Questioning in Aquinas

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In moving beyond our human acts of sensing to other kinds of acts which are also said to be cognitive if we want to understand whatever we could be experiencing and sensing, the point of departure is both an experience of particularity as this is given to us through our acts of sensing and an experience of this experience as a problem or a difficulty of some kind which somehow needs to be overcome. Questions emerge in a way which reveals the emergence of a critical, curious attitude as the asking of questions also fosters and encourages an attitude of curiosity about what it is that, as human beings, we are currently experiencing or have been experiencing through the various receptions that are proper to us in our having our acts of sensing. As a phenomenon, questions and queries emerge spontaneously, in a completely natural way, since it is proper and right for us, as human beings, that we should ask questions about what it is that we do not fully understand (given the incompleteness of our current understanding and knowledge).[1]

This asking of questions initially reveals a power or a capability of understanding which exists, in its own way, as a species of intellectual light: it is an intellectual light which is present within us as human inquirers if we refer to how this light or how this "lighting" reveals itself as the form through which our human cognition in occurring.[2] The form which is the shape or the intelligibility of a given question points to a form that will hopefully be understood if the answer to a given question. As St. Augustine had noticed in his own time and context, even as we ask questions for which we lack answers, in asking questions, we begin to know what it is that, proleptically, we are seeking to understand and know.[3] On the one hand, our acts of sensing admittedly give to us an immediate knowledge of things which are proximate to us in our acts of sensing.[4] The asking of questions implies an initial knowledge of some kind from which we necessarily begin as we move from what we initially experience and, in some way, understand to what we might begin to experience and understand.[5] How do we deal with things which are far away or which are far removed from what we have been experiencing?[6] How too do we deal

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1*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 2-4. See also Jan A. Aertsen, "Aquinas and the Human Desire for Knowledge," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79 no. 3 (Summer 2005): 412. When Aquinas comments on Aristotle's claim that "all men naturally desire to know" (the opening lines of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 980a21-24) he gives three reasons to explain why this is so. If the human intellect is to achieve the end or purpose for which it was created, it must try to engage in acts of understanding; since it is proper for man to understand, it is right and proper for us as human beings to seek understanding as if it were a proper goal; and, finally, since our human understanding has an origin which must derive from some form of prior understanding, it is right and meet that our human understanding should try to move toward this understanding in order to be united and joined to it.

2*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 109, a. 1; 2a2ae, q. 171, a. 2.

3St. Augustine, *Patrologia latina*, Migne, vol. 34, col. 547, cited by Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., *Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History* (New York, N.Y./Ramsey, N.J./Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 55.

4*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 7, 2, 1302.

5*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 15, a. 10, ad 1.

6*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 2, 45.

with things which communicate a false appearance or false resemblance and which tempt us to confuse the appearance of a thing with its likely or probable reality?[7]

These experiences of incompleteness accordingly help us to explain why Aquinas says, following Aristotle, that there exists a natural human desire (an *appetitus*) which functions as a searching, "seeking principle."[8] It wants to know the truth and the cause of all things.[9] It wants to reduce every kind of multiplicity that is experienced by us in the world to some kind of unity which perhaps can be known but which cannot be directly experienced.[10] And this desire, tendency, or appetite *as natural* to us exists as a completely legitimate desire which causes movements that are not only completely natural but which are also self-directive or self-governing and so self-constituting (being not merely or purely a matter of instinct if we can decide either to encourage this desire or, in some way, impede it).[11]

7*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 17, a. 1 & ad 2.

8Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 32.

9*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 50; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 1; q. 12, a. 8, ad 4: "The natural desire of the rational creature is to know everything that belongs to the perfection of the mind, namely, the species and genera of things and their types." Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 8; q. 94, a. 2; 2: hence, "man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society.... [and also] to shun ignorance [and] to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things..." If man naturally desires to know the causes of all things, he naturally desires to come to a knowledge of God who is the most important cause as the first cause or first principle of all things from which everything else comes. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 25, 11 & 14; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 4. The human ability to grasp the meaning of a universal and to know a universal implies a natural human ability to come to a knowledge of God who exists as a universal. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 2, a. 3. However, since God can only be known as he exists in himself by an act of divine understanding and not by us in a created act of understanding which receives a created species or form from a created effect that we initially sense, God can only be known by us in a supernatural way: by the reception of a divine essence, species, or form which can only enter our understanding (our intellects) in the context of another life through a divine illumination which gives to us a supernatural gift. Cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 47, 3; 3, 48, 12-16; 3, 51-53; William E. Murnion, "Intellectual Honesty in Aquinas and Lonergan," (paper presented at the Third International Lonergan Workshop, Erbacher Hof, Mainz, Germany, January 2-7, 2007), pp. 8-9.

10*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 91, 3; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 115, a. 3. As Lonergan cites the pertinent principle in Latin: *oportet reducere omnem multitudinem in unitatem* [every multitude has to be reduced to unity]. Cf. "Bernard Lonergan's Draft Pages for Chapter 3 of His Doctoral Dissertation, "*Gratia Operans*: A Study of the Speculative Writings of St. Thomas of Aquinas," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 22 (2004): 138.

