) where, allegedly here, a potency in its causing would be moving itself into a condition of act or it would be reducing itself from a condition of potency to a condition of act. Between potency and act, a disjunction exists since, as human beings, from potency as potency we cannot get any kind of act. From nothing we cannot derive something which is not nothing. Hence, in order to speak about the possibility of bringing instances of being from the condition of non-being, an all powerful, transcendent act of understanding and willing would be needed and, in referring to this type of act, we would have to refer to the propriety or to the necessity of a divinely active acting subject.

To quote from a question and, implicitly, an assertion that comes to us from Socrates in the reasoning which he uses if we are to move in terms of cause and effect from a knowledge of acts toward a knowledge of subjects: if, for instance, we can intelligently move from human activities to human beings; if we can intelligently move from activities which belong to horses to horses; if we can intelligently move from musical activities to the being of musicians; *a fortiori*, "...is there anyone who believes in supernatural acts and not in supernatural beings? ['does any man believe in spiritual activities who does not believe in spirits?' or, alternatively in translation, 'can a man believe in spiritual and divine agencies, and not in spirits or demigods?']" Cf. "Socrates' Defense (Apology)," *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princetown University Press, 1961), p. 13, as cited by John W. O'Malley, *Four Cultures of the West* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: First Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 78. See also Plato, "Apology," *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), p.

they will eventually begin to emerge into an unexpected, novel condition of being from what has been their prior absence of being, or from what has been existing as their privation of being. The longer the possible passage of time within our world of space and time and, within the parameters of our human world, the longer or the greater our human patience and forbearance, the more likely will be the chance or the probability that, at some point, a change will occur that will lead to a new cycle of recurrent events and activities and so to a new order of things that is able to produce a series of new effects and consequences. The evil or the lack of intelligibility which has been existing is not destined to last forever since, to the degree that evil exists and spreads and to the degree that contradictions abound and fester within it, conditions are created which reveal its impotence, its ineptitude, and, ultimately, its uselessness and futility. According to a traditional understanding of things that we can recall and recite to ourselves: “pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall,”<sup>242</sup> or, in other words, frankly spoken, from within the kind of dynamic (the kind of dialectic)<sup>243</sup> which exists within the intrusion and reign of many evil deeds and actions, the mass of evil ultimately collapses from within itself. It “is crushed by its own excess.”<sup>244</sup>

However, in addition and in a way which points to degrees of complexity, if, from evils, goods can be brought into a condition of being and if, from evils and the provocation of a given evil, a certain type of good can possibly emerge and exist for the first time, then, *a fortiori*, from the stress, the communication, and the suffering of greater evils, greater goods can be possibly encouraged; many greater, unanticipated goods can be brought into a condition of being for the first time through developments and changes and sufferings that had not been expected, or in any way sought, planned, or intended. A kind of hierarchy in the being of things is to be alluded to if we should attend to how, from a given type of evil, a given type of good can be more easily brought into the fullness of its unforeseen existence. We already know that, in our world, from absences of intelligibility in our understanding and knowledge of things, to a larger and greater extent, we can have absences of intelligibility in the manner of our human

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25; and *The Essential Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1999), p. 527.

Acts point to origins and to centers of activity (ultimate acts to ultimate origins; ultimate acts to ultimate actors) which would have to exist in their own way as unities which would exist as effectively active subjects (either respectively as a mundane subject or as a divine subject). From within a theological understanding of things (as this comes to us from from both Augustine and Aquinas, Aquinas deriving from Augustine), a philosophical understanding of things is to be alluded to (as this comes to us from Aristotle, the teaching of Aquinas deriving from the teaching of Aristotle) which is grounded in how and why, in our understanding, we must speak about a real distinction which distinguishes potency from act since no change or development can occur in anything if we do not speak about some type of other which is actual and not potential. Nothing which is potential can explain that which is actual and, because this is so, to explain acts we need to refer to the being of other acts.

241Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas On the Nature of Human Liberty*, 33 (*s.l.*: St. Athanasius Press, 2016), p. 54.

242Proverbs 16:18.

243Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, p. 25.

244Lonergan, “Philosophy of History,” *Archival Material*, p. 35.

living and acting.<sup>245</sup> Lesser evils easily lead to greater evils and to a larger number of these evils. Recalling words that have come down to us from the teaching of Aristotle that touch on these matters: in our understanding of things, “the least initial deviation from the truth [of things] is multiplied later a thousandfold.”<sup>246</sup> An initial lack of understanding inclines us to move in directions that tend to add to our previous lack of understanding. Our incomprehension can cumulatively grow and increase in a way which is not bereft of many moral consequences as, by default, an absence of intelligibility in our understanding encourages a similar type of absence which will belong to the order of our external actions.

Similarly although conversely, from bits of intelligibility in our understanding and knowledge of things, to a larger and greater extent, intelligibility and reasonableness can begin to exist for us within the manner of our human living and our external acting. Our lives can become better and more joyful even if we might not be able to express in words why exactly this should be the case. While the causality of evil is itself not intelligible or understandable (if we should want to speak about causality in any kind of proper way, if evil exists as a privation of good (as a privation of intelligibility and rationality), and if good exists in a hierarchy which runs from lesser to greater goods, then, in a way, as we move through a taxonomy of evils that goes from lesser evils to greater evils and as we experience these same evils in the depths of our suffering,<sup>247</sup> conditions are created or they are enhanced in ways which can then lead to

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245Please note in this context that the coming of good from evil is a teaching that comes to us from diverse sources which include St. Augustine and Viktor Frankl. To argue that *greater goods can come from greater evils* is a teaching, however, that comes to us from other diverse sources that could possibly include both St. Thomas Aquinas and Karl Marx. However, a real distinction in teaching would have to exist between Aquinas and Marx if it can be argued and if it should be argued that, for Marx, through decay and decline and class war, evils directly effect goods or they directly cause goods and if, on the other hand, it can be argued that, for Aquinas, evils occasion goods; they function not as efficient or as productive causes but as passive causes or as material causes if they are understood in a way which refers to how they exist as potencies or as prior conditions that are being used in an unexpectedly mysterious way by external agents of one kind or another: by active causes which effect, from unlikely conditions, a good that, otherwise, would not exist. Cf. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, p. 260.

246Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, 1, 5, 271b7-9. See Aquinas, “Prologue”, *On Being and Essence*, where he says, in his first opening sentence, that “a small mistake in the beginning is a big one in the end, according to the Philosopher [Aristotle] in the first book of *On the Heavens and the Earth* [1, 5, 271b7-9].” Cf. Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas On Being and Essence: A Translation and Interpretation* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), p. 1.

247See how Lonergan distinguishes five different kinds of evil in the context of his *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, pp. 688-690. Physical evil refers to privations that exist within the order of physical nature; dramatic bias refers to the privation of mental and psychological health which can exist within some persons; individual bias refers to distortions which exist in the wake of individual human selfishness; group bias refers to problems and difficulties that are produced by the selfishness and pride of distinct human groups; and general bias refers to the lack of long term analysis which belongs to the shortcomings of a pragmatic kind of thinking which is usually spoken about in terms which refer to the alleged sufficiency

changes that would have to be more radical and thorough in the depth of their intelligibility and rationality if, in dealing with our experience of suffering and in countering our experience of unintelligibility in any concrete instance, a new, intelligible, intelligent ordering of things is to possibly emerge in a way that can lead us toward a larger, new array of individual, concrete goods.

Summing up: while, as noted, a finality exists within the world of physical and chemical nature and while a similar but different finality exists within a world which is inhabited by plants and animals, because another but similar finality exists amongst us as human beings, a quality or a manner of perfection belongs to us as human beings according to a manner or to a way of perfection which exists through growth and changes that uniquely belong to us in how, through our sensing, our thinking, our understanding, and our judgments and decisions, we exist, think, and live as conscious human beings (according to the intelligibility of our human nature). The goodness of our acts and the intelligibility of our acts is explained by the goodness and the intelligibility of our nature in both a positive and a negative way if, as human beings, we can act in ways which would deny and which would act against the kind of nature which properly belongs to us as human beings.

In terms of the kind of development which is accordingly proper to us as human beings and the order of perfection which belongs to this order, a set of conditions exists in terms of a number of constitutive elements. An arrangement of elements points to the intelligibility of an operative trajectory. The elements exist as (1) effects that, in some way, come from a greater cause that is not lacking in any kind of perfection. In some way, in the manner of our being, beyond our personal control, a kind of perfecting exists through a coordination of means and ends which is constitutive of the manner of both our being and our living; (2) the kind of perfection that we have points to a perfectibility which exists within or through an indeterminate order of finality (an indeterminate order of realization) whereby for us, as human beings, because we exist as causes with effects of our own, we can move within a circumstantial context from one order of perfection to another order of perfection (from the perfection of mere being and living toward the perfection of some kind of fuller, better being and living); (3) the manner or the mode of this perfection is enhanced or it is effected through a deliberative form of freedom which exists within us as human beings, this deliberative form of freedom existing as a species of operative potency since it exists as a species of act or as an operation although, at the same time too, it exists as a potency; hence, its incompleteness, its insufficiency, and its fragility; (4) the potency which belongs to us as human beings (whether it is passive or active) is such that it is not able to realize itself or, in other words, entirely move itself into a condition of act, self-realization existing as an idea or as a belief and also as a hope

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of common sense. In moving from physical kinds of evil through toward the shortcomings of our common sense, the absence of intelligibility in our human life and world becomes a problem that steadily grows in intensity and complexity as intelligible solutions become less accessible to a larger number of persons and as they are less acceptable to greater numbers of people. When problems become more pressing and urgent, our desire grows for solutions that can be put promptly and immediately into effect and so, in the wake of this type of desire, policies of one kind or another which value, as a good, the use of some kind of external force or compulsion if quick results are to be achieved in how we are to deal with some very difficult human situations.

or as an aspiration but not, in fact, as a fact or as a truth that can be proved through apprehensions of evidence that would be sufficiently satisfactory for the good of any judgments that we would like to make; and (5) the prevalence of breakdowns and disruptions within both our physical and our human worlds points to disruptions and breakdowns which can be massively disorientating and which would accordingly point to the problem and the quandary of how we are to cope with incidents of decline and decay in our world and the different kinds of death which exists in this or that part of our human world. As we move from the physical world of things to the human world of things: the more that a given thing possesses a greater degree of perfection and goodness, if this thing should be deficient or defective in some way in the manner of its being and operation, the greater and larger will be the harm and the evil that will result.<sup>248</sup> The less the good, the less the evil but the greater the good, the greater the evil.

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248Aquinas, *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3. In other words thus, the gravity and the depth of wrong that is done is to be correlated with the level of perfection and the quality of being which exists with respect to the existence of a given thing. More evil is to be correlated with the being of something which exists as a greater, more perfect good. The greater the goodness of different things in terms of nature, acts, and operations, the greater will be the evil in these things in terms of what they do or do not do if any factor works within any of these things in a way which hinders the proper functioning of any given act or any given operation.

A correlation of like proportion which thus exists between good and evil (greater good, greater evil where each implies the other) accordingly implies that a similar proportion and correlation should exist for us in any solution that can possibly reconcile the conflict between good and evil in a way which can turn everything toward a condition of intelligibility and so toward a condition of good. A solution is only adequate if, in some way, it possesses a greater goodness which can then measure the goodness of any lesser, given thing and if it can also absorb the dysfunction of every kind of evil in a way which can turn every evil, however strangely, into a source of goodness and virtue.

In this context thus, if we should move into the terms of a theological understanding of things that can be possibly given to us, an anticipatory heuristic emerges as a point of departure and as an explanatory key for moving toward a better understanding of how, in Christ's Incarnation and saving death, we can have or, in fact, we have a wise and an adequate solution for problems and difficulties that are posed by the strange correlation which exists between the extent and depth of goodness in different things and the evil that these same things can have and which they are enabled to do and which, at times, they do have, possess, and exercise. For this purpose thus, see Alain Besançon's, *A Century of Horrors: Communism, Nazism, and the Uniqueness of the Shoah*, trans. Ralph C. Hancock and Nathaniel H. Hancock (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2007) for an analysis and arguments to the effect that some evils in our human world are so great and massive that, if we are to have some kind of adequate understanding of them as a means of coping and relating to them, then we must move into theological ways of thinking and speaking in a way that would inevitably point us toward questions and inquiries that would have us ask about the possible adequacy, or the probability, or the likelihood of a theological solution which, in some way, is possibly given to us if, in some way, we can recognize it and, in our own way, accept it.

Hence, as we move from regressions and distortions (of one kind or another) which exist with respect to the organization and the ordering of many things within both our physical and our human worlds, the failures, regressions, and distortions are especially noticeable if we should attend to the human order of things which exist within our world and to the many conflicts that have existed within this same order of things in ways which have lessened and, at times, destroyed the good of society which must initially belong to us as human beings (as a prior kind of good which must exist for any of us if each of us to be born and so begin to live a fully human life within our differing social contexts). And yet, as a general principle, as we have been arguing, as an antidote, different kinds of good need to be realized although, admittedly, through an indeterminate form of emergence which accounts for the being of many different goods, and through an indeterminacy which is greater or which is heightened if, for the being of greater, more intelligible, more valuable goods, more conditions and variables are needed in a circumstantial coordination of them which is more rare to the degree that we advert to the insufficiency of our personal government, the extent of our conscious control. More so with greater, more valuable goods than with lesser, less valuable goods, an understanding and a knowledge of greater goods is often not too easily grasped and known. Their meaning is more hidden for us (although, on the other hand, it can be possibly known and discovered to a greater degree through later reflections which can possibly exist for us through the actuation of later historical judgments and through the kind of reflection which exists as an active potency through the acts of questioning which belong to the kind of analysis which exists within the interests and the scope of philosophy and theology).

To illustrate our point a bit: if, for instance, we should look at the birth of moral philosophy in the Greek world and at the intellectual achievements of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle and how they created new ways of thinking that eventually led to the emergence of new disciplines and new departments of knowledge within the human order of things, is it not without significance to note, in surprise, that these advances emerged from within an ongoing context of decline and deterioration within the world and the culture of ancient Greece? When the human world that surrounds us appears to be disintegrating and we find that we are losing our bearings and a kind of moral compass which should belong to us, can we not argue that the occurrence of these disruptions within our human world is not something that is not necessarily lacking as some kind of possible, greater good? We admit, on the one hand, that breakdowns of one kind or another (in economics, politics, education, and culture) can harm or impede us in terms of how our potencies are to be moved into a condition of act. In some cases, operative potencies of one kind or another might not be too easily elicited or too well encouraged. We might not ask certain questions about certain things or we could be asking questions that are nonsensical or unintelligible if, to a given question, an intelligible answer (an intelligible object) is not accessible or forthcoming in terms of the kind of cognition which belongs or which ought to belong to us as human subjects. In a given context of meaning, it can be said about some questions that an intended, intelligible object does not, in fact, exist for us and, if any kind of progress is to be made, if new questions are to be asked, then these must attend to the possible being of some other kind of intelligible object.

For an example of this, in the history of physics as a science, look at the intellectual kind of change which took place when scientists stopped asking questions about the nature of uniform motion or about the nature of velocity where it exists as a constant, unchanging motion and when, instead, beginning

late in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and proceeding into the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, they began to ask questions about changes in the speed and the velocity of moving bodies. What causes accelerations or decelerations to occur in the motion of moving objects? If no verifiable external cause is to be found to account for the being of something that is moving at a constant speed and if verifiable external causes are to be found to explain changes in motion when a moving object moves with a lesser or a greater speed, then the ways of science in the manner of its procedures point to a distinction which would have to exist with respect to the nature of the different questions that are being posed. Some questions fruitfully and properly intend an understanding that is to be reached through the discovery of an adequate answer which directly answers a question which is being posed. The possibility of proof through a verification that leads to corroborative acts of sense points to the legitimacy and to the proper being of a given scientific question or, in other words, to a question which does not exist as some other kind of question. A scientific question is to be associated with a scientific answer and a scientific way of moving from a question to a satisfactory answer. However, on the other hand, other questions can intend intelligibilities that are not to be found according to a scientific type of inquiry that one could be seeking or employing. If an external mover cannot be found to explain the motion of an object that is moving at a constant speed (in terms of cause and effect) and if it is not possible, according to the methodology of scientific procedures, to provide any proof or evidence that can point to a cause which cannot be found (it would have to exist in some kind of hidden or occult way), then we must move toward a conclusion and an insight which realizes that the wording of a given question is such that it cannot be regarded as a scientific species of question.<sup>249</sup> Through the kind of apprehension which exists in an inverse insight, we can discover that a given question is to be regarded as a nonsensical, unintelligible question. A given question is not to be regarded as a good question (as a rational question), relative to the type of understanding that we can have through the kind of scientific cognition which properly belongs to us as human subjects. If some kind of further understanding is to be desired and sought in some way, then some other kind of question needs to be asked: a question that would point to the being of another kind of discipline and to the kind of understanding which would properly belong to the being of this other discipline.

As we admit thus that adverse cultural conditions conduce to elicit a change of consciousness in us which is evidenced by the asking of new questions that can lead us into new ways of imagining and thinking and so the possible reception of new acts of understanding that had not been previously expected or anticipated, then, from all this, we can conclude that the more serious our trials and difficulties and through the experience of these difficulties, the more likely will there be a change in us of our possibilities and potency (in terms of both our active and our passive potencies). In terms of our active potency, we can become more open and more ready and willing to risk the asking of certain questions that we had not thought before to ask or conceive and so, by this change in the focus and in the intentionality of our asking, we

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<sup>249</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 46-47.

become more open to knowing and participating in new orders of meaning and being that can react on us in a way which joins us to a larger, greater world of existing things which somehow now comes to live within us (within the life of our souls and so on into the life of our bodies). A consciousness of newly existing things tends to affect us in ways which reshape the manner of our human living as we begin to think and move into other kinds of changes that can be brought into an order and condition of existence that we can work toward and cooperatively effect.

But, in addition and as a kind of complement, we have our passive potency and how, in ways, our passive potency can become something that experiences and changes in its own way as, in certain ways, or along certain lines, or within certain parameters, this passivity becomes more passive or, in other words, more receptive and open. A contemplative dimension can begin to emerge with greater point or force or with an importance that had not been too clearly or easily acknowledged before in the life of a given person. A contemplative dimension can become more prominent, something which begins to have more value and worth. With the help of our active potency, through what we do, we can then do things that can enhance the passivity that more radically belongs to that which exists in us as our passive potency than that which has been existing in us as our active potency. By being less active and less transitive, through our passivity and our introversion, we can become more open to receptions of meaning and being that, before, we have not been suspecting, seeking, or even trying to work toward in any given way. We set time aside, we discipline ourselves, we make changes in how we live, we find ways to be more available, we find ways to be more passive than how we have been living and operating. Each helps the other: our passive potency, our active potency; and, conversely, our active potency, our passive potency.

All these things being said thus, if we should think about the being of a transcendent, first cause who exists as a perfect unity of knowing and willing and if we should think about the dialectical kind of perfectibility which happens to belong to us as human beings in our lives (if, within the kind of order which exists within the finality of our human living, deliberation and choice exist as chance variables where some decisions and actions can emerge which are full of meaning and significance while others can emerge which are entirely lacking in meaning and significance while yet others exist as combinations of meaning and unintelligibility), then the bettering, the improvement, or the saving of our human choice in the manner of its perfectible exercise points to the necessity of some kind of major shift that would have to belong to it in terms of how better or how best we are to exercise the limited kind of freedom which belongs to us as human subjects.

However, in thinking about these matters, are we speaking about some kind of healing or curing that is somehow needed? Or, are we thinking about a form of raising, an elevating, or sublation that takes a given reality and which then brings it into the being of some other reality? Or, are we thinking and speaking about some kind of combination of the two? Something which, in its unity, exists as different levels? We can argue that a kind of finality properly belongs to us as human beings and, as we have been noting, from the viewpoint of our cognition and the standpoint of our metaphysics, our finality exists as an indeterminate type of thing within an indeterminate kind of world which moves towards different kinds and degrees of determination. Certain aspects of all this we do not understand in any satisfactory way (given the kind of cognition that belongs to us as human beings) although, as we refer to the

being of unknowns which exist for us as known unknowns in our awareness of them, we can admit that the lack of determinacy points to a species of goodness which exists if we should refer, for instance, to the goodness of our human freedom and the liberty which exists within the scope and the exercise of our human freedom. The indeterminacy of our freedom, in its exercise, comes with or it is explained by the intelligibility of our freedom as a species of good although in a way which would have to point to a parallelism which exists if we should compare the indeterminacy of our freedom as a good with the indeterminacy of both ourselves and our world as also a good as this also exists for us as some kind of given (hence, as a species of effect that is not caused by ourselves). We exercise our freedom within a world that is not bereft of a certain type of flexibility and openness that we could refer to in ways which suggest to us that we can speak about it as if it, too, has a kind of freedom which properly belongs to it.

These distinctions aside however (for instance, a rational kind of freedom that is grounded in acts of understanding differs from an accidental or a haphazard kind of freedom that is grounded in acts of willing, apart from acts of understanding), if indeterminacy exists as a good and hence as an intelligible, reasonable, rational thing, and if it cannot be lacking in its having an intelligibility which properly belongs to it (though we might not understand or grasp this intelligibility), then the affirmation of intelligibility in terms of its being and actuality points to some kind of relation which would have to exist in terms of a correlative act of understanding if intelligibility, as a term or datum, cannot exist apart from how its origin exists in some kind of act of understanding. Intelligibility and understanding go with each other or, to employ a traditional way of teaching: sense goes with sensibility as intellect goes with intelligibility. You cannot have one without the other. Intelligibilities which exist, but which we cannot grasp or understand through our limited acts of understanding, point to the necessity of positing an unrestricted, transcendental form of cognition which can understand things that we can never know. The intelligibility of indeterminacy (in its goodness), if it is not lacking in intelligibility, points to a ground which would have to exist as some other kind of subjective, objective other that, from us, elicits or solicits our wonder and interest. Necessarily, we would have to refer to an unrestricted kind of knowing and to an unrestricted kind of willing which, allegedly, in its unrestrictedness, alone belongs to God if here, by God, through the use of this word, we should refer or we would want to refer to a transcendent center of activity or, in other words, to a unique species of subjectivity that can be conceptualized in terms which traditionally refer to the existence of God and to an alleged nature which would have to belong only to God (if God is to be distinguished in a way which sets him apart from anything else): God as the cause or principle of being. A divine nature, in its divinity, would have to differ from the being of all other natures (from the kinds of nature which belong to us and which exist within our world and which would have to belong to the being of every other kind of thing that exists within our world of space and time).

The bettering of our human choice, in relative terms, accordingly supposes a relative order of perfection which already exists within us and amongst us to the degree that we can devise options and make choices about how we are to think and live (we enjoy a given level of self-reflection that exists whenever we move into an act of reflective understanding which could lead us to the making of a new judgment) and, at the same time, if we should think about the possibilities and the need for some kind of radical improvement in the manner of our human choice and in the decisions that we take and make, the further or the radical bettering of our

human lot accordingly points to a second order of perfectibility which would have to exist at a higher level in a way that would be distinct and separated but which would be joined or added to our lower first level, accordingly changing and raising this lower level to a higher level if our lower level activities begin to occur on the basis of a new foundation that, in turn, creates a new context for how we live and think. The reality of these two orders, where they are found to exist in human beings, suggests or it points to two forms of divine enabling or to two forms of divine assistance which would then exist in their own way as two distinct orders, a lesser good of order existing within or open to a higher good of order or, more specifically, for want of better terms and concepts, the good of our choices at a lower level would exist within the good order of virtue which would exist at some kind of higher level. It would inform the being of the lower level or, in other words, it takes the good of choice into itself as an exercise which points to the reality and the goodness of our human freedom and it turns it into the good of virtue where, in everything that we do, we always act thoughtfully and wisely and with a kind of love that is informed by the good of self-sacrifice and the care that is to be given to the well-being of other persons and things. Act augments act in a way which supplants one act with another act or which turns a given act into something more than what it is as merely or simply an act.

The good of virtue builds on the good of choice in a way which points to how the good of choice exists (in a preliminary way) as one kind of contingent, created thing and how the good of virtue exists as another kind of contingent, created thing: as a good which supposes both a number of material goods and also a number of immaterial goods as, at the same time, it also adds goods which belong to a transformative order of things which is to be regarded as ultimately final: ultimately curative, salvific, or redemptive. In both cases, potencies and acts exist together (a potency is known or it is determined by a given act) and, as we have been noting, no potency is able to move from how it exists as a potency to how it would exist in a condition of act. And so, in terms of causation, in order to distinguish between these two orders of good in a way which can possibly refer to differences in term and effectuality which would belong to the operation of a transcendentally existing, immanent cause that is always in a condition of act, in our language and concepts, we distinguish between God as the Creator and Sustainer of all things and God as the Savior and Redeemer of all things even if, within God or from within the context of a purely divine standpoint in terms of how God exists in Himself, these distinctions do not apply or exist. Our distinctions are grounded in the kind of experience that is given to us as human beings.

In the wake of the gift, or the givenness, or the creation of choice as this exists among us as human beings and in order to give our freedom and our exercise of choice a further good, a realization, or a perfection that it cannot possibly attain on its own through any acts which would exist as active potencies, our God as Creator can be conceived to exist in another way if we should think about God, in the providence and unrestrictedness of his goodness, as also our Savior and Redeemer. The one necessarily leads to the other if the one God or the one transcendental cause of the being of all existing things, in its comprehensiveness and omnipotence, is the source of all possible goods. Hence, relative to the given, created order of choice and the doing or the active potency which exists in our acts of choosing and in the wake of our different, individual choices, as an addition or as a supplement or, more accurately, as a bettering, renovating, transforming agent or catalyst, the good of virtue exists at a higher level

as a supernatural kind of quality or property<sup>250</sup> and, if this is so, our conception of God as our Creator turns toward God as our Redeemer. At an initial level, with God's help as *pure act*, our cognition and our knowledge of him moves from a condition of potency into a condition of act. But then, on the basis of this knowledge, with God's help as *pure act*, our thinking and understanding moves to a higher or further level as we think about a second kind of help that comes to us from God. We move from a condition of potency to a condition of act when we begin to think and speak about God as more importantly or as mainly or principally our Savior and Redeemer. The initial help of God as *auxilium* is replaced or it is supplemented by the second kind of help which exists as *gratia* [or grace] or which is spoken about in terms which prefer to speak about the being of grace if we are to have a concept or a word that would differ

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250Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 109, a. 1. Please note that, to avoid confusion, we can distinguish and, at times, we must distinguish between a moral ordering which exists in terms of an order which allegedly refers to natural virtues and a moral ordering which refers to higher virtues which would exist as supernatural virtues. Much depends on how we interpret and understand the quality or the condition about that which is truly *natural and human* for us versus that which is not natural or appropriate for us as human beings. In the teachings of stoicism as a school of thought in moral philosophy for instance, with respect to that which is natural and appropriate for us as human beings, we have an understanding of virtue that has been conceptualized and, from it, suggestions about how to grow in human virtue in a way, however, which encourages the necessity of a form of detachment which appears to be indistinguishable from a kind of indifference that we should have with respect to the things of the world which exists about us if or given the fact that the world about us is something over which we have no control or power of government. If we are to protect ourselves from the pull and push of our appetites, desires, and emotions, we need to introduce a measure of internal distance within ourselves. Simply put: we should try to avoid feeling or experiencing our emotions as they come to us if we are to make judgments and decisions that are not biased or distorted in some way because of emotional estrangements or emotional attachments that we could possibly have. For stoics, the detachment or the objectivity which is to be sought has been identified in terms which speak about the goodness of an attitude which should exist as *apathy* or *apatheia* in a choice of words that has led to interpretations and understandings which encourage a self-protecting type of self-discipline. We should try to avoid or to shy away from all experiences of pain and suffering which can come to us from without as these move us from within within the context of our emotions and feelings whenever, at times, deprivations of one kind or another come our way or as they befall us in the course of our human existence.

Hence, within this type of moral culture and standpoint, an understanding of virtue is given to us which is purportedly reasonable and thus natural, right, and proper for us and yet too, if it is practiced and put into effect within the circumstances of our individual lives, we will find (as would be stoics) that it tends to lead us into a way of living that is not entirely natural or proper to us as human beings if, in the ways which it prescribes and encourages, it somehow reduces or it takes away from the fullness of our human experience (the fullness of our humanity) if we are not allowed to experience and to accept and receive our pain as it comes to us in different forms. In other words, we can thwart the goodness of our humanity in its development and growth if we are interested in trying to forestall or to prevent ourselves from having certain painful, unwelcome experiences that can lead us toward major changes

from a concept or a word which prefers to speak about the other, first kind of help that is given to us when we first think and speak about God as our Creator and Sustainer. If God, as our Creator or as our Sustainer, in some way is present within our world, then, as our Savior and Redeemer, he would be present in another kind of way if the meaning of one kind of presence differs from the meaning of another kind of presence (depending on the difference in meaning which exists since the difference in meaning points to both a difference in being and a difference in the presence that would belong to the being of a given meaning).

Simply put in the contrast that we are trying to make as we move from the givens of our freedom in choice toward the redemption or the saving of our freedom in our actions (in the actualizations of choices that we make): “to err is human; to forgive, divine.”<sup>251</sup> A healing of some kind, a beneficial change, can possibly come to us if initially, as a prior condition or as a species of material condition, in our choices, we have been making decisions that, in some way, have been defective (they have been reducing the reality of our effective freedom; they have been creating a world of things which exists as a narrowing of our perspectives and horizons, a world which exists as a kind of enclosed chamber or prison), and if we can be open to a second kind of transition which would move us from a second condition of potency to a second condition of act as we transcend a given, created order of things which exists at one level and now moves into a higher order of existing things. If the higher level of grace is supernatural, relative to the good of order which exists in the being and the functioning of created things, this same level can be supernatural in an absolute, unrestricted sense if, in a change of viewpoint, we consider things in terms of how they can be equated with the being of divine things: with the being and life of God who we conceive as the transcendent cause of all existing things and who cannot be conceived in a way which can possibly acknowledge the being of any other kind of higher, highest good. If God is the creator and the sustainer of our

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within ourselves (within the data of our consciousness and experience): to shifts within the shape and contours of our imagination and so, from this, to the possible reception of new insights and new apprehensions that can shed an entirely different light on what it means for us to be fully and truly human. The shortcomings and the disappointments that we experience, by distracting us or by turning us the side, by these means, they can point us toward soundings and realizations which, at some level, know and sense that questions about what is truly natural and normative for us are fraught with controversy and dispute. Through time, conditions, and circumstances, as our experience of self and the world comes back upon us in our recollective memory, if we should find that we are haunted by our experience of self and world, what has seemed to be natural, right, and proper for us as human beings becomes a highly questionable thing. We encounter limits. We find obstructions that, perhaps, are being caused by fears in us that, perhaps, are baseless and groundless and so the kind of detachment that has seemed to exist as a virtuous habit that we should acquire and practice becomes an object of worry and suspicion. The good which exists in it is simply not sufficient or adequate and so, in its deficiency and lack, it emerges as a defect for which, perhaps, we are liable and culpable. Natural goods begin to exist as relativities in a change which can make us open to a new awareness of virtues or a set of other good habits that, in some way, are other and different: while not denying the good which exists in our natural virtues but, in fact, adding to them in some way through a kind of transformation which gives them a new basis and foundation.

<sup>251</sup>Alexander Pope, <http://www.quotecounterquote.com/2010/12/to-err-is-human-to-forgive-divine.html> (accessed March 3, 2018).

world, the perfection or perfectibility of this world of ours in terms of the extent of its possible goodness points to how God, in his goodness, would have to exist as more than just its creator and sustainer if, in God, as we have been noting, no kind of goodness is lacking. All exists in God in a condition of act: the understanding, the knowing, the willing, and the loving.

To illustrate our point a bit in a way which best points to the significance of this shift in meaning, it is to be admitted, on the one hand, that an act of killing is an act that we can all do as human beings and that, at times, we have perhaps all done this as human beings. The act of killing, as an act, exists as an intelligible motion because it has a cause which can be known and an intelligibility which exists in the being of a cause as we move from the intelligibility of a cause into the intelligibility of its effect. Causes imply effects. And so, in killing, each of us exists or we can all possibly exist as a subject of this kind of act. A certain type of motion is required and in the movement of the motion or in the being of the motion, a transition occurs which obviously moves from a condition of potency to a condition of act. The actions and motions that we initiate to some extent however (as with all our actions and motions, despite what they could be) - these require a causality which points to the being of a transcendental active cause since, in general, as human beings, we exist and live within a condition of potency, relative to the being of a higher, transcendental cause which exists perpetually in a condition of act. The reception of any kind of act that comes to us always supposes some kind of active transcendental cause.

However, if we should speak about this same act of killing as an act of murder, we take the act of killing and we give it or we put it into another dimension. We acknowledge the givenness or the presence of another kind of reality: another kind of act. A physical act does not exist as just a physical act since something is added or something more is found to exist within a given act of killing which allows us to turn it or to realize that it exists also, *internally*, as a moral act (as an act of murder). On the one hand thus, we distinguish and we speak about the act in question as a species or instance of perfection that exists at one level *qua act* and so, in this context, we can regard and believe that God is the responsible, active, transcendental cause where, in this type of act, a perfection, a completion exists, God existing as its primary source or as its first cause. Simple put: *Deus operatur in omni operante...* God operates in everything that operates.<sup>252</sup> But, if an act with a perfection that belongs to it *qua act* or operation is turned toward an objective or toward an end that is lacking in reasonableness and worth, it exists also as a morally defective act; hence, an evil act which points to an internal form of corruption. The perfection in terms of act or operation remains and to God, as Creator and Sustainer, we can refer to the being and the reality of a responsible, operative, transcendental cause. But, if this same act exists for the sake of an irrational evil objective, its cause is only the being or the subjectivity of how we are functioning as human subjects and how we could be behaving as irresponsible, unethical, immoral human subjects. A transcendental cause cannot be properly referred to here in terms that would want to speak about the rightness, the propriety, or the givenness of God's causality since, in making God indifferently responsible for both the being

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<sup>252</sup>Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 304-305; p. 379. In his *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 339-342, see Lonergan's detailed analysis on how we can regard God and a sinner as both causes of sin (*causae actus peccati*) in each their own way although the cause of defect or deformity (*causa defectus, causa deformitatis*) is not God but, instead, it is the created will of a rational creature who does what he or she should not be doing.

of all evil actions and deeds and the being of all virtuous acts and deeds is to think in a way that would have to detract from the reality of our human freedom and any choice that would allegedly belong to us as human subjects.<sup>253</sup> The play or the role of our human causality would be downgraded; more accurately, it would exist as an irrelevant, witless thing. Its lack of meaning, sense, and purpose would be pointing to its lack of being (the absence of its reality).

Simply put, in using theological terms: “God cannot be directly the cause of sin.”<sup>254</sup> God cannot be directly the cause of any moral evil. And so, it is said that, as human beings, whenever we do the good that we do or should do, God acts through us and we always act with God's help (we exist as his agents, as his cooperators); but, when we do evil, we have only ourselves to blame. In terms of agency, as moral agents, in matters of sin, we are acting only on our own behalf and God does not act to help us in this way although, on the other hand, if we should begin to think about the possibilities of remorse and repentance and the viability of a possible change in the direction of our willingness in terms of how we could or should be

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253See the Council of Trent in the wording of its “Decree on Justification,” as cited by *The Teaching of the Catholic Church: as contained in her documents*, originally prepared by Josef Neuner and Heinrich Roos, ed. Karl Rahner, trans. Geoffrey Stevens (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967), p. 398, #743: “if anyone shall say that it is not in man's power to make his ways evil, but that the works that are evil as well as those that are good God produces, not only permissively but *proprie et per se* [“properly and directly”], so that the treason of Judas is no less his own proper work than the vocation of St. Paul – *anathema sit*.”

254Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 79, a. 1. At best, God can only be regarded as the cause of sin to the degree that a sin is just an act or an operation which exists as, respectively, an act or an operation. Cf. *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 49, a. 2, ad 2; *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 8. Hence, for Aquinas, the “first cause of evil is good, not evil.” Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 5. Whenever an evil act possesses any goodness in it, it is because there is something of being or reality which exists within a given act. Adultery is wrong but there is nothing wrong *per se* about the union of male and female in the conjugal act of sex and so this union can lead to another reality or good which is the reality or the finality of human generation and reproduction (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 1, ad 3). As Aquinas argues his case in q. 49, a. 2, ad 2: “...whatever there is of being and action in a bad action, is reduced to God as the cause; whereas whatever defect is in it is not caused by God, but by the deficient secondary cause.” As human beings, through our deficiencies, we exist as the proper causes of sin.

See also what Aquinas says in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 for how this question can be perhaps discussed from another perspective where, within this context, Aquinas distinguishes between the natural existence of an act or operation (which is itself a good) and the moral qualification which a given act can receive. The same act can be virtuous or evil depending on whether or not certain virtues are present or absent in the lives of responsible human agents. Hence, if an act is done in a context that is lacking in its reasonableness and goodness, it cannot be said that God is responsible for it. God cannot bear the weight of the moral responsibility that alone belongs to us. But, if an act is done in a context which evidences virtue in us as human agents, the good that occurs both naturally and morally is traceable ultimately to God as the first cause of all things (God as Creator for one and God as Redeemer for the other).

acting and behaving in the course of our concrete human lives, then, appropriately, we can speak about a change which exists as an effect and an understanding of things which moves from a notion and a sense of God as only our Creator and Sustainer toward a notion and a sense of God, as most properly or as most fully, our Savior and Redeemer. The difference in effect points to a difference in cause and so, in our experience of remorse and as we begin to move toward the kind of radical re-assessment and re-evaluation of things which exists in our acts of contrition and repentance, the appropriate transcendental cause ceases to be God as simply our Creator and Sustainer but, instead, God as our Savior and Redeemer (or God as God exists in terms of the moral qualifications which belong to God with respect to the love of God and how God's love for that which He has made more fully expresses itself in terms of how God saves or redeems that which He has made). The perfection or the good which exists in the givenness of our human freedom (in its actions) is complemented by the perfection or the good which exists in the healing and saving of our freedom (in its actions). If the condition or the being of our human existence depends or relies on God in one way then, more radically, the goodness of our being or the flourishing of our being depends or relies on God in another kind of way (within another context or order of existing things) if God's unrestrictedness, or if the unrestrictedness of God's understanding and willing and all the good which exists in this understanding and willing, is itself for us a legitimate point of departure for a shift in our thinking and understanding as we move into a way of thinking and understanding that is open to a relation and to a knowledge of God that is not restricted with respect to any of its points of reference. The unrestrictedness of a given source implies the unrestrictedness of its effects in terms of all the possible consequences which can ensue as a proper order of effects.

For all intents and purposes thus, as we move from the condition of our being toward any actuations that can refer to effecting any acts which are constitutive of conditions that are to be equated with the good of our human flourishing, the salvific side of God becomes, for us, a kind of need or requirement. At another level of gratuity (more so than that which exists for us if we should only think about God as our Creator and Sustainer), God as our Savior and Redeemer adds or, more accurately, God as our Savior completes the creative side of God in a way which brings the order of created things toward a completion which exists as the perfecting and as the perfection of the created order of existing things. The locus of change or activity in us (as a receptive or passive condition) is grounded in the changeableness or in the malleability of our understanding, our judgments, and our decisions. Instead of acts and operations that are solely determined or which are solely directed toward goods which, as terms of acts, belong to acts or operations which exist simply in themselves as acts or as operations (the good is simply the act or the operation), other kinds of goods becomes obvious. They assume a greater importance (they enjoy a different status, a higher status) and the existence of these goods points to the necessity of our moving toward a change in our understanding of God in terms of how God exists more fully or more properly as our Savior rather than as simply our Creator as we move from a knowledge of him as our Creator toward a possible knowledge of him as more possibly and probably our Savior and Redeemer, any and every knowledge of God as our Savior leading to a greater love of God as more our Savior than as our Creator.

In our reflections, an expectation or a sense of further and future things begins to form and to germinate within us. It begins to emerge and to exist within us in terms about how, ultimately and primarily, in his perfection as a Creator, God most truly exists as a helpful, providential

Creator; hence, if He is to truly and fully exist as He is; if He is to truly and fully help us as His creatures, He must exist as our Savior and Redeemer and, in some way too, He must reveal Himself to us as our Savior and Redeemer if, participatively, through our freedom and the choices that we make, in some way, we are to cooperate and obey Him and so, by these means, belong to God through a closer kind of union that would exist between us and Him. Again, to reiterate our point: to be a truly good Creator is to be a providential Creator and to be a providential Creator who supplies all goods and who provides for all goods that are needed – this necessity points to how God exists most properly not as our Creator and Sustainer but as our Savior and Redeemer. The goodness of the fullness of God as Creator, as this is more fully known and articulated and as it is more fully appreciated – this qualification points us toward dimensions of meaning and being which need to be known as, in our own way, through how we act and through how we receive and accept things, we begin to move toward purposes, tasks, and gifts that belong, in fact, to how truly God exists and lives if, as we have come to realize and know in ourselves, God exists as pure act (as *actus purus*). He is totally lacking in any incompleteness (since bereft of potency in terms of being able to receive any kind of future act),<sup>255</sup> and this purity or transparency of spirit extends into every kind of good through the transformation or the realization of every possible kind of good that can be brought to be and to exist within our world of created contingent things. The omniscience and the omnipotence which alone belongs to God knows no restriction other than that which would be logically impossible.<sup>256</sup>

For documentation to this effect with respect to questions which ask about God as more properly our Savior and Redeemer and the question of His revelation to us, see texts that come to us not only from the religious history of the Jewish people (as this is contained in the *Old Testament*) but also other texts that can be cited from other sources of one kind or another that come to us from outside the Jewish world (in the context of other traditions): words that can be quoted from such as Confucius, Aeschylus, Socrates, Plato, Virgil, Cicero, Tacitus, and Suetonius.<sup>257</sup>

In Jewish sources we have words and texts which speak about “God’s promise to the patriarchs that through them all the nations of the earth would be blessed; the prediction that the tribe of Judah would be supreme among the other Hebrew tribes until the coming of Him Whom all nations would obey; the strange yet undeniable fact that in the Bible of the Alexandrian Jews, in the Septuagint, one finds clearly predicted the virgin birth of the Messiah; the prophecy of Isaias 53 about the patient sufferer, the Servant of the Lord, who will lay down his life as a guilt-offering for his people’s offenses; the perspectives of the glorious, everlasting kingdom of the House of David.”<sup>258</sup> To be also noted in texts that

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255 Joseph D. Mudd, *Eucharist as Meaning: Critical Metaphysics and Contemporary Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), p. 87, n. 7, citing Bernard Lonergan on the meaning of God as “pure act.”

256 Flew, *There is a God*, p. 157.

257 Fulton J. Sheen, *Life of Christ* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 12-14.

258 With some spellings that have been amended in ways which differ from Sheen's

come to us from Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zachariah is an expectation that “one day Yahweh, the God of Israel, would come back in person to live within the Temple,”<sup>259</sup> coming, going to Jerusalem, properly rebuilding the Temple there and then living, dwelling within it.

In non-Jewish, gentile sources (if we can speak within a context which refers to how, in our human history, we encounter persons who can be said to exist “virtuous pagans” who all had an “inkling of redemption”),<sup>260</sup> in his play, *Prometheus Unbound*, for instance, Aeschylus (c. 525 - c. 456 BC), as a Greek playwright and tragedian, had written (according to one translation): “Look not for any end, moreover, to this curse until God appears, to accept upon His Head the pangs of thy own sins vicarious.”<sup>261</sup> According to yet another translation, elsewhere in his works, Aeschylus had written about “a savior and redeemer [who is needed] to unloose man from the 'primal eldest curse'.”<sup>262</sup> Amongst the ancient Romans, the historian Tacitus had noted that “people were generally persuaded in the faith of the ancient prophecies, that the East was to prevail, and that from Judea was to come the Master and Ruler of the world.” Suetonius, another Roman historian, in his life of Vespasian, notes that “it was an old and constant belief throughout the East, that by indubitably certain prophecies, the Jews were to attain the highest power.”<sup>263</sup> A contemporary author is cited by Suetonius “to the effect that the Romans were so fearful about a king who would rule the world that they ordered all children born that year to be killed – an order that was not fulfilled, except by Herod.” Before Tacitus and Suetonius, in his day, Cicero had recounted “the sayings of the ancient oracles and the Sibyls about a 'King whom we must recognize [in order] to be saved,' [and so he] asked in expectation, 'To what man and to what period of time do these predictions point?'" If we turn to the *Fourth Eclogue* of Virgil, we find words that recount “the same ancient tradition” and other words which speak about “a chaste woman, smiling on her infant boy, with whom the iron age would pass away.” Earlier, in their own day, amongst other Greek philosophers, Socrates and Plato had both spoken about “the Logos and...the Universal Wise Man” who has “yet to come.”

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original text, see Fulton J. Sheen, “The Only Person Ever to Pre-Announced,” <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2015/12/25/person-ever-pre-announced/print> (accessed September 27, 2019).

259N. T. Wright, “The Self-Revelation of God in Human History: A Dialogue on Jesus with N. T. Wright,” in Flew, *There is a God*, p. 192.

260See “Virtuous pagan,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtuous\\_pagan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtuous_pagan) (accessed February 29, 2020). See also <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urmonotheismus> (accessed February 29, 2020).

261Sheen, <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2015/12/25/person-ever-pre-announced/print> (accessed September 27, 2019).

262Sheen, *Life of Christ*, pp. 13-14.

263Sheen, <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2015/12/25/person-ever-pre-announced/print> (accessed September 27, 2019). All other quotations that are cited are taken from this source.

In the Far East, in the middle kingdom of China, the same expectation existed where there it was believed that the great Wise Man would be born in the West [relative to the geographical location of the Middle East]. "In the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Tchao-Wang, of the dynasty of the Tcheou (corresponding with the year 1029 b. c.), on the eighth day of the fourth moon, a light appeared in the south-west, which illuminated the king's palace. The monarch, struck by its splendor, interrogated the sages who were skilled in foretelling future events. They then showed him books in which it was written that this prodigy signified the appearance of a great saint in the West, whose religion was to be introduced into this country a thousand years after his birth." From Confucius, about five centuries later, we have words which refer to that who exists as "the Saint."

Summing up thus: if we compare the brokenness of our human order as we experience it and a self-transcendent kind of desire which also exists within us (within or in conjunction with our human brokenness, mixed in with our other desires), it would seem to be obvious to us that God has created a world (a human world) that senses and knows, to some extent, about the degree or the depth of its incompleteness; a world that, as a truly good Creator, God cannot entirely leave to its own devices: a world that needs to be redeemed and saved and which is to be redeemed and saved (in some manner or other, at some point in time) and so brought into an order of perfection that, mysteriously, the created order of things cannot give to itself (through the active potencies which belong to it) but which must be somehow given to it in a way which would have to differ both in kind and in degree from the kind of help that had been limited to effecting the mere good of our being and existence and the reproduction or the continuance of this same kind of being and existence.

And so, if we are to be related and joined to God in a way which best leads us toward the enjoyment of a higher order of goods which would exist for us as a supernatural order of goods (relative to the being of God as our Creator and how we live and exist as created, contingent, human beings), then the means will be effected through a change or a shift in the receptivity of our receptivity: through how, through a kind of enlargement or through a heightening that would be given to us and to it (our receptivity), we can move from the consciousness that we currently have of externally existing things toward a consciousness of other things which exist within the terms or the parameters of another dimension that differs and which exists beyond anything that can be given to us through specifications or determinations that belong to conjugates of space and time. The change in our receptivity changes us in terms of how we exist as participants and how we also exist transmitters and communicators as, now, we begin to encounter an order of things where, by how we encounter these new things, we necessarily participate in the being of these other, new things and, in a way, we change in how we ourselves exist as, by means of our humanity or not apart from our humanity, we become more like the being of these new things that are beginning to enter into the order of our human lives.

The ramifications which ensue can be known through a certain kind of order which already exists in us as human beings and which, from within, unfolds and further expresses itself. Through the kind of help which can accordingly come to us as *gratia* or grace (or which could come to us from the *reception* of *gratia* or grace), two things directly and inwardly happen to us from within our ourselves in our being (within both the comprehension of our understanding

and knowing and within the orientation and the movement of our desiring and willing): (1) a different, higher kind of knowledge would be given to us (this knowledge would also be caused in us *although in a different way*; it would also exist as a reception although as radically a transformative kind of reception that is somehow given to us; it would exist beyond our natural or our ordinary knowledge of different things; hence, most eminently, it would exist as a supernatural kind of knowledge) and (2) a different kind of willing would also be given to us (it would exist as a supernatural kind of willing and desiring if its focus or direction is an orientation that cannot be explained if its basis is the kind of grounding which specifically belongs to our natural or our ordinary acts of human cognition). We begin to love that which we have not loved; to appreciate what we have not appreciated; to respect that which we have not respected. Beyond or in addition to a supernatural kind of knowledge that is given to us, a supernatural kind of willing is given to us in a way which points to changes of value and to actuations of virtue which have come to exist within us and so, with this or from this type of change, the aptness or the propriety of another kind of love which participates or which is elicited from us through the immediacy or perhaps through the mediation of a transcendental kind of love that has been somehow given to us and which most properly belongs to God as its ultimate source and subject.<sup>264</sup>

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264To avoid any misunderstanding at this point, we would do well to refer to how Augustine speaks about the prevenience of grace and a distinction that he draws between operative and co-operative grace. Operative grace, as an initial gift from God, works from within a person's willing to initiate a change in its orientation with respect to its desires for certain means and ends, and co-operative grace works with a person's willing as it begins to respond and to try and do good actions and deeds. With operative grace, "our mind is moved and does not move" and with co-operative grace, "our mind both moves and is moved" (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 111, a. 2). Our willing is moved and it does not move. Our willing both moves and it is moved. In operative grace, God moves and touches a human person from within and he does this in a direct fashion (without any intermediaries) and, at times, apart from any kind of human prayer, entreaty, or request. God can touch our hearts and minds from within although we are always free to reject the movements of God's grace whether it is operative grace or cooperative grace. We are not forced to act in any given way. We can respond in a positive way (or in a negative way) although always, as is the case for instance in any of our co-operative acts, God's prevenient grace is always present. It is always needed. To speak about the situation in another way: through his grace, God creates a situation which respects our freedom and, at the same time, God assists or he encourages the being and the actuation of our human freedom. The self-determination of the human will which reveals the freedom of its operations is a reality that is congruent with the reality of God's divine causality since co-operative grace seeks to assist and to strengthen our human willing as it begins to respond in a positive manner to the initial gift of operative grace that is suggesting or pointing to other ends and other means that could be properly desired by us as things which we should do or strive towards. More options are revealed to us than that which would otherwise be known by us (apart from grace). The goodness of this assistance prescinds or it derogates from an attitude that wants to give an undue emphasis to the self-determination of our acts of human willing since, to employ a human analogy, when one person assists another to do what the other wants, the person who is helped experiences and enjoys a greater degree of freedom than would otherwise be the case. God's grace makes our freedom more possible and likely in a way which transcends the contingency and the createdness of our individual acts of human

At this point, if we should speak more about the kind of love which allegedly exists in God as our Creator and about how it differs from the kind of love which allegedly exists in God as our Savior, because the good of redemption adds to the good of creation, the greater or higher good of redemption necessarily points to a love that must be greater or more intense. A given kind of love explains the reality of God's creation but, if we are then to speak about the kind of love that would explain the reality of an order of redemption that would come to us from God as our Savior, then more love is needed or more love is supposed: a greater care and concern than the love which exists in God as our Creator (a love which cannot exist as any kind of material determination because it exists as a quality of willing and doing, its fullness or greatness accounting for the being of all other existing things). In another way of speaking in the context of our analysis, we can argue that, if God's love as our Creator is to be entirely and fully providential, then the love of God as our Creator shades off in terms of its also existing as the love of God as our Savior and Redeemer.

In attending then to the givenness and the gratuity of God's grace (beyond the givenness and the gratuity of our created acts of human understanding and our created acts of human willing),<sup>265</sup> and in attending to a supernatural reception of understanding and knowledge which

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choice. Our freedom is augmented. It is enlarged and expanded. If we should speak about how, by our actions, we can somehow merit any gifts that could be given to us by God, the possibility of our earning any kind of merit is itself a reality that is grounded in the work and in the benevolence of God's prevenient grace. God's grace creates a new context for how we can think and live.

<sup>265</sup>To avoid misunderstanding with respect to our created acts of human willing or how we can speak about created acts of human willing as acts which exist in their own way as proper effects, please note with respect to our acts of human willing that they possess a contingency which is displayed in two distinct ways. First, in a tradition of thought and analysis that has come down to us from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, it can be validly argued, to some extent *with qualifications*, that, in a real way, our human knowing, in its contingency, acts or moves our human willing, in its contingency. According to the Latin phrasing: *nihil volitum nisi praecognitum*. Cf. Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 28. Contingency touches contingency. In other words, “nothing is willed that has not first been known”: *appetitus sequens intellectum*, desire following understanding, our willing being an effect of our understanding and so the contingency of our willing comes from the contingency of our understanding. Each exists as an effect but, to a greater extent, our willing exists as an effect of that which exists as both an effect and a cause. Cf. Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 12, ad 2; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 4, ad 3; Frederick E. Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2000), p. 195.

