

Questioning the Good within the Order of our Practical Acts of Human Understanding according to Aquinas

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If, as a moving desire, our wonder or our curiosity impels us as human beings to engage in cognitional activities whose object is a knowledge of the truth of things and this first principle heuristically reveals the normative structure of our human cognition, through a question which now asks about how we should act given what we know,¹ our practical acts of human reasoning reveal a distinctive form of cognition where *being*, as a primary notion, is in some way transcended by *good* as a primary notion or first term.² *Good*, by functioning as an intended end (or purpose),³ and thus as a cause⁴ (as a final cause), as a principle or source of movement,⁵ it is constitutive of our practical acts of human reasoning in all of its successive acts and operations. In a parallel with the kind of first principles which is basic

1 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 1.

2 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2; 2a2ae, q. 10, a. 4, ad 2. In a way, *good* supplants *being* as a transcendental, as an ultimate end or objective from which we can then possibly initiate a study of the intentionality (or goal-directedness) which is constitutive of us as human beings with respect to our human subjectivity although, at the same time too, it is to be noted that while the *good*, as a final or exemplary cause, precedes and orders all subsequent causes in supplying and giving reasons which explain why anything acts, *being* or *existence* as such functions as the condition or as the precondition of every kind of cause since the good, as a final or exemplary cause, cannot exercise its influence unless it should also happen to exist. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, a. 11, ad 2; Francis Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), p. 52. *Being* exists as something that is more primary and universal (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 65, a. 3) although, on the other hand however, for Aquinas, *good* and *being* are to be regarded as convertibles. Each can be turned or made to exist as the other. *Ens et bonum convertuntur*; “being is convertible with good.” See Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 21. *Good* can be understood in terms of *being* and *being*, in terms of *good*. *Being* and truth are sought and desired as goods and *good* exists as a truth or reality through its intelligibility or its reasonableness. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 11, ad 2. However, in speaking about *being* and *good*, substantial being and moral being can be respectively distinguished from each other in a way which acknowledges a difference between the being of substantial good and the being of moral good. Selman summarizes Aquinas’s teaching on the *good* in the following terms:

- 1) all *being* is good; 2) things *seek* the good; 3) they are good as they are *perfect*; 4) the good is their *end*; 5) they are good because they have a *likeness* to God.

3 *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3; *De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 4; cf. *In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 19, q. 5, a.1, cited by Crowe, “Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas,” *Three Thomist Studies*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2000), p. 115, n. 4.

4 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 13, a. 11, ad 2.

5 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 2, ad 1; 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 3.

to the functioning of our theoretical acts of human reason,⁶ a set of first principles, which specify goals or ends,⁷ derives from this basic notion of good (as a species of anticipation), and these first principles reveal a set of precepts or regulations which guide our practical human reasoning to configure a structure which is endemic to it: an order which is normatively constitutive for us as, by our practical acts of thinking and reason, we engage in a series of different acts which are all related to one another and which are to be distinguished from each other as they lead us toward words, actions, and deeds which are their proper result. A sequence of different acts and operations build on each other in a relation which leads us as knowers toward concrete encounters with the being of good things, the good of these things being the ultimate object of our questions which move our cognition from an initial concern with theory and truth toward a concern which asks about praxis and execution in terms of goods that can be implemented and realized for perhaps the first time.

To begin with our trying to understand the notion or anticipation of good before moving to any precepts or regulations which impart an order to the structure of our practical acts of reasoning within the order of our human cognition, *good* in a way transcends *being* as a more comprehensive notion⁸ since a natural inclination toward a knowledge of reality or *being* is an inclination which is reinforced and sublated when, as potential human knowers, we decide *as a good* to give ourselves to a life that is wholly given to an understanding and knowledge of the truth of different things.⁹ As human beings, we seek to know *being* because they believe that it is *good* for us to know *being*. As an inclination which is the principle of our operations in moving us toward that which we want or desire (even if that which we want and desire is something which exists outside of ourselves or which transcends ourselves),¹⁰ our willing or our “will wills the intellect to understand,”¹¹ and so from this, as a consequence, it follows

⁶*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3; q. 63, a. 1; q. 94, a. 2; q. 100, a. 1; 2a2ae, q. 23, a. 7, ad 2; *Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 826. As *being* is the first principle of our theoretical acts of human reason (the first and most basic of its first principles), *good* is the most basic principle that is constitutive of the first principles that belong to our practical acts of human reason (cited as “first principles of action” by Aquinas in the *Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 826).

⁷*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6.

⁸*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 3. As Aquinas goes on to note (in ad 4), “he who desires a good seeks to have it as it really is in nature, not as it is in his consciousness” (see *St. Thomas Aquinas Philosophical Texts*, trans. by Thomas Gilby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 253, n. 672). Later, in a. 12, Aquinas reiterates this point by noting that, while the intellect is concerned with things “as they exist spiritually in the soul,” the human will is concerned with things “as they are in themselves.” In the *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 1, ad 1, Aquinas had argued that while coming to a knowledge of truth perfects us as knowers, material beings who cannot engage in acts of cognition cannot be perfected by any kind of knowledge that leads to truth. However, material beings and immaterial beings can be both perfected by the existence of good things which exist as ends. A material thing can be taken and improved upon by an agent who acts upon it for an end that is good. For example, stone or rock can be taken and carved into a statue. In addition (in ad 2), the form of a material thing can also direct or incline a material thing toward something which is itself good and whose enjoyment improves the status of a materially existing thing. Stone or rock is such that it can be carved or used as building material for something which transcends the mere being or rock or stones.

⁹*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 12; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 16, a. 1, ad 3; q. 57, a. 1; q. 58, a. 1, ad 2; 2a2ae, q. 166.

¹⁰*De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 2, ad 7; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 19, 2.

¹¹*Summa Theologiae*, q. 16, a. 4, ad 1.

that every understanding, knowing subject possesses or has a will or a willing that is known if we think about the good of things instead of the truth of things.¹² As human beings, we understand at times because we will to try to understand something¹³ instead of doing something else (even if, admittedly, our understanding ultimately comes to us as a gift or as a reception). Being or truth exists as the good or as the perfection of our reasoning, thinking, understanding which exist both within a condition of act and within a condition of potency. However, as a more comprehensive kind of thing, good as the goodness or the virtue of a given human person perfects an entire person (which includes our intellects or, in other words, our understanding) because of a union which emerges between being or reality (the being or reality of truth as this is known by us in our judgments}, on the one hand, and desire (or appetite), on the other hand, which exists within each of us to incline us toward actions that realize achievements and deeds. A knowledge of being exists as but one species of achievement or deed.¹⁴ Good transcends being as, at the same time, it also precedes being¹⁵ because a basic desire for good orientates each of us into an order of cognitional operations where the imminent object is an

12*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 19, 5.

13*De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1.

14*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, pp. 116-117 on good in Aquinas as a harmony or correspondence between being and the phenomenon of desire or appetite. If truth is a harmony or a correspondence between being and intellect (being and understanding), goodness is a harmony or a correlation between being and desire within each of us as human beings. The union of the two creates in us an existing human will (and not some other type of will). Hence, in the union which exists within our acts of human willing in a way which forms and creates its specificity, it naturally follows for Aquinas that moral virtue is to be understood as a good which is “defined by reason.” Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 59, a. 4. It is a right or a good inclination. The inclination is good because it agrees or is in accord with reason. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, q. 58, a. 2. As Aquinas argues it in q. 59, a. 4, moral virtue refers to a development or the perfection of our appetites or desires which exist within our acts of willing but by or according to a perfection which occurs when our desires, appetites, or inclinations are directed toward good as this good is grasped, defined, and known by us in our acts of understanding and judgment. In Aquinas’s own words, “good as defined by reason is that which is moderated or directed [*moderatum seu ordinatum*] by reason.” The appetites and desires which exist within us, within our human souls, are ordered from within in a subordination of appetites and desires toward the greater good which exists in our acts of human reasoning and understanding. Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 313; p. 348, n. 49. See also the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 60, a. 5; q. 61, a. 2; and 2a2ae, q. 58, a. 3 for other texts which refer to the norming influence of our reason as our acts of reasoning and understanding convert our appetites into virtues. Quoting also from Aquinas, *De Virtutibus*, a. 9 (as cited, respectively, by Rhonheimer, p. 85; p. 313):

Virtue of the appetitive part (that is, moral virtue) is nothing other than a certain disposition or form, stamped and pressed upon the appetitive power by reason.

The good of man, insofar as he is human, consists in the reason attaining to a complete knowledge of the truth, and the subordinate appetites being ordered [*ut...regulentur*] in accordance with the rule [*regulam*] of reason.

15*De Malo*, q. 1, a. 2.

understanding which knows the being or the reality of things through judgements which grasp the truth of a truth.¹⁶ “I understand because I will to do so.”¹⁷ Hence, not only does our knowing move our willing (as an orientation toward good which reveals a good which is understood to exist as a good,¹⁸ and which should thus be accomplished or worked toward precisely because it is known to be right and good) but, in an even more fundamental way, our willing moves our knowing for the good which can be achieved either purely in our knowing,¹⁹ or by and through a knowing that leads to other acts and activities.²⁰ Simply put: “the truth will set you free.”²¹ As every judgment leads us toward a knowledge of reality with respect to a truth about this or that thing (and this exists as a good), a certain beginning or an increase and growth begins to occur within us with respect to a species of experience that can be said to ground an experience of well being that we sense within ourselves or, in other words, an experience

16*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 2; 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 1, ad 2.