11*Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 16, 836; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 80, a. 1; 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 4. In q. 80 (and elsewhere in other texts), Aquinas distinguishes between a natural desire, inclination, or appetite which works purely by instinct (where a living being does what it does because it cannot decide or do otherwise) and a superior form of inclination which allows for degrees of self-determination or degrees of self-constitution. This second form of desire or inclination is certainly given as a natural potency or nature (as a general principle of movement which belongs to us as human beings within the created order of things) but its exercise is not foregone since, instead, it is subject to us in the making of our human decisions which can decide that certain objects are to be sought and not others. The presence of a decision making ability distinguishes higher and lower creatures from each

No natural desire *as natural* exists in vain (without some kind of purpose or reason) even if, within the context of our present life, it is a desire which cannot be entirely fulfilled or met.[12] And, at the same time too, as a correlative, it has to be said that no desire *as desire* exists entirely for itself but for something that is other than itself.[13] And, so, with respect to our human cognition, it "belongs by nature to all men,"[14] to us all as human beings, to have a natural desire for knowledge which leads us toward the perfection of our human nature as questioning, thinking, knowing beings,[15] and so, from this natural desire, a concomitant natural knowledge of things emerges that, initially, had been confused and undifferentiated since, initially, it had been lacking in distinction, clarity, order, and definition.[16] Hence, not only do we have a natural desire for knowledge which transcends that which we already understand and know but, on this basis of this desire, we can have a natural knowledge of things which joins us to a real world or world of being which encompasses the being of all existing things.[17]

The incompleteness of our initial human knowing according points to why we cannot be happy or content with a situation whereby we have an awareness or a knowledge of things which is not fully understood or fully known.[18] Since, for instance, it is natural for us to want to know about who God is in His being[19] because God, as first mover, is the ultimate cause of all things that are experienced in our world,[20] this desire for knowledge about God accordingly implies the legitimate existence of a natural human desire that seeks to understand and know the cause or causes of all things,[21] to have an understanding and a knowledge of things that is not lacking in any way (and which is only fully satisfied if God, as the cause of all things, is Himself fully understood and known).[22] As noted, our

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other and, as a capacity or real potency, it exists most prominently in us as human beings. A human person can decide what he or she wants or desires. Desires are not always or necessarily programmed.

12*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 48, 11; cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3, 51, 1; 3, 57, 4; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 1.

13*Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 821.

14*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 1.

15*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 2, cited by Aertsen, p. 413, n. 7; *Sentencia Libri De anima*, 1, 1, cited by Aertsen, p. 413, n. 8.

16*De Veritate,* q. 11, a. 1; *Sententia super Physicam*, 1, 1, 7; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 1; q. 42, a. 3; q. 85, a. 3. Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, pp. 295-296, n. 38

17Frederick E. Crowe, "The Present Relevance of Complacency and Concern," *Three Thomist Studies*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2000), p. 176.

18Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c.104, trans. as *Compendium of Theology* by Cyril Vollert (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Co., 1948), p. 110 (hereafter cited as "*Compendium theologiae*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation); *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 8.

19*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 51, 1; 3, 57, 4; 3, 63, 2.

20*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 8; q. 109, a. 6; 1a, q. 12, a. 1: "if the rational intellect does not come to rejoin the first cause of things, a natural desire would remain in vain."

21*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 32, a. 8; 3a, q. 5, a. 4.

22Please note that when, in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 7, Aquinas speaks about the proper object of our human intellects (our understanding) as the nature, quiddity, or essence of a thing *as it exists in corporeal matter* (my italics), he does not speak about the final goal or the ultimate object of our human knowing – an object which refers to the adequate object of our cognitive desire but which is not proper or proportionate to our created acts of human cognition in the interplay which exists

initial experience of things communicates an initial, fragmentary knowledge of things but, as this fragmentary condition is experienced, in time, it serves to create a situation which encourages a shift within us where our knowing must move through a number of different stages or steps before some kind of fully differentiated knowledge can be achieved about any given thing.[23] Inquiry (*inquisitio*) begins with wonder and wonder from a sense of ignorance that we wish to escape from.[24] The experience of our human wonder, by its very nature, in its own joyful way,[25] anticipates that something is to be added to the data of our sense or the data of our imagination.[26] Given the effects thus which are seen on a daily basis, what can be their likely or probable cause?[27] Hence, in wonder, a cognitive desire exists,[28] a desire which is to be distinguished from any irrational form of curiosity which wants to understand causes which are of lesser weight or importance than those causes which exert a more primary influence in determining the meaning and existence of things which are to be understood as effects that stem from causes that we would like to know about and identify.[29]

With respect to the reality of our legitimate human wonder, its appetite or thirst can be insatiable since

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between our acts of sensing and our acts of understanding. Cf. Frederick Lawrence, "On 'The Meditative Origin of the Philosophical Knowledge of Order," *The Beginning and the Beyond Papers from the Gadamer and Voegelin Conferences* Supplementary Issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 4, ed. Fred Lawrence (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1984): p. 63. The proper object of our human knowing is to be contrasted with the adequate object of our cognitive desire which refers to God: knowing God by his essence, *videre Deum per essentiam*.

23*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 3. In his *Hermeneutics and Method: The 'Universal Viewpoint' in Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 25, Ivo Coelho speaks about how, through the making of our subsequent inquiries, it is possible for us to move from an undifferentiated knowledge of reality toward a differentiated knowledge which knows many things within a context which is to be identified with wisdom and a "view of the whole" which wisdom enjoys (wisdom being wisdom). Quoting Coelho's own words:

> This differentiation is by a process of dichotomy: divine being into material and non-material, subdivide the material into the living and the non-living, and so on. This process leaves out nothing, and at the same time we are moving towards ever more detailed knowledge of the whole.

