

## Judging in Aquinas

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In turning now to a second basic type of question or the second basic type of question which exists as a query, “is it?” or “is it so?”, in posing this type of question, as an inquirer, a given human subject is now seeking a second kind of intelligibility which manifests itself through experiencing a second kind of inner word or concept which exists as an answer that, by affirming a “yes” or a “no,” either affirms or denies a given alleged fact or a given alleged actuality of some type or kind. As Aquinas notes: “properly speaking truth is in the intellect in its function of affirming and denying one reality of another; and not in sense, nor in intellect knowing *what a thing is*.”<sup>1</sup> In judgment as a natural capacity or as a power of our human reason,<sup>2</sup> a synthesis or a relation is posited,<sup>3</sup> or, on the other hand, it is denied

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<sup>1</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 2, my translation; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 1 where Aquinas speaks about a “second operation of the understanding...which...joins and divides concepts by affirmation or denial.” Earlier, in the *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 3, Aquinas had noted that “the intellect judges about the thing it has apprehended at the moment when it says that something is or is not.” The same point had been articulated earlier in q. 1, a. 1: “the Philosopher [Aristotle] says that “in defining truth we say that truth is had when one affirms that ‘to be which is, and that not to be which is not.’” In the *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 6, 4, 1233-1236, Aquinas speaks at some length about why truth and falsity exists in the mind or the intellect and not in external things since truth or falsity is only known through an act of judgment which, as a second act of our human minds within the context of our understanding, is to be clearly distinguished from our prior, abstractive acts of understanding which grasp the form or the meaning of a given thing that had been initially sensed as a body. In the understanding which occurs now within our judgments, as human beings, we grasp a formal likeness (a kind of form) which also exists within what is known as real and true, but this form is understood as a kind of “completion” which brings our human knowing to term in a given judgment in a way which points to an analogous completion which exists as the reality or as the ontological completion of a given thing with respect to its existence. Not to be forgotten however is the fact too that a kind of ontological completion exists in us since, to the extent that we move toward judgments from our initial acts of sensing and from our later but our initial acts of understanding, we become more than what we had been before. We exist in a fuller way as human subjects and this growth in our subjectivity points to questions and considerations which can ask about possible ontological ramifications that perhaps can be identified and known. If between knowing and being, a correspondence exists which points to some kind of identity between the two where, in some way, each reflects or points to the other, we can wonder about how this principle can be applied in a way which can refer to a kind of ontological completion which also exists from a basis which refers to how our acts of cognition have moved through an order which is completed when, finally, we come to acts of understanding which exist as judgments (as reflective acts of understanding).

<sup>2</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 129, 3.

<sup>3</sup>David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 59, citing Bernard dJ. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. David B. Burrell (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), pp. 48-66. As Tracy summarizes Aquinas’s understanding of the nature of judgment, “judgment is not further synthesis but the positing of synthesis.” A synthesis is postulated by an act of abstractive understanding and this same synthesis, if it is verified, is then posited by an act of judgment.

and rejected, and so it can be said that “to know...is nothing other than to judge.”<sup>4</sup> It is to give and to come to some kind of rational assent.<sup>5</sup> Through judgments about truth, persons connect with reality,<sup>6</sup> with something which is greater than themselves, with how we exist as human subjects. Being (or reality) refers to a truth or it is joined to a truth as it exists within one of our judgments.<sup>7</sup> In the convertibility of truth and reality, truth and being,<sup>8</sup> reality or being presents itself to us through our true judgments or our true affirmations.<sup>9</sup> Through a *secunda mentis operatio*, through a “second operation of the mind,” we take an intelligibility that has accrued or which has come to us from our first mental, intellectual operations (seeking some kind of direct understanding), and we then shift into a new mode of intellectual consciousness which seeks to detach itself from the meanings that have been initially apprehended by us in order to think about them in a quiet, reflective way: in a manner which, later,

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<sup>4</sup>*Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 3, 4, cited by Peter Hoenen, *Reality and Judgment according to St. Thomas* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. 6 (my translation). The Latin reads: *cognoscere...nihil aliud est quam iudicare*. Hoenen’s study draws together a number of texts that are taken from the corpus of St. Thomas’s writings to argue that Aquinas proposes a sophisticated theory of judgment which clearly distinguishes between a prior abstractive act of understanding performed by us as human knowers (referred to by Hoenen as a “simple apprehension”) and a subsequent act which is no longer a simple apprehension but an act of judgment that goes back and reflects upon the content of the first operation to evaluate it in a critical way: in a way which reveals to our human understanding the fact that it truly understands something which is other than itself. As Hoenen argues in his Introduction, p. xv, “according to St. Thomas the human mind even in its natural attitude, prior to any philosophizing, is already *critical*.”

<sup>5</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 15, a. 1, ad 3. Aquinas refers to judgment in terms of assent which he distinguishes from consent which is not purely an intellectual act but, instead, an act of the mind as it is conjoined with an act of human willing. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 9, a. 1: *...autem homo per naturalem assentit secundum intellectum alicui veritati*, “...man assents to some truth through the natural reason, on the basis of an intellectual insight...,” as quoted by Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 261.

<sup>6</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2.

<sup>7</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 9, 6. In this same text, Aquinas refers to two notions of *being* which he finds in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (1017a 8-35) where, on the one hand, *being* refers to the attribution of a property in terms of its essence (or form) and, on the other hand, it can also refer to an affirmation which says that something is true and, because it is true, real. Cf. Aquinas’s commentary in the *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 9, 885-897. For Aristotle, being is form and form is being or *ousia* (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 7, 17; Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, pp. 390-391) since form causes being by giving being to matter within the physical or material order of things that is constitutive of our naturally existing world (Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 2, 775: “form gives being, and matter receives it”). Hence, nothing exists apart from its specific determination through the agency of an active principle which is the causality of a given form. This form unites itself to what is able to receive it (and so some kind of passive principle is indicated). The two constitute an essence and, as a result, a specific kind of being or thing, a specific kind of substance: a “this” instead of “that” comes into existence. Substance is essence, the “what it is” of a given thing. For a full explanation of the reasoning which led Aristotle to identify substances in terms of essences, see Michael Novak, “A Key to Aristotle’s ‘Substance’,” *Substances and Things: Aristotle’s Doctrine of Physical Substance in Recent Essays*, ed. M. L. O’Hara (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), pp. 188-208. For Aristotle (and before with Plato), forms exist in an eternal way.