17*De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1.

18*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 27, 2. As Aquinas accordingly argues, “since the object of will is a good grasped by the intellect,” “it is of the nature of will to reach out to whatever the intellect can propose to it under the aspect of goodness.” For this reason, as Crowe notes, *Three Thomist Studies*, pp. 121, “St. Thomas says repeatedly, the object of the will is the *bonum intellectum* [a good that is understood], and this seems to mean the good [that is] understood as good; the will, he says, is open to all [that] the intellect proposes to it *sub ratione boni* [under the aspect of the good]. Essentially the same point is made in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 2, ad 2 where Aquinas speaks about the goodness of non-existent things (cf. Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 133 & n. 50). Non-existent things can be good without being, without in fact existing, although, as our understanding and judgment apprehends the goodness of things which have yet to exist, we are moved or we are encouraged to fulfill conditions that will then lead us toward the existence of things that have yet to emerge and be.

19*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 12.

20*De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1: “I understand because I will to do so.” Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 316. In analyzing how Aquinas understands how our human willing is related to our acts of inquiry and understanding, in Bernard Lonergan's *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 95-96 and pp. 319-320, Lonergan argues that, when Aquinas speaks about the causality of our acts of human willing (the fact that these have a causality of their own), he rejects Aristotle's understanding which had viewed our human acts of willing as purely a function of our human acts of thinking and reasoning (as if it exists as a “wholly passive potency,” quoting J. Michael Stebbins in his *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan*, p. 84). Cf. Patrick H. Byrne, “The Thomist Sources of Lonergan's Dynamic World-view,” *The Thomist* 46 (1982): 117. See Aquinas, *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 2; *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 6; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 10, 17; *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 3; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14; and *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 81, a. 3, ad 2; q. 82, a. 2 for texts which deny that acts of understanding and judgment force or necessitate our acts of willing to engage in activities which lead to a desired end. In interpreting Aristotle's *De Anima*, 3, 433b10-13 in the *Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 830, Aquinas argues that, in Aristotle, the “absolute starting point of movement” in the movement of desire or appetite is the apprehension of a desired object, either through the powers of our human imagination or the activity of our intellectual, human acts. *Appetibile apprehensum movet appetitum*; “the apprehended object of desire moves the appetite” (citing Stebbins's translation, *Divine Initiative*, p. 323, n. 90) even if this phrasing only presents the meaning of Aquinas's interpretation and so does not cite any literal wording from any text that is written by

of happiness that now arises within us (within our sense of self and world).²²

A basic desire for good moves all of our subsequent desires²³ in a way which adheres or which accedes and yields to the normativity of our purely rational operations²⁴ but which also suggests and implies that our human desires or appetites are not entirely or sufficiently moved by our speculative acts of reasoning (as we engage in acts of thinking, understanding, and judging) since our practical acts of reasoning have motives of their own which transcend purely mental activities and which account for the life of these same activities.²⁵ A person is good if a person's willing is good,²⁶ if it is effectively orientated toward goods that are both intended and performed.²⁷ Judgments about truth condition judgments about value which grasp or which know about the goodness of a being or reality (whether

Aquinas. On the whole, in the early writings of Aquinas, up into the first part of the *Summa Theologiae*, our human willing (the will) tends to be viewed in passive terms. It is something which is acted upon. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "On God and Secondary Causes," *Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 63; *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran & H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 551. It lacks a causality of its own. But, while the life of our human imagination and our human intellect does admittedly play a primary role in exciting our acts of human willing toward movements of one kind or other, a double primary causality is in fact to be postulated (two operative efficient causes) since our human acts of willing also act (to move themselves) on the basis of naturally desired ends which already belong to the structure of our human acts of willing and which incline them to act in certain ways or in certain directions. "To will and not to will lie within the power of the will" (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 10, 17). Cf. *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1. Our human will is in fact moved by two causes, or two principles, which refer to a structure of reason and a structure of desire or appetite which are related to each other and which, in fact, work together. Cf. Selman, p. 142. As our understanding specifies an object or an end which is to be desired by our human acts of willing (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 1), at the same time too, the self-movement of our willing is accounted for by its own ends and first principles which are constitutive of its inner life (q. 9, a. 3). The object or end is a practical good that is being desired or wanted. An *appetibile* or a "seekable" designates the object of a striving that exists within us. Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 26; p. 32; p. 71. As in the structure and the operations of our human cognition where the object is a knowledge of specific facts, in the end, judgments belonging to our willing (as a knowing which seeks to grasp courses of action) are also rationally made by reducing hypothesized conclusions to first principles in order to establish specific courses of action which can then be implemented to realize a desired, concrete good. In the life which exists in our human willing, our willing moves itself by working for ends or objectives which are constitutive of its first principles and by effecting a kind of reduction which tries to move from ends that are specified by first principles back towards specific means that can lead us toward the ultimate attainment of our desired ends. As, in our theoretical acts of understanding, from a general premiss in a syllogism where we move toward a specific conclusion, in the same way, from an end or an object which functions as a kind of premiss in our practical or our moral acts of understanding (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3) and which is to be identified with the fundamental orientation which exists within our human willing toward that which is good (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 90, a. 2; q. 94, a. 2 cited by Frederick E. Crowe, "Dialectic," *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, p. 238), we move toward a choice which designates a very specific means that can lead us to other, higher means and ends which ultimately lead us toward an end that satisfies all of our desires and whose desiring has served as a catalyst for us to help us construct an ascending scale of related means and ends. If we are to reach an ultimate goal, we must discover a very

the reality already exists or whether it has yet to exist, and so has yet to be brought into a condition of being).²⁸ Hence, as what had been suggested to us by what Blaise Pascal had observed in the context of his own day, *le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas*,²⁹ “the heart has reasons which the mind knows nothing of.” Where through our acts of understanding judgments reveal objects which should be desired as goods, the desires for good that are present within our human willing or appetite create a causality within us which bestirs us to engage in activities which are initially cognitional but which then move us into activities which are non-cognitional. Desire for good exists as a transcendently operative cause as it moves us into activities which lead us toward goods which, later, through our acts of understanding, we can properly grasp and apprehend³⁰ and then, from that point on, we can begin to move toward fuller achievements of good that had been initially known and grounded

specific, initial means or concrete step whose execution will initiate us to a series of actions that will lead to ultimately desired ends or goals. A theological order or structure belongs to the dynamism of our human acts of willing as this willing constructs a relation of means and ends which lead us toward the actualization of a highest goal or end, and as this same will works with other human acts of willing to order means and ends in ways which distinguish how, as human persons, we will differently live our different lives. As Aquinas argues above in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3, for a physician, a patient’s health is something that is ultimate. A physician will make decisions based on what will nourish or restore a patient’s health. But, if you or I happen to be a patient or a potential patient, we might decide to forego certain medical treatments because we wish to attain higher objectives of some kind: ends which transcend the health of our bodies. The end of our individual life or activity becomes a means for another person’s life or activity. Cf. Crowe, “Dialectic,” *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, pp. 237-238. In the life of our human acts of willing, we usually work from an initial, inchoate sense of basic ends or objectives and, from there, we work toward specific objectives which designate means that are made known to us through co-operative activities which are centered and grounded in acts of inquiring, understanding, and judging. Knowing and willing move each other in a reciprocal relation which excludes the primacy of our reasoning over our willing (as the Greeks would largely have it) and the primacy of our willing over our acts of understanding (as many modern thinkers would have it, thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Nietzsche, and Freud). In our understanding, our desires and inclinations are known and in our desires and affections, we move toward our acts of understanding. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 9, a. 10, ad 3, 2ae ser. On Hobbes and the primacy of the human lust for power in human life, see Eric Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint: Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, vol. 5, ed. Manfred Henningsen (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), p. 307.

21John 8: 32 (Knox).

22*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 3, ad 1.

23*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 4; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 1.

24*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 12, a. 1, ad 3; q. 13, a. 5; cf. Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 90.

25*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 1, ad 2. See 3a, q. 8, a. 1, ad 3 where Aquinas suggestively notes that, in comparison and in conjunction with the head (which can be used as a metaphor for our minds or our understanding), the heart exercises a certain hidden kind of influence. In discussing the movement of our human acts of willing through our desires, in “A Recurrent Duality in Thomist Writings,” *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 128, Crowe argues that we can find some texts in Aquinas which link the movement of our human desires with the operations of our speculative acts of thinking and reasoning. However, most texts speak about desire in connection with the life of our practical acts of thinking and reasoning. However, if a desire for good grounds our subsequent cognitional activity and its concern with attaining the goodness of truth, we can argue that a link

in the apprehensions which we had previously enjoyed. The rationality of any willing or desire for good as an intention for what is or can be explains why the general and ultimate goal of our human willing or our human desire is an unrestricted notion or sense of good which ranks as an unqualified good or, in other words, as a universal, common, infinite good (as a *bonum universale, bonum in commune*);³¹ or, alternatively, as “goodness itself”³² in a goodness which refers to the reasonableness of our desire for experiences of complete goodness whose attainment becomes made likely or more probable through our possibly making later rational choices which select goods which could lead us toward a fuller enjoyment of many good things as the proper goal or end of our living if our living is to exist as a truly good thing (as if suffused with meaning and purpose).³³ Human desirability or appetite,

between our speculative acts of reasoning and desire can be postulated through the subsuming, sublating mediation of our practical acts of reasoning which move us as human beings from a first attachment to the concreteness of our sensible, human experience toward a second attachment that longs for the concreteness of that which can be achieved by us as human beings within the spatial temporal order of our created existence. As Crowe puts it when he speaks about how our human understanding can move our willing in a differentiated way in *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 129, our “speculative intellect moves the will to harmony with the good that it presents as being; [our] practical intellect moves the will to pursuit of the good that may be achieved.” Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 5 on the mutual priority of intellect and will in how they relate to each other; also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 83, a. 3, ad 3.