24*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 3, 55. As Eric Voegelin speaks about what Aristotle says on the nature of human inquiry:

> "A man in confusion (*aporon*) or wonder (*thaumazon*) is conscious (*oietai*) of being ignorant (*agnoian*)." (*Metaphysics*, 982b 18). From this restlessness in confusion arises the desire of man to know (*tou eidenai oregontai*) (980a 22).

Cf. Lawrence, "On 'The Meditative Origin of the Philosophical Knowledge of Order," p. 58.

25*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 32, a. 8, ad 2.

26Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 22.

27*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 25, 11; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 12, a. 1.

28*Compendium theologiae*, c. 205; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 32, a. 8.

29*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 167, a. 1 & ad 3, cited by Aertsen, p. 415, n. 16.

there is nothing that it cannot wonder about and so ask any questions that can be posed. Its range is potentially infinite,[30] even if its functioning depends upon a variety of internal conditions since, factually, our human curiosity varies from person to person. The interest or the consciousness of one is not the interest or the consciousness of another. Who and what we are determines who and what we will try to grasp and understand. "The end appears to each man in a form answering to his character" or, more literally, "such as a person is, such also will the end appear to that person."[31] *Qualis unisquisque est, talis finis videtur ei.*[32] While some desire knowledge for its own sake, as an intrinsic good,[33] others have interests, concerns, and desires which interfere with purely cognitive desires and motives.[34] Wonder about any given subject ends once something has been thoroughly investigated and understood.[35] However, as questions emerge one upon another, they give a form or a shape to all of our subsequent acts of human inquiry, and this shaping gives a form or structure to our cognitive human consciousness as we respond to different questions with different actions that try to meet the needs and the demands which have been raised and created by our asking of different questions. Certain actions are done at one time and others, at another. Hence, by understanding the form or the structure of our inquiry, we understand the form or the structure of our human cognition, the order of our human acts of reasoning as these exist and function for the sake of our later, possible understanding. In the process of asking questions, as human knowers, we begin to change ourselves as we engage in actions which, as potential knowers, they must now undertake and move into.

On the form or the structure of our human inquiry, Aristotle had argued in Book 2 of the *Posterior Analytics* that it is by our asking different kinds of questions that we can speak about the form or the

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30*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 76, a. 5, ad 4; q. 91, a. 3, ad 3; cf q. 54, a. 2 where it is said that although the human mind is finite in its being, its acts of understanding are infinite.

31Frederick E. Crowe, "On Lonergan's Foundations for Works of the Spirit," *Developing the Lonergan Legacy: Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 318-319, citing Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3, 5, 1114a 30 f, cited by Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 83, a. 1, obj. 5; 1a2ae, q. 10, a. 3, obj. 2. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *On Charity*, a. 12; trans. Lottie H. Kendzierski (Milwaukee: Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1997) p. 100 (hereafter cited as the "*De charitate*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation) where, in support of Aristotle's thesis that each person's character explains the goals or ends which each person apprehends or understands, Aquinas refers to 1 Corinthians 2:14 which notes that "the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God." In "Lonergan's New Notion of Value," in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), p. 58, Crowe cites this text from Aristotle in a fuller context, as follows:

> Now some one may say that all men desire the apparent good, but have no control over the appearance, but the end appears to each man in a form answering to his character.

32*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 83, a. 1, obj. 5; 1a2ae, q. 10, a. 3, obj. 2; cf. *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 3, 13, 516.

33*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 19, 8.

34*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 4; 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 33, a. 3 & ad 3; q. 37, a. 1.

35*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 3, 67.

nature of our scientific inquiry.[36] To reach a better understanding of science as the habit and practice of intelligent understanding, Aristotle had asked about the form of the question. What is the form of the question? What is a scientific question? What is its intelligibility? What do we want to know about when we ask a scientific question? What does a scientific investigation seek to attain? What does a scientific understanding consist of? First discover the form or the intelligibility of the question, and, then, we should be able to identify the general content of all scientific answers and activities which lead us toward scientific understanding.

In his *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle had thus postulated that all questions can be reduced to four basic types: whether there is an *X*; what is an *X*; whether *X* is *Y*; and why *X* is *Y*. However, as we examine this classification and Aristotle's subsequent discussion, we find that he reduces these questions to two basic types.[37] The first basic type groups together "What is an X" and "why X is Y" because these can only be answered by offering or postulating an hypothesis which can relate a number of distinct elements or parts into a relation. The second basic type groups together "whether there is an X" and "whether X is Y" because these can be answered by only saying either "yes" or "no." The responses between the first and second totally differ. The prior asking of what and why questions creates an orientation that determines specific activities which a potential knower must engage in if an answer is to be found for a specific type of question. But, this orientation is quite unlike a second orientation which is created when matters of fact have to be decided through a second, distinct form of inquiry.