could lead us toward possible affirmations of truth or reality.<sup>10</sup> Judgments come after our conceptions: after, in a word or definition, we have first conceived a form, an essence, or a quiddity.<sup>11</sup> Judging brings our knowing toward its proper conclusion.<sup>12</sup> In judgement, our “knowledge is completed.”<sup>13</sup>

Hence, we can perhaps argue that our human knowing happens principally in our judging and not in any other kind of cognitive act. Instead of a form of some kind, act as an act of existing, existence, or *esse* emerges as the general object of our questions that now seek to make a judgment.<sup>14</sup> While, on the one hand, from a metaphysical perspective, existence refers to the actuality of an essence (composed already of a formal principle and a material principle; hence, form and matter) or, in other words, the actuality of being in terms of its reality, on the other hand, from a cognitional perspective, it refers to an affirmative judgement that is reached by us through an act of reflective understanding which exists as a

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However, when the world ceases to be seen as an eternally existing thing, when it is seen as a purely contingent thing in the context of Christian belief in terms of the world being created by God, form loses its primacy as an adequate principle of explanation. A higher, a more explanatory principle needs to be identified and invoked and this, for Aquinas, refers to act as act of existence or act of being which is to be correlated with an act of rational judgment that affirms whether or not a proposed understanding or meaning is to be regarded as a true understanding or true meaning: true or real because of a reduction, ultimately, which has been able to specify an extrinsic cause that is itself lacking in any kind of contingency. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 53.

In metaphysical terms, an act of existence is to be sharply distinguished from an essence or, more specifically and properly, it is to be sharply distinguished from a finite essence which refers to the essence of a contingently existing thing. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 54, a. 3. Understanding a finite essence does not necessarily include understanding its being or existence. Being or existence cannot be derived from any nature or essence (with respect to the being of contingently existing things) even if, admittedly, we can say that natures and essences exist in a qualified sense as hypothetically existing entities which have been discovered and which can be employed by us, using our minds and understanding, to employ them as explanatory conjugates. Cf. *Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, p. 11; p. 53; p. 164. An explanatory principle is not a concretely existing being that can be somehow known and sensed initially as a body before it can be known as something which exists as a thing or substance. It lacks the fullness of reality which belongs to the simple existence of concretely existing beings or things which exist as compositions of matter, form, and act although, always, its existence is ordered in some way toward the act of being or the act of existence of a given thing or being: being conceived “either as an accident, or as an intrinsic principle of being, or as a possible being, or as a being in the mind.” Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript translated 1989 by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), p. 165. Hence, as an explanatory, second kind of *being by which* which combines with a first, explanatory *being by which* that exists in form, nature, or essence (*Incarnate Word*, p. 157), an act of existence or an act of being adds something to a finite essence by joining with an essence as *that by which something is* to create a new situation: a being, thing, or substance now fully *is* or *exists*. A substance or thing is thus not simply an essence. It is not an embodied form. It is not *that by which it is* but it is *what is* or *that which is* (in a union which joins an essence with an act). An Aristotelian understanding of substance is accordingly supplanted by a Thomist understanding of substance which associates what something is with the facticity of its being or the facticity of its existence. What something is does not always refer to a nature, a form, or an

judgment.<sup>15</sup> In judging that something is so, it can be said that, by our understanding, we compose.<sup>16</sup> An intellect composes. It says that a predicate is truly united with a given subject. Similarly, in saying that this is not the case (in saying that something is not so), an intellect divides or it separates. It says that a predicate is not truly joined with a given subject. In judging, in composing and dividing, our human inquiry moves away from form toward act in a shift that is orientated toward a greater degree of self-transcendence (where, before, an earlier form of self-transcendence had moved us in our human cognition initially from the data of received sense to the understanding of a given, received form).

As our acts of sensing apprehend sensed images that are given to us in our acts of sensing, our acts of sensing undoubtedly experience a conformity or a match between our human sensations and sensing as a

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essence. More can be implied. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 29, a. 4, ad 2; 3a, q. 17, a. 1, ad 7; q. 17, a. 2 & ad 4; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 151; p. 158.

8*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 3.

9*Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 13, 7 & 11-12. As Aquinas explains it in the *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1 and in q. 21, a. 1, in knowing a truth, we know about the conformity of a certain thing with a given intellect or act of understanding. While we can argue that the being of a given thing exists independently of its known truth and so, in a sense, it is prior to its truth, an affirmation of truth adds to being a knowledge about a conformity of thing with an intellect which reveals the reality or the beingness of a given thing. What exists independently of ours minds, our understanding, comes to exist within a mind, within our understanding, as a perfection which refers to a growth which exists within our understanding and knowledge.

10*Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 8, 125; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 6, 4, 1236. Citing Aristotle's *Physics* (247b10) in the *Sententia Libri De anima* and also later in the *Quaestio disputata De anima*, a. 6, Aquinas notes (in the *Quaestio disputata De anima*, p. 71) that "the soul becomes cognitive and possesses prudence when [it is] at rest." As a necessary precondition, before our understanding can move into the knowledge which exists in judgment, our judgment, as a prospective act of cognition, requires an attitude of mind and consciousness which resembles a species or type of contemplation. More so than what is required for abstractive acts of understanding, in order to move toward any form of critical knowledge that is grounded in wise or prudent judgments, as human beings, we must first work for some form of detachment which exists as a kind of inner peace within ourselves (within our souls). Habits of life which exist in us may need to change since the precondition of any judgment which leads to any form of wisdom (whether in science or in ethics) is the good of engaging in some kind of withdrawal from the normal circumstances of our daily life. For a time, we must withdraw from any form of social intercourse with other human persons since, prior to judgments, we need time and distance from any distractions which could be diverting our minds and attention from pondering matters in a way which can consider the possible existence of all the relevant factors that could possibly apply in a given case or question which asks about the possible reality of a given, understood meaning.

11*Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 3. As Aquinas briefly notes in the *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, "the concurrence of two elements, apprehension and judgment about a thing apprehended, is necessary for knowledge."

12*Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 2; a. 3.

