

Reason in Aquinas: How it exists as a Differential

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Aquinas begins with a question about how to distinguish between a material or a physical action and an immaterial, non-quantifiable type of action if we are to distinguish between a material agent or actor and, on the other hand, an immaterial agent or actor. Hence, how to distinguish between the “actions of a man” and a man’s “human actions”¹ (an *actus hominis* versus an *actus humanus*) or, in other words, “human actions [as they] ordered to an end” (*operatio humana ordinata in finem*)?² At the very beginning of the *Summa Theologiae* in the *Secunda Pars*, when speaking about what or how it means for us to be a human being, Aquinas distinguishes between acts that are simply performed by a human being and other acts which are inherently or intrinsically human, acts that cannot be performed by some other kind of actor, agent, or subject.³

¹*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 1; 2, p. 583; cf. aa. 2-3. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 8: “the human act, which is called the moral act, obtains its specification from an object [that is] related to the principle of human acts, which is the reason,” as cited by Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 420. This same point is stated in other texts: notably, in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 5; q. 18, a. 8, ad 2; and in the *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.

²Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 33.

³*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 1; cf. 3a, q. 19, a. 2. For a more technical and precise discussion of what distinguishes rational from non-rational operations as this difference is explained by a close reading of Aquinas where it is argued that Aquinas clearly distinguishes between understanding as an event and the its formulation or expression through the means of a concept, see 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), pp. 100-102. In examining this question, Stebbins argues, following Bernard Lonergan, that a legitimate Thomist understanding of this difference is derived from an experience of the data of our personal cognitive experience: from the datum or consciousness that a rational act has in a sense or in an awareness of its own rationality. Acts of sense, as acts of sense, do not know or understand why their activity is conjoined with particular experiences of data. However, rational acts are rational because they are not lacking in such an awareness which properly belongs to the data of our human consciousness. Acts of reason, as they occur, not only grasp a *ratio* or a meaning which is the proper term or the object of their several operations, but they also experience a second kind of object within cognition, a second kind of object which is purely immanent to the acts of cognition themselves, and this experience refers to a reason of some kind which grounds or which attests to the rationality of our reasonable acts. From experiences of rationality, all else follows. 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), pp. 179-182, where, in his explanation, Lonergan distinguishes three kinds of presence or three kinds of object: (1) a local, physical or ontological presence or object which exists apart from cognition (as when we experience the presence of our faces

To use a somewhat standard example, when a man raises his hand to ward off a fly, he is a human being who assuredly engages in an action. However, to the degree that his act or action is a function of biological purposes and instincts (or to the degree that it is an unthinking, unpremeditated action: an act only of a physical organ or a power which is willful or instinctive), it is not properly a *human* act. All human acts are acts performed by human beings but not all acts performed by human beings rank as inherently human acts. A genuinely human act is an act that has been pondered, considered, and thought about before, through a decision and a choice, it is put into effect.⁴ It is informed by a variable that is denominated in terms which refer to “reason” since this “reason” exists and emerges as the fruit of a process of learning and reflection and this deliberation, to the extent of its reasonableness, in turn

which cannot be directly seen by our eyes); (2) a presence or object which is the terminus or term of a cognitional act (whether an act of sense or an act of reason); and (3) a presence or object which is the self-presence or the self-consciousness of a person who engages in certain acts and who therefore knows that he or she is engaging in certain acts and not others. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 10, 3, 12 for how St. Augustine distinguishes three different meanings for presence or object, and the discussion which Aquinas provides in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 46, 6 which admits the existence of a third kind of presence or object that a person has: a pre-reflective knowing of self which refers to one’s self-experience of one’s consciousness. While the second kind of object is not itself conscious (although it is the term of a conscious act), the third kind of object is conscious because it is a conscious act which refers to a conscious subject. By acts which are conscious, a subject is conscious and he or she is made conscious. A subject then ceases to be more than just a substance: a being or a person who would be existing as a subject in only a potential or in an unrealized way. A person can be less than a subject although, through its activity, it is to be identified with a subject. Cf. *Incarnate Word*, p. 190; p. 198. Through differing acts thus which lead to each other as conditions that prepare the way for the emergence of other, later acts, a subject grows in its own consciousness, in its own inner or interior experience of itself in terms of what it does and what it is able to do as a performer and doer. A subject is more present to itself; it is more fully conscious. And so a subject is not only known as a subject through a consciousness that is aware of itself through the givenness of an experiential, reflexive knowing of its self-consciousness but, at the same time too, a subject is also constituted as a subject through a heightening of subjectivity which enhances and which changes the subjectivity of a given subject in terms of what it does, performs, and experiences. The knowing of a subject *as a subject* transforms a subject in a way which would not occur if the knowing of a subject were to be a knowing that is essentially only the knowing of an object (and nothing else) where, in knowing an object as an object, an object is not itself changed by the knowing that is had of it (even if, to some extent, it has to be admitted that a knower is changed in some manner, to some extent, whenever it comes to a knowledge of something which a knower possesses within his or her consciousness). Cf. *Incarnate Word*, pp. 183-4, p. 198; see also Bernard Lonergan, *Collection*, “Christ as Subject: A Reply,” eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 165. By attending to the inner experience of our consciousness, the psychological reality of a subject manifests itself to us. The advent of consciousness and the awareness which a person begins to have of what he or she is doing takes a person as a substance and then turns it into a species of psychological subject.