In this context thus, our willing exists not as a willful appetite but as a rational appetite since we are supposing that our willing exists as a proper derivative of our knowing and understanding (hence, as a species of “passive potency” or as a “wholly passive potency”). Cf. Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 84, citing Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 95-96; pp. 319-320. Quoting Aristotle and adapting his words for our purposes here: “our willing exists

differs from a natural reception of understanding and knowledge (as this also ultimately comes to us from God), to the degree then that this higher knowledge is not conditioned by our prior acts of inquiry that, in a way, could possibly lead to it or which could possibly intend or desire it, we can and we must speak about it as an *a priori* kind of knowledge. But, on the other hand too, to the degree that, at times, through our inquiry and through the kind of seeking which exists in our acts of inquiry, we are directed or we are oriented in a way which could lead us toward an apprehension and a reception of God as our Savior and Redeemer (we refer here to a species of openness and inquiry in us which would exist as a species of active, operative potency), then we would have to speak about a knowledge that is not entirely lacking in *a posteriori* aspects and elements (be they many or few) which need to be acknowledged and

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within our reasoning.” *Voluntas...est in ratione*. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 5, citing Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3, 9, 432b5. The goodness or the value of our willing, and this includes the freedom of our willing which exists in its own right as a species of good – this is all measured or it is all determined by the degree that “it follows the order of wisdom which [our] intelligence determines [through its acts].” Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Redemption*, trans. Michael G. Shields, eds. Robert M. Doran, H. Daniel Monsour, and Jeremy Wilkins (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2018), p. 247, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 1, ad 2m. Reiteratively, the “good which is understood moves the will [which is done].” *Bonum intellectum est obiectum voluntatis*. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 3, ad 2. In the grounding of our willing in an understanding of things that acknowledges the goodness or the wrongness of certain actions and in also grounding our willing in the inventiveness and the dexterity of our understanding to the degree that our understanding understands new things or finds new ways of doing certain things, our acts of understanding and knowing accordingly move or, more accurately, we can say that they condition our non-cognitive activity or our later cognitional activities by working through the human experiences that we each have of our desires or appetites which, in turn, help move us or encourage us to engage now in this action and now in this other possible action.

However, to the degree that we distinguish between the working of a cause and the influence of a condition (to the degree that we distinguish between that which exists as a necessitating cause and that which exists as a conditioning influence), and to the degree that we admit that no act of understanding in us impels, forces, or causes any given act of human willing from us, from the arena of our subjectivity (because, in fact, our understanding does not force us to do anything in terms of our later acts of human willing), we accordingly find that the contingency of our acts of human willing is not entirely explained by the kind of contingency which belongs to our acts of human understanding. More needs to be grasped and understood by us in a way which would have to point us to why our acts of human willing possess a nature or a kind of being which is proper to them and which differs from our acts of understanding and which is not determined by our acts of understanding and knowing. Our willing, distinctively, exists apart from our acts of understanding despite how our willing is at times moved by our understanding to an extent which explains how and why our understanding adds or how and why it increases the freedom which allegedly already belongs to us within the possibilities of choice which exist for us within our different acts of human willing. The understanding helps the willing if it can point to a larger number of possible options which, in fact, exist for us that we can take up and use (previously, they had not been known) and if also, through our understanding and the evaluation which exists within our reflective understanding,

known for the sake of our having a more complete grasp of all the elements and parts which, in some way, are involved.

On the one hand thus, if we think about how we exist as human beings, our knowledge of higher, divine things, when or as it is simply given to us, this same knowledge is not imputed or it is not infused in us in a way which necessarily ignores or which necessarily destroys our freedom and the kind of causality which properly belongs to us in terms of how we exist as cogitating, willing, desiring human subjects. The giftedness which exists for us within our initial understanding of things is, in fact, supplemented or we can say that it is added to in another way if the perfection which exists within our created acts of understanding is improved

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we can prefer and take up one option instead of another possible option if some kind of greater good is to be achieved in a way that surpasses the good of our using some other way, means, or instrument. Cf. Aquinas, *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 2; *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 6; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 10, 17; *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 3; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14; and *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 81, a. 3, ad 2; q. 82, a. 2.

For a fuller understanding of things thus, as a further second aspect, we need to speak about how, in themselves, our acts of human willing have a contingent causality which properly belongs to them. While our acts of imagining and understanding play a role in exciting us toward our acts of desiring and willing, initiating a movement that occurs within our acts of desiring and willing, our willing, as an active potency, can also act to move itself on the basis of ends or objectives that already belong within the kind of order or structure which belongs to us within our different acts of human willing: ends which incline us to act in certain ways or in certain directions, ends which we do not determine through that which we do or make but which simply belong to us within the order of our human desires to the degree that, in fact, we exist and be as human beings. Simply put then: our human willing is moved by two causes or two principles which refer, one, to a structure of reason that is denominative of our acts of human cognition and, two, to a structure of desire or appetite that is denominative of our acts of human willing. Each is related to the other and each acts on the other through a kind of mutual causality that exists between them. Cf. Francis Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), p. 142. As our understanding specifies an object or end which is to be desired by us through our acts of human willing, the self-movement of our human willing occurs through an ordering of ends and first principles which is constitutive of the inner life which belongs to our acts of human willing. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 1; a. 3. In our willing, the object or end is a practical good of some kind that is being desired or wanted by us. An *appetibile* or a “seekable” designates the object of a given striving that, in some way, exists in us already though it can be encouraged or discouraged in one way or another by that which we understand and grasp or by that which we fail to understand and grasp, our knowledge and our lack of knowledge tending to exist together in a way that we cannot so often easily distinguish, the one from the other. Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 26; p. 32; p. 71.

However, within our acts of human willing, an object or an end can be a means that leads to another desired end which exists as a further, greater objective. Means and ends differ from each other even if, at times, some ends exist as means and some means, ends. In our willing, in its acts, the willing moves itself in its desires by working toward ends or objectives

upon or if it is perfected in a way which moves it into a second order of completion and perfection as now, from a supernatural kind of knowledge which is freely and at times unexpectedly given to us and which belongs to us within the order and the content of our cognition, we can now move toward a familiarity with supernaturally existing objects and acts of human willing which inform and change and add to the goodness and the reality of our ordinary lived human existence. The new, inner experience which comes to exist within us through our reception of grace points us or it directs us toward the reality of an order of things or the reality of an order of objects which is ultimately or absolutely supernatural if, in turn, we find that this order cannot be transcended in a way which could possibly point us toward the being of a higher order of existing things. The supernatural quality of both the knowing and

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which already exist within our willing as eliciting, soliciting first principles that are already, in fact, given to us; and then, by effecting a kind of reduction which moves from a condition of potency to a condition of act, in our acts of willing, we can search out and look for a specific means that can lead to the ultimate attainment of our desired ends and objectives. If, for instance, in a syllogism, in our acts of theoretical reasoning, we move from the terms of a general premiss toward a specific conclusion of some kind, similarly, in our practical or in our moral reasoning, we move from an end or object which functions as a kind of basic premiss and which is to be identified with a fundamental orientation which exists within our acts of human willing. It leads us and it inclines us toward that which exists as more specific goods, initially good which exist as attainable goods. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3; 1a2ae, q. 90, a. 2; q. 94, a. 2, as cited by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), p. 238.

In this context, we move toward a selection or a choice which alights on a very specific means that can lead to other, higher means and ends which would ultimately lead us to an end that satisfies all of our desires and whose desiring has served as a catalyst for us in constructing an ascending scale of related means and ends. If we are to reach an ultimate goal, we must discover a very specific, initial means or a concrete step whose execution will initiate a series of actions that will lead us to our ultimately desired goals. A theological order or a theological structure belongs to the dynamism of our individual human willing as this willing constructs a relation of means and ends which lead to the actualization of a highest goal or end and as, at the same time, our willing works with the willing of other human beings in order to order means and ends in ways which distinguish how persons will differently live their individual, human lives in a relation that joins all these persons with each other. A social order emerges. As Aquinas argues in a given case, for a physician, a patient's health is something which is ultimate for him. A physician will make decisions based on what will nourish or restore a patient's health. But, if one happens to be a patient or a potential patient, one could decide to forego medical treatments of one kind or another because one wants to attain higher objectives in terms of ends which transcend the health or the good of one's physical body. Questions about quality of life issues move from questions about one's physical health toward questions that ask about one's psychological health. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3. The end or the purpose of one person's life or activity can also become a means for another person's life or activity as this exists, for instance, in the context of our family life within the order of our human world. Cf. Crowe, "Dialectic," *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, pp. 237-238.

the willing that is given to us as grace - because it exists as grace and because it exists as a salvific kind of knowing and willing that effects a reorientation within us in our human lives - for these reasons, it exists as a knowing and as a willing that has not to rely or depend upon the agency of secondary causes which exist within the ambit of our created, contingent world. The absence of necessity with respect to the use of secondary causes (despite the occasional use of secondary causes) coupled with the redemptive purposes of grace points to how this kind of knowing and willing is all directly caused by God as God chooses to act directly within our human souls or directly within us within the consciousness which we each have as living human subjects, effecting changes which we have not been expecting if, simply put, the object or the purpose of grace is to effect a set of salvific, redemptive, and healing changes which change us as human subjects in terms of how we feel, think, understand, know, and act with respect to the manner of our own existence and the being of other persons and things. The reorientation which is effected, as a species of commensurate effect, explains why no ramifications can be satisfactorily known if their point of reference is restricted to the kind of specification which belongs to material categories or material determinations of one kind or another.

The unrestrictedness of God's divine understanding and knowing and the unrestrictedness of God's divine willing and doing in terms of truth and goodness (everything exists together) accordingly suggests not only the possibility but also the probability of a non-discursive, immediate type of knowledge which exists, however, as not simply an intuition (as something

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In the willing however that we do, we tend to work from an initial or an inchoate sense of our basic ends or objectives and then, from there, we work toward specific objectives or actions which designate means that are made known to us through co-operative activities which belong to us and which are centered in our different acts of inquiring, understanding, and judging. In the initial knowing that we do, if we are honest with ourselves and if we pose questions to ourselves about why we are behaving in certain ways, we can find or we should find that our initial acts of knowing are being moved by desires that are grounded in prior movements that belongs to our acts of human willing which are seeking some kind of good that, as yet, is not understood or known. The dominance of an ongoing, reciprocal relation which always exists between our acts of knowing and willing accordingly explains why we must reject a philosophy which emphasizes the primacy of the reason over the will (as the Greeks largely had it) and any philosophy which emphasizes the primacy of the will over the intellect (as many modern thinkers largely have it: for example, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Nietzsche, and Freud). In our understanding, at some level, we know or we are conscious of our desires and inclinations and, within our desires and affections, we move toward our desired acts of cognition and understanding. Cf. Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 9, a. 10, ad 3, 2ae ser. On Hobbes and the primacy of the human lust for power in human life, see Eric Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint: Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, vol. 5, ed. Manfred Henningsen (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), p. 307.

As a general principle which points to the truth of our basic position: the more perfectly something is known, to the same degree it must be admitted that the more perfectly it can be willed, desired, or loved. To make any progress in one points to the necessity of our having to make progress in the other.

that, in some way, we do or perform whenever, from the context and the form of our sensitivity, we intuit this or we intuit that). Instead, we refer to a species of knowledge which exists in another context (in another dimension) where something is seen and known for the first time; something is placed before us to experience or something is placed within us in a way which points more radically to our lack of personal agency (to our lack of accountability, worth, and merit). We can suppose or we can think about a cognitive form of imputation. We see certain things or we understand certain things but in a manner that is disincarnate. In some way, the means exist apart from our bodies and the life of our bodies if we advert to a form of cognition which emphasizes the intervention or the primacy of a form of agent object which is lacking in spatial and temporal dimensions; something which exists in an otherworldly manner or, in other words, a form of agent object which is divine or transmundane. If we are to speak about something which transcends our understanding and any language or concepts that can possibly emerge from the reception of our understanding (the one leading to the other), we cite words which point to our difficulty; words, which, at the same time, point to our meaning. If we should speak about a form of communication and reception which transcends the form which belongs to the incarnate form of cognition which belongs to us in our humanity to the degree that we exist as a union of material and immaterial principles (our bodies exist as ensouled realities and so we exist as the proper subjects of a combination of both material and immaterial operations):

For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe in God, no explanation is possible.<sup>266</sup>

A divine form of revealing accordingly points to a revelation of divine things and so, within this context, to a species of knowledge which differently belongs to us as human beings: a species of knowledge which is not improper though we might not say that it is entirely proper to us as human subjects if our point of departure for this type of judgment is the kind of primacy which belongs to us in our activity in our acts of inquiry and questioning and the kind of reception which peculiarly belongs to us with respect to our created, contingent acts of sensing and understanding. The receptivity which belongs to our possibly accepting a revealed kind of knowledge that is given to us about divine things is no basis or it cannot be used to argue that other forms of receptivity cannot be admitted or that they do not, in fact, exist for us. The same time, this form of receptivity points to how our receptivity exists as an unrestricted type of openness (as an unrestricted type of potency) and how, through our knowledge of self

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<sup>266</sup>Franz Werfel, Prologue to *The Song of Bernadette*,

<https://quotes.yourdictionary.com/author/quote/15785> (accessed January 20, 2020). The teaching which is communicated in these words has been attributed to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. See [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/thomas\\_aquinas\\_186900](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/thomas_aquinas_186900) (accessed January 21, 2020), quoting Aquinas in a paraphrase of his teaching which notes and argues that “To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.” The fuller teaching can be found in a text which comes to us from the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 1, a. 5, ad 1: “Unbelievers are in ignorance of things that are of faith, for neither do they see or know them in themselves, nor do they know them to be credible. The faithful, on the other hand, know them, not as by demonstration, but by the light of faith which makes them see that they ought to believe them, as stated above.” Cf. <http://jareddees.com/without-faith/> (accessed January 21, 2020).

in its self-transcendence, we can know about the being of this potency. Aside from anything that would be entirely lacking in meaning, sense, and intelligibility, we do not know what we cannot possibly begin to understand and know and so, from a revelation of supernaturally existing realities, we can have a revealed knowledge of these divine things and, then from this, truths and the connections which exist between truths which would belong to the form of a revealed religion in its tenets and beliefs. The primary or the transcendental cause is now God as our Savior and Redeemer and not God as our Creator and Sustainer (even as we know or sense in some way that, in its perfections and imperfections, the order of created things is somehow ordered toward a salvific order of things which supposes the createdness of things before the salvation of these same things is to be considered and attempted in a way which moves into a world of created things and how this world exists through conjugates that belong to determinations of space and time). If the perfection of created things is not to be destroyed, or obliterated, or, in some way, put to the side through actions or interventions which are purely external (acting on us from without), then the improving or the saving of created things supposes or it suggests the good or perhaps the necessity of a form of redemption that somehow moves or exists within the being of created, contingent things (working from within the being of contingent things if, for us, the being of created things exists as our fundamental point of departure).

A link with contingent, created things remains and it endures in a way which is evidenced to the degree that these contingent, created things exist as carriers and transmitters of meaning that have been adapted or which have been employed to effect supernatural aims and purposes as these work within accumulations and configurations of space and time according to the different manners of expressiveness which belong to differing orderings of space and time and any variations in communication which belong to these orderings of space and time. Into our world, within our world, meanings exist. They are introduced or they have been introduced in a way which transcends the gap which has always existed between our unrestricted desire for understanding and knowledge and our failures to achieve the kind of understanding and knowledge that, ideally, we would like to attain through the operative potency which exists within us, through our sense of wonder and the asking of many questions that can emerge as an expression of our curious wonder. Its unfolding urges us or it presses upon us in ways that reveal the inadequacies and the failures of our human cognition and a lack of sufficiency which belongs to our contingent, created acts of cognition when they move and as they have moved from the data of our experience toward our possible acts of understanding and judgment through the mediation which exists for us by way of the questions that we could be asking and posing.

A sense of the insufficiency of our contingent acts of human reasoning and yet an appreciation of our contingent acts of human reasoning at the same time, however, points to *a posteriori* aspects that belong or which can prepare the way for the kind of knowledge that is apprehended by us through the kind of divine help which exists for us through the communication of an infused, divine form of revealing grace. As we attend to our acts of cognition and as we notice how a gap exists between our cognitive wishes and desires and the extent of our cognitive failures at different levels, we position ourselves or we place ourselves within a context which is open to alternatives. We begin to think about options or possibilities which could be open to other ways of knowing, other ways of operating, and other ways of functioning. As needed as it is, or as important as it is, we find that our ordinary and our

pragmatic understanding of things and our philosophic or our scientific understanding of things is something that we cannot always entirely rely upon or depend upon if our objective is an unlimited kind of truth which would exist as an unlimited kind of good: hence, as a truth and a goodness of things that can never change, lessen, or grow (an unrestricted truth of things that, in its depth and goodness, forever holds and endures).

In our ordinary or in our commonsensical understanding of things, too often or somewhat frequently, we experience cognitive failure in a way which adds to our moral failure, increasing and augmenting it, and, conversely, moral failure encourages cognitive failure in ways which vary as we move from one person to another. Similarly too (but in a more radical way, or more comprehensively), in our scientific understanding of things and also in our philosophic understanding of things, here and there, we experience degrees of cognitive failure and a greater measure of misery and evil as this failure moves into any adjoining kinds of moral failure which emerge within the details and the context of our concrete human life. Failures within the human order of things, in their own way, create an orientation or, more properly, a kind of void which contextualizes our later lines of inquiry as these can emerge in the conduct of our philosophy and science. Misdirections in inquiry lead to problems that had not been expected or foreseen if other questions are not being asked along other lines of inquiry which lead to better science and analysis and the kind of understanding which is supposed to exist within us the reception of philosophic insights.

Something more is accordingly needed if, in our desire for unrestricted understanding and knowledge and in our desire for unrestricted good and value, we are to move toward an understanding and a knowledge of things that is probably more sound (more truthful and more accurate) and, at the same time too, more comprehensive and inclusive (having more depth and punch). As given, it would establish and it would point us to a larger number of connections or it would discover a greater number of relations which would exist among a larger number of distinct variables. The relations themselves would be ordered to each other in a way which could then point us toward an all encompassing, larger relation of things which would exist in its own right as a distinct unity, a unity which would exist, for all intents and purposes, as a new universe or as a new world of things which has always existed but which, perhaps now, we are discovering for the first time as we work more with an understanding that knows about our limitations (appropriating and moving into another order of things in a way which we can import into the order and the life of our souls, our inner consciousness of things, in a way which changes our thinking and living in ways which make for a change in our subjectivity and the emergence of a new human culture). Some problems are understood in a better way or perhaps they are understood for the first time if we can move into an ordering of meaning which transcends a lower or a baser order of things, moving not only in a way which moves upwards “from our sensing toward our understanding” (according to the ways or the light of our human reason as it moves into its acts of reasoning) but also, on the other hand, moving downwards “from our understanding toward our sensing,” from a context which refers to a transcendental point of view, from a kind of *a priori* knowledge and cognition in an awareness which can be given to us not through our acts of inquiry, understanding, and conception but through an awareness which would have to exist as an act of belief or faith. More exists for us than that which meets the eye. More exists for us than that which conforms to how we are moving from our acts of sensing to our acts of understanding.

Simply put, though a means which acknowledges a dimly understood transcendental perspective and which puts our understanding within or into this higher, larger perspective: *credo ut intelligam*.<sup>267</sup> I believe so that, now, I can begin to understand,<sup>268</sup> “I have faith so as to be able to understand.”<sup>269</sup> “Unless I believed, I should not understand.”<sup>270</sup> Alternatively, as a recommended precept, *crede ut intelligas*. “Believe that you may understand.”<sup>271</sup> To know about a truth that exists in an un-understood, hidden way (with respect to its meaning and significance) bestirs and moves us from within. All the more urgently, it acts on us to move us: to “impel the mind to penetrate its content.”<sup>272</sup> As a heuristic, our faith points us toward new objects which now need to be considered, pondered, and understood. We are challenged. It “tells us what there is to understand,”<sup>273</sup> to what we can now begin to turn our attention in the hope that, in some way, we can grow within ourselves within the subjectivity that is constitutive of who we happen to be as human subjects.<sup>274</sup> All the greater should become our desire for some kind of growth in the depth and range of our understanding as we now begin to realize and know that new things draw us toward their intelligibility as our understanding begins to emerge as an effect of faith or as the fruit or “the reward of faith”<sup>275</sup> through a kind of promotion which is given to us in our search for understanding. On the basis of a received, divinely revealed faith, we begin to seek and to inquire and then to find and to discover new realities and truths in the wake of a religious teaching which is grounded in the formula of a divinely worded precept when we are told and encouraged: to “seek and you shall find.”<sup>276</sup> A

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267St. Anselm, as quoted by Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 24.

268See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credo\\_ut\\_intelligam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credo_ut_intelligam) (accessed March 8, 2018), citing St. Anselm of Canterbury; my translation. Quoting earlier words that come to us from St. Augustine: “I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe,” as cited by Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Vatican City State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), p. 43, #158.

269Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 43.

270St. Anselm, as quoted by Gilson, *Reason and Revelation*, p. 24.

271St. Augustine, as cited by Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine* (London, 1961), as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 46.

272Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 46.

273Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 46.

274See Owens, *Human Destiny*, p. 3, where Owens makes the same point about an expansion of horizon which occurs whenever religious beliefs begin to exist within our human consciousness and sense of the reality of different things. Citing his own words: “In both the theoretical and the practical areas numerous items in the content of religious beliefs...prompt genuinely philosophical questions. The beliefs themselves take on the role of phenomena with aspects that come under the investigation of philosophy.” What is accepted through faith “raises...many queries that call for philosophical answers.”

275St. Augustine, *On the Gospel of Saint John*, 29, 6, in *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, trans. H. Browne and J. H. Parker (A Library of Fathers), Oxford, 1848; Vol. 1, p. 440, as quoted by Gilson, *Reason and Revelation*, p. 19.

276Matthew 7:7, as quoted by St. Augustine, *On free will*, 2, 6, as cited in *An Augustine Synthesis*, trans. E. Przywara (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1936), pp. 58-59, as

divine admonition encourages us in our understanding and, in a way, it points us to a new requirement and duty which must be met. Simply put, according to wording of it which has come down to us: it is incumbent on us, as believers, that “those who *can* understand, *should* understand.”<sup>277</sup>

As a catalyst thus, a perceived, acknowledged transcendence opens us up to apprehensions of meaning and being that are rooted in religious apprehensions of meaning and being if we can begin to live by the truths of a received religious tradition which can begin to point us toward revealed divine truth: divine truths which exist as divine things. One light touches another; the light of faith and belief, the light of our cognition and understanding in the discursiveness of its different acts. We come now to know about certain things that, before, we had not known about. We come to give our assent to the being of certain things and, at times, we withhold our assent to the being of other things.<sup>278</sup> Our thinking, our understanding is changed as some things cease to be imaginable or thinkable for us as the order or the pattern of our human sensing itself changes when it begins to attend to another order of images and phantasms.<sup>279</sup> We move from a previous point of view or from a different standpoint because a new interest, or a new focus, or a new perspective has been grasping our attention and we begin to experience and to notice sensible objects in a manner that is now ordered to another order of intellectual objects, a difference in the form of our sensing and the form of our imagining leading us toward differences in the form of our understanding and judgment. New things are grasped and known. At a human level for instance, we know that the sensing of a poet differs from the sensing of a scholar even if no change or no difference exists in the intelligibility or in the nature of that which exists as the form of human seeing as a species of cognitive act. The sensing of a believer accordingly also exists in a way which differs from both the sensing of a poet and the sensing of a scholar and in a way which differs from someone who is not a

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quoted by Gilson, *Reason and Revelation*, p. 19.

<sup>277</sup>Ramon Lull, *Dialogue between Faith and Understanding*, as quoted by Gilson, *Reason and Revelation*, p. 31, quoting from E. A. Peers, *Ramon Lull, a Biography* (London: S.P.C.K., 1929), pp. 312-313.

<sup>278</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3.

<sup>279</sup>Lonergan, “*Pantōn Anakephalaiōsis: A Theory of Human Solidarity*,” *Archival Material*, pp. 55-56; “Outline of an Analytic Concept of History,” p. 122. If, for illustrative purposes, we should think about how, through an order of revelation, the “mind of Christ” is mediated to us through the life and the mind of the Christ’s Church which He has established as His body, we find within this new, third order of premotion a new paradigm that encompasses human and divine things in a way that has led to the rise of a new human culture and which continues to exist as a source of renewal for the further development of our current human culture, criticizing it in certain ways and pointing to a road or path that can be explored and followed. If a first order of premotion refers to the created order of things which exist within our world and a development which moves from thought to action in solving problems of one kind or another, and a second order the evil and sin which exists within our world as a distorting influence and effect, the third order refers to the inauguration of Christ’s Kingdom and the kind of life which exists within it that we are all invited to if we should be moved to turn ourselves toward Christ’s life and being and so begin to accept the helps that He is giving to us if, successfully, we are to live and walk in the way of His healing and saving example. Cf. Lonergan, “Analytic Concept of History,” p. 103, pp. 122-123.

religious believer (although, in the sensing of a poet or in the sensing of a scholar, nothing prevents the sensing of a believer from also being the sensing of a poet or the sensing of a scholar). Different forms of sensing complement and add to each other in ways which enrich the subjectivity of our human acts of sensing. A heightening in our subjectivity is to be correlated to a heightening which exists within the kind of order which belongs to the being of objectively existing things.

Instead of relying on arguments and an understanding of things that accordingly comes to us from a Platonic tradition on how we live and exist and on how we should live and exist, and instead of relying on Aristotelian arguments that come from a tradition which works from how we experience the contingent being of our physical, natural, human world, a third option or, more appropriately, a solution presents itself to us if we should attend to a more comprehensive, third point of view in terms of teachings and beliefs that are to be associated with the workings of grace (and the favor and guidance of grace) if, in the end, in terms of determining a source and point of origin, no other explanation can be given apart from an *a priori* kind of knowledge which would exist as the teachings of a given religion if this religion is informed by teachings and a belief that, in some way, has been revealed and imparted to us and, in some other way, received and accepted by us. Specifically, we turn toward an inference or we make an inference that takes us toward God and the things of God. We phrase our argument through the form of a syllogism.

A first premiss turns, in general, to the general run of our human affairs and at how, in the history of human things, we find various efforts and attempts and differing forms of human organization that, in some way, are all geared toward an understanding and a sense of the presence of divine, transcendent things. A correlation can be pointed to which joins a “natural knowledge of God” (as, cognitively and allegedly, we move from effects toward causes) and a natural type of revelation (or, as some would say, a primitive or a primeval type of revelation, a general type of revelation, or a universal type of revelation)<sup>280</sup> that is given to us so immediately and quickly in the context of our having a natural knowledge of God<sup>281</sup> if we say that, ontologically or from the standpoint of his own perspective, “God...makes Himself known naturally to the human mind.”<sup>282</sup> Through the created order of things, it is said thus that God initiates a revelation of himself to us as our Creator. Quoting Paul of Tarsus to this effect, God's “invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.”<sup>283</sup> About the kind of revelation which exists here, it is said that “God manifests himself to men so that they can know him; for since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal

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<sup>280</sup>See Rodney Stark, *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 38-40. A tradition of scholarship in ethnographic studies argues that available evidence points to a primitive form of monotheism that is foundational in the life of primitive societies. The technical German term refers to this point of view in terms of *Urmonotheismus*. Cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urmonotheismus> (accessed February 29, 2020).

<sup>281</sup>Second Vatican Council, *Nostra aetate* 2, in a reiteration of teaching that initially comes to us from the teaching of the First Vatican Council in 1870 in its decree *Dei filius* c. 2.

<sup>282</sup>Moore, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity*, p. 178.

<sup>283</sup>First Vatican Council, *Dei filius*, citing St. Paul, Romans 1:20.

power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”<sup>284</sup> Any ignorance that would exist on our part as a cognitive quality (or cognitive deficiency) is to be associated with a psychological or moral quality which exists as our foolishness since all ignorant persons are foolish *by nature* if their foolishness derives from a prior condition of ignorance, the meaning of our foolishness existing as a function of the meaning of our ignorance.<sup>285</sup> From this ignorance and then this foolishness, we understand why persons who are afflicted in this way are not able “from the good things that are seen to know him who exists, nor...recognize the craftsman while paying heed to his works.”<sup>286</sup>

Hence, we can conclude: as our Creator and so in a way as our progenitor or Father, God cannot be regarded as properly a veiled or “hidden god” because, within the created order of things, he provides signs, clues, or images to us in such a way that they can be directly perceived by us or they are directly experienced by us in a way that should immediately elicit our attention and interest and then, from there, through how we respond and engage in our demonstrative acts of human thinking and reasoning (if, intelligently, we engage in our acts of thinking and reasoning), then, we should be able to move toward a commensurate, natural knowledge of God in terms of both the truth of his being and existence and the kind of qualities or the nature which, in fact, properly belongs to God as God.<sup>287</sup> Allegedly, as an observation that we make:

From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.<sup>288</sup>

In words which corroboratively point to the truth of this awareness in a way that comes to us from other sources: here, for instance, from Plutarch (c. 46-120 AD), a Greek biographer and essayist, he had spoken in a similar way about the prevalence of a religious sense of things in our human life. In his words:

You may find communities without walls, without letters, without kings, without money, with no need of coinage, without acquaintance with theaters or gymnasia, but a community without holy rite, without a God, that uses no

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<sup>284</sup>St. Paul, Romans 1:19-20. Cf. <http://inters.org/Vatican-Council-I-Dei-Filius> (accessed March 24, 2018).

<sup>285</sup>Wisdom 13:1.

<sup>286</sup>Matthew Levering, *Biblical Natural Law: A Theocentric and Teleological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 64.

<sup>287</sup>Brague, *Law of God*, p. 21.

<sup>288</sup>Second Vatican Council, *Nostra aetate* 2, as cited in the *Documents of Vatican II with Notes and Index*, Vatican translation (Strathfield, NSW: St. Pauls Publications, 2013), p. 387. So sufficient is our universal and our natural knowledge of God that it leads us to think and speak about God as if, indeed, He is our Father and that He exercises the kind of care or solicitude that normally belongs to anyone who exists as a father.

prayer, without sacrifice to win good or avert evil – no man ever saw or ever will see.<sup>289</sup>

A second premiss, however, jars with the first in a way which points to a degree of indeterminacy and yet a resolution of tension which transcends ambiguities when, on the one hand, we affirmatively speak about a natural knowledge of God and, on the other hand, about a primitive type of revelation that exists in conjunction with this natural knowledge. On the one hand thus, with respect to the universality of belief in God as a Supreme Being (or, appositely, the universality of belief in something which can be conceptualized in terms which can speak, for instance, about the agency of a “higher power”) - this kind of belief, as a given, is something which exists as a datum which mitigates against our working with a notion of natural transcendent knowledge which would be confined or defined in terms which would have us speak about a transition which would always have us move, through time, incrementally, from a condition of potency to a condition of act. The absence of any variation in the natural knowledge that we have about the being of a supreme, eternal, personal principle (as we move through time and from one social order to another) instead suggests or it points to variables or to causes which cannot exist as an assembly or as a conglomeration of chance conditions: here now or here there, or partially existing here or partially existing there for this person or that person. In the context of a given type of intellectual culture and within the context of a given type of conceptualization (as we live within this culture and use its language), we can always speak about how, in our thinking and understanding and over a period of time, we all move from a knowledge of effects toward a knowledge of causes in a way which would inevitably and ultimately point to the reality and the being of God as a supreme, uncaused cause. The being is known apart from the nature or form or we would say that it is easier to know about the reality or the facticity of God's being than anything about the nature or the form of God as being or reality. A discursive type of knowing is suggested in this type of transition which would have us move, through our inquiries and our thinking, from something that would be initially known toward something that can be known and discovered for perhaps the first time. Potency is always succeeded by act, potency yielding to the reality or the finality of act.

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289Victor Flanagan, “Primitive Revelation and the Religions of the World,” <https://www.dominicanajournal.org/wp-content/files/old-journal-archive/vol13/no3/dominicanav13n3primitiverevelationthereligionsth.pdf> (accessed March 16, 2018). With respect to our having a universal, natural knowledge of God, it was accordingly argued and noted by the Second Vatican Council in the teaching which can be found in *Nostra aetate* 2 that:

From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

Cf. *Documents of Vatican II with Notes and Index*, p. 387.

For purposes of further clarification, please note that asking about who God is (as the transcendental cause of all things) always supposes that we already know that God exists (as the transcendental cause of all things). However, to know about who God is in his nature supposes an understanding which is to be identified with the understanding which God has of himself and, on the basis of the principle of identity which exists between every act of understanding and the content or term which belongs to the content of any given act of understanding (no real distinction exists between an act of understanding and the understood which is grasped by us in an act of understanding), this type of understanding which exists as God's knowledge of himself can never properly belong to us as contingent, created human beings (given how we exist as limited, partial understanders). In any understanding that we could possibly have about who God is, some other kind of understanding would be needed which would differ from the understanding which God would have of Himself.

However, if, in some other way (or non-discursively), a natural knowledge of God or a sense of God is already fully given to us as human beings, on the basis of this realization and conclusion, we can try and think about the viability of an alternative explanation which would not have to assume that we are thinking about a type of knowing which would be conditioned by a movement which would shift (for us) from a condition of potency to a condition of act. If the idea of God as an apprehension is not itself undoubtable or innate (if, for instance, it cannot be compared to a rule or a precept of logic as logical laws exist and inwardly guide the manner of our deductive acts of human reasoning), then it can be argued that its species of givenness points to some kind of *a priori*, primitive, general, or undifferentiated universal type of revelation has been somehow already vouchsafed to us. Admittedly, we have our acts of inquiry and cognition in the context of our human life; we can begin with our acts of sensing and we can try to move toward possibly receiving appropriate acts of understanding that would move us from our acts of sensing through images and phantasms toward our consequent acts of understanding and judgment. But, as we have been noting, the absence of variation as we find this in the records and the annals of human history as regards a sense of divine, transcendent things suggests the reality and the givenness of an inchoate, primitive type of revelation (an inchoate, primitive type of awareness) which, in some way, exists for us as our fundamental point of departure (existing already within a condition of act, however dimly, before we should begin to engage in any kind of reflection or thought that can then move us from a condition of potency to a condition of act). So obvious and so apparent seems to be the reality of God's existence as we admit to ourselves that a complication exists in the context of our apprehensions. On the one hand, we can have an inarticulate, vague, ambiguous, and yet urgent sense of the being and the reality of God and, on the other hand, a thoughtful, inquisitive, reflective type of apprehension that wants to think and ruminate about the question of God's existence (asking this or that question) and then, from there, possibly moving toward an affirmation which would want to speak about the truth or the reality of God's being and existence.

As Aquinas had noted in the context of his own day and time, difficulties and problems can be encountered (they are often encountered) if we should try to move toward a reflective, philosophic knowledge of God (apart from a knowledge of God that is somehow already or immediately given to us in a pre-reflective way). Quoting his own words: "the science to

whose province it belongs to prove the existence of God, is the last of all to offer itself to human research, since it presupposes many other sciences: so that it would not be until late in life that man would arrive at the knowledge of God [which belongs as the fruit of a species of scientific or philosophic inquiry].”<sup>290</sup> The greater the number of prior conditions which need to be met, the less likely will they all be given and fulfilled.

In the transition which occurs thus if we would want to move from an un-thematized sense of God's being to a thematized sense of God's being and existence, the catalyst, the agent, or the pivot or point of difference appears to be the posing of questions as these emerge for the first time within us in a conceptualized, communicable form (through the instrumentality of words and concepts which can begin to exist as an externalized species of object) since, through acts of conceptualization and through the clarification which exists in our acts of conceptualization, a motivating cognitive cause emerges within us as a desire in a way which enhances and which changes us in our consciousness. It encourages us to be open to new acts of understanding that would be more clearly known and distinguished from other acts of understanding that are less well known (they are simply given; we already have them or they have been inherited; hence, they have not been clearly distinguished from each other). The new acts lead to new acts of conceptualization which, in their own way, are also more clearly known and distinguished from other acts of conceptualization that have been lacking in degrees of expressiveness within either or within both the forum of our interior consciousness and the kind of forum which belongs to the order of our outer expressiveness and a form of consciousness that we have which points to an extroverted form of orientation. In any results which follow, everything depends on the strategy that we employ in the context of our questions since, as we know in the context of our individual human experience, some questions are fruitful while others are not. Some questions should not be asked.

For illustrative purposes, a simple example of a form of pre-reflective consciousness as this refers to God can be alluded to if we should say that, in times of crisis within difficult military situations, it is true to claim that “no atheists exist in foxholes.” However, how this awareness becomes a point of departure for us in any rethinking that would exist through any questions that could be asked – in this context, we will find ourselves within another form of consciousness that, in its potency (its active potency), is a cause and a source of many disputes.

To employ an illustrative example which exists, for us, as a kind of parallel: in his *Confessions*, Augustine talks about the nature and the meaning of time but in a context which notes that, if, for us, time exists as an unquestionable, un-thematized type of thing, we tend to think that we know what it is. We experience no problems. We might not think that we should ask any questions about it. But, as soon as we begin to think about it and to reflect about it, we soon find that we are not so sure about what exactly it is. We move into controversies and disputes.<sup>291</sup> Hence, in a similar way, in the human story of

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<sup>290</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 2, a. 4, as cited by Levering, *Biblical Natural Law*, p. 14, n. 36.

<sup>291</sup>Augustine, *Confessions*, 11, 14-17.

things in the context of our human culture, we have an initial awareness of things which knows about the being of higher, transcendental things but, within the context of our later inquiries and subsequent reflections, this awareness can come under various forms of scrutiny that can detract from it: taking us away from a simple kind of belief that had existed for us initially with respect to the being and the truth of divine things and how we understand how we exist or relate to the being of divine things.

In turning thus toward a form of resolution, to begin on a negative note, as Aquinas notes and argues, among human beings, for some persons, in the context of their thought and reflection, God's existence is not self-evident at all although, for other persons, God's existence appears to be all too obvious and so, in the context of their viewpoint, God's existence is obvious and self-evident.<sup>292</sup> If, for various reasons thus, the idea of God is not to be regarded as undoubtable or innate (if it does not exist as an *a priori* kind of thing, as something which already exists within us as a built-in ingredient since, otherwise, there would not be any atheists in our human world), and if, in a preliminary way too, God's existence is not to be regarded as a conclusion which, gradually in time, we would arrive at and come to through our discursive acts of human reasoning, then it can be argued, as a third possible explanatory option, that "what is innate is...the ability easily and to a certain extent *spontaneously* to know the existence of God from His works."<sup>293</sup> Italics mine. As Aquinas had noted in this context: "the knowledge of Him [or our knowledge of God] is said to be innate in us in so far as we can easily know the existence of God by means of principles which are innate in us."<sup>294</sup> A rightly ordered life of reason, as this can exist in some persons or in the lives of many persons, immediately points us or it immediately gives us a sense of God's being and existence prior to the posing of any definite specifications of question.

For evidence to this effect thus, see for instance how, in the autobiography of his *Confessions*, Augustine notes and argues that, within the context of a materialistic type of philosophy as this had existed for him among the Manichees, he could not have or ever have a sense of the being of God's existence (God not being a body) but that, from within an immaterial type of philosophy as this has existed among the neo-Platonists, this was no longer a problem for Augustine since God is to be known in terms of how he exists as a spirit, as an immaterial reality. He is known not through our senses but through our acts of understanding or through our acts of believing which exist as another species of immaterial, cognitive act which, in their own way, are right and proper for us to have as human beings.<sup>295</sup> Acts of believing can join us to a world that, otherwise, we would know nothing of.

Hence: if our initial knowledge of God is not itself undoubtable or innate (if it is not an

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292Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 1.

293Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 14.

294Aquinas, *In Boethium De Trinitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6, as cited by Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 14.

295Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 134-144.

predisposing element or already a part of the order or the structure of our human cognition), and if it is not the term of any argument that we would like to make as we would move from thinking about effects to thinking about causes, then, in terms of a classification or category, we are left with a type of inference which would exist as the immediacy of a *simultaneo* type of inference which, in turn, can be explained in its own way (as itself also an effect) on a basis which refers to theological or ontological grounds that can be found and proposed if we should now speak about the primacy of a primitive type of revelation which exists within the created order of things (in a world which exists outside of ourselves and in a world which also exists within ourselves, within our sense and consciousness of self as we participate and live in a world which exists outside of ourselves). In immediately sensing or knowing that something exists contingently or in sensing or knowing that it has been brought into being from a prior condition of non-existence, we immediately sense, know, and believe that some kind of operative, unknown maker or some kind of operative, unknown creator exists and that this unknown maker must, in fact, exist. God would exist for us here as initially as an unquestionable point of origin, as a species of unquestionable thing, if God reveals himself or if he manifests himself to us in a very early or primary way, albeit, through a pre-reflective, undifferentiated species of cognitive act which would exist on our part as a prior condition, apart from our asking or posing any questions. As we have been noting, questions can come later if, through a meditative form of self-reflection and by engaging in a form of inner dialogue with ourselves, we should want to move toward reflective acts of understanding and judgments about any kind of reality which, cognitively, would exist for us now as the term of a reflective act of understanding.

In an analogical way of speaking, we move from the faith and the belief of a child to having the faith and the belief of an adult and from a point of departure where our initial or primary awareness or sense of God would not be an awareness which exclusively or totally exists as an act of faith; nor, at the same time, would it exist as exclusively or totally a cognitive act that would differ (in every way, in real terms) from an act of faith that somehow mysteriously exists within us. A lack of differentiation in terms of our initial knowledge and apprehensions of things immediately always points us to a lack of differentiation in our acts of knowledge and apprehension.

To try and find how we can best speak about this type of cognitive act which immediately knows about the being of God's existence, instead of trying to apply distinctions which would exist, allegedly, as an ordering of real differences and distinctions, we should perhaps best refer to an ordering of distinctions which would exist as conceptual distinctions or as intellectual, mental distinctions. In general, in our thinking and in the reception of our individual understandings of things, the immanent or the proximate focus of a cognitive type of inquiry that belongs to our thinking and understanding always ultimately leads to concepts and terms that emerge within us and which, to some extent, are peculiar to ourselves in our acts of thinking and understanding. However, in an ontological or in a theological type of inquiry where acts of meaning in our understandings and concepts are controlled and shaped by a strategy of questions that we could be asking, we are moved toward a different, distinct, specialized set of concepts and terms although, in fact, both sets can refer to the same thing, the same reality if this reality is a sense of the being of

God's existence.<sup>296</sup> Simply put: if an *a priori* argument moves from a cause to an effect, then this type of argument cannot be applied to God since God does not exist as an effect. God cannot be caused. *A posteriori* arguments, on the other hand, always move from effects to causes and we can speak about this type of argument within a discursive context of inquiry as we engage in an analysis which would move us from effects to causes. But, if we are to speak about God as a cause which does not argue and think itself out in a piece by piece movement which would go from effects toward causes, we are left with a form of inference that is immediate and which is all too obvious to us (it would exist as an intellectual type of intuition) until perhaps, later, we can begin to have doubts about it (through a restlessness that we experience within ourselves) and so, then, we can begin to engage in discursive acts of inquiry by moving into questions and inquiries that can possibly move us toward judgments which would exist within us within reflective acts of understanding that can be possibly given to us in the wake of new acts of understanding that could be given to us. As we have been noting, one leads to the other: direct acts of understanding to reflective acts of understanding.

In any case, whatever we should decide: if, for some or for many, God's existence is not to be regarded as very obvious or as unquestioningly self-evident, the context of this supposition and judgment could very well be a degree or a level of consciousness and an attendant realization or an attendant knowledge which knows and supposes that, despite telling or intelligent arguments that could be proposed and constructed in proof of the reality of God's existence, all arguments are insufficient since no argument, as an argument, can compel or force our human acts of willing to move in a certain direction. No argument here or elsewhere can compel a person to move from a condition of unbelief into a condition of belief. In some way, some kind of struggle is always involved or supposed. Some kind of struggle is always elicited or some kind of struggle is always given to us if we are to move toward a belief in God that could change us in our sense of self and in our sense of the world that exists about us, changing our consciousness of self and world in a way that would reveal truths and realities that had not been suspected, truths and realities which had not been previously known or supposed. We admit that a mistaken philosophical bias in our thinking or an errant judgment in our understanding always impedes us or it will thwart us in possibly moving toward an understanding of things that would be rooted in accepting the truths of a received, imparted religious faith and tradition. However, in addition too, another variable is pertinent and relevant if we should refer to a distortion or a deformity which can exist within the contours of our human desiring and willing since these also serve to thwart or to impede the good that can possibly come to us if we should accept the truths of a religious faith that, in some way, is being communicated to us or which, in the past, has been communicated to us in how we have experienced our life within the kind of world that we have been born into. If belief in God is not a purely cognitive act, or if it cannot be separated from acts which belong to the order of our human desiring and willing; if belief always shades into elements or ramifications that belong to our acts of human desiring and willing, when we advert to the givenness of this complexity, we should understand why belief in God does not exist as some kind of foregone conclusion. It is not as easy as we would want or wish it to be. To move into any kind of

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<sup>296</sup>Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, p. 157.

human inquiry as a new point of departure, in its own way, supposes a form of receptivity or changes in our acts of desiring and willing if we are to engage in new forms of reflection that can possibly take us into new orders of meaning and being.

A third premiss refers to the experience of unrestrictedness and how we experience this unrestrictedness within ourselves in a way which allows us to attribute it to a greater degree to other subjects of understanding and willing who, in some way, are not less than ourselves but who are, in fact, more or greater than ourselves. A proper unrestrictedness, on the one hand, accordingly exists in us as human beings (in our subjectivity, to the degree that we exist as living human subjects) if we attend to the unrestrictedness which exists within our acts of wanting and desiring every kind of good that can possibly exist and which could be possibly given to us, whether we should refer to the good of understanding or goods that transcend the good of understanding if the good of loving always transcends the kind of good which belongs to understanding. Admittedly, the kind of unrestrictedness which exists in our wants and desires does not necessitate an adequate type of fulfillment that would exist as a correlative of the kind of unrestrictedness which already exists within us within the active potency of our desiring, wishing, and wanting. Hence, the fulfillment which could exist would exist initially as an option (as but a possibility) as we try to move toward determinations of probability which would require a basis or ground which exists outside ourselves and which would move and touch us from without if transcendental, supernatural satisfactions or transcendental, supernatural objectives are to be achieved through the help of means that, in their being, would have to possess a transcendental or a supernatural form of specification if we cannot move simply from the unrestrictedness of our desiring to the unrestrictedness of any form of attainment.<sup>297</sup>

A traditional way of speaking argues that, from our desire for an understanding of higher things which transcend ourselves and the kind of limitations which belong to the kind of being that we have, we can conclude that, as human beings, we have been made and created by God as our Creator in such a way that it points us toward supernatural ends or supernatural goals which, in some way, properly belongs to us as human beings although, in our limitedness and in our contingency, we cannot reach these ends apart from some kind of special help that we conveniently refer to in terms that speak about the gratuity of grace.<sup>298</sup>

In terms thus of possibility but of a possibility which exists as a *point of departure for moving toward possible determinations of probability*, if we are to move toward or to receive an unrestrictedness which is greater than the unrestrictedness which we already have within us (relative to our own wants and desires), then our efforts would have to suppose the good of somehow moving into another order of existing things that exists beyond ourselves and an

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<sup>297</sup>Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Canon Bastible, trans. Patrick Lynch (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books, 1974) p. 102.

<sup>298</sup>J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 165, citing both the teaching of Aquinas and how Lonergan understands and interprets Aquinas's teaching.

order of cognition which is best spoken about not in terms of the form or the content which belongs to the intelligibility of our incarnate, human acts of understanding but in terms of the form and the content which belongs to another kind of cognitive act as this is suggested to us through the perambulations of our self-reflection and the coining of words and concepts which would have us speak about an act that, in this life, we do not experience or know; hence, an act which, by referring to a transcendent form of cognition, for want of a better designation, we would refer to the givenness of a “beatific vision.” The knowing in this “vision” is immediately given to us but it would exist as an intellectual type of seeing and not as a sensible type of seeing. We would immediately know about the being of certain things that are higher than ourselves, apart from any corporeal acts of human sensing and the necessity of having to pose any questions in inquiries that would be needed as a form of preparation that could then possibly lead us toward the acts of cognition that we are seeking and desiring.<sup>299</sup>

Accordingly, within this context, if we are to begin with possibilities before moving toward determinations of probability, if we work with analogical acts of understanding and not with our direct acts of understanding, we can begin to speak about a purely immaterial form of cognition and how, as purely spiritual or immaterial beings (or as immaterial, spiritual subjects), angels (as angelic beings) exist as cogitating, desiring, willing subjects in a way which is totally determined by the form or the kind of cognition that belongs to them. We say that they are absorbed; or that they are taken up; or that, in their being, in a forgetfulness of self, they “are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory”<sup>300</sup> where the explanation for this kind of experience is a form of cognition that could possibly belong to us if, in a way that we do not understand and know, we were to become like angels in the manner of our being and living through the reception of a new manner of cognition (if our acts of sensing are no longer given to us; if our acts of sensing are no longer needed by us; if our acts of sensing have, in some way, ceased to exist for us although we find that we continue to exist as cogitating, knowing, loving subjects).<sup>301</sup>

In addition to the being, the reception, and the genesis of our direct acts of understanding, in our self-reflection, we find another species of abstractive act which brings us into an awareness of things that, otherwise, would not be known. In its own way, this other kind of act detaches or removes that which is individual and peculiar to us in our human acts of cognition and, by this means, through the suggestiveness of analogies, we can begin to know about the possible being of cogitating, knowing subjects who exist more simply as immaterial, angelic spirits and about the possible reception of another kind of cognition that could be possibly given to us if,

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<sup>299</sup>Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Vatican City State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), p. 268, #1028.

<sup>300</sup>Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, trans. Ilse Lasch (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), p. 38.

<sup>301</sup>For information about this kind of cognition, consult currently available information that we now have about the question and numerous incidences of near death experiences that some persons have and how, allegedly, our human cognition can continue to exist when persons speak about how, in experiencing physical death, their spirit or their soul leaves their bodies in terms that refer to “out of body” experiences. A kind of seeing and knowing occurs but it is not one that works through our organs or acts of human sensing. Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near-death\\_experience](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near-death_experience) (accessed February 4, 2020).

in some way, the form and the functioning of our human cognition were to change in ways that are not subject to our personal control when, at a certain point and for all of us in the context of our human lives, physical death inevitably comes to us but not so the death of our spirit or the death of our souls; not so the death or the demise of our psychological life which continues to exist for us in a way which is other and which is apart and distinct from the life of our bodies.

To avoid confusion here and for the sake of further growth in our understanding of things, compare the kind of abstraction or the kind of separation which exists in a direct act of understanding with the kind of abstraction and the kind of separation which exists in an analogical act of understanding. A direct act, by its nature, by its act, subtracts from data or, from data, it separates material components from immaterial components, removing from the data what are given to us through our different acts of sensing and imagining to grasp or now know about an inner, intelligible component that is not seen but which is now being grasped and apprehended by us through a direct act of understanding. An intelligible structure, form, or idea is extrapolated or it is excised from a given set of material conditions or, in another way of speaking, a direct act of understandings grasps a universal which exists within a given set of particular conditions and circumstances. It removes and it distinguishes a universally existing form or structure which exists as a trans-empirical element or component and so, by this kind of supervening, intervening act, it frees this immaterial component from its connectedness to a given set of empirical, material conditions. Direct acts of understanding work from a basis that is grounded and which is conditioned by our prior acts of human sensing and by our prior acts of human imagining and questioning that are suggested by our given acts and contents of human sensing (the acts of questioning and imagining emerging in the wake of our prior acts of human sensing).

On the other hand however, analogical acts of understanding work from a basis that is grounded and which is conditioned by our prior, direct acts of understanding that, in some way, have been given to us (acts of understanding which, in some way, belong to us). Analogical acts work with a meaning or an understanding which has been grasped about something in a prior, direct act of understanding and then, by separating and detaching it from its sources and origins that refer to our prior acts of human sensing, questioning, and imagining, we apply it or we associate it with something else that has been given to us through the kind of mediation which exists for us in other acts of human sensing and the mediation which exists for us also in other acts of human questioning and imagining. A given meaning is applied to something which is quite other and distinct and which is yet similar in some way in the belief and in the hope that this association or attribution can possibly shed light or reveal something to us about the intelligibility or the meaning of a given thing that, in the context of our present life in this world of space and time, we do not directly grasp and understand, nor can ever directly grasp and understand. “The slenderest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the

most certain knowledge of lesser things.”<sup>302</sup> Where, in some contexts, direct acts of understanding are not appropriate or applicable in any receptions that we can possibly desire and hope for, analogical acts of understanding can exist for us as receptions that, in turn, reveal shades and nuances of meaning that, otherwise, would not be known and grasped. In both cases, whether with direct acts of understanding or with analogical acts of understanding, we move from what we already know toward what we can begin to understand and know for perhaps the first time. The limitations which exist in our human understanding do not preclude extensions or developments in the scope and depth of our understanding if, in our understanding of any given thing and whether we should speak about direct acts of understanding or analogical acts of understanding, we do not govern, control, or determine that which could be given to us in an act of understanding.