13*Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 2. To paraphrase a quotation that is taken from the *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 1 (a text that cited and adapted by Matthew Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, p. 97), "discursive thought leads to judgment, and the judgment brings thought to rest." Cf. *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 6, 4, 1234.

type of knowing and that which our acts of sensing are sensing but, at the same time however, our acts of sensing do not know or grasp this conformity or match as something which is known by them.<sup>17</sup> By lacking in a form of self-reflection that can fully turn back on itself to think about what proportion exists between itself and what it is apprehending, this further or other kind of knowledge is not given to us in our acts of sensing. Nothing can be said about a conformity (a *conformitas*) or an equalization (an *adaequatio*) which, allegedly, should exist between our knowing and a given thing (between ourselves in our knowing and something which is other which is known) in a conformity or an alignment which is required if a knowledge of reality is to exist within us, within ourselves, as knowers who are moving from a condition of potency to a condition of act.<sup>18</sup> In terms of self-knowledge, our senses only know that they are sensing.<sup>19</sup> In sensing an object which is sensed and in sensing itself sensing,<sup>20</sup> an act of sensing does not understand itself.

In addition too, and as a complication which needs to be acknowledged, as our abstractive, direct acts of understanding know that they are grasping a meaning which becomes an idea within our understanding minds and that this idea expresses a meaning which has been abstracted from the data or the matter of our senses, like our acts of sensing, our initial acts of understanding also do not know if they exist as knowing (if the understanding which is experienced is the same as that which exists as the experience of knowing): if, in understanding, we are knowing a truth and not only experiencing a meaning or having an idea.<sup>21</sup> The kind of inquiry which seeks knowledge, at some point, encounters the problem of truth as our cognitive human consciousness begins to realize that “distinctions [that are] drawn by the mind are not necessarily equivalent to distinctions in reality.”<sup>22</sup> The first operation of our understanding does not know if a conformity exists between that which is understood in an idea and that which is supposed to be understood through the understanding which has been reached and expressed through the reception that exists in us of a given idea.<sup>23</sup> Admittedly, a conformity of sorts between knowing and being, knowing and reality, can exist within our knowing without our knowing

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14*Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3; p. 27. As Thomas Weinandy explains it in *Does God Change? The World's Becoming in the Incarnation* (Still River, Massachusetts: St. Bede's Publications, 1985), p. 75, since the act of a thing's existence is not a thing's form, nature, or identity, act or *esse*, as a metaphysical principle, lacks a form which is intrinsic to it. In lacking its own “whatness” or form, we cannot say what *esse* is. *Esse* exists as only the correlative of a positively concluded affirmation: a “yes” to a question which asks if something is, in fact, true or real.

15*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2.

16*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 3.

17*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 9; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 6, 4, 1235, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 66, 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 2; q. 17, a. 2.

18*De Veritate*, q. 1, aa. 1-3; *Summa Theologiae*, q. 16, a. 8, ad 3.

19*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 9; also cited by Bernard Lonergan, “Christ as Subject,” *Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 169, n. 20.

20*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 2, 591.

21*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 11, 760; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 2. See also William E. Murnion, “Intellectual Honesty in Aquinas and Lonergan,” (paper presented at the Third International Lonergan Workshop, Erbacher Hof, Mainz, Germany, January 2-7, 2007), pp. 4-5.

22*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 50, a. 2, as quoted from *St. Thomas Aquinas Philosophical Texts*, trans. by Thomas Gilby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), Thomas Gilby, p. 13, n. 40.

23*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 6, 4, 1236.

that, in fact, such a conformity exists.<sup>24</sup> However, if such a conformity is to be known and appropriated as an identity or as an equation of mind and thing,<sup>25</sup> if truths are to be known for what they are as truths, a new pattern of cognitive activities must arise to respond to questions that now ask about a meaning that can affirm or deny the truth of a truth.

When made, denials of truth in judgments rank as true affirmations since, in a denial, through a judgment, we affirm that something is so.<sup>26</sup> We affirm that something is not the case. In all positive affirmations, judgments assert that the terms and relations that are constitutive of a given form or idea have a meaning which is identical with one that also exists in reality, a reality which is greater or more than our own being or reality since it is that within which we somehow exist and live.<sup>27</sup> An identity which already exists in an act of understanding between an act of understanding and that which is understood by it becomes an identity which now comes to exist between the being of a given knower *as a knower* and the being of that which is now known which, in its existence as a being, is to be clearly distinguished from the natural existence or the natural being of a given knower who, through his or her reflective act of understanding, is now seeking to know a being which is other than itself and *as other than itself*. The kind of identity which emerges within a judgment is not to be confused with any kind of metaphysical or ontological type of identity which might want to posit an identity between two or more beings or two or more objects. It is only with respect to the order of divine self-knowledge as this exists in God that an identity within judgment is to be equated with any form of metaphysical identity, God's self-knowledge being the same as God's own act of existence or God's own act of being.<sup>28</sup>

With respect to the differences and the relations which exist between our abstractive acts of understanding and our reflective acts of understanding which exist in judgments, while it can be argued that abstractions distinguish form from matter and while, on the other hand, it can be argued that judgments distinguish one thing from another thing (in affirmatively saying or positing, for instance, that this is not that),<sup>29</sup> the unity which is sought by our judgments in the intellectual object that properly belongs to our acts of judgment is of such a kind that it transcends whatever exists as the unity which is attained by our prior, abstractive acts of direct understanding. While we first understand and grasp an intelligible unity that is given to us in a form, our judgments take an intelligibly understood unity and they turn it into a real unity by employing its own procedures and operations. It affirms the rational or the true existence of a given form. Form is turned into an actuality, a reality, or an act. Reality or being is defined by another kind of intelligibility: by an intelligibility which exists as a rational kind of

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<sup>24</sup>Terry J. Tekippe, *What is Lonergan Up to in INSIGHT? A Primer* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 122. The context of Tekippe's discussion is what Aquinas says about acts of judgment in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 2 and about how judgment makes a contribution to our knowing which cannot be supplied by our prior human acts of sensing and abstracting.

<sup>25</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 2.

<sup>26</sup>*De ente et essentia*, 1.

<sup>27</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, a. 12.

<sup>28</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 47, 5; "God's being is God's understanding," my translation; 4, 11, 7; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 3, a. 4; q. 14, a. 4: "The act of God's intellect is His substance." See also Ivo Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method: The 'Universal Viewpoint' in Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 22.