With respect to concepts and by way of further illustration, as Lonergan argues in his analysis of how Aquinas understands our human cognition, as this is rendered in Lonergan’s study, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 48, when our human understanding occurs, “it pivots on itself to produce for

functions as a basic premiss to explain how and why potential actions that are performed by a human agent can be transformed into actions that are intrinsically human, human precisely because they possess a freedom and goodness that is grounded in and defined by the deliberations and the decisions of our rational human reason.⁵ *Homo maxime est mens hominis*.⁶ A man or woman, a human being, is principally his or her mind or his or her intellect in terms of acts or operations that are implied through the form of signification which refers to mind or intellect.⁷ Reasonableness or rationality or, in other words, the reasonableness and rationality of our acts of human reason, their proper functioning, measure the height and breath of our authentic human living since it is only by means of reasoning and the self-reflection of our reasoning that human beings can know that they can govern themselves by

itself another object which is the inner word as *ratio, intentio, definitio, quod quid est*.” The “pivoting on itself” denotes an experience of rational consciousness which a knowing human subject always enjoys whenever he or she experiences an act of understanding. While conditions exist which help to explain why any given act of human understanding occurs, the self-consciousness of our human understanding is a datum whose presence within us within our human understanding explains why our human understanding possesses a sufficiency or a groundedness which properly belongs to it and which functions as a form of compulsion within our conscious human life, albeit, as a compulsion that is rational and not despotic or willful. Rational exigencies freely move a human person towards actions and deeds that are themselves free because they come from a rational and an intelligent foundation. Actions and deeds are not spontaneous but they are more free to the degree that they are now subject to some form of rational control.

⁴Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 1, 3; trans. as *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* by Kenelm Foster, O.P., and Silvester Humphries, O.P. (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumbox Books, 1994) p. 2 (hereafter cited as the “*Sententia Libri De anima*” followed by a technical reference to the original text, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation).

⁵Thomas Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, q. 24, a. 1; trans. in three vols. as *The Disputed Questions on Truth* by Robert W. Mulligan, James V. McGlynn, and Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952) 3, pp. 137-9 (hereafter cited as the “*De Veritate*” followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); q. 24, a. 2; q. 22, a. 12; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 48, 3; 5 vols. by Charles J. O’Neil as *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (Garden City, New York: Hanover House, 1957) 2, p. 144-5 (hereafter cited as the “*Summa Contra Gentiles*” followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); *Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 1, 8; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, prologue.

⁶*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 29, a. 4, cited by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., “The Origin and Scope of Bernard Lonergan’s *Insight*,” *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), p. 27.

⁷A number of other texts taken from the *Summa Theologiae* can be cited as evidence of Aquinas’s thesis that what makes a human person to be specifically human is the human ability to engage in acts of reasoning which lead to the possibility of understanding. In 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 5, Aquinas argues that human happiness is principally grounded in the human exercise of man’s highest and most noble power or faculty: the activities of the human intellect when engaged in a theoretical reasoning of some kind which then leads toward experiences of true understanding and knowledge. Later, in 2a2ae, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1, Aquinas notes that “man as such is a rational being” (3, p. 1759). Hence, since the proper pleasures of our human life pertain to acts of reasoning which lead us toward understanding, temperance, as a virtue, is not to be exercised in trying to restrain us as human beings as we engage in

determining alternatives from which they can choose which action is, in fact, to be put into effect.⁸ At a certain point, within our deliberation, within our reasoning, persons realize that they are truly responsible for the actions which they engage in and for the kind of person that they thus become as a consequence of what they are thinking and doing. A properly human act is self-determinative.⁹ Hence, “only that is said to act which has dominion over its action.”¹⁰ Reason, reasoning, successfully converts actions that are merely actions into acts which are intrinsically human (and, because they are human, they are right; they are moral). Human action and moral action always refer to the same thing, to the same reality.¹¹

Hence, for Aquinas, reason is properly referred to as “the first principle [*primum principium*] of human acts.”¹² “The proper action (*actio*) or operation (*operatio*) of man as man is to understand, for by

acts of reasoning that direct us toward understanding. Restraints need to be applied only against inclinations which come from a biological or an animal nature (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 95, a. 1). They have no other place or role.

8*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 5, ad 4; *Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 16, 840; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 12, ad 3; q. 22, a. 2, ad 4, ad 5; q. 83, a. 1; 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 3; q. 9, a. 3; q. 13, a. 6; q. 17, a. 6, ad 1.

9In “St. Thomas Aquinas’s Theory of the Act of Understanding,” *The Thomist* 37 (1973), p. 110, a paper based on an unpublished dissertation entitled, *The Meaning of Act in Understanding: A Study of the Thomistic Notion of Vital Act and Thomas Aquinas’s Original Teaching* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1969), William E. Murnion strongly argues that, according to Aquinas, self-mastery is a quality which only belongs to us as human beings. Its basis or ground is man’s experience of himself as a reasoning, thinking being since the self-reflection of our human reasoning reveals to the reasoning human person a personal power or potency of decision which is the ability either to act or to not act in any given situation. To argue this point, Murnion cites from Aquinas’s *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, 6, 2, 1126 which he emends by introducing a negation (“not”) to make sense of a concluding phrase that belongs to the sentence that he then quotes. My translation accordingly reads: “two works are said to be evidently proper to man, knowledge of truth and action inasmuch, evidently, as man assumes mastery of his own action, and is not moved or led by anything.” In his “Shankara and Aquinas: A Case Study in Comparative Ethics,” *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 20, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2008), p. 344, Murnion notes that acts are only truly human if it is possible for us to take responsibility for them through the reflections and the deliberations that we engage in. For this reason, it can be properly said that freedom cannot exist without deliberation or, more tersely, in Murnion’s words, “deliberation is necessary for freedom.”

10*De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 9, ad 4; 1, p. 243; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 24, a. 2; *Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 818, 831; 16, 836, 840.

11*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 3. As Aquinas goes on to argue in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 5, ad 3 and also in the *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 4, an act can be identical as a purely natural act but, as one attends to the different contexts within which acts occur, one finds significant moral differences. The absence of reasonableness in one context changes an act that is performed by human beings into an act that is less than human while the presence of reasonableness converts the same act into an expression of human behavior which leads to many good consequences and results.