As Aquinas argues, for instance, in his *De Anima*, acts are distinguished from each another on the basis of the different objects which they intend or desire.[38] Hence, a "first operation of the mind" (*prima mentis operatio*) proceeds from a first set of questions that have a distinct object, but this operation prepares the way for a "second operation of the mind" (*secunda mentis operatio*) which follows a second set of questions that have an object which differs from the object that is sought by the first set of questions.[39] Thus, human knowing functions in a self-assembling kind of way. Although it begins with our sense perceptions, through a dialectic of questions and answers that is constitutive of our inquiry, it passes from the givenness of experience toward an apprehension of forms or meanings, and from forms or meanings toward apprehensions of truth or reality. Citing Aquinas's own words from the *Sentences*,

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36Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 2, 2, 89b 36-90a 34, cited by Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 26.

37Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 2, 2, 89b36-90a6; *In Aristotelis libros Posteriorum analyticorum*, 2, 1.

38*Quaestio disputata De anima*, a. 13. In his "Christ as Subject: A Reply," in *Collection*, "Christ as Subject: A Reply," eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 167, Bernard Lonergan cites the Latin phrasing as *actus specificantur per obiecta*, i.e., acts are specified by their objects.

39*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 9, 1239. "In speculative matters...there is a twofold operation of reason: first, to discover through inquiry and, then, to judge about the discoveries," my translation. In his *Debated Questions* 2, q. 2, a. 1; trans. as *Quodlibetal Questions 1 and 2* by Sandra Edwards (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983) p. 79 (hereafter cited as the "*Quaestiones de quodlibet*" followed by technical reference to the original, and if a translation has been used, by the volume and page of the English translation), Aquinas clearly notes that "the question 'Is it?' is different from the question 'What is it?'"

"the first operation of the intellect regards the quiddity [essence or "whatness"[40]] of a thing; the second regards its existence or being;"[41] "to understand [*intelligere*] pertains to intellectual apprehension;" "to be wise [*sapere*] pertains to intellectual judgment."[42] Human knowing possesses its own finality or its own teology as it moves from our lack of understanding toward a fuller understanding which concludes in knowledge, in a knowledge of reality.[43] The human mind or, more phenomenologically, as human subjects, in our wondering, thinking, and questioning, we exercise an intellectual type of causality or agency which, in turn, verifies the claim that "there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses, *except the intellect itself*."[44]

To specify more exactly what the "first operation of the mind" consists of, it has to be admitted that, in

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40I translate "quiddity" or the Latin *quidditas* as "whatness" since this word is derived from the Latin interrogative *quid* meaning "what." While *quidditas rei* is translated as "quiddity of a thing," *quid rei* is translated as "what a thing is." It refers to a thing's definition which, as known, leads to a comprehensive knowledge of that thing whose "whatness" has been grasped and expressed through the formulation of a definition. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 20, a. 5. From it, potentially, other truths can be known and demonstrated. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 7, ad 5.

41Aquinas, *Super I Sententiarum*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad 7, my translation, cited by Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 17, n. 24; and quoted also in Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 222, n. 606 with a slightly different wording. For corroboration, see the *De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 2; q. 3, a. 2; q. 14, a. 1; and the *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 6, 4, 1232. In the *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3, Aquinas speaks of two mental operations in a more extended discussion.

> The intellect has two operations, one called the "understanding of indivisibles," by which it knows *what* a thing is; and another by which it composes and divides, that is to say, by forming affirmative and negative enunciations. Now these two operations correspond to two principles in things. The first operation has regard to the nature itself of a thing, in virtue of which the known thing holds a certain rank among beings, whether it be a complete thing, as some whole, or an incomplete thing, as a part or an accident. The second operation has regard to a things's act of existing (*esse*), which results from the union of the principles of a thing in composite substances, or, as in the case of simple substances, accompanies the thing's simple nature.

Gilby's translation in his *Philosophical Texts*, p. 221, n. 604, is more precise.

> Of the two phases of mental activity, the first is the understanding of essential meanings, while the second is a judgment, either affirmative or negative. A dual reality corresponds to these activities: to the former corresponds the nature of a thing, according to its state of being, complete or incomplete, part or accident, as the case may be; to the latter corresponds the existence of the thing.

In his *Verbum*, p. 17, n. 20, Lonergan lists a number of works by Aquinas which refer to two operations of the mind, a twofold operation of the mind (*duplex mentis operatio*). Besides citation from the *De Veritate*, citations refer to *De Potentia*, q. 8, a. 1, c.; q. 9, a. 5 c.; *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, 5, a. 9 c.;

the initial activities of this first operation, the "what" and "why" questions appear to differ in the meanings which they intend. What something is does not appear to be why it exists. In Book 2 of the *Physics*, Aristotle had specified four necessary causes or reasons[45] which one should always invoke in order to explain anything thoroughly as this is first encountered by us in the context of our sense experience.[46] A material cause refers to that from which something is made. A final cause refers to an end or purpose for which something is made, or why a given action is performed. An efficient or instrument cause refers to that by which something is done in order to change something in another. And, lastly, a formal cause is that which specifies what something is.[47] It combines with that which is indeterminate or less determinate in order to produce something which had not previously existed.[48]

However, in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Aquinas cites Aristotle to the effect that "what" and "why" questions "basically coincide."[49] Each question seeks the same object where, in

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and *Lectura super Ioannem*, c. 1, lect. 1.

42*Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 7, 672.

43*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 3.

44Loemker, *G. W. Leibniz* 556, as quoted by Tim Lynch but with the emphasis added by the author, in "Human Knowledge: Passivity, Experience, and Structural Actuation: An Approach to the Problem of the A Priori," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 17 (1999): 77.