<sup>29</sup>*Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3.

intelligibility because, in a judgment, another kind of intelligibility is grasped and affirmed. Where the form or the essence of a thing specifies what it is (and from the form or the essence of a thing, we can derive a designating name, label, or reference), the act or the being of a given thing is something which must then be received by a given understood form if something new is to exist, if something new is to emerge and to exist.<sup>30</sup> As a metaphysical correlative, in conjunction with potency and form, act belongs to the constitution of anything which exists.<sup>31</sup> With respect to created things, and within the structure of our human acts of understanding, form is never to be confused with act, being, or reality since we can understand the form of a thing without knowing anything about its being or existence, whether or not it in fact exists.<sup>32</sup> As distinct from a form or essence, “being means something having existence.”<sup>33</sup> “A being [*ens*] is said to be in as much as it possesses being [*esse*].”<sup>34</sup> *Esse* is the act by which something as an *ens* or being exists.<sup>35</sup> Form can only be identified with act if again, as with God, we should refer to an uncreated, existing thing which cannot receive an act of being or an act of existence (an *actus essendi*) if its form or essence exists also as its proper act of being or as its proper act of existence.<sup>36</sup>

As in fact a different kind of intelligibility, the intelligibility which properly belongs to judgments works from a different basis or ground. “Difference of product postulates a difference of ground.”<sup>37</sup> An intelligibility is affirmed to be real once it is verified since all prospective judgments try to make truth claims that can withstand any possible criticisms that can be alleged against them, and if any claims are to be made about the possible reality or the possible truth of any given understood meaning where a grounding base needs to be identified within some type of cognitive experience that other persons can somehow themselves also have, reach, or attain. Every other person should be able to refer to this base or to have it within the order of their experience in order to verify any claims about truth

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30 *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1.

31 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 19, a. 1, ad 4; cf. *Incarnate Word*, p. 159.

32 *De ente et essentia*, 4, 6; cf. *Quaestio disputata De anima*, a. 6; p. 71; *De Potentia*, 7, 2, ed. 9; *Quaestiones de quodlibet*, 2, q. 2, a. 1. As Aquinas had argued in the *De ente et essentia*, 4, 6; trans. as *On Being and Essence* by Armand Maurer (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949) p. 46 (hereafter cited as the “*De ente et essentia*”):

...every essence or quiddity can be understood without anything being known of its existing. I can know what a man or a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it exists in reality. From this it is clear that the act of existing is other than essence or quiddity, unless, perhaps, there is a being whose quiddity is its very act of existing.

Cf. Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, p. 75; *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. 121.

33 *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 1, 2419; cf. 4, 2, 556-558.

34 *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 1, 2419, as cited by Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, p. 121, n. 18.

35 *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 1, 2419, cited by Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, p. 75 & n. 25.

36 *De ente et essentia*, 4; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 11.

37 Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 60.

that are being made by other persons.

Hence, with the initial posing of questions about the truth of an idea or concept, meanings that are initially experienced within the order of our intellectual consciousness are immediately converted into meanings which now enjoy a provisional kind of status. They exist as possible apprehensions of being or as possible apprehensions of existence. An idea becomes a hypothesis. It has been converted in a way which has turned it into a new species of potency and, in turn, this potency or potentiality endures or remains until our additional inquiries can possibly lead us into new experiences of data that can be possibly given to us in a way which brings us into a species of experience which exists for us as evidence, the experience of evidence existing for us as an experience of rational necessity. We are moved and compelled by experiences of confirmation in evidence to respond in a way which hastens and points to an act which now exists as a free assent which exists within us.<sup>38</sup> Its freedom is defined by an experience of reasonableness. The reasonableness points to the rationality of our understanding as it now moves toward a judgment that we must now make: hence, to the appropriateness, the goodness, or the rightness of an affirmation which says that that which has existed as a hypothesis is to be known as an instance or species of fact.

The kind of compulsion which accordingly exists points to why we cannot speak about a kind of force which is akin to some kind of external pressure which threatens us in some way, sufficient to destroy us in how we exist as conscious, experiencing human subjects. Because, prior to a prospective act of judgment, the abstractive understanding of our cognitive human consciousness has already moved from our outer sensible, sensing experience toward an internal activity that is given to us in how we apprehend the meaning of a given form or idea, our judgments begin initially from that which is inside of ourselves since, in any judgment that we must make, we act according to norms or principles which exist within us (within our operations): norms and principles which are properly constitutive of our acts of judgment (where our judgment exists as a distinct, rational type of cognitive act which belongs to us as human beings and subjects). According to one wording of it that comes to us from Aquinas: “understanding [the intellect] knows about things only by measuring them, as it were, according to its own principles.”<sup>39</sup> In order to know if a proffered truth is indeed truly and rightly true, in the experience which we have of ourselves in our cognition, we must go back and, in some way, reflect back upon ourselves and what we have been experiencing. We remember, we recall, we attend to the acts or the operations that we have employed or which have been given to us in ways that have led us toward the act and the term of an act of understanding which, now, we are reviewing and considering through a form of interior inquiry which encourages us toward having an understanding which would exist as an understanding of our cognitive selves: an understanding which understands something about the extent or the goodness of our understanding.<sup>40</sup> Simply put: “[the human] intellect knows truth insofar as it reflects upon itself,”<sup>41</sup> in judgments which are made about ourselves.

By means of this process, we advert to the adequacy of a link which connects our previous, given acts of direct understanding (our simple acts of apprehension) with their corresponding apt images which exist as phantasms. When moving into a judgment, we each assume a greater degree of self-control

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<sup>38</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 1; cf. *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1, obj. 10.

<sup>39</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 1.

<sup>40</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 9; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 11, 912; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 2.