12*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 90, a. 1; 2, p. 993 and also 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 1, ad 3. See Aquinas’s definition for the meaning of “principle” in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 33, a. 1; 1, p. 173 where he says that a principle is “that whence another proceeds.” A principle is to be distinguished from a cause (q. 33, a. 1, ad 1 & 3) since cause suggests that a difference exists between a cause and an

reason of this he differs from all other things.”¹³ From this, all else follows. To the actions of a human being comes an intentionality or purpose which explains why a given act or action is what it is and why it exists in the way that it does.¹⁴ The object of an act (*finis operis*), as a goal toward which deeds are ordered,¹⁵ commonly coincides with an object or action that is being immediately intended by a human agent (*finis operantis*) in a specific action which, as a means, leads to one’s intended goal or objective.¹⁶ Goal and act coincide. Instrumental, specific acts or actions serve higher purposes as persons engage in specific acts or actions in order to meet goals which transcend these acts or actions and the specific ends or purposes which are properly correlative to the activity of these acts. Through living a life of reflection and reasoning, a human being can begin to choose how he or she will act and live: what ends or objectives one should live for and how one should change and perfect oneself to become a better person and, as a consequence, begin to live a happy, joyful life.¹⁷ Not only does a life of reason perfect a given human intellect but, as a source of perfection, it also perfects the human agent in a way that moves the human self from one achievement to another or, to use a more traditional form of expression, from one perfection to another perfection.¹⁸ The life of reason which a person already has and from which a person begins already possesses a degree of understanding which exists as a perfection (something which has already been achieved) and, so, as the life of thinking and reasoning grows and advances in a human person, it attains new perfections which reveal an origin and a destiny which is common to both. As the human life of reason begins with the actuality or the reality of what a human person is (the constitution, order, or organization of a given human person), it also concludes as the terminus of a long process that seeks to realize this actuality or reality more fully.¹⁹ Actuality or reality gives rise to more actuality or more being. Being leads to being, act to act, in a dynamic which correlates reality or actuality with a form of activity that realizes itself as a reality. Hence, being or

effect where an effect is something lesser than a cause and an effect depends or relies upon its cause. However, a principle possesses a wider meaning since it refers to that which is first, or to that which is a point of origin for a given set or order of things. As Aquinas notes as an example, “a point is the principle of a line.” While a principle can be a cause, in its wider significance, it primarily refers to an ordering first term which does not imply that any second or third term *ad infinitum* is of lesser importance or value than the first term. No difference in reality is to be postulated or concluded. A principle admittedly refers to a point of origin but not necessarily to a specific cause.

¹³Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 3; trans. as *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* by John P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961)1, p. 7 (hereafter cited as the “*Sententia super Metaphysicam*” followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 57, 15; 2, 60, 2; *Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 2, 17.

¹⁴Daniel Westburg, “Good and Evil in Human Acts (1a 2ae, qq. 18-21),” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 91, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 2, ad 2.

¹⁵*In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 2, a. 2, a. 1, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 432.

¹⁶Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 432.

¹⁷*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 76, 15 & 19; 79, 3; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 1; q. 26, aa. 2-3; q. 76, a. 1; Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 10; 10, 10, 2080; trans. as *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics* by C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumb Ox Books, 1993) pp. 40-3 & p. 623 (hereafter cited as the “*Sententia libri Ethicorum*” followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation).

¹⁸*Sententia Libri De anima*, 2, 11, 372.

¹⁹*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 3, 4-6.

reality is to be regarded as essentially an activity. The two cannot be disassociated from each other.

Unlike plants and animals who have ends determined for them which then determine how they will behave and act, unlike these other creatures, through our choices, we, as human beings, can determine ends (as means) that we can implement although, as created beings, we cannot determine ends or aims which already belong to the meaning and being of our human existence and the given functioning of our human operations.²⁰ As human beings we can understand the meaning of our operating toward an end or objective since we can understand how means and ends relate to each other and how they also differ from each other. An end can be grasped as an objective to which we can dedicate our lives (give ourselves to) but different means can be imagined about how we may prefer to reach a greater end that we wish to realize, reach, and attain in some way.²¹ By understanding these differences as they pertain to ends and means, intermediate ends can be distinguished from each other and also different means by which we can realize different ends. The realization of one end becomes a means for attaining others and, by grasping a chain of causation which links means and ends, means and ends can be related to an ascending hierarchy of goals and goods that can reveal ultimate purposes and objectives that can then serve to guide us in our human operations in an intelligent, reasonable, and self-transcending manner. Reasoning, as an activity within human life, distinguishes what it regards as good from what it regards as bad or evil, or what it views as right from what it views as unethical or wrong,²² and on this basis, persons can decide about how they should live in any given context. The object thus is not merely life but a good life which is not to be defined by a reductionist, aggregative notion of good which is content with purely biological purposes and a purely biological form of existence and which is defined by a private possession of goods that serves these purposes.²³

However, if reason is truly the first principle of human life and if it exists as an internally operative norm, its correlation with law raises questions about what could be the distinct meaning of law. Is law other than reason? On the one hand, Aquinas clearly identifies law with reason (it is the rule of reason).²⁴ To the degree that reason is an active principle, so is law. Law functions as an ordering principle and, in its proper functioning, human reason also acts as an ordering principle.²⁵ In grasping

20*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 18, a. 3; 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 4; q. 24, ad 1, ad 3; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 88, 3; 2, 23, 6; 2, 47, 1-5; 2, 48, 1-6; *ST*, 1a, q. 59, a. 3; q. 82, a. 1; cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 6, a. 1; q. 13, a. 6.

21*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 83, a. 1.

22*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 21, a. 1.

23*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 10, 123-26; 10, 10-12. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1 where Aquinas distinguishes between the goodness of mere being or existence and a fuller or greater goodness which exists by means a thing's perfection or full actuality. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran & H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), Lonergan, pp. 423-425. For a contemporary restatement on the meaning of the good for human living, see Frederick G. Lawrence, "The Human Good and Christian Conversation," *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground and Forging the New Age*, eds. Thomas J. Farrell & Paul A. Soukup (Kansas City, Missouri: Sheed & Ward, 1993), p. 254. See *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 90, a. 2 on law and its relation to the common good where Aquinas argues that law, if it is good law, is "ordained to the common good," the good of human persons living together in society.

24*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 90, a. 1, ad 3.