26 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 4, ad 3; 1, p. 26: “a man is said to be good, not by his good understanding; but by his good will.”

27 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 6.

28 In discussing this point, Fred Crowe in *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 122, refers to two apprehensions which Aquinas speaks about: an apprehension of truth which is then followed by an apprehension of goodness. There are two acts of the mind, but these two acts are not to be confused with an apprehension or an abstractive understanding which grasps a form and a second which grasps the validity of an understanding within a reflective judgment. As evidence, Crowe cites a text from the *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum (In 1 Sent., d. 27, q. 2, a. 1)* to the effect that an apprehension of truth is to be regarded as a simple apprehension while an apprehension which then goes on to grasp the goodness of a truth or reality is to be regarded as a perfect apprehension. Grasping a truth, in and of itself, does not appear to be sufficient however. In addition, we must go on to grasp a truth with respect to its goodness even if we must admit that all realities or beings which are grasped through rational affirmations of being or truth possess an inherent goodness that already belongs to them as intelligible beings and that this goodness belongs to being as one of its aspects. The reality of a truth, with respect to its intelligibility, imparts or suggests a desirability which manifests and points to the reality of an intrinsic form of goodness. Hence, when speaking about our human willing in terms of its inherent rationality, by means of this rationality, as human persons we are directly related to the being of truth. But, truth is a goodness that mediates a direct relation between our willing and that which exists as being or reality although it can be argued that, if we do not wish to argue that our willing relates to that which exists as being or reality through the principle of goodness, we can argue that our willing *as a rational appetite* is directly related to that which exists as being or reality through the intelligibility of that which exists as being or reality. Through the principle and the experience of intelligibility, we can speak either about the reality of things or the goodness of things. The intelligibility of a good that has yet to be discovered justifies our acts of inquiry about it where the object here is understanding and a judgment which grasps a known truth. But, at the same time, the

or the essence of our human willing, is defined by this attribute of rightness and goodness.³⁴ Our desires for goodness then serve to co-ordinate us in how we choose to organize tasks and duties in ways which will impart an order to our human lives: an order in our lives in terms of how we each individually live; and an order to how, as human beings, we relate to each other in a common search for good which binds us together in co-operate, helpful relations which must exist if certain goods are to be reached and obtained.

In the relation which exists between *good* and *being* in terms of how they correlate with each other, a number of other points can be made. First, with respect to the desirability of good, while a desire for *being* is always joined with a desire for *good* since “goodness and being are identical in reality, ...goodness conveys what...being does not [convey], namely, the quality of being desirable.”³⁵

intelligibility of a truth that has yet to be fully realized justifies our efforts to fulfill conditions which will hasten the fuller manifestation of a truth that has been only initially grasped and affirmed.

29Blaise Pascal, *Pensées, d'après l'édition de L. Brunschvicg* (Londres, M. Dent & Sons, n.d.; Paris: Georges Crès et Cie, n.d.), no. 277, p. 120, quoted by Bernard Lonergan, “Horizons,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, eds. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Express, 2004), p. 19. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 8, a. 1, ad 3.

30*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 2. As Aquinas argues in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 7, all persons want what they believe is good for themselves. All persons seek concrete experiences of good although, without due reasoning and understanding, they will not know what is really and truly good for them. Reasoning and understanding aside thus, our desires for good which propel our acts of human willing exist with a degree of indeterminacy that is to be contrasted with the determinacy that is endemic to us where our point of departure is the existence of reasoning and understanding. The determinacy of one is to be compared to the indeterminacy of the other.

31*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 54, a. 2; 1a2ae, q. 2, a. 8; *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 3, as cited by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 196, n. 16. “Rational desire therefore, which is will, has for the proper aspect of its object the universal good.” See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 10, a. 1, ad 3 which explains that the will, as an immaterial power, has its term or correlative in a general notion of good which includes many particular goods without specifying exactly what they are. In the context of his own work (reference lost), Clifford Kossel refers to this universal good as the “comprehensive good (*bonum in communi*).” It is the “nonparticular good to which all particular goods must conform to be good at all.”

32*De Veritate*, q. 25, a. 1. See also q. 22, a. 4, ad 2; q. 25, a. 1, ad 3, ad 6. But, as Aquinas briefly notes in the *Quaestiones de quodlibet*, 2, q. 2, a. 1, this “goodness itself” is to be identified with God.

33*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 10, a. 1 & ad 3.

34*De Veritate*, q. 25, a. 1. See also Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 196.

35*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 1, as quoted by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 75, n. 209. See also *De Veritate*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 9; and *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 4, ad 1. In his analysis of how *good* and *being* relate to each other in Aquinas’s understanding of them, in *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 125, Crowe cites texts from Aquinas to indicate that, since *being* and *good* refer to the same reality, any difference between them is based only on a choice which we make about what quality or aspect is to be selected for an analysis that we are seeking to make. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 1; *De Potentia*, q. 9, a. 7, ad 6; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 14. Good can be viewed as a mode of being (as a *modus essendi*) and, conversely, being can be viewed as a mode of

Hence, as we have already noted, “truth is included under the notion of good insofar as it is a good which is desired.”³⁶ And so, what is good calms or pleases us in our desires.³⁷ It is something which can be pleurably received and enjoyed. It is a *complacentia boni*, a taking pleasure in the good which exists as a form of love that is being given to us.³⁸ The good exists here as a delight or a joy. But, more actively, as an *intentio boni*, as the term of our actions that are desiring experiences and attainments of good, or as that which is applied or which is related to our actions (*bonum applicatum ad operationem*) as a means or tool which could lead us toward possible enjoyments of things that are good,³⁹ the good reveals itself to us not just as an end which can be achieved through some act or operation on our part (an operation that is understood as a *processio operati* in terms of cause and effect),⁴⁰ but also as an intention, appetite, aptitude, or disposition which intends an end⁴¹ but which, initially, does not know which means are to be related to a given, desired, hoped for end.⁴² It only initially knows that means are to be distinguished from ends as an intermediary or middle between the activity of a given subject or agent and the subject's or agent's attaining of a given, desired object,⁴³ and that means are to be ordered toward ends in ways which allow us to move from that which has yet to be achieved to that

good. If being is to be related or understood in terms of its desirability, it becomes a good and being becomes a species of good (one particular type of good). Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 16, a. 4, ad 1. But, conversely, if good is to be known as a truth or reality, it becomes a being which needs to be grasped as a truth by our understanding and affirmed in a reflective, rational judgment. Truth emerges as the primary, universal object in the intelligible order of things and it measures the good of any alleged instance of good. On the other hand and at the same time, good is beautiful in the pleasure and the delight with which it is enjoyed, and being is enjoyed through the proportionality which is revealed to us with respect to the meaning of a form. The true, the good, and the beautiful all interrelate with each other and, as aspects, they refer to the same reality. Cf. Aquinas, Opusc. xiv, Exposition, *de Divinis Nominibus*, iv, lect. 5, cited by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 78, n. 221; *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 1, ad 12; and *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1.

36 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 4, ad 1, my translation.

37 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3; cf. Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 128, n.

37.

38 Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 88; cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 25, a. 2.

39 *Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 827.

40 *De Veritate*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 9.

41 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 8, a. 1.

42 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 12, a. 4, ad 3. Previously, in a.1, ad 4, and earlier in q. 8, a. 3, Aquinas had distinguished between *velle*, or simply willing an end, and willing which is also the intending of an end in terms of our committing ourselves toward seeking appropriate means that will lead us to a desired end. Two species of willing should be distinguished within our human willing which, in 3a, q. 18, aa. 3-4, Aquinas refers to as *will as nature* and *will as reason*. Will as nature, as a rational appetite, spontaneously intends an object as an object exists in itself as an end. Health can be cited as an example and this is an example that Aquinas cites. But, on the other hand, will as reason exists as a rational appetite which “bears freely on an object, not as that object is considered in itself but according to its being ordered toward an end” (Bernard Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript translated 1989 by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato*, p. 131). It is a deliberative or a counseling act of willing and it proceeds as the fruit of our rational reflections whose term is a choice that is made about a means that will lead us toward a given, desired end.