<sup>41</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 9, my translation. See also *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2; q. 10, a. 9.



and personal responsibility than is otherwise the case with respect to our prior, previous acts of abstractive understanding. At the same time too, in the self-reflection of our judgments, we make more of a contribution of our own in terms of our acts of thinking, questioning, and understanding.<sup>42</sup> Hence, as the conscious knowing of a given, known truth requires a form of self-possession which exists as a form of reflective stance or distance, the self-appropriation which occurs in all of our acts of judgment consequently explains why Aquinas says and affirms that “truth is found primarily in the intellect.”<sup>43</sup> In every judgment, in the understanding which exists in every judgment, we judge ourselves with respect to the character and quality of what we have been understanding and how we have been thinking, questioning, and understanding.<sup>44</sup> What relation or proportion exists between that about which we think that we know and understand and the means by which we think that we know and understand something which is other than ourselves? In a real sense, to reiterate, we always judge ourselves. Our judgment judges itself since, in every prospective judgment, a certain amount of self-reflection exists which exists as the ground or as the basis of our individual human freedom (even if this self-reflection does not immediately lead us toward a form of self-knowledge that is fully adequate for us if our object should be to fully understand ourselves as inquiring, thinking, human learners and knowers).<sup>45</sup> Knowing a truth does not imply fully knowing our individual, human self even if we can properly argue and state that every instance of knowledge, as it occurs through our making of a given judgment, by this same making also provides a base from which we can possibly move toward a more adequate understanding and knowledge of ourselves (as best as we can do this within the context of our current human life).<sup>46</sup>

In the self-reflection which accordingly occurs within our judgments and which leads us toward an affirmation which avers some kind of known objectively existing truth, not only then is some kind of truth known but, at the same time too, in the knowing which we are experiencing, we are now knowing that, now, we are truly knowing.<sup>47</sup> Our knowing is self-consciously known through an understanding of our understanding which occurs within the order of every judgment. It is a fully conscious human type of knowing through a specification of consciousness which, as we have been noting, is to be identified with that which exists as our rational consciousness (as distinct from an experience of

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42William 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), p. 22.

43*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 3, my translation; cf. a. 9; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 2.

44*De Veritate*, q. 24, a. 2.

45Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 87. As Aquinas had noted in the *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 9, “many persons know that they have a soul without knowing what the soul is” (my translation). In other words, in every judgment a certain amount of self-knowledge exists (a certain amount is performatively required) although this partial self-knowledge is to be clearly distinguished from a full or complete form of self-knowledge that only begins to emerge through a self-reflection that first turns to ourselves, to the activity of our human understanding in order to distinguish constitutive elements or parts that have served as means or tools by or through which our understanding has been encouraged to exist (keeping in mind that understanding is essentially a reception and not an activity or species of proaction). A useful, parallel distinction could be to speak about acts versus actions. Acts refer to receptions; actions, activities or proactions.

46*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 111, a. 1, ad 3.

47Crowe, “Lonergan’s Search for Foundations, 1940-1959,” *Developing the Lonergan Legacy*, pp. 168-169, citing a number of passages from Lonergan’s *Verbum*.

empirical, sensible consciousness and an experience of intellectual consciousness on the basis of what has been our prior acts of questioning, thinking, and understanding). A person rationally knows that he or she knows that something is either true or false, and in the self-knowing which occurs as the precondition of every experienced, received judgment, our self-knowledge emerges as a presupposition which is so basic that, without it, no judgments of any kind can exist. A person truly knows something other than him or herself when always, at the same time, the same person truly understands and knows his or her own understanding and knowing:<sup>48</sup> that which exists as the conditions that have all to be met if we are to make a valid claim and assertion that, in fact or in this instance, we truly know this or truly know that.

In other words, fuller meaning as true meaning only emerges through a kind of circular return (a *reditio*), a reduction, or a resolution to the first principles that are given in us our intellectual and sensible acts (our acts of intellect and sense) through a *resolutio in principia* which is effected by our acts of human reasoning and which, in a way, recalls the structure of our human reasoning and how our previous acts of human reasoning have moved from initial experiences of sense toward later experiences of understanding,<sup>49</sup> and how our acts of understanding occur in a context which necessarily presupposes first principles of understanding that, in themselves, contain simple apprehensions of truth and fact.<sup>50</sup> In judgment, as in our abstractive acts of understanding, we move from effects to causes, or from consequences to sources. Two major steps are to be pointed out and noticed.

First, we work with our understanding to identify the act of abstractive understanding which had led us toward a grasp and apprehension of form within matter.<sup>51</sup> In doing this, we seek to determine all the

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<sup>48</sup>James B. Reichmann S. J., *Philosophy of the Human Person* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1985), p. 114.

<sup>49</sup>*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*, p. 21, Coelho refers to this process of reduction as the “mechanism of judgment.”

<sup>50</sup>*Super Librum Dionysii De divinis nominibus*, VII, lect. 2, no. 713, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, pp. 269-270; p. 293, n. 32: “*Inquisitio [= inventio] enim rationis ad simplicem intelligentiam veritatis terminatur, sicut incipit a simplici intelligentia veritatis quae consideratur in primis principiis; et ideo, in processu rationis est quaedam convolutio ut circulus, dum ratio, ab uno incipiens, per multa procedens, ad unum terminatur*; the “investigation or ‘discovery’ of the reason is completed at the simple understanding of truth, just as what is considered in the first principles begins from the simple understanding of the truth; in this way, there is a certain ‘turning around’ as in a circle, while the reason begins from one thing, goes through many, and comes to a stop with one again.”

<sup>51</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 9. Later in q. 2, a. 2, ad 2 and, in certain ways more fully in q. 10, a. 8, Aquinas outlines how it is possible to proceed from a reflection on an abstractive act of understanding to a reflection which generates a self-knowledge of ourselves as knowers. In acts of abstractive understanding, we grasp a form within experiences of sense data and, in attempting to do this, through our questions and inquiries, we are always moving outwards from ourselves into the data of sense which we are experiencing. However, with the reflection of judgement and in order to move into an act of judgment, we move back from a form or object that we have apprehended within external data to reflect back on the prior act which has apprehended this form or formal object within the sensed data that we have been experiencing and, by reflecting on this act, we can begin to think about the powers or

relevant principles which have informed our previous act of understanding.<sup>52</sup> We begin with a possible meaning of some kind, a form or an essence which exists within our experience of understanding and, from it, we move toward those conditions which have to be met before we can argue toward any valid assertions of fact that we would make. Since the first operation of our minds begins with inquiries into sensible experience and then, from abstractions, we move toward conclusions on the basis of a number of primary and secondary principles, prospective judgments must begin with which principles have been employed in coming to any meaning that now awaits our evaluation and judgment. The secondary principles are most immediately present because they are most proximate and, from them, we then go toward the first principles which are also given to us within the cognitive awareness that we each have as inquirers. Together, these principles all need to be related or lined up with each other in a sequence which passes from one principle to another: from demonstrable first principles which exist as secondary principles toward undemonstrable first principles which exist as primary principles.<sup>53</sup> Specifically, we attend to how our secondary principles are ordered to primary first principles. What principles must be invoked in order to move from common primary first principles toward specific secondary first principles and then toward specific conclusions and what principles have, in fact, been invoked? What principles exist within our intellectual consciousness which have led us toward conceptions whose truth we are now trying to judge? By them, “we judge all things.”<sup>54</sup>