25*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 87, a. 1.

any idea or form (Aquinas's term is "species"), a created intellect is able to understand how a multitude of things can be related in a way which reveals a hidden oneness or hidden unity.²⁶ The "human intellect 'rolls many things into one' (*multa ad unum convolvit*)."²⁷ A form as an idea takes a material multiplicity and it converts it into an unseen but understood unity. The unity is intelligible. It is not material.

By way of contrast, as angel, as a purely intellectual being, has a created intellect that can immediately grasp the unity and relation of different things.²⁸ For an angel, reason is essentially simple; it is a simple, single act. No parts exist. When an angel perceives a cause, it immediately perceives all of its effects; and, when it perceives any effects, it similarly immediately perceives all the pertinent causes.²⁹ An angel does not have to work for any understanding or knowledge (*cognitio*) since all meanings are immediately known.³⁰ Hence, for an angel, reason exists as a species of intuition.³¹ Each act of

26*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 58, a. 2.

27Thomas Aquinas, *Super Librum Dionysii De divinis nominibus*, VII, lect. 2, no. 714, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 269.

28*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 58, a. 3.

29*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 58, a. 3, ad 1-2.

30Thomas Aquinas, *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 5; trans. as *On Evil* by Richard Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) p. 472 (hereafter cited as the "*De Malo*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation).

31The intuitive knowing of an angel is to be sharply distinguished from a Kantian understanding of it which is rooted in a common and even pragmatic understanding of cognition which tends to regard knowing essentially in ocular terms: as a seeing or looking at something. To say that "one sees" is to say that "one understands." Another similar expression that is commonly used avers that "seeing is believing." Thus, when intellectual activity is interpreted in terms of sensate "seeing" or "looking," understanding or knowing is characterized by an immediacy that normally belongs to our acts of human sensing. In order to see, we have only to open our eyes and focus our gaze. Seeing occurs somewhat automatically. But, with understanding, the case is otherwise. We can ask questions and think and ponder about things, but understanding does not emerge merely by our performing any given act or any number of given actions even if the doing of certain actions frequently leads to our understanding, or it encourages the likelihood that understanding will occur. Understanding, when it happens, is not something that is produced at will by us as human agents. Instead, when it happens, it is something which is received. It comes as a gift even if we have tried to work for it.

However, the immediacy of sense, in its strength and power, does suggest that sense has a cognitive sufficiency which it does not really have. The experience of this immediacy tends to lead us to an understanding of human cognition which speaks about the reality of intuition. Hence, in Kant's understanding of human cognition, a person is immediately related to a real object only through a sensible type of intuition. As Kant notes early on in his treatise on the conditions of possibility for our human knowledge (in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 19, B 33): "In whatever manner and by whatever means a mode of knowledge may relate to objects, intuition is that through which it is in immediate relation to them, and to which all thought [*alles Denken*] as a means is directed." *Anschauung*, the German noun used by Kant for intuition, has a literal root which means "intuit," "look," or "look at." Intuition is basic in knowledge since knowledge of reality only comes through our sense experience of things. Sensible experience or sensitive operations (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling) define what an object is as a real object. Memory and imagination only extend, prolong, and refashion

knowledge is complete and comprehensive. All knowing is instantaneous. Or, in other words, the knowing of an angel is not discursive.

On the contrary, for us however as human beings, reasoning (thinking) is a process or motion that we need to engage in (if we are to reach any desired kind of understanding).³² This reasoning or thinking moves and shifts from one element or part to another in a succession of steps and stages which manifests itself in two different ways.³³ First, our human reasoning and cognition moves from one known to another known.³⁴ Not everything is known all at once. Human knowing is always partial and incremental.³⁵ Then, secondly, in another form of succession which also reveals the incremental and partial character of our human knowing: a potential knower moves from what is already known to what has yet to be known, or to what has yet to be more fully known.³⁶ A shift takes a knower from effects to causes, or from causes to effects,³⁷ or from similarities to similarities, or from contrarities to contrarities by employing principles of explanation that lead to conclusions in a manner which reveals that human reason is a labor which works through two different forms of reasoning activity (signified by the way of analysis and then by the way of synthesis).³⁸

With respect to our reasoning in general, Aquinas speaks about it in terms of ratiocination (*ratiocinatio*) or discourse (*discursus*).³⁹ Knowing involves a set of different acts or elements which need to be coordinated with each other if an unknown is to be known. Thus, for Aquinas, understanding and reasoning are to be clearly distinguished from each other.⁴⁰ “To understand is simply to apprehend intelligible truth; to reason is to advance from one thing understood to another, so as to know an intelligible truth.”⁴¹ *Ratiocinari, cogitare*, reasoning, thinking exist for the sake of our understanding, our understanding as *intellectus*.⁴² We think in order to understand. *Intellectus* is the ultimate goal and end within our cognition and, whenever it occurs, prior preparatory reasoning experiences its transcendence in a shift that is effected by our experience of understanding.⁴³ Hence, as the knowing of an angel explains why an angel exists as an *intellectual* being, the knowing of a human being explains why a man or woman is identified as a *rational* being,⁴⁴ a being, literally, who reckons, computes, calculates, and plans if the common verbal meanings of *ratio* are to be considered in the context of

our initial experiences which are first apprehended by us in acts of sense. But, because angels lack organs of sense (because they exist as immaterial beings), their knowing as an activity works apart from experiences which they do not have and which they cannot have as non-incarnate beings or substances. Meanings are grasped by a form of intellectual activity that does not need to work with other activities in an interaction which can lead to knowledge. This lack of co-operation is a conclusion which thus argues that purely intellectual acts are sufficient for the cognition of angels. In a manner that escapes our human experience (given the form or structure of our human experience), angels directly apprehend meanings as the term of their intellectual acts (these being the only acts which, as knowers, they are able to perform and enjoy). Instead of sensible intuitions, spiritual intuitions are said to occur which, technically, are unlike acts of seeing or looking and these spiritual intuitions directly connect an angel with the being of real objects.

³²Thomas Aquinas, *Super Librum De causis*, prop. 9; trans. as *Commentary on the Book of Causes* by Vincent A Guagliardo, Charles R. Hess, and Richard C. Taylor (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996) p. 71 (hereafter cited as the “*Super Librum De causis*” followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 64, a. 2; *Lectura super Ioannem*, c. 1, lect. 1, para. 26, cited by Lonergan, *Collection*, p. 146, n. 7; and Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 585.