In speaking then about angelic spirits and the kind of teaching that we have about the being and the life of angels and the kind of unrestrictedness which belongs to them (at no time is their cognition ever restricted through any form of interruption), while, cognitively or subjectively, its context is ourselves in our cognitive performance and self-reflection and an unrestricted, natural desire for an understanding of things which are other than ourselves, in our current context as human beings, we find that, in the light of the *unrestrictedness* which exists in us, our object can then shift and turn toward other forms of unrestrictedness which, ultimately, would have to refer to the being and the life of God if God exists as an originating, uncreated, immaterial spirit and how, possibly, we can be united and joined to him since, cognitively and subjectively, as we also know in the context of our self-reflection and knowledge, we find that, in any given act of understanding that could be given to us (whether it is direct or analogical), as subjects in a condition of act, we are always joined and united to whatever exists as the term of a given act which exists within us, within the transcendence or the self-transcendence which belongs to us within the fullness of our subjectivity. Act and term of understanding (as with act and term of experiencing or seeing) can never be separated or disjoined from each other if each cannot exist without the other. In words which suggestively point to the unrestrictedness of other origins and sources that exist outside of ourselves and which are to be associated with worlds of meaning and being which transcend the parameters of our sensing experience and any given set of spatial temporal conditions:

[Unexpectedly or surprisingly in the context of my current life in conditions that belong to limitations of space and time and which are limited by conditions of space and time] I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love...For the first time in my life I was able to understand the

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<sup>302</sup>Aquinas paraphrasing Aristotle (*De Partibus Animalium*, 1, 5, 644b31), in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 1, a. 5, ad 1, as quoted by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 3. A less literal translation reads as follows: “the slenderest acquaintance we can form with heavenly things is more desirable than a thorough grasp of mundane matters.” Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Latin text and English translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices and Glossaries*, vol. 1, *Christian Theology*, ed. Thomas Gilby (New York: Blackfriars, McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 19.

meaning of the words, “The angels are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory.”<sup>303</sup>

Turning now then to God and to the things of God, another but different, proper unrestrictedness belongs to God alone in an unrestrictedness that, as we have been admitting, we ourselves do not directly understand or experience although we acknowledge the fact that, in some way, it can be adverted to. In some way, it exists. The unrestrictedness in act as this refers to God (whether we should speak about anything which would exist either as understanding or as willing and loving) – this unrestrictedness, in turn, points to a form or to a mode of expressiveness that is derivatively unrestricted if its basis or point of departure is an unrestrictedness that, in its own way, is proper only to God and the things of God, God existing as this unrestrictedness. The mode of expressiveness, in its unrestrictedness, necessarily transcends anything that we can think about or imagine although, as an analogy, in the inference that we are making, we know about this expressiveness (we find it within ourselves) to the degree that we attend to our own expressiveness and to how it flows within us in our consciousness or how too it is communicated or made known to others in terms that relate to how they, in their own way, live and exist. If, in us thus, from a limited understanding of things, we always have a form of inner, limited expressiveness which exists as a grasped, understood idea that we can begin to think about through a form of inner dialogue that emerges within the rationality of our thinking and understanding (the idea emerges or it becomes a form of inner object or concept that we can interrogate and ask questions about), then, in the wake of anything which exists as an unrestricted act of understanding or any subject who exists as an unrestricted act of understanding, necessarily, a form of unrestricted expressiveness is to be admitted. It would exist in lieu of anything which would exist as an unrestricted act of understanding or in lieu of anything which would exist as an unrestricted act of loving. Something which is truly good or something which is unrestrictedly good (whether in understanding or in loving, or the two together), in its unrestrictedness, would express itself or it would communicate itself to anything which could be other in an unrestricted way. So great is its perfection or quality that no real distinction is to be admitted between the understanding or the loving and the expressiveness that immediately exists in the wake of both the understanding and the loving. The unrestrictedness would explain why the understanding includes the loving and the loving, the understanding or, on the other hand, why the unrestrictedness of one immediately leads to the unrestrictedness of the other.

On the basis of these considerations thus, within the manifold and the assembly of our human data and so within the history of all the striving, the desiring, and the yearning which we encounter in our lives, we find differences and connections which point not only to possibilities but also to the probability that some kind of divine form of self-presentation (or a divine form of self-revelation) is to be granted, explained, and justified by means which refer to a trajectory of distinct elements which come together in a way which points to a heightening of our human consciousness and which also points to an anticipation that builds up within us as we become more aware of how and why we exist as human beings and why the world exists in the way that it does. If, indeed, (1) God is the creator of all things in the world; and if (2) he is the supreme governor or the supreme ruler of this contingently existing, created world (the source of its being and order); and if (3) he exists as unrestricted understanding and as unrestricted

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303Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, p. 38.

willing and loving, then, if there is to be a “true knowledge” of how “every created thing” exists “in relation to [God as he exists in] himself” (instead of our having only a true knowledge about how created things are related to each other in a way which does not exclude how they are related to ourselves), then, for the sake of the truth of things in all its fullness and accuracy and for the sake of all the ramifications that could then lead us toward the greatest kind of good which can be known and, in some way, achieved and enjoyed by us in the context of our present life (and in order to avoid any misjudgments on our part), only God (in terms of how he exists in himself) can be seen to exist as the basis or source of any true knowledge that we can possibly have of him, the being of God as God pointing to a form of communication that differs from how God can be known and conceived by us if our point of reference is limited to the configurations of God's created order and how, in this context, God can be understood to exist as principally our Creator and Sustainer. God as God best reveals Himself to us or, from a divine perspective, only God gives to us a true knowledge of divine things and how these things are related to everything else from a standpoint which refers to God's point of view.<sup>304</sup> Only God is able to “impart” this type of true knowledge in the reality and fullness of its truthfulness or, in other words, only He can give it to us in a way which cannot be more truthful or more certain if indeed, from within the order of existing things and while transcending the order of existing things, to the highest degree or in a different degree, in words which come to us from Augustine, God, in his self-knowledge, cognitively enjoys in Himself a condition of perfect self-knowledge (and no kind of partial self-knowledge) and if God, in his being or ontologically, is in fact Being itself (as the source of the being of all things) or, in other words, “Truth itself”<sup>305</sup> (as the being or the measure of the being and the truth of all things). Nothing can be more real; nothing can be more true. The infinity or the unrestrictedness of God's understanding points to why God exists as “Truth itself.”

In the consequences which follow: in an absolutely exclusive sense, God's revealing of himself to us points to the fullness and to the expressiveness and the radiation of God's self-knowledge in a transparency of self which uniquely and fully belongs to God as God exists in Himself. The transparency or the lack of deception, in its unrestrictedness, explains why God cannot deceive anyone (or Himself) in a way which could possibly point to any kind of imperfection that could allegedly belong to God's self-knowledge or which could come from the fullness of God's self-knowledge.<sup>306</sup> Nor, in addition, can God be deceived by anyone who could be other than God as God exists in Himself since God exists in Himself in a way which cannot point to a lack of knowledge or a lack of understanding that could allegedly exist in God.<sup>307</sup>

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304Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 59, #216.

305Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 59, #215; Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 8, 2, 3, as quoted by Menn, *Descartes and Augustine*, p. 153, n. 20.

306A Cartesian argument avers that, because God is infinite and because God “does not distinguish himself from others,” then he cannot or he “does not recognize interests of his own that are different from those of his creation.” Hence, God cannot be regarded or conceived in a way which would have us believe that he would want or that it is possible for him to deceive anyone in how, in any way, he chooses to reveal himself and what is given to us in how he chooses to reveal himself. Cf. Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. xiv.

307Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, 3, as cited by Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 42, #156.

To understand a bit more how or why we can speak about the fullness of God's self-knowledge and the import or the significance which accrues to this kind of self-knowledge as this connects with us and any possible human knowledge of God that we can have through the direct kind of knowledge which exists as revelation, it can be said as follows:

To understand the kind of link which exists between God's understanding and knowledge of himself and how, in his revelation of himself to us, God's self-understanding and self-knowledge is to be understood as both fundamentally pivotal and fundamentally catalytic (the revelation exists as an application or as an extension of self of God which is preeminently trustworthy and credible), please refer to how Augustine speaks about our limited understanding and knowledge of self and how uncontroverted and how indisputable is this understanding and knowledge of self (despite the extent and the reality of our own contingency and our proneness to error and the possibilities of our falling into many misjudgments). In Augustine's own words: "But, without any delusive representation of images or phantasms, I am most certain that I am, and that I know and delight in this. In respect to these truths, I am not at all afraid of the arguments of [the skeptics] the Academicians, who say, What if you are deceived? For if I am deceived, I am. For he who is not cannot be deceived; and if I am deceived, by this same token I am....And, consequently, neither am I deceived in knowing that I know. For, *as I know that I am, so I know this also, that I know.*"<sup>308</sup> Italics mine. Knowing and being exist together. The self-knowing that we have exists in a self-authenticating kind of way.

Hence, in the midst of any possible skepticism that we can pretend to have about our own being and about the reality or the being of our understanding and knowledge, even if we should find ourselves within some possible kind of self-delusion and deception as we think about any number of different options, this possibility is not ultimately definitive or triumphant since, in the end, no amount of delusion or second guessing about the status of our being and the knowledge that we have of our own existence can possibly lead us toward any real doubt that we can have about whether or not we exist and whether or not we have an understanding and knowledge of ourselves in the kind of cognition which belongs to us as human beings. To know that we exist is to know and to acknowledge the understanding and the knowledge that we have of ourselves in our existence. Our existence is as undoubtable as is the being and the extent of our understanding and knowledge if, through our understanding, we cannot but not know about the being of our individual existence. The kind of being that we have, in including the kind of knowing that we have, points to the reliability of our understanding and knowing despite its proneness to mishaps in the reception of our understanding and a lack of reasonableness in some judgments that, at times, we try to make.

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<sup>308</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, 2, 26, as cited by Rodney Stark, *Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2005), pp. 25-26.

Hence, we can conclude as a species of derivative: how more so is the understanding and knowledge which properly belongs to God and which is constitutive of the being of God? From the exclusion of any kind of deception or illusion which can possibly exist in God's understanding and knowledge of Himself, it follows from this that, from God or on God's part, no deception or delusion can possibly come to us from God in the context of God's revelation of Himself to us. From the self-revelation of ourselves which comes to us from our self-understanding, on the basis of an analogical act of understanding, we can move to a notion of God's revelation of Himself as this comes to us from the kind of self-understanding which God alone enjoys in an unrestricted way as God (God as the source of all things). The unrestrictedness of God's self-understanding immediately points to an unlimited kind of self-expression or an unlimited kind of self-revelation that would exist as a proper conclusion that, in turn, elicits our inquiry and interest if, now, we should want to know about the terms and the conditions and the content of this divine form of self-revelation as, possibly, it can be grasped and understood by us within the kind of cognition which properly belongs to us as human subjects. To approach the immediacy of God's understanding is to move toward a like kind of immediacy which can also be said to exist within us within the order of our human cognition if, in some way, as rational creatures, as effects, we participate in the kind of causality which exclusively belongs to God.

While, on the one hand thus, an indirect knowledge of God can be drawn by us from a knowledge of God's creatures and ourselves as God's creatures (as, discursively and tentatively, we move from effects toward their likely, probable causes), this same knowledge is corrected or it is augmented, surpassed, and perfected if we should now refer to a direct knowledge of God which, in some way, exists or a direct knowledge of divine things which immediately exists and emerges within ourselves whenever, externally or from without, it is given and received by us through the mediation and the expression of an inwardly apprehended, understood word, concept, or message which comes to us directly from God (given the agency and the subjectivity of God's own being and the unrestrictedness which belongs to the manner of God's self-expression). Hence, what is given to us or what can be given to us exists as a divine species of communicated word and, as this same word begins to move and to enter into the warp and the fabric of our human history, it enters into the order of our human knowledge and communication whenever this word is found to be spoken to us (in some way and other) through ways and means that reveal its fecundity, its power and significance. Linguistic and non-linguistic means, as they are needed and used, touch our human sensibility in ways which, together, point to a distinct form of apprehension and understanding and to determinations of truth which point to self-authenticating form of affirmation in terms of their content, reception, being, and reality. In this context thus, truths are known through assents which are elicited from us or in us in ways which point to how a non-deliberative form of judgment is to be associated with internal acts of faith and belief and the kind of assent which exists in our acts of faith and belief where before (in our indirect knowledge and understanding of divine things), more easily or more apparently, we had known God as principally our Creator and Sustainer

rather than God as principally our Savior and Redeemer.<sup>309</sup> In an exclamation that, for instance, comes to us from the text of Isaiah 45:15: “Truly with you God is hidden; the God of Israel, the savior!” God as our Savior exists more or less as a “hidden god,” relative to the more obvious kind of manifestation which has seemed to exist for us if, through the operations and receptions of our “right reason,” our rightly thinking reason, we should think about God as our Creator and if we should attend to the suggestiveness which belongs to the kind of hierarchy and the parts and the connections which belongs to the being of God's created order.

Where through the actuation of our created human acts of understanding and reasoning, a light or a dawning of understanding is to be distinguished and known, a different kind of light is to be distinguished and known if we should now refer to actuations of transcendental, religious belief and faith as these can also occur and exist within us as human beings (in an inward way, through an inner sense of things), according to a manner which precludes or which prescinds from our having to assume or claim that our religious faith exists as some kind of personal, rational, human kind of achievement (as an acquisition or a derivative conclusion that, somehow, we have gained, acquired, or drawn). In differing from the kind of sensate or the kind of primitive revelation which exists for us through the mediation of shapes and forms which exist within the contours of embodied, physical nature, through this other kind of revelation (which is allegedly more direct, being less convoluted), at times God opts or he has decided to initiate a dialogue, a conversation, or a relation with us in a manner which continues to respect how we exist in our world as human beings and how also, within this same world, we can begin to relate to God as he exists in Himself if, to us as rational beings, He is approaching us as a rational being (as the source of every kind of rationality) and if He is revealing Himself to us in a new and special way when, now, God exists as more than simply our Creator and Sustainer, God existing more fully and more properly as our Savior and Redeemer. The difference in mission or function points to a difference in the form of the communication and the revelation which is being used as, in a different way, as a rational, understanding, loving, communicating being, God approaches us as inconsistently rational, understanding, loving, communicating beings, the rationality of a divine transcendent being totally outstripping and transcending the kind of rationality which allegedly belongs to us as

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309Karl Rahner, “God's Self-Communication,” in “Revelation,” *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), vol. 5, p. 355. To supplement this point with a story that came to me some years ago: at an Anglican theological college that was based in Toronto, Ontario in Canada, I once met a young seminarian (Andrew by name) who was studying for service in the Anglican ordained ministry. In the course of time, he came to speak about how or why he came to believe in the truth of the professed Christian message. It seems that he had a younger sister who “had become a Christian” and in order to belittle her new found religious faith, he took up the New Testament gospel texts and he began to read them in order to find materials that could be used to persuade his sister that she had made a foolish decision. However, in reading the gospel accounts, he was himself moved and converted by the words and sentences and the accounts that he was reading about and so he came to believe in the truth of the same faith that his sister had come to hold and to believe. In his own way, Andrew “became a Christian.” The word of Christian teaching exercises an influence that inherently belongs to it even if, admittedly, in a given act of reading, it does not exist as the only operative cause.

human beings, agents, and subjects.<sup>310</sup> The means of communication corresponds with the manner of its possible apprehension while, at the same time, it transcends the manner of apprehension which typically belongs to us as human beings. At no time is the inconsistency or the fragility of our rationality a datum which is to be ignored or put to the side (whether we should refer to our self-understanding of it or to the kind of understanding which allegedly belongs to God to the degree that God exists as an unrestricted act of understanding, the self-understanding of God existing as a condition that is prior to the kind of understanding that would exist of things or in things that could be other than God to the degree that God creates things that are other than himself where, perennially, the context is always God's understanding of himself from which everything else exists and flows).

To try and refer to an exemplary example which points to the kind of mediation which exists if God, as a rational divine being, attempts to enter into our lives as inconsistently rational human beings, if we turn to the context of Christ's public life and ministry and what is known about this public life and ministry, compare the teaching of Jesus's critics (and how it was heard and received by many persons) with Jesus's own teaching and how it was heard and received in a way which points to an authoritativeness that inherently belonged to it. In his teaching and behavior, it was said (it was reported of Jesus) that the quality or the content of his teaching was such that it testified or it pointed to its own, obvious reality, its inherent truthfulness (its normativity in terms of how we should think about it and then act from within the context of our human lives).<sup>311</sup>

In terms of referring to a possible explanation: it can be argued that Christ spoke and acted *with authority* (as meriting our belief and acceptance) because, in his life and teaching, he was properly ordered toward the being of a higher transcendental source, a higher transcendental cause (in this case, to God as his rightful and proper origin; hence God as his Father) although also, from within our own lives, if we are rightly ordered toward the being of a higher transcendental cause, then, in a similar way, our own words and actions will not be lacking in an authority, a merit, or a weight which properly belongs to them in terms of how we stand and exist within the world and how we relate to our fellow human beings (how we perceive them and how, in turn, we are perceived and received by them).<sup>312</sup> In Jesus's own teaching, life, and being, a moral authority is to be alluded to and not a juridical or a legal type of authority

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310René Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Alba House, 1967), pp. 337-339.

311Matthew 7: 28-29: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their scribes." Cf. <http://biblehub.com/matthew/7-29.htm> (accessed March 13, 2018); similarly also in Mark 1:21-22: "Then Jesus and His companions went to Capernaum, and as soon as the Sabbath began, Jesus entered the synagogue and began to teach. The people were astonished at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as the scribes." Cf. <http://biblehub.com/mark/1-22.htm> (accessed March 15, 2018).

312Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority: A Theology of the Magisterium in the Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1997), p. 137.

where, in general, as we notice in the life of our world, in the possible absence of any kind of moral authority, a legal or a juridical authority soon loses the respect and the deference that should properly belong to it and the value of rendering an obedience that it seems to want and to expect of us.

As we reflect and think about this issue thus, we can agree with the thesis and a consequent affirmation which would have us say that “the certainty that the divine light gives is greater than that which the light of [our] natural reason gives”<sup>313</sup> if, through the inspiration and the reception of God's revealing light and grace, within our human souls and apart from the created type of intelligence that we each variously have (some of us having more understanding than others), a knowledge of God is somehow given to us through a comprehension and a recognition of things which is immediately and interiorly given to us by God through the medium of a form of revelation or a form of self-revelation which exists as a kind of inner word or a kind of inner conceptualized form that is grasped by us from within although, as initially or if initially, an internally existing thing, it has yet to be put into our own language and words and other external marks and signs that can be used to communicate its substance and significance to the kind of cognition which typically belongs to us as human subjects as we move through the givens and presentations of sense toward the kind of given and presentation which belongs to us in our acts of understanding.

The wording or the meaning of these truths which, in some way, are imparted and communicated accordingly exists for us in a way which points to transcendental apprehensions of meaning and transcendental specifications of meaning and so to how, in the absoluteness or the height of their transcendence, they would have to exist for us as “mysteries of faith”<sup>314</sup> (or as “mysteries of religion”) where, within our souls or within our minds (or within our inner experience and cognitive consciousness of self), these mysteries now live and exist through an infusion of faith and belief which would have to exist as a supernatural mode of cognitive reception. In the shifts which would be occurring in us through the reception of this kind of knowing, our awareness would belong to an experience of faith which is endowed with its own manner of apprehension (given a special potency in us which would have to exist in us as a species of supernatural potency, relative to a proper fulfillment which would have to exist as the reception of a supernatural act and the supernatural kind of fulfillment which would attend the reception of a supernatural act).<sup>315</sup> Simply put: within this higher or elevated context, a potency ceases to be simply or purely natural as now, it becomes something more or something greater (although not in a way which acts against nature or which jars with nature in a way that cannot add to both its goodness and its intelligibility). This other potency would exist in its

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<sup>313</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a-2ae, q. 171, a. 5, obj. 3, as cited by Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 43, #157.

<sup>314</sup>Please note here that the reference to mysteries refers to truths that we cannot entirely or adequately understand if these truths refer to the things of God that can never be adequately understood by us through acts of understanding which belong to us as contingent, created beings. No contingent, created act of understanding can grasp that which can only be adequately grasped and known by an act of understanding which would exist as an uncreated, transcendent act of understanding.

<sup>315</sup>Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, 4, as cited by Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 43, #159.

distinctiveness as allegedly an obediential potency “insofar as [in faith and belief] it can be actuated by God alone”<sup>316</sup> apart from having to work through the necessity of employing any secondary causes as often as secondary causes can be employed as God may wish or determine to use them.

God accordingly reveals himself to us in a way that we cannot entirely comprehend or grasp through any acts of cognition which can be said to properly belong to us in our human acts of understanding as, in our own way, we try to acquire and move toward an understanding of things that would have us move from an order of effects toward an order of causes. God's reasons or God's understanding, as we have been noting, can never be the reasons or the understanding that we ourselves can properly understand and know if God's reasons exist as terms that properly belong to God in his unrestricted acts of understanding or God as an unrestricted act of understanding (and not to any other kind of understanding). God's reasons are but partially known.

As an aside and in point of contrast (the contrast points to a clarification in terms of the kind of import or the kind of fallout which attends the validity of a distinction as we move from a primitive or a natural type of revelation as this exists in a natural knowledge of God toward a positive or a supernatural type of revelation which exists within the parameters of a revealed, received religious faith), to understand how or why we have many religious traditions that are not to be understood in terms of supernatural revelation and grace but in terms of a lesser kind of help that belongs to the kind of reception which exists in our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding (as, through extrapolations from sense and understanding, we move forwards in our knowing from the data of our conscious experience of self and world), we can attend to how other religions have existed in the context of their own date and time and the proximate points of origin which have belonged to these different religions.

The principal point or argument is to the effect that, apart from the supernatural help of grace, religion (in its expression and development) exists as *largely* although not totally as a product or as a projection of our human imaginings and thinking. The less which is known about the being of transcendental, supernatural realities, the more that, as human beings, we will try to move toward these realities by way of similarities and resemblances that we can possibly find through the reception and enjoyment of analogical acts of understanding and by positing beliefs that are based on what we have already come to know about in terms of our “own notions and ideas” which, in their content, would have to vary as we move from one society and time to another society and time.<sup>317</sup> If, for instance, we should attend to bits and pieces of

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<sup>316</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *De ente supernaturali: Supplementum schematicum*, p. 61, as quoted by Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 145.

<sup>317</sup>Victor Flanagan, “Primitive Revelation and the Religions of the World,” <https://www.dominicanajournal.org/wp-content/files/old-journal-archive/vol13/no3/dominicanav13n3primitiverevelationthereligionsth.pdf> (accessed March 16, 2018).

evidence that come to us from what is known about the religion and the beliefs of the ancient Greeks and also from what is known about the religion and the beliefs of the ancient peoples and societies who were living around ancient Israel as it existed in Old Testament times (Israel as it emerged and was formed into a single state under the rule of one monarch and then later as it was divided into two separate kingdoms before eventually returning to a unity that it had once enjoyed in the days of its earlier Davidic kingship), we can find developments in an understanding of religious realities that are tied to perspectives and orientations that come from the kind of culture which was existing within a given human, social order.

With respect, for instance, to the religion of Hellas and the ancient Greeks, the surviving observations and criticisms of Xenophanes of Colophon (d. 476 BC) point to the dominance of an anthropomorphic type of religion and also to the inadequacies of an anthropomorphic type of religion (whether it is Greek or foreign) since, as a result of our all too human projections and anticipations, the gods and goddesses of one's religion (in this case, the Homeric gods and goddesses of traditional Greek religion) were conceived in a manner which resembled how, as human beings, we tend to exist and live within the context of our human world in our particular societies. As has been the case with us as human beings in how we have tended to live and exist, in the stories which were told among the Greeks, the Greek gods and goddesses lie and steal and they often engage in illicit forms of sexual activity (some less or more than others). If they should speak to us, they might not be truthful in anything that they would be saying.<sup>318</sup> They differ from us only in terms of the kind of immateriality and immortality which properly belongs to them and so, if we are to move towards a better theology or, better still, a true, correct theology of God that can attend to the reality of his transcendence, then the best approach is a new conception of God which thinks and speaks about the reality of God's essential oneness and the reality of a divine enjoyment of every kind of good and perfection. God is good; God is wholesome. God is "one, supreme among gods and men, and not like mortals in body or in mind."<sup>319</sup> To the extent that rationality exists in our human life, in an unrestricted way, rationality belongs to God or rationality is to be identified with God in terms of his nature, being, existence, and acts.

In turning however to the world of ancient Egypt and ancient Mesopotamia, instead of a conception of religion which is largely determined by human considerations in terms of how human beings live, think, and conceive of themselves, religious apprehensions were determined from another standpoint

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<sup>318</sup>Stark, *One True God*, p. 21, citing Aristotle to the effect also that, with respect to the divinities of traditional Greek religion, "the Gods are incapable of real concern for humans – lust, jealousy, and anger, yes, but never affection...they are not to be counted on, and it is quite uncertain that it is wise even to attract their attention."

<sup>319</sup>Xenophanes, cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xenophanes#Theology> (accessed December 31, 2016), citing Zeller, *Vorsokrastische Philosophie*, p. 530, n. 3.

which turned to the regularities which existed within the world of physical, biological nature. The Egyptians and Mesopotamians noticed and perceived that an unending sequence of regularities or patterns exists within the greater world of physical, biological nature. Changes are constantly occurring within this world but they are always occurring according to invariant patterns that govern all the movements and sequences. The outer world of nature can be worked with to some extent through a kind of cooperation which can lead to developments that are brought into the being of our human world (witness the construction of irrigation systems for a distribution of water that can cover long distances) although, in the last analysis and somewhat obviously from our human standpoint, the cosmic order of things is not subject to our human control and government, this absence of control and government accordingly pointing to a divine status which allegedly belongs to the being and the particulars of physical, biological nature (given the beauty, the power, and the greatness of the world which exists within the world of physical nature).<sup>320</sup> In ancient Egypt, the sun was conceived to exist as a god who is to be worshipped and who is to be known as the god Re.<sup>321</sup>

Hence, with respect to the ordering of our human society as this applies to the proper order of its administration and government, the human order of things should be conceived and it was conceived as something which legitimately exists to the degree that it reflects or that it participates in a divine order of things which already exists beyond our human control when we attend to the being of our physical, biological world. To the human order of things in the ordering of its government a form of divinity is to be attributed and ascribed. In their own way, the rulers of a state enjoy a divine status which belongs to the nature of their office and person. If, for instance, the sun-god Marduk exists as a transcendent deity who “is appointed as the ruler over all the people,” then his “earthly analogue” or his earthly parallel or earthly deputy and representative is the Babylonian King Hammurabi (c. 1810-1750 BC) who, as the supreme ruler of Babylon, as its sixth king, belongs to the lineage of the First Babylonian dynasty. He is seen to rise “like the sun over the people” and, as king, he lights “up the land” and he dispenses “the essentials of just order” throughout the Babylonian kingdom.<sup>322</sup>

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320See the Old Testament texts that are given in the Book of Wisdom 13: 1-9, where it is noted, from the point of view of a Jewish understanding of things, that the pagans (the gentiles) have erred in religious matters. Many, foolishly, have been led astray by their perceptions of the beauty, the power, and the greatness of created things that they have encountered within the givens of their sensible experience: to such an extent thus that they have mistaken the greatness of these created things for the reality and the greatness of divine beings (for the being of gods and goddesses who are given names if we are to distinguish them from each other). Cf. University of Navarre Theology Faculty, *The Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians Texts and Commentaries* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1993), p. 72, pp. 19-20.

321See <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sun-worship> (accessed February 18, 2020).

322Eric Voegelin, *Order and History Volume One Israel and Revelation* (Baton

If thus, from an understanding and an observation of human things, the ancient Greeks derived their religion in a way which points to a specific notion or sense of divine things, along another road although essentially from the same anthropomorphic standpoint, the ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians worked with a notion of divine things that was inspired by how they observed the things of nature as these existed within the being of physical, biological nature. In both these cases, from a created order of existing things, a notion of divine things was determined by employing analogies which moved from an ordinary knowledge of things that are seen and experienced toward things which are unseen, hence enjoying in their own way a higher, transcendent type of character. In words that have come down to us from the Greek physician Alcmaeon of Croton (born *c.* 510 BC): a certain and a direct knowledge of things only exists among the gods; but, amongst ourselves as human beings, we can only work with signs that are given to us within our visible world and, by following them and by interpreting them, we can feel our way toward a world which is unseen.<sup>323</sup>

In a shift which points thus to both the emergence and the primacy of a non-anthropocentric point of view and in a shift which comes to us from the kind of religious history and the mediation which is recounted and found in the writings of the Jewish Old Testament, it is reiteratively noted, as a fundamental point of departure for us that, at the very beginning of things, in the revelation of divine things as this refers to God and the works that are proper to God alone, “God [has] created man [humanity] in his own image, in the image of God he [has] created him [our humanity]; male and female he [has] created them.”<sup>324</sup> Instead of God being like us, it is we who are like God because we have been made by God in a way which reflects something of God in us. If truly we exist as an effect, then something of that which is causing us also exists within ourselves.

In the stories that have accordingly come down to us from the apprehensions and the vicissitudes of the Jewish religious tradition, in a context of love and friendship, as this exists within the kind of making which exists with respect to the effecting or the ordering of our creation, as we move from God as the Creator of all things toward ourselves as human beings as we have been brought into being through a divine act of creation,<sup>325</sup> from a being which exists in an unrestricted, immaterial, immortal kind of way, according to the Jewish and hence

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Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), p. 26.

323W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy Volume I The Early Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 344.

324Genesis 1:27, as quoted by Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Vatican City State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), p. 91, #355; and Genesis 1:27, as quoted by Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem*, 15 August 1988, as quoted by Jacques Dupuis, *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Alba House, 1996), p. 177. Please note that, by using square brackets, I have tried to combine and conflate how Genesis 1:27 has been translated in slightly differing ways and, at the same time, make the quotation more readable.

325Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., p. 91, #355.

the Christian doctrine of creation, a lesser but a special kind of being has been brought into being with characteristics of its own that are unique to it. Its immateriality and its immortality (as this reveals something about God) is strangely joined to a number of material components and these components all point to conditions or limitations which explain why the kind of immateriality and the kind of immortality which belongs to us as human beings is to be regarded as a qualification. It exists at a lower level, being not the immateriality and the immortality of God, the Creator. Uniquely, in our way of being as human beings, material and immaterial conditions exist together in a manner which is supposed to endure if, in the end, immaterial realities and principles are truly joined to the being of a corporeal body and if, through a union with material components, immaterial realities are then positioned to be able to more fully express themselves in ways which, otherwise, but, for bodies, would not occur or exist. The death or the disappearance of bodies accordingly points to the need for some kind of recovery or some kind of resurrection<sup>326</sup> (if, indeed, between the human body and the human soul, a real union exists where each needs or relies on the other if the other is to enjoy the fullness of reality that it should have, the immortality of the soul in its union with a body pointing toward the possible immortality and also the eventual immortality of the physically existing human body). Death loses its bite, its sting. It does not exist as it would appear to be or to portend. Instead, the manner of union, as it exists both within our current life and beyond the circumstances of our current life – this union explains why it can only add to the goodness of all relevant, existing, material conditions, raising them or giving to them perfections and qualities that, otherwise, they would not have; and employing these same conditions in ways which concretize elements or features which point to the goodness and the reality of immaterial conditions and the immortality which accompanies the being of all immaterial things.

The likeness to God which accordingly exists within the order of the rational human soul explains why, within the material order of created things, “only man is 'able to know and love his creator',”<sup>327</sup> since, in the self-knowledge and in the interiority which belongs to us as human beings, we resemble, we enjoy, and, in a sense, we also participate in a knowledge of self that exists most eminently, most fully, and most radically in the self-knowledge which God has of himself, the immediacy and the totality of God's self-knowledge differing, by means of a real distinction, from the partial kind of self-knowledge which belongs to us as human beings because of the incremental or the discursive manner of knowing which properly belongs to us (given the manner of our created being and existence). As human beings, because of our spirituality or because of our spiritual likeness to God and the things of God, we best move toward a knowledge of who we are as human beings if we can direct our attention and our thoughts toward the immaterial things of God (working from an understanding of these things of God however slight, partial, or imperfect is the extent and the degree of our knowledge) and so, by this means, we separate ourselves from the kind of understanding and knowledge which knows about the being of all the lesser created things which exist for us within the parameters of our visible, contingent, material world.<sup>328</sup> It is more challenging and difficult and so it is a

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<sup>326</sup>Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., p. 78, #298; p. 91, #355.

<sup>327</sup>Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 12, 3, as cited by John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., p. 91, #356.

<sup>328</sup>University of Navarre Theology Faculty, *The Navarre Bible The Pentateuch* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1993), p. 41, 1:26; and, at the same time, also citing the

greater good that we should move toward an understanding of ourselves than an understanding of things that would want to move toward things or objects that are only given to us through our various acts of human sensing. From the internality of our consciousness of self or from the spirituality or the immateriality which characterizes this consciousness, we work from a new, different point of departure. With respect to the kind of given that is given to us through our different acts of human sensing, it is towards these acts that we move and direct our attention.

A number of metaphysical repercussions follow. First, the manner of our likeness to God which exists in us as human beings explains why it can be said that, as human beings, we exist in a way which heads or which crowns the created, visible order of things within the being of our world.<sup>329</sup> All other created visible material things exist in order to serve us as human beings (we have been given or we find that we enjoy a kind of dominion over the being of all other visible created things) and, by means of this ordination and subordination, it can be justifiably said that human beings have been brought into being for the sake of their own good: in order realize the being of their own good.<sup>330</sup> It is good as human beings that, in fact, we exist and live even if, at the same time, we would have to admit (to ourselves and to others) that the condition and being of our human existence is something which does not add anything to the being or the condition of God's own being and existence since God's own being, in the condition of its perfection, precludes from having to need anything which could make it better or more perfect. God, otherwise, would not be God.

Secondly, as a species of first principle, if nothing is wanting in God, then we must admit that, as human beings, we grow in our own being and perfection to the degree that we are turned toward God and actively yearn and seek to move toward the things of God.

This turning in turn explains why we exist as expressions or as manifestations of God's own goodness where our greater human good exists as a union which can exist between ourselves and God. Only if we attend to how, as human beings, in our own way, we exist for the sake of the goodness of God - as an expression or as a manifestation of God's infinite goodness (our being or our goodness not actually adding to the being or the goodness of God) - only on this basis then can we speak about how, as human beings, we best exist (we truly flourish) if, by our free voluntary actions, we accept our spiritual orientation and nature and we deliberately turn ourselves towards the being and things of God and so seek to live for the sake of his service and worship, our way of service and worship resembling the kind of life which perpetually belongs to angels, as immaterial spirits, who are filled with happiness by simply enjoying the proximity of God's givenness, loving and adoring God, eternally, time without end. Simply and bluntly put, as a kind of primary truth which reflects or which points to the meaning or the truth of our individual human existence: we best understand ourselves and the kind of fate or destiny which belongs to us if should note that already, as created immaterial beings, angels live and exist in a way which "lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite

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Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 14.

<sup>329</sup>Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 1979, as cited by Dupuis, *Christian Faith*, p. 177, #429.

<sup>330</sup>Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 24, 3, as cited by John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., p. 91, #356.

glory.”<sup>331</sup> A love and an adoration of something that is other than themselves (which is other than ourselves) turns us away from preoccupations with self that are self-regarding and the kind of orientation that exists within this type of consciousness. We begin to move toward a knowledge of other things since, with respect to love, “where there is love there is an eye.” *Ubi amor ibi oculus.*<sup>332</sup>

In other words thus, if, with Plotinus, we succeed in understanding how we exist as human beings and who we are as human beings (if we should understand how, through our being, our ontology, or our metaphysics, we are always participating in the perfection or in the being of an uncreated, transcendental principle), then we can understand how a teaching can come to us from St. Augustine in a way which combines this metaphysical understanding of things with a theological teaching which comes from another source: from the religious history of the Jewish people. As St. Augustine alludes to a theological teaching of things which supposes or which incorporates a metaphysics of our human existence, both teachings argue or both hold to a belief which says that the fallenness of our human condition is not ultimate or radically pervasive because, into the very nature and the fabric of what it means to be a human being, a principle of transcendence is to be found (it exists as a “built in” feature). Citing the manner of St. Augustine's teaching in words which point to soundings and teachings that come to us from Plotinus:

...the likeness of God [that is] impressed upon the human soul [which exists as the image of God] cannot be destroyed by a person's attachment to earthly things to the point that it does not retain even the faintest traces of that likeness; and so, it is correct to say that a sinner, despite the irregularity of his life, is aware of and does keep some part of the Law.<sup>333</sup>

The fallenness of our human condition or the lack of perfection which pertains to the manner of our being and living is not adequate or sufficient for any kind of argument which would have us deny that, in our self-knowledge, despite its limitations, we are not without a degree of knowledge which knows about how we ought to live and exist given who and what we are as human beings. The quality or the extent of our moral goodness and also the quality or the extent of our moral blindness is not total, one way or the other, although, admittedly, without the benefit of some kind of help and assistance that would come to us from sources that are bereft of any kind of limitation or imperfection, in the context of our current lives, we will not succeed in fully knowing the extent of our moral obligations nor will we succeed in fully discharging all the moral obligations which, in fact, belong to us to the degree and the extent that we exist as human beings (in a condition of union and cooperation with other human

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<sup>331</sup>Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, p. 38. In words that have come down to us from a Jewish Old Testament psalm (Psalm 27:4): “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.”

<sup>332</sup>Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences*, as cited by Sala, “From Thomas Aquinas to Bernard Lonergan,” <http://lonergan.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FROM-THOMAS-AQUINAS-TO-BERNARD-LONERGAN-2.pdf> (accessed on July 15, 2020), p. 11.

<sup>333</sup>Augustine, *De spiritu et littera*, 27, 48, as cited by *The Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians Texts and Commentaries*, p. 80, 12-14.

beings). Problems and difficulties come to us that lack human solutions that are entirely adequate or implementable.

The most serious problems and difficulties are bereft of cure and resolution if, in some way, the apt and effective solution is one which requires some kind of sacrifice on our part: some kind of dying to self which takes away or which removes aspects or elements that belong to us in the experience of our humanity if we are to continue in the manner and mode of our current human existence. At one level, in family life, parents sacrifice themselves for the good of their progeny (relinquishing goods of body and soul and sometimes the good of their individual, personal lives). At a second level, subjects and citizens belonging to a particular state similarly make sacrifices for the good of their fellow subjects and citizens in ways that can become most apparent and which is most needed in times of war and crisis if the existence of a given society is being threatened in some grave way. From the history of ancient Athens comes the perhaps legendary story of the Greek herald and messenger Pheidippides who, in 490 BC, ran a distance of almost 27 miles to inform his fellow citizens in Athens, meeting in assembly, that Greek arms had successfully defeated an invading Persian army at a battle which has just been fought at Marathon: in his last breath, gasping out the word “victory” and then immediately dying of exhaustion;<sup>334</sup> in his last words, reporting: "Joy to you, we've won."<sup>335</sup> And then, at a third level, in a way which can touch a larger number of persons and groups, stories come to us about individuals of one kind or another who somehow accept, find, and turn to the love of God as their ultimate source of meaning and goodness (cooperatively living and working with this first principle in a way which turns into a companionship and which points to a friendship which now exists between ourselves as limited, spiritual, incarnate beings and God as an unrestricted, immaterial kind of being who exists as both our Creator and our Redeemer. While all persons in their humanity commonly fear death and so the end of their earthly existence, this fear of death does not necessarily override all other considerations. Right actions differ from wrong actions. A sense of this difference exists within us in a way which points to a judge or ways of judging which exist as the rule of an internally existing moral conscience. Do this or avoid that, or try to do this instead of that. And so, at times, the doing of right actions points to the good of our voluntarily choosing to accept what death and suffering could come our way if some kind of greater good is to be brought into being for perhaps the first time.<sup>336</sup> The rationality of the sacrifice points to its possible joyfulness in our experience and execution of it and to why, in our consciousness of self, we find that we are attuned to a possible revelation of divine things that centers on the good of sacrifice as this primarily and first exists within the being of divine things before it can begin to exist more fully within ourselves in the context of our human lives. If, in some way, sacrifice exists within the being of divine things, if sacrifice through some kind of giving of self exists as the way of the being of divine things, then sacrifice becomes for us the best or the more likely mode by which we ought to live if truly, in our own way, we exist as reflections or as an image

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334Rodney Stark, *How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2014), p. 363.

335See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheidippides> (accessed February 20, 2020).

336Daniel J. Mahoney, “Foreword: Natural Law and the Restoration of Practical Reason,” in Pierre Manent, *Natural Law and Human Rights: Toward a Recovery of Practical Reason*, trans. Ralph C. Hancock (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020), p. xiv.

of divinely existing things. Inseparably, the self-transcendence and the sacrifice exist together. They form a single unit.

To try and give a concrete example that illustrates this point in a way which can indicate how a created order of things can be joined to a redemptive order of things that, in its own way, can be said to be revealed to us, compare how sacrifice exists within the created order of things as a species of self-transcending act and how sacrifice can be said to exist within a redeeming, redemptive order of things. If sacrifice were to exist within a divine scheme of things, it would have to exist as something that would have to be more noble, wiser, and more rational. We know that self-sacrifice exists amongst animals. An animal mother takes risks to defend her animal offspring. And then, to a greater degree or more intensely, self-sacrifice exists amongst us as human beings although through ways which are not necessarily instinctual, automatic, or mechanical. Decisions sometimes need to be made on the basis of thought and evaluations that are grounded in determinations and apprehensions of good which encourage us at times to put our fear of suffering and death to the side. However, if that which is most excellent in us is itself subject to corruption and distortions of one kind or another and if, in some way, this facility or ability needs to be redeemed through something that would have to come from an outer worldly source who would exist as God as Redeemer, then the best means would be something which would have to be more noble and fine: a more noble kind of sacrifice which would relativize the sacrifices that we already commonly know about and have within the context of our human life; a sacrifice which would be so great and so noble that it elicits our attention and desire if it is to work as a catalyst within our world to change us in ways that can lead us toward better sacrifices. They would be greater, more wholesome, more beautiful and so possess a greater degree of goodness and merit. Within this context thus we can accordingly think about what is known about the sacrifice of Christ and how it operated within the details of both his life and his death. In the life, that which was heavenly and divine allegedly entered into something that was less or which was inferior to itself and, in the death, troubles, evils, and miseries which could have been avoided were deliberately accepted and shouldered in a way which pointed to how the best, most apt, possible response to incidences of evil in our world is an act which somehow exists as an unexpected, unfathomable, mysterious act of love. "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do."<sup>337</sup> The evils which exist in our world can lead to goods; they can be turned into instances of great good if, in responding to them, we shift and move into the order of self-transcendence which always belongs to acts of love: not responding to an evil act with another evil act but with an act which is self-giving and loving because it is full of the kind of care which exists in solicitude and the light of rationality which belongs to the meaningfulness of an intelligibility which is somehow being supplied and rendered in a set of circumstances are not auspicious. In the sacrifice that one

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337Luke 23:34.

makes of one's self, the object is the good of another.<sup>338</sup>

**in conclusion...**

The articulation of a heuristic that is needed (or which inchoately, is in some way perhaps supposed) before we should move toward an adequate understanding about how the specifics of natural law exist as a formal component within the substance of the Catholic Church's official moral teaching supposes or it requires an explication which, in its own right, would have to exist as an anticipatory, proleptic philosophy of nature or, in other words, as a proleptic, anticipatory philosophy of natural law. How we ask or inquiry about any given thing influences what we will come to understand about the nature of a given thing. A given question in its form points to a given answer, in its form. The heuristic that we presume and which we articulate exists as a species of norm that we already understand (to some extent) if we admit to ourselves, as an initial point of departure, that the more that we can and should understand about the being of a given thing, the more we will probably understand what is being said or taught about the meaning of a given thing that we are supposed now to understand (as we try to grow in our understanding of it). Our fore-understanding guides our later understanding in terms of the inquiry that we are best advised to undertake. And so, as a species of guiding directive norm, the intelligibility, the unquestionableness, and the normativity of its different parts and elements points to why, in its own right, it can be viewed as an ordered combination of natural laws that are individually distinct from each other, the ordering of all these different laws existing, in its own right also, as a fuller specification of the form or the content of that which exists for us as the substance of natural law (at this law exists at a higher or more comprehensive level).

However, as a qualification that needs to be admitted in a way which points to a kind of closed circle, it is to be noted that, as we engage in a higher form of inquiry that attempts to specify the terms and the relations of this heuristic law of nature (we refer to a transcendental form of inquiry that we should undertake and that we have been attempting to make), we employ resources that are not limited or which do not exclude what we might currently know about what has been taught to us about natural law as this comes to us from the teaching and through the practice of the Catholic Church. We refer to a form of teaching that tends to be implicit if we should refer to how, in different ways, the Church has traditionally expressed her faith and belief to both herself and also to others who could be attracted to the good of her professed teaching: through, for instance, catechetical forms of instruction and communication that work with the phrasing of words and statements, and through liturgical forms of worship and communication that work with rituals, signs, and symbols which touch our imagination and

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<sup>338</sup>For a fuller discussion of the kind of sacrifice which can be said to be divine and yet a kind of sacrifice which can be said to exist in a human way within our humanly existing contingent world, see how Bernard Lonergan speaks about understanding Christ's life in terms of his incarnation and Christ's death in terms of a "Law of the Cross" as he discusses this meaning and law in the context of his theology in *The Redemption*, trans. Michael J. Shields, eds. Robert M. Doran, H. Daniel Monsour, and Jeremy D. Wilkins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), pp. 197-263. To understand the significance of Christ's incarnation, see Lonergan's *The Incarnate Word*, trans. Charles C. Hefling Jr., eds. Robert M. Doran and Jeremy D. Wilkins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

understanding through cultivations of sense and the kind of receptivity that exists in us through our different acts of human sensing.

We never begin with an absence of understanding in ourselves but with what, in some way, we have already come to understand and know where now, through our inquiries and questions, we undertake not so much to add but, instead, to clarify and to distinguish what we have already come to understand and know. Simply put: our apprehension of nuances and differentiations is simply more likely to the degree that we exist as believing, acceding, yielding human subjects who, in some way, already belong or who have been participating, in some way, in the corporate life of the Catholic Church (however primitively or incompletely has been the degree of our belief and participation through the hearing and learning of prayers, the recitation of the creed, and the celebration of the Church's liturgy in the context of public worship).<sup>339</sup> To the extent that, in our Catholic life, no real distinction exists between our faith and our reason, or to the degree that our scientific or our philosophical understanding and knowledge of things exists as an inner moment within our theological reasoning and thinking about things as this exists within the context of a life of faith, then, to a greater extent, a kind of pre-understanding (or a kind of fore-understanding) is already operative within each of us. It exists as our initial point of departure and, at times, in unexpected ways, we detect its guiding, directive presence as it qualifies the kind of receptivity which belongs to us as human subjects.

To give a personal example, when in my early university studies I was engaged in undergraduate Political Science studies, in my last year, I was forced to meet requirements and so take a survey course in political philosophy. I had delayed taking it since, in those years, I had no use for philosophy. I was not interested in the subject. However, in the context of my course, I chanced to read Plato's *Republic*, and was surprised by what I found. It seemed very obvious to me that Plato was a Catholic. He thought like a Catholic (although I knew that he lived in pre-Christian times). I soon realized, in the context of my early catechetical training and instruction, that, in some way, Plato's thought had been mediated to

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<sup>339</sup>See how Etienne Gilson speaks about these matters in his autobiography, *The Philosopher and Theology*, trans. Cecile Gilson (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 11-14. When speaking about the formation of his own mind and the course of his later intellectual development, he notes that, in the “formulas of [the] Christian dogmas,” philosophical terms frequently appear although, initially, we might not know anything about how they emerged in a religious context. We refer to “words [such] as substance, essence, singularity, propriety, [and] person.” In imbibing a religious faith in the context of one's early years (before any kind of formal education begins), we receive a formation that is indebted to a history of philosophical discussions that have led to distinctions and nuances that have found their way into the tenets of religious belief and the public practice of one's religious faith. In an indirect fashion, we have been introduced to a world of philosophical inquiry and questions by the degree that we live and exist as religious believers and subjects and to the degree that our religion exists as a larger or a more primary source of meaning for us as we think about how, in a better way, we can try to live our religious lives within difficult human contexts. The more that we attend to questions which ask about the meaning of our faith, the more we turn to questions that will wrestle with philosophical problems which, in time, emerge in the course of our religious development.

me, however primitively, through the wording and the phraseology of the Church's ordinary teaching. This teaching had not in any way directly referred to the intelligibility of Plato's thought although, in fact, through the appropriation of Plato's thought which had occurred in the history of Catholic theological reflection, his insights had moved into the ordering of the Church's understanding and it had influenced the form of the Church's teaching (the form of the Church's communication to all and sundry). Further inquiry and reflection then led me to realize that the same observation can be made about how, within the ordering of Catholic theology (through centuries of thought and reflection), the insights of other philosophers have also been appropriated and so brought into the wording and the presentation of the Church's official teaching. Nothing which is true about the being of things that are not divine is outside or foreign to the truth of the being of things as these things directly refer to God and the existence of divine things. What is rational within the order of philosophy is rational also within the order of Christian theology as, within our understanding of things, truths of faith act on truths of reason and as truths of reason also act on truths of faith. All these things exist together or they come to exist together even as they are distinguished from each other although, ultimately, the connections and the relations which exist among all these different things point to a fundamental unity which joins them all into a single, undivided whole that would seem to be known only by God (given our failure to grasp the meaning of this whole to the degree that divinely existing things can only be adequately understood by something which exists as a divinely existing act of understanding).

In other words, we cannot construct or apprehend a heuristic understanding of natural law in a way which is entirely external or which is outside that which already exists as the shadow or the light which is cast for us by the presence or the givenness of natural law if essentially, in our search for understanding, natural law is itself already operative within us and if it is present through through the kind of expressiveness which exists within us within our cognitive acts and the ordering which already exists among our different cognitive acts.

To understand why we can speak about how a species of closed circle exists for us within the order of our thoughtful, philosophic cognition, we can fall back on an understanding of indemonstrables that comes to us originally from Aristotle.<sup>340</sup> Simple put: some truths are so basic and fundamental as first principles that they cannot be proved from some kind of external viewpoint. Every effort to try and find a proof ends up supposing that which we are wishing to demonstrate and to prove. The reality of meaningfulness or intelligibility exists, for instance,

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<sup>340</sup>See Aristotle, *Topics*, 100a30-100b20 (as translated by W. A. Pickard in the *Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1, p. 167):

Things are true and primitive which are convincing on the strength not of anything else but through themselves; for in regard to the first principles of science it is improper to ask any further for the why and wherefore of them; each of the first principles should command assent in and by itself.

as an indemonstrable if we are not able to get outside the experience of meaningfulness or the experience of intelligibility in order to argue for its probable or likely validity. The indemonstrability of meaningfulness in turn points to the indemonstrability of its constitutive elements as we might come to know about the identity of these different elements and to how they exist in a relation that is constitutive of the kind of being which belongs to that which exists as the datum or the givenness of intelligibility or as the datum or the givenness of meaningfulness.