43 Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 58.

which we can achieve through certain acts or operations which function as the instrumental means.⁴⁴ In understanding the desire which is basic to us in our acts of human willing, not only must an end be good as a real or a true good, but, at the same time too, the desired end must be perceived or apprehended as a good which, in fact, we should desire and seek.⁴⁵

Goods which are desired are goods which are desired because they are loved⁴⁶ where, in loving something, we will and desire its intrinsic goodness.⁴⁷ Our love functions as a principle of activity from which all else proceeds⁴⁸ where, in our acts of loving, we will another's goodness and the goodness of our own selves as other. Love causes desire. If it is said then that knowledge preconditions every form of love that truly desires any given good (“*Nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*, Nothing can be loved that is not already known”⁴⁹), and if knowledge can only be had if we should first desire or love it, it then follows that love or desire exists not only as a consequent but also as a necessary type of precondition.⁵⁰ Love exists as something that is primary. It is something which is given to us in the concrete course of our human life since love for a good that will delight us creates and fuels desires that will move us toward acts which seek to realize a desired objective or end.⁵¹ Love exists as a beginning and, yet, it

44*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 12, a. 2; Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 129.

45*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 8, a. 1.

46*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 1; 1a2ae, q. 25, a. 2.

47*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 3: “to love is to will good to someone or something,” as cited by Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 671.

48*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 91, 17; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 36, a. 1; q. 38, a. 2; 1a2ae, q. 26, a. 1.

49Bernard Lonergan, “Faith and Beliefs,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, p. 42. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 19, 8; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 27, a. 3, ad 3; q. 36, a. 2; q. 75, a. 6. In the very first article in the first question of the *Summa Theologiae* (1a, q. 1, a. 1), Aquinas argues that, before we can work toward or move toward a particular goal or end, this end or goal must be first known or, as Aquinas argues in q. 27, a. 3, ad 3; 1, p. 149, “nothing can be loved by the will unless it is conceived in the intellect.” The same point is made in the *De Potentia*, q. 9, a. 9, ad 3 (2nd series) and also later in q. 10, a. 5 (as quoted by Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 617): “For it cannot be, nor can it be understood, that there is a love for something that has not first been conceived by the intellect.” By nature, love is rational. Cf. Leo Vincent Serroul, “Sapientis est Ordinare”: An Interpretation of the *Pars Systematica* of Bernard Lonergan's *De Deo Trino* from the Viewpoint of Order, unpublished dissertation (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004), p. 94. “We love what we first know to be real, true, good, and therefore lovable.”

50*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 4; cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 113, a. 1. See also Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 10. As Aquinas argues in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 23, a. 4; q. 27, a. 1; and 2a2ae, q. 45, a. 2, love is not only a human product, something which we, as human beings, can produce and work for as something we would reach and attain, since it is also a gift which, as an orientation or a sympathy, initially moves us toward a certain goal and not to some other goal. The fact that it is a gift and, as a gift, is not essentially a human product, necessarily implies thus that it comes from origins that lie beyond our human order or our human calculation. From the gift of love comes a connatural kind of knowledge which is borne of love. See Raymond Moloney, “Conversion and Spirituality: Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984),” *The Way* 43 (October 2004), pp. 126-127; and Crowe, “School without Graduates: The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises,” *Developing the Lonergan Legacy*, pp. 205, n. 24).

51*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 25, a. 2.

exists also as an end or term where nothing can happen without it. Desire and love are sometimes to be equated with each other since both seek to belong to something which is other than ourselves and, in charity (which exists as unselfish love),⁵² both seek to belong to something that is entirely ultimate because only something ultimate is able to completely satisfy any desires which belong to us and which long for a fulfillment that is entirely full and complete. A supremely desirable final end (an *ultimus finis*) or purpose (which refers to a highest or an ultimate good) functions as the first mover of all of our practical human actions that can lead us as persons toward itself through the instrumentality of employing an order of lesser desires and loves which intend an order of lesser, subordinate ends.⁵³ If we attend to the intrinsic meaning or nature of goodness as goodness allegedly exists in itself, it does not exist as something which comes from something else (it is not a goodness which we try to acquire or to get from another) but, instead, it is something from which all else comes and flows through a kind of self-giving communication that wants to bestow or to give itself to another through a kind of love which distinguishes the good of friendship and a mutual desire which exists in friendship to always seek the good of the other that we happen to appreciate and love.⁵⁴

On the other hand, however, it can also be argued that desires precede love and not love, desires. If the object or end is something that will supremely please or delight us, desires can be generated which

⁵²In *1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 4, cited by Gilby, *Theological Texts*, p. 43, n. 80. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 24, a. 1, Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of desire because he distinguishes between two kinds of appetite. The desire which exists in our sensible appetites should not be confused with the desire which exists as love or charity since love or charity refers to the being of a rational appetite. True love, or true charity, is directed toward goods that are really and truly good. They have been reasonably and rationally apprehended and affirmed. As Matthew Levering cites and summarizes Aquinas's understanding of charity in his *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), p. 59, "charity is the ecstatic movement of the will toward the divine good *as good*, 'according as it can be apprehended by the intellect.'" Its form, in its universal significance, is universally applicable. See Aquinas, *De charitate*, q. 1, a. 3, ad 9:

....each virtue has a special form from its proper end and its proper object, by which it becomes this virtue. But it has from charity a certain common form, by which it can merit eternal life.

See also Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 405, n. 6. When charity is given to us, as human persons, through a kind of participation which, as persons, we can have in the love and charity of God, this charity will serve us as a form for transforming and perfecting us with respect to all the different human virtues which perhaps already exist in us. All human virtues will be orientated toward God as an ultimate, supremely lovable good. In this context, charity is to be understood as an effect of grace. It is something that principally comes from God. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 100, a. 10, ad 3.

⁵³*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 4. See also Georg Wieland, "Happiness (Ia IIae, qq. 1-5)," trans. Grant Kaplan, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), p. 58; and Crowe, "Dialectic," *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, p. 238.

⁵⁴*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1; q. 28, aa. 1-2; q. 28, a. 4, ad 2; q. 65, a. 5; 2a2ae, q. 25, aa. 2-3; 3a, q. 1, a. 1. See also Crowe, "School without Graduates: The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises," *Developing the Lonergan Legacy*, pp. 204-205.

precede our acts of loving and these desires, through our experience of feeling, will dynamically orientate us toward things which can then be loved and enjoyed as they exist in themselves.⁵⁵ The desires which lead to experiences of love transform us in ways which will cause us to resemble that which we so strongly desire and love as this exists in itself.⁵⁶ Desire (as it works from our acts of loving in the order of execution or as it works from within us toward experiences of love in the order of intentionality) directly relate us as persons to that which is loved or desired and then, through intensities which vary among us from one person to another,⁵⁷ it moves us as persons from one set of activities to another set of activities in order to reach an object which we so strongly desire and seek. When our desire or love is complete, it lies in a condition of rest, in a state of repose or quiescence. Our love then exists as complacency. Hence, there is nothing more for us to do other than to take pleasure or delight in the good that has been achieved or in the good that has been received as an unmerited gift.⁵⁸ From the happiness which exists in the satisfaction of all of our desires comes its enjoyment or delight which can then be seen as a final cause, an ultimate end, and a first principle of our practical human activity.⁵⁹ Nothing more is needed beyond our purely enjoying the happiness which we each happen to have.

For these reasons then, love or acts of loving, functioning as an agent, can be understood as the first act of every movement that exists within our human willing.⁶⁰ It exists as the root and the foundation of every other movement within our acts and dynamic of willing. Hence, love is present in the being of all things, even if, admittedly, in varying degrees. Quoting Aquinas: “ordered love is included in every virtue, disordered love in every vice.”⁶¹ The greater the desirability or the lovableness of a given desired good, the more likely will we engage in activities which will lead us toward the good that evinces the factuality of such a strong desirability or such a strong lovableness.⁶² What is good corresponds to or it refers to that which is desired in terms of some kind of achievement, accomplishment, or realization which is concrete in our human lives because it possesses a determination that is definite and so, in a way, final.⁶³ “Doing always exists in the particular”⁶⁴ even if it is also true to say that that which is not particular or concrete is also to be regarded as itself also good.

⁵⁵*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 25, a. 2.

⁵⁶Aquinas, Opusc. xiv, Exposition, *Super Librum Dionysii De divinis nominibus*, ii, lect. 4, as quoted by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 33, n. 92. See also *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 12: “the will is referred to things as they are in themselves, whereas the intellect is referred to them as existing spiritually in the soul.”

⁵⁷*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 3.

⁵⁸*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 70, a. 1, ad 2.

⁵⁹*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 2, a. 6; q. 90, a. 2.

⁶⁰*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 1.

⁶¹*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 29, a. 3, as quoted by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 254, n.

675.

⁶²*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 824-826. While Aquinas regards our practical human intellect as a principle of movement (as an active principle of movement), the desirability of an object plays a more dominant role in its eliciting of acts from us as human subjects as it directs us as subjects toward goods that await their possible attainment.

⁶³*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 8, 2, 1552.

⁶⁴*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 12, 780, my translation.