Aquinas's use of words.⁴⁵ For us as human beings, understanding, *intellectus*, emerges as the term of a series of acts which are rational because, instrumentally and teologically, they lead to one another in a conditioned, conditioning relationship where the object and term is an experience of understanding. Reasoning seeks understanding although, at the same time too, its basis or ground is a prior experience of understanding which belongs to the human intellect's self-understanding: an understanding which spontaneously and naturally grasps that it can engage in acts of reasoning which can lead toward understanding because the acts of our human reasoning all possess a form which relates their parts or elements into a whole which reveals the functioning of our human reason as an activity (in terms of what it does and how it functions).⁴⁶

33*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a.7; q. 58, a. 3; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, ad 10.

34*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 14; 3a, q. 11, a. 3 & ad 2.

35*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 2, a. 3; 3a, q. 12, a. 2, ad 1.

36Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia super Physicam*, 1, 1, 7, trans. as *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* by Richard J. Blackwell, Richard J. Spath, and W. Edmond Thirlkel (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumb Ox Books, 1999), p. 4 (hereafter cited as "*Sententia super Physicam*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); *Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 14, 8; *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 3; 1a2ae, q. 97, a. 1: "it seems natural to human reason that from the imperfect it gradually arrive at the perfect," as cited and translated by Frederick E. Crowe, "Practical Knowledge and Its Application," *Three Thomist Studies*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2000), p. 40, n. 15; "Law and Insight," *Developing the Lonergan Legacy: Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 275 & n. 22.

37Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 1 *ad tert. quaest.*; trans. as *The Division and Methods of the Sciences: Questions V and VI of his Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius* by Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1953), pp. 58-59 (hereafter cited as "*Super Boetium De Trinitate*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 2, 1, 278; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 14, a. 5; 3a, q. 12, a. 1, ad 1.

38*De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 15; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 57; 1, pp. 196-99; *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 10; trans. as *On Spiritual Creatures* by Mary C. FitzPatrick in collaboration with John J. Wellmuth (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1949) p. 116 (hereafter cited as the "*De Spiritualibus Creaturis*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 7.

39*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 58, aa. 3-4; q. 59, a. 1, ad 1; q. 79, a. 4; q. 85, a. 5.

40*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 12; q.15, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 108, a. 5.

41*Summa Theologiae*, 1, q. 79, a. 8; 1, p. 403; cf 2a2ae, q. 2, a. 1.

42Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q. 9, a. 9: "*sed cogitare ad intelligendum*," quoted by Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 23, n. 46.

43For a discussion on how the difference between reasoning and understanding became a later source of controversy amongst Thomist interpreters as neo-Thomist interpretation developed within the 20th Century, a controversy which pitted one school of thought led by Jacques Maritain and a second led by Pierre Rousselot S.J., see Gerald A. McCool, "History, Insight and Judgment in Thomism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987) 299-313. If understanding is interpreted in terms of reasoning (discursive reasoning), the uniqueness of understanding as *intellectus* can be

The discourse of reason always begins from an understanding and ends at an understanding; because we reason by proceeding from certain understood principles, and the discourse of reason is perfected when we come to understand what hitherto we ignored.⁴⁷

Hence, given this fact and because of it, it is only by understanding the proper functioning and order of these different acts, or the normativity of these acts, that we can then draw a distinction which knows that our reasoning is itself also subject to law: whatever could be the norms or the precepts which regulate how our human reason should function if it is to lead us toward an understanding and knowledge which can ground the possibilities of an authentic form of human living. If reason itself then acts as an ordering principle (as, in fact, a lawgiver or as a source of laws), it is because of a distinct set of laws which are constitutive of the order of our reasoning and which exist as a natural, inner law that is operative within our reasoning and cognition.⁴⁸ This natural law exists at a higher level, as a higher order of meaning and being, which in turn explains lower levels or lower orders of meaning and being since this higher order of meaning and being functions as a basic condition of possibility for any meanings, beings, and realities which can be known at a lower level. Understanding these basic set of laws which reveal a structure or normativity in the functioning of our human reason and cognition accordingly reveals a set of principles or laws which transcend the ordering of our human reason and cognition in its effects while, at the same time, also giving to the ordering of human reason a distinct configuration or form which exists within it and which allows our reasoning and cognition to employ its own means and to attain its own ends.⁴⁹ The functioning of our human reason reveals a

overlooked although, similarly, it has to be admitted that a second distortion results if the immediacy and the concreteness of *intellectus* is itself overemphasized and stressed. A just solution only emerges if the reasoning which prepares for understanding is clearly identified and properly understood.

44 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 58, a. 3.

45 *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (1977), s. v. "ratio."

46 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 8; q. 14, a. 7; q. 79, a. 9; *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 1; q. 15, a. 1; cf. q. 58, a. 4; q. 85, a. 5; *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 1 *ad. tert. quaest.*

47 *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 8, a. 1; 3, p. 1198.

48 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 2.

49 In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 71, a. 6, ad 4, Aquinas refers to natural law as a species of law which derives from a higher law which is to be identified as God's eternal law but which also exists in a secondary way in laws which are not eternal but which have somehow been created and which exist in the "natural judgment of human reason" (*in naturali iudicatorio rationis humanae*). Natural laws exist within the structure of our human reasoning and so they can be found there if we try to understand the structure of our human reason in its various acts. However, as Aquinas proffers an explanation later in q. 91, a. 6, we understand the normativity or the lawfulness of our human understanding if we attend to the inclinations and the ordinations that are most proper to us in our human living and which distinguish our human life from the existence and life of other things. Laws exist within created or subordinate things to the degree that these same things are naturally or normally inclined to abide by a higher set of laws which account for the existence and the life of these other, later things. The proper inclinations or ordinations of things reveal not only higher laws to which these things are subject but also these same laws as they also exist within these things as constitutive, inner principles. The participation of a thing in a higher reality which functions as a source or point of origin for law turns the participant (*particeps*) into an analogous or secondary source of law. And so, as we attend to those inclinations which distinguish us as human beings from any other kind of existing thing,

transcendent, subjective principle which is to be equated with an inner principle which exists as natural law, although less as a known order of things and more as a knowing or an ordering of our human reason or intellect which can then know about the being of other things (other than itself although, in fact, not excluding how it exists in itself).⁵⁰