The transcendence which exists in meaningfulness, to the degree that meaningfulness exists as something which is greater than ourselves, in turn points to how transcendence exists in its own right as a species of indemonstrable. When, through our analytic understanding of things, we try to move from something that is already given to us in our cognition toward sources or points of origin that are initially hidden from us in our cognition, we move toward something that is not immediately obvious to us. We move in a way which points to why our movements exist as a form of transcendence (to some extent, we can speak about the validity of our self-transcendence). And then, through our synthetic understanding of things, when we take a principle of some kind or some kind of suggestive reason or meaning, and when we use it as an ordering principle that can join a number of variables whose connection had not been previously grasped or known, we find too that, in this type of understanding and inquiry, we experience transcendence. We are engaged in another form of transcendence. In both cases, we go beyond what is initially given to us. We enter and move into new apprehensions of being that immediately reveal and point to a world of things that, before, we had not know or suspected.<sup>341</sup>

The transcendence which exists within us accordingly points to an interpretation or a meaning for “natural” which comes across as somewhat flexible, loose, or fluid. A traditional distinction had distinguished between natural potency (as nature), on the one hand, and obediencial potency (as that which exists beyond nature), on the other hand. What allegedly transcends our nature is not supposed to be somehow appropriate, suitable, or natural for us. We can say or we are tempted to say that it is apart from us or unnatural for us although we do not say that it is anti-natural or that it exists as some kind of distortion or defect. The ambiguity points to the impetus or the movement of transcendence as this exists, in general, within us within the teology of our consciousness, or the teology of that which exists as the human spirit (for want of a better way of speaking about it), and how better this transcendence is understood if we can move into some form of differentiation that can speak about an ordering of different stages or parts. A truncated understanding about how we exist as human beings necessarily points to a truncated understanding of nature. A sounder or a wider understanding of transcendence however points to a better or to a fuller meaning about that which is said to be natural for us and, at the same time too, to degrees of relativity which exist if, in a given context, our point of reference should be limited to one species of transcendence in contrast with some other species of transcendence that can be known if we should begin to think about transcendence in general and to identify how we differently experience it as

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341D. C. Schindler, *Freedom from Reality: The Diabolical Character of Modern Liberty* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), p. 197: “...the transcendent becomes present in the differentiation of the unity and a unification of the diverse.”

different human subjects. The progression or the heightening of our transcendence is always changing our sense or our understanding about that which is believed to be entirely natural for us if that which we have been regarding as entirely natural and proper for us comes under suspicion: if it becomes a questionable thesis. We can think, for instance, about the naturalness of our eating and sleeping and we can also think about deprivations of food and sleep that we can introduce into our lives for the sake of goods and values which exist at a further remove, at a higher level. Something needs to be achieved or something needs to be received beyond that which can be achieved by us through the ingestion of food and the relaxation of sleep. Something can become more real for us in the context of our lives than what has been our experience and sense of the being of other realities and so, reiteratively, a change in our awareness of reality points to that which is now more natural and proper for us than what, before, we have been sensing, believing, or anticipating.

To understand how or why we can speak in this way, see currently available literature about near death experiences and how human consciousness can be experienced in a way which transcends the kind of cognition that belongs to our acts of human sensing.<sup>342</sup> It can be said, on the one hand, that communication with God is an extraordinary, unusual thing. On the face of it, does it not exist as an extraordinary thing? But, if, immaterially, God exists in all things (including ourselves), then prayer and communication with God ceases to be an unreal or an unnatural thing. It properly belongs to us as human beings and subjects if we have been created in a way which points to how we have all come from God and to how our consciousness is such that it is not limited to the influence and the weight of material variables, our consciousness not existing as a function of our brains since, instead, our brains exist as a function of our individual, human consciousness. Our consciousness exists as a larger, greater thing and, if this is true, then that which is natural or appropriate for us is determined less by physical or material variables and more by variables that are lacking in any degree of physicalness and materiality. More than we might realize, although yes, for a time, we exist as physical biological subjects, we also exist as transcendental subjects and, through the receptivity or the openness of this transcendence as this exists within us, a nature which belongs to something else or to someone who is other than ourselves can enter into us in a way which raises or which sublates our own nature in a way which adds a second nature to it. For any given human being, it can become entirely natural for him or her to be and to live in a constant form of communication with God and, on our part, we can soon begin to regard this kind of communication as something that is typical or which is natural with regard to the life of a specific human person. It is something that we have come to expect and perhaps, in some way, to hope for. The experiences and the life of another person suggest a way living that can possibly also belong to us as human subjects.

The primacy of the transcendence which accordingly exists within us, to the degree that we develop this transcendence by acknowledging it and by articulating it – as implemented, it turns us toward the materiality of the Church's teaching as this has been given to us and as it

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<sup>342</sup>Spitzer, *Soul's Upward Yearning*, pp. 174-176.

has been put into the materiality of communicable words and phrases. It accordingly then uses this materiality and, in a way, it exploits it. It finds more meaning than would otherwise be the case. Hence, instead of a form of reading which would be limited to attending and knowing about the meaning of words and phrases, it begins to know about the objects to which these same words refer. The objective, through our having a more informed kind of intentionality, becomes a form of inquiry that will more radically change and transform us from within. As a species of general principle, we admit that we are always changed in some way by any understanding which comes to us about the meaning of any given thing.<sup>343</sup> Simply put: the more or greater the understanding, the more or the greater will be the changes that will occur within us; the greater the change in our understanding, the greater or the more probable will be changes that will occur in how we exist and live as desiring, wanting, loving human subjects. The quicker or more immediately will we have an understanding of things that is so beneficial that it is now best referred to in ways which would have us speak about a species of good which is so good or so transformative that, in the end, we must speak about a good which is redemptive or salvific.

### **Part III: Natural Law in the Teaching of Pope Leo XIII: a Second Reading**

Before returning and adverting to the data (the wording) of Pope Leo's text, on a technical or explanatory note, please notice that the Leonine reference to "right action" as the terminal object or goal of our moral thinking and reasoning should suggest to us the prior necessity of our having "right reason" if, from ourselves, we are to move toward an outer, external world of shifting conditions, toward determinations of "right action" on a basis which would have to refer to a prior givenness which refers to actualizations of "right reason" and the determinations which belong to this "right reason." Although here, in his magisterial teaching, Pope Leo does not directly refer to the necessity or the value of "right reason," its necessity and its value would have to exist for us as a fundamental presupposition (as a kind of critical requirement) if we are to move from that which could be correct or "right" in our reasoning and understanding to that which could be correct or "right" in our expressive, externalizing actions of either doing this or avoiding that. The prior necessity of our good reasoning can be postulated or its prior necessity should be postulated for two basic reasons. First, according to one argument, we initially notice that if, through an analytical form of inquiry, we are to move backwards or retroactively from that which allegedly exists as "right action" toward the roots or the grounds of this "right action," we should find that, in a prior kind of way, "right action" exists eventually as a outcome or a determination of our "right reason" or, in other words, "right action" is to be regarded as the objective and the purpose of our "right reason." "Right reason" exists for the sake of moving into possible "right actions." The purpose or the object transcends the reasoning while this purpose or object, by our attending to it, gives a form and a shape to our reasoning by encouraging it to fall into a particular or a right order of acts in the "right reasoning" that is needed if we are to move toward the good of the "right action" which, in some way, is being desired by us.

However, according to a second argument, if the normativity of the Church's earlier magisterial

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<sup>343</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 35, a. 1, as cited by Thomas Verner Moore, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity: An Introduction to the Spiritual Life and Mental Health* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1959), p. 156.

teaching about the competence and the status or role of our already given human acts of reasoning is to be regarded as a species of first principle for us as Catholics (functioning for us as a created, contingent kind of given that we should acknowledge and accept and from which we can draw our own conclusions in terms of its significance and importance),<sup>344</sup> then, the goodness and the necessity of our human reason as “right reason” is a prerequisite which is to be regarded by us as our primary, fundamental point of departure when, within and through the performance of our human acts of cognition, we move into not only an intelligible order of cognitional acts but also an intelligent order of cognitional acts and operations which are somehow prescribed or which, in fact, are mandated by the kind of intelligibility that is properly constitutive of us as human subjects. Together, they are constitutive of how we exist and function as cogitating human beings with respect to all the different acts and operations which properly belong to us in the performance of our human cognition. To explain and to adumbrate a bit more about what this is and if we engage in a form of reiterative summary:

Beginning then with initial acts of our human sensing (and the kind of knowing which exists within this sensing), later acts exist as our human acts of questioning, reasoning, thinking, understanding, and judging. To our human acts of sensing, these later, subsequent acts all exist as complements or as supplements. They add to the givens of our sensible human experience. They enrich the sense or the apprehension which belongs to us through our various acts and data of sense or, in other words, they point to or they indicate a reality that is not entirely known by us if we should only refer and rely on our various acts and data of human sensing and, at the same time too, these later acts also direct or they can determine how we are to work with our various acts of human sensing: how they are to be disposed and aligned by us in new ways or how they are to be employed by us in a variety of different ways, depending on the relevance or the dominance of a given context (as we move from a given concern, question, or interest toward other concerns, questions, or interests which engage our interest and attention and which serve to reshape the pattern or the form of our human conscious activity in ways which would vary according to how we exist and live in an individual way as functioning human subjects). The rightness of an external action always refers to the degree or the extent of its intelligibility where here, within this context, we move and live within an ordering of acts and activities which moves from our apprehensions of truth toward possible apprehensions of goodness or possible apprehensions of value (even as we sense and know that apprehensions of truth exist also as goods that are realized when the conduct of our human inquiry moves us from a condition of potency toward a condition of act). Again, how must I behave, how must I act, given the good which exists in that which I have come to understand and know?

**Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*: the text**

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<sup>344</sup>See “The Church's Teaching about the Nature of Natural Law and how it begins with the Church's Teaching about the Nature of the Human Mind,” <http://lonergan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/NaturalLawIntro-6.pdf> (accessed February 29, 2020).

Turning now to the data or the wording of the Church's teaching as this comes to us and as it is grounded in the teaching of Pope Leo XIII in *Libertas praestantissimum*, the pertinent text reads as follows:

[The most fundamental of all laws is the *lex naturalis*, the natural law]...which has been written and carved into the individual souls of all human beings, because it is *itself the human reason insofar as it commands the carrying out of right action and forbids wrongdoing* [in Latin: *quia ipsa est humana ratio recte facere iubens et peccare vetans*]. Now this *prescription* of the human reason [*humanae rationis praescriptio*] could not have the power of law, unless it were the voice and interpreter of a higher reason, to which our mind and our freedom ought to be subject...It therefore follows that the law of nature is the very *eternal law* implanted in those who have the use of reason, inclining them to a right action and goal [*inclinans ad debitum actum et finem*], and it is also the eternal reason of God, the Creator and Governor of the whole universe.<sup>345</sup>

### **Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*: the interpretation**

To understand the meaning of this text, to understand the significance of its teaching, in an initial set of considerations, let us first attend to meanings which can be described as immediate, immanent, or proximate. In another way of speaking, let us refer to the intrinsic intelligibility about that which exactly is being taught in the text which we have just cited above. We want to understand what is being communicated where, here, in the context of the Pope's encyclical, the Church's Magisterium refers to the nature or the meaning of natural law (other than simply the matter of its being or existence): its form rather than its act. A second set of considerations then attempts to move into an extended discussion about points or elements that have been already briefly mentioned in the context of our initial, prior considerations. We attend to the ramifications of the Church's teaching through conclusions and reflections which are to be regarded as valid inferences, given the specifications of meaning which exist as first premisses within what the Pope is apparently saying to us through the choice of words that he employs in the textuality of the teaching which is given to us in *Libertas praestantissimum*. We look at how a number of distinct realities are all intimately joined to the kind of meaning for natural law which the Church officially prescribes in her official doctrine and teaching (the form or the meaning specifying or referring to that which already exists within a condition of act).

In a way thus, when we refer to the intelligibility of the Church's teaching, compositely, we would be moving from causes to effects and not from effects to causes or, more accurately (and less ambiguously), we would be moving from an initial understanding which postulates a fundamental point of departure which would exist for us as a new species of first principle for all else that would exist within the orbit of our understanding. Like a leaven that could begin to change us from within (it could direct us toward a new orientation), it would introduce us to

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<sup>345</sup>Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*, as cited and also as it is italicized by Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 11. Everything which is given within square brackets refers to interpolations that I have introduced into the text of Rhonheimer's translation.

a subsequent ordering of variables which, together, would combine and define a new set of terms and relations which would exist for us at a higher level as a more comprehensive ordering of realities that, in its comprehensiveness and intelligibility, would exist as a reality that would exist as a species of closed circle. The circularity is explained by the fact that the meaning of each term points to the meaning of the other adjacent terms, vice versa. Each meaning, at the same time, points to the meaning and the being of an elemental, distinct reality. Hence, as a given meaning, or as a given aspect, or as a reality is more fully understood, the more it should point to the meaning of the other variables which are to be seen as relevant and pertinent. A seminal understanding about the nature of natural law should then point us toward reverberations and soundings which should indicate why, to natural law, the Catholic Church ascribes an authority and a status (a task or a mission) which is to be subsumed or which is to be incorporated into the tasks or the roles that the Church has assumed for the sake of purposes which belong to her mission which is the achievement of our salvation (as this comes to us ultimately from God). As we have been noting, the order of our redemption which belongs to us within the life of the Church exists in a manner which supposes the prior being of God's created order even if, in the understanding or in the kind of understanding which exists as God (the identity which exists between the reality of God's being and the actuality of God's understanding), no separation or no real distinction exists between the truth or the reality of God's divine creating and the truth or the reality of God's divine saving. Both exist within the unrestrictedness of God's being as an unrestricted act of understanding, there being no distinction also between this understanding and God as an unrestricted act of loving and willing and God as an unrestricted act of willing and doing.

### **Proximate apprehensions of meaning**

#### **1. Natural Law and its Importance: its Primacy**

First, with respect to the existence of natural law, beyond the question of natural law or assuming the truth and the reality of its objective existence, the Pope notes (and so the Church proclaims and teaches) that natural law is “first among all [laws].”<sup>346</sup> Amid cultural and historical variations, among all human beings wherever or however they live or could be living, its primacy is to be noticed and, in some way, admitted.

For evidence and arguments to this effect (from a standpoint that attends to other sources that can be consulted), if we advert, for instance, to how all persons tend to talk to each other amid the expectations which they tend to have of each other in how they should relate, regard, and treat each other, materials come to us from the documentation that C. S. Lewis provides in his *The Abolition of Man or Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*.<sup>347</sup> From differing religious,

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<sup>346</sup>Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*, as cited by *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, eds. J. Neuner, S.J. and J. Dupuis, S.J., 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Alba House, 1996), p. 789, #2012.

<sup>347</sup>C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man or Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 89-109.

ethical, and cultural traditions and despite all the differences which exist among and between them, a common fund of moral precepts is to be found and these can be collated in a manner which should immediately point to the being and also the relevance of a common moral law which touches all human beings and which exists for us in a universally accessible manner. A common moral law exists specifically as the special kind of “natural law” which is applicable to us as human beings. It properly belongs to us as living human subjects. Hence, this “natural law” exists as our “natural moral law” because it belongs to us in our life as human beings, irrespective of all the differences which exist amongst us as human beings, whether with respect to the being of individual differences or with respect to how we exist within distinct societies or communities which all differ from each another in many different ways.

As Lewis reiterates these arguments in his *Mere Christianity*, in making two points in particular: (1) different kinds of natural law apply to different kinds of existing things where, for instance, natural laws which apply to the life of animals differ from the natural laws which apply to the life of plants and then, if we should attend to the different species of different things, the kind of natural law which applies to the life and being of cats differs from the kind of natural law which applies to the life and being of dogs; (2) uniquely with respect to ourselves as human beings, if we should choose to do so, we can transgress the kind of natural law which properly applies to us as human beings or, on the other hand, we can abide by the kind of natural law which properly applies to us as human beings.<sup>348</sup> If, for instance, we refer to a precept (known as the “golden rule”) which says that we should “do unto others what we would have them do unto ourselves,” we all know that we can violate this precept in selfish ways or, conversely, we can obey it in how we should relate and treat other human beings.

This option or this possibility of transgression in how we in fact act and behave accordingly explains why a set of moral, normative, natural laws properly applies to us as human beings (they point to a freedom of choice which belongs to us as human subjects in terms of how we exist as free moral agents) while, on the other hand, in the absence of any freedom of choice or prior to the exercise of any kind of choice which belongs to us as human beings in our willingness to do this action or avoid that action, other laws of nature can be distinguished and known.<sup>349</sup> These exist in another category as analytical natural laws and not as natural moral laws (according to a conceptuality which we have inherited from a tradition that speaks about the correctness of this distinction), and these laws refer to natural processes which invariantly occur within a world that is not subject to the order of our human control in any kind of direct way (despite the possibilities of cultivation and cooperation which, at the same time, also belong

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<sup>348</sup>C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), pp. 3-9.

<sup>349</sup>Alejandro A. Chafuen, *Faith and Liberty: The Economic Thought of the Late Scholastics* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2003), p. 20.

to us and to the order of this naturally existing pre-moral world). Analytical natural laws enjoy a form of objective existence which is presupposed by the being of our natural, human, moral laws and the kind of objective, moral existence which belongs to the being of normative natural laws (given the nature or the kind of intelligibility which belongs to us as human beings as we live within our incarnate human condition). As human beings, we exist within a world which already exists for us and we live well, in a good and better way, if we can understand the world that we happen to live within, working with the intelligibility of this world in a way which can add to the goodness of the intelligibility which already exists.

Analytical natural laws accordingly exist for us as one of our fundamental points of departure if, subsequently, we are to make wise choices with respect to the kind of observance that we should give to the being of our prescriptive, proscriptive, natural, moral laws. Even within the kind of order which belongs to our human world and how, through our actions, we have constituted the being of this world, analytical laws of nature are to be distinguished from the being of our normative natural laws. Citing one illustrative example: the principle that “scarcity affects prices” refers to the being of an analytical natural law in economics (specifying one of these laws) but, on the other hand however, how wisely we respond to conditions of scarcity and the prices of things within our world refers or it invokes the being of normative, natural, moral laws, raising questions about how we should observe and relate to the kind of demands or the imperatives which belong, as implications, to the sense and the intelligibility of these same laws.<sup>350</sup>

Moving on from here thus, when the Pope speaks about the primacy of natural laws, it seems that he is contradicting himself when, later, within the context of the same discussion (within the terms of the same paragraph), he refers to the being of eternal laws and, by implication, a primacy which would have to belong to these laws if we say that natural law participates within the being of eternal laws. If something is eternal, it would have to be primary. It would have to exist before there can be the being of anything else.

Admittedly of course, we can say about God that God, as a transcendent being relative to ourselves, is the source, the author, or he is the creator of all the laws which we have not brought into being by ourselves or laws which we cannot bring into being through the kind of agency and participation which properly belongs to us as contingent, creative, dependent human subjects (employing an order of contingent causes which belongs to us in the scope and in the range of our human activity and creativity and how we happen to exist and live as human subjects). Contingent causes, to the degree that they exist, point to the being of contingent results or, in this case, laws which, in their specification, would exist in a contingent fashion. We can think about our conventional laws (our artificial manmade laws). These are subject to change, variation, amendment, and sometimes their rejection and abolition (if, perhaps, in a contingent way, we can grow in our knowledge and understanding or perhaps lessen in the extent of our knowledge and understanding through misapprehensions about that which should

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<sup>350</sup>Chafuen, *Faith and Liberty*, p. 20.

exist as the common good of all in a given society and misapprehensions about how, commensurately, the common good of a given society is to be enhanced or protected in some kind of good, practical, beneficial, human way).<sup>351</sup> However, from God, as a transcendent uncreated subject, comes the being of all pre-existing natural laws and, in God, the being of all eternal laws (however we should speak about these laws). In their eternity, as an order of meaning that can then be put within a set of determinations that refers to spatial and temporal conjugates, within this context and in spite of this context, natural laws can be understood to exist as eternally existing laws. They exist as eternal laws if they are known by God in a way that uniquely belongs to him, transcending all conditions of time and space. In their transcendence (relative to the being of all material determinations) and as coming to us from God (their eternal source), our fundamental supposition and conclusion is a teaching and a belief which avers that God's divine being and God's divine creating cannot exist within any kind of spatial temporal context where, within such a context, we would have to say about God that now, in time, He creates and that now, in another time, He does not create. The unrestrictedness of God, as an unrestricted act of understanding which, in turn, points to the unrestrictedness of an object or content, explains why no real distinction can be said to exist between laws which refer to how God understands himself and laws which refer to the intelligibility of things that could be other than God. From the intelligibility of God's self-understanding comes the intelligibility of everything else.

These points aside however, the reference to natural laws continues to trouble us in light of the fact that we tend to think that natural laws exist essentially (by their very nature) within the materiality of spatial temporal contexts (within a kind of nature or a world which exists in terms of its having a physical, chemical, or biological nature, always having these kinds of determinations as properties, traits, or attributes) according to a manner which would then seem to point to the facticity and even to the necessity of a form of contingent being which would have to belong to the being of natural laws and a possible real distinction or a real separation which would have to exist between the being of natural laws and the being of eternal laws. However, in pondering this question further, in the light of our thought and reflection, we can say that, yes, if we admit that some laws of nature exist within spatial and temporal conditions as we encounter these conditions within the data and the content of our sensing experience (through our various acts of human sensing), the givenness of this type of condition is such that it does not demand or require a conclusion which would have to have us conclude that natural laws exist as contingent specifications of meaning or as contingent determinations of meaning and intelligibility. The variability or the contingency of spatial and temporal conditions does not imply any kind of necessary variability or any kind of necessary contingency that would have to pertain to the being of natural laws (whether or not they are embedded in any spatial and temporal conditions).

If we are to understand the eternity of natural laws in a better way (in a more positive way), a useful point of departure for us within the order of our human cognition points to a kind of transcendence or to a lesser degree of contingency which always exists with respect to our acts of understanding, relative to the kind of being which belongs to the nature and the kind of

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<sup>351</sup>Andrew Willard Jones, *Before Church and State: A Study of Social Order in the Sacramental Kingdom of Louis IX* (Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Academic, 2018), p. 401, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 95, a. 4; q. 93, a. 3.

functioning which belongs to our different acts of human sensing. In their being, determinations of meaning and intelligibility directly proceed or they directly relate to determinative, correlative acts of understanding as their likely source and probable point of origin. If there is no act of understanding, nothing is understood. And so, for this reason, as we move from our acts of understanding toward other acts of understanding in terms of cause and effect (moving from our understanding as an effect toward another kind of understanding which would exist as a cause), as we move from acts of understanding which possess a degree of contingency toward acts of understanding that would be wholly lacking in any kind of limit or contingency, the laws of nature or all natural laws can be understood to exist in a way which points to the reasonableness or the intelligibility of their eternity. Nothing forbids or precludes the kind of existence which they can have and which they, in fact, have as terms or as contents that are grasped by a species of understanding that would have to be transcendent and so allegedly supernatural or divine (since it would not be subject to the influence of external conditions and so it would not be subject to the ups and downs of any kind of variability that would point to varying degrees of contingency).

Existing in terms of being as an unrestricted instance of being, an unrestricted act of understanding accordingly grasps or it joins or it unites an infinite number of very many things (whether these exist as forms within forms, or as relations within relations, or as structures within structures). In order then to speak about a possible distinction which could exist between natural laws and eternal laws, we cannot refer to the being of any kind of real distinction nor to the adequacy or the sufficiency of a verbal or a terminological species of distinction but, instead, to the propriety or the rightness of a conceptual, mental, or formal species of distinction which would have us speak about how all eternal laws are natural or proper to the being of God (God existing as an unrestricted, eternal act of understanding), and how too, within the givenness or within the being of physical, chemical, and biological conditions (the being of these material conditions as these are constitutive of the being of a material world), these eternal laws can also exist within a context of spatial temporal conditions *as natural laws* or as the laws of incarnate nature which are appropriately or suitably joined to differing arrangements of spatial temporal conditions (according to the kind of capability or the kind of potency or the kind of receptivity that would properly belong to the being of these material conditions).

To borrow and to adapt language which comes to us originally from the teachings of Aristotle and Plato, the eternity of forms in Aristotle or, respectively, the eternity of Ideas in Plato is to be contrasted with the passivity, the changeability, or the formlessness of receptive, indeterminate matter. As we understand the teaching of Aristotle, meaning or intelligibility can exist within a material, sensible world without coming from the being of a material, sensible world as its likely point of origin or without entirely belonging to the being of a material, sensible world as this world is given to us with respect to the being of all its material and sensible determinations.

To illustrate this point with a degree of concreteness: the death of a living thing as it exists within our material, sensible world and its passing out of being or existence does not mean that the nature or the intelligibility of a given living thing has itself ceased to be or to exist even if we can point to a possible change of location, its absence relative to the being of a new set of spatial and temporal conditions. A change in sense does not imply or require a change that

would have to exist or to occur within the life of our understanding. In another way of speaking that can be employed: a change in the sensible form of a thing is not to be equated with a change in the intelligible form of a thing even if it can be argued that, in another sense, changes in sensible forms (as these are noticed by us) can point to changes in the being of an intelligible form (as we move from one intelligible form that is understood toward another intelligible form which can now be understood) when, from the being of sensible forms, we can argue toward the being of an intelligible form that can be known by us within a direct act of understanding. This point aside however in terms of how we are to understand how our acts of sensing can lead us toward acts of understanding that we can experience, relative to the being of sensible forms, intelligible forms are bereft of change and alteration because of a unity which always exists between a form as an immaterial, unchanging thing and an act of understanding which exists also as an immaterial, unchanging thing as it grasps a form in a way which points to an inseparable relation or unity which must always exist between how it exists as an act and what the same act grasps as the term or the content which belongs to it as an act. Nothing separates an act of understanding from that which it grasps within its understanding. Absent one and one must absent the other.

However, in a change of perspective, if our context (if our point of departure) is not defined or determined by the kind of primacy which belongs to an order of concretely existing things as this would exist for us from the viewpoint of a metaphysics; if, in fact, our point of departure could be that which would be first for us (*quoad nos*) within the kind of order which exists within the life, the progress, or the development of our human cognition as one kind of act is succeeded by another species of cognitive act (questions about reality leading toward possible judgments about the being of reality), then, within this context, we can speak about how, in our human experience of things, naturally existing laws (the so-called “natural laws”) exist with a regularity and with a form of primacy which needs to be acknowledged. They are first known by us within the context of our human experience. We begin by experiencing our world and our human life within a context of temporal spatial conditions before we can then begin to think about the possible being of other laws which, allegedly, would exist at a higher level as eternal laws (as eternally existing laws) and which would seem to differ, in some respects, from any laws which would exist within the outer world of physical nature although, if we should refer to the being of all laws in general which exist apart from any possible human creation of them (laws which are not subject to any kind of human origin, control, or governance), then, from the stability or the abiding character of naturally existing laws as we encounter and find these laws through the order of our human knowing (through the kind of mediation which exists for us within our human cognition), we can then claim that, from the viewpoint of this perspective, natural laws can be conceived to exist as a species or as a subset of eternally existing laws.

Other eternal laws can be also distinguished. Some can refer to the being of other things (as in other orders of existing things) and, in our context as human beings, they can also refer to an order of redemption that is opposed or which differs from the kind of order which belongs to the kind of arrangement that is distinctive of created things. Other laws can exist as salvific, redemptive laws although again, as laws, they exist in their own way as but a subset of eternal laws. In all cases that refer to eternal laws, their explanation necessarily points to how eternal

laws exist as correlatives that belong to God as an eternal, unrestricted act of understanding;<sup>352</sup> or, in other words, God as a “dictate of practical reason” to the degree that we can speak about a divine form of effective, practical reason that accounts for the being of all things (even as we must admit that, in God, no real distinction exists between the depths of God's knowing and the depths of God's doing; no real distinction exists between act and potency). Only a conceptual or a mental distinction is to be alluded to and acknowledged with respect to the kind of truth which exists in the kind of knowing which we have which, in turn, reveals an order which is endemic to how differences are distinguished and related to each other within the kind of meaning which belongs to the significance of conceptual distinctions.<sup>353</sup>

With respect then to the mode of our cognitive understanding as we move from natural laws to eternal laws – as, in our way, we move from effects to causes instead of from causes to effects – because a direct understanding of transcendental divine things is not given to us within the context of our present life - in our desire thus for a partial or a limited understanding of eternal laws, we must work from a context which is informed by resemblances and similarities which would exist as analogies: analogical acts of understanding replacing or supplanting our direct acts of understanding. Initially, we work with or from a direct but a limited understanding of the laws that is given to us within the order of incarnate nature in order to prepare ourselves in a way which would be geared toward the possible reception of another kind of limited understanding that would exist as an analogical act of understanding. The laws of nature that we know about through our prior, incarnate form of cognition, in the wake of our search for degrees or growth in our understanding – these same laws then suggestively point us toward the reality of other laws which, in their own way, are eternal. Throughout, within and from the contingency of our understanding and knowing, a principle of self-transcendence is operating in a way which moves us along. Its thrust or vector points us toward all absences of contingency through a form of awareness which belongs to us within the activity and the actuation of our human cognition.

From a standpoint that accordingly attends to a differentiation which exists within the order of our human cognition and the existence of different orders which exist within the order of our human cognition (we have already distinguished between direct acts of understanding and analogical acts of understanding), laws which are not natural or suitable to us (from our human point of view) can be understood to exist as if they also exist as another species of natural law if, cognitively, our point of departure (or our point of reference) is a change or a shift in the attentiveness or the orientation of our consciousness. A new pattern presents itself or a new pattern emerges if or as it is shaped by new interests and concerns that lead us to think about other things (ask new questions). The originating material basis (for want of a better term) is a change in the data of our experience if and as we move into an awareness and a sense of things which, more immediately, or which, more proximately, come to us from sources or causes that

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352Richard J. Dougherty, “Natural Law,” *Augustine through the Ages An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), p. 583, citing St. Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manicheum*, 22.30; 15.8.

353Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1; q. 92, a. 1. See also J. Brian Benestad, *Church, State, and Society: An Introduction to Catholic Social Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), p. 65.

seem to work with a fewer number of secondary causes, or which would seem to work from a total absence of secondary causes (according to how, typically, we have been understanding and knowing about the being of primary causes through the being of secondary causes). Another mode or another species of cognitive awareness (which is seen by some to be more than simply human or which is often not regarded by others in a way which believes it to be typically or rightly human) can begin to emerge within us if, through our self-reflection and our criticism, we can begin to understand and know that our thinking and understanding is not able to point to its sufficiency: if it is not able to give to itself any unquestionable points of departure or any conclusions that could then be used with confidence as first principles in the conduct of our subsequent thinking and inquiry. Simply put: in the history of philosophy, no solution to a given philosophical problem has been regarded or accepted as entirely adequate or sufficient. Amongst philosophers, no position has won any form of general acceptance. Controversies continue to exist and to excite debate.<sup>354</sup> New questions are being asked or old questions are being rephrased in a way which would seem to imply that some other lack of understanding is to be admitted or, in some way, adverted to.

Hence, as soon as we begin to conclude that our human understanding and knowing is itself not a satisfactory, sufficient thing (its autonomy is not to be understood in terms which would have us speak about the necessity or the fullness of its self-sufficiency), then, within this context of doubt and inquiry, we can begin to avail ourselves of a new awareness of things that could be possibly given to us in a way which points to the possible being of other realities, other sources of meaning that have not been known before or which have been forgotten about (realities which we cannot sense, imagine, fashion, or grasp if we should restrict our cognitive activities to a line of movement and reception which moves and shifts within us as we begin from the acts and the data of our human sensing and move from there, through our acts of inquiry, toward the possible reception of new acts of understanding and the givens that can be grasped by us through the kind of apprehension which exists in our acts of understanding). Simply put, in the words of one source that can be cited (among others:) “recognizing the poverty of philosophical opinions, not adhering to any of them, seeking truth, *I saw*.”<sup>355</sup> To explain a bit more fully our point here as this can be gleaned by us as we attend to the teachings of a dominant philosophical tradition that is shaped by an approach which seeks to find some kind of fundamental, seminal point of departure that, allegedly, is apodictic for us (so certain and so secure would be our manner of thinking and knowing that it cannot be subject to any kind of doubt or the possibility of any kind of radical revision or refutation), about the fallacies one approach, as this is taken from a critical evaluation of the history of European rationalism in

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354Leszek Kolakowski, *Metaphysical Horror*, ed. Agnieszka Kolakowska (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 1; “The Death of Utopia Reconsidered,” *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 135: “Philosophy can never discover any universally admissible truths.” From Descartes comes a claim to the effect that philosophy has “been cultivated for many centuries by the best minds that have ever lived and that nevertheless no single thing is to be found in it which is not a subject of dispute and in consequence is not dubious.” Cf. René Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, trans. E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1971), as cited by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 10.

355Buddha, *Sattaniyata*, 4, 9, 3, as cited by Schumacher, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 47.

philosophy, the following can be said:

If, for instance, we attend to the status of the *cogito* as this notion of mind is to be found within the cognitional philosophy of René Descartes (the “I think,” hence “I am” argument), please attend to the merits of the following distinction. It is one thing to say that the experience which we have of ourselves, engaging in different intellectual activities, points to the truth of a probable cause which is best known by us if we should speak about the being of an immaterial, immortal soul and, on the other hand, it is another thing to say, allegedly now with Descartes, that our individual existence as a spiritual or intellectual substance is a conclusion that we can rightly draw and affirm as if this truth exists as a self-evident, analytical principle within the context of the suggested type of analysis which Descartes offers to us.<sup>356</sup> It is, allegedly, not a theory that we can find and think about but, instead, it is said to be a fact that we can hold and believe (a fact which we should hold and believe). Again, allegedly: as a truth (as a reality), it flows, it proceeds, or it can be deduced from the givens of our intellectual experience of self (its contents) as if, in some way, the being of our substantiality is something which exists within the being of the kind of consciousness that we have of ourselves, engaging in intellectual activities of one kind or another. Allegedly, our objectivity comes from our subjectivity and the objectivity is as certain as our subjectivity.

However, as regards this question and the manner of analysis which is used, a difference is to be noted. On the one hand, yes, we can admit that the kind of subjectivity which we have, in its own way, reflects the kind of ontological being which we happen to be and to have. Our subjectivity exists as a function of our being, of our objectivity. But, in saying this, whenever we speak about functions or operations, we do not speak about the givenness or the necessity of an identity that would have to exist between, say, a subject and an object. Admittedly, yes, each points to the other: subjectivity to objectivity and objectivity to subjectivity. However, at the same time too, the absence of identity or the existence of a real difference which exists between subjectivity and objectivity is a truth which points to an order of things which precludes the validity of any kind of reduction that would have us think of things solely in terms of the givens of our human subjectivity and the particular condition of this subjectivity as it exists for us at any given time as if objectively existing things have being or existence only if, within our subjectivity, a grounding for them exists (or if some kind of grounding can in fact be found to exist within us within the alleged kind of absolute which would refer to the being of our subjectivity).<sup>357</sup> In the knowing of any given subject, a subject undergoes

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<sup>356</sup>Kolakowski, *Metaphysical Horror*, pp. 60-61, pp. 63-64; *Husserl and the Search for Certitude* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), p. 13.

<sup>357</sup>Leszek Kolakowski, “The Priest and the Jester: Reflections on the Theological Heritage of Contemporary Thought,” *The Two Eyes of Spinoza & Other Essays on Philosophers*, ed. Zbigniew Janowski, trans. Agnieszka Kolakowska and others (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2004), p. 251.

change. Knowing changes the subjectivity of a subject but not that which is being known by a given subject<sup>358</sup> (even if we compelled to admit that the choice and the implementation of a given method of inquiry can change that which will be known by us through our later acts of understanding and judgment).

The questionableness of our subjectivity, despite its reality and its legitimacy, accordingly points to the value of our possibly moving toward a larger, more comprehensive point of view: the good and the possible being of a species of openness or an orientation which can exist within us which, in its own way, acknowledges the possible being of other lines of cognitive awareness; or, alternatively and more accurately, an understanding of different kinds of cognitive awareness that are given to us as human beings in a way which acknowledges the existence of movements and transitions that are quite other than the kind of understanding and knowing which belongs to the species of cognitive form or pattern that is to be associated with how we engage in the praxis inquiry which exists in philosophy and science.<sup>359</sup>

Prior or apart from the kind of work which exists in philosophy and science, a world exists which is not the effect or the product of these disciplines. Other sources of meaning are not to be ignored or placed to the side since, in their own way, they introduce us to realities that can then become the object or the subject of reflections and inquiries as these would exist for us within our practice of philosophy and science.

A more accurate understanding of philosophy would say that its object is not “to deliver truth” but, instead, “to build the spirit of truth...never to let the inquisitive energy of the mind...stop questioning what appears to be obvious and definitive.”<sup>360</sup> In supplementary testimony that we can cite to this effect in a letter that was written by a father to his oldest son soon after the Second World War in 1947:

Keep your good heart. Become a person who lets himself be guided primarily by warmth and humanity. Learn to think and judge for yourself, responsibly. Don't accept everything without criticism and as absolutely true... In all your undertakings, don't just let your mind speak, but listen above all to the voice in your heart.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>358</sup>Aquinas, *In 1 Sent.*, D. 30, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3, as cited by Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *Being and Knowing*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>359</sup>See Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 204-212, and how he distinguishes between different patterns of human consciousness in a way which points to other forms of cognitive awareness and the propriety and rightness of these other forms and patterns.

<sup>360</sup>Kolakowski, “Death of Utopia Reconsidered,” *Modernity*, p. 135.

<sup>361</sup>Rudolf Höss, former Commandant of Auschwitz Concentration Camp, “Farewell Letter to his Children,” dated April 11, 1947 (five days before his execution), as quoted in

For the sake then of a need or a desire for increases in the extent and the depth of our understanding (if we should want a kind of understanding which could possibly move us toward an unrestricted act of understanding to an even greater degree, or which could be the closest that we can determine or imagine with respect to the content and the scope of an unrestricted act of understanding), in this context thus, only a theological kind of understanding can possibly suffice as a species of apt or adequate explanation that we can possibly grasp and hold since its terms of meaning directly refer to transcendental considerations and the possible being of transcendental objects and realities because, within the light that is cast by this kind of purposeful, speculative understanding, our point of departure shifts and moves into a combination or into a nest of theological terms and meanings which, in a limited way, would have to refer to the life and being of non-contingent, uncreated things. From a grounding which points to the possibilities and the viability of a species of theological understanding, another kind of penetrative power can be accordingly given to us in our thinking and understanding. Another kind of penetrative power can begin to exist for us if we would be willing to move into this species of meaning and intelligibility in order to experience and to receive the kind of intelligibility which properly belongs to this type of understanding: an apprehension of things which exists for the sake of more fully moving us toward the kind of light that is shed by an unrestricted act of understanding which knows about the existence of things in a manner which necessarily transcends the kind of knowing that allegedly properly belongs to us in the manner of our human cognition as, through inquiry and questions, we move from our acts and data of sensing toward prospective acts of understanding and then, in judgment, back from our acts of understanding toward prospective acts of sensing which would exist as apprehensions of data that can be given to us as apprehensions of proof and evidence. Admittedly (or naturally), a comprehensive understanding of divine things (a comprehensive understanding of eternally existing laws) only exists if we can refer to how God understands himself as an unrestricted act of understanding since, within this perspective, the different kinds of law which exist can all be best joined and related to each other and so seen to proceed from the omniscience and the omnipotence of how God exists as a unity which perfectly joins the range of his divine knowing with the range of his divine willing.

In other words, as a conclusion that we can draw and make (if, in God, all things are known and, from him, all things exist), conventional manmade laws exist in conjunction with eternal, divine, and natural laws and all exist together, cooperatively, within the bounds or the ambit of a single order of things since, in agreement with the persuasiveness of a teaching which comes to us from St. Augustine, we say that nothing exists outside of an all encompassing divine scheme of things which, in its unrestrictedness as an object or content, is something that we can never fully grasp and understand by ourselves (whether in the context of our present life or in the context of some other kind of life). Everything exists and happens within a divinely known and a divinely willed (a divinely governed) general scheme of things that is only fully known and understood by God as he exists in himself (given how he exists as an unrestricted act of understanding). Act goes with object.

Relative to ourselves thus as human agents (as human subjects), through the enactment and the

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf\\_Höss#Arrest,\\_trial,\\_and\\_execution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Höss#Arrest,_trial,_and_execution) (accessed May 9, 2020).

administration of our own laws (our conventional, manmade laws that we think about and devise), we experience a unity or a relation with other laws which exists as a species of participation (each in the other) because, in different ways, we are joined as legislators to all other kinds of law in a way which exists as a mass where together, in their union and combination, all laws point to a relation which would exist as a transcendent or as a divine form of governance and administration: a government which works with every kind and degree of cause. Where some causes are necessary in the manner of their being and their operation (hence, they are lacking in any degrees of contingency), others are entirely contingent in the manner of their being and operation and, then too amongst these causes, some succeed in the effect of their causality while others fail in the effect of their causality. A fuller explanation about how all these things work together becomes possible only if a fuller analysis is either attempted or if it is accepted on a basis which can somehow notice and admit that, from within our world, good can, at times, come from evil or being can, at times, come from absences of being.

From our human point of view, mysteriously, greater good is brought into being than would otherwise be the case if contingent causes were not also allowed to exist: if they were not permitted to exist fully in the manner and in the mode of their contingency, enjoying a partiality and a fragility which could lend itself to the possibility of their defective operation (now at one time and now at another). While one type of intellect or one type of understanding is able to put things together in such a way that good can continually come from good or that being can continually come from being (the kind of intellect or the kind of understanding which we can identify with ourselves, with possibly the kind of intellect or the kind of understanding which normally belongs to us as human beings in how we can combine causes in a way which can move from good to good or from being to being), on the other hand however, it would take a really great intellect (an unrestricted act of understanding) that is then able to create an order of things whereby, continually, it is possible for good to come from absences of good; or being, from absences of being: an intellect that we cannot directly understand and know through our own acts of understanding although, yet, it is an intellect for which there exists some degrees of evidence if we should attend to how, in our human lives, through the experience of trials, sufferings, and deprivations, greater goods can be brought into being which cannot be brought into being in any other way (apart from the trials and the difficulties that are given to us within the conditions of our present life, these trials and difficulties existing in a way which creates conditions which can elicit and encourage the possible emergence of new actions, deeds, and virtues that, otherwise, would not exist). Simply stated: without the experience of certain trials and difficulties in our lives, patience cannot emerge as a distinct quality, good, or virtue (as a distinct manner of living that can be added to the being and the formation of our human character). Without suffering, without the possibilities of self-sacrifice and the kind of actuation which exists in self-sacrifice, our human love cannot exist as a greater thing; it cannot exist at a higher or deeper level and so become a reality which can respond to inequities and injustices with unexpected acts of forgiveness and mercy through a heightening of our consciousness which can eschew anything which resembles

any kind of revenge or vengeance (as this would exist for us if we were to abide by an older or a more traditional legal principle which says and thinks of justice in terms of an “eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”) or, in other words, wrong for wrong, hurt for hurt.<sup>362</sup> The kind of justice which exists in “an eye for an eye” and a “tooth for a tooth” is transcended by a higher order of things which does not respond to the human experience of hurt and evil by adding to the number of hurts that can be inflicted by human beings on other human beings. Better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. Suffering comes with evil but it is to be distinguished from it in a way which refers to the relevance of a real distinction.<sup>363</sup>

Hence, relative to the kind of doing and the kind of being which belongs to us as human beings, through the kind of secondary causality that belongs to us in how we exist and live and in conjunction or in relation to an order of things that is grounded in the originations and the proceedings of an unrestricted act of understanding and an unrestricted act of loving that is grounded in the possibilities and the power of this unrestricted understanding, nothing is ever lost within our world of existing things. Everything is being used in some way to achieve a greater good: some kind of higher purpose or end even if, personally and individually, we are lacking in the kind of understanding that we would like to have about the goods that belong to such purposes and ends. In other words, in the kind of legislation which belongs us as human beings, in varying degrees, through a form of cooperation which would exist as a species of acceptance and obedience, where and if our legislation works from a perspective that is informed by a communion or an orientation that is directed toward the being of other laws which exist which in turn point to other forms of legislation (to the degree that other laws are acknowledged whether we would refer to them as eternal laws, divine laws, or natural laws), our manmade, conventional laws participate in the being of these other laws in a way which, in its own way, points to the freedom of an unrestricted inner orientation which is endemic to us in how we exist as human beings and subjects, despite our many social and cultural differences. As limited as we are in our individual contingencies, despite how limited we might be in how we exist in our individual contingency, yet, always, we are carried, we are moved, or we are encouraged to pass through our limitations and our contingencies by an inner spirit or an inner desire that is not lacking in the unrestrictedness which properly belongs to it: an unrestrictedness of aspiration which points to the good of pursuing unrestricted ends or the good of pursuing unrestricted objectives (objectives that we cannot reach by ourselves in what we do but which, perhaps, can be received; goods which elicit our interest and our intentions, drawing us towards them in ways which point us toward changes which, perhaps, we can make in how we think and understand things and how we can live and act in the conduct of our individual lives).

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<sup>362</sup>For an example of the kind of good and the kind of love that is intended in this context, see Paul Glynn's *A Song for Nagasaki: The Story of Takashi Nagai Scientist, Convert, and Survivor of the Atomic Bomb* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009). Either we try to bring good out of evil or, perpetually, we live in anger and within a narrowing of perspectives which comes with anger.

<sup>363</sup>Leszek Kolakowski, “Leibniz and Job: The Metaphysics of Evil and the Experience of Evil,” *Is God Happy?: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), pp. 162-163.

It is no easy task to speak about the kind of participation which exists between laws which exist as higher, natural laws and laws which exist as an effect of our human making of them (our manmade laws existing, in their own way however, as natural laws if they properly come from us as human subjects, or if they are suited to how, in our living, our acts exist as actuations of the kind of nature which properly belongs to us as human beings). In other words, our manmade laws can reflect or they can point us toward other laws that we have not brought into being: laws which exist as other kinds of natural law. If we say that the principle of “do unto others as you would have them unto you” exists as a natural law or as a natural precept for us as human beings (as a transcultural human norm which should be observed and obeyed), then, perhaps, from this principle, if this principle can be regarded as a species of primary first principle, then, from it, an order can be created in the administration of our human justice which favors the kind of good which exists as the regularity of due process in the procedures which are used. Human beings are not to be treated in any kind of arbitrary way. Certain standards need to be acknowledged on the one hand (as an ideal) and, on the other hand, they need to be created or specified in a way which ensures that favoritism does not creep into the administration of judicial decisions. No one enjoys any privileges and so no one can enjoy any advantages that could work against the good of other human beings.

On the other hand however, manmade laws can reflect orientations, policies, and decisions which cannot be reconciled with the being and the good of natural laws (whether we should refer to laws that we do not legislate or laws that can come from us as actuations of our transcendental, human spirit). An animal, a dog cannot be other than what it is as an animal, a dog. A dog can be friendly or unfriendly, depending on how it has been conditioned and trained (even as we admit that dogs, in general, tend to be friendly toward human beings). But, with us as human beings, despite the influence that is exerted upon us by adverse external conditions and the degree of their impact, it is still possible for us that, in some mysterious and strange way, we can grow in the depth of our humanity and so become more fully human or, on the other hand unfortunately, we can lessen in the degree of our humanity and so begin to live in a way which is less than fully human. In the face of adverse conditions, yes, definitely, many persons can fail in their humanity and, for them, life becomes a disheartening, brutal experience. And yet, within the same context which exists within the givenness of adverse conditions, other human beings can flourish and they can begin to live more fully, growing in their love of life and in their love for other persons even if it should seem to us that they should not be moving in this direction, given the kinds of moral and material conditions which have existed for them within the context and the environment of their human existence.

Through a kind of summary which can thus be drawn: if, reasonably or rationally, it is easier for us to understand that good can come from good and that one good thing leads to other good things (and so on indefinitely), then, within this context, we can understand how, in the normativity of this species of natural law and precept, we have a basis that can serve us as it encourages and moves us toward how we can make new laws that will reflect the being of laws that already somehow exist for us: laws that are normatively natural in their own right although they exist as higher orders of meaning and being in a transcendence of them which points to their unchangeability. Good leads to good. One encourages the other: intelligibility, intelligibility. However, on the other hand, not so easily or not so rationally can we understand how, between higher laws and some of our manmade laws, connections exist or a connection endures even if, in fact, some of our manmade laws do not exist or they do not seem to exist as

projections or as elongations of reasonableness and intelligibility: as additions that can be reconciled with the being of laws which already exist for us in our world (laws which exist as a distributions or as sets of natural laws), whether they should refer to a normative ordering of transcendent causes and higher realities; whether they should refer to ourselves in terms of who and what we are as human beings; or whether they should refer to where or how some of our manmade laws exist as reasonable, rational projections of the kind of spirit which properly belongs to us in how we exist as conditioned, self-transcending human subjects. Apart from any analysis that we would want to attempt, that which is natural is mixed in with that which is unnatural and that which is reasonable from one point of view clashes with that which is reasonable from another point of view.

If we look at different legal codes that have been developed in the course of our human history, a principle that is self-evidently just is not seen to be self-evidently just if we compare a given legal code with other legal codes and as this reflects different judgments that have been made by different persons in different social and cultural contexts. We assume, for instance in our day, that “only people who have committed a crime should be punished and not others.”<sup>364</sup> However, according to the Code of Hammurabi, one could kill persons who have, in fact, not committed a crime. If John has killed Martin's son, Martin has the right to kill John's son. An eye, or an eye and a tooth, for a tooth. In the Soviet Union, in the criminal code which had existed under Joseph Stalin, for some political crimes, family members who had not known anything about any wrong that had been done could be justly imprisoned for the rest of their lives in concentration camps. If, for instance, as a basis of civil law, we hold that we are always bound to “to keep our promises” and that no law can “valid retrospectively,” these principles which are widely acknowledged and accepted in our day were, at one time, not widely known or accepted.

To move into an inquiry which tackles these difficulties accordingly moves us beyond a set of expectations which belong to one way of imagining and thinking toward or into another way of imagining and thinking which points to another set of expectations: expectations which exist more as hopes if we should try to understand and argue that, between naturally existing, higher laws and our conventional, manmade, human laws, a positive connection of some kind always exists. In another kind of way, in a way that we do not expect or plan, the kind of disorder, the lack of intelligibility (or the contradictory lawlessness) which can often exist within some of our manmade, conventional, human laws can begin to point us toward the goodness of a necessary recognition that we should give with respect to the being of an order of existing things that exists beyond any possible reshaping that we could perhaps desire to give to them in our desire to try and control all things that can have any kind of impact on how we should live and exist as human beings. If, within ourselves, we notice desires for unrestricted forms of understanding and knowledge and other desires that yearn for unrestricted kinds of loving and attachment, it is to be admitted that also, within ourselves, we can find and we can be limited by other desires which exist within us because they serve to thwart and to divert us: they point us toward an unrestricted kind of control that, ideally, we would like to be able to exercise over the being of all existing things (despite a common awareness which exists within us and which

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<sup>364</sup>Kolakowski, “On Natural Law,” *Is God Happy?*, pp. 241-242.

knows about the contingency of our emergence which would seem, then, to point toward the contingency of our individual existence and the contingency of our individual lives with respect to our many acts and operations).

## 2. Natural Law in the Theology of the New Testament according to St. Paul

According to a manner of reiteration that exists to some extent within the conceptuality of Pope Leo's teaching, citing the frequently cited teaching of St. Paul, it is said about natural law that it is "written and engraved in the soul of each and every man, because it is human reason ordaining him [or ordering him]<sup>365</sup> to do good and forbidding him to sin."<sup>366</sup> Metaphorically speaking, as a first point, this natural law is said to be "carved" or "engraved" within us, in a manner which refers to our humanity in terms that are defined and specified by a second point of reference: the nature or the intelligibility of our human reason with respect to the form and the concreteness of its actuations (the form and acts of our reason both existing together). The wording obviously differs from the wording that we find in the commonly cited text and teaching of St. Paul as this has been given to us (below) in Romans 2:14-16, although the linguistic difference does not seem to point to any real difference that can be said to exist with respect to the content of the official papal church teaching.

When Gentiles, who do not possess the law [the Mosaic law], do instinctively [φύσει, *physei*, by nature]<sup>367</sup> what the law requires [literally, "the things of the

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<sup>365</sup>Rhonheimer, p. 12. I cite an alternative translation that has been given for the original Latin text that was used by the Pope's letter in order to indicate how natural law exists in the manner which is proper to it (how its function or purpose is to be properly understood).

<sup>366</sup>Pope Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*, 597, as cited by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vatican City State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), p. 474, #1954. From Neuner and Dupuis comes a differently worded translation: "the natural law...is written and engraved in the mind of every human being for it is the human reason itself, commanding to do right and forbidding sin."