While good is inseparable from being,⁶⁵ it nevertheless transcends a minimal understanding of being which emphasizes the good of mere existence since the goodness of any given thing is also the realization of all its potentialities or its powers once a thing's being or its existence is given as a point of departure.⁶⁶ As Socrates is reported to have said: "the most important thing is not life, but the good life."⁶⁷ Good, as defined by an intrinsically rational desirability, is in turn defined by the desirability or the goodness of its completeness or its perfection. The more perfect or the more good that something is, the more it is intelligible and the more too is it intelligent.⁶⁸ Specifically speaking, good exists as a perfective agent.⁶⁹ As an end, it is "that which perfects."⁷⁰ Its attainment improves or it perfects something else that is other in the context of a relation which exists between a good as an object and that which a good perfects (whether the being in question desires a good that improves itself as a good, or whether the being in question desires a good that will improve something else that is other than itself).⁷¹ Conversely, nothing can be perfect if it fails to attain its naturally desired end.⁷² Union with an end as a good realizes a concrete good in the life of a given person who is seeking this type of union. Thus, as a final cause and basic justification for that which we do (functioning for us as a necessary first cause or justification for that which we begin to want to do), goodness as an end functions as a basic, fundamental, species of cause.⁷³ It exists as the "cause of causes."⁷⁴ It is a perfectly natural inclination (*inclinatio naturalis*) which exists in us and which, at some level, never ceases to operate in us in the subsequent decisions and actions that we take⁷⁵ since "all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by [our] reason as being good"⁷⁶ and all apprehensions of good incline us as persons to do what we can to attain them. The apparent goodness of an alleged

65*De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 4, ad 4; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 20, a. 2.

66*De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 5; q. 22, a. 1, ad 7; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 28, 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 2, a. 5, ad 2. Here, in this text taken from the *Summa*, Aquinas quotes Dionysius to the effect that "things that live are better than things that exist, and intelligent things better than living things." However, in the same text which contains his response to objection 2 in article 5, Aquinas distinguishes between a minimal and a maximal understanding of being since, from another perspective, being includes every perfection of being. It "surpasses life and all that follows it." See Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, pp. 20-22, for an analysis of Aquinas which distinguishes different notions of being and different notions of good. Substantial being is to be correlated with substantial good and moral being with moral good. Moral being or moral goodness is an accident that is added to substantial being and goodness and which brings moral being and good to a perfection that it would not otherwise have.

67Plato, *Crito*, 48b.

68A. G. Sertillanges, O.P., *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy*, trans. Godfrey Anstruther, O.P. (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, n.d.), p. 36. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 2, a. 5, ad 2.

69*De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 1. See also Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 124.

70*De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 6, my translation.

71*De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 2; a. 6.

72*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 44, a. 3, ad 3.

73*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 2. See also *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1 on end as final cause and form as formal cause.

74*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1. See also *De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 5 where it is said that "goodness has the character of a final cause" and *Super Librum De causis*, prop. 9; pp. 65-66.

75*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3; q. 12, a. 2.

76*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2; 2, p. 1009. See also Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 28; p. 284.

species of ultimate good, which is regarded as a good by us as persons who believe in it, functions as an ordering principle for us in all the actions that tend toward it and, for this reason, none of us can normally serve or live for the sake of more than one ultimate good.⁷⁷ Rejecting one ultimate good entails selecting and living by another ultimate good. Failure to attain an ultimate good because our means are limited or inadequate does not argue against the legitimacy of our desiring and seeking a type of ultimate good which could possibly entirely fulfill all of our desires for a form of realization or a form of perfection that knows no limits or bounds.⁷⁸ What we cannot attain through our own efforts can be something which we can receive as a gift.⁷⁹ Freely, it is bestowed.

Second, with respect to the question of simple convertibility, *being* and *good* are convertible with each other since what is real, true, or simply, that which is, ranks as a good.⁸⁰ It exists as a good. Everything is good to the degree that it simply and reasonably exists. Being is that which is true and also that which is good since every truth, as a truth, is a good which should be desired and sought.⁸¹ In addition, what can be brought into existence in terms of possible being exists also as a being which ranks as a good.⁸² “Every being, as being, is good,”⁸³ and outside of being, nothing exists.⁸⁴ *Being* and *good* are both intrinsically rational. Both are intrinsically intelligible. Good is a reality or *being* because its basis is form, meaning, or intelligibility that has been rationally grasped and affirmed or which can be rationally grasped and affirmed. For the same reason, good exists also as a *ratio* or intelligibility. Hence, as *being* becomes an object that is deemed to be worthy of pursuit as a good, its contrary is to be regarded as an evil and so something which should be avoided.⁸⁵

77*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 5. As Wieland summarizes the argument in “Happiness,” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 59, “it is contradictory to accept several final ends.” If a given person’s striving is completely fulfilled and if something else is desired, this striving would necessarily not be completely fulfilled. Hence, it can be concluded that, when we, as human persons, experience lack of fulfillment when we give ourselves to a final end, the final end which we have chosen as an ultimate good is to be regarded with suspicion as an end which should now be questioned in the hopes of our finding an end that is truly final because it is supremely good.

78*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 62, a. 1; 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 2, ad 4; a. 6.

79*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 62, aa. 1-2; 1a2ae, q. 62, a. 1.

80*De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 2; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 1, 9.

81*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 54, a. 2.

82Gregory M. Reichberg, “The Intellectual Virtues (1a 2ae, qq. 57-58),” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 132.

83*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 3. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 7, 8-11.

84Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 380-381. See also Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 125.

85*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 12. As Aquinas argues in the *De Malo*, q. 10, a. 1, a kind of parallel exists between our intellectual desire and our appetitive desire. As the terminal object of our human cognition is a judgment which either can affirm or deny the truth or falsehood of a given proposition, similarly, by a judgment which brings our moral deliberation to a close and a choice, a decision is made about whether to pursue an apprehended good or to avoid what has been found to be evil. As Aquinas links these two kinds of judgment in the *De Malo*, “what is pursuance in the *appetitus* is affirmation in the intellect, and what is avoidance in the *appetitus* is negation in the intellect,” as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 52, n. 53.

The rational desirability of good as as real and true accordingly explains why, from the basic notion of good (functioning as a simple first principle), an axiomatic first principle is then derived (according to a synthetic order of reasoning that is traditionally cited as the order of composition⁸⁶) which avers and states that the “good is that which all things seek after,” *bonum id quod omnia appetunt*.⁸⁷ Simply put, or too simply, good is that which all things seek, want, or love.⁸⁸ Or, conversely, things are good as they are desired by beings which already, in fact, exist.

In turn, from this aforementioned first principle, a first precept emerges, the first precept or regulation of our practical acts of human reason which refer to a natural law (a *lex naturalis*)⁸⁹ when, for instance, it prescribes an injunction which says to us that “good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be

⁸⁶*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 3, 35.

⁸⁷Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1, 1, 1094a3. “The good is that which all things desire,” as quoted from the *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 1, 9-11 by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 115; quoted also by Aquinas in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 37, 4 and the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2. In *Three Thomist Studies*, “Applying Universals to the Particular: The General Problem,” p. 8, Crowe cites the principle of “*bonum est quod omnia appetunt*” (“the good is what all things desire”) as the first principle of our practical, human intellect whose ground, in turn, in the primary notion of *good*. From this first principle come other first principles and then precepts which say what persons should in fact do.

⁸⁸Plato, *Symposium*, 201-204. As Lawrence argues in “Lonergan and Aquinas: The Postmodern Problematic of Theology and Ethics,” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 448, when Aristotle and Aquinas both say about the good that, initially, it is to be defined as that which all things desire, they propose a definition that necessarily comes across as “indiscriminate.” When good is defined merely or simply as a correlative of desire, nothing is said about how to distinguish real good from any apparent good. There are many kinds of desire and so it is only by inquiring into the nature of desire that we can begin to move toward a critical notion of good that is grounded in a critical understanding of desire. Certain desires can be proper to a particular being (hence they are reasonable and rational) and others are not even if they can also be experienced by a particular being and even sought by the same being. Hence, when speaking about how all things naturally tend toward some kind of good (good as an object of desire), we evade a uncritical notion of desire by speaking about desires that are purely natural (natural because they are governed by some kind of intelligible principle) as opposed to desires that are quite unnatural and which thus lack in having any kind of normative status. They are not what they should be.

⁸⁹Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 53, n. 56, citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 96, a. 1, ad 2 to argue that a precept of the natural law is to be clearly distinguished from prudential precepts in our making of a concrete moral decision in a context which refers to the practical life of our human reason. In his “Overview of the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas,” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 35, Stephen J. Pope gives a brief definition for natural law in a context which speaks about how natural law is related to eternal law. Natural law is referred to as the “participation” of intelligent and free human beings in God’s eternal law which they do by living according to “right reason.” Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 2. The eternal law, as Pope understands it, refers to the “providential government of the universe, and all that is in it, by the Divine Reason” where “God governs creation through ordering all creatures to their good.” Human beings participate in God’s providential government of the created order by acting freely “on the basis of reason.” This same understanding of eternal law is echoed by Rhonheimer in his *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 234, where he speaks about eternal law as “the *ratio* of God’s providence and wisdom, by which all

avoided.”⁹⁰ *Bonum est prosequendum et faciendum, malum vitandum.*⁹¹ Then, from this precept, all other precepts are derived as precepts of the natural law in conjunction with an accompanying, prior deduction of an order of lesser, secondary first principles which are specified on the basis of our aforementioned primary first principle which speaks about good in generic terms as that which is sought by the being of all things. For instance, from the primary first principle, we can infer the lesser first principles which say that “it is wrong to do harm to anyone” and “injustice is never right.”⁹² Then, from these lesser principles comes a corresponding lesser precept: “Be just” in how we relate to each other, other persons.⁹³ Treat them rightly.⁹⁴ Similarly, if it is said that knowledge is to be pursued and ignorance avoided, a corresponding precept says that we should “avoid ignorance.”⁹⁵ Similarly, if it is said that it is good to treat our neighbors well, a corresponding precept says that we should not harm our neighbors.⁹⁶ Again, if a lesser principle says that one man should not harm another, a precept can then aver that we must not kill or murder.⁹⁷ The first principles of our practical acts of human understanding designate goods or ends which constitute all the goods that are properly constitutive of the human good which exists for us and which activities we must seek to work for and to achieve.⁹⁸

The universality of these basic principles or precepts which ground the activity of our practical acts of creatures are guided toward their final goal.”