Understanding the transitions through which human knowing passes thus reveals a basic structure or a customary habit,⁵¹ which, as a habit, is defined as “that which we act when we wish,”⁵² and, as structured, this knowing is ordered and subject to law.⁵³ Instead of its functioning as a maker or principle of law, a reverse relation also obtains between reason and law as fidelity or adherence to a set of laws effectuates the reasoning process to bring it about. When Aquinas speaks about human cognition (*cognitio*) in different sections of the *Summa Theologiae* and in some of his other, earlier works, he points to a sequence that links cognitional acts and, in turn, this sequence points to an invariant, normative order.⁵⁴ The acts all differ from each other but the pattern which joins them together reveals an inner order and thus a law which accounts for the proper functioning of our cognition: what should and must occur within the dynamics of our human inquiry. Not only does reason function as a “measure,” but it is itself also a “measured measure,” a *mensura mensurata*.⁵⁵

Three major theses briefly summarize Aquinas’s understanding of human epistemology and, as stated, they point to a normative structure that is constitutive of us in the dynamics of our human knowing:

(1) *omnis cognitio incipit a sensu* (all knowledge begins from sense), (2) *intellectus habet duas operationes* (the intellect has two operations), the grasp of ‘*quod quid*

we discovers laws which exist within those inclinations that are most proper to us in our human condition. We discover laws which are constitutive of our human cognition.

⁵⁰See the discussion of Martin Rhonheimer in his *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, pp. 11-12, where he argues that natural law in Aquinas should not be understood as an objective order of things that is then subjectively known by us through our human reason since the ordering of reason which occurs in our reasoning activities also suggests that natural law can be properly identified with our human reasoning in its acts of ordering and directing. Human reason exists as a natural act and so we can possibly argue that its term exists as a natural law of some kind (the one constituting the other) although neither possesses any authority unless both reason and law are grounded in an eternal law which exists in divine reason and which is constituted by this divine reason. Hence, as we attend to the objective subjectivity of natural law, we can speak about natural law not as belonging to an external “order of nature” but as the “eternal law itself (*ipsa lex aeterna*), insofar as it is ‘present’ to our [human] reason.”

⁵¹*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 11, a. 5.

⁵²*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 11, a. 5, ad 2; 4. For a reworded, more precise definition, we can refer to Michael Shute and William Zanzardi’s *Improving Moral Decision-Making* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Axial Press, 2003), p. 76, which speaks about habit in terms of a set of interrelated parts that, together, constitute a whole or a unity.

⁵³*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1.

⁵⁴In a passage taken, for instance, from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 108, 5; 3, p. 105, Aquinas notes that “our intellect does not immediately attain the knowledge of the quiddity of a thing, but with a certain order in the process of inquiry.”

⁵⁵Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 244. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 1 and in 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 1, ad 3.

est (what something is) - *intelligere*, understanding - and *compositio et divisio* (composition and division) - judgment, (3) *veritas proprie loquendo in solo iudicia inest* (truth properly speaking resides in judgment alone).⁵⁶

In conformity with Aristotle's understanding of human cognition, Aquinas argues, with respect to our human cognition, that "it is as ridiculous to say, the soul alone understands, as to say, alone it builds or weaves."⁵⁷ Knowing is a co-operative effort which involves both soul and body (the relevance of immaterial and material conditions) since human knowing occurs in a being that is formed by the union of these two principles. Soul (*anima*) is united to body in a way which takes a body and then converts it into a certain kind of body which exists and lives as a result of the soul's causality.⁵⁸ The body is needed by the soul if the soul's intellectual operations are to occur.⁵⁹ Hence, a human person exists as a species of incarnate spirit. *Anima mea non est ego*; "My soul is not I."⁶⁰ The soul gives a form or a structure to the materiality of our bodies in order to order the body in a certain way toward the being and life of the soul and, from this form or structure, the knowing of our souls derives its characteristic form or structure.⁶¹ Human knowing emerges as a function of the structure of the human soul: how human beings exist as embodied, incarnate beings.⁶² As Aquinas argues:

A thing is known by being present in the knower but how it is present is determined

⁵⁶Giovanni B. Sala, "Intentionality versus Intuition," *Lonergan and Kant: Five Essays on Human Knowledge*, trans. Joseph Spierl, ed. Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 101.

⁵⁷A. G. Sertillanges, *The Intellectual Life: Its Spirit, Conditions, Methods*, trans. Mary Ryan (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), pp. 33-4, citing Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 19, a. 1.

⁵⁸*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 75, a. 1.

⁵⁹*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 4. As Aquinas expresses his position in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 129, 7 (as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 339, n. 12) in a way which speaks about the good of bodily life and how the life of the body is to be properly understood:

According to the natural order, the body of the human being is for the sake of the soul, and the inferior powers of the soul are for the sake of the reason...But because it is oriented toward another [*ad aliud ordinatum*], it ought to provide help [*auxilium*] to that other, and not an impediment [*impedimentum*]. Therefore it is naturally right [*naturaliter rectum*] for the human body—and even the lower powers of the soul—to be treated in such a way that the act of the reason and the good of the reason be as little impeded as possible [*minime impediatur*], and instead be helped; if it happens otherwise, there will be sin against nature [*erit naturaliter peccatum*].

⁶⁰Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio et Lectura super Epistolas Pauli Apostoli, In II ad I Cor.*, 15, lect. 2, no. 924, cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 538.

⁶¹*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 83, 26.