<sup>367</sup>See [https://biblehub.com/greek/physei\\_5449.htm](https://biblehub.com/greek/physei_5449.htm) (accessed March 25, 2020). See also St. Paul, *Letter to the Romans* 2: 14 RSV which, in comparison, gives an older, a different, and a more traditional, standard translation when referring now to that which exists "by nature" [from the original Greek, φύσει]. In employing a literal translation and with respect to the good of such a translation, the ablative "by nature" best translates the original Greek of St. Paul. The later shift to a less technical expression (in a newer, revised translation) can be understood to reveal a different kind of bias or a different kind of interest or focus if, now, a less technical manner of expression is to be preferred over words that, as used, immediately point to meanings and significances which belong to a metaphysical form of analysis and so to ways of thinking, understanding, and speaking that belong to a species of intellectual culture which differs from the kind of apprehension that belongs to the ways and means of our human commonsense understanding of things. A shift in our understanding is required if we are to move from a notion of instinct to a notion of nature or a notion of natural law since, in speaking about the presence of a nature or the operation of a natural law, we would be referring to an explanation that is to be alluded to if we should ever want to speak about things which exist with a regularity that is indicative of the presence of patterns which can be said to exist as instincts. A confusion arises if, by "instinct," we begin to think in terms of actions that are

law” or, in other words, “instinctively observe...the regular, natural order of things...prescinding from any positive revelation”<sup>368</sup>], these [or they], though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts [literally, “the deed of the law is written”],<sup>369</sup> to which their own conscience [*syneidesis*, in Greek] also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secrets thoughts of all.<sup>370</sup>

According to a traditionally, commonly accepted precis of St. Paul's teaching which, until our

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somehow programmed or compelled to exist and to occur in a way which would derogate from the possibilities and the reality of our human freedom and the multiple choices that face us, as human beings, whenever we must decide how, in a given situation, we should respond through some kind of appropriate action. Simply put: “all moral precepts...would be superfluous if their function were fulfilled altogether by instincts.” Cf. Leszek Kolakowski, “Education to Hatred, Education to Dignity,” *Modernity*, pp. 256-257.

In order to retain any kind of language that prefers to speak about instincts and how it can be true that, *instinctively*, we characteristically behave in our own way as human beings, our instinctive behavior needs to be qualified and seen to exist as reasoned instinctive behavior because, by reasoning and within our reasoning, an intellectual kind of movement exists and it is a movement which attends to alternatives that differ from each other. Cf. Moore, *Heroic Sanctity*, pp. 178-179. Can I solve this problem or understand why “x” acts in a certain way by working with this image or by constructing this other image, or by asking some other kind of question? In the play of our acts of thinking and reasoning, a kind of freedom manifests itself (we can go this way or that way) and, to solve a given problem or to understand why “x” acts in a certain way, we will find that different approaches are possible for us and we will discover a given way which works for ourselves while another person can possibly move toward the same desired act of understanding through other means that he or she finds. We come to our ways and means through discoveries that we do not entirely control by ourselves (through the agency of our own actions) since, as a general principle or truth, no acts of understanding are simply given to us by our desiring and willing of them. The chanciness or the contingency of our asking the right question at the right time in the right place combines with the contingency and the chanciness of our receiving a desired act of understanding that solves a given problem and, together, this chanciness points to an absence of autonomy which exists with regard to our own acts of cognition in a way which points to how, for us, other causes are operative (causes that we would like to understand and know if, in general, we are to move toward a satisfactory understanding about how and why we exist and live as we do as human beings).

<sup>368</sup>Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Letter to the Romans,” *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), p. 837.

<sup>369</sup>Fitzmyer, p. 837.

<sup>370</sup>St. Paul, *Letter to the Romans* 2: 14-16 NRSV. See also Romans 2:14-15 NIV, as cited by <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+2%3A14-15&version=NIV> (accessed January 31, 2016) and as also cited in the *Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians*, p. 79. According to another translation and, perhaps, more clearly for

own day,<sup>371</sup> has been widely believed and accepted (where, in St. Paul, nothing is explicitly said about the existence of anything which is cited by St. Paul as “natural moral law”): St. Paul teaches, for all intents and purposes, that the “natural moral law...is written on the hearts of [all] men,”<sup>372</sup> whether we should refer to Jews, Gentiles, or, for that matter, to any other kind of human being (although if one is not Jewish and if one is not a Gentile, one cannot be any other kind of human being). Through the exercise in act in each of us of our individual human reason (the actuation in question refers to how *syneidesis* or conscience exists within each of us as human beings), it can be said about pagans for instance, about the so-called Gentiles (about those of us who are not Jews) that, only by this means, have we all received from God the “principles of the natural *moral* law.”<sup>373</sup> Italics mine. “By acting in accordance with nature,” “whereby we *understand by nature* that what is evil must be avoided, and equally *by nature we know* that there has been prescribed for us what is good,”<sup>374</sup> by acting in accordance with our human nature through the actuations of our conscience in our acts of moral reflection and judgment (according to who or what or how we exist as human beings as instantiations of a

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the sake of our purposes:

Pagans who never heard of the Law but are led by reason to do what the Law commands, may not actually 'possess' the Law, but they can be said to 'be' the Law. They can point to the substance of the Law engraved on their hearts--they can call a witness, that is, their own conscience--they have accusation and defense, that is, their own inner mental dialogue.

Cf. <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=35060> (accessed January 27, 2017).

371See Marian Machinek, “My Conscience is Clear' (1 Cor 4:4). The Potential Relevance of Paul's Understanding of Conscience for Today's Fundamental Moral Theology,” *Religions* 2017, 8, 201: “though *contemporary exegetes* stop short of seeing this passage as an early Christian exposition of the natural law, it is nevertheless rather arresting [since]...St. Paul clearly draws a close parallel between conscience and such weighty anthropological notions as law (*nomos*), nature (*physis*), heart (*kardia*), and thought (*logismos*).” Italics mine. The allusions point in a direction which is suggestive about how natural law exists within us as a species of inner form that is joined to the inner nature or the form of our humanity. Cf. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320037776\\_My\\_Conscience\\_is\\_Clear\\_1\\_Cor\\_44\\_The\\_Potential\\_Relevance\\_of\\_Paul's\\_Understanding\\_of\\_Conscience\\_for\\_Today's\\_Fundamental\\_Moral\\_Theology](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320037776_My_Conscience_is_Clear_1_Cor_44_The_Potential_Relevance_of_Paul's_Understanding_of_Conscience_for_Today's_Fundamental_Moral_Theology) (March 20, 2020).

372David S. Oderberg, “The Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Law,” *Natural Moral Law in Contemporary Society*, ed. H. Zaborowski (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 58, summarizing the teaching of St. Paul in Romans 2:14-15.

373University of Navarre Theology Faculty, *The Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians Texts and Commentaries* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1993), p. 79.

374St. Ambrose, *De Paradiso*, 8, 39, as quoted by Martin Rhonheimer, “The Cognitive Structure of the Natural Law and the Truth of Subjectivity,” *The Thomist* 67 (October 2003) 4: 3.

common human form or nature which belongs to all of us), it follows from all this that we will all adhere or, in fact, we are already adhering in some way (however partially) to the “same moral precepts” which God has more exactly specified and which He has given to us more accurately if we should refer to the prescriptions and the proscriptions that belong to the tellings of the Jewish law as, in their core, they are officially listed in the decalogue of “the Ten Commandments.” They exist as a set of norms or rules of conduct that, allegedly, have been divinely revealed to us and which come to us through the mediation of Old Testament scripture and the religious life and tradition of the Jewish people.<sup>375</sup>

As a general principle that we are always supposing and affirming in the context of any discussion that touches on the question of revelation (with respect to the teaching of St. Paul) and as a general principle that St. Paul would have himself understood and accepted: it is to be held and believed that salvation ultimately comes to us from the Jews or that salvation ultimately comes to us through the Jews if and since, by means of the Jewish law, we can more accurately know about the sum of our human duties and responsibilities through a set of prescriptions and proscriptions that, in some way, already belong to a discoverable, created, natural, moral law which somehow already exists within each of us as created, contingent, human beings. Of everyone, in one way or another, whether Jew or Gentile, God requires that we all “keep the natural moral law”<sup>376</sup> since, as human beings, we are all subject to this species of law which universally exists within each of us as a species of operative, inner form and principle which governs the form and the shape of our ethical, moral, human life.

Before moving into a fuller discussion about the meaning and role of conscience in St. Paul, please note that, in the argument and teaching of St. Paul, a parallel exists if we should recall how a similar ordering or how a similar shift exists in the explicit teaching of the Old Testament which, in turn, reflects and points back to a pre-existing tradition of understanding which has come down to us from the religious life and history of the ancient Hebrews, the Jewish people. A knowledge of God's existence (admittedly, according to the degree or the extent of this knowledge) – it should point us, somewhat immediately, toward a knowledge of how we should act and behave in our existential, human, moral life. A knowledge of God's existence, in its adequacy, should point us toward a knowledge of God's expectations of us as these would apply to us as human beings if, truly, we exist as God's creatures (if, willy nilly, we exist as God's subjects as soon as we acknowledge and know about the reality of God's sovereign existence).<sup>377</sup> As St. Paul had himself argued earlier in *Romans* 1:19-20 before he

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<sup>375</sup>Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, p. 79.

<sup>376</sup>Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, p. 79.

<sup>377</sup>Please note the qualification that we find in St. Paul of Tarsus in the wording of *Romans* 1:21; Ormerod, *Faith and Reason*, p. 3, citing in this context, *Romans* 1:21: “for though they [the pagans, the gentiles] knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.” A limited knowledge of God, however real, does not immediately lead to results in terms of how we should live *in a truly good way* as human subjects in our human history although if, admittedly, the experience of darkness and futility is given to us in our experience of self, it

allegedly speaks about the natural moral law and the role of our natural human conscience (and as we have also previously noted): apart from the gift and the reception of grace and a knowledge of truths that is given to us through revelation or prior to the kind of knowledge that is given to us through the imparting of revelation, it is to be admitted as a prior condition and fact that “what can be known about God is plain to them [the Gentiles, the pagans, or, in other words, ourselves as human subjects], because God has shown it to them [already].” This same knowledge is also plain to all Jews as human beings (apart from how they exist as obedient, religious subjects). In the reason which is immediately given and cited by St. Paul: “Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.”<sup>378</sup> Apart from a knowledge of God that can be revealed to us by God in a heightened, added, or supernatural way, God's existence can be known by us in a purely natural, contingent, created way (as, in our cognition *ex contingente ad necessarium*,<sup>379</sup> we move from our acts of sensing toward our acts of understanding through our acts of inquiry and reflection) if we should attend to the contingent, created order of things that we find about us within the being of our corporeal, material world and so, by our reasoning and thinking, move from the effects or the results which we should immediately and initially perceive toward a conclusion or a cause which, as a reason, immediately points to a truth which knows about how God exists as the source of all contingently existing things: how God exists as an uncaused cause who must exist if the being of contingently existing things is to have any kind of adequate explanation since, without doubt, as a metaphysical principle, no contingently existing thing is able to bring itself into the condition of own being and existence.

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can possibly lead or serve as a basis for questions and critical reflections that can lead us toward an altered sense or different theology of God that, in turn, points to a form of moral reflection and new realizations which can begin to know how, from a now more adequate knowledge of God, we can move into a better form of human living that is itself now more adequate, a form of living which can be said to be more loving and wholesome because it is filled with experiences of meaning which detract from what had been our prior experiences of meaninglessness: darkness, futility, and unintelligibility.

<sup>378</sup>Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, pp. 72-74. See also in the New Testament the wording of the *Letter to the Hebrews* 3:4 (its author is unknown). Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorship\\_of\\_the\\_Epistle\\_to\\_the\\_Hebrews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorship_of_the_Epistle_to_the_Hebrews) (accessed March 17, 2020). Citing the text: “for every house is built by someone, but He who build all things is God.” In similar, earlier teaching that has come down to us from the Old Testament in the teaching of Wisdom 13:5, it is noted that “by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen so as to be known thereby” (as cited by Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, p. 6). God's existence and the sovereignty of God should be somewhat obvious to us if we should think a bit about it as we move from that which we know about our human world to that which can begin to know about a world that transcends our individual human existence.

<sup>379</sup>Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism The Founders The Golden Age The Breakdown*, trans. P. S. Falla (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), p. 13, citing the form or the manner of a specifically Aristotelian form of argument or an Aristotelian form of cognition which always moves us as knowers from apprehensions of contingency toward apprehensions of necessity.

The intelligibility which exists within our created world, as it accordingly points us toward the intelligibility and the intelligence of a supremely existing divine source and so, derivatively, to the goodness and the benevolence of this same source – the combination that we find (or can find) accordingly points us toward the being of a transcendent kind of moral order which exists beyond or outside of us and it also serves for us as a point of departure for how, from our different backgrounds and contexts, we can all come and move, however partially and incrementally, toward an objectively existing knowledge of moral obligations or precepts that, eventually, at some point, would have to apply to ourselves as human beings (given the kind of agency and the responsibilities which properly belong to us as active, living, human subjects).<sup>380</sup> The discursiveness which characterizes the mode and manner of our human cognition perhaps best explains why an adequate knowledge of moral precepts that are proper to us as human beings is not immediately or fully given to us if, allegedly, we would try to presume, suppose, or argue that through only one cognitive act that is somehow given to us, everything would be fully grasped and understood.

A pre-Christian genealogy which accordingly attends to the question of origins reveals or it points to a prior, conditioning influence of Old Testament thinking in an awareness of things which associates a natural knowledge of God with a natural knowledge of applicable moral precepts (or a natural knowledge of applicable natural laws or norms) that are endemic to how we are to exist and live as responsible human beings. From a knowledge of God in terms of truths of fact, a knowledge of our moral responsibilities in terms of intelligible choices, actions, and responses can be admitted in terms of choices that we should make and choices that we should avoid.

With respect, for instance, to a natural knowledge of God's existence, citing, for instance, the wording of a song, a prayer, that comes to us from Psalm 19:2 in the Old Testament: “the heavens tell the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.”<sup>381</sup> More explicitly later in Wisdom 13:5: “from the greatness and the beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator.”<sup>382</sup> Pre-Christian teachings and beliefs within Judaism refer to the creation of the world's existence from a prior condition of nothingness and also to the unaided power of our human reason and how, in general, by means of our thinking and reasoning, according to its own contingent, created lights, we can have a true knowledge of God that is distinct from the kind of knowledge that belongs to the data and the truth of any kind of revelation (even as this first or pre-religious knowledge does not necessarily conflict with any later teaching that could be given to us through the special or the unusual teaching that is said not to be natural but which is said to be revealed if we should distinguish between, on the one hand, an absence or a privation of reason which exists as unreason (or as irrationality) and, on the other hand, a promotion of reason which exists as the transcendence of our reasoning and understanding when our received human wisdom and knowledge of things is overturned or, in some way, it is put to the side; or, if it is recast by a new, unexpected understanding of things that cannot be explained through the ruminations of our created acts of human cognition if, now, their new ground is a knowledge of first principles that can only be known by us if we should refer to a transcendent order of things that is somehow, for the first

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<sup>380</sup>Kolakowski, “On Natural Law,” *Is God Happy?*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>381</sup>Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, p. 73.

<sup>382</sup>Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, p. 72.

time, being revealed and made known to us through unusual or through unexpected forms of communication (which exists as a supernatural form of communication).<sup>383</sup> An initial knowledge of God, apart from or prior to the influence of any kind of religious belief, on the one hand, prepares us for a greater or a further knowledge of God that can be given to us through the kind of *logos*, word, meaning, or reason which belongs to the intelligibility of revelation although, on the other hand too, we might find or, in fact, we will often find that, in our subjectivity, we are not always sufficiently prepared to receive the word of some kind of divinely revealed message (a word which exists as a conceptualized, divinely revealed understanding of things) since, according to the narrative and the testimony that we find which is constitutive of the ups and downs of our human history, we often struggle (each of us in different ways) to move from a somewhat obvious, created, contingent, natural knowledge of God (God who exists as our Creator and Sustainer) toward a later knowledge of God who would exist more fully and more pointedly as our Savior and Redeemer. More easily and pre-conceptually (prior to the formation of any concepts, whether of outer words or inner words), we can know or have a sense about how God exists as our Creator and Sustainer than about how God exists as our Savior and Redeemer.

With respect to a natural knowledge of moral laws as these come to us from God (as they are implied by the reality of God's existence and the implications of his government), if, in the Old Testament, moral reflections in us (as we advert to them) point to a form of divine working as this exists within us as human subjects within the life of our individual souls, within our individual consciousness of self (for instance, as this is displayed in Exodus 14:4 where it is said about God, for instance, that "I [God] will harden Pharaoh's heart"), then, within our consciousness of self and within our human deliberations and determinations about what could be right or wrong in any given situation, an inner dimension presents itself to us: a dimension which exists as a species of demanding, imperative, inner voice; a preceptive, proscriptive, active variable; and so, at times or often, a troubling, inaudible, inner councillor who or which, in concrete circumstances, is urging us and pointing us toward that which we should or should not do. As we attend, for instance, to the wording of Isaiah 30:21: "And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left."<sup>384</sup> Or, for instance, Job 26:7: "I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days."<sup>385</sup> The quandaries that are given to us in our experience of self immediately point us to a lack of complete control or to a lack of autonomy which somehow properly belongs to us as human beings: a lack of autonomy in how we should consider and think about things in the decisions that we must make and so, from this type of inner apprehension, an inner sense of things points us to a transcendent kind of authority which is somehow always operative within us, the working of this authority in turn pointing to the reality of independently existing, transcendent things and so to the reality of God's being and existence. In this way thus, through a kind of tussle which exists within us within the deliberations of our conscience, to a greater extent, our deference, our obedience,

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<sup>383</sup>Navarre Bible St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, pp. 72-73; Philippe Dragonet, "The Eleventh Hour."

<sup>384</sup>Isaiah 30:21 ESV, as cited by <https://www.openbible.info/topics/conscience> (accessed March 18, 2020).

<sup>385</sup>Job 26:7, as cited by <https://www.openbible.info/topics/conscience> (accessed March 18, 2020).

and, at some point, the good of our possible devotion and worship is being suggested, pulled, and invoked from within us if, possibly and existentially, we are to move toward some kind of resolution which would lessen or quieten what inner demands exist within our experience of self within that which exists as the turnings of our conscience (demands that we cannot too easily ignore or suppress without inflicting or doing some kind of harm to ourselves in the manner of our living).

This intersection which accordingly exists in conscience accordingly explains two things: (1) why moral laws are known by us in ways which point to their contingent necessity (if we should happen to exist, God knows why we exist as human beings and not as some other kind of being or creature);<sup>386</sup> or why, in other words, as laws, they have a normativity which points to their transcendent nature and to the necessity of transcendent origins; and (2), why a positive relation or a positive conjunction always exists between a growing awareness and knowledge of God's being and existence and a growing awareness of God's expectations and hopes as these would refer to us and to demands and exigencies that belong to us in a knowledge (however implicit) which points to laws or to requirements which are legitimate because they exist in an inbuilt fashion as naturally existing laws (as naturally existing requirements) that are determinative in specifying that which exists or which should exist as acceptable human behavior. On the one hand, while a growing awareness of God's existence leads us toward a larger and a greater knowledge of moral laws, on the other hand too, a growing awareness of moral laws which exist within us leads us or they point us toward a larger knowledge or a greater awareness of the reality of God's being and existence that we should begin to have. Too many stories (from a rhetorical viewpoint, we say that innumerable stories) in the Old Testament point to the reality of these close, proximate connections: how intimate is a relation which exists between the haunting quality of a mysterious, inwardly existing, imperative, subjective, objective moral law and what God, in his sovereignty, is expecting of us as human beings, creatures, and subjects. As we find, for instance, in a story that comes down to us about King David in one of the narratives of the Old Testament: "But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the Lord, 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly'."<sup>387</sup>

On the one hand thus, while our theoretical acts of human reasoning and while our practical acts of human reasoning can combine with each other in a way which points us toward the being of divine things (apart from the influence and the sway of a believed, received, practiced religious tradition), and while, in this way, we can begin to know about how our ethical human behavior can also exist as a species of effect (if we should understand, for instance, how, in

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<sup>386</sup>For the sake of a fuller understanding of things, contrast and compare two different notions of human personhood: on the one hand, a person has been defined in terms of "a being [who is] characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality and a moral sense" and, on the other hand, a person can be defined as someone who "is revealed in his proneness to certain feelings, moods, and desires, and which may depend upon the glandular and chemical characteristics of his constitution," citing Moore, *Heroic Sanctity and Insanity*, p. 116, who, in both cases, is quoting from a standard copy of Webster's dictionary.

<sup>387</sup>2 Samuel 14:10, as cited by <https://www.openbible.info/topics/conscience> (accessed March 20, 2020).

general, our understanding always exists as a species of effect), it is to be admitted, however, that a philosophical or a detached understanding of God's being and existence is rarely found in human beings who are not without some kind of religious belief. In the same way too, can we also argue that a fully adequate understanding of our human moral duties and obligations is rarely found in a context that is divorced from some kind of religious belief and practice that would exist within a given human person as a living human subject? Obviously, yes, a naturalistic, an abstract, or a philosophic knowledge of God does serve to buttress or it does encourage us to move us toward the good and even the necessity of giving to God an acknowledgement, a worship, a service, and an obedience which would justly belong to God. God is God and not some kind of creature that has been made and which can come and go in the manner of its own existence. Changes in our knowledge effect changes in how we exist as human beings. Can we change in our knowing in a way that can have no impact in how we should live and exist as human beings?

Hence, in attending to these different variables and as we think about how possibilities and probabilities are joined to each other, in moving from the cognitive order of things which exists for us in our lives toward a moral order of things and how we live or can live as rational, ethical, human subjects, we encounter two things or we would want to make two points with respect to the significance of the theological teaching which comes to us from St. Paul. First, the worship and the obedience that is given to God is normally the stuff and the substance of some kind of religious observance.<sup>388</sup> By itself, a philosophic knowledge of God is not able to trigger or to necessitate a response to God which would have to be understood or which could be possibly understood in terms of worship, adoration, and a form of self-sacrifice which would exist as service since lack of moral goodness or lack of virtue does exist as an evil vector (as a privation) within our human world and, as a negative species of variable, it acts or it often reacts on us to divert, to distort, and to thwart the inclinations and directions of our understanding. Easily we are turned away from the luminosity or the fuller light which can belong to us in the apprehension of our understanding if, by our ways of thinking and reflection, we should begin to assume and believe that, necessarily, we must always act against ourselves and the good of our reasoning and thinking if we should begin to hold that God's existence is to be regarded as a tenable affirmation. Secondly, the living of a good moral life becomes more likely or more possible for us if we can begin to move and live within a context which is transcendently religious or, more specifically, a religious context that is blessed and graced with an intelligibility or a rationality that surpasses the kind of reason which can be said to belong to the meaning or the sense of some other form of religion. Religions do differ from each another. More fully we should come to know about the extent of our moral obligations and more easily we should be able to meet our moral duties and obligations if (1) our ground is a fuller or a truer knowledge of the being of transcendent things (than would otherwise be the case, apart from any revelation) and if (2) our inclinations and desires are turned toward a greater love for the being of higher things that we have come to know and to accept. The greater the meaning or the greater the knowledge, the more or greater should be the response which exists as love and affection. Similarly, the greater the meaning, the more likely, the greater, or the truer should be the truth of existing things that we have come to understand and know (through the kind of knowledge which belongs to us as human beings if we should refer to the kind of knowledge which would exist for us as revelation).

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<sup>388</sup>St. Paul, *Romans* 1:21.

### St. Paul on our Knowing as Conscience

In a way which evidences how, universally, through our acts of human reasoning and knowledge, we have conscience as a morally impelling, imperative commander, in words that have also come to us from St. Paul, it is said that “[the Gentiles, the pagans] know the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death.”<sup>389</sup> Conscience, as the kind of agency or faculty which denotes and belongs to the ways and means of our determinative moral cognition, is a way of knowing which is conditioned or, if it is sound, it is grounded in a prior knowledge of things that belongs to a factual or a theoretical knowledge of existing things (whether we should speak about persons, places, or the existence of other conditions). It exists within each of us whenever we combine or as our inner human form or nature is joined or informed by any acts or deliberations that we can have within the ambit of the kind of inquiry and reflection which belongs to us in our acts of moral human reasoning.<sup>390</sup> First we know and then we act (if, allegedly, we exist, as reasonable, rational human beings; if we are capable of existing as reasonable, rational, human beings). In other words, “what is good can only be fully or adequately determined on the basis of what is true.”<sup>391</sup>

To be a bit more specific and also partially to reiterate what has been said about how an insensible, inaudible kind of inner voice can be said to exist within each of us within the range of our insensible, inner hearing: our conscience exists as a dynamic form of operative, inner norm and so it exists as an admonishing, imperative, directive, “inner voice.” As a judge or adjudicator, if we can quote words that come to us from the conceptuality of Aquinas, it is that “by which [in the middle of many concrete circumstances] we judge what *hic et nunc* [here and now] is to be done as being good, or to be avoided as evil.”<sup>392</sup> As a knowledge of God's being slips or shades into an awareness of ethical or moral demands as these also come to us from God, in the ethical kind of teaching that we find in an assembly of varying biblical, scriptural texts, the moral precepts or the moral warnings that are given point to a divine kind of control or a divine kind of intervening censorship which somehow exists within us (within our inner experience of self): an insensible, telling, inner voice which we insensibly experience and which has been identified in ways which refer to how a kind of conscience exists within us which exists, in turn, as both a reflection of divine things and as also a purveyor and a communicator of divine things.

In its specificity, conscience is best understood as a limited but proper competence which belongs to each of us if we should contrast it with the kind of rational judgment which, as an

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<sup>389</sup>St. Paul, *Romans* 1:32. The Greek verb that is used refers to ἐπιγινόντες (literally, as a past participle, “having known”). See [https://biblehub.com/greek/epignontes\\_1921.htm](https://biblehub.com/greek/epignontes_1921.htm) (accessed March 25, 2020).

<sup>390</sup>Mahoney, “Foreword,” Manent, *Natural Law and Human Rights*, pp. x-xi.

<sup>391</sup>Michael Allen Gillespie, *Hegel, Heidegger, and the Ground of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 25.

<sup>392</sup>Thomas Aquinas, as quoted by John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/anglicans/volume2/gladstone/section5.html> (accessed March 11, 2010).

*assent*, belongs to the order of our human cognition if, here, we should refer to the meaning of general propositions that need to be evaluated and judged in a way which points to the probability and the reality of their truth. General cases differ from particular cases or, in other words, the good of assent in making reasonable factual judgments differs from the good of *consent* which belongs to reasonable moral judgments as these judgments move us toward the kind of term which would exist as the approval and the approbation of our affirmative, willing *consent*. The judgment of our deliberative, practical reason differs from the judgment of our factual, theoretical reason; or, in other words, our ethical or moral judgments about how we are to act or proceed in our behavior in any consequent actions that we do differs from our factual or cognitive judgments about what we are to hold and believe about the truth and the reality of this or that given thing or fact and so, because this is the case (or if, indeed, it is the case; if we are persuaded that this is the case), it can be said, for instance, within an application which belongs to a Catholic theological context, that our “conscience [our practicable human decisions] cannot come into direct collision with the Church's or the Pope's infallibility [in the reliable exercise of the Church's teaching office]; which is engaged in [specifying, elucidating, affirming, and communicating the truth and the good of] general propositions, and in the condemnation of particular and given errors [that touch on the truth of these general propositions].”<sup>393</sup> Truths of fact, reason, or belief differ from prudential choices that need to be made about how we should respond or behave in any given concrete context and, because this is so, reasons or considerations that belong to one type of judgment should not be confused with reasons or considerations that belong to the other type of judgment.

To amplify our point a bit, on the basis thus of this distinction, care needs to be exercised if truths of fact, reason, or belief are being rejected or questioned on grounds that allegedly refer to the claims of our human conscience and the competence which allegedly belongs to the good of our human reason as this exists within the moral imperatives that belong to the workings and the conclusions of our moral, human conscience. To be lacking in an awareness of this distinction can lead to obfuscations and confusions and to misdirections in the kinds of inquiry that we should be undertaking. It can divert us from moving toward acts of understanding and into the kind of reflection and judgment that needs to be exercised if its object is a reality or a truth which, in its own right, needs to be understood, affirmed, known, and acknowledged; a reality which, in fact, exists as a specification of ontological reality or which belongs to an ontological order of things which exists in its own right as a species of prior condition, having a normativity which exists within it if we should refer here to the reality or to the truth of things that we cannot properly deny or reject within risk of falling into some form of internal contradiction that would detract from the rationality of our human consciousness with respect to the proper form of transcendence that belongs to us as cogitating subjects (in how we exist as incarnate human spirits). A distinct set of reasons which belongs to judgments of fact or judgments of truth differs from the reasons

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<sup>393</sup>John Henry Newman, *A Letter Addressed to the Duke of Norfolk on Occasion of Mr. Gladstone's Recent Expostulation Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/anglicans/volume2/gladstone/section5.html> (accessed March 11, 2010).

which would belong to the specific choices that we must make as, at times in our inquiry, we must move into the kind of rational consciousness which belongs to the life of our practical, moral, human judgments.

About the authority and the claims of conscience, in details which, to some extent, employ Christian terms of reference (according to a theological and a rhetorical conceptualization that comes to us from the thinking and teaching of Cardinal Newman):

The rule and measure of duty is not utility, nor expedience, nor the happiness of the greatest number, nor State convenience, nor fitness, order, and the *pulchrum*. Conscience is not a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself; but [instead] it is a messenger from Him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by His representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ, a prophet in its informations, a monarch in its peremptoriness, a priest in its blessings and anathemas, and, even though the eternal priesthood throughout the Church could cease to be, in it the sacerdotal principle would remain and would have a sway.<sup>394</sup>

However, if we take the teaching of St. Paul in the way that it was originally offered to us and if we distinguish it from how, later, it was transposed into an order of meaning which belongs to a later context of thought and analysis, in the words which St. Paul uses, he specifies a meaning which refers to laws which exist within our human hearts and not to laws which exist as determinations of our human thinking and reasoning nor, explicitly, does he refer to laws which exist as determinations of a divine form of reasoning and understanding (or God as simply an unrestricted act of understanding). The divine knowledge or the divine understanding (or God) is simply supposed if no other higher source or higher cause is to be alluded to. Hence, if St. Paul refers to human hearts in a way which insinuates that in us, as the “seat of [our] emotions,”<sup>395</sup> they are to be regarded as the center of both our being and our activities in how, properly, we are to live and to exist as human beings; or if, in this way, our hearts are to be regarded as a species of first principle from which all else flows in how we are to exist and live as human beings, then the transposition of this teaching which we find in post-Pauline restatements of it which prefer to refer to the being and life of our ethical or practical human reason accordingly points to a shifting and a recasting of concepts and linguistic terms which, in turn, points to a larger change of context with respect to how we should understand ourselves with respect to how we exist and live as human beings and how we should want to speak about how we have come to understand who we happen to be and exist as human beings. Changes in wording, at times, point to changes in the degree of understanding that we are enjoying or to the use of another kind of method in the manner of our self-thinking and analysis. St. Paul works with a way of thinking and a way of speaking which points to the kind

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<sup>394</sup>John Henry Newman, *A Letter Addressed to the Duke of Norfolk on Occasion of Mr. Gladstone's Recent Expostulation Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/anglicans/volume2/gladstone/section5.html> (accessed January 30, 2017).

<sup>395</sup>Ulrich L. Lehner, *God is Not Nice: Rejecting Pop Culture Theology and Discovering the God Worth Living For* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2017), p. 81.

of analysis that he was using and which would have been familiar with the bulk of his listeners and hearers.

According then to an older way of thinking and speaking which comes to us from St. Paul and which he had inherited and which he employs to some degree in the letter of his teaching, our knowledge of moral norms (as this exists in us), as it refers to our “hearts” - this knowledge points to an undifferentiated kind of apprehension which already somehow exists within us in how we exist and live as human beings. Thought and feeling are mixed in together within our consciousness of self and world and, through both a metaphorical and a compact form of expressiveness that exists in St. Paul's teaching, the focus or locus which is cited suggests or it alludes to the desiring or to the feelings which allegedly already exist within us within all the yearnings or the aversions that, in some way, are present within the affectivity which is suggested whenever we refer to the kind of knowledge or the kind of connection which exists whenever we speak about the being and life of our hearts. To some extent, we are tempted to fall back on a teaching that can be quoted from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century reflections of Blaise Pascal: simply put, the heart has reasons which the mind knows nothing of. Alternatively, “the heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of...we know the truth not only by the reason, but by the heart.”<sup>396</sup> Our desires, conations, inclinations, and emotions are constitutive of how, metaphorically, our hearts exist in us (apart from the mechanical or the physical type of activity which belongs to our living hearts in terms of how they function as pumps to maintain the circulation of our blood within the incarnate kind of life which belongs to each of us as human beings). Our desires, feelings, emotions – these all galvanize us in ways which point to a positive relation which exists between the state and the condition of our emotions and desires and the beating or the fibrillations of our hearts. Our emotions and desires bestir and impel us in different ways. Other than changing the rate of any physical movements or the pace of any biological rhythms which exist within us, they also move us toward outer forms of human action, whether moving towards or moving us away from this or that action and object and so, in this way, pointing us toward that which we should be doing whenever we move from the domain of our inner selves and our inner actions toward a field that is constituted by our many exterior, outer actions.

However, through our experience of self and as we struggle with ourselves, the kind of connection which already exists within our hearts can move us more clearly toward the kind of connection which also belongs to our cognitive awareness of different things as, in our struggles and trials, we move into discussions, debates, and arguments with the individual consciences that we each happen to have. Our emotions and feelings play a constructive role (even as they can also mislead us if our affections are joined to ends and objectives that are lacking in the kind of goodness which belongs to the goodness of reason or the goodness of rationality and intelligibility). For instance, through the remorse and the experience of sorrow that is given to us within our self experience as this exists within the inner phenomena of our consciousness, we identify past behaviors which we should be ashamed of (behaviors which we have come to regret and to lament); and, through the questioning and the ruminations that brood within us, we fall into a form of self-reflection which reacts upon us in ways which move us toward the kind of self-determination that can possibly avoid a form of self-

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<sup>396</sup>Blaise Pascal, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/559339-the-heart-has-its-reasons-which-reason-knows-nothing-of> (accessed April 1, 2020).

destruction that could be threatening us in some way. Our affectivity exists as a point of departure for our later acts of moral reasoning which emerge as a kind of crown or summit that exists within the order of our conscious subjectivity if, in the wake of our desires and through the later kind of mediation which exists in our acts of direct understanding and in our judgments of fact and being, we move or we are seeking to move toward goals and aims that are initially revealed or known (however partially) by us through the interest and the focus which belongs to our acts of desiring, wanting, and yearning. The desiring or the wanting immediately joins us to the being of a desired, intended object (the desiring, in its way, reveals or it points to the reality of the object) and, with the onset of the acts of our practical human reasoning or, in other words, the acts of our existential reason, this reasoning begins to assume a primacy of its own which turns all of our subsequent inquiries and all of our other acts of understanding and judgment into its means, its servants: its potentially useful instruments.

Hence, if the wording and the conceptuality of St. Paul points to a point of origin which exists in terms of visceral apprehensions and experiences of feeling and emotion as one kind of approach that can be taken by us as we then proceed from them toward acts of understanding that could be given to us in the context of later reflections and deliberations (our affectivity fuels or we say that it enlivens and animates our cognition),<sup>397</sup> then, from the kind of wording and the conceptuality that we find in the teaching of Pope Leo XIII, another approach presents itself to us in a way which points to the primacy and to the good of our working from a second or a converse point of departure that is definitive of a shift in orientation that has arisen in our human culture<sup>398</sup> if now, amid our many desires, we should distinguish between desires which

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397Bernard Lonergan, as cited by James Morin, "Patterns of Conscious Intentionality: An Autobiographical Exploration," *Lonergan Review* 7, 1 (2016): 159.

398To understand this shift or to allude to this shift, see Bruno Snell's study, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1953). While a reading of St. Paul, in his surviving letters and texts, points to an awareness of Greek philosophy and about how, through a process of cultural transmission, it has had a history of its own which points to how, even to our own day, it has touched us in ways which point to the formation of a new differentiation of consciousness which exists in us which, in turn, points to a distinct pattern of different acts (how, recurrently, our acts of sensing are to be combined with our acts of questioning, reasoning, and understanding), it is not to be forgotten however, that, in some way also, St. Paul was faced with the necessity of having to communicate his meaning to persons who were not entirely or fully formed by the requirements, the potency, and the manner of operation which typically belongs to that which exists as the "Greek mind" *qua* the kind of analysis and synthesis which belongs to the Greek philosophic mind. Simply put (and a bit crudely): as human beings and not as angels, we do not exist as detached intellectual spirits (or, in other words, as detached intellectual subjects). Our corporeality (or our incarnation), to some extent, explains why, in the best of us, rational considerations might not be always entirely prevalent or dominant in the manner of our human living. To some extent, if we argue that the good of one requires and promotes the good of the other (our rationality, our sensibility and the two, vice versa), the best or most apt means of communication necessarily reflects how a dialectic exists between these two different sources of meaning. Each cannot be the other and, yet, each acts on the other through a form of mutual causality which necessarily exists between them (given how we happen to exist and be as human beings).

exist as sensible, sensory desires and other desires which exist as intellectual, rational desires;<sup>399</sup> and if, in the name of the goodness of reasonableness or rationality, we should attend to our rational desires in a way which attributes a primacy to them which turns them into a new, distinct point of departure for any conclusions that we would want to find and to draw. We can begin with the experience of our curiosity and the data of our human inquiry and the life of our *human reason* (in its many acts) and move to how this exists for us within a context which points to how it can be applied in a way which inevitably leads us into other acts which exist with respect to the life and the role of our *practical moral reason* and the kind of good or excellence which belongs to the life of our practical human reason.

With Aquinas (and with others in the context of an earlier tradition of thought and feeling), within the context of his analysis and the differentiations that he makes, the life of our speculative, theoretical human reason is to be distinguished from the life of our practical, moral human reason.<sup>400</sup> A real distinction is to be adverted to. Thought and feeling are to be seen in a way which emphasizes their difference and distinctiveness even as we know, however, that one leads to the other or that, from one, we can possibly go to the other. Apart from the right kind of sensibility that is to be associated with the goodness of understanding and our human acts of thinking and reason (the good of one leading to the good of the other), we might not have the kind of flowering or the kind of development which can begin to exist for us if we should refer to the intellectual kind of life which we can each have as human beings. Refinements in our sensibility are to be associated with refinements in the degree of our understanding.

To belabor our point a bit then so that, ideally, no variables are omitted: through the orientation and the movement which exists within our affective life (through our desires, feelings, and emotions), apprehensions of good are communicated to us in a manner which points to how symbols dramatically function as incarnate carriers of meaning. The receptions which we enjoy bestir us in ways which can lead us toward questions, apprehensions, and conclusions that we have not had before. Their effect is but a new openness or a new orientation for possibly receiving new acts of understanding which could be given to us in a way which transcends anything that can be known by us through any apprehensions which could exist for us if, solely, we were to depend on our different acts of human sensing and on the kind of consciousness or the kind of awareness which belongs to us within our different acts of sensing. As a general rule, apart from the promptings and yearnings of our passions, desires, and interests, nothing can ever happen for us if we should want to move toward any questions that would ask about how we exist as inquiring, inquisitive human subjects who, for reasons that have yet to be understood, are not entirely satisfied by what is simply given to us through the conditioning which exists for us in how we live as feeling, sensing human beings, enjoying (through our human sensibility) all the many things that can be given to us through all our different acts of human sensing (amidst their many possible combinations).

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<sup>399</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 24, a. 1, as cited by Moore, *Heroic Sanctity*, p. 184.

<sup>400</sup>Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 16, a. 2; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2.

The apostolic teaching of St. Paul accordingly creates one context or it points to one context while the magisterial teaching of Pope Leo XIII creates another context in tandem with how St. Paul encourages an approach that can be articulated in terms which speak about a universal human awareness which we all have within us as human beings. We all inwardly sense and know that, in our willing and doing, we exist as responsible moral agents (as responsible human subjects). But, if our willing is to exist as a truly good thing (if our willing and doing is to grow in its own goodness, in its intelligibility, or in its sagacity and wisdom), then it needs to move or to be turned toward a deeper understanding of things which comes from attending not only to the affections and the inclinations which exist within our hearts but also, or more deliberately, to the kind of order, method, and structure which normative for us with regard to both the nature and the performance of our human cognition. In the kind of transposition which is portrayed through the teaching of Pope Leo XIII, we move and turn toward fathoming the nature of our human cognition with respect to its order, method, and structure and the demands which peculiarly belong to it. Understand ourselves in our understanding and use this as a basis for understanding how our affective life plays a proper role in how, then, we can grow in both our understanding and our life of self in relation and combinations that we would have with other human persons (not excluding God in terms too of how He exists). By this means, the initial and somewhat inchoate kind of knowledge that we have of ourselves (which St. Paul alludes to) is put through a form of re-articulation, a clarification, or an elucidation which emerges in the wake of a heightened form of self-reflection and awareness that can begin to exist within us as we ourselves change: becoming differentiated, differentiating conscious human subjects as we move within and through different patterns of consciousness (beginning initially from the undifferentiated kind of understanding which belongs to the ways and means of common sense and then moving into a scholarly or an erudite form of consciousness which is superseded if we can move into a metaphysical or a theoretical form of consciousness which is, in turn, superseded if we move into a form of inquiry and a pattern of consciousness that can distinguish how these different forms of inquiry all differ from each other although in ways that can indicate how they are positively related to each other in ways which contribute to richer apprehensions of meaning that can belong to the givenness of a distinct pattern of consciousness).

To a greater degree, we can understand the affectivity and the play of our emotions and feelings (about how they serve us and about how they help and direct us in different ways) if we should begin to understand ourselves as not only or as not simply as subjects of volition in living out our desires and passions but also as subjects of self-reflective forms of inquiry and understanding. The volition and the immediacy of the kind of self-awareness which exists whenever we refer to the stirrings of our hearts becomes a mediated form of immediacy that is experienced and known if we can speak about how our volition and willing is to be understood in terms of its own proper reasonableness and rationality through a kind of order which exists within our practical acts of human reasoning (as this ordering is conditioned, however, by the kind of order which already belongs to our prior, factual acts of human reasoning that exist for us in a purely cognitive way, enjoying a degree of detachment which belongs to the kind of rational control which exists whenever we move from initial or direct acts of understanding to later acts of understanding which exist as judgments, as reflective acts of understanding). If the teaching of St. Paul is understood to exist as a species of seed that is inserted or planted within the human consciousness of believers, the later teaching of Pope Leo can be understood

to exist as a technical expression of meaning which, in turn, points to a technical apprehension of meaning which recapitulates, or which represents or reflects the more biblical or the more ordinary kind of teaching that we find in St. Paul where, by “biblical,” we refer to apprehensions and expressions of meaning that come from an undifferentiated kind of consciousness which is to be associated with the kind of immediacy that belongs to the order of our human common sense and its need to produce results or some kind of impact that is immediately felt. It is immediately palpable. It is immediately effective although, admittedly, the depth of penetration both within the order of our understanding and the order of our acts of human willing exists as a distinct, separate question. Time needs to pass in a way which points to the necessity of further thought and reflection in conjunction with an experience of trials and difficulties which, together, can serve to point us toward the greatness of goodness and truth which, in fact, exists with respect to a given meaning that, initially, we have first come to sense and know (in some way, apprehend and understand through how, at any time, we find ourselves in terms of how we are disposed to exist, in our subjectivity, as open, receptive human subjects).

### **3. Natural Law as an Inner Principle or Form**

According to a mode of inquiry that is inspired by the kind of analysis which is to be associated with the name and reputation of Aristotle and Aquinas: in a manner thus which we have yet to fully understand and know, the ordering of nature which exists within us as the intelligibility of natural law is something which exists within us as if it were a species of indwelling form, relation, unity, or complex intelligible connection of inseparable, immaterial parts and elements which, in this case, would exist as an animating, indwelling spirit, or as an animating, indwelling principle or soul. One conception *as spirit* is Hebraic; the other *as form*, Greek. The form (the law, the natural law), through a form of shorthand or if it is conceptualized in terms of act (as a limitation and as a determination of act) – this form or law operationally exists as a center or as a subject of activity and reception which exists within us. As strange as it may seem (initially) - the “order of nature” as natural law or the “order of nature” when it is specified to exist as natural law - this same “order of nature” exists within us in two different ways (according to two differing conceptions of it): (1) in a manner which is constitutive of how, performatively or cognitively, our subjectivity exists in its concrete life (if we can refer to the truth of its proper or its full human functioning); and (2) how, metaphysically or ontologically, our individual human souls exist as an explanatory inference (given the kind of subjectivity which we each happen to have). One points to the other. While our human souls exist specifically as a species or type of rational soul, on the other hand, as it is understood and known in terms of its expressiveness, it is to be identified with all the many different activities, operations, and receptions which are connatural to us as human subjects or which are proper to us in terms of the being or the intelligibility of our rational human souls as, through differentiating shifts of consciousness in our experience of different things, we are always moving, relatively speaking, from an initial condition of potency toward a later condition of being and act. More precisely in this context, if our point of departure is the principle, the intelligibility, or the causing which belongs to the kind of existence which belongs to the being of our human souls, we are always moving from that which exists initially in a condition of initial first act toward that which would exist in a condition of later second act and then, from there, possibly toward that which would exist or which could possibly exist in a condition of later third act *ad infinitum*. Acts succeed acts through a form of enhancement and

augmentation which belongs to the being and the life of our souls as we continuously move from act to act. For the sake of our understanding here, to unpack the meaning of these different transitions in the context of its many nuances and differences, a number of distinctions need to be noticed and then put into an articulation which would allegedly be more adequate and sufficient.

As a first step and first principle, distinguish initially between potency and act and then, from there, on the basis of the principle of act, distinguish between a first potency and then a second potency. Something which exists in a manner which is allegedly devoid of any kind of form or determination (or act) exists in a condition which is known technically or simply as potency. More precisely speaking, we would say about potency as potency (about this species of potency) that it exists as sheer potency, or as prime potency, or as pure potency, or as unrestricted potency (or, in a way, as material potency if here, by “materiality,” we should prefer to refer to all absences of any kind of qualification and determination through means which would work with a metaphorical turn of phrase).<sup>401</sup> When a first determination or a first act *as form* is supplied or, in some way, given which refers to an identity or a meaning of some kind, in saying that this is this type of thing and that this other is this other kind of thing (for example, this is a dog and this other is a cat, this has the nature of a dog and this other, the nature of a cat), we would be speaking about the presence or, in some way, the indwelling of a formal determination of meaning and being which exists allegedly within a given set of material conditions. When material conditions are informed or when they are ordered by an unseen, intelligible ordering of intelligible parts or elements which refers to an intelligible, formal structure of some kind (something that would be grasped by us as the term or the content of a direct act of understanding where something is understood and so not seen or, in any way, sensed), then, in the awareness that we would have of this invisible, insensible configuration or structure of parts and elements, with respect to the manner of its being, we would have that which would exist for us as, technically, the meaning and being of a form (a form without, apart, or distinct from any possible instantiation in

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401 Something which exists in an immaterial way can exist as a potency if it can be informed by a determination which, relative to it, would exist as an act. Hence, in employing a metaphor, an immaterially existing potency would exist or it can be spoken about as if it were a species of material potency, relative to the possible reception for a form which would then reduce its materiality *qua* its indetermination to a condition of act. While the matter of a thing or the materiality of a thing can be spoken about as if it were a species of potency (existing as a passive principle, relative to an act of determination of whatever kind that it can receive), to speak instead about potency rather than to speak about matter or materiality is to move into a greater degree of abstractness in speaking about the meaning of things since potency, as a term of meaning, is not restricted to absences of determination that would exist in a purely material way and which would be correlated with the kind of given of things that belongs to us if we should refer to the kind of receptivity which is to be associated with our different acts of human sensing and the kind of potency which is to be associated with our different acts of human sensing.

instances of matter). The form differs from the matter (as respectively a unity which transcends multiplicity or which is other than the plurality or the multiplicity which belongs to matter and our experience of it)<sup>402</sup> even as it is joined and as it exists within a given set of material conditions. In the metaphysics of Aristotle, the form of a thing in its whatness is to be identified with the being of a thing (the emergence and the being of its individual existence). Form causes being.<sup>403</sup> It explains being. A thing (a substance, a reality) exists as an effect or as a result (as soon as a given potency is informed by the entry or the reception of a given form). A thing exists as the union of these two principles: matter and form (potency and form). A thing is not a body; it is not that which exists as but only the matter of a thing.

However, how do we explain why, in any given instance, a given form is joined or it is being joined with this or that potency? If a potency is known or if it is determined on the basis of some kind of form or intelligibility (first the intelligibility and then a given potency is known in terms of its potency or its receptivity), how do we account for the initial or the prior being of forms (the existence of forms, the existence of intelligibility)? Admittedly, relative to the absence of any form vis-a-vis any given potency, a form (if given) always exists as a realization, as a determination (or, in other words, vis-a-vis a potency, it would exist as a species of act): hence, it would exist as an instance or as a specification of that which exists as an initial act or as a first act. Whenever a formal determination is found within a given set of material conditions, or whenever we should try to speak about the coming or the entry of formal determinations within a given set of material conditions, as we have been noting, an initial transition always moves something from a condition of potency to a condition of act, albeit, more specifically however: from that which exists as a first potency to become that which now currently exists as a first act. That which exists as a first act (because it is a determination) specifies that which has existed as a first potency (conferring on potency a qualification or a specificity which sets it apart from that which could exist in terms of any kind of pure or unrestricted potency). This potency goes with this first act of form

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402Sala, "From Thomas Aquinas to Bernard Lonergan," <http://lonergan.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FROM-THOMAS-AQUINAS-TO-BERNARD-LONERGAN-2.pdf> (accessed on July 15, 2020), p. 5.

403Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1951), p. 235, citing from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. To the degree that form explains why something is a certain thing and not some other kind of thing, we can understand why, with Aristotle, we can conclude that form exists as "the cause of Being" if form, through the principle of intelligibility, exists as the means or as the principle of discrimination whenever we should speak about the being of any given thing which suggests that it is not some other kind of thing. This differs from this other thing. Cf. Owens, p. 236, interpreting Aristotle. Nothing exists in our world apart from its being some kind of thing. Nothing exists apart from its having some kind of formal determination. Absent the determination, absent the being. One cannot exist without the other (determination and being).

and not with some other first act of form.

However, within this same context and as we move from this context to a larger or a further context of meaning for the sake of finding explanations that could be more adequate and comprehensive for us, the union or the conjunction of forms with potencies, now at this time and now at this other time (as a distinct species of being) points to our need to understand another species of being if we should notice that understanding a thing's form does not imply the necessity nor does it account for the sense or the intelligibility of its being (its being as a truly existent existent). Formal, ideal being is not real, actual being (real being as real existence). Understanding a thing's existence (if something exists as more than an idea or hypothesis) exists as a larger need, requirement, or demand which, in turn, points to the relevance of another species of meaning and being (another species of explanatory principle) which, as a thinkable, conceivable determination, is not act as the determination of any form but, instead, act as the determination of a thing's existence apart from either its matter or its thinkable, conceivable form (its essence as potency joined to form). Act, as existence, explains why something is: why, in fact, it is not nothing;<sup>404</sup> why it exists in a way which points to an ultimate kind of primacy which belongs to act other than form (why act as the act of being or act as the act of existence accordingly exists as the “act of all acts,”<sup>405</sup> containing within it all possible differences and variations as we speak about things which exist as potencies and forms).<sup>406</sup> In moving from form as a first determination to act as a second determination, act accounts for the reality of a thing's existence and so act functions as a principle of being or as *the principle of being* as we move, through our cognition, from apprehensions of ideal being toward apprehensions of real being (*esse reale*) where generically here, in act as distinct from form, another kind of intelligibility is being sought which exists, in its own right, as a rational, reasonable determination. By means of a new point of departure that is available to us, with regard to determinations of act, as we again move from potency to form or from potency to act (from absence of meaning toward apprehensions of meaning), we now move from form as a first determination or

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404Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 24: “...being emerges as the cause that makes a thing more than mere nothing.”

405Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 60.

406Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, pp. 64-65. For illustrative purposes, if we take being in the most general sense that we can imagine and suppose, three kinds of being can be distinguished and separated from each other if we should speak about (1) real being or real differences, (2) conceptual being and conceptual differences, and (3) material being or material differences. To understand these differences in turn requires an explanation that would correlate these differences with the differentiated structure or the differentiated order of our human cognition. Real being goes with judgment; conceptual or mental being, with direct acts of understanding or speculative acts of understanding; and material being, with our different acts of human sensing. A more general predicate does not exist although, in given instances and applications, its reference, clout, or significance will vary as being falls into an order of kinds or types. Cf. Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, pp. 112-113.

first act of meaning and being toward act as a second determination or second act of meaning and being.

Reiteratively, the intelligibility of a thing's existence differs from the intelligibility of a thing's form (something is more wonderful, it is more meaningful if, in fact, it happens to exist in a manner which transcends our initial understanding of it or if it should always transcend our possible understanding of it)<sup>407</sup> and, as soon as this real distinction is adverted to (as soon as it is grasped and understood by us), it points to the inadequacy of an Aristotelian reliance on the primacy of form (Aristotle's metaphysics of form) and so to the good of a larger scheme of things which would exist as a metaphysics of act (or, in other words, as a metaphysics of existence) which emphasizes the primacy of acts of being or the primacy of acts of existence over the primacy of forms and the kind of intelligibility which would be restricted to the being and the meaning of forms. If potencies or possibilities are known as soon as forms or intelligibilities are known (the forms reveal the possibilities as potencies), forms or intelligibilities are understood and known in their reality as soon as acts of being are known in a way which points to how, from acts of being, everything else comes and flows (whether we should speak about the emergence and the existence of contingently existing things which exist as a tripartite, composite union of potency, form, and act; or whether we should speak about the emergence and the existence of any forms and any potencies that can be then known if we should only know about the existence of meanings which exist as forms). A compositive, synthetic, or a unifying feature accordingly also belongs to acts of being to the degree that, to the being of form for instance (whether apart from material conditions or as instantiated or as joined to a given set of material conditions), something is added in terms of a predicate which refers to how forms exist in their own way as consequences and effects. To them belongs an emergent, real form of existence which somehow properly belongs to them *as forms*.<sup>408</sup>

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407Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 44; pp. 58-59. If form exists as a good (as a perfection), act also exists as a good (as a perfection) although as a greater perfection than that which exists in terms of the perfection of form.

408Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 49. To avoid confusion here, please distinguish between two senses of being when we refer to being in terms of real being or real existence. One sense is static if we should refer to the critical role of our human judgment when, in judgment as a reflective act of understanding, it is concluded and said about something that, in fact, it really and truly exists. The truth of a thing, as known, immediately points to its being, to its reality. From apprehensions that know the truth of things, we immediately know about the being or the reality of these same things. With truth or from truth; reality, being. Real being is grasped in a way which differs from how hypothetical being is first grasped and understood by us through a speculative or a direct act of understanding. However, another sense of being is more primary than this if we should refer to how it plays a creative or a dynamic role if, on the basis of an understood metaphysical perspective, we attend to how causes exist as emergent acts of being and existence. As productive, effective causes, they combine or they can join this with that in order to make this or to make that. These acts of

Forms, with respect to their species of reality, are joined to their being, to their emergent being as effects; and the same forms, in their reality, can be joined and united to material conditions in new, varying expressions of themselves in a kind of being which exists whenever a given form is being joined to a given set of material conditions in any given concrete context and instance. With respect thus to the being of forms as regards how they are joined to acts of being (how, from a given form, we can refer to its originating or its generative act of being or how it has received the act of being and the reality which it happens to have): on the one hand, yes, for us, through our self-understanding, a form exists as the term of a direct act of understanding where the form and the act cannot be separated from each other. If you have one, you must have the other. A form or an idea is explained by a generative act of understanding that has been somehow received by us although, in the proceeding or in the enjoyment of a given idea or form, a temporal sequence or a temporal ordering is not to be adverted to with respect to the relation which exists between an originating act of understanding and a form or an idea that is being grasped by a given act of understanding. Act and form or idea exist together.

However, at the same time, as we think about acts of understanding and the ideas that they know, in the context of our inner experience of things (in the context of our self-consciousness), it is to be noted that a form as an idea or a form as an intelligibility exists in a way which points to its transcendence: the probability of its transcendence relative to ourselves in our being and our own acts of understanding. While, in one respect, the transcendence of a given idea points to a transcendence which also belongs to us in our self-transcending acts of understanding, a greater measure of transcendence belongs to our ideas if, in their way, they exist independently of whether or not they are being grasped by any of us in any of our acts of understanding. This difference, in turn, points to the reasonableness of a conjecture which would then argue and claim that, if necessarily ideas exist as terms that belong to apprehensive, generative acts of understanding, then, from this, the greater transcendence of ideas points to how they must exist as the term or as the issue of some other, more primary act of understanding: an act of understanding which would be transcendent to

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being constitute the being or the actuality of different things in a way which differs from the subordinate kind of causality which belongs to forms as ideas of one kind or other that, in turn, lead to the genesis of other ideas in ways that can point and refer to new possibilities which perhaps can be realized in some way for the first time. A constructive act is to be alluded to if it can be properly said that “the being of a thing [in its existence] is the cause of the correct judgment” which exists within the grasp of an understanding, knowing subject. Cf. Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 119. We move toward being from truth and, conversely, from being to truth, all apprehensions of truth existing as but a species of being among other species of being in a context which works with analogies if we are to speak not about a common meaning for being or existence but about meanings that can be said to resemble each other if we were to compare, for instance, the being of an idea with the being of a truth. Each of these exists but in different ways.

whatever we could possibly have and enjoy within ourselves in terms of our private, individual acts of understanding.

In a metaphysics of act (as this first comes to us from Aquinas: to him belongs the credit),<sup>409</sup> act (or an act of being) emerges in a way which points to how it exists as a third species of explanatory principle (relative to what is understood whenever we should refer to that which exists as potency and that which exists as form). As distinct from the being of form (or the being of essence as a unity or fusion of potency and form), in the kind of conceptuality that has come to us from Aquinas: “being means something having existence;”<sup>410</sup> or alternatively, “a being [an *ens*] is said to be in as much as it possesses being [*esse*].”<sup>411</sup> *Esse* is the act by which something as an *ens* or being exists.<sup>412</sup> Form, as a principle, can only be identified with act, as a principle, if we should want to refer to an uncreated or a non-contingent type of existing thing which cannot receive its act of being, its act of existence (its *actus essendi*) from something else. In this case, its form would exist as its own act of existence (or its own act of being).<sup>413</sup> Form exists as act and act, as form.

Act explains more than that which can be understood if we should only refer to the being of forms because it refers to a species of actuality which exists at a further remove from us, at a higher level if, from within the order of our human cognition, we move from initial sensing experiences toward direct acts of understanding and then, from there, toward reflective acts of understanding in the context of a cognitional order which is to be correlated to an order of existing things that is to be identified in terms of potency, form, and act. Cognitionally, within the order of our cognition, act would seem to be a bit more remote although, in another sense however, as an explanation that can be known, as soon as it is known, it enjoys a form of immediacy and primacy to

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409Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 1, 2419; 4, 2, 556-558. Aquinas's innovation was to discover that “all *Aristotelian* acts were in reality ‘potency’ [in a condition of potency] with respect to [that which exists as] the *actus essendi* [the ‘act of being,’ the ‘act of existence’].” Italics mine. Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actus\\_Essendi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actus_Essendi) (accessed April 15, 2020). As Aquinas notes and as we have already noted, this act of being exists as the “act of all acts, [it is] the perfection of all perfections.” Cf. *Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia*, question 7, article 2, ad 9, as cited by [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actus\\_Essendi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actus_Essendi) (accessed April 16, 2020). It is better that a thing exists than that it should not exist. More in terms of meaning is needed if we are to move from ideal, possible forms of existence toward the kind of instantiation which exists whenever we refer to real forms of existence.

410Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 1, 2419.

411Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 1, 2419, as cited by Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. 121, n. 18.

412Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 1, 2419, as cited by Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Change? The World’s Becoming in the Incarnation* (Still River, Massachusetts: St. Bede’s Publications, 1985), p. 75 & n. 25.

413Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, 4; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 11.

the degree that, immediately, it explains three kinds of being: the two kinds of being which refer to the being of potencies and the being of forms and so, from this, normative or classical kinds of law which exist with respect to formal determinations of meaning and being; and then the third kind of being which refers to statistical kinds of law that are known through circumstantial or actual determinations which can indicate, through measurements and apprehensions of evidence, when, in any given instance and at any given time, an understood form is being joined to the materiality of an experienced potency. Normative, classical determinations of law and meaning exist within statistical determinations of law which attend to incidences of chance and the probability of conjunctions which exist as events.

Moving on: vis-a-vis the reception of act as an act of being or as an act of existence, the union which exists as a fusion of potency and form (which is known through a direct act of understanding) becomes a second species of potency, relative to acts of being which work with essences (as unities of potency and form) in a way which effects a thing's concrete being. This placing or this putting of being, as an effective productive cause, points to the presence of an operative metaphysical principle while, on the other hand, the positing of being, the acknowledgement of being, or the affirmation of being exists as an operative cognitional principle which refers to the truth, the factuality, or the reality of a thing's being; or the truth, the factuality, or the reality of its existence in a second type of transition which moves from a first act or a second potency to a new act which would exist as a second act, the second act existing specifically as an act of being or as an act of existence. A given form within matter or potency – as it is known by us through an affirmative act of reflective understanding (in transitioning from an earlier act of direct understanding to a later act of reflective understanding, a judgment) – this same form as it is joined to a specification of matter or potency would now also exist for us or it would now be known by us to exist as an objectively existing thing. It is a metaphysically existing reality and not a subjectively existing reality (it is not a surmise or a hypothesis) as this would exist within the consciousness which belongs to us in our experience of self. While, admittedly, it is known by us as the term of an act of judgment, at the same time, through the awareness (through the consciousness) which exists within us within our acts of judgments, it is also known to exist in a manner which differs or which is independent of whether or not we are knowing anything about it through any of our prior acts of experiencing and understanding, our initial acts of understanding leading us toward acts of understanding which would exist as our judgments (as our reflective acts of understanding) as, in the way of our cognitive self-transcendence, we move from something which exists as an idea toward something which exists as a known fact or truth.

In the shifts thus which have been occurring, we find an order which increasingly points to how the reality of acts transcends the reality of forms. If forms play a role in specifying the suitability or the appropriateness of occurrences and incidences which exist as acts, if the normativity of forms

points to a stabilizing, critical function which belongs to their meaning and being, acts reveal a dynamism that is not solely determined by forms and the kind of impact which belongs to the order and the being of forms. The primacy of acts suggests a plurality of alternatives: options and possibilities which condition the reality of a metaphysics of history which would exist as a normative, heuristic philosophy of history because of an order which can be found if our object is a set of acts which inherently belongs to us as human beings to the degree that we exist as human subjects. Hence, as acts succeed acts in a continuum and flow of acts: as potency first gives way to form (form as first act), and as form then gives way to acts of being or acts of existence (as second act), second acts becomes a species of third potency as they are informed by other acts which exist as third acts. Acts of being (acts of existence) give way to activities and to receptions which normally belong to us as living, human beings where, here, we exist as not simply a substance or thing but, more fully, as a subject and as a center of many different acts, activities, and receptions that are given to us: acts, activities, and receptions which immediately point to a fuller form of living and possibly to a full flourishing about how we can exist as human subjects if, within us, some kind of flexibility or some kind of openness is possibly operative: a potency that is receptive or which could be receptive to experiences and acts that had not been expected, known, or anticipated. Differing acts, as we move from acts of form to acts of existence and then to acts of flourishing – these all point us toward higher levels of being which, in turn, point to depths or densities of intelligibility and meaning which are indicative of intelligence as itself a species or instance of intelligibility. The intelligibility of an effect points to intelligent operations which exist as a higher, greater cause. Higher acts explain acts which exist at lower levels of being and intelligibility and, in their being, they are creative of all lesser acts and the order of these acts, acts at a higher level then becoming a basis or a point of departure for the possible reception of new acts which can then possibly exist in a way which determines a higher level of being. A conclusive point of determination only emerges when, at some point, we are forced to refer to something that is uniquely other (call it an “x” or call it God) which exists as some kind of unrestricted, absolute type of intelligibility which, in its compactness, density, and concentration, is to be identified with an unrestricted, absolute act of intelligent being. The greater the act of intelligence (the greater the intelligence), the more, unrestrictedly, it would exist as an absolute which exists within an order or a class which is unique to itself alone.

In our current context thus, as we refer to a natural law which exists within ourselves, we allude to an intelligence and a normativity which allegedly exists as the life of “human reason itself” and the order which, in its contingency, it necessarily has as we try to think about it in terms of all the actualizations which it enjoys through all of its many different acts, operations, passivities, and receptions.<sup>414</sup> As we have been noticing, some laws of nature exist as intelligibilities which refer to an external order of preoperative causes which assist and which make for the correct functioning of our human cognition and the goodness of our human acts of

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414Rhonheimer, p. 46, n. 13.

willing and doing. Our cognition, our human living, does not exist within a vacuum. To some extent, we begin from understood, known apprehensions of meaning and being that are not without degrees of value and worth in pointing us toward where we need to go: means, ends, and approaches that are more right and fruitful for us than other possible alternatives even if, within this order of preoperative causes, distortions and omissions abound, handicapping our understanding of things and limiting us through defects which exist within the good deeds that we can possibly do and effect.

However, on the other hand, if we think about how natural law exists internally within us as a rational specification of meaning and being which joins different variables with each other in an understood, known, intelligible unity and about how it exists as a requirement which must be met if we are to be human at all in how we are to live and exist; and if we think about how other laws of nature exist that have yet to be discovered, known, and then implemented within the order of our external actions in the wake of later actualizations which can begin to exist with respect to the growth and the genesis of our understanding and knowledge - the creativity of our imagining encourages the creativity of new acts of understanding which could lead us toward new acts of judgment and evaluation and so the creation and the being of new realities<sup>415</sup> – the basis for any transition which moves us from pre-motions toward new acts and new motions is the kind of bridge or the mediating kind of role which is played by how, as subjects, we exist with our subjectivity that we happen to have. An ideal, normative type of identity always exists between acts and form when, respectively, we refer to our practical acts of human reasoning (as third acts) and the kind of form which belongs to a prescriptive and a proscriptive set of natural laws which exist initially within us in a condition of first act if, in this context, we conceive of laws in terms that would initially think about them as a formal specification of intelligibility. This ideal needs to be met if progress is to exist in the course of our human lives (if this progress is to exist as a real thing and not as a cloak or as a cover for something which would be lacking in meaning, truth, and reality). From an operative or a concrete union which can allegedly exist (at times) between these two orders of being (in terms of act and form), or from the operative or the concrete union that joins third acts with second acts and these with first acts, we can understand how our rational human souls are to be understood in a manner which points to the manner of their proper role and agency and how, in their agency and also in their receptivity, they exist as secondary causes (lacking in an autonomy which would point to some kind of independence or some form of self-sufficiency which would be averse to an awareness which knows about how our understanding and our willing is conditioned by acts and operations which must exist as an order of pre-motions). The

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<sup>415</sup>See Joseph Owens, *An Interpretation of Existence* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1968), p. 81, for argumentation and illustrations which point to the creativity of our human reasoning as this exists, for instance, in logic and mathematics. If we are thinking logically and yet intelligently, we can take two distinct truths, two things that are known apart from each other, and by somehow combining and uniting them (by bringing them together), we can discover a third new truth: something that had not been known before and this third truth is known with a truthfulness and a groundedness which is as secure as the two truths that had been previously known and used by us as our initial points of departure. Cf. Joseph Owens, *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed. John R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), p. 6. What do we do when we reason when we try to move from A to B?

normativity that we find within ourselves *precisely because of its normativity* in turn points us to why this normativity exists as a sign and as an experience of transcendence. The one points to the other as the normativity exists as but a given that is suggestive of something that is greater than ourselves if it is not entirely subject to the ways and means of any kind of manipulation that we would try to effect.

For our own purposes thus, we work with a definition of soul which transposes an earlier understanding and conceptuality of it which originally comes to us from Aristotle within the analyses which exists within the context and the content of his metaphysics. A rewording or a reconceptualization of Aristotle's teaching accordingly now speaks about soul as “a higher order principle of design that orients physical and chemical processes towards ends [objectives and purposes that are] not intrinsic to them”<sup>416</sup> although, in the adaptation that we employ for our own purposes here, in a more abstract manner, the human soul as a “higher order principle of design.” It orients all of our cognitive acts toward ends and objectives which transcend the individual nature which belongs to each type of distinctive act as each act exists within the performance and the experience of our human cognition. Our cognitive acts, in our self-experience of them, do not exist *per se* as a species of material substratum. In point of evidence, we do not see ourselves engaged in our different acts of human seeing. Instead however, we work from an awareness which refers to our consciousness of self or to our experience of self as this is given to us within the actions or acts that we could be doing or receiving.

To illustrate our point, using a simple example: while our acts of human seeing are ordered or defined by a specific set of objects (they are directly correlated to a certain type of object) which reveals colors and shades of light and the experience which we have of these same colors and shades, it can be said too that these same acts of human seeing can be employed in ways which lead us toward other possible ends and goals. On the one hand, a truth which is known to be true is given to us as the term of a specific act of reflective understanding (immediately in the wake of a judgment which affirms the truthfulness or the reality of a given idea, form, or notion). However, within the context of our many different acts of human inquiry (among all the different kinds of inquiry that we can engage in), our acts of human sensing exist as instrumental acts or means which are always directed toward goals which transcend the proximate kind of object which is always the species or the datum of an immediately given, experienced object that typically belongs to us through our different acts of human sensing. Our acts and data of sense can be employed in a manner which will direct them toward conclusions and decisions which belong to an order of other cognitive acts and operations: specifically, with respect to our conclusions and decisions, to terms or proximate objects which belong to our rational acts of human judgment (our differing acts of human judgment). This type of act or operation (our judgments), like some of our other acts and operations, is not to be identified with the nature and the performance of an act of human sensing (how our acts of sensing exist for us within the order of our human cognition) since each species of cognitive act - whether we speak of sensing, understanding, or judging - each species of act performs a different type of task or job in terms by using different means to

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<sup>416</sup>Robert Spitzer quoting from a definition that comes to us from Michael Polanyi in *The Soul's Upward Yearning: Clues to Our Transcendental Nature from Experience and Reason* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), p. 263.

achieve a different species of object, and this lack of identity among differing acts and objects in cognition explains why, in our various acts of sensing, there exists a species of reality (a materiality or a physicality) which is always being transcended and surpassed whenever we move from physical or chemical processes that exist in our acts of sensing toward intellectual processes which are constituted by operations which exist as our different acts of inquiring and reasoning, or as our different acts of understanding and judging. In parenthesis, by way of further explanation:

The experience of physical or chemical changes which is given to us within the data of our external experience is something that we can separate ourselves from and so take a measure of distance. The means is our ability to ask any kind of question that we might want to ask about the givens of our sensible experience where no question exists as simply the term or as the product of a physical or chemical process since, as a prior condition of inquiry, every kind of physical or chemical process must be something which first exists for us as a fundamental point of departure if we are to ask any questions about it, here within this one context or here within this other context. The dependence of intellectual or rational activities upon the mechanism of physical or chemical processes as a given is not to be understood in a manner which would want to speak about an intrinsic form of dependence and so, as a consequence of this, an intrinsic form of determination as one follows the other. Only an extrinsic form of dependence exists and so, from this, only an extrinsic form of determination.

In conclusion then, as, through the principle of act, we move from potencies to acts, and also as we then move from acts to acts, the form or the intelligibility of a naturally given, existing law informs and shapes the style of our human reasoning, indicating its order or structure and so, by this ordering or structuring, it determines that which would exist for us as our normative or as our “right reason”: our “right reason” as the legitimate or correct performance of our human reasoning in all the acts and actions which are constitutive of its being with respect to the fulness of its reality. The intended or immediate object of our *practical human reason* is always an apprehension of meaning that knows about possible courses of exterior action: the existence of one or more possible courses of action which could be possibly implemented by us through various choices and actions that can be effected if we should want to move from initial moral determinations which exist within our ethical understanding and knowledge of things toward moral determinations which would exist as the commission of our external, concrete, human actions. The possible courses of action which we come to know about always first exist immediately within ourselves, within the ken and the consciousness of our understanding and judgment, as soon as we come to any of our personal conclusions or as soon as we experience apprehensions of meaning which always belong to a distinct species of cognitive act which would exist for us as the making or as the deliberations of our practical human judgement (specifying that which I must do or that which I should do given that which I have come to understand and know within the context of my current understanding as this exists within a given, external, concrete context). To conclude our discussion by explicating these matters a bit more fully:

The dynamic performance or the dynamic activity of our moral inquiry and deliberation, as it exists within the ups and downs of our human conscious life,

moves us or we can say that it leads us toward judgments, decisions, and actions that can effect many beneficial moral changes, both within ourselves as human beings and also with respect to the lives of other human beings, changing us (altering our lives) as living human subjects and, in some way also, encouraging and helping other human beings in changes that, perhaps, they can also make within the conduct of their own lives. Ideally, and sometimes concretely or actually, everything should work together in some way to constitute a new order of human things or a renewed human order of things as, cumulatively and progressively, we construct and build our human world within a shifting penumbra of spatial temporal contexts that are constantly moving and changing in their form and shape (conditioning and, at one level, constituting a history of persons and events) where, ideally speaking, everything should accumulate and grow together in a manner which can conceivably construct the fabric and the order of our human world in a way which adds new concrete goods to an assembly of other concrete goods in a development of things which appears to lack any kind of known limit or boundary. In the working out of our natural human law as this exists as both as an objectively existing subjective principle (through a kind of communion which would exist between its objectivity and the subjectivity which exists within us), if this law is fully put into effect through all of our subsequent acts, then, by referring to the intelligibility of this law, we can refer to an expanding law of human progress, its violation in turn pointing to regressions of one kind or another which would exist as negativities that can be used as form of explanation for the incidences and expansions of decline and decay that can arise within the human order of things that is constitutive of human history.

#### **4. Natural Law as Right Reason**

Within this context thus (as we attend to the teaching of Pope Leo), when we think about the implications of “right action” and “right reason,” one to the other, we can make an inference which points to a normativity which exists in terms of how, beyond the manner of our human knowing, we exist with a normativity which also belongs to how we exist or should exist as moral subjects with a consciousness which belongs to this type of subjectivity in both its active and receptive aspects. “Right action,” as a possible effect, implies “right reason” as its necessary, prior ground (the mediation of our “right reason” as a truly lawful determination)<sup>417</sup> and so, initially, the priority and the normativity which belongs to the functioning and the life of our acts of human cognition. “Right action” exists as but a second form of self-transcendence and also as a heightened form of self-transcendence which follows whenever, from our initial acts of cognition, we move from the self-transcendence of our “right reason” toward the self-transcendence which also belongs to us in the deeds which exist within the context of our “right actions.” Through our self-reflection and understanding, we find a normativity which is endemic to the life of our acts of moral, human reasoning: indicating how, in our subjectivity, we exist as rational, responsible, virtuous, moral agents if, to be truly moral, our external actions need to meet a set of requirements and demands if they are to exist with a

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<sup>417</sup>See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 3, as cited by Jones, *Before Church and State*, p. 400.

character and a qualification which points to their morality (the truth and the goodness of this morality as something which would exist, in fact, as a reasonable, rational, good thing). Whether as a potency that is awaiting its possible realization, or as an act which exists with this or that degree of realization (however partial or incomplete), our moral acts of reasoning exist within us in a way which points to how they are informed or guided both from within and from without; or, in other words, how they participate in laws which inhere within us within our acts, internally governing and directing our acts of moral reasoning in its deliberations and decisions through the instrumentality of how, in some way and to some extent, they exist within the fabric of our deliberations and decisions even if it is also the case that these same laws exist not from ourselves but from some point of origin which is other than ourselves (other than our subjectivity; other than how, as human beings, we happen to exist as human subjects). In accounting for the life and the being of our practical acts of human reasoning, some kind of prior condition or pre-motion needs to be alluded to if we are to speak about the right kind of normativity which properly belongs to our acts of moral reasoning in an application and explication which needs to distinguish between two different kinds of predetermination or two different kinds of pre-motion: (1) a first pre-motion exists as the normativity of a form and (2) the second as the realization of an act if, through an identification with the kind of incarnate life which belongs to us in our different acts of human reasoning and thinking, natural law exists as more than a form since, in its concreteness or in its display (its life, vitality, and manifestation), it also exists as a realizing, realized type of form which exists more fully and properly as an act. The form as a limitation and the act as a realization or as an act of existence go together as we move from a focus on the primacy of natural law as a form toward a focus on the primacy of natural law as an act.

Hence, as a formal determination, natural law exists as an understood intelligibility that we have come to understand and discern as we have abstracted this intelligibility from the ebb and flow of how we exist in our history as human subjects (within the ups and downs of this history). As known, it reveals or it points to a set of laws that, for us, are both prescriptive and prohibitive. This needs to follow that if this is to happen or if this other thing is to happen with any degree of likelihood or probability. However, as an act, in its instances or in its display and manifestation, natural law exists as ourselves in our acts, receptions, and operations. It reveals a vector (a dynamism) which can be said to belong to the course of our human history wherever we should speak about how progress exists within our human world (however hidden or however implicit could be the existence of this vector within the ambiguities which exist within the data of our human history). Its operative, facilitating context is constituted by a very large number of predisposing events and occurrences, and by conjunctions and combinations of these same events which, as conjunctions and combinations, exist in their own right as distinct events. Some things can then begin to happen and occur (with possibly this or that new degree of regularity) through an instrumentality which belongs to us through the mediation and the interventions of our participation through our inquiries, our understandings, and our judgments. The object is ultimately some kind of achievement or a realization of other acts and deeds which, in some way, need to be brought into a condition of being if an understood intelligibility is to exist as a realized species of intelligibility. The laws, as a form, point to a distinctive form, shape, or pattern of operations which belongs to us in the dynamism of our morally effective, conscious life; but then, as acts, receptions, and operations, they reveal a transcendence which belongs to us in the context of our moral lives as our acts, actions, and deeds escape a self-control that, ideally, we would perhaps like to claim and to exercise in the

course of our lives; this absence of self-control in turn pointing to a higher order of government which exists at a higher level, an order of government which in turn points to why it can be argued that our acts of moral reasoning exist as effects which transcends the kind of causality which belongs to the order of our human subjectivity. In some way, they participate in an order of higher causes that can be understood, to some extent, if and as we move from our acts of moral reasoning (as effects) toward postulations of understanding and knowledge which can speak about how higher causes exist: causes which have a kind of nature, a law, or an order which belongs to them in terms of how they exist with a transcendence of their own which points to their distinctiveness and to a form of knowability that is not directly proportionate to ourselves in our acts of cognition where these are directed toward the possible reception of acts of understanding which would exist as direct acts of understanding.

To avoid any confusion here at this point, as a fundamental point of departure, let us first distinguish between that which exists as a passive potency and that which exists for us as an active or operative potency. If all effects *qua* effects essentially exist as passivities, as things which are simply caused or brought into being from a prior condition of non-being as a consequence of something other that is effecting and making them, then only by attending to the kind of passivity which belongs to us in the nature and the operation of our human cognition can we begin to move toward an understanding which can know more about the nature and the operations of our human cognition. These are things which do not simply be or exist as if the context of our cognition is some kind of vacuum. Necessarily, in our self-understanding, we try to know about how higher orders of law and operation exist even if it happens to be the case that these orders of reason and intelligibility are not natural, appropriate, or suitable for us (given the kind of existence which belongs to us as human beings and subjects) even as these same laws exist and function as the ground or as the basis of the operational kind of natural law which belongs to us within the manner of our human being and living (through our understandings, judgments, and actions within the course of our human lives). They are determinative of the kind of inner form which properly belongs to us as human subjects and of the kind of acts which realize, reflect, and point to the character or the quality of this inner form. We differ from every other kind of existing thing.

As we turn then to the being of our human cognition, with regard to the passivity of our understanding and knowledge, through our self-inquiry and our self-reflection, we should begin to notice that our human acts of understanding do not exist as activities or as things that we simply do by ourselves where, in our cognitive lives, our understanding occurs whenever we should want it or will it, or whenever we should decide to make or to produce it. However, on the other hand, our human acts of questioning are to be regarded as activities, as actions: as things that we do and initiate. We can decide to ask certain questions and we can also decide to avoid asking other questions for reasons that are either good, indifferent, or inadequate. Our questioning, as much as it exists in its own way as an effect (given how we exist according to the way that we happen to be), accordingly also exists as an operative, active potency (relative to the reception of our acts of understanding), and when it functions as an operative or active potency, as an activity, it creates a new cognitive context for us and, from within this new perspective, we can experience ourselves engaging in other acts or activities which belong to the order of our cognition and, at the same time also, receiving or experiencing other acts that can be given to us within our new cognitive environment (acts which would exist for us as passions or as receptions).

A traditional distinction accordingly distinguishes between our acts of human reasoning and our acts of human understanding since no amount of reasoning or willing produces a desired act of understanding.<sup>418</sup> The understanding comes to us, it is given to us when maybe we are least expecting it; and this giving, this reception, points to causes and so to realities which exist beyond ourselves and the kind of control that we can properly exercise by ourselves: beyond the sensing that we do, the imagining that we do, and the questioning that we do. Our reasoning exists as an active or operative potency and our understanding exists as a passive, receptive potency even as we can argue and admit that, in one way, truly, all of our cognition exists as a passive potency and, at the same time too, in another way, all of our cognition exists as an active potency.<sup>419</sup> Our acts of sensing, imagining, and questioning – all these acts, all these activities – are elicited and, in some way, they are caused by external agent objects of one kind or another who exercise an influence or an impact on us in a way which bestirs us and which awakens our cognitive consciousness in a manner which points to the being of other things (the enjoyment of these other realities) that differ from who we are and am as human beings. In the absence of any kind of outer physical light, no seeing occurs; nothing can be seen. In the absence of any reverberating, sounding sound (as in the peeling of a bell), no hearing occurs; nothing can be heard as an order of silence prevails and endures. While we can decide to direct our acts of sensing in this way or that way for this or that reason or purpose, while we can focus here or focus there, our acts of sensing primarily exist as passions or as receptions despite how we are tempted to believe that, essentially, they exist as things that we do and perform and not as things that we receive and experience.<sup>420</sup>

Belaboring the point a bit more thus: if we should distinguish between the formal object of our human cognition in terms of being (the being of different things) and the proper objects which belong to the form of our human cognition (the object is specified by the form), we should notice that, in our individual acts of questioning, reasoning, understanding, and judging, the proper object is always an intelligibility that exists externally to ourselves as it exists within material conditions of one kind or another, within varying specifications and conditions of matter that are sensed or given to us in a way which points to how this intelligibility exists as a species of *a priori*. The incarnate kind of knowing which accordingly belongs to us as human beings (as human subjects) - as our acts of sensing and imagining interact with our acts of

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418 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 2. See also Georgio Pini, “Two Models of Thinking: Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus on Occurrent Thoughts,” *Intentionality, Cognition and Representation in the Middle Ages*, ed. Gyula Klima (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), p. 86, on understanding which exists as a passion or as a reception. On the philosophic roots of this kind of thinking and understanding, see the conceptualization as this is given to us by Aristotle in his *De anima* 3, 429a13-15; b22-25.

419 See Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, p. 173, where he argues that, while sensing and understanding have been traditionally regarded as passive potencies, it can also be argued that, in their own way, they exist as “capacities” or as “powers for operation” [as things that we can do in terms of some kind of initiative that belongs to us]. As Owens concludes: “all faculties, even the cognitive ones, are active in the sense that they are powers for operation.”

420 Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 141, citing Aquinas in an assembly of different texts. For instance: “sensing consists in being moved and receiving an influence,” “sense knowledge is completed in this, that the sense is moved by the sensible thing.”

questioning and understanding – this kind of knowing which belongs to us is something which is elicited or we say that it is encouraged or it is triggered by how other objects or other realities exist also in their own incarnate way if we attend to how, in fact, they truly and properly exist. Intelligible objects or intelligible realities exist within material determinations that are first given to us through the kind of familiarity which exists within our experience which is shaped but whatever could be coming to us from our different acts of human sensing.

However, on the other hand, if we should attend not to the passive potency of our human cognition but, relatively, to the active or the operative kind of potency that also belongs to us in the manner of our human cognition, we should notice that, within us, a desire exists to know about beings or realities which do not exist in a material, incarnate way as joined to a material conditions of one kind or another (realities which transcend any givens that can be directly experienced or known by us through our different acts of human sensing). Hence, within this larger context, we can refer to another kind of object which exists for us as the formal or as the ultimate object or goal of our human cognition and then, by attending to the finality of this ultimate or final goal, we can begin to understand why, from the viewpoint of this perspective, the full gamut of our human cognition can be regarded as a species of operative, active potency. Our limited or our partial acts of understanding exist for the sake of questions and objects that are always joined to an unrestricted desire for understanding that, in its unrestrictedness, is to be regarded as a species of openness or as the working of an inner heuristic principle which cannot be elicited or limited by something which exists in a restricted manner. Immediately, we think about the being of some existing things where the intelligibilities which belong to them normally or properly exist only within an order of determination which is governed by conjugates which belong to the being of spatial and material conditions. Within the kind of world that is given to us within our ordinary experience of things, echoing a teaching that comes to us from Aristotle, forms always exist within matter. Things which exist in a limited way accordingly evoke a limited kind of curiosity that is satisfied as soon as an adequate or as a limited kind of understanding is given to us (an understanding which is needed if a given, limited, contingently existing thing is to be understood through an intelligibility which properly belongs to the being of this limited, contingently existing thing, existing as an ingredient which belongs to the being of a given, limited, restricted thing). Conversely however, the being of an unrestricted desire for understanding implies that its probable cause or reason is some kind of unrestricted object that, in some way, elicits or bestirs us in our desires in a manner that cannot be explained if we should refer to the limited character of our individual human existence and the limited kind of curiosity which accompanies the limited kind of being which belongs to contingently existing things. Something which exists in a limited way cannot explain something which exists in an unlimited way.

On a basis which accordingly refers to the being of an unrestricted desire for understanding which exists within us as human beings (within our subjectivity), by a kind of addition or a supplement which exists if we should want to move toward a fuller understanding of our “right reason” in a manner which more fully accords with the Church's teaching of Pope Leo XIII, it is not to be denied thus that our human desire for an unrestricted understanding of things is something which exists in a primary way as an active force or as a creative power which moves or which inclines us toward acts of understanding which are other than our proper acts of understanding, relative to the pattern or the kind of cognition which belongs to us in how, in our cognition, we ordinarily combine our acts of sensing with our acts of understanding (our

acts of direct understanding, as receptions, sublating or rising from our acts of sensing and our prospective acts of reflective understanding returning to any of our acts of sensing that can be of possible value to us in the kind of determination which exists within the making and the reception of a prospective judgment). The unrestrictedness of our desire for wisdom and knowledge points to a form or an intelligibility which properly belongs to the being of an unrestricted object and, in the wake of this unrestricted desire, from it, on the basis of a new actuation of things that can emerge from within us, a new possible ordering or a new possible coordination of all our cognitive acts is brought into being within us in a manner which grounds the meaning and the reality of a new cognitive distinction. Our proportionate acts of human cognition differ from our disproportionate acts of human cognition which exist as analogical acts of human cognition as, in another way or indirectly, we move from something that we understand and know toward something that, perhaps, we can begin to understand and know in a manner that is tentative and partial and yet not without value for us as we try the better to understand ourselves, the world that we live in, and how better we can fit ourselves into an overarching, general scheme of many existing things.

If our proportionate acts of human cognition include acts of sensing and experiencing as a necessary, preliminary element or ingredient (we understand what we first sense and experience), on the other hand, our analogical acts of human cognition prescind or they distance themselves from the correlatives that belongs to our prior acts of sensing and experiencing in seeking to work now with only acts and contents of cognition which belong to our acts of understanding and judgment. An intelligibility that has been abstracted and detached from prior acts and data of sense, precisely in its transcendence, immediately points to the transcendence which also belongs to us in our understood, self-transcending acts of direct understanding. Within the context of an immaterial order of existing things or, in other words, “in things that are without matter,”<sup>421</sup> an identity always exists between an act of understanding or us as understanders in our understanding and any given understood (independently or apart from the press and the influence of any kind of sensed, material condition),<sup>422</sup> and this normative kind of identity in turn points to how things are and also to how they should exist if understanding is to exist with a reality of its own, having a completeness or a perfection that is suggested by how, in our own way, our acts of understanding exist with an intelligibility which differs from that which belongs to our acts of human sensing.

The separateness of our understanding, apart from any limitations that could be induced by any of our acts of sensing (we lack a direct understanding of things that cannot given to us through our prior acts of human sensing) – this separateness in turn points to a range and an order of other realities: of a kind that, in their separate intelligibility, are more real than ourselves in terms of how we happen to exist as combinations of acts of sensing that are joined to acts of understanding. These other realities exist in a way which is more intelligible, intelligent, reasonable, and rational and the reason or explanation is the fact that they are not limited or joined to sensible, material determinations since, as we have been noting, relative to the being of any kind of material determination, they exist with an absoluteness of their own which is proper to them.

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<sup>421</sup>Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 196, p. 309, quoting from Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*.

<sup>422</sup>Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 46, p. 196.

If our understanding accordingly best exists through the kind of separation which belongs to us through the instrumentality of an abstracting act of direct understanding and the kind of liberation or growth of unrestrictedness which belongs to us in our direct acts of understanding, this understanding *as understanding*, in its goodness and quality, suggestively points to the possible being of a different kind of knowing and so to the possible being of a different kind of living subject: a knowing, willing, free, conscious subject which would be alive in its own right and which, in the order of its constitution, would never be joined or limited through any kind of union that could possibly exist between it and the being, character, or impact of any kind of material condition. An introspective, direct act of understanding that is directed toward a better understanding of ourselves encourages us, in the light of our unrestricted desire for the goodness of increases in our understanding, to move toward indirect or partial acts of understanding which exist as introspective acts of understanding which attend to an elusive knowledge of things that we can never directly know or understand. In words which come to us from an act of understanding that has come to us in our history: “of things invisible, as of mortal things, only the gods have certain knowledge; but men can only follow the signs [traces] given to them in the visible world and by interpreting them feel their way towards the unseen.”<sup>423</sup>

The required point of departure which accounts for the rationality of this type of shift is a metaphysical insight which knows that acts exist before any potencies can possibly exist since, without acts or apart from acts, nothing can ever be or exist. No potencies can ever be or exist. From potencies, acts can never emerge although, from acts, potencies can be known in terms of the kind of reality which belongs to them. Acts are absolutely prior, relative to the being of any kind of potency. Hence, understanding, as an act, exists most properly in its own right as both an act and as an unrestricted act, apart from anything else which could possibly exist (apart from potencies, apart from anything which needs to be grasped and understood by us through any of our acts of understanding). The basis or the ground for our moving into the kind of good which belongs to analogical acts of understanding (despite their incompleteness or their partiality) is a metaphysical conclusion which knows, on the basis of a priority and a primacy which belongs to the being of acts, that immaterial subjectivity or immaterial subjects exist as a prior kind of effective understanding, relative to the later kind of understanding which we belong to us, and this understanding exists apart from having to work from any acts of sensing for the sake of then possibly moving toward acts of understanding which would exist in us as a subsequent kind of understanding.

In a manner which accordingly recalls teaching that has been given to us initially by St. Augustine in the context of his reflections in a theology of the Trinity in his *De Trinitate*: instead of working with images or impressions that are directly taken from the givens that belong to our various acts of human sensing, if we are to deal with the things of God or with the being of immaterial things that are wholly lacking in any kind of corporeality or materiality, we best move toward a limited understanding of these immaterially existing things if we work with a suggestiveness which belongs to an immaterial order of existing realities which are known by us or which exist within us as our immaterial acts of understanding: acts of

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<sup>423</sup>Alcmaeon of Croton (c. 480-440 BC), as quoted by Diogenes VIII, 83; Chester Starr, *The Awakening of the Greek Historical Spirit* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968), p. 113.

understanding which belong to us as much as they are given to us and so are not produced by us. To understand things that exist in themselves in only an immaterial way (we allude to the notion of a “separate substance” that is discussed, for instance, in the context of Aristotle's philosophy),<sup>424</sup> we best grow in our understanding of things if we can avoid the kind of suggestiveness which belongs to using material analogies of one kind or another. Work, instead, with the being of immaterially existing things (with the immateriality of immaterially existing things that, to some degree, we participate in if we should refer to an immaterial, inner principle which exists within us as our human spirit). Work with immaterial determinations that belong to our subjectivity and through resemblances which derive from using spiritual or psychological analogies of one kind or another, notice how they all point to a second order of transcendence which exists at a further remove if we should move from a first order which pertains to our proportionate, direct acts of understanding toward a second order which pertains to our disproportionate and yet proper, analogical acts of understanding. If first acts of understanding transcend the givens which exist in our prior acts of human sensing, analogical acts of understanding transcend the givens which exist for us in our prior, direct acts of human understanding.

To give an example (admittedly, somewhat extended) which points to the good and also to the origins of analogical acts of understanding and how analogical acts of understanding function within our human apprehension of things: in Christian belief, it is said about God that Christ, as the Son of God, comes or proceeds from His Father, the Father being a divine point of origin. However, what kind of proceeding exists here? How are we to think about it? How are we to understand it? And, lastly, how are we to speak about it on the basis of our apprehended understanding of it? A very initial impression thinks in terms of lineages and trunks and branches. Through a picture kind of thinking, we imagine a stream (a tributary) that flows from a major, parent river. One comes off from the other. The greater river exists as the source for the water of the lesser stream. Or, on the other hand, we can imagine the stem of a tree or the stem of any other kind of plant and a shoot that springs from the main stem. That which exists

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<sup>424</sup>Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 12, 9, 1074b34, as cited by Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 46. We refer to things or substances that exist apart from their having any kind of material, physical component. The substances in question properly exist without their having to have any kind of material, physical component as this would exist if we should allude, for instance, to any organs and acts of sensing that require an embodied, incarnate form of existence existence if they are to function in the manner which properly belongs to them. The immateriality explains why, necessarily, separate substances exist as separate intellects or as disincarnate acts of understanding that, having not to rely on acts of sensing, are not joined in any necessary or positive way to any acts of cognition which would exist as acts of sensing. Cf. Joseph Owens, *Human Destiny: Some Problems for Catholic Philosophy* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), p. 28. To avoid confusion, we distinguish between an extrinsic relation to acts of sensing versus an intrinsic relation to acts of sensing. If our acts of understanding exist in a way which transcends our acts of human sensing, an intrinsic relation or an intrinsic form of dependence cannot be properly spoken about although, on the other hand, an extrinsic relation or an extrinsic form of dependence can be admitted and spoken about. A form of reliance exists but it is not one which precludes a cognitive shift which exists in terms of self-transcendence and the kind of self-transcendence which exists for us with respect to the operations of our human cognition.

in the stem moves on into a shoot. Each is constituted by the same kind of material. However, in applying these material resemblances (existing for us as material analogies), it is suggested by this imagery that the stream belongs to a lower level or to a lesser degree of reality than the parent river and, similarly, the shoot is less than the parent stem. In this context thus, God the Son comes across to us as a species of lesser lower being, relative to the greater larger being of God the Father. From these images, an empirical kind of thinking inclines us toward heretical conclusions about could be the true and real teaching of the Christian faith as this pertains to the divinity of Christ as the Son of God. Easily, the Son is turned into a kind of creature, albeit, a very special kind of creature. He is not entirely or fully divine.

However, in a break with this kind of thinking (as a new point of departure), if we move from material analogies to immaterial analogies, if, with St. Augustine, we engage in a form of psychological introspection which attends to an immaterial, inner kind of experience that exists within us which is not to be associated with our acts and data of human sensing, if we attend to a kind of inner life which exists within ourselves with respect to the givens or the contents of our intellectual experience, we should begin to notice that other kinds of proceeding can be distinguished and so known by us.<sup>425</sup> John's gospel 1:14 refers to Jesus of Nazareth as the Word of God who has been sent to us by God. He comes from God. And so, if we attend to the kind of intellectual consciousness that we can find within ourselves in our consciousness of self and any flows or proceedings which exist within our consciousness of self, we should first

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<sup>425</sup>On the basis of the kind of advice that come to us from St. Augustine (as this is given to us, for instance, in the *De vera religione*, 39, 72): *Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas; ei si tuam naturam mutabilem inveneris, transcede et te ipsum* (“Go not outward, turn inward into thyself; in the inner man dwells the truth; and if thou hast found thy nature to be changeable, transcend thyself”). Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Plato and Augustine*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Ralph Manheim (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1962), p. 71; Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 129. We best move toward God if we can take up a “radically reflexive [reflective] stance”; if, in Augustine's own words: *questio mihi factus sum* (“I have become a question to myself”), and only then can we work toward a “metaphysics of inner experience” (instead of a metaphysics or an ontology which refers to the being of externally existing objects). Cf. Jaspers, p. 71, citing Wilhelm Windelband on the being of a “metaphysics of inner experience.” By our going inwards within ourselves, we can begin to be drawn out of ourselves upwards as we attend to a form of upward, inner striving that we can find within the depths of our souls within ourselves (a striving which works from a self-transcendence that is present within our conscious life as it moves and shifts from act to act in a manner which points to how, in some way, God is present within us, within the depths of our souls, in a presence which evidences the sense and the value of always working with a method of reflection which equates our possible acts of self-knowledge with a possible knowledge of God that can be given to us in terms of who and what He is and the reality of His existence). Growth in self-knowledge promotes growth within ourselves or it leads us toward growth in our understanding and knowledge of God and the being of divine things. As Augustine's words speak about his project: *Deum et animam scire cupio* (“I desire to know God and the soul”). The two go together. But, if God is to be truly known: *Noverim te, noverim me* (“Let me know myself, let me know thee”). Cf. Jaspers, p. 70. We move from one to the other.

immediately notice two kinds of proceeding: two kinds of proceeding that would be apparent at first flush. First, in our thinking, we are always engaging in a kind of inner dialogue with ourselves. We inaudibly talk to ourselves and we argue with ourselves about this or that question or issue and this inaudible, inner kind of dialogue points to the being of a first kind of emerging word: a word that is entirely subject to our control and wish, however willful or arbitrary could be the kind of control that we could be exercising in any given situation. Then, secondly, we should also notice (without too much self-scrutiny) that, in expressing our thoughts, our beliefs, and our understandings to other persons and groups, we must use words that belong to a communicable, understood, external form of language and speech. We borrow and we select words which already exist and, as needed, we construct and we form new words (or neologisms) in order to construct new sensible instruments which can function as better carriers of linguistic meaning that others will readily understand and appreciate. These words are voiced and heard and also, they can be inscribed on flat surfaces and then read by other persons who know about the positive association which exists between the givens of inscribed markings and the givens of our external human speech. As external determinations, these sounds and markings point to the being of a second kind of word which is distinguished from the being of the first kind of word as soon as we now speak about the being of externalized, outer words which come from us in a context which points to an extroverted form of subjectivity: an extroverted subjectivity which belongs to us as human beings and an extroverted form of subjectivity which belongs to others as human beings. Hence, similarly, Christ exists as an external or as an outer Word when we think about the materiality of his Incarnation. At a certain time in the context of our human history, Christ did walk and live amongst us, among other human beings. He was heard by us and them and he also communicated meanings and teachings through his deeds and actions and also through intersubjective forms of human behavior and interaction that cannot be expressed in ways that are entirely sufficient for us if we should refer to the kind of communication which is restricted to the being of the spoken and written word as this is recorded for us in the gathering and compilation of records and the composition of narrative texts in the annals of our written human history.

However, on the other hand, through a challenge which exists for us and which yearns for a penetration of Christian belief that can be more thorough in the kind of impact which it can make on us within our understanding and belief as Christians, how are we to think about Christ apart from his Incarnation (apart the being of his earthly presence, apart from the being of his earthly manifestation)? How can we think about him in terms of how he exists and how he proceeds or how he comes from his originating unoriginated Father, prior to the kind of instantiation which he has within conditions which pertain to the ups and downs of our temporal human history and having a form of constitution which relies on the reality and the aptness of spatial and temporal categories? How does Christ exist, relative to the being of his Father in terms of the kind of godhead which properly belongs to Him? What is the divinity which properly belongs to Christ? How does it exist *per se* in itself?

In other words, if we are to respond to this question that is now being asked of us, as a point of departure, can we speak about a third kind of intellectual proceeding that we can find within ourselves within the consciousness that we have of ourselves? Now, in addressing this question, it has to be admitted that some persons will give a negative reply. No amount of self-searching appears to reveal any other kind of proceeding which exists in a way which refers to

the being of a non-instantiated word or concept. However, if we find that, at times, it is a struggle for us to find the right external words that are needed if, accurately, we are to communicate a meaning that somehow exists within ourselves, can we not advert to a third kind of word which exists, a word which exists in a purely internal way? In our consciousness of it (or as our awareness of it is distinguished from an awareness which is directed to other objects and acts), Augustine used to refer to the being of an internal word which exists within our hearts.<sup>426</sup> Prior to the being of external words and concepts, internal words and concepts exist and they exist in a manner which transcends cultural differences as these vary and exist within differing historical contexts. And, in addition to this too, this inner word or this inner concept is not to be identified with the being of an idea or a solution or a connection that is grasped by us in a prior, direct act of understanding. Where in the context of his day, Aquinas had spoken about acts of simple apprehension, in the later context of our own day and time, with Bernard Lonergan, we refer to these acts of simple apprehension in terms of direct acts of

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426Gerard Watson, "St Augustine and the inner word: the philosophical background," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 54 (1988), pp. 84-85. See Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 15, 19: "whoever is able to get hold of a word...not only before it is sounded, but even before the images of its sounds are revolved in fantasy [*cognitione*]...can see...in this dim reflection some likeness of that Word of whom it is said: *In principio erat Verbum* [In the beginning was the Word]." To identify St. Augustine's notion of inner word a bit more precisely and concretely, Watson cites from St. Augustine's analysis in the text of the *De Trinitate*:

This word is neither Greek nor Latin nor does it belong to any other language (ib. 9, 19), and it has a better claim to the title 'word' than that which is heard aloud (ib. 9, 19). It is a faithful representative of the knowledge we possess, sense or [know] (ib. 9, 22) [using an alternative translation prepared by Edmund Hill: "the word is most like the thing known, and most its image, because the seeing which is thought springs direct from the seeing which is knowledge"].

Citing also St. Augustine from the *De Trinitate* 19, 11, n. 20 (as cited by Frederick Crowe, *Lonergan and the Level of Our Time*, pp. 17-18):

If anyone wishes to find some likeness of the Word of God...let him not study the word that sounds in our ears, or the word that is uttered with the lips, or the word that is formed imaginatively in the silence of the mind (for the words of all audible languages can be thought in silence, and we run through songs in our imagination [*animo*], while the lips say nothing)... But we must transcend all these... We must come to that human word, the word of a *rationally-souled being*...that does not issue in sound, and is not formed by fantasy in the likeness of sound, for that has to be done in some determinate language, the word then that precedes all the signs by which it may be manifested. (italics mine)

understanding.<sup>427</sup>

In the context of our individual human experience: if we should try and engage in thought experiences of a kind that belongs to the possible solving of this or that mathematical problem, we might discover within ourselves that, on the one hand, an act of understanding (an act of direct understanding) immediately solves a given problem. We realize, at a certain point, that  $x$  must always equal  $y$ . In our understanding, a solution is grasped for the first time. And, on the other hand too, as soon as a solution is grasped or known, before we begin to move into acts of external conceptualization, we should also immediately notice that, within ourselves, a second kind of intellectual awareness is given to us. In solving a given mathematical problem, we realize (perhaps also in a condition of wonder and amazement) that we are now in the presence of an invariant mathematical law. The solution points to the being of something which exists at a higher level: hence, a law or a universal principle which, initially for us, exists as an inner word or as an inner concept. The intelligibility that is grasped by us in a prior act of understanding is carried forward or it is manifested to us through the being of an emergent inner word that, reasonably and rationally, is the offspring of a prior act of understanding. If we should then turn to the kind of conceptualization that comes to us from the later theology of Aquinas in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, we can say that from an act of understanding comes an act of conceptualization (an inner act of conceptualization) and then, from this inner act, another step or another act which moves into an externalizing act of conceptualization which works with the fabric of outer words and concepts.<sup>428</sup> So great can be our understanding of things that no act of outer or external conceptualization is entirely adequate for us in our possibly communicating a meaning to another that would be entirely suitable and adequate.<sup>429</sup>

If our self-scrutiny is accordingly apt, observant, and truly sufficient, we should discover a third kind of proceeding word and if we attend to the kind of relation or proceeding which this proceeding word has from its originating act of understanding, on the basis of this intellectual or immaterial analogy, we can then say about Christ that He proceeds from his Father in a manner which resembles the kind of proceeding which exists in the proceeding of an inner word. As soon as we have an act of understanding, we have the second kind of act which exists as an inner act of conceptualization and, in addition too, nothing exists in the prior act of understanding which does not also exist within the consequent act of conceptualization. Cause and effect do not exist at different levels of being where, allegedly, the being of the Father would be in some way higher than that which is the being of his Son. The divinity of Christ, the Son of God, is, in fact, on a par with the divinity of God the Father since nothing in the Son as Word is not also present within God as Father. Both share the same divinity and this sharing points both to the essential oneness and unity of God and, at the same time too, to a mysterious, divine kind of relation which allows us to speak about a divine Father and a divine Son which exists within the being or the unity of one God.

So close, in fact, is the relation or the intimacy that it exists as a form of primordial oneness which escapes our understanding and comprehension even as we attend to how our acts of

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<sup>427</sup>Aquinas, *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 2; Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 25.

<sup>428</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 14, 3; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 53, 3.