45The Greek *aitia*, *aition* translating as "cause, also translates as "explanation" or "reason."

46Aristotle, *Physics*, 2, 3, 194b16-195a26.

47Aristotle, *Physics*, 2, 3, 194b27-29.

48Hardon, "Formal Cause," *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, pp. 216-217.

49*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 7, 17, 1651; 7, 17, 1667-1668. In his *Posterior Analytics*, 2, 2, 90a31, Aristotle had noted that "to know what it is (*ti esti*) is the same as to know why it is (*dià ti*)," a point which simply reiterates what he had argued earlier in 90a15-17 when speaking about how what and why questions resemble each other with respect to questions that are asking about the nature of a lunar eclipse. Quoting Aristotle's words, as cited by Michael P. Maxwell, Jr., "Lonergan's Critique of Aristotle's Notion of Science," *Lonergan Workshop: Lonergan's Openness: Polymorphism, Postmodernism, and Religion*, vol. 18, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Lonergan Institute, 2005): 162:

> For it is evident that in all these the whatness and the why are the same. Thus, to the question "what is an eclipse?" one may answer, "It is the privation of light from the moon, [caused] by the earth's interposition"; and to the question "Why is there an eclipse?" or "Why is the moon being eclipsed?", one may answer, "Because its light disappears when the earth is interposed between the sun and the moon.

In his *Metaphysics*, 7, 17, in another kind of way, Aristotle makes the same point when he argues that a question asking "What is it?" or *Quid sit*? is to be interpreted as asking *Propter Quid*? or "Why this particular thing or being is the being or thing which it happens to be?" The object is an explanation of some sort which can refer to a formal cause or formal principle which states a reason that says why something is the kind of being that it happens to be. Sometimes "what" questions can be immediately interpreted or viewed as "why" questions although, sometimes, they need to be transposed into "why" questions before inquiries can then follow which can then possibly lead to further understanding. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript translated 1989 by

both cases, the desired object is some sort of explanation or understanding which can identify why something exists or why it has certain characteristics which do not seem to belong to anything else.[50] The object is a constitutive principle of some kind which is not obvious to any act of sense but which has to be discovered through some other means. When we seek to identify reasons to explain why a being has properties that are perhaps not intrinsic to it, we must ask about relations that obtain between such a being and other beings and events, and so, here, we ask "why" questions instead of "what" questions. However, when we ask about the inherent nature or the identity of a given thing, we ask about its form or its formal cause although, to the degree that it is united or embedded within material conditions, we ask about a thing's quiddity,[51] its essence. "The object of the intellect is *what a thing is*,"[52] with respect to its formal cause.[53] We ask about a reason (*ratio*) or an internal relation of parts which forms a whole as this whole exists within an embedded, embodied manner although, when this reason or relation is considered in a way which clearly distinguishes it from any kind of union with matter or the being of material conditions (instantiation, for instance, within a given body), the object is simply a form and not an essence or quiddity.[54] The object of our human sensible experience is to be clearly distinguished from an object which exists as the term of an intended act of understanding which the asking of questions seeks. While the object of our sensible experience is an object as it exists within matter or an object as it exists through matter (an object which presents itself through our experience of matter); alternatively, a form as it exists within corporeal matter or a form as it exists within this type of matter (*forma prout in materia corporali existit*; [*forma*] *prout est in tali materia*),[55] the intended object of our human understanding is other as a form that is grasped by us solely through an act of understanding before it can then be known as a quiddity, or as an essence, or as a "whatness" in terms of how this "whatness" is always joined to species or type of corporeal matter which must always belongs to it.[56] A form, if instantiated, must always be joined to a certain type of matter.

When commenting on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Aquinas simply repeats Aristotle's apposite meaning

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Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), pp. 147-148; *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, eds. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli; rev and aug. by Frederick E. Crowe with the collaboration of Elizabeth A. Morelli, Mark D. Morelli, Robert M. Doran, and Thomas V. Daly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 30, p. 32; *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 104-105; Michael Novak, "A Key to Aristotle's 'Substance'," *Substances and Things: Aristotle's Doctrine of Physical Substance in Recent Essays*, ed. M. L. O'Hara (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), p. 200. Aquinas's *quod quid erat esse* refers to a general formal principle which is neither genus, species, or individual thing but which accounts for all these different things. Cf. *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 7, 2, 1275; Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran & H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 581.

50*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 7, 17, 1650.

51*De Veritate*, q. 15, a. 2, ad 3; see the *Sentencia Libri De anima*, 3, 7, 705-719 for an extended discussion.

52*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 8.

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

54*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 10, 904.

55*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 1.

56*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, a. 7.

for form (*forma*) as *ratio*.[57] Form exists as an "intelligible structure."[58] It is species,[59] an "intelligible species" (*species intelligibilis*) which, commonly, for Aquinas, designates a species[60] or form.[61] It is species as the "intelligibility of data,"[62] or, to use a term that originally derives from Aristotle, it is *eidos* or *morphê*.[63] For both men, *eidos* as form refers to what is known not through our sense perception of it but through an act of our minds, through our reason or *nous*.[64] Even if it is possible for some intellects to engage in acts of understanding without working with any images or phantasms, no intellect or no understander is able to understand anything apart from an intellectual species or a form that is grasped by an act of understanding.[65] Form, like essence, refers to a principle of explanation but, to reiterate, in a manner which says that by first understanding a form or an intelligible species, we can

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57Thomae Aquinatis, *Metaphysicorum Aristoteles*, 8, 1, 696 & 1687, ed. M.-R. Cathala (Taurini: Marietti, 1950), pp. 402-403.