⁶²As Aquinas notes in the *De Veritate*, q. 9, a. 10, ad 3, 2ae ser; II, p. 54, "understanding, properly speaking, is not an activity of the intellect, but of the soul through the intellect, just as to make warm is not an activity of heat, but of fire through heat."

by a knower's way of being. How something knows depends on how it exists. Hence, if the way of being of a thing which is to be known is beyond what belongs to a knower, knowing such a thing would be beyond the natural power [or the natural potency] of the knower.⁶³

Cognitive activity, as performed by human beings, thus has its own proper object (specified as an intelligibility that somehow exists within material conditions),⁶⁴ and this activity occurs through an interchange or an interaction between what is within a human knower and what is outside a given knower: at times, *a rebus ad animam* and, at other times, *ab anima ad res* ("from things to the soul" by way of reception, *via receptionis*, and, conversely, "from the soul to things" by way of motion, *via*

⁶³*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 4, my translation.

⁶⁴*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 11. "A thing's mode of knowing depends on its mode of being. But our soul, as long as we live in this life, has its being in corporeal matter; hence, naturally, it knows only what has a form in matter, or what can be known by such a form." Between the mode of being and the mode of knowing, a proportion, *proportio*, or correlation can be discovered and this proportion between the mode of a subject's being and the mode of its knowing carries over into a proportion that is reflected in the order of being or reality, ontology and metaphysics. A text in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 96, 5; 2, p. 326 directly refers to the existence of proportionality in noting that "the mode of a thing's proper operation corresponds *proportionately* to the mode of its substance and nature." Italics mine. With respect to a proportion between the order of knowing and an order or structure in that which is known, Frederick Crowe in his *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 223, n. 51, quotes a text from the earlier *In 4 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*. d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 6 which had referred to a proportion which should exist between the order or structure of knowing and a like order which should exist in the order of what can be properly and connaturally known. "The potency of the one knowing has to be on a level with the knowability of the thing known." Later texts in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 7; a. 8; q. 85, a. 1; and a. 8 all speak about a connatural, proportional relation between the embodiment of the human soul (the soul informing a body) and the embedded existence of forms within matter which is the proper object of our human knowing. With respect to human beings, and also with respect to angels and God, a distinct strict proportion exists between the knowing of a certain type of subject, on the one hand, and what is being known by the same subject, on the other hand. When commenting on John's Gospel, in the *Lectura super Ioannem* 1, 18, lect. 11, nn. 208-21, as cited by Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas Volume 2 Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 51, n. 69, Aquinas accordingly argues that, in the context of a strict proportion which exists between a created intellect and a created form, a created intellect can come to an exhaustive understanding of a created form but not to an exhaustive understanding of an uncreated form.

On the basis of the embodiment which properly belongs to the character of our incarnate human existence, while the object of our human sensible experience is an object as it exists within matter, a form as it exists in corporeal matter or a form as it is in such matter (*forma prout in materia corporali existit*; [*forma*] *prout est in tali materia*; see q. 85, a. 1), the object of our human understanding is a form that has been grasped as a quiddity, an essence, or a "whatness" which exists in corporeal matter (cf. q. 84, a. 7). See Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 212. Aquinas distinguishes between objects of sense and objects of intellect in a way which indicates that, for every element which exists within our cognitional order, a corresponding element can be posited in the ontological or metaphysical order. As Aquinas had noted in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 88, a. 1; 1, p. 448 (also cited by Crowe, *Three*

motionis).⁶⁵ Quoting Aquinas's own words, "the operation of the intellect has its origin in the senses although in respect to what is apprehended through the senses, the intellect knows many things which the senses cannot perceive."⁶⁶ In its brevity, two positions are thus initially stated. First, in the order of human knowing, all cognition begins with the experiences of our senses:⁶⁷ with sense experience, with what the senses receive in their actuation and operation.⁶⁸ Sense functions only as a material cause in the actuation of our human cognition.⁶⁹ A complete explanation must, however, refer to other causes. Second, as the human intellect begins to work with the data of *sensibilia* (with anything that is sensed) to grasp any meaning or significance that can be found within the data, it functions autonomously as if it were a source of light.⁷⁰ The light that is cast by its given, received, created, God given operations

Thomist Studies, p. 223, n. 52), "our intellect in its present state of life has a natural relationship to the natures of material things." Put more precisely, as quoted by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies* (p. 223, n. 52) and as Aquinas states it in q. 108, a. 5, "something is said to be in a certain thing by the proper mode when it is adequate and proportionate to its nature."

⁶⁵In *2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 20, a. 2, ad 3; In 3, d. 14, a. 3, sol. 3, cited by Crowe, "Appendix: The 'Realism' of Intellect and Will," *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 193, n. 10; *De Veritate*, q. 10, aa. 5-6. See also Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., *Christ and History The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982* (Toronto: Novalis, 2005), p. 171. On the interaction between sense and intellect (in movements that proceed from the world experienced through the senses to the soul which are also combined with movements that go from the soul toward the world that is experienced through the senses), Crowe also cites a number of other texts from Aquinas to corroborate the existence of this double relation within human cognition: passages from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 96, 10; the *Sententia super librum De caelo et mundo*, n. 2; and the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 8. Because the human intellect relies on the powers of sense to help and to encourage its reasoning activities, it can be cogently argued thus that it is a human being or person who is engaged in thinking and reasoning and not just an intellect or a mind. Cf. Francis Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), p. 105. Human personhood is not to be identified with intellect, mind, or soul. It exists as a larger thing (as an incarnated kind of thing).

⁶⁶*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 78, a. 4, ad 4; my translation.

⁶⁷*De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1.

⁶⁸*Sententia super Physicam*, 1, 1, 8; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 12; 1a2ae, q. 50, a. 3, ad 3. "The rational [cognitive] powers [potencies] of apprehension naturally receive from the sensitive powers," my translation.

⁶⁹*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 6: "Sense knowledge cannot be said to be the total and complete cause of intellectual knowledge, but rather, as it were, the matter of the cause," as cited in Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, pp. 577-579.