<sup>429</sup>Aquinas, as cited by Lehner, *God is Not Nice*, p. 9.

inner conceptualization are inseparably joined to our prior acts of understanding in a oneness that is suggestive of the kind of oneness which properly belongs to God. This cognitive relation which is discovered within us helps us in our thinking in terms of how we should speak about the relation which properly exists between God the Father and God the Son even as we must admit too that the initial reception of this religious teaching is a catalyst for us. It encourages us and it moves us into a form of inquiry and a reflection in a way which leads us toward the goodness of a new cognitive discovery and insight which, in turn, leads us to a heightening of our self-understanding and so an improved, amended philosophy of mind and intellect that is now more exact and adequate precisely because it has been encouraged and provoked by a problem which has originated from an order of questions which belongs to the subject matter of theology and religion. In the last analysis, for doctrinal and philosophic reasons (and apart from reasons that we do not grasp or understand or which we can never grasp or understand), God exists as essentially a social being. He does not exist in a manner which is essentially alone or in some way that is isolated or alienated from itself. The lack of aloneness points to a form of self-sufficiency that, directly, we cannot imagine, grasp, or understand although, from a direct act of understanding and through an analogical act of understanding that we can now use and employ, we can know and say about God that the communion which exists within God or which in fact exists as God is the best explanation that can be offered for attributing to God a form of inner love and a joy which is so abundant that it overflows in an unrestricted, unlimited kind of way in the context of a joy and a happiness that nothing else can possibly enjoy, rival, or challenge.

In the kind of interchange or the kind of interaction which accordingly exists and which is proper to us as human beings to the degree that we exist as human subjects, some of our cognitive acts exist as analogical acts of understanding in the context of a larger ordering of differing kinds of acts which allow us to move from one kind of act to another. In some cases or in many cases, direct acts of understanding are succeeded by analogical acts of understanding and, through our analogical acts of understanding, inquiries are encouraged which can lead us toward new direct acts of understanding that can, in turn, serve as new points of departure for acts of self-understanding which can work with a better understanding of intellectual or immaterial analogies in a way which can add to the mass and the sum of our understanding and knowledge of very many different things. Direct acts of understanding (as perfect or complete acts of understanding) are joined to analogical acts of understanding (as imperfect or incomplete acts of understanding) and, as we move from act to act (or, in other words, from one reception of understanding to new receptions of understanding), the ultimate result is a generation of new conditions in a reorientation of self which emerges from within ourselves within the context of our human world (within the order of our subjectivity). In wanting to understand things which transcend our human way of being, knowing, and living, and beyond the limitations which belong to our direct acts of understanding, if we are not impeded or obstructed in some unforeseen way, as suitable or as natural acts of understanding which also belong to us as human beings, through our analogical acts of understanding, we are turned or oriented toward a world of higher, transcendent things and, by these means, we can be changed by this orientation in ways which can gradually seep into the fabric and the particulars of our human culture, changing the manner of our concrete, human existence.

In attending then to the being and the life of our practical human reason in the context of its many acts and operations, and by combining our direct acts of understanding with our

analogical acts of understanding, within this larger context, two orders of law can be properly distinguished from each other: two orders of law that belong to us although in different ways; hence, two orders of law that are both natural or proper for us (even as we participate in them in different ways). Both kinds of law are jointly operative where each is higher or prior in some kind of way, according to the degree that each exists as an order of being which transcends the other (whenever the other exists as a base or as a prior point of departure). In all these cases, in all these acts of understanding, each conditions or encourages the other. Something which exists at a lower level as an experience of multiplicity receives or undergoes a unification of sorts which would exist at a higher level (as we move, for instance, from multiple direct acts of understanding toward the fruitfulness of an analogical act of understanding, back and forth: back toward acts of direct understanding, where feasible, and then back toward new acts of analogical understanding). Multiplicities with respect to analogies, in their own way, elicit a form of inquiry which wants to know about reasons that can be grasped in order to find some kind of ground or, ultimately, a more comprehensive act of understanding and so, as a derivative effect, a principle of criticism and discernment which can distinguish between the good and the worth of some analogies versus the uselessness or the inappropriateness of other analogies which, at times, we have been tempted to use that could then possibly lead us toward some possible increase in the extent of our understanding.

For an example of this, look at the methodological achievements of Greek philosopher and theologian, Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), and how, in his day, on the basis of an inverse act of understanding, he understands the fruitlessness of a particular method of interpretation and understanding that was then being commonly used to interpret many scriptural passages that were to be found in the texts of the Christian Bible. The effect, on the part of gnostic forms of interpretation, was to produce a plurality of many fanciful speculations that were proposed and proffered about the true meaning of scriptural passages as these existed in the Bible with respect, allegedly, to Christian notions and beliefs about who God is and about what could be the origin of our physical and human world. In scripture however, in the denotations and connotations of its many passages, symbolic determinations of meaning frequently tended to prevail as a general rule and, in interpreting these passages, gnostic interpreters tended to come up with new symbolic determinations of meaning. Symbolic apprehensions of meaning were to be explained by new symbolic apprehensions of meaning in a seemingly endless profusion of new determinations which ensued as a result of solely relying on a mode of procedure which mitigated against the possibility of finding some kind of lasting solution that could withstand later criticism that could possibly lead to some sort of revision that would be radical in its effect and consequences. Hence, in order to solve this problem of our having too many symbolic determinations of meaning which tended to jar and conflict with each other, the best thing to do is to find and to adopt a new approach. Simply put: try to avoid symbolic determinations of meaning and the means that are used to come to new symbolic determinations. Wherever anthropomorphic determinations of meaning are encountered in words and phrases, avoid a literal form of interpretation. Avoid a way of thinking that would lead to new anthropomorphic constructions of meaning that can excite our imaginations and passions in ways which fail to encourage and

lead us toward any increases that can befall us with respect to the extent and the depth of our own acts of understanding.

As a general principle which we ought to acknowledge: if we look at the kind of language which is commonly used by the Christian Bible, in both the language of its scripture and in the language of literature and popular communication, words tend to be used as symbolic carriers of meaning. Exact references and significances are usually not to be found because they were never intended, desired, or meant.<sup>430</sup> To assume and to act otherwise obfuscates the progress of any possible understanding which, perhaps, we can have. Hence, best attend to a different kind of problem and issue. Move into a different kind of meaning. Ask critical or theoretical kinds of question where the object is a higher order of meaning and being whose terms would be unequivocally known and then unambiguously communicated. Try to see, at the start, if a suggested reality, in fact, truly and really exists.

Four steps best serve us as a guide if we are to evade and move beyond the ambiguities which commonly exist for us in our use of human language. First, define the meaning of all proffered terms. Assign or determine a meaning which certain words will always have. Be consistent. Second, ask if anything corresponds to the term or the meaning which has just been defined. What exists as accessible, available evidence and is it good or truly sufficient? What points to the truth or to the reality of a given meaning? Third, if existence is granted and affirmed, move into a form of descriptive investigation. With respect to a known affirmed object, what can be said about its qualities and properties? Determine these. Fourth and lastly, try to explain. Explain that which has just been described. What are its likely, probable causes and what effects should properly flow and follow from the event of their actuation and being (from the factuality of their operative presence)?<sup>431</sup> By employing this strategy,<sup>432</sup> we can move into a new apprehension of meaning and being which better secures the truth of the Church's official teaching in a way which can cut across different human cultures and the particularities which always belong to

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430Lonergan, *Second Collection*, p. 93.

431Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, eds. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 182.

432Please note the significance of this transition and how it can be found within the kind of methodological understanding which comes to us from Aristotle's reflections where, in time, he moves from *categories* as descriptive determinations of meaning that are grounded in our different acts of human sensing toward *causes* as explanatory determinations of meaning and being that are grounded in insights and understandings which belong to forms of analysis that are operative in us in terms of philosophic or metaphysical determinations of meaning and being. To know is to know about causes that may be none too obvious. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, eds. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 723. The shift that we find in Clement of Alexandria suggests a possible influence which could be coming from Aristotelian sources that are not directly named or cited.

each of us within our different acts of human experiencing and our differing acts of human imagining that are being suggested to us by how our acts of sensing are combining with how we could be feeling and existing as perplexed, passionate, loving, worried, human beings. Unambiguously now, with care and through criticism, we can begin to know about what we, as Christians, really and truly profess and believe. We can also begin to specify reasons which can explain more exactly why we should happen to believe in that which we hold and maintain.

A first law, as we have been thus noting, accordingly refers to one specification of norm or nature that is germane to us. It exists as a species of indwelling, operative, normative form which in turn exists within the configurations of our human cognitive activity (giving to it an order and a formal determination that is peculiar to it). The form of this type of cognition, as a norm, in turn mirrors, reflects, or it points to a normative form and concomitant order which proportionately exists outside of ourselves: a form and order which exists within things which are other than ourselves but which are like ourselves, existing as they do in a way which points to an incarnate form of existence. Form, spirit, intelligibility exists within the matter of material conditions and the ambiguities that are endemic to these conditions apart from the configurations and differentiations which belong to that which exists as form, spirit, or intelligibility. But, on the other hand too, a second and a higher law also exists within us (within our subjectivity) although, in its transcendence, in the higher and greater degree of transcendence which belongs to it, it exists in us in a more allusive, transcendent way. Less appropriately do we speak about the aptness of some kind of identity between ourselves and the order of this second kind of law (even as this identity exists as a cognitional kind of identity and not as a metaphysical kind of identity). More appropriately, we can only speak about an overlap of sorts (the reality of a partial kind of identity as we attend to our acts of knowing and willing). A relation exists in terms of participation or as a species of communion between ourselves and orders of reality which are more radically other than how we happen to exist as living, conscious, human beings.

The unrestrictedness or the transcendence which accordingly belongs to this second order of laws explains why, necessarily, we must speak about a fixity or an absence of potency which specifically belongs to these laws: a fixity and an absence of potency which is quite other than the fixity or the absence of potency which belongs to the first order of laws that we can begin to know about if we should first refer to the kind of normativity that is determinative of ourselves in our humanity with respect to our differing acts of knowing and willing. In different ways, as we have just noted, we participate in both types of law within our human acts of reasoning and knowing (and as this knowing moves into our acts of willing in a way which imparts a moral qualification to our acts of human willing). The absence of contradiction or, in fact, the existence of a fundamental form of compatibility and a fundamental form of mutual causality, explains why a fruitful, positive relation must exist between them if, with respect to the first order of laws that we understand and know, we can grow in a greater understanding of them and in a better observance of them. The positive relation points to a cooperative order of relations. An order of cooperative actions is endemic to us within the life and the activity of our human reason as we attend to the kind of knowing and willing which is effective within the order that is proper to us in our human acts of willing and doing. As both an effect and a cause, or in virtue of the causality which belongs to our

practical life of human reasoning and thinking, as morally deliberative, active, passive subjects, we cannot properly live apart from the second, higher order of laws which we can but dimly know but which exist as eternally operative laws that are forever valid and to which, perennially, we are always subject.

With respect thus to the first order of laws, these exist as determinations or as specifications of our human intelligence to the degree that, in us, our intelligence is fully operative. On the one hand, our intelligence exists as the actuation of a distributed, individual kind of intelligibility which belongs to each of us as human beings to the degree that we each exist as cogitating human subjects. They govern us in all of our cognitive acts as we move in a contingently necessary way through an ordering of operations; and they exist as laws or as principles which our acts of human reasoning do not give to ourselves. Hence, on the other hand or apart from our individuality, as natural laws, they exist at a further remove: at a higher level, as a species of unifying principle although, through the performance or through the actuation of our various acts of human reasoning and knowing which exist as effects, these higher laws become known to us with respect to how they exist as causes (if we assume that the reason or the intelligibility of a thing is, always in fact, a proper cause). Cognitively, we can begin to know them in ways which, perhaps, we had not suspected or had thought possible where, here, our point of departure is the data of our self-experience which exists within ourselves. We experience our acts of cognition and, as we do this or to the degree that we do this, we should notice that, within our cogitating acts, as we move toward a possible understanding and knowledge of things which are other than ourselves, we also inevitably move toward a partial understanding of ourselves as human knowers (a partial understanding of ourselves as human understanders). To understand more about what could be involved here, a form of self-reflection comes to us from Aquinas (in a form of self-reflection that we can replicate within ourselves):

In his *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2 and, in certain ways more fully in q. 10, a. 8, Aquinas outlines how we can move through a reflection about an already received act of understanding which pertains to something which is other than ourselves toward a subsequent inquiry and reflection which generates degrees of self-knowledge with respect to ourselves as human knowers. With respect to a direct act of understanding which is given to us, in this type of understanding, we grasp a form or an intelligibility which exists within a mass or an order of empirical data (these data exist for us initially as sensed data) and so, by doing this or in seeking this type of further understanding and knowledge, we should be noticing that, in inquiries which lead to direct acts of understanding, we must always move outwards from ourselves into the external data which exists for us within the context of our sensing experience. We work or play with this data or a given datum in a way which turns it into a material point of departure. However later, within the later reflections of our judgements, we move back from a form or an object which is apprehended and understood within the varying configurations of external data (as this has been grasped by a direct act of understanding) to reflect now on the act itself which has initially apprehended and understood a form or an intelligible object (that is allegedly located within a given arrangement of sensed data) which has been grasped and understood by us by our prior direct act of understanding and so, by now directly reflecting and thinking about the rightness or the propriety of this act (by investigating it and

by asking questions about it), we can begin to think about the potency or about the capability which belongs to us with respect to the reality of our rational human souls: how it functions as a mover or as a species of active or operative potency (where this potency refers to a set of powers or to a set of activities which belong to us in a way which points to how, ontologically, an immaterial spirit exists within us in a manner which is both active and passive; a spirit which cognitively exists as our consciousness or sense of self that never dies but which survives our physical, mortal deaths).<sup>433</sup>

As we move retroactively from object to act and then toward potency, we accordingly move toward an understanding that can begin to grasp the form or the essence of our human souls (as a union of soul and body) and then, from there, we can move toward a judgment which knows about the immateriality of the human mind in terms of its peculiar form or essence because this power, as an active principle (or as an active potency), has been able to detach a form from material conditions in a way which points to a new attachment which emerges and which exists whenever an abstracted immaterial form is attached to another immaterial reality which happens to exist as the reality (or the being) of our human intellects, our human minds, our acts of understanding.<sup>434</sup> As form exists within matter,<sup>435</sup> by a return or by a *reditio* which occurs specifically in the reflections of our prospective acts of judgment, our human inquiry moves back first toward the form and the act of understanding toward which, in some way, our prior cognitive activity has been proceeding and from which, in some way also, our cognitive activity has proceeded (by the light that is cast by the intelligibility of a form that has been grasped by us in a prior act of understanding) and so, by this type of return which moves into the interiority which exists within our acts of understanding, the autonomy or the self-subsistence of our human understanding becomes apparent or more apparent to us than that which we have previously known or had thought about. It can be revealed to us in terms of how it exists in itself (in a way which suggests to us how, later, through our self-reflective, analogical acts of understanding, we can begin to think about the self-subsistence of an unrestricted divine intellect, the self-subsistence of an unrestricted divine act of understanding, and about how this self-subsistence is to be grasped and understood by us with respect to its unrestrictedness).

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<sup>433</sup>See Robert Spitzer, "Clues to a Life Beyond," *The Soul's Upward Yearning: Clues to Our Transcendental Nature from Experience and Reason* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), pp. 173-203. A positive relation exists between advances in medical treatment and care (within emergency situations) and the generation of personal experience, testimony, and evidence which points to the endurance of our human consciousness and identity and a kind of life which exists within us and which never dies despite radical shifts that could be occurring with respect both to the life and the condition of our bodies and the kind of data that could be given to us within the data of our human consciousness.

<sup>434</sup>Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 29.

<sup>435</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 2, ad 1.

The basic heuristic principle which is operative throughout (which grounds this kind of inquiry) simply states and notes that, most simply put, our understanding understands our understanding.<sup>436</sup> In other words, understanding understands itself by means of how it already exists initially within us as an act of understanding. No other way exists. Since understanding occurs through an act of understanding, the understanding of this first act of understanding necessarily leads to another act of understanding which would exist for us as an act or as an instance of our self-understanding.

Admittedly however, whether through our acts of inquiry and judgments we would want to move toward some kind of fully reflective self-knowledge which could then be put by us into words – this decision is something which awaits each of us as we attend to ourselves in the context of our personal reflections and deliberations. When we think about our cognitive desires and how they exist in different ways, it should be obvious to us in our self-reflection that we all tend (we would prefer) to want to understand things which are other than ourselves than to try and understand ourselves since, in understanding ourselves, changes would need to occur in ourselves in terms of how we exist and how we think and live as individual human beings. To recall words that come to us from the Old Testament in Proverbs 16:32: “The patient man is better than the valiant: and *he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities.*”

When we are engaged in the kind of reflection which accordingly belongs to us in every kind of prospective judgment, when we attend to what we do when we are engaged in our different acts of human judgment, we accordingly find that, in our judgments, we are always going back and reflecting upon ourselves (upon our past cognitive behavior). We question ourselves about how we have been functioning as anticipatory learners and knowers. We attend to how we have moved, through our inquiry, from the initial givens of our sensing experience toward the givens which exist within us within the contents of our different acts of understanding. An initial understanding has perhaps been given to us about how or why, for instance, A could be possibly related to B or how or why perhaps A could be possibly ordered to B. A reason or an intelligibility has been grasped by us, in an immaterial way, when we have received an initial act of understanding that has been given to us (for one reason or another). Within this context, with respect to the kind of conceptuality which Aquinas had used within the context of his own day, Aquinas had spoken about a species of reduction which always occurs within and through our different acts of human judgment (a reduction which is other than a reduction to unity which characterizes our initial acts of understanding as direct or simple acts of understanding).<sup>437</sup> Through the kind of analysis which exists in a prospective judgment, we always move from something which has been initially grasped and understood by us and then, from there, we move back through the lines of our prior acts of reasoning and thinking, through

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436Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 87, a. 1

437Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 1; a. 8, ad 10; q. 11, a. 1, ad 13; q. 12, a. 1; a. 3; q. 14, a. 1; a. 9; q. 15, a. 1; q. 17, a. 1; q. 22, a. 2; q. 24, a. 2; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 7; q. 79, a. 8; cf. a. 12; 1a2ae, q. 74, a. 7. In his *Hermeneutics and Method: The ‘Universal Viewpoint’ in Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 21, Ivo Coelho refers to this process of reduction as the “mechanism of judgment.”

our acts of understanding, toward the givens which exist for us within our initial acts of human imagining and sensing (the givens which exist within the acts and data which belong to our human senses) since, according to the manner of our human knowing, it always begins with our various acts of human sensing even as, by our questioning and understanding, we always transcend whatever has been given to us initially through our prior acts of human sensing. Our sensing would lose its distinctive human character if, in some way, it is not directed toward the kind of enrichment which would exist in the cognitive experience that is given to us through the givens of our understanding as this understanding reveals perspectives and linkages which cannot be attained through the experience of proximity and succession that alone belongs to us through the kind of cognitive mediation which exists for us if our givens are restricted to that which belongs to our various acts of human sensing.

In the kind of *completion* which accordingly exists within the order of our human knowing as this exists in our prospective acts of judgment, two steps can be distinguished if already, in our cognition, we have passed from acts to sensing into initial, prior acts of understanding. Firstly and most immediately, we notice that we check for the possibility of any contradictions which could exist in terms of how we have moved from prior acts of sensing through acts of imagination toward our later acts of understanding. Coherence exists as the first test of our human rationality since no contradictions can exist within anything which pretends to be intelligible if it is the term of an intellectual act which exists as a direct act of understanding and, in addition too, no contradictions can exist in the cognitive movements which have shifted from apprehensions of sense through toward acts of understanding through the differing steps of our inquiry and the apt mediation of suggestive images which have functioned as phantasms to trigger the acts of understanding which we have been desiring and which, at times, as receptions, we duly experience within ourselves (within the order of our cognitive consciousness). When moving from our prior acts and data of sensing toward our first acts of understanding (whether as direct acts of understanding or as abstracting acts of understanding if, with respect to abstracting acts of understanding we should prefer to work with language which comes to us from Aquinas's terminology), have we violated any laws which pertain to the basic laws of human logic? In the reasoning and thinking which we have been doing, have we, for instance, abided by the principle of contradiction in a way which guards against the kind of interference or impediments that would occur if, in some way, contradictions have been allowed to creep into the lines of our thinking and reasoning? Lack of contradiction, in an understanding, always immediately points to the possibility of its truth or the possibility of its reality (whether its reasonableness exists in terms of probability or in terms of certainty) since absence of contradiction is always to be equated with the potency or the possibility of rationality (to the degree that it exists at all).

Employing language which comes to us from Aquinas, within the reflexivity of our judgments, our goal is ultimately to move toward a primary set of first principles which would exist for us within our human experience of sense (the acts and data of human acts of sensing), although in a manner which first works through another set of evident first principles which immediately refers to the fundamental laws of our human reason as these exist, to some extent, within the potencies or the capabilities of our human logic where, within our logical operations, laws that are peculiar to logic specify rules or norms which are constitutive of the validity of inference within the human order of cognition which belongs to us whenever, in our acts of inference, within the context of our reasoning and thinking, we move from that which we already

understand and know to that which we have yet to understand and know but which we would now hope to understand and know as a consequence of valid inferences or valid conclusions that, in a given case, we are now currently making and drawing. If, in moving from acts of sensing to acts of direct understanding, we might not be too aware about how our thinking is being guided by norms that refer to operations that are purely logical in their meaning and significance, in moving through a prospective act of judgment in a way which attends to how we have moved from acts of sensing through acts of reasoning to initial acts of understanding, our awareness changes as it now becomes more cognizant. We think more about absences of contradiction which we must have if we are to enjoy an understanding of things that could be possibly right or correct.

Secondly but more crucially however (in a second step which exists in the way of our judgments), again, through the mediation of the normative first principles which are constitutive of the structure of our human cognition (governing our acts of reasoning and determining it as “correct reason”), we attend to conditions or we determine conditions which must be fulfilled and which must be known to be fulfilled if we are to move from an apprehension of meaning which exists initially as a seminal or as a bright idea toward a determination of meaning which would exist as a true idea or as a right idea. The truth of an idea (within the order of our human cognition) depends on conditions which must somehow be known and met within the order of our cognitive experience if, through our reflective acts of inquiry, a given meaning is to be properly judged and known for what it truly happens to be. Conditions will always vary (they must always vary) as we move from one idea or meaning to other ideas and meanings (as we move from one prospective judgment to other prospective judgments), although, among all these differences or despite all these differences, it is always the case that, in our judgments, we always determine truths in a way which refers to them as contingently existing truths. And so, from a context which is determined by how, cognitively, we exist as human thinkers and knowers, we must think and speak about these truths in a way which must refer to how and why they exist as conditioned apprehensions of meaning. Conditions in knowing reflect conditions in being if, in every judgment, a cognitive identity exists between how we exist as knowers in our knowing and how a given known exists in the manner or the character of its being. The beginning of our knowing, as it moves from acts of sensing to acts of understanding, explains why, in the reflection which exists as judgment, new acts of sensing are needed in a way which points to their primacy as a species of determining condition (our acts of understanding as conditioned acts of understanding pointing to conditions which would exist as new acts of human sensing which could be possibly given to us).

According then to a general law or form which always links conditions with a conditioned (causes with effects) and which adverts to the possible fulfillment of these same conditions (as operative causes), we would say as follows about the kind of form or the order which exists within the reflections of our human judgment according to an order of implication which exists in the following argument, *modus ponens*: if P therefore Q; but P; therefore Q. A condition is linked to a conditioned; the condition is met or it is fulfilled in some way; therefore the conditioned exists now as an unconditioned (as a virtually unconditioned and not as an unconditioned unconditioned or as an absolute unconditioned)<sup>438</sup> in a change of status which

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438Please note that the introduction and the application of this qualification points to

has occurred through the kind of mediation which belongs to a rationally conditioned, thoughtful, reflective, act of judgment. All absence of being is foresworn since what is known and affirmed no longer enjoys the ambiguity, the ambivalence, or the contingency which always belongs to the status of possibilities where something can be this or that: true or false, good or bad. Conversely or obversely thus, through a complementary *modus tollens* form of argument: "if P, then Q. Not Q. Therefore, not P."<sup>439</sup> Through the enhancing or the constructive form of argument which exists as a *modus ponens*, a first proposition is known and it exists as a hypothetical proposition. A second proposition is also known but independently of the first proposition and, for purposes of distinction, we say that it exists as a categorical proposition. In the kind of cognition which then exists within the kind of connectivity which belongs to our acts of reasoning and thinking, a third thing is known which is not known otherwise if one should only refer to either of the other two propositions which are already known.<sup>440</sup>

In a rewording of the order which exists within this *modus ponens* form of argument and inference: "P implies Q and P is true, therefore Q must be true."<sup>441</sup> Something about P suggests

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how other things can exist in a way that is not caused by anything which could be other and different from it (hence, existing in a way that is entirely lacking in the causality or in the influence that belongs to any kind of pertinent, relevant condition). An analysis of this type of unconditioned inevitably leads to God if, in our understanding of God prior to any judgments that we would make, we understand that God exists in a way that would have to be uncaused by anything else (God being God).

<sup>439</sup>"Modus tollens," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modus\\_tollens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modus_tollens) (accessed September 1, 2020).

<sup>440</sup>H. W. B. Joseph, *An Introduction to Logic* (Cresskill, NJ: Paper Tiger, 2000), pp. 335-337; Joseph Owens, *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, ed. John R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), p. 6. As Owens speaks in a general way about the general form of scientific reason and how it is structured in a way which points to how our understanding and knowledge of things can possibly grow in each of us as human subjects: "what is contained in neither of two propositions independently known, is cognitively engendered through their union in the syllogism." Syllogisms exist as compact specifications of the kind of order which belongs to our acts of human reasoning when, at some point, in our desire for understanding, reflective judgments must be made about what exists as the truth of things that, initially we have understood. See also Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, revised and augmented by Frederick E. Crowe with the collaboration of Elizabeth A. Morelli, Mark D. Morelli, Robert M. Doran, and Thomas V. Daly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 119, and *Verbum*, pp. 66-67, for explanations and illustrations which indicate why, in general, syllogisms can be regarded as a normative species of intellectual form or order which exists within our different intellectual acts: within our acts of reasoning, within our acts of direct understanding, and also within our later acts of reflective understanding. Their use, in their compactness, indicates why a constructive, formative role belongs to our intellectual life if, as human beings and subjects, we are to grow in our knowledge and understanding of many different things.

<sup>441</sup>"Modus ponens," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modus\\_ponens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modus_ponens) (accessed August 31, 2020).

Q or if we happen to know what P is, we should know something which exists as Q. Our reflection thus as this occurs within our judgments - through the mediation and the operation of higher, transcendental laws which determine where or how our valid reasoning exists as a species or mode of procedure within our multiple acts of human cognition - this order of reflection which exists within our judgment with respect to the being or the reality of external things first takes its point of departure from the data which belong to the interiority of our understanding and reasoning and it then moves toward possible acts and data of sense that are needed or which must be given to us as exemplifications or as specifications of verifying evidence if, indeed, truly, through our inquiry and our understanding, through an ongoing form of interaction and cooperation which necessarily exists between our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding,<sup>442</sup> we have been moving from the givens and ambiguities of sense toward apprehensions of meaning which are to be regarded as true apprehensions of meaning and being which exist both within our understanding and (in another way) within sense, apprehensions of being which would exist as a true knowledge of existing things. These later apprehensions which exist in our judgments all participate in the being of reality and, through the mediation of our correct judgments, we are immediately joined to the being of an order of real objects (which exists in its own right as a transcendent order of existing things).

With respect then to a unifying kind of role which belongs to judgments as we move toward realities which exist as conditioned realities although as virtually unconditioned realities, the apprehension of conditions and the fulfillment of conditions with respect to a unity of the two together explains why acts of judgment differ from acts of sensing since, in acts of judgment, a combination or a union of things exists as intelligible determinations are joined to sensible determinations in a way which effects an act of judgment. Acts of judgment first begin with something which already exists as a union of form and matter. A prior act of direct understanding has separated an intelligibility from its location or from its indwelling within a given, specific set of material conditions. But, in the wake of this act of subtraction and abstraction and prior to an act of judgment, through the articulated, understood conception which arises in the wake of that which we have come first to grasp and understand in a direct act of understanding, an understood intelligibility has been reconnected to a specification of matter although not to any particular instances that are known by us through our different acts of human sensing but, instead, to a specification of matter which refers to all possible instances of it: hence, to an intellectualized form of matter which exists as common matter or as general matter. All particular instances exist within it or all particular instances fall within it wherever these instances are found or wherever they can be or should happen to exist in any given place. A prospective judgment works with an awareness of intellectual and empirical conditions since acts of direct understanding always proceed from experiences of sense data through toward an insight in an act of direct understanding in a manner which needs to be bereft of any kind or form of contradiction if the intelligibility of an insight is to exist as itself a real thing

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<sup>442</sup>Giovanni B. Sala, "Lonergan on the Virtually Unconditioned as the Ground of Judgment," trans. Donald E. Buzzelli, <http://lonergan.org/2020/07/25/lonergan-on-the-virtually-unconditioned-as-the-ground-of-judgment/> (accessed July 25, 2020).

and if, in turn, it is to point toward the possibility of its reality or truth through the experience that we have about the possibility of its rationality (whether a reasonableness in terms of a determination of probability or a reasonableness in terms of certainty, whatever the case may be).

Lastly, in ultimately moving back toward a ground which exists in our acts and data of sense, as we reflectively move back through the order of our understanding through the acts of our imagination toward apt acts and data of sense that are connatural to the order of this shift according to the manner of our human cognition (our understanding, in a way, comes from our earlier acts of sensing although in a way that is not suggested by the kind of order which exists in deductive logic to the degree that its procedures are mechanically understood), the trajectory or the line of this cognitive order points back toward whatever acts and data of sense are needed and which we must enjoy in point of verification and confirmation if an abstracted form or an abstracted intelligibility is to be reunited to its instantiation and location within a given set of material conditions that are proper to it. And so, as we experience these indicated, required acts and data of sense within ourselves (within our conscious awareness of them), we have now the ground that is needed within us which we notice within the apprehension of our judgments as a prior understanding which had been previously abstracted from a prior set of experienced sense data is now reunited or it is found to exist again within a new act, datum, data of sensed experience.

In a new way or in a different way, the datum or data which are found by us, within the context of our judgments, instances or belongs to the species of common matter that had been previously joined to the intelligibility or to the form which properly exists within it *as its intelligibility* and not as the intelligibility of something else (given the unity which essentially exists between any given form and the material conditions which the same form organizes as its constitutive, inner, incarnate principle). In our judgments, the unity of all these things (form and matter, intellect and sense) is combined and it is grasped within a greater context which exists as the cooperation which must exist for us between our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding although only by means of our inquiry and understanding can the unity of all these things be known and grasped and so in some way possibly employed and used by us for a myriad of different purposes.

The reduction to evidence which exists first with respect to the laws of our reasoning and thinking accordingly facilitates or we would say that it leads us to a second reduction to the evidence which would exist for us with respect to our various acts and data of human sensing. The givenness of these acts and data of sense or the experience of these acts and data of sense immediately points to how, for us, they exist as a species of cause which would exist as a species of material cause. Its presence or givenness disposes us or its givenness encourages or elicits from us the likely occurrence of a reflective act of understanding (an understanding which would exist for us as a rationally affirmed judgment and conclusion) although not in a manner which could refer to any claim that would want to speak about any kind of sufficiency

which would exist simply or merely within the givenness of our acts and data of sense, a sufficiency which acts of sensing would somehow allegedly knowingly know to the degree that they exist as acts of sensing.

With respect to this question of sufficiency, only an act of understanding knows about this sufficiency as it grasps the aptness or the presence of this sufficiency. Only an act of reflective understanding can know or conclude that the evidence which is given to us in a given case is to be regarded as adequate or truly sufficient or that a given set of data is to be regarded as an adequate presentation of all the pertinent evidence which is truly needed in the context of a pending, prospective judgment. The immediacy of sense exists as an immediacy which belongs to both our different acts of sensing and also to the awareness of self which exists within us in our consciousness of self when we are experiencing the acts and data of sensing which belong to us although, in fact, if we should want to speak more broadly about the question or the presence of immediacy, the drawing of a rational conclusion is something which exists in a way which also points to its own immediacy. This immediacy belongs to us in our understanding. It exists within the movements of our understanding that we consciously experience whenever we conclude or experience an apprehension which knows about the givenness or the existence of sufficiency within any apprehensions of evidence that we have been experiencing (or which are currently experiencing) within a given concrete context. We inwardly sense, apart from our acts of external sensing, that more evidence is not relevant or apt. It is simply not needed or required. We have not to look for other specifications of evidence which perhaps can be found through other acts of sensing if we should want to continue to reflect on ourselves and so ask more questions within the kind of inquiry and cognition that we have been engaging in to the degree that we exist as active, prospective, hopeful human knowers.

To understand why questions about sufficiency in evidence are often confused with apprehensions of quantity, please notice that sufficiency, as a term, is often used as a turn of phrase or as a metaphor which suggests that sufficiencies refer to apprehensions of verifiable quantity and so to possible increases in the amount of evidence that can be available for us in the context of any given, possible, prospective judgment. The more we have in terms of quantitative determinations of evidence, the more probable should be the truth of a conclusion which would be the issue and the term of a pending, prospective judgment. Hence, unfortunately, because quantity exists as a material determination, we are encouraged to believe and to hold and to think that acts of judgment exist primarily as acts of sensing and not as spiritual or as immaterial acts of understanding (as reflective acts of understanding). However if we are to move toward an explanation that can possibly account for an experience of sufficiency that is internally given to us within our sense of self within the data of our cognitive consciousness (which exists as a kind of inward, inner thing), we need to attend to how acts of judgment exist not with an extroversion which typically belongs to our different acts of human sensing but, instead, as acts which exist in an inward way as much as they are positively related to how, within the order of our cognitive acts, acts of sensing play a subsidiary role that is both necessary and, in some way, primary and essential for us. In our cognition, everything somehow begins with what is given to us through our

different acts of human sensing and so to sensing, as our prior point of departure, we must return if we are to move toward judgments which can know that an intelligibility which has been understood is, in fact, a reality that can now be affirmed and known to be true where now, through the truth of a known thing, we can know about the legitimacy of its being: that it really and truly exists.

### 5. Right Reason Objectified as Natural Law

If our normative or right reason is constituted by acts and operations that are severally active and passive (reasoning exists as an activity; understanding, a reception), its expression, reflection, or objectification in terms of understood, apprehended words or concepts or, further on, the kind of manifestation which exists through the actualization of externally existing goods and deeds, points to something which exists *as an other* (it is distinguished *as an other*) even if it is informed or although it carries, within itself, the same intelligibility and meaning which has been belonging to us in our prior acts of human cognition to the degree that our cognition *as right reason* has been fully operative in both an active and passive sense. Our acts of reasoning and understanding are entirely proper to us according to the manner of the self-transcendence which belongs to both us and them. Beginning then with laws that are already determinative of a functioning, operative nature which exists within us as an intelligible, intelligent ordering of different acts of knowing and willing where one species of act exists for the sake of another species of act (or, in other words, these acts as ordered which exist as originating acts of meaning and being), then from all this, through the effective ordering of our reasoning and understanding which exists whenever we live and move within the actualizations of our human cognition (when, teleologically, we proceed from our acts of sensing through to our various acts of human understanding through an ordering which joins and relates these acts with each other), by these means, two consequences follow as proper effects.

One: laws of nature which operatively exist within us, through the heuristic form of anticipation and mediation which properly belongs to them – these laws of nature reveal other laws of nature which exist beyond us on the basis of a principle which says that our understanding exists as a potency (a receptive potency). As a species of potency, our understanding exists as an immaterial capacity where the immateriality, in turn, points to a species of unrestrictedness which is entirely appropriate to it. One goes with the other. Most simply put: in its potency (in its orientation, or in the kind of openness which it has), our understanding, our intellect, exists as that which “is by virtue of becoming all [other] things.”<sup>443</sup> Alternatively, it exists as it is because it can “become everything [else; everything which is other than itself although through a form of unity or identity which is cognitive and which is not ontological or metaphysical].”<sup>444</sup> The unrestrictedness refers to our desire for

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<sup>443</sup>Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 3, 5, as quoted by Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: the desire to understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 136.

<sup>444</sup>Aristotle, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, 3, 5, trans. Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumb Ox Books, 1994), p. 219. See also a saying that has been attributed to Thales of Miletus: “Intellect is the swiftest of things, for it runs through everything,” as quoted by Tina Stiefel, *The Intellectual Revolution in Twelfth-Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 5.

understanding even if it does not refer to that which our understanding is able to enjoy or to attain in any given context or instance if, always as a precondition, our understanding exists as a function of our being and if, from the finitude of our being, we refer to the finitude of our understanding. Again, each goes with the other. The being of one points to the being of the other even as, here, an unrestricted desire is to be admitted though, always, it is joined to restricted attainments of one kind or the other.

Two: as cognitively known, these other laws of nature, as they are grasped and known, are put into another order of being which becomes obvious to us as soon as we begin to notice (or as we should begin to notice) how, in the wake of our understanding, an objectification immediately begins to occur within us when, from an initial experience of understanding which exists within us *as an identity within ourselves*, an understood always emerges or a known emerges which differs from how it exists more primitively as the term of a prior act of understanding. In the wake of our understanding and as the term of another kind of intellectual act, that which is first understood immediately exists in a way which is set apart *as an other* from a prior, generating act of understanding as soon as we realize within ourselves, again in the wake of our understanding, that something other exists which is not ourselves despite an identity which has existed within us whenever we think about the kind of experience which belongs to us whenever an act of understanding is given to us. However, this other exists as a different kind of thing. It exists in a different way because, as it confronts us in our cognitive consciousness, we can begin to stand back from it. We can begin to interrogate and ask questions about it and we can think about as if it were an other that differs from who we are as cogitating, experiencing human beings.<sup>445</sup> It participates in or, in a way which has yet to be explained and understood, it exists as the term of another species of intellectual act which transcends our prior acts of understanding even if it incorporates that which we have already grasped and understood through the reception of our prior, direct acts of understanding.

To explain this shift in a concrete way, to cite a brief example which points to the gist of a proffered explanation which is grounded in another datum which belongs to our cognitive experience of self: if, as a thought experiment, we take a problem in geometry and we try to solve it by drawing lines that can possibly reveal why, for example, this angle must always equal this other angle, we should find that, cognitively, we are experiencing or we should be experiencing two different kinds of inner events (two different kinds of act and thus two different kinds of object if, always, a given kind of object goes with a given kind of act). First, in solving our mathematical problem, through a direct act of understanding that is given to us, we know or we immediately realize that this angle must always equal this other angle (“x,” for instance, must always equal “y”). However, in knowing that this “x” must always equal this other as “y,” we should also find or we should also notice within the data of our cognitive experience that a second realization is also given to us, a realization which is less specific or which is less concrete: perhaps it is a bit nebulous although, in its own way, it is larger and

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<sup>445</sup>Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 201. See also note e, pp. 258-259, which quotes various texts to show that identity and confrontation exist in different ways within the kind of order which belongs to us with respect to the nature and the functioning of our human cognition. Elements of introversion exist with elements of extroversion in a manner which points to the complexity of our human cognition and to why, for us, laws of nature exist in a way which is somehow both inward and outward (in a variety of different ways).

awesome. Where, within our prior understanding act, a universal is grasped by us within a particular set of material conditions (we say that a form has been abstracted or that it has been extracted from matter, if we use a way of speaking which comes to us originally from the conceptuality of Aristotle's philosophy), consequently or in the wake of this prior, generating act of understanding, this universal now immediately assumes a new form or a new shape that is proper to it. It is experienced in another way in an instantiation which differs from the first kind of instantiation which belongs to our prior understanding (relative to how, as a form and as an understood, a universal has initially existed within a set of material conditions) because, now, it is joined or it is subsumed by something which emerges or which exists for us as a thinkable, communicable, inner word or concept or, in other words, a something which exists as a species of thinkable, communicable, inner word which exists as a meant and which exists as the stuff or as the material of a form of inner dialogue which emerges and exists within us to the degree that we exist as thinking, reflective, human subjects. An understood now also exists as a conceptualized, objectified, intellectual object and so it exists as a new kind of outer object (relative to ourselves and to how we exist in our subjectivity). It exists as a new kind of other (it is other than the kind of other which is experienced by us through our first acts of sensing) where now, within the privacy of our inner human ruminations and apprehensions, we have taken an understood idea and we separate it from its point of origin in a way which refers to how it had existed as the term of a prior, direct act of understanding. We find that we can think and argue about its implications, its ramifications, and also about its possible truth; or, in other words, we find that we can argue with ourselves about that which we think that we have correctly grasped and understood. From a form of cognitive identity that is initially experienced, a form of difference is experienced which points to the necessity of a real distinction which exists between that which is a subject and that which is an object. The one, in its transcendence, leads to the other; identity, otherness, difference, contrast, or perhaps a degree of opposition.

Where previously, prior to our initial acts of understanding, a universal had been joined to a set of material conditions (these conditions functioning as a distinct carrier of meaning that is first encountered by us through our different acts of human sensing), this same universal, as it is separated from our prior acts of understanding, is now joined to a second carrier of meaning which we can identify if should speak about an inwardly experienced inner word which exists as the proceeding of an inner word or, appositely, as the emergence of a *verbum mentis* (a mental word, a “word of the mind,” an *intimum verbum*, which, elsewhere in the language of Aquinas, is referred to as a *verbum cordis*, or as a “word of the heart,”<sup>446</sup> and in other places as a *species expressa*, an “expressed species”).<sup>447</sup> Something which is known as the term of an act of understanding becomes the term of another kind of intellectual act which exists as a first act of objectification which exists as an act of conceptualization which, as a distinct act, immediately springs from or it proceeds from a generative, prior act of understanding. Act comes from act and no act from a potency. An understood is converted into a new form or into a new species of being when, internally, it is converted into a species of other, external object

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<sup>446</sup>Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 27, a. 1, as quoted by Claude Panaccio, “Aquinas on Intellectual Representation,” *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, ed. Dominik Perler (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 190.

<sup>447</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method I*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 129.

which can be externalized to a further and greater degree if, not without struggles and difficulties and the asking of additional questions, we try to put our inner words and concepts into determinations or specifications of outwardly existing words which would exist as externalized, verbalized concepts. That which we have understood as a first species or specification of being, as that which we have then pondered and thought about as a second species/specification of being, shifts into a third species/specification of being which exists whenever we move from the privacy of our inner words and concepts toward the publicity of externally expressed concepts and words and the kind of communication which can exist among us as interacting human beings: by all these means thus, facilitating the goodness of our possibly having a common life with each other and so serving the needs and the requirements of human cooperation in a way which can sustain a given social order, or which can act to reform or to construct a new human order of things within the boundaries that are set by our current conditions, employing resources which already exist within our given society and the kind of order which already exists within it. From an act of understanding to an act of internal conceptualization and then on into an act of external conceptualization that can end in further actualizations which exist as a production of goods and services, we are always moving from one species of being to other species of being (initially, as we have noted, from a first species of intellectual being to a second species of intellectual being and then to a third species of intellectual being and then, from there, toward other kinds and manifestations of being in a rational form of expressiveness which shares or which is joined by a common thread (since a common intelligibility joins everything together through varying changes in incarnations and instantiations which point to how progress exists in the context of our human lives).

To return then to the mathematical example that we were working with, in shifting from acts of understanding to acts of conceptualization, we discover how, as orders or correlations, laws exist as others: as realities which differ from ourselves and which explain why both our world and ourselves exists in the way that they do, each having an order which properly belongs to it. In our lives, we seek to solve problems but, in solving any given problem, within the order of our cognitive experience, in encountering a new kind of intellectual act which also exists in its own way as an act of understanding (in conception, understanding exists), a universal is now known in a way which points to how it exists as a lawful, prescriptive determination of meaning and being. In this case (in our example), a normative law exists as a mathematical law (within a given set of conditions) and, as a law, it is universally applicable. A universal which has existed within the intelligibility of a solution has been turned into a universalized word or concept which translates into a phraseology which is distinctive of law (whether the wording or the conceptuality reuses old words and terms in a new way, or whether it constructs new words and symbols in order to denote the meaning of an understood law). Where originally (in acts of understanding) acts and terms go together (they always exist together), now, as we move to acts of conceptualization and as we associate acts of conceptualization with the meaning and the possible reality and being of objectively existing laws, something which has been grasped and understood becomes an object that is now joined to a new set of material conditions and components in a way which turns these conditions and components into new carriers of meaning and being. As new, additional questions eventually and subsequently arise in the course of any later inquiries, a formalized, externalized, intellectual object which exists as an initially known, understood law becomes a new point of departure for us and, at the same time, something which should become more well known to us with respect to how it exists in its own way with an otherness which is peculiar to it.

Through the self-transcendence which, however, belongs to the operative normativity of our cognitive subjectivity, understood laws (packing one kind of normative punch) turn into laws which pack another kind of normative punch when understood laws undergo a form of confirmation and verification that turns them into laws that are now known to be real and true. The absoluteness which belongs to our prior acts of understanding (relative to our acts of sensing) is transcended by another kind of absoluteness which belongs to our acts of judgment (which exist as our acts of reflective understanding) in a shift which points to an order of primacies which, in turn, points to differing orders of being which need to be acknowledged. The objectivity of this differs from the objectivity of that; an idea, from the reasonableness of a given conclusion. This is more important or vital than that for this or that reason. Hence, or in other words: where the kind of primacy that belongs to our acts of sensing is succeeded by a primacy that belongs to our acts of direct understanding (our sensing exists for the sake of our understanding), the primacy of our later acts of judgment points to a completeness, a fullness, or an absoluteness which is necessarily less relative or which could be entirely lacking in relativity if, through our judgments, we know about conditions but we also know that no conditions exist with respect to the truth of a thing which had not been met or fulfilled in some way.

As a kind of subset or in a shift which accordingly moves from possibilities to actualities, some laws are known to exist as conditioning, determining absolutes. From their standpoint (because they exist within the context of a higher order of things), all lesser orders and all other things are understood and known and so, from within these lesser orders of things, constituent elements are understood in terms of how they are all related and joined to each other in a way which knows that one cannot exist without the other. This goes with that. Toward laws which have moved beyond the kind of conception that belongs to our acts of direct understanding, other laws exist in a way which refers to an order of conception which belongs and which springs from our prior acts of reflective understanding. More so than with the being of any kind of theory which exists as a hypothetical law, truly existing laws exist in a way which points to a superior form of explanatory power. It surpasses what, before, we had been grasping and understanding. In their independence and to the degree of their independence, the greater is their transcendence.

Hence, as we move from the intelligibility of order in our understanding toward the conceptuality of law which ensues in the wake of our direct acts of understanding and our later reflective acts of understanding through differing acts of conceptualization, and as the objectivity of law becomes more obvious to us as, through our self-understanding and through a form of inner dialogue which we have with ourselves, we grow in a greater understanding of ourselves, the net result is a fuller or more ample conceptuality of law. In some ways, it has been enhanced and added to. To a greater degree, it points to its transcendence and to origins which would be transcendent. A greater transcendence of law becomes more apparent to us in a way which acknowledges two related, distinct variables: how these laws exist immanently within us and how they exist in a way which points to their superiority and hence, to their transcendence. Transcendental laws determine the form of our operative human cognition and, as we have been noting, as a heuristic, they point to the form or to the kind of order which belongs to the being of externally existing things. Like ourselves but beyond ourselves, externally existing laws exist within differing sets of material conditions and we encounter

them in only an initial way through our different acts of human sensing. The more observant or the more lawful, however, becomes the manner of our cognition and the manner of our living which, in its own way, is the context of our human cognition, the more fully and more probably will we come to know about other laws which, in their own way (or appropriately), exist within a world which transcends each of us with respect to the mode and the manner of our individual human existence although, in learning more about the laws which transcendently exist within ourselves and other laws which transcendently exist beyond ourselves, it is never an easy task to talk about these laws: to find the right words and expressions that will more accurately express the form, the shape, or the intelligibility of these laws.

Grow in understanding and find the right words and the effect serves as both a stimulus and as a check for us to encourage new ways of thinking that can become more perceptive and intelligent. More carefully and observantly, we can move toward a knowledge about the being of other laws. Laws, too, that are not too well understood (even if they are known) can be understood in a better way. To employ a simple example, we can think about the principle of contradiction and how it exists as a fundamental determinant, pointing to a kind of order or pattern which normatively belongs to us in the nature or the form of our human reasoning and thinking, partially constituting our human reason in conjunction with other principles (as normativities) which exist as fundamental laws which are denominative of us with respect to the form of our human reasoning. Bluntly put in the wording of one accessible definition: “a thing cannot be and not be at the same time, or a thing must either be or not be, or the same attribute cannot at the same time be affirmed and denied of the same subject.”<sup>448</sup> If something is or if something exists, it cannot not be. However, if this principle of reasoning is thoughtfully observed as a precept to guide and determine how we should think and understand and express the content of anything that we have perhaps come to understand and know, its observance and its implementation in conclusions which are drawn is to be contrasted with another type of reasoning and thinking that we can find among many persons who seem to know nothing about the principle of contradiction. An implicit knowledge is to be allowed. This can be granted. In some way, it must exist in all of us if we all exist as human beings. However, it is to be admitted that an inchoate, implicit kind of knowledge and awareness is to be distinguished from an apprehended, instructed form of mental training which attends and which speaks about the principle of contradiction as a truly existing reality and about how it differs and arises from other principles that can be found within ourselves (within the data of our intellectual consciousness). To think reasonably (as here an unconsidered assumption or expectation) differs from the kind of performance which should exist and which will more probably exist if we have been trained in how more fully to think rationally and reasonably. Hence, on the basis of this difference, better than otherwise, a conceptualized knowledge of laws best serves us if we are then to move toward a greater understanding and knowledge of different things. An explicit knowledge of these laws becomes a desideratum which we should seek to attain and to enjoy. More intelligent questions can then be asked. More intelligent acts of understanding become more likely and probable in a shift of consciousness which has moved from the data of our consciousness into the data of our self-consciousness in a shift, an ordering, and new orientation which leads us toward a larger knowledge of laws that await,

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448“Principle of Contradiction,”

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Principle+of+contradiction> (accessed January 11, 2016).

first, their discovery and understanding before, subsequently, they can receive a form of conceptualization which is always needed if an understood, affirmed intelligibility is to exist as an understood law which, as an other, exists now as a disposing, objectively existing norm and guide. In this context, an “is” exists as an “ought” to the degree that it acts as a predisposing condition or cause or, more specifically, to the degree that it exists as a necessary condition but not a sufficient or adequate condition with respect to how better we can begin to sense new different things and, from there, think about new different things, possibly understand new different things, and then, from there, possibly act in different kinds of ways.<sup>449</sup> The conditioning kind of effect would, however, differ in its effect if our knowledge of things is limited to a descriptive form of knowledge which differs from the kind of impact which belongs to the reception and the experience of an explanation and the fuller kind of engagement which belongs to us as human beings and subjects if, beyond our sensing, we are engaged in acts of questioning and thinking that can lead to acts of understanding which know about the truth of a thing which exists now in terms of its reason and explanation.

### **In conclusion...wrapping up**

In attempting to provide a heuristic that can be of help to us in understanding the Church's teaching about natural law (we refer not to its existence but to its meaning or substance in terms of what exactly it is), we have found that a kind of fit exists between the enormity and the challenge of the object which is to be understood (given its importance) and the kind of preparation which is needed if we are to move into an understanding of the Church's teaching which transcends an approach that could be limited to a knowledge which revolves about the meaning and denotation of words. Words have meanings which commonly exist in dictionaries and more precise meanings can be determined if we attend to how they relate to other words and the result is a labeling or a species of meaning which can be largely or essentially descriptive. However, to understand or to believe that words point us toward realities which exist at a higher level is another matter and the primacy of moving ever more closely toward a transcendental point of reference gives a different sense to our language and the kind of knowing that we need if we are to move beyond a descriptive grasp and understanding of different things.

To give a brief example: the word “community” is often used to describe groups of persons who happen to be living together and who could be associating with each other in some elemental, functional kind of way. They might live and exist together in a way which points to how they legally exist as a corporate body. But, in these cases, is the meaning of the word, “community,” a reality which exists at only a verbal or descriptive level? Does it have any other meaning or significance? Does it refer to a higher reality of some kind which, in its meaning and being, transcends whatever is the sense of the words which we could be currently using? Can “community” be used in a way which refers to an explanatory understanding of it?

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<sup>449</sup>Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, p. 8. “Nature, in the form of genetic endowment, is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition.” See also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Is-ought\\_problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Is-ought_problem) (accessed September 28, 2020) for an initial understanding that can speak about naturalistic fallacies where are alleged to exist if we try to move from the order of that which we know to the order of that which we must do if we are to exist, morally, as human agents.

Can the word be used in a way which knows about the importance of preparatory, prior conditions which need to be known and encouraged in terms of how different human beings relate to each other and which in turn explain why, perhaps, a given community really and truly exists as a distinct species of moral bond and unity which exists among persons and why it must differ from any kind of community which exists as some kind of conglomeration or association of different persons? How does a community differ from a mass or a group?<sup>450</sup> Among persons who adjacently live with each other, do bonds of friendship and commitment connect them with each other in a way which forges a relation which transcends the being of individuals who happen to belong to an identifiable group which is said to exist as some kind of associative organization?