58*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 8, 1, 1687.

59Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 175.

60In order to distinguish species from form, one might say, with Patrick Byrne in his "The Thomist Sources of Lonergan's Dynamic World-view," *The Thomist* 46 (1982): 128, that a species is what one knows when one has produced a definition which expresses the meaning of an understood form.

61Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 2 (New York: Blackfriars, 1970), 1, p. 60 (hereafter cited as "*Summa Theologiae* Blackfriars"). *Unde similitude rei visibilis est secundum quam visus videt; et similitudo rei intellectae, quae est species intelligibilis, est forma secundum quam intellectus intelligit*. "Hence, that by which the sight sees is the likeness of the visible thing, and the likeness of the thing understood, which is the intelligible species, is the form by which the intellect understands" (my translation). Back in the *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 1, Aquinas had spoken about a thing's *eidos* or form as its likeness or resemblance (*similitudo*) although the operative notion of likeness or resemblance that would apply for properly understanding the nature of human understanding would have to be one which posits an immaterial meaning for likeness or resemblance since the human intellect, as an immaterial receptor of forms or species, is not able to bring or to incorporate anything into itself which only possesses material co-ordinates. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 4. If, in this context, the language of image is to be used in talking about the meaning of a form, species, or *eidos*, the appropriate meaning for image would have to speak about an immaterial resemblance or an immaterial likeness. In the apprehension of this immaterial resemblance or likeness, an immaterial universal meaning is grasped by us in an act of understanding which transcends material conditions or coordinates as it moves toward a second kind of universality which is not the universality of meaning but the universality of a meaning which exists now as a true or right meaning (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 54, a. 2; q. 75, a. 6; q. 85, a. 2, ad 2). This transcendent immaterial meaning accordingly possesses a significance which is universal or ubiquitous since it rejects meanings that are determined by the presence of material or physical differences.

62Bernard, *Collection*, p. 284, n. g.

63Bernard Lonergan, *Caring About Meaning: patterns in the life of Bernard Lonergan*, eds. Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey, and Cathleen Going (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1982), p. 45; *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 171.

64Patrick H. Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 198, 200. According to a traditional distinction amongst the ancient Greek philosophers, *nous* is reason and *logos* or *dianoia*, rationality. Cf. Stephen Jayard, "Rationality,"

then understand an essence. Form is the *quo est*; it is that "by which something is" (*quo aliquid est*).[66] On the one hand, it is the cause of being, the *aition tou einai*, the *causa essendi*.[67] But, as the cause or mover (*movens*) of understanding, it is, on the other hand, that "by which the understanding understands" (*quo intelligit intellectus*).[68] It is a mode or a principle of understanding, or a *causa cognoscendi*.[69] It is a cognitive tool which is not to be identified with what is understood or known,[70] the *id quod intelligitur*, which is the proper object of our human inquiry and the primary object of our human understanding, and which also exists outside the mind as that about which questions are being asked and posed.[71] In contrast with form, the *id quod intelligitur* exists as an essence. It is the quiddity of a material thing[72] (*quidditas rei materialis*) which is constituted by two uniting principles in terms of form and matter. Hence, while the form of a thing can exist both within our minds (within our

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unpublished text, p. 1.

65*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 11, a. 2, ad 1.

66*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 10, 904. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 17, a. 2, ad 4, Aquinas refers to the compound of matter and form (constitutive of the essence or quiddity of a thing) not as "that which is" (*id quod est*) which refers to a thing's existence but as "that by which (a thing) is" (*id quo est*) which suggests and implies that essence, nature, or quiddity is to be understood in terms which primarily refer to a principle of explanation. A positive relation is supposed to exist between *that which is* and *that by which it is* (cf. Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 87). Cf. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, p. 210; and Roland Krismer, "Zu: *Summa Theologica* I, Frage 16, Artikel, Anwort," "Anmerkung zur *Respondeo* im Lichte von Lonergans *Understanding and Being*," http://www.lonergan.at/philo/artikel.php?ID=8#Anmerkungen, April 13, 2004. As Lonergan goes on to argue (in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 135), a *remote principle-by-which*, which refers to the nature of a given thing, can be distinguished from proximate principles of explanation which exist within a given nature. Sensitive and rational principles and apprehensive and appetitive principles can be distinguished within human nature which can be properly regarded as a *remote principle-by-which*.

67*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 7, 17, 1667-1668, as cited by Lonergan, "Isomorphism of Thomist and Scientific Thought," *Collection*, p. 135. In his literal expression, in the *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 7, 17, 1668, Aquinas speaks about "cause of the matter" which can be interpreted as a cause which disposes a phantasm or image to be ordered or to have a form or structure which then acts, as a material cause, to help trigger an act of understanding within us, within our human intellects. Cf. Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, pp. 593-595. See also Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 171.

68*Summa Theologiae* Blackfriars, 1a, q. 85, a. 2, my translation; cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 75, 13. See Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 605, on the difference between the object of an act of understanding and the object of an act of conception. The object of an act of understanding, as a cognitional cause or mover, is "that from which and because of which the object of the act of uttering emerges." The object of an act of understanding differs from the object of an act of conceptualization.