⁹⁰*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2; v. 2. See also *De Malo*, q. 10, a. 1.

⁹¹Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 72. See also Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, “Applying Universals to the Particular,” p. 8. As, in the context of his own work (reference lost), Clifford Kossel interprets the first precept of our practical human reason: “Do good” quickly identifies the first general precept which says that good is to be done and evil avoided. However, when the focus shifts to how we can accomplish or realize the good that we wish to reach as an end or terminus, he avers that the first precept becomes a directive which says that we should “act according to reason.” Ends and means are both defined by an intrinsic reasonableness which mutually belongs to them.

⁹²*Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 826; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 100, a. 3; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 15.

⁹³*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 58, a. 2.

⁹⁴*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 57, a. 1; q. 58, a. 2. As Matthias Lutz-Bachmann explains Aquinas’s understanding of justice in his “The Discovery of a Normative Theory of Justice in Medieval Philosophy: On the Reception and Further Development of Aristotle’s Theory of Justice by St. Thomas Aquinas,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000): 7, “the virtue of justice consists in ‘adjusting’ or bringing about ‘some kind of equality’ (an *aequalitas quaedam*) between the agents and the objects [that are] involved in the external exchange.” Cf. Selman, p. 148. In justice, some kind of right order is realized or put into effect. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 103, a. 1. In the different kinds of justice which exist, whether we talk about the relations which should exist among equals or the relations which should exist between superiors and inferiors, in either case, justice is always defined by some type of equality which is to be implemented, or safeguarded, although the equality will vary in its meaning as it relates persons and beings who may each have a different ontological status and a different set of responsibilities and obligations. The equality will always be proportionate in an ordering which manifests how everything should be rightly related.

⁹⁵*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2.

⁹⁶*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 2.

⁹⁷*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 95, a. 2.

⁹⁸*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6. See also q. 23, a. 7, ad 2; 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3.

human reason, and which inherently belong to the meaning or the character of our practical acts of human reasoning as a species of human cognition, accordingly explains why these basic precepts are to be regarded as natural laws that are normative for us in the context of our human behavior. As the habit of intellect for our theoretical acts of human reason (the habit of first principles) is a perfectly natural and intelligible inclination which belongs us with regard to the nature or the meaning of our human cognition, in the same way too, the habit of first principles in the life of our practical acts of human reason, which is distinguished as *synderesis*,⁹⁹ exists as a perfectly natural and intelligible habitual orientation of acts which always informs the meaning of our human life as it is lived within the concrete course of events that are constitutive of our human history (even if, at times, these intelligible precepts or norms are not always observed by us as human beings). The natural laws or first principles of our practical acts of human understanding are as natural and as unchanging and normative as are the first principles of our theoretical acts of human understanding.¹⁰⁰ Both sets of principles rank as natural laws. From them come the many different acts of us as persons who are engaged in theoretical or practical acts of human reasoning. Their actuation, whether by way of discovery in our personal acts of inquiry or by some form of instruction – in both cases, they are to be identified with natural law as this law exists in an operational form.¹⁰¹ As a basic presupposition, the natural laws of our human acts of understanding include the intelligibility of inquiry as it leads us to a knowledge of truths and the intelligibility of inquiry as it also leads us toward deeds that can create instances of good where, before, good things had not existed.

With respect to its dynamic character, the realization of good in the realization of good things through that which human beings do explains why, as a designation, good ultimately lacks a static or abstract significance. While abstractions can be helpful to us and so they exist as goods, good exists as something that is never in fact abstract. It is not an idea even if good ideas exist.¹⁰² It is not a truth nor a command even if truths and commands rank as “goods in thought.”¹⁰³ In the same vein too, the good is never an ideal even if good ideals exist. Good is other; it is wholly concrete. Goods which can exist are to be distinguished from goods which fully exist.¹⁰⁴ While truth (and falsity) primarily exists in us in judgements of fact which perfect our minds and add to the goodness of our understanding, good and evil primarily exist in things which transcend any judgments about goodness even if, admittedly, concrete goodness is realized initially through our rational apprehensions of goodness and the subsequent choices that, as persons, we can make.¹⁰⁵ Good emerges from the goodness of already existing things as good things are given a greater good through activities that seek to reproduce the goodness which already exists in a given thing.¹⁰⁶ The goodness or the perfection of an effect is not the

99*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 12 & ad 3. See also Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas Volume 2 Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 316. Later, in q. 79, a. 13, Aquinas loosely refers to *synderesis*, or the habit of first principles in practical reasoning and understanding, as conscience, conscience referring now to a habit and not to an act which springs from a habit. See Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 39.

100See Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 16, a. 2 on the permanence of first principles.

101Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 300, n. 55; p. 280.

102*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 2.

103Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 365.

104*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 3.

105*De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 2. Aquinas frequently refers to Aristotle when noting that truth and falsity do not exist in things but in thought as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 6, 4, 1027b25-27.

106*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 2, ad 2; q. 5, a. 4.

goodness or perfection of a cause but something that is less. Hence, if an effect in its goodness replicates or reproduces the goodness of an originating cause, it achieves a goodness that cannot be surpassed within the order of causes and effects.

The basic principle by and from which we determine the proper good of any given object is the nature or the form of a given object since what a thing is suggests what kind of good is a thing's proper reality or what is its perfection.¹⁰⁷ "Everything acts by reason of some form that it has."¹⁰⁸ From every form comes "a certain trend or tendency whence proceeds its activities or operations."¹⁰⁹ The will or appetite of a given thing is to be identified with its nature.¹¹⁰ Hence, it follows from this that "the good of everything [the proper good of everything] consists in the fact that its operation or activity is suited to its form"¹¹¹ ("each thing is in act through its form"¹¹²) or, to state the matter in different terms, "when a thing has a proper operation, the good of the thing and its well-being consists in that operation."¹¹³ The operation which is suited to a given thing perfects it as a *processio operationis* apart from how, as a *processio operati*, it can exist as the cause of an effect. In other words, in this situation, good is defined essentially as an activity, an operation, and the perfection of goodness lies in activities or in operations which are well and which are properly performed by a given being. Operations are to be distinguished from the act of being or act of existence of a thing which is to be presupposed by the being of any operations.¹¹⁴ Good is not so much a form or a condition but an exertion or actualization where the nature or the form of a given thing is to be carefully distinguished¹¹⁵ and so to be identified as a passive

107 *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 1, 21; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 5.

108 *Super 3 Sententiarum*, d. 18, q. 1, a. 1 sol, quoted by Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 131.

109 *Sententia Libri De anima*, 2, 5, 286. See also *Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 4, 302; 8, 21, 1149; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 36, 2; and *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 13, a. 1; 3a, q. 19, a. 1, ad 4: "to operate belongs to a person from his nature," as cited by Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 127; Stump, *Aquinas*, p. 37.

110 *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 5.

111 *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 2, 257. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 108, 6; 4, 59, 4; *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 179, a. 1, ad 1. On the correlation between desire, on the one hand, and good, on the other hand, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 120, Crowe reiterates a Latin phrase which notes that "desire tends toward the good that is suitable to it." *Appetitus tendit in bonum sibi conveniens*.

112 *Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 4, 302. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 3, a. 2: "every agent acts by its form."

113 *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 10, 119.

114 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 19, a. 1, ad 4.

115 In *Verbum*, p. 115, and also *Insight*, p. 458, Lonergan explains why Aristotle's analysis of reality in terms of three basic metaphysical principles (potency, form, and act) serves as a tool of explanation which allows us to argue that a thing's essence is not to be correlated with its reality or being. As Lonergan illustrates by an argument that looks at the function of our eyes in sensation, initially, our eyes first exist as a datum of sense when they are experienced by us (through the reflection of a mirror). Eyes bereft of meaning lack purpose and function. Their significance is purely potential. The matter or the potency of our eyes denotes a lack or privation of form. But if, through an examination and an analysis that we undertake, we grasp the purpose or the meaning of our eyes as sight, we move from an experience of matter or potency to an experience of form or essence (essence being a union of form with matter). Sight (as an intelligibility or nature) denotes an essence, but this

principle of operation from which there proceeds the *reception* of two effects that can be identified.¹¹⁶ The good of an operation always surpasses the good of a form.¹¹⁷

With respect to the reception of these two effects, first and principally, comes a thing's characteristic reality, being, existence, activity, or operation.¹¹⁸ In the transition from form to operation, "form stands to operation as potency to act."¹¹⁹ Form (as potency relative to act, as a second kind of potency) does not self-actuate since actuation requires an active principle of operation that is found in an act or operation (something which is already fully in a condition of act) which functions as an efficient, extrinsic, acting cause to produce an effect that is somehow similar to itself.¹²⁰ In the order of reality or the order of external nature which has been created by God and which determines how things relate to

essence is not the seeing which realizes the form or purpose of our sight which, as form or purpose, only anticipates any subsequent seeing which only comes through a later actualization which perfects or implements the meaning which already exists in us through the mediation of form or essence. With act, nothing more needs to be done for something to become what it is meant to be and so, for this reason, the essential lack of potency in an act explains why the realization or the achievement of an act is something that now exists outside of time. As act, there is nothing more to be done. Nothing more needs to be developed.