Hence, to avoid an understanding of natural law which could exist at a primitive level which could be misleading and somewhat shallow, the construction of a nuanced, heuristic approach that we have been attempting to outline seeks to indicate how an adequate understanding of natural law supposes and requires an inquiry which should attend to a large number of distinct variables: correctly identifying each of them and then correctly relating them to each other in a way which points to a more comprehensive, larger order of things which really and truly exists (an order of things which in fact exists in its own right as an exemplification and specification of natural law). In other words (most simply put), to understand the Church's teaching about natural law supposes a circular kind of thinking or a circular kind of understanding (at times too, a circular kind of belief) that, seriously, we cannot too well escape or avoid (given the kind of form or structure which endemically belongs to us with respect to the ways and means of our human cognition). Necessarily, in any given context, we begin with a sense or an initial understanding of things but one which we have yet to thematize, explicate, and define. Understanding natural law supposes a prior understanding of natural law that is somehow given but which also needs to be cultivated and encouraged.

In some way thus and to some degree, we have previously imbibed or we have inherited premonitions and initial meanings which refer to the meaning and the being of natural law (prior to our posing and our asking of questions in a way which supposes that natural law exists as a legitimate object of inquiry). In a sense that we can inquire and ask questions about, being precedes meaning even if, by way of meaning, we know being. In our lives (as we think back and reflect about it), we begin at the start of things, in some way, with a symbolic kind of knowledge: with subtle, symbolic connotations and denotations of meaning and being if we have been raised, say, within a culture that has been touched by some kind of belief in the reality and meaning of higher laws that point to regularities which exist both within the world around us and within ourselves as we exist within the greater world that happens to surround us. Most immediately, if we should happen to be Catholics, if we have been raised as Catholics within a Catholic religious culture (however completely or imperfectly is the existence of this culture), we have probably been touched by influences and innuendoes that are suggestive of natural laws and a belief in the existence of these higher, transcendental laws. If natural law has existed as a part of how the Church has been understanding herself (her place, role, and mission), to the extent that this teaching has descended into the expressiveness of the Church's corporate life and worship, it has affected and acted on the lives of very many persons in a way that can only be explicitly and deliberately known if, at some point, we

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<sup>450</sup>Lonergan, *Second Collection*, p. 5.

move from the data of our conscious experience into the data and givens of a consciousness which now exists as our self-consciousness.

We move toward an explanatory understanding of the meaning and being natural law through the action of two paired causes: by an experience of natural law that we already have and by a realization which exists within us that we need to understand this datum (this order, this correlation, this law) in order to determine how it fits or puts us into a larger, general scheme of things that we would like to understand and know if, possibly, from a larger or a more comprehensive act of understanding that can be given to us, we can begin to live in a better way (acting more wisely and living more joyfully and faithfully). The more that we should happen to know about natural law, the more that we should be able to understand when, later, we encounter and think about what, authoritatively, the Church has been teaching us about the substance and reality of natural law and how it should affect us in terms of how we are to imagine, think, and live. The Church's teaching, as it is given to us, acts as a species of efficient, formal, and final cause and so, at times, as a provocative catalyst and also possibly as an irritant that can challenge us with respect to our personal wishes and expectations. The more that we learn about the order of this natural law, the more that we should be moved by it with respect to that which could be the degree and the extent of our understanding as new acts of understanding increase and add to the depth of our previous understanding, possibly changing and altering it in certain ways.<sup>451</sup> In one sense, act comes from act and, in another sense, the same act acts on potencies in ways which reduce or which convert them into the being of new acts.

On the basis then of these general considerations and by going back and adverting to the wording of the Pope Leo's teaching as this was given to us in *Libertas praestantissimum* and in also the context of other later teaching documents, a number of conclusions present themselves to us (conclusions which exist, in their own right, as new differentiations and determinations). First, verbal differences or verbal distinctions in conjunction with mental or conceptual distinctions exist in a way which needs to be distinguished from conclusions and assumptions

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<sup>451</sup>See here Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* which, in different places, points to the phenomenology of a kind of self-correcting conversation or dialogue which exists between us an experiencing, thinking, receptive, human subjects and an initially experienced, encountered, other, outer object which is given to us when, as experiencing subjects, we encounter something which exists as an other (differing from how we exists as living, conscious subjects). The other is being known to some extent (however primitively and inadequately) but it is not too well known or understood (it may not be accurately or properly known) and, yet, by means of an initial encounter that each has with the other, each is challenging the meaning and the being of the other in a way which, in the order of cognition, points to a form of mutual causality which exists between them. The causality of something which exists as an other, even if it should be lacking in any form of consciousness that would belong to it, on the other hand however and in its own right, it signals and it points to a higher order of causes that could be more remote, an order of causes which begs for its understanding, discovery, and elucidation if, in some way, the given of something which exists as an other for us is to have an understanding which is somehow proper to it: an understanding that satisfies our curiosity in a way which places us within the terms of a wider, more comprehensive context of existing things.

which point to an order of real distinctions which cannot be said to exist (despite what these other differences are apparently seeming to imply and suggest). Whenever, for instance, we find references in the wording of later magisterial teachings which point to laws which are said to be “promulgated by the light of natural reason,” the term of this type of act can be understood in a way which refers to the impact or the relevance of natural laws as these laws exist within ourselves. If then, by the authenticity or the fullness of our understanding we exist as specifications or as embodiments of natural law to the degree that natural law exists within us as an operative, expressive, inner dynamic, laws can exist, on the one hand, as conventional constructions within given sets of conditions and circumstances and, on the other hand, they can also exist as natural laws to the degree that they participate and live within the intelligibility of natural laws which somehow already exist (even if they are not entirely or explicitly fully known and understood). To speak about the “light of natural reason” is to refer to a reality or a datum that can elicit questions about the scope or the nature of this light. What does this light refer to?

To employ a convenient example, think about a law (a regulation) which says that, in the administration of punitive justice, no pregnant woman is to undergo any form of capital punishment. Apart from pregnancy, only then, possibly or rightly, can a woman be lawfully executed.<sup>452</sup> This law, as a judicial penal regulation, points to how it exists as an artificially constructed, conventional, manmade law. But, on the other hand however, in the principle or in the precept which it guards or which it enshrines, it exists as a specification or as an application of a natural law which somehow already exists (a law that we already know and whose understanding points to the good of moving into some kind of lengthy analysis if this kind of law is to be properly and rightly understood). A natural law more fully exists as law (as the intelligibility and rationality of law) to the degree that it enters into the details of our human life (to the degree that it is promulgated and applied through the observance of a given manmade, conventional law, existing not as an imposition but as a guide to how better and more happily we can exist and live if a given manmade, conventional law is received by subjects who recognize the reasonableness and the goodness of a given prescribed law).<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>452</sup>For a case which points to the sense or the intelligibility of qualifications which, at times, need to be admitted within the circumstances of different individual cases, prior to the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg on June 19, 1953 (both had been previously sentenced to death on April 5, 1951 after having been convicted by the US District Court for the Southern District of New York on March 29, 1951 for conspiracy to commit espionage against the national security of the United States), efforts were made to seek clemency from Presidents Truman and Eisenhower to the effect that the Rosenbergs should not be executed. Various arguments were voiced. By referring to the kind of intelligibility which belongs to the meaning and being of natural law, it was argued by some that, as parents, the Rosenbergs should not be put to death. They have two dependent young sons (both minors) and, for their sake, their parents should be spared death and the boys not turned into orphans. This argument allegedly prominently figured in the efforts of Pope Pius XII to seek clemency to spare the lives of both parents (apart from any questions that could ask about the likelihood of their legal or moral guilt). Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius\\_and\\_Ethel\\_Rosenberg#Trial\\_and\\_conviction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_and_Ethel_Rosenberg#Trial_and_conviction) (accessed September 30, 2020); <https://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/AmRad/broadsides.pdf> (accessed September 29, 2020).

<sup>453</sup>Jones, *Before Church and State*, p. 401; p. 406.

In terms thus of this or that species of law, a given type of law can exist in a way which points to a transcendent, natural aspect of some kind which somehow normatively belongs to it or which exists within it although, always, a judgment about the question of naturalness (its appropriateness or its rightness) depends on the strategic choice of one's fundamental point of departure or reference if we are to attend and speak about the kind of proper, natural relation which should exist between a given originating act (or a given originating subject) and its proper, adequate term. If, for instance, a conception of law (on our part) speaks about God's divine law or about God's eternal law and this conception is to be admitted and associated with God and the divine kind of self-understanding which alone belongs to God, then the eternal or the divine law of God exists in a way which is entirely natural and proper to God. It is not natural or proper to us as originating, thinking, human subjects if, for instance (and as only one reason that can be specified), our point of departure is the kind of discursive knowing which alone belongs to us as cogitating subjects. Typically, we begin with the givens of our ordinary experience and, like the Greek physician Alcmaeon of Croton and others, we try to move toward a world of things that we cannot directly sense or see, working initially with or from a point of departure that cannot be said to conflict with a kind of knowing which also belongs to us as human subjects if, now, our alleged point of departure is a given in sense or experience which mysteriously leads us toward a knowledge of transcendental realities which, in turn, belongs to a divine revelation of some kind and the kind of ontological, cognitive, effective type of causality which belongs to revelation as a transcendent, divine type of intrusive, intervening, expressive act where here, within this heightened, larger, or richer context of cognitive experience, contingent secondary causes exist in a way which transcends the character or the nature which typically belongs to how they have been existing for us as secondary effects and causes. The manner of usage is new and, at times, it is upsetting, disconcerting, and jarring.

To conclude with a familiar, frequently cited, prominent example that comes to us from the early religious history of the Jewish people: spying from a distance, a man named Moses sees a bush that is filled with burning flames but in no way does the burning damage or harm the plant within which the flaming is occurring.<sup>454</sup> The vegetative matter of the plant is not consumed or turned into ashes. In no way is it used up. In the wake of this curious sight (seeing this strange sight), Moses approaches what he is seeing in order to try and understand it and this approaching is entirely proper and natural to Moses according to the kind of cognition which properly belongs to him and to us as conscious human subjects. We are curious about things which appear to be odd or strange in some way and our attention and focus is turned toward them.

To explain a second distinction that we find in church teaching which seems to exist as a verbal distinction (although more probably as a conceptual or mental distinction): only a difference in terms of mode of mediation explains why divine or eternal law can be said to exist as two species or why a second species can be distinguished if our point of departure is the agency or the causality of our naturally existing acts of human reasoning (when we find, upon our self-examination and self-reflection, that our human understanding and the knowing which ensues

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454Exodus 3:1-4:17.

in the wake of our understanding is, in fact, also a gift or a *donatum* which exists as another species of divine gift). On the one hand, as a general premiss, God exists as the primary cause of all things (whether we should speak about the being and the maintenance of our currently existing world of contingently existing things or the redemption and the saving of this same world of contingently existing things). He is conceived in these terms and he is also conceived to exist as an unrestricted act of understanding and willing. We know, however, that our own acts of understanding exist in a restricted way and we also know that our acts of understanding do not exist as our own work, product, and project: as solely the effects of our doing and making and as thus solely our personal task and work. In our cognition, personal agency exists only to a certain extent. We can decide to ask certain questions and pursue this or that line of inquiry. We can respond in this or that kind of way. But, if our sensing and understanding both exist as potencies and as receptions that suppose externally active outer causes, if we find that we cannot effect their actuation in ways that we entirely control, manage, and govern, we will find, upon reflection, that, analogically, divine law or eternal law (which exists as God) exists as a kind of fruitful, expressive genus. The two different specific ways by which it exists, from the viewpoint of our perspective, explain why, with Pope Leo XIII in the teaching of his encyclical that is given in *Pastoralis Officii* (dated September 12, 1891), we can say that “two divine laws”<sup>455</sup> exist, although admittedly, from a higher, transcendental perspective or from a divine perspective, only one kind of divine, eternal law exists if God's law, as a conceptualized order, reflects the unrestricted self-understanding which alone exists as God (God's law, in its way, existing as God, or God as we translate his being into the articulateness of words and concepts). God can be said to be instantiated or incarnated within the conceptuality or the formularies of His law, or we can say that God exists in terms of His law or as His law. From the kind of perspective that belongs to us as human beings, the one kind of divine law (as God) can only be known by us through either of two ways or through a conjunction and union of these two ways: through the instrumentality of our human reason (philosophically, through our natural acts of human reasoning as we move in one way from the data of our experience); and, again from the data of our experience, religiously, through the mediation and script of “letters written under divine inspiration.”<sup>456</sup> Both laws refer to the same reality. Both exist as divine or eternal law. Differences which exist within our reasoning point to conceptual differences which differ from the kind of difference which exists in only a material way if our point of departure is but the existence of words and concepts which exist as synonyms.

As we turn from an overlap or sometimes an identity which exists between conventionally existing laws and naturally existing laws, a second overlap presents itself to us as we think about the relations which exist between natural laws and divine or eternal laws which, in turn, lead to questions which ask about differences and distinctions: whether these could be material, conceptual, or real. If the meaning and being of some conventional, manmade laws participate in the meaning and being of natural laws, natural laws exist within divine or eternal laws to the degree that we can also speak about the legitimacy of their participation. Again, a relation exists in terms of cause and effect since an initial point of departure points to how or why it can be said that natural laws come from God as their ultimate source and transcendent point of

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<sup>455</sup>Pope Leo XIII, *Pastoralis Officii*, as cited by *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 487, #1939.

<sup>456</sup>Leo XIII, *Pastoralis Officii*.

origin. Hence, in terms of intelligibility, some kind of overlap must exist between the two: the intelligibility of created natural laws (and also the intelligibility of ourselves) and God as He exists in Himself as His active intelligence (God existing as an unrestricted or pure act of understanding) even as we have been admitting that a real distinction exists between the kind of understanding which exists as God and the kind of understanding which naturally belongs to us and, similarly too, the kind of understanding which would belong to other cognitive subjects if we can imagine and think about the possibility and the probability of created or contingent acts of understanding which can possibly exist apart from any kind of movement or shift which, in us, would have to move through acts of inquiry from initial acts of sensing toward the possible reception by us of our later acts of understanding. The gap between the discursiveness and the partiality of our human acts of understanding and the unrestricted immediacy of God's own understanding (God as a pure act of understanding) points to the rationality or to the probability that some acts of understanding exist which are lacking in discursiveness but which would be lacking in the unrestrictedness which alone belongs to God in terms of how God exists as an unrestricted act of understanding. An act of understanding can exist even if it is not sought or desired by a given potential understander and it has not to be identified with God in terms of how God exists, without potency, as an unrestricted act of understanding. The postulation of this more perfect act of understanding, relative to ourselves, in turn creates conditions which point to an expressiveness or to a conceptualization that we can imagine and infer which, in turn, points to an order of natural laws which belongs to this kind of being which, like us, is contingent in its origins but which differs from us in terms of the kind of potency which it duly has and enjoys.

An exploration along lines which think about acts of understanding in terms that are purely receptive (a given conscious subject is purely receptive and not active in any way) leads to discussions which must then speak about how, as incorporeal or as immaterial subjects, as disincarnate acts of understanding, angels exist as a distinct species of created knowing subject. To explain the rationality of a form of argumentation which we can invoke here (which we can extrapolate from and towards), the functioning of our human cognition as an intermittent type of activity suggests why some contingent beings could and should exist who, unlike ourselves, are entirely or solely engaged in passive acts of understanding.<sup>457</sup> First, since, with us as human beings, every act of understanding is always a self-transcending, immaterial type of act (it is not the act of a material power, agent, or organ), the transcendence which belongs to every act of understanding *as an act of understanding* raises questions about the possible existence of more perfect acts of understanding which surpass the transcendence which properly belongs to us in our human acts of understanding.<sup>458</sup> Acts of understanding would seem to exist which

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457Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, 4.

458Aquinas, *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 50, a. 1: "intelligence cannot be the action of a body, nor of any corporeal faculty." Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 8, ad 3; 84, a. 6; q. 85, a. 1. For help in understanding these matters, see Mortimer J. Adler, *The Angels and Us* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 107-108. Adler argues that philosophical arguments can be constructed which point to the real, to the rational possibility that yes, as "separate substances" or, alternatively, as "separate subjects," angels, as purely spiritual, immaterial beings, really and truly exist. However, if it is

do not belong to us as human beings but, instead, to higher forms of created, contingent being. Secondly, as human understanding abstracts forms from matter to separate forms from matter, and as forms enter into the fullness of their being or the fullness of their reality and so become what they are as intelligibilities (which are distinct from everything else) through attaining a form of existence that is entirely apart from material conditions of one kind or another, the separation of forms from matter (as a precondition for every act of human understanding) and the consequent reception of a form in our understanding accordingly suggests that angels properly refer to intelligibilities which, as beings, always exist apart from matter and so, as intelligencies, they are always engaged in acts of understanding which are purely receptive in the character and mode of their operation.<sup>459</sup> To reiterate: form, in its immateriality, possesses a meaning which suggests that its reality only fully emerges or exists if it is understood as something that exists apart from matter. As every form in matter accordingly gives to matter its meaning or significance, its priority as an agent suggests a lack of dependence on the givenness of any kind of material condition.<sup>460</sup> The existence of less perfect forms of understanding in us as human beings accordingly suggests that other forms of understanding could possibly exist whose operations are not linked in any way to any acts or operations which would serve as lesser, instrumental causes which would have to be operative before an act of understanding can be properly received and enjoyed. Some acts of understanding exist which can be simply received without needing any prior acts or operations which would seek and prepare the way for receiving acts of understanding and which would function as efficient, conditioning, effective, instrumental causes, and these acts of understanding properly belong to the life of beings who are conceptualized in a way which refers to the reality of angels.<sup>461</sup> The understanding

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thinkable, conceivable, and probable that purely material things exist, since a real distinction exists between our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding (where one exists in a material way and the other in an immaterial way), it is thinkable, conceivable, and even probable with respect to our judgments, that, in their own right too, purely immaterial things exist: immaterial things which would exist, in fact, as immaterially existing subjects which, from our view and standpoint, we cannot directly sense or perceive (other than possibly know and affirm through a kind of inference which belongs to us in our acts of understanding and reflection and the kind of belief which can be given to us and which would also belong to us in the context of our having some form of religious faith).

<sup>459</sup>Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, 4; *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 9, a. 3.

<sup>460</sup>Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, 4.

<sup>461</sup>In this context, to speak about angels as if they exist as “separate substances” is to use a conceptuality which comes to us originally from Aristotle and then, later, to speak about them as “separate subjects” is to use a conceptuality which conceivable comes to us from Bernard Lonergan on the basis of a *minor real distinction* which he draws between soul and subject, substance and subject, or thing and subject. Within a given thing, the soul, substance, or thing refers to the reality of its being or existence, or a thing simply in terms of its mere being or its mere existence; the subject, on the other hand, refers to an accident, conjugate, or property that can inhere in a given soul, substance, or thing; something that can belong to a given soul, substance, or thing but which might not belong to a given soul, substance, or thing. Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 514. Compare the consciousness of someone who is fast asleep and

of a purely spiritual, immaterial being enjoys a simplicity in its acts or operations which obviously points toward an ever greater simplicity which would have to belong to a form or instance of intellect or understanding that has not received any kind of existence but which, in itself, exists in an entirely non-contingent, uncreated way.<sup>462</sup> In this situation, despite the simplicity of an act of angelic understanding, it exists as an act of understanding however which needs to be continually actuated and received as each angel, as a purely spiritual being, is brought into the kind of being which it happens to have with respect to the manner of its created existence. As soon as an angel exists, it understands but not so with us as human beings since our potency exists as a larger, greater thing (more needs to be realized and actualized; our potency exists as a greater, larger thing; the indeterminacy is greater and more ambiguous).

The participation of natural laws in eternal or divine laws and yet the absence of identity points to why, within this context, it would seem, initially, that all natural laws would have to exist as reasons which, in their dependency, would exist as secondary causes. They would be other than God and, for some reason, they exist in a way which derives and comes from God. We can know about the being of some of these laws as we work from the kind of order which exists within us, within the order of our human cognition (sensing through inquiring moving on into our understanding and judgment). Proportionate natural laws can be directly known and understood to the degree that they are found to exist within material conditions that we are encountering and experiencing through our different acts of human sensing. Other laws can be encountered and found however (to some extent, through our suppositions and inferences, we can speak about them) and these too would exist as secondary causes (as natural laws) but, according however to a differentiation which exists with respect to the form of our human cognition, they can only be found and known through analogical acts of inquiry which, in turn, lead to analogical acts of understanding and judgement if our point of departure is that which we can never directly understand and know.

We already know; we have already adverted to a kind of knowledge which exists for us as an extraordinary, revealed type of knowledge. Relative to a specification of natural law which exists within spatial temporal conditions, other natural laws can be adverted to but, increasingly, they would have to exist in a supernatural way. Some natural laws exist in a relatively supernatural way while others, in an absolutely supernatural way. Not only in all cases are material conditions and components absent but, so too ultimately, are any prior, disposing conditions and components which would exist in an immaterial way. Increasingly, as we attend to a kind of hierarchic order which belongs to the being of natural laws in general,

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not dreaming and someone who is waking or is fully awake. The choice of words varies although the common basis remains a real distinction that is drawn between someone who exists as a conscious, living subject and someone who exists unconsciously as a soul, substance, or thing. Not all substances or things can possibly exist as subjects although, in fact, many substances or things exist as subjects if some kind of consciousness is granted (if it can be alluded to and in some way known to exist). To understand the strategic importance of this minor real distinction, see Bernard Lonergan's paper on "The Subject," in *Second Collection*, pp. 60-74.

<sup>462</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 2.

to a larger and greater extent, they come to be identified with God and with the being of God's divine, eternal law. The overlap or the communion eventually shifts into an overlap or a communion which would exist as a form of identity. Increasingly also, God's eternal laws cannot be too well understood or, more accurately speaking, they are understood in a manner which is increasingly less sure, certain, and obvious. More indirectly or more remotely or less immediately are they grasped and understood.<sup>463</sup> We know more about laws that are allegedly natural and proper to the being and life of angels than about any laws that are allegedly natural and proper to God. Less easily can we ask questions about things which are not given to us through our prior and first acts of human sensing. God would seem to exist more mysteriously than the being of any angel if we attend to a kind of order which exists within our acts of analogical inquiry and understanding (as we move through analogies from one act of understanding to another).

To the degree then that the natural law which we know about participates in laws which belong to higher orders of meaning and being, we can only then accordingly say about these natural laws that they can be conceived to exist as if they exist as divine laws or as eternal laws. They share. They participate in the same intelligibility and then, through the mediation of truth, it

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<sup>463</sup>To understand this point more fully, in their respective works, compare how St. Thomas Aquinas approaches what can be said about God and divine understanding with how Bernard Lonergan approaches and deals with the same question. If we look at the kind of analysis that Aquinas uses, he approaches divine understanding through the mediation of a two step procedure. Given what Aquinas knows about the nature of our human understanding (its conditions, premisses, and character), from what is directly known about the form of our human cognition, through analogical acts of inquiry and understanding, we can move toward an understanding which can speak about the cognition of angels who exist essentially in an immaterial way and whose acts of cognition accordingly exist in an essentially immaterial way. Then, from a perspective that is informed by an analogical knowledge of angelic knowledge and understanding, new questions can now ask about God and divine understanding (the form of this understanding and knowledge) and so, from these, new analogical acts of understanding can lead to apprehensions and an understanding and knowledge about what can be said about the meaning and being of God as an unrestricted, pure act of understanding. An analogical understanding of God is grounded in an analogical understanding of angels which, in turn, is grounded in a direct understanding as this refers to the extent of our self-understanding and knowledge. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 11, as quoted by Mary T. Clark, *An Aquinas Reader* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 170.

However, if we attend to the kind of analysis which presents itself to us in the thought of Fr. Bernard Lonergan, a more simple procedure is used. Directly, we can move toward an analogical understanding and knowledge of God as an unrestricted act of understanding from an understanding and knowledge which knows about the nature of our human cognition and understanding. The reasoning is a bit less complex or it is less detailed to the extent that, although Lonergan refers to angelic understanding (he acknowledges its being and existence), for his own reasons (perhaps for pedagogical reasons), he prefers to move directly from the kind of understanding that we have about ourselves with respect to our own acts of understanding toward the kind of understanding which alone would have to belong and exist as God (as God exists in himself). Cf. Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 225.

can be said that they also participate in the being of that which exists as divine laws or as eternal laws.<sup>464</sup> They reflect the meaning, the order, the structure, or the intelligibility of these higher laws even if we must admit to ourselves, as a qualification, that differences in theological understanding or differences in metaphysical understanding with respect to the meaning and import of these higher laws effect changes in how natural laws are understood, a change in our understanding leading to changes in conceptuality which are given with respect to our knowledge and apprehension of natural laws that are believed to belong to both the meaning and being of divine, eternal laws.<sup>465</sup> Hence, as a qualification which needs to be introduced, by means of this participation and sharing, it cannot be said that, *ex nihilo*, they have been divinely instituted. They have not been created if, already and always, they exist

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464See the kind of argumentation that we find in Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 2 and which, in a way, we have been adapting and presenting. If the realization or the birthing of our human cognition cannot be explained in a way which precludes the necessity of some kind of auxiliary, divine help which supposes the actuality of an unrestricted act of understanding, then all apprehensions of truth which exist within our understanding (however minor) suppose an awareness of a highest order of law which is best denominated if we should refer to them as eternal or divine laws.

465See Sidentop, *Inventing the Individual*, pp. 216-217, for an analysis of this qualification. Whatever or however can be our understanding and knowledge of the normativity that belongs to the being of divine eternal laws, our understanding of natural laws (as these exist within our contingent, human world) will vary in ways which point to an ordering of reinterpretations and changes which can reveal new points of departure and abrupt transition that can be possibly described in terms which speak more about revolutions than about changes which would exist as some kind of evolution. Compare, for instance, a notion of natural law which thinks of terms of “everything being in its right and proper place” (as we find this as a presupposition, for instance, in the thought of Aristotle and Plato) with a notion of natural law which thinks in terms of equality and reciprocity or, in other words, if we are told as a religious moral precept that we should “love thy neighbor as thyself,” then, as Christ Himself urges when, in the gospel, He says that “whatever you want men to do to you, do so to them,” we should “do unto others what you would have them do unto you and avoid doing unto others what you would not want them to do unto you” (as we find this wording, for instance, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century in the first distinction, within the opening sentence of Gratian's *Decretum*, his concordance of Church canons). Cf. Sidentop, *Inventing the Individual*, p. 353; Jones, *Before Church and State*, p. 417, n. 78. “Natural law is what is contained in the Law and the Gospel by which each is to do to another what he wants done to himself and forbidden to do to another what he does not want done to himself.” Cf. Sidentop, *Inventing the Individual*, p. 216, citing Gratian. See also John C. Wei, *Gratian the Theologian* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), pp. 37-38. Natural law exists within divine law. In identifying natural law with biblical law or, in other words, with divinely revealed law (hence, ultimately, with God's eternal law), a prior understanding of natural law in terms of everything being in its proper place is superseded or it is placed within a larger context which acknowledges the good of working from a different and a higher perspective which now emphasizes the good of working with a newly discovered, revealed truth which adverts to a fundamental form of equality which inherently always exists amongst us as human beings but which, before, had not been well noticed or known. An older tradition and point of view is not entirely removed or lost (its intelligibility continues to hold and to exist) although, now, the

although, on the other hand too, if we should ask about their use and application in ways that come and derive from God as their ultimate point of origin, in this sense we can then speak about how these laws have been placed within contingent conditions which refer to subjects which have been created in a certain way (subjects which exist as understanding, knowing subjects). The laws of our understanding which are normative and natural for us cannot not exist also within God as their intelligent, rational cause in a way which is proper to God alone and which, to some extent, is definitive of God unless, if, in some way, we should try to argue that, in God, a real distinction can be somehow alluded to which distinguishes between the order of divine understanding and knowing and the order of divine willing and doing and which then tries to argue that, by its dominance or primacy, the willing or the willfulness determines the reason and rationality and that, freely, it can relativize it or put it to the side in some way at any given time; hence, by this means, arguing against any notion which would want to think about the mysteriousness of God's utter simplicity or about how God *per se* exists as a pure, unconditioned, unadulterated, simple, single act that we can never adequately understand or know if, by God, we should think about an understanding and a willing that is so intimate and proximate that it exists with a perfect oneness that is unique into itself (existing thus as a fundamentally perfect unity). By this means and improperly, a real distinction which is natural and proper to us and which belongs to us in the kind of being that we have is being projected or exported; it is being attributed and placed within a theology of God that would have to be essentially anthropomorphic in contrast with any kind of understanding which would want to speak about how God exists in an utterly mysterious, unique, simple way: in a way that, properly, we cannot imagine or picture although, with words, understanding, and through our inferences and conjectures, we can possibly speak about it in a way which would elicit from us a form of rational agreement and consent that would add, in turn, to the quality and the depth of our religious faith and belief.<sup>466</sup> God exists, yes, as a known but as a known unknown if the unrestrictedness of God points to a form of indeterminacy which is not to be equated with any kind of potency or absence of intelligibility but, instead, to an unrestrictedness of intelligence which we cannot grasp through a direct act of understanding. That which escapes our understanding exists as also an indeterminacy (for us) although, ontologically, it is entirely lacking in any kind of indeterminacy.

If, then, in our inquiries, on the basis of an analytical approach within our inquiry and reasoning, we have moved from our acts and data of sensing toward a knowledge of higher

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emphasis that is given to the reality and the factuality of our human equality *in the sight of God as a supernatural perspective* creates a new, larger, human context which, if it is believed, adopted, and practiced, in turn reshapes and remolds the form and structure of a given human society and how the different persons within it are to relate to each other in ways which are judged to be truly right, just, and good. The goodness or the worth of each individual person points to the good of forbearance and reciprocity which should exist in how different human persons relate to each other (despite what differences exist between them) as each person needs to care and to provide for the good of the other in a way which is turned toward the good and the value of participating and engaging in various forms of self-sacrifice.

<sup>466</sup>For further information about these things, see Robert R. Reilly's *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2010), pp. 48-56. Reilly speaks about the "demotion of reason," the "primacy of the will," and God as "unknowable."

laws which exist as divine or eternal laws (which, in turn, refer to an order of divine things which exists among these different things), a synthetic approach moves from God as our fundamental point of reference toward meanings and beings that cannot be known but for how God exists as both a known unknown and as an infinitely operative kind of actuation which exists always within a condition of act. The natural law which is proper to God refers to a conceptualization of God's unrestricted intelligibility which exists as the term of God's unrestricted understanding. This unrestrictedness, the unrestrictedness of God as eternal law, divine law, and natural law, explains why it encompasses every other kind of intelligibility which can be conceptualized in terms of law: whether we should refer to laws which exist as the conceptualized intelligibility of things which are other than ourselves, laws which exist as the conceptualized intelligibility of our being and our minds, or laws which exist as the conceptualized intelligibility of anything that, through our agency as secondary causes, we have somehow made or produced. This quality of unrestrictedness, even if we should not inherently or directly understand it, accordingly explains why, from an unrestricted divine act of intelligence (or God as unrestricted intelligence), unrestricted intelligibility unrestrictedly ensues, follows, and proceeds in a way which is constantly putting itself, inserting itself, planting itself, or introducing itself into an innumerable number of differing contexts and situations which, before, had not existed. The unrestrictedness explains not only the ongoing emergence (an unending or an unrestricted emergence of new, novel things; or, in other words, a lack and absence of static conditions) but, at the same time too, an unending care or an unending maintenance of conditions which account for every kind of duration as we refer to the being of existing things.

In a third conclusion that can be drawn from the wording of Pope Leo's teaching, the need for a moral or a virtuous form of human living and existence is immediately tied to questions which ask about how or why our human actions are linked to forms of behavior and operation that are directly related to God and which belong to the kind of thinking, intentionality, or understanding which allegedly exists with respect to God alone, God's understanding constituting who God is as He exists in himself in the manner and reality of His uniquely existing being. Actions which, in their unintelligibility, cannot be said to come or to proceed from God in any kind of direct way, or which in some way are lacking in the intelligibility of God's divine causality in some way reject God and so it can be said, with a touch of anthropomorphism, that they displease and offend God. As acts of rebellion or as acts which take us away from the possibility of any kind of full union and concord with God, they are to be avoided and shunned by us if we are to avoid a form of self-contradiction which would eventually lead to our self-destruction. Actions which accord with God and which are said to please God are, instead, to be encouraged and supported and, according to ways that we can discover and devise, they are always to be implemented and so, in some way, enacted and put into practicable, concrete effect in a way that can be said to bring our world into the kind of order which belongs to God's Kingdom.

Proscribed actions, in their irrationality, accordingly fall into a classification which speaks about moral defects that are conceptualized in terms which speak about how they exist as moral evils. Within a larger scheme of things however (within a theological, religious context which works with its own acts of understanding, knowledge, and belief), these same evils exist with a theological classification. They exist as sins. They are conceptualized in ways which refer to how they exist as derogatory actions that are directed against the goodness and wisdom

of God or, in other words, as actions which withdraw us from God, withdrawing the recognition, cooperation, and obedience which, to Him from us, is naturally and properly owed.

If we should think then about how or why our moral behavior can be possibly regarded as good or virtuous (how to explain the extent of its goodness), prescribed actions which exist within this order exist as meritorious deeds and they are to be encouraged as worthy, meritorious deeds which are always good in themselves because, in some way, they exist or they are included within the range or the compass which exists within the ambit and the scope of God's understanding and willing, the understanding and willing both existing together in God in a way which exists as God (God as He exists in Himself). From the perfect union which exists between the unrestricted understanding and the unrestricted willing comes an unrestricted, self-sacrificing loving which, in terms of a conceptual or a mental distinction as this exists within us with respect to our thinking about God (although, phenomenologically, in the performance of our own willing and loving, a real distinction in us is to be alluded to) – this loving of God exists as a kind of summit or apex. It conceptually differs from the substance of the divine willing (it is not to be equated with mere willing and doing) since, in our context (as we extrapolate from the unevenness or the lack of perfection which exists in us in order to move and speak about the things of God), no act of willing as an act of willing can exist as a loving, caring, appreciating act if it is not informed and grounded in an apprehension and understanding of things that is not lacking in the depth and the extent which it should or could have in terms of a larger or a comprehensive kind of knowledge and understanding which should be desired. The more and the greater our understanding, the more and greater should be our loving in terms of how we judge, respond, and act in any of our subsequent actions and deeds.

If, for us thus, our *rational acts* of human willing always exist in some way as *acts of loving* as we move toward the loving through our understanding (or as the loving which exists within our understanding moves into the loving which exists within our other acts of willing and doing), more so or more abundantly and radically must this be the case with God as again, conceptually, we begin not with the primacy of our understanding but with the primacy of our loving and then move from there to think about the being of other things. Conceptually, in our thinking about God - as we choose to begin from what we believe and what is postulated to be first or primary in God as an ordering first principle and not as an effective primary first cause<sup>467</sup> - from the loving comes the willing and then, from the willing, the knowing and the understanding. Divine unrestricted willing, as perfectly joined to divine unrestricted understanding, necessarily exists as divine unrestricted loving. By its communication, its expressiveness, and its instantiation through a mysterious, strange form of self-transcendence which is peculiar to God alone (if, in creation and redemption, things other than God exist; they

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<sup>467</sup>To avoid confusion here, please distinguish between principle and cause or first principle from first cause. Causes imply effects which exist as lesser realities than their responsible, originating causes; a principle which exists as a first principle is not a cause but, instead, it exists as an ordering principle. What is ordered by it does not exist as something which is somehow lesser. It is not less intelligible, less good, or less noble. An ordered element can be taken and then used as a new first principle for the ordering of elements that had been ordered by a prior first principle that, before, one had been using.

come from Him), this divine type of self-transcendence, as an analogy, in turn explains why God creates in the way which is done and why then, by moving or acting on us in our potency, God also elicits a good which exists as the greater or the fuller good of our created acts of human freedom when, from us, a form of cooperation is encouraged which is necessitated or not forced upon us.

We exist more fully as subjects if, in responding, we should try to love in a way which points to the good and the primacy of how our love also exists as self-sacrifice, loving not only God as He exists in Himself but also our neighbor (amid whatever could be the difficulties and the challenges which exist in this context): loving God thus through the order of persons and things which God has created as prior conditions, relative to ourselves, if, through the order of persons and things which have been created, God lovingly brings us into the kind of existence which we happen to have as human beings and, if too, through this same ordering, God moves us within the depths of our inner selves, in our subjectivity. Our understanding is moved and so too our willing in an effecting of our doing and loving in a way which adds to the good of our created human freedom in a way which supposes and works with the good of our created human freedom. Nothing is subtracted from the freedom which already initially exists within us with respect to our possibly willing different options which initially define the scope of our free human willing when we think about the existence of different possibilities as regards our possible actions and about how we can devise other possibilities and options, apart and prior to any actualizations which would exist, within a given context, as a reduction or resolution which exists and which emerges and ensues whenever, at some point, we make an informed, reasonable, rational, human decision in any choices that we would want to make.<sup>468</sup>

In a manner which accordingly notes and which points to how or why God's divine willing is positively related to God's divine understanding and knowing (God's perfection or lack of potency pointing to the reality of this unity), for us too, as we try to attend to ourselves in a way which increasingly moves from what we know about God to what we can know about ourselves, we should discover that, despite the contingency of our existence and how we differ

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<sup>468</sup>See Jones, *Before Church and State*, p. 400, as he cites Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 100, a. 3, ad 1, where here Aquinas speaks about love of God and love of neighbor as, for us, the “first general principles of the natural law”; hence, as new points of departure which should be self-evident to us through the perambulations of our self-scrutiny and reflection: if, in our self-reflection and self-understanding, a sufficient depth and rigor exists to the extent that we come to know about the extent and depth of our human potency and about how and why, apart from this potency and in order to reduce this potency or to raise this potency to a condition of act, a cause or an act must exist in some kind of prior way, externally and other to ourselves, and so having a wholeness, a purity, and a fullness that we do not have in terms of act or actuality which, in turn, in comparison to ourselves, would have to exist in a complete or unrestricted fashion as the good of divine understanding, willing, and loving. Necessarily of course, in order to speak about unrestricted understanding, willing, and loving, we would have to speak about things which are, in fact, so unique that, inevitably, we cannot speak about humanity but, instead, about divinity if we are to refer to something which radically differs from ourselves and so something that we cannot possibly imagine or picture although, through our understanding, we can find ways to speak about it and ask questions about it.

as creatures from God who exists as our creator and maker, on the other hand, from our knowing the good or through our knowing the good through the mediation which exists within us through our acts of understanding and judgement, as human beings (as moral subjects), it immediately follows for us that we should always do or act on the good that is initially given to us through the good that our understanding is initially grasping and knowing in terms of understood, affirmed realities that are known in terms of their reality and truth: their aptness and relevance. Our willing and knowing both point to each other. A form of mutual priority or a form of mutual causality can be adverted to as we try to find reasons to explain why, in any given case, “x” could be causing “y” (whether the “x” is an act of cognition or whether, as act of willing, it is more than an act of cognition).

For instance, to try to be a bit more specific: our acts of cognition, on the one hand, presuppose a prior form of willingness and a desiring that yearns for experiences of intimacy or familiarity which, perhaps, can be known and experienced by us to a greater and a fuller extent (through some other means or process if we should refer to the kind of given which exists in understanding). The willing leads to the kind of seeking which exists in our later acts of questioning and reflection although, as our inquiries occur and as they lead us toward familiarities which exist as an initial specification of closeness and intimacy that is given to us through our later acts of understanding, they serve to heighten and to whet our desires and appetites. They encourage us in ways which can lead us to other actions and deeds: possibly launching new inquiries that can lead us toward new acts of understanding, or engaging in other acts and operations which are non-cognitive but which can add and heighten the intimacy that we have initially known within our prior acts of understanding and knowing. Increases in our willing and desiring can encourage us to think and act in more thoughtful ways even as we know too (and as we must admit to ourselves in our self-reflection), that increases in our willing and desiring can create conditions which exist as hazards and temptations, leading us toward lapses, omissions, and distortions. Our desires can exist in inordinate ways. They can overween and overwhelm, and, in another way too, our understanding of things (in their lack of completeness or in their lack of complementarity) – these too can lead to distortions, trials, and challenges: toward a whetting of desires and passions which can thwart or obstruct the possible reception of new acts of understanding which, ideally, we should have although, in us and always in us, because an unrestricted desire exists in us for an unrestricted kind of union which can exist in us with respect to the being of so many other things which are other than ourselves, the push and pull of this kind of desire acts upon us to direct us toward ways of thinking and feeling that can entertain the possibility that, in some unknown way or manner, an order of fulfillment exists. Possibly, it can be given to us even if we should not know about how we can achieve a desired type of unity here which is somehow to be reached.

The relation to God (by a kind of indwelling or participation in us that is natural to God and which is also natural to ourselves) accordingly explains why, in the wording of a teaching which generally expresses the mind or the understanding of the Church, Pope Leo XIII speaks about why, conditionally, natural law or the “law of nature” is to be, at times, equated with “eternal law” (or with God’s “divine law,” or with God as He exists in Himself). In other contexts, as we have already been noting, Pope Leo (and other popes) have spoken and they continue to speak at times, conceptually, about “divine law” and not about “eternal law” although both are, in fact, referring to the same thing, the same reality. Restricting our inquiry however to the wording of the Church’s teaching as this exists in Pope Leo’s *Libertas*

*praestantissimum*, it is said that “all prescriptions of human reason can have force only inasmuch as they are the voice and interpreter of some higher power on which our reason and liberty necessarily depend.” To assume or to think that individual human beings are to be regarded by themselves as “their own supreme legislator” is to adopt a position which conflicts with a contrary point of view which alleges that, by its very nature, law *as law or, in other words, law as a conception and expression of intelligibility* is something which always applies to a mass of participating individuals: in this case, to all of us as a mass of individual persons who, at the same time, all differ from each other in multiply distinct ways (according to multiple categories and within multiple, differing sets of conditions and circumstances).

Ideally or properly, law applies to all individuals who are informed and marked by it, irrespective of the existence of any individual differences: transcending the individuality of individual persons if we should think about how, as a conceptualization of intelligibility, the principle of law relates to each of us in our human individuality in a way which has not to imply the necessity of any form of conflict or contradiction. On the one hand, yes, it cuts across or it transcends the materiality of our human individuality although, on the other hand, it also protects our individuality since, despite all our individual differences, the intelligibility or the meaning of this law points to a universal degree of dignity and worth that we each have and so, as a consequence, we each merit a universal form of respect and care which, at times, shields us from the sway and pull or the bias of our individual differences: protecting us from difficulties that could be caused by differences which exist in us that are not favored or which are not appreciated by other persons who, in their own way, have their own differences (their distinguishing traits and particular points of view).<sup>469</sup> The dignity that is owed to each of us is grounded in the intelligibility or the common law of our common humanity which exists in us as a God given specification of natural law, the uncreated law of God existing within us now as created law and hence, as our natural law. It exists within the goodness, the rightness, and the incarnation of our humanity and also within the dignity which is owed to us as an elicited effect if, by an awareness of it in others, a form of regard and respect is given to us which is properly and rightly due.

Hence, to the extent that law *as law* applies to all modes and manner of us as human beings and persons - this law, as *natural law*, as something which is “implanted [as a nature] in rational creatures [universally] and [as] inclining them to the right course of action and to their end [in

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<sup>469</sup>Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, p. 83. To understand how the advent and spread of Christianity has led to changes which have led to the birth of notions which tend to regard the individual human person as a species of fundamental building bloc for the life and the functioning of any given human society, see, in his analysis, how Siedentop compares the conditions of life which had existed in ancient city life with the new kind of community which emerged later in European medieval town life. A change in religion is alleged to be basic and fundamental. A universal or a universalized type of religion has replaced a local, parochial type of religion which had varied as one moved from the gods of a given family to the gods of another family and then, from there, to the gods of one's clan or tribe to the gods of another tribe or clan. Belief in a common faith which all share and participate in creates new conditions of association which, in turn, point to a less divided, a less hierarchal type of human society.

any decisions and choices which must be made]”<sup>470</sup> - this same law, this law of nature which exists in us and which defines us with respect to our humanity (both with respect to the manner of our being and the manner of our subjectivity) – this same law is not only to be identified and defined as “the eternal reason of God, the Creator and Ruler of the whole world”<sup>471</sup> but, at the same time too, in its conceptuality, this same law is to be referred to in a way which refers to God as He exists in Himself. The two are to be identified (the law and God) since this eternal law points to something which is divine in us, a something divine that can never be properly taken from us. If laws of nature are entirely natural and proper to us from our human point of view (they belong to how we exist and live), the objectivity which exists with respect to these laws is not to be separated or detached from the kind of objectivity which also belongs to eternal or divine laws which are naturally known only by God as only God can know them as the proper intelligibility, the effect, the consequence, or as the product of His purely active divine reason, God's divine reason existing (strictly speaking) as the given or as the perfection of God's understanding, the eternal or divine laws of God existing as the term of this divine understanding which only God has and is.

Summarizing then the gist of Pope Leo's teaching as this comes to us thus in 1888 from his encyclical *Libertas praestantissimum*: while eternal laws (or divine laws) are to be regarded as laws that are entirely natural and proper to God (existing in their own way as God or as God's own natural laws), laws which exist within restricted conditions and which are related to these restrictions also exist as natural laws, relative to differing specifications of relation and condition. One specification of natural law belongs to us within our human condition but, to the extent that it exists as an objective, subjective principle that is actively operative within us, it can be said that these same laws spring from us as they are known and expressed and as they are then put into effect in ways which make them more fully known. By this means, it can be said that, from us, natural laws exist, albeit, laws which move into a form of elaboration or construction which points to why it can be said that they exist as conventional, manmade laws.

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<sup>470</sup>See Odo of Dover, *circa* 1170, as quoted by Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, p. 246, quoting from Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights*, pp. 63-64: “natural jus [natural law] is a certain force [that is] divinely inspired in man by which he is led to choose what is right and equitable,” Natural law is more than some kind of external order of intelligibility which exists within external physical nature; it is more that the morality of norms, injunctions, and proscriptions that refer and guide our rightful, proper human behavior; more importantly, it exists as “a kind of subjective force or power [that is] inherent in [our] human personality.” It is that which is “called reason” which exists as “a natural force of the soul,” citing Huguccio (d. 1210), an Italian canon lawyer, as originally quoted by Tierney in *The Idea of Natural Rights*, p. 64, and as then re-quoted by Siedentop in *Inventing the Individual*, pp. 246-247. This reason, as it is allied to our reflection in a way which governs our subsequent moral human behavior, in turn explains why the conceptuality of the natural law which exists within us is better understood if we should not shift to a conceptuality which speaks about our having natural rights, natural rights replacing natural law. The law of our reason or the law of our subjectivity points to necessities with regard to our life and freedom which exist as rights that we must have and which can never be taken from us if we are to exist in any kind of human way.

<sup>471</sup>Neuner and Dupuis, *Christian Faith Documents*, p. 789, #2012, citing Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*.

These laws come from us through the kind of reflective discursiveness which properly belongs to us as human subjects in the context of our human knowing and thinking, given both the nature and the operations that are typical of us in how we exist through many different acts of cognition which interact with each other and which, together, are constitutive of us in our human cognition. Differing, on the one hand, from the kind of ordering and understanding which exists with respect to how God exists within his own natural reason or as his own natural reason, these same laws also belong to the higher order of eternal or divine law if we can speak about how our human understanding exists and lives as a participation in God's own divine understanding. Hence, we speak about how our understanding exists as “created light” and how it exists with the reality which it has because it participates within a greater light or a greater understanding which essentially exists as God's “uncreated light,” God existing as this unchanging, ever constant, “uncreated [shining] light.”<sup>472</sup>

Eternal laws, divine laws, natural laws, conventional laws (however we speak about them and however we distinguish them) – all these laws exist as reflections of understanding, of acts of understanding which are fully operative or, in other words, acts of understanding which are simply operative in a given act that is complete in itself since no act of understanding, as an act, is ever partially operative as an act even if some acts of understanding are more profound and more acute than other acts of understanding that can be enjoyed by other persons amid other sets of circumstances and conditions. Hence, if, in all these cases, their common cause (the cause of all these laws) is an act of understanding which, in some way, is foundationally generative and operative, then, if we can refer to a kind of order or the kind of ordering which exists between divine and human acts of understanding (connecting these two orders, revealing how these two orders are related to each other), if we can understand how our human understanding exists within a larger, conditioning context which refers to the causality of divine understanding and how it must exist for us if we are to enjoy our own acts of understanding as subjectively existing, contingent beings (blessed with our contingent acts of understanding), then, within this larger context, we can understand why, normatively, no contradiction should exist between or among these different orders of law. In terms of their intelligibility, they all point to each other. Created natural law, as a participation, expresses the scope of divine law or eternal law, while tentatively, through analogical acts of understanding, divine law or eternal law explains created natural laws in terms of their different kinds and species.

The order which exists within the presentation and the articulation of the Church's teaching – because the Church's teaching about the being and meaning of natural law is preceded by an order of teachings which speak about the being and meaning of our natural human reason (our natural human cognition apart from any defects or imperfections which exist within its enactment and performance)<sup>473</sup> – this sequence accordingly explains why no adequate

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472Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 5; 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 4; q. 91, a. 2.

473In proof of this claim, see the documentation and the evidence that has been gathered and put together in the context of a monograph which is known as “The Church's Teaching about the Nature of Natural Law and how it begins with the Church's Teaching about the Nature of the Human Mind.” Cf. <http://lonergan.org/2020/05/22/book-the-human-mind-and-how-it-relates-to-the-churchs-teaching-on-natural-law-16th-ed/> (accessed November 10, 2020).

understanding about the Church's teaching about natural law can proceed or emerge apart from attending to two distinct, related variables: (1) the good of attending firstly to the data and the wording of the Church's teaching as this has evolved through time about the kind of cognition which properly belongs to us as human subjects *qua* human subjects but (2) the good of attending to this teaching in a way which requires that we engage in personal inquiries of our own which attend to the data of our individual human cognition and so, by this means, encountering, finding, and verifying the kind of intelligibility which exists within us which, in turn, specifies the reality of an internal order which exists as the natural law of our human cognition). No easy, simple task if we find that an understanding of our human cognition raises questions that ask about *a priori* apprehensions of being which point to the need for an understanding of metaphysics which, in turn, raises questions that ask about transcendence and the primacy of a metaphysics of disproportionate being if, through the principle of intelligibility as this exists as the intelligibility of our subjective intentionality, a metaphysics of proportionate being is to be understood to some extent (however partially or fully). Understanding is grounded in understanding; intelligibility, in intelligibility. The complexity of our human cognition as it points to the complexity of our human situation (we discover, for instance, that knowing causes willing while, in another way, willing causes knowing), the existence of active and passive aspects points to a greater simplicity which always belongs to us in our experience and reception of understanding in contrast to whatever can be first known by us through the data (whether inner or outer) which belong to our acts of human experiencing. By a kind of reduction, analysis, or resolution (and in a way which recalls the incompleteness theorems of Austrian mathematician Kurt Gödel), we move toward some kind of higher, highest law of meaning and being if lower laws are to be understood and explained. A normative understanding of our acts of knowing and willing does not explain all of our human behavior (our human actions and deeds, the things that we do now at this time and now at this other time). An understanding of our human cognition is not to be equated with how, in fact, each of us senses, thinks, understands, and judges. Hence, where gaps exist between what is supposed to be proper and natural and what is lacking in propriety and naturalness, this gap or separation exists as a provocative catalyst, as perhaps a species of dispositive, material cause. It suggests or implies that something more is needed in a way that can add degrees of intelligibility and goodness that are somehow needed if an omission or a gap is to be joined and bridged in a way that can lead to a larger, more comprehensive point of view: a point of view that can perhaps lead to a fuller, more comprehensive manner of human living and being. Naturalness, propriety, and rightness and unnaturalness, impropriety, and wrongness often exist together as a species of *a priori* apprehension that exists within our human comprehension and, as we try and find our way as human beings and subjects, we ask questions in a way which can alter our expectations. We are loosened up and we are turned onto new paths, ways, and routes. A sense of natural law yields to articulations of it which differentially expand its meaning and which reveal its variability and relevance. A richness of detail can possibly emerge although in a manner which points to why, between our openness and searching and our predilections and expectations, an ongoing form of tension exists. So much exceeds our grasp and control and, yet, so much depends on the control which exists in the acceptance that we can give to whatever, fortuitously, is being given to us at any given place and time. We can know more about what is truly natural if we can know more about what is not always so natural to ourselves (on the basis of initial suppositions and appearances) and so, to these other sources and dimensions and from also these sources and dimensions, we can move toward an understanding of natural law which comes to us, most eminently, from a transcendental,

religious source which is to be publicly adverted to if we should think about the mission, the responsibilities, and the teaching of the Catholic Church as, here, we find this in the definitions of Pope Leo XIII.