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the activities which belong to us in our souls, to that which exists as the human spirit. As we move retroactively from object to act and then from there toward our activities (our active potencies), we move toward an understanding that can initially grasp the form or the essence of that which exists as the human soul (which exists as a union of soul and body) and then, from there, we move toward another judgment which can acknowledge an immateriality which exists within us, an immateriality which refers to the immateriality of our human cognition, our human minds (appositely, the immateriality of our souls or the immateriality of our understanding) because this same mind or this same understanding has been able to detach a form from matter in a way which then reveals a new attachment which exists as the attachment of an apprehended form to an immaterially existing reality which exists as the reality or the being of our human intellects (our understanding). See Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 29. As form exists within matter, within material conditions (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 2, ad 1), by a return or a *reditio* which occurs specifically in us in an act of judgment, our human inquiry moves back toward the central form and act which exists in us and from which all of our activities have proceeded and so, by this reflective return, the autonomy or the self-subsistence of our human understanding and cognition reveals itself to us in a way which suggests how the self-subsistence of the divine intellect can be then properly understood. The basic heuristic principle which is operative and which grounds this kind of inquiry that is geared toward the possibilities and the achievement of our self-understanding is one which simply says and avers that understanding understands understanding (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 87, a. 1). Our understanding understands our understanding. No other way exists. Since our understanding occurs through an act of understanding, the understanding of this first act of understanding necessarily requires a new, distinct, subsequent act of understanding. Admittedly however, whether or not through possible acts of inquiry and judgment we would wish to move toward some kind of fully reflective type of self-knowledge which could be then put into words is a decision that awaits each of us within the order of our thoughtful reflections and considerations.

<sup>52</sup>*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 47, 7.

<sup>53</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 112, a. 5.

<sup>54</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 7, ad 3 (4<sup>th</sup> set of objections).

Then, and secondly, we work with our acts and data of sense in order to determine relevant acts and data of sense.<sup>55</sup> Since first operations of the mind grasp forms within phantasms (as insights into data), the identification of principles necessarily turns us toward any acts of sense which have played a role in the activities which have served to condition us with respect to the subsequent activities which belong to us in terms of how, mentally, we exist as abstracting agent intellects. “Since the senses are the first source of our knowledge, we must in some way reduce to sense everything about which we judge.”<sup>56</sup> For every act of sensing, a corresponding content exists from which images have been received and which have been refashioned by us to produce suggestive images that have provoked our initial acts of understanding. The instrumental object in the act of understanding which specifically exists as a judgement is a reflection that thinks about the relation that connects data of sense with terms of abstractive understanding as these have been conceptualized in externalized words and concepts that reveal the meaning of an order of internally understood mental words. By experiencing the interactive relation which connects data, on the one hand, with principles of understanding, on the other hand, a rational assent becomes possible through a second kind of intellectual emanation which exists as a rational compulsion: it grasps the reality or the rationality of a proposed, understood truth. The ground is a basis which exists within the content of our experience. A retroactive analysis has grasped all the necessary, facilitating conditions that are needed as we move toward the conclusion of a prospective judgment; and, by referring to the data of the cognitional consciousness which are immediately available to us as knowing subjects, through their givenness or self-evidence, we immediately know if all these conditions have been met and fulfilled.

With every judgment that we make, some aspect or part of reality is revealed to us. Consequentially, as human beings, as human subjects, we become more fully united to reality (to the order of truly existing real things). Our judgments reveal the true order of things within which we live and exist and thus the place and even the possible significance of our human living as this exists within an order that has been given to us, an order that God has created. Hence, “wisdom [*sapientia* or *sophia* in Greek] differs from science in looking at things from a higher set of principles.”<sup>57</sup> Wisdom is to be distinguished from

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<sup>55</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 9.

<sup>56</sup>*De Veritate*, q. 12, a. 3.

<sup>57</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 51, a. 4, my translation. See *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 9 which refers to wisdom as a higher reason (which judges things and disposes of things from a viewpoint grounded in a knowledge of eternal laws) and science as a lower reason (which has a subordinate function and task), and *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, a. 2, ad 2 which argues that the understanding of science (the habit of science) and that which belongs to first principles (the habit of first principles) both depend on the understanding which is the habit of wisdom in order to judge any conclusions which have been reached through our scientific reasoning and also the first principles that our scientific reason employs to acquire an understanding of anything. *Sapientis est ordinare*: “it is the part of the wise to order [and to judge; and since lesser matters should be judged in the light of some higher principle, one is said to be wise in any one order who considers the highest principle in that order],” *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 1, a. 6, as cited by Leo Serroul in “*Sapientis est ordinare*”: an interpretation of the *Pars Systematica* of Bernard Lonergan’s *De Deo Trino* from the viewpoint of order, p. 35 (an unpublished dissertation presented at the University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, 2004). The same point had been noted in the first paragraph in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and is reiterated by Aquinas later in the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 45, a. 1 as regards the “work of the wise person.” Cf. Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P., “St. Thomas Aquinas and the Biblical Wisdom Tradition,” *The Thomist* 49 (1985): 594-596. Hence, “according to Aristotle (*Metaph.* I. 2), it belongs to wisdom to

science.<sup>58</sup> It gives a perfection to science that science cannot give to itself. As a species of intellectual virtue or habit, wisdom transcends the apprehension or the understanding which comes to us from *intellectus*, from the abstractive understanding of any species of scientific analysis that is constitutive of the life of a given science.<sup>59</sup> In contrast, wisdom emerges as a preeminent virtue within the order of our human knowing: knowing here as a knowledge of realities, beings, or facts.<sup>60</sup> Beyond the understanding of abstractive acts of understanding and the habit of first principles which exists within our understanding, and beyond the acquired habit of science which employs primary and secondary principles to reach conclusions through forms of reasoning that try to show how certain conclusions follow from a given set of principles,<sup>61</sup> through judgments which are sound because they are just and rational, we grow in wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom is to be equated with knowledge and