⁷⁰Thomas Aquinas, *The Soul: A Translation of St. Thomas Aquinas' De Anima*, trans. John Patrick Rowan (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Co., 1949), a. 4, ad 7 (hereafter cited as the "*Quaestio disputa De anima*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 1, a. 2. In his "Applying Universals to the Particular: The General Problem," *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 8, n. 20, Frederick Crowe cites a whole list of texts taken from Aquinas which refer to the natural intellectual light of our human reason. The human intellect is constituted in a way which indicates that it has a light of its own which it uses to attain understanding and move toward knowledge. The natural light of our human reason is not the only form of intellectual light but, nonetheless, as it finds and reveals meanings, it participates in any form of light which also finds and reveals meanings. Beyond the light

reveals a form or specification of light that is strictly intellectual.⁷¹ Within its ambit or range, all things are made intelligible. Everything is understood. All things are made known to us (things which either already exist or which have yet to be brought into being).⁷² Through the light of their own intellects or our understanding (serving or functioning as a medium),⁷³ as human beings, we can transcend any initially given experiences which come to us through our acts of sensing.⁷⁴ Intellectual light, or the light of intellect, refers to a power of manifestation or a demonstration which is the very power, the orientation, or the potency itself of the intellect to enjoy acts of understanding.⁷⁵ It is a “general power of understanding,”⁷⁶ a power or a capability or a receptivity of understanding that ultimately reveals the truth of things to us,⁷⁷ although the light of intellect should not be understood as something which refers only to the power or to the facility of our human understanding since the power of manifestation

of the human intellect, there is a light which belongs to angelic and divine understanding (a “light of glory”) and, as the light of our human reason *as a medium* reveals differences which distinguish truth from falsity or good from evil, it reveals itself as a reasoning and understanding which not only participates in an understanding which ultimately belongs to God but which also manifests an understanding which ultimately belongs to God, an understanding which is to be identified with an eternally existing law (as the term of an unchanging divine understanding of things) which, in turn, is to be identified with an eternal reason or understanding, an eternal reason which directly refers to God’s divine reason, God’s divine *nous*. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 5; 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 4; q. 91, a. 2; Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 258. Citing some of Aquinas’s own words, *quia quidquid veritatis a quocumque cognoscitur, totum est ex participatione istius lucis, quae in tenebris lucet*: whatever truth is known by anyone of us, it is always known by way of participating in a light that shines in the darkness (cf. *Lectura super Ioannem*, I, lect. 3, no. 103; Rhonheimer, p. 292, n. 21), a light that is always shining to dispel darkness and which touches all persons to the degree that anyone possesses any degree of understanding. Cf. Rhonheimer, p. 265. Our human reason is to be identified with a proximate measure (*mensura proxima*) and with a divine, remote measure (*mensura remota*) but in a context which works from a principle which says that our human reason, as a secondary cause, is only able to operate on the basis of a first cause which is to be identified with the primary causality of God’s reason and understanding. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 4, & ad 1 & ad 2. As Rhonheimer cites Aquinas from q. 19, a. 4: “the light of the reason that is in us can show us the good, and rule our will, insofar as it is the light of Your countenance, which means that it comes from your face [*a vultu tuo derivatum*].” Through light, through acts of meaning which reveal meanings, a bond joins truths that are known through the light of our human reason with truths that are known to God in His eternal understanding of things and which He could have revealed or can reveal through the manifestation of a special revelation. Citing Rhonheimer’s translation of the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 4, ad 3:

While the *lex aeterna* is not accessible to us insofar as it exists in the divine mind itself [*secundum quod est in mente divina*]; it is known to us [*innotescit tamen nobis*] to a certain extent either (1) through the *ratio naturalis*, which derives from it as its own image [*propria eius imago*], or (2) through some additional [*superadditam*] revelation.

71For a thorough survey of what Aquinas means when he speaks about “intellectual light,” see Francis X. Meehan, “Lux in Spiritualibus According to the Mind of St. Thomas Aquinas,” *Philosophical Studies in Honor of The Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O.P.*,” ed. John K. Ryan (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1952), pp. 127-164.

72*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 4; q. 91, a. 2.

or the power of demonstration cannot be ascribed as belonging only to the potency of our human intellects in the context of our understanding. Other forms of intellect can be no less potent or able. Other forms of intellect can be identified since the light of intellect exists as necessarily a precondition. As an actuating capacity which exists within us, it makes our understanding possible before any understanding becomes determinate in any given instance.⁷⁸ Within it thus, in a certain sense, a virtual knowledge of all things exists,⁷⁹ although, on the other hand, actual knowledge only comes and exists for us through the agency and the instrumentality of other activities which human beings must engage in and participate if they are to come and move toward a true knowledge of anything that is known.

⁷³*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 10, 730; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 88, a. 3, ad 1.

⁷⁴*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 75, a. 6.

⁷⁵*De Veritate*, q. 9, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 67, a. 1.

⁷⁶Crowe, "Applying Universals to the Particular," *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 12.

⁷⁷*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 106, a. 1.

⁷⁸Aquinas, *In 3 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 14, a. 2, sol. 1, quoted by Crowe, "Applying Universals to the Particular," *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 12, n. 35.

⁷⁹*De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 6, as cited by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 22; and by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 10 who translates as follows, "in the light of agent intellect all knowledge is in a certain way originally given to us as a natural endowment." In his *Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History* (New York, N.Y./Ramsey, N.J./Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 134, Crowe cites Aquinas's Latin text from the *De Veritate* as follows: "*in lumine intellectus agentis nobis est quodammodo omnis scientia originaliter indita.*" In his *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), p. 146, Lonergan identifies the light of agent intellect with the light of inquiry present in our consciousness where, through inquiry and our asking of questions, all knowledge, all science is made known. The "'agent intellect' becomes the pure, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know." Cf. Robert M. Doran, "Preserving Lonergan's Understanding of Thomist Metaphysics: A Proposal and an Example" (an unpublished paper presented at the annual Lonergan Workshop, held at Boston College, Boston, June 15-20, 2008), p. 5. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 77, 5, the same point is made when Aquinas identifies the created light of the human intellect with the agent intellect of the human reason which refers to the active role which is played by our human reasoning in the effort that it makes in order to attain a degree of understanding in what it wants to understand and know.