116 *De Potentia*, q. 2, a. 2, quoted by Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 126, n. 115; Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 105.

117 *De Potentia*, q. 5, a. 5, ad 14, quoted by Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 131, n. 150. Cf. Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 551.

118 *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 7, 12, 1486. Earlier, in the same vein, in the *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 1, 12, Aquinas had distinguished between a first perfection which belongs to a form and a second which belongs to an operation or activity since he wants to distinguish between activities that have a characteristic form and which have products which do not exist apart from the operations that make them and other activities that can make or produce things which exist apart from the operations that make them. The twofold effect which can thus be legitimately ascribed to the principle of form (functioning as a passive principle) then serves as a basis from which we can derive a twofold notion of action or operation as Aquinas distinguishes between an operation which exists within an agent and whose product or end is itself and a second species of operation which seeks to go outside an agent to realize an end that exists outside a given doer. Cf. Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, pp. 104-107.

119 Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 105. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 54, a. 3 where it is argued that "in every creature the essence differs from the existence, and is compared to it as potentiality is to act." Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 53, 3. Later on in the *Summa Theologiae*, in 1a, q. 105, a. 5, it is noted that, in an order of proportionality which exists within the order of creation with respect to a constitutive set of metaphysical principles, matter exists in order to receive a form and a form exists to receive an operation since a form or essence is ordered to its proper operations (although, at the same time, as a corrective, it should be noted that the reception of an operation is not to be understood in a way which would deny the prior necessity of an act of being or an act of existence which, in created things, must be presupposed before any act *as an operation* can to be specified and received). Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 54, a. 2; q. 79, a. 2. In any case, whether or not we speak about matter receiving a form or form, an act of being (or an act as an operation), in all created things, metaphysical principles are all related to each other in terms of a potency/act relationship, by a proportion between potency and act. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 1, ad 6; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 2, 2438. In any created thing which exists as a compound of essence and act of existence, "it is one and the same which is in potency through the essence and in act through the act of existence"

each other, all “acts and operations precede potentialities.”¹²¹ And when an operation exists to produce an effect (as a *processio operati*: as the procession of the product of an operation), it is an activity that reveals the perfection or the actuality of an agent who must be already in a condition of act if it is to produce an effect as an efficient cause. The same act perfects a given subject or agent (as a *processio operationis*: as the procession of an operation) while, at the same time, it grounds the production of a particular effect or result (as we distinguish between these two notions of operation: an operation as a *processio operationis* versus an operation as *processio operati*).¹²² Hence, in actuation, from the operation of an active potency or an efficiently operative cause, an operation is received as a passion by a form which, as a fertile receptor, specifies and even limits the kind of operation which it can suitably receive and accept.¹²³ An order of proportion exists between a given type of form and a given type of

(Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 164). Matter, form, and act have meanings that all derive from the interrelations which each have with each other in their different meanings. We cannot properly define any of these terms unless we invoke the meaning of the other terms which themselves cannot be defined unless we invoke the meaning of the term that we have initially tried to define. See Crowe’s discussion of the role of proportion in Aquinas’s analysis (*Three Thomist Studies*, pp. 221-223) for an account which explains how, in Aquinas, proportion serves as a heuristic principle that is highly useful for purposes of understanding any form or type of reality which can be encountered in either the created or uncreated world. Metaphysical principles which refer to the created material order of things can be adapted and employed for purposes of understanding realities or beings that transcend the created material order and which cannot be regarded as the proper objects of our created, incarnate acts of human cognition.

120 *De ente et essentia*, 4, 7; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 16, 3; 1, 16, 7; 1, 22, 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 3, a. 4; Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 137; Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, pp. 97-8; Byrne, “Thomist Sources,” *Thomist*: 117-8; 121; 129-30. As Byrne explains it, the human intellect, in its theoretical and practical understanding, is not able to move itself in terms of its own acts of understanding. As has already been noted, understanding exists as a reception. However, if an act of understanding is to occur now at one time or now at another, it needs to be in a fitting and right relation with an appropriate agent object which can trigger an act of understanding in us and, because this prior disposition is not entirely subject to our human control, its explanation (if an explanation is to be sought) requires the postulation of a transcendent source which providentially orders things in such a way that acts of understanding become more likely than they would otherwise be. Citing Byrne’s own words of explanation (p. 118):

...God moves the intellect in a statistical fashion by means of an external, indirect premotion which, from a human point of view, is reducible to a non-intelligible (or random) *per accidens* set of circumstances. The external premotion brings a moved and its mover - in this case, intellect and the mover of intellect - into the right relationship. Once that relationship is right, intellect will be moved to a state where it can provide a content or object to the will in order to specify the act of the will.

121 *Sententia Libri De anima*, 2, 6, 304. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 3, ad 2.

122 Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 97.

123 See also Lonergan, *De ente supernaturali*, p. 63: “second act [operation] ... is limited generically by the potency in which it occurs and specifically by the form that it perfects,” as cited and translated by Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 355, n. 15.

act.

Then, secondarily, from operations and from the reception of operations, can come a characteristic effect which exists as the term of a given action or operation although these effects are not invariably always given (they do not always come with a given operation) since, as Aquinas argues, “there are many operations which do not produce an effect”¹²⁴ unless a number of other conditions are also fulfilled and met.¹²⁵ The heating of a fire, for example, will not necessarily cause anything to burn unless, also, a combustible object is brought close enough to it so that it can begin to burn and ignite.¹²⁶ The same act or operation can thus be understood to have both a passive and an active aspect and both aspects *can be* simultaneously operative.¹²⁷ To use an example which is lacking in physical determinations and qualifications, a given teacher can attempt to instruct a group of would be students. The effort that is required and which is expended can lead to a growth in a teacher's understanding but this same growth in a teacher's understanding does not always or necessarily mean that the students who are present will grow in their experience of understanding. They should experience a growth in their understanding but, again, this might not be the case. One does not necessarily imply the other.

To explain this point a bit more fully: on the one hand, as received by a given form in a way which actualizes the being or the meaning of a given form, an act or an operation functions passively within a given being to give it a reality which it would not otherwise have but then, as we move from this species of transition and effect to a second species of transition and effect, when this same act or operation also produces an effect which exists in something which is other, beyond or outside of a given existing thing (or subject) to effect a second transition but now an external type of transition which moves in its own way from a condition of potency to a condition of act, it now functions as an active or as an efficient principle of causation although, from the viewpoint and standpoint of form (as a general principle of explanation), this second species of effect needs to be received by a second species and specification of form when, as a potency, this second species of form receives an operation or an act which primarily brings this form toward the fullness of its being or the fullness of its truth and reality. If we refer again the example of a teacher who is attempting to instruct a group of students, this second form refers to the kind of potency which exists as the form of the students who are present. These students, as students, each have a form within them which refers to their individual teachability and the actuation of this form in terms of learning supposes a number of requirements which must be met if their learning is actually to happen and to occur at any given time and within a given context.

To the degree then that an act or an operation possesses both a passive and active aspect, to the same degree then, it can be argued, with respect to objects, that the object of a given act or a given operation can possess both a passive and an active aspect. As an act or operation produces an effect as its likely, probable, characteristic object, this same object can also then function as a causal, active, agent object (point of origin or subject) as it also acts to produce an effect in another which, as noted, has a form of its own. An object which is identified as an agent or catalyst designates an act or operation which first exists as a reception (relative to a given form as a potency); but, if the same object is identified as an externalizing type of effect, it designates an act or an operation which functions as its efficient cause.¹²⁸

¹²⁴*De Potentia*, q. 2, a. 2, as quoted by Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 126, n. 115.

¹²⁵Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 233; p. 250.

¹²⁶*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 9, 4, 1818.

¹²⁷*Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 5, 320; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 9, 4, 1818.

¹²⁸*De Anima*, a. 13; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 77, a. 3. See *Verbum*, pp. 138-143, for a

As form defines what kinds of operations can be produced and received, the same forms also define what kinds of objects can be in turn produced or received. Through the principle of form, a connatural relation always exists between an operation and its proper, characteristic term or object where, as a consequence, it can be said that the proper object of an act or operation can be understood to exist in a way which points to why it can also have another or second nature or form which also properly specifies the character of a particular act or operation.¹²⁹ A proportion connects acts with objects, forms, and potencies to determine the respective meaning of each term on the basis of how each of these principle relates to another.¹³⁰

With respect then to the relation between the being of a thing and the question of its perfection (which

lengthy discussion about the meaning of object in Aquinas.