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consider the highest cause and by means of that cause we can form a most certain judgment about other causes, according to which all things should be set in order,” as cited by Matthew Levering, “Wisdom and the Viability of Thomistic Trinitarian Theology,” *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 600. Similarly, in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, a. 2, Aquinas had spoken about the ordering which a wise man is able to do if such an ordering begins from a knowledge of the highest causes. From such a perspective, a person would be wise without qualification since, if a person were to have a simple unadulterated knowledge of God, he or she could then judge and arrange all things in an order that is measured by divine rules or norms (*regulas divinas*) that are constitutive of an unchanging, eternal law which belongs to God alone as the proper term of God's divine understanding. See *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 1 and 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 1, ad 3 on God's mind as the measure of the truth or the reality of all things and on how all things participate in God's eternal law by imitating or participating in the understanding which most properly belongs to God's uncreated understanding. It accordingly follows, and as Lonergan explains it (in the *De Deo Trino*, p. 15, as cited by Serroul, p. 49): “it is the work of wisdom to discover what problem is first in the sense that: (1) solving it does not presuppose the solution of other problems; (2) once solved, a second is expeditiously solved; (3) the solution of the first and second leads immediately to the solution of a third, and so on throughout all remaining related problems.” Everything begins with “an extremely fertile act of understanding” which answers an initial question and, by virtue of this first answer, “all other questions are answered in an orderly fashion” which, in turn, introduces “a system of definitions” that, in turn, creates a “technical vocabulary.” Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 151. From a basic set of terms and relations which is grasped by an initial act of understanding, all else comes and flows.

<sup>58</sup>*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 4, 1183. Cf. Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 29. In his analysis of what Aquinas has to say about wisdom, pp. 27-34, Levering distinguishes four different meanings for wisdom in Aquinas: wisdom exists as an intellectual virtue; as a gift of the Holy Spirit; as sacred doctrine (*sacra doctrina*); and as Christ, the Son of God. See also Levering, “Wisdom and the Viability of Thomistic Trinitarian Theology,” p. 597.

<sup>59</sup>*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 6, 76; 1, 1, 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 5, ad 4.

<sup>60</sup>*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 9, 1256. Earlier in Book 6, lecture 7, paragraph 1191, Aquinas distinguishes between wisdom as a virtuous speculative knowledge of reality or being and the practical wisdom and virtue of prudence which governs our right human behavior in terms of how we should respond to given concrete situations as we encounters them in our daily living. In his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 2, 2, 290, Aquinas reiterates this distinction when speaking about the relation between speculative and practical knowledge. The same kind of distinction is articulated in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3 when Aquinas distinguishes between the

knowledge, wisdom.<sup>62</sup> In a like correlation, being wise as an activity is to be equated with our acts of intellectual judgment; and acts of intellectual judgment, with the activity of our being wise.<sup>63</sup> Wisdom is right judgment, the virtue of our right judgments.<sup>64</sup> A habit of wisdom perfects our human cognitional operations through a knowledge of reality that is gained by our knowledge of truths since this habit attends to being or reality by employing first principles that directly pertain to our questions about the truth of things and which are normally revealed to us as a consequence of participating and engaging in introspective acts of understanding which are then followed by our acts of introspective judgment.<sup>65</sup> Where, in Aquinas, being is the most basic first principle of things (it exists as the primary or the first concept of our understanding), from a judgment which then affirms and asserts the truth of the principle of non-contradiction, it immediately follows from this that we cannot say that what exists can simultaneously not exist (*impossibile est esse et non esse simul*). Being and non-being exclude each other. This affirmation in turn immediately points us back (in our self-awareness) toward the primacy and the reality of being and to how it necessarily functions for us as the basic presupposition and the first principle of all our acts of judgment.<sup>66</sup> From it, all else comes and arises in any of our later

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wisdom of virtuous judgment as this judgment exists in us as morally good persons who want to behave in a virtuous manner and the wisdom of good judgment as this also exists in us as persons who can come to a true knowledge of something while lacking a personal truth or reality within ourselves which would distinguish and set us apart as morally good persons. Even within ethical or moral matters, persons can make wise, accurate judgments about things even as or if they should lack any kind of personal goodness or a life of virtue within themselves.

<sup>61</sup>*Super Boethius De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1; Bernard 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. 162. In J. Michael Stebbins's, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), *Divine Initiative*, p. 25, while citing from the first edition of Lonergan's *Verbum*, Stebbins briefly summarizes how Aquinas understood the habit of science as an acquired intellectual habit.

Understanding develops; one can gradually accumulate and synthesize insights until one commands knowledge of a whole subject or field. The possession of this kind of synthetic knowledge is the acquired habit of science (*scientia*), the grasp of the implications of what one understands, the ability to demonstrate conclusions. Learning a science is a long and laborious process; but having learned it, one possesses habitual knowledge and can thereby understand with ease the interconnected ideas which the science comprises.

<sup>62</sup>*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 3, 629. "The intellect as judging is said to have wisdom, whilst as apprehending it is said to understand." Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 10, ad 3 also correlates wisdom with knowledge, knowledge which is regarded as certain or sure.

<sup>63</sup>*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 7, 672; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3; 2a2ae, q. 9, a. 2.

<sup>64</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 45, a. 2; cf. Coelho, p. 21.

<sup>65</sup>*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 5, 1181.

<sup>66</sup>Owen Bennett, "Existence and the First Principles According to St. Thomas Aquinas,"

acts of judgment.