69*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 53, 2 & 4. "Though this species the intellect comes to be in act." See also Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, pp. 102-103, on how, in Aristotle, we can distinguish a *causa cognoscendi* from a *causa essendi*, the cause of knowing from the cause of being. By one chain of reasoning we can move from a cause of knowing to a cause of being and then, conversely, we can move from a cause of being to a cause of knowing (from what is first in itself, *prius quoad se*, to what is first for us, *prius quoad nos*).

70*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 56, a. 2, ad 3. Aquinas distinguishes between the form or the species of a thing that exists within somebody else's mind and the natural or the real existence of a thing which exists apart from whether or not it is understood and known by another knowing subject. The form or species of a thing, as it exists in the mind of a knower, is referred to as an "intelligible

understanding) and within the data of perceived sense, its embodiment as essence precludes the proper functioning of any form of human understanding which is no longer linked to a world that exists beyond ourselves, extramentally outside our thinking, inquiring minds. However, even as we admit and grant that the essence of a thing is to be identified as an embodied object that is the proper object of our human minds (as an object of questions that ask for a reason or an explanation), form emerges as the particularly distinctive end or goal of our inquiry. It is its constitutive principle, the constitutive principle of our inquiry, since it is that which is intended by our questions whose fundamental interrogatory form exists as "what is it?" "*Quid sit*?" And, as the asking of this question transcends all of our sensing activities, form emerges as a new term or object which transcends the being of purely material objects.

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existence" which is cognitively intended. Hence, "intelligible existence" is to be associated with "intentional existence."

71*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 2; cf. Murnion, "Intellectual Honesty in Aquinas," p. 11 where Murnion distinguishes between what is secondarily and what is primarily understood: a species or intentional likeness is what is secondarily understood while a thing to which an intentional likeness or species refers is what is primarily understood. In two unpublished papers, "Scotus on the object of understanding," pp. 6-10, and most especially in "Scotus on concepts," pp. 5-6, Giorgio Pini discusses a critical distinction that Aquinas had drawn in q. 85, a. 2 of the *Summa Theologiae* which allows him to escape from a form of subjectivism that regards the human knower as a self-enclosed subject whose understanding and knowing is a purely private affair that is disconnected from possibly understanding and knowing anything which exists outside the human mind. Form as "that by which something is understood" must be clearly distinguished from "that which is understood" since their identification implies that what is understood exists only within the operations of the human mind (within our understanding) and not also outside of it. To think or assume that what is understood is thus disjoined or disconnected from what has been previously sensed also suggests that the human mind cannot go back and understand itself in terms of how sensing and understanding are related to each other in a positive manner where each form of activity mutually assists the other in an exchange that can bring our human cognition to a development which reaches truth. See also J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 100-102, where Stebbins discusses how Lonergan explains how *quod* and *quo* are to be clearly distinguished from each other. While *quod* refers to the object of a rational operation (it is, for instance, something which is grasped in terms of its meaning or intelligibility), *quo* refers to a reason which explains why something has been grasped as the term of an act of understanding or willing. For our initial acts of understanding, for our judgments, for our acts of faith, hope, and charity, we have reasons of some kind. Rational acts are distinguished from all other kinds of acts because of this difference in consciousness. In every rational act, there exists an awareness or an experience of reasons and an awareness or an experience of the sufficiency of our reasons. With respect, for instance, to ethical decision making, these reasons specify a motive or a purpose which explains why it is right and good that a given object should be desired and sought for in the willing which we do because of the understanding that we come to enjoy. See also Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, p. 105, for a discussion about how in both Aristotle and Aquinas, in an explanatory syllogism, a middle term refers to an act of understanding which allows us to move from a sensible experience of data toward a meaning as this is experienced in our acts of conception (which spring from our prior acts of understanding).

72*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 84, aa. 7-8; q. 85, a. 5, ad 3; a. 8; q. 86, a. 2; q. 89, a. 1. As James B. Reichmann S. J. tries to explain it in his *Philosophy of the Human Person* (Chicago: Loyola

As intended and later, as it is apprehended, a formal cause explains all of the other causes which Aristotle had grouped in his listing of four necessary causes. Where the other causes explain how something emerges from non-being to being (how something becomes), a formal cause refers to a thing or an event in terms purely of its actuality or being: what it is apart from its becoming what it is as it is.[73] A formal cause explains the need for certain material causes and not others. It also explains why certain instrumental or efficient causes must be employed in order to effect changes in the being of other beings. Efficient causes help to account for relations which might exist between one being and other beings. And, finally, a formal cause also explains why certain ends are to be sought and not others. As a heuristic which shapes the "first operation of the mind," the intended form or formal cause of a thing or an event accordingly elicits a whole series of human actions which seek understanding and which facilitate its likely occurrence. First mental operations conclude with an act of human understanding which grasps a form, and through the mediation of this form (functioning as an intelligible likeness and not as a sensible likeness), in and through our acts of understanding, as human beings, we begin to know about realities or things that exist outside of ourselves.[74] Through form, something outside our minds (our understanding) comes to exist within our minds (our understanding).[75] A form or species "assimilates the intellect to the nature of its object."[76] Form is a means which is not to be confused with what is thus understood.