129Aquinas distinguishes between a natural form and a form that is grasped and conceived by our human reason (*forma naturalis* versus *forma a ratione concepta*). Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 2: “just as a natural thing has its species from its form, so an action has its species from its object, as movement from its term.” The same thesis is reiterated in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 5. The already given natural form of a thing which already exists is not to be confused with a form which is brought into being because it is “conceived by reason” and which, by a judgment that is grounded in right reason, is reasonably and rationally able to specify the goodness or the badness of a given prospective human act or operation. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 10: “the species of moral acts are constituted by forms, as they are conceived by the reason,” as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 90. See also Rhonheimer, p. 41. As Rhonheimer goes on to explain his thesis (citing texts from the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 72, a. 3, ad 2; 1a2ae, q. 73, a. 3, ad 1; and *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 4, ad 9), p. 159, n. 62, the object or the form of an action is a desired end which is intended by a given human subject. While a desired end can be spoken about in a strictly material or natural way (as if it were a material good which refers to the matter about which an action is carried out), this same desired end *as desired by a human being in a natural human way* also specifies the intelligibility or the form of an action that can possibly lead to the realization of a desired end as a human good. From an understanding which begins with understanding things to be done in terms of their ends, we initially begin to reason about what specific actions need to be taken if a desired end is to be attained. Cf. *De Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, q. 1, a. 2, as cited by Rhonheimer, p. 406, n. 8. An end, simply because it is desired by a human being as the term of our natural human inclinations, initially imparts to every prospective human action an initial moral qualification which suggests what, as human beings, we should begin to do in terms of our behavior. Human desires, simply existing as desires, always possess some form of moral qualification. However, while our human intentions are to be understood as our inner acts of human willing, subjectively desired goods become objectively good only to the degree that they can be realized in a manner which accords with the requirements of our right reason in the proper actuation of its acts and operations. By itself, the reasonableness or the goodness of any given intention is not sufficient for creating a situation where acts or operations are also good and right. Cf. *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 40, q. 1, a. 2, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 446, nn. 33-34.

130In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 18, a. 2, ad 3, Aquinas notes that the meaning of an act or operation is not simply or fully determined by an object which is produced or which is intended by a given act or operation since the full and proper meaning of an act or operation is only really properly determined if a fit or just proportion exists between an act or operation and a given object. Ends do not justify means. See *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, ad 1, as quoted by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 447, n. 37: “if someone wills an evil in

refers to its greater, ultimate good), while, admittedly, the nature or the form of a thing exists in itself as a good, a thing is truly or fully good and perfect only to the degree that it perfectly or fully exists in a condition of act and is fully engaged in the activities and operations which properly belong to it.¹³¹ “What is in potentiality is imperfect unless it is reduced to act.”¹³² A thing’s existence in terms of its realization is its completeness or its perfection.¹³³ Its properly functioning existence is its right and proper perfection. Perfection (as a principle which is used to specify the possible extent of real, realized goodness) measures the goodness and value of every operation¹³⁴ as, at the same time, a thing’s form or a thing’s nature specifies its proper orientation, inclination, or desire¹³⁵ to be¹³⁶ where, for every being, for every existing thing, its own good or perfection is something which is naturally desired as its

order to pursue something good, then this good is not the goal of the will, but only a goal that the agent has proposed to himself in a disordinate way.” In any given concrete situation, in the judgments which have to be made, can it be said that a desired good (which already possesses a material or natural goodness) is rightly or properly related to any act or action which could be employed to realize a desired good in a way which more aptly converts it into a proper human good? Is a desired good a truly “fitting object,” is it a proper object in the context of our moral desires? Is it an *obiectum conveniens*? Cf. Rhonheimer, p. 421. In any given situation, do all the pertinent circumstances warrant a particular, concrete action instead of some other particular, concrete action? Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 20, a. 1. Throughout, in the metaphysical language which Aquinas prefers to use, form (as a principle of meaning or intelligibility) necessarily plays a mediating role to determine which acts and objects can be properly received and which acts and objects can be properly brought about in the realization of a practical, human good. Cf. *In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, as quoted by Rhonheimer, p. 435:

What is natural to something is what is suited to its form [*quod convenit suae formae*], through which it is constituted is such a nature....But the form through which man is man is the *ratio* and *intellectus*. Therefore it naturally tends toward whatever is suited to man’s reason and intellect. The good of any virtue [*cuiuslibet virtutis*] is suitable for man according to the reason: because such goodness [*bonitas*] comes from a certain commensurability [*commensuratio*] of the act to the circumstances and to the end, a *commensurability that reason brings about*.

131 *In 4 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 49, q. 3, a. 2 sol., cited by *Verbum*, p. 131, n. 151: “What is ultimate and most perfect in anything is its operation; wherefore every form inherent in a thing is compared to its operation somewhat as potency is compared to act; on this account form is called first act (for example, knowledge); and operation (for example, to consider) is called second act, as is evident in the second book of the *De anima*.” Cf. *De Potentia*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 5, a. 5, ad 14; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 9, 5, 1828-1829; *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 2; q. 49, a. 3, ad 1; Byrne, “Thomist Sources,” *Thomist*: 129. While the existence of a given thing *through act* is itself a good, the realization of all potentialities in the existence of a given thing *through operations* exists as an even greater good. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 37, 5; 3, 3, 4-5.

132 *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 9, a. 1.

133 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 37, 5; *Compendium theologiae*, “Hope,” 2, c. 9; p. 330; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 4, a. 1 & ad 3; q. 5, a. 1.

134 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 4, a. 1. See also Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 43.

proper finality or purpose.¹³⁷ “Every action [in a way] comes from some form.”¹³⁸ Hence, operationally, heuristically, and initially, the good is not simply that which all things seek since, more adequately, it is that which all things naturally and properly desire or run after¹³⁹ even if, in some or in many cases, desires for good are not consciously experienced and known.¹⁴⁰ Perceived good (as human beings experience and perceive perceived goods) causally stir and move our desires or appetites toward a good that is now being sought even if, on occasion, mistakes are made about what we should properly and truly desire as a good which ought to be attained.¹⁴¹ As an object of desire which is first in the order of our human intentions (but which serves as an end or as a final cause which elicits subsequent acts which move us toward the end or the final cause as a given good), good or goodness is that for which other things exist or for which other things are brought into existence through choices which we, as human beings, make and the activities which we engage in as a consequence of the choices that we have and do made.¹⁴² Since, as noted, good or good things, as an object of desire, function as an ultimate principle of order in our human lives and since, in some way, it is that which all things seek to enjoy in a possession that is meant to last through time once it has been initially achieved,¹⁴³ on the basis of an order of specification (an order which refers to that which is first intended or desired by us in our acts of desiring), a second order is thus created which is distinguished as the order of execution, performance, or use when, as human beings, we employ means and resources which exist outside of ourselves in order to achieve and to realize goods which had initially existed only from within us in the

135 *Summa Theologiae*, 1ae, q. 80, a. 1 & ad 3.

136 Ludwig Honnefelder, “The Evaluation of Goods and the Estimation of Consequences: Aquinas on the Determination of the Morally Good,” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 427. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 7, 3.

137 *Compendium theologiae*, “Hope,” 2, c. 9; p. 329. See also Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 115; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 7.

138 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 1, ad 4.

139 *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 1; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 1, 9; 11; 3, 11, 500; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 5, a. 6; q. 16, a. 1; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 4, 71. See also Bernard Lonergan, *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. 27-33; Terry J. Tekippe, “The Crisis of the Human Good,” *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 7 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 314.

140 *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 1, 9.

141 *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 3, 35; 3, 13, 515-516; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 8, a. 1.

142 *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 12; *CAM*, 1, 11, 179; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 9, 105. As Aquinas later notes in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, 12, 7, 2526, “that which is good [as a selected or chosen good] and that which is desirable in itself belong to the same class.” When an intermediate good is selected as a means for realizing a desired or intended good, in the structure of our human willing, intentional and instrumental goods (which can be understood as intentional and instrumental operations) are ordered and related to each other in a way which recalls how form and matter are related and ordered to each other. An intended desire in its intelligibility functions as a kind of form; and instrumental operations as active potencies, a species of matter as conditions are determined and fulfilled in a manner which in turn leads to the realization of an intended, desired goal. The intended goal functions as a first principle which organizes all things in a coordination of means and ends. Cf. *In 3 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 446, n. 35.

143 *De Veritate*, q. 21, a. 2.

decisions which we had been making about the goods that we will and wish to seek and acquire.¹⁴⁴ Here, in the execution or the doing of different things, means precede ends¹⁴⁵ (instead of the converse relation which exists within the order of intentionality where ends precede means as the means whereby we can grasp which means we should employ in order to reach a given goal or end).¹⁴⁶ The end or good of an act, functioning as an instrumental means, is to be distinguished from the end or the good of a galvanizing intention.¹⁴⁷ An act can only be regarded as good or virtuous if both the intention and the act or the means is also itself good.¹⁴⁸ Good means lead to good ends. The goodness of one points to the goodness of the other if, ultimately, a given goodness is to exist with the perfection, the goodness, and the integrity which it should have.

144*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 16, aa. 1, 4. Aquinas distinguishes between use as execution *after choice* and use as execution *before choice* when, through our human desiring as our willing, through our understanding, we are directed to engage in its acts to answer certain questions or to solve problems that, in some way, press upon us.

145*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 3, ad 2.

146*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 4; q. 16, a. 4.

147Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 337, n. 4 refers to Lonergan's citation of Aquinas in a text that is taken from the *In 2 Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 1, which defines the end of an act of execution as "that to which the work is directed by the one acting."

148*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 8. See also Selman, p. 145.