Originality in any of our acts of abstractive understanding should thus not be confused with the possible sagacity of any subsequent judgments that we might make since, as human beings, some of us can function with an uncommon type of mental ingenuity (which few others possess) to grasp forms within images by how we skillfully construct suggestive arrangements of data and, yet, as human beings, we could be woefully lacking in our ability to employ the arts and proofs of judgment in a way which can lead us to correct judgments and assessments with respect to meanings that we are grasping and expressing through any words that we could be using. We can be clever and yet not be very wise and perhaps the explanation is one which says that wisdom tends to emerge as a later acquisition in the course of our lives. Wisdom attends our acts of judgment as the virtue of our good or right judgments, but acts of judgment come after our prior acts of sensing and our prior acts of abstractive understanding which themselves must be well done and properly received if carefully considered judgments are to follow at a later stage within the order of our human cognition. While, as human beings, as subjects, we all begin with acts of sensing, we do not all succeed in moving with ease into later acts of abstractive understanding. Wisdom accordingly presents itself as an even less common achievement than our initial acts of sensing and understanding although, as once achieved, it plays a pivotal and a kind of prior role within the dynamic of our human understanding since, through wise judgments about reality that we make, subsequent decisions can then be made about what inquiries we should undertake and how we should conduct ourselves in the undertaking of these inquiries. A wise person sees what another is not able to see.<sup>67</sup>

With respect in general to first principles,<sup>68</sup> for instance, judgments can affirm their reality through an inquiry that leads to an explicit form of self-knowledge and which attests to the validity of certain first principles and their importance as tools of analysis that are needed by us in the context of any kind of critical inquiry that is needed if we are to move toward a critical understanding of anything.<sup>69</sup> An ordering of all things in wisdom can then begin to occur as we rightly choose and define basic terms which are then combined by first principles in a way which points to the meaning and the point of axioms.<sup>70</sup> Within the order of our human cognition, analytic propositions are to be clearly distinguished from analytic principles.<sup>71</sup> On the one hand and initially, abstractive acts of understanding grasp the meanings of first principles by grasping and defining the meanings of their

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*Philosophical Studies in Honor of The Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O.P.*, ed. John K. Ryan (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1952), pp. 165-166.

67Serroul, q. 267, n. 110, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 3; Frederick E. Crowe, "Rhyme and Reason: On Lonergan's Foundations for Works of the Spirit," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 17 (1999): 29.

68See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 6, 6, 1140b 31-1141a 7; 6, 7, 1141a 17-19. Aristotle correlates wisdom with a knowledge of first principles from which everything else follows in science although he describes our coming to know first principles in terms of reason which exists as "intuitive reason." In the *Metaphysics*, 2, 1, 993b 27-28, he suggestively and obviously notes that "the principles of eternal things must be always most true."

69*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 5, 1182-1183; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 5, ad 4.

70Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 319, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 5, ad 4.

71Bernard Lonergan, "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, eds. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Express, 2004), p. 376.

component parts or elements. Part points to whole and whole to part. But, through later verifying acts of judgment, we can move toward a knowledge of these component parts and wholes and so, from this, a subsequent knowledge of the first principles which eventually emerge from the meaning and relation of all the component parts.<sup>72</sup> Through our judgments, we move from our thinking about analytic propositions toward a knowledge of analytic principles, propositions that have been verified through the reflective understanding which exists in our rational judgments.<sup>73</sup> Otherwise, without judgment, our analytic propositions would exist in a potentially endless number and we would not be able to distinguish between analytic propositions which exist as hypothetic propositions and those which happen in fact to be true. Our judgments determine which is which: which principles are to be regarded as objectively true and which principles are to be regarded as objectively false.<sup>74</sup> Moreover or in addition, through our wise judgments (wise because they are rational), we can choose which principles are to be applied in a given situation in order to reach truths that we have yet to know.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 5, ad 4.

<sup>73</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 432; *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 346.

<sup>74</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2.

<sup>75</sup>In Bernard Lonergan's *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 156-157, Lonergan explains Aquinas on why wisdom, as a habit, is more important than the habit of intellect or science since it "selects the terms that intelligence uses to construct analytic principles." Lonergan argues as follows:

....there is no knowledge of truth contained on the second level of consciousness [abstractive understanding], or on the first and second combined [sensation plus abstractive understanding]. Wisdom's selection of terms is the selection of one meaning of the term "being" rather than another, and once that selection has been made, the rest is settled. For example, there is Parmenides' notion of being, Plato's, Aristotle, Avicenna's, Averroes', St. Thomas's, Scotus's, and Hegel's. They all differ, there is no first principle that does not attain a different meaning according to the different meaning you give being. How do you pick out which is the correct notion of being? Picking out the correct notion of being is putting in a fundamental determinant in the meaning of all possible principles you may ever appeal to. Why do you prefer Aristotle to Plato and Aquinas to Scotus? That is the function of wisdom. Wisdom governs the selection of basic terms, the selection of basic terms governs first principles, and first principles govern conclusions. Because we move up to wisdom, because wisdom is not a foundation from which we start but towards which we tend, it is by studying different philosophic systems, comparing them, and seeing the different consequences of the different systems that one arrives at the wisdom of one's own that entitles one to prefer one notion of being to another. That preferring one notion of being to another is a strategically very



Wisdom orders all things,<sup>76</sup> but this ordering begins with an examination of first principles which are then known and selected as a consequence of later judgments that we make.

In conclusion then, a man is wise if he is able to order all things since only a wise man is able to order and understand things as they really are and truly exist as realities.<sup>77</sup> A wise man is someone who should be well disposed in the manner and the content of his affections.<sup>78</sup> While, admittedly, we can try to speak about wisdom in metaphysical terms, as something which is given to us through a “first philosophy” or a metaphysics which claims to offer a knowledge of universal first causes or principles from which all else can be understood,<sup>79</sup> wisdom being the “chief of all the sciences,”<sup>80</sup> on the other hand however, wisdom possesses an operative, performative significance. It has a meaning which is derived from the functioning of our human cognition since, by its being related to us in our human cognition, wisdom exists or it is defined by the rationality of our prospective judgments. It is defined in terms of what conditions must be fulfilled if our judgments are to emerge in a way which distinguishes them from acts that are lacking in the goodness of rationality and which would be essentially arbitrary or willful because they would be lacking in the reflectivity of the type of understanding that is able to ponder and ask questions about itself.

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important judgment, and it is a judgment of fact. Which notion of being is the real? To select the notion of being that is the notion of real being as opposed to false conceptions of being is the fundamental wisdom of the philosopher

<sup>76</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 5, c. & ad 4 cited by Frederick G. Lawrence, “Lonergan and Aquinas: The Postmodern Problematic of Theology and Ethics,” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 439, n. 14. Quoting the Latin, [*sapientiae*] *est ordinare omnes* [*virtutes*].

<sup>77</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>78</sup>*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 7, cited by Crowe, “Rhyme and Reason: On Lonergan’s Foundations for Works of the Spirit,” *Developing the Lonergan Legacy*,” p. 316, n. 5.

<sup>79</sup>*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 2, 51.

<sup>80</sup>*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 6, 1188; cf. *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 34; 1, 2, 36-51; 3, 60; 2, 2, 289-290.