To grasp the structure or form of our human reasoning which leads us to a first act of understanding (or, in other words, in order to move toward an understanding of our own understanding), the understanding that is sought is one that is grounded in our experience of self since lack of awareness of ourselves in our understanding implies a complete lack of understanding. Understanding cannot mean anything to us if it cannot be received or experienced for what it is or how it exists as our understanding, if it cannot be enjoyed by us when we want to understand something and which can tell us when they are experiencing our understanding and when they are not experiencing our understanding. Hence, to understand ourselves understanding and the elements and relations that are

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Press, 1985), p. 106, "what is *first* and *directly* known is not the idea [or form] within the intellect but rather *that of which* the idea [or form] is the likeness - the material thing initially reached by the exterior senses." The human intellect does not exist in a self-enclosed kind of way since, by means of form, an *embodied* form is understood and this embodied form refers to a world that exists beyond the reasoning of our human intellects although this same world is encountered in a self-transcendent way through a self-transcendent act of understanding.

73Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 9. Hence, if a formal cause accounts for the being and character of all the other causes, its priority, as a principle of explanation, suggests why a like priority and ordering exists within the order of being or reality. Before the existence of any potency or any coming to be, the necessary precondition is something which already fully exists. Potency presumes actuality but not the reverse: actuality, potency.

74*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 2.

75De *Veritate*, q. 10, a. 4; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 85, a. 2, ad 1.

76William E. Murnion, "The Meaning and Import of Aquinas's Philosophy of Mind," pp. 21. As, in his own way, Peter Kreeft paraphrases it in his *A Summa of the Summa: The Essential Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica Edited and Explained for Beginners* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), p. 115, n. 80, "the thing known *is* (exists) in the knower, i.e., the same form exists first individuated by matter in the object and then abstracted from matter, as a universal, in the mind of the knower."

constitutive of our understanding, the starting point must be a form of self-awareness or a form of self-consciousness that is, to some extent, already cognitive as an awareness of ourselves engaged in our acts of reasoning and understanding.[77] The human mind or, appositively, we knows ourselves; we know our intellectual light through ourselves, through our own activities as the actuation of our powers and capabilities which exists as this intellectual light.[78] From an initial and an elementary act of understanding which first grasps a meaning as it exists within a set of material conditions, we move toward an understanding and knowledge of every other thing.[79] Human self-understanding emerges with a greater degree of probability to the extent that it is derived from the experience which we have of our own understanding as this occurs for us within the context of our concrete, incarnate acts of human cognition.

77*De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8 & ad 1; *Sentencia Libri De anima*, 2, 6, 308; 3, 9, 724; p. 217; *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 12, ad 4; Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 1, a. 3; trans. as *Faith, Reason and Theology: Questions I-IV of his Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius* by Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1987), p. 27 (hereafter cited as "*Super Boetium De Trinitate*"). See also Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 88. As Aquinas notes, following Aristotle, the human intellect only understands if it is actually understanding (understanding occurs through understanding) and, if it is not understanding, if it is not receiving "intelligible forms" which convert our potential human understanding into our actual understanding (as Aquinas argues in the *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 12, ad 4), it cannot understand and know anything, either other things or itself. Prior to any understanding and in terms of understanding, the human intellect exists only as a pure potency or pure potentiality (cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8; *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 12, ad 4). Hence, an understanding of the human intellect must begin through some act of understanding that is currently being enjoyed, and this occurs whenever anyone is understanding any object where, in understanding any object, the "actually understood object and the actually understanding subject are one being." Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, ad 5, 2ae ser. The understanding already belongs to the data or tp the contents of our human consciousness, the awareness that a person has of him or herself. As St. Augustine had noted in the *De Trinitate*, 14, 8, 11: "the mind is mindful of itself, understands itself and loves itself," as quoted by Francis Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), p. 64. The human mind has a conscious memory of itself from which it is possible to move from a tacit to an explicit knowledge of itself. As St. Augustine had noted earlier in the *De Trinitate*, 9, 3, my translation, "as the mind [*mens*] comes to know corporeal, material things through the bodily senses, in an immaterial or incorporeal way, the mind comes to a knowledge of itself through itself." Human self-knowledge begins with an intelligible self-presence or consciousness which the mind initially has of itself: a consciousness that is immediately given to us through the memory which the mind has of itself in its different activities as these different activities lead to understanding and as they include any experiences of our understanding. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, ad 1; q. 10, a. 8, ad 2; q. 10, a. 8, ad 1, 2ae ser. See Murnion, "Intellectual Honesty in Aquinas," pp. 2-4, on the Augustinian origins of Aquinas's understanding of human consciousness as manifest *In 1 Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 3, a. 1, ad 1; d. 3, q. 4, a. 1, ad 7; and *In 2 Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, d. 16, q. 1, a. 4, ad 4; also Murnion's "Aquinas's Earliest Philosophy of Mind: '*Mens*' in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and Other Contemporaneous Writings," *Aquinas on Mind and Intellect: New Essays*, ed. Jeremiah Hackett (New York: Dowling College Press, 1996): 45-84; idem, "Aquinas's Theory of the Mind in the *Commentary on the Sentences*," *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 19/20 (1994-1996): 157-176. Since human self-understanding begins with the data and the form of understanding which is constitutive of the understanding of every human intellect, for this reason, it can be said that our human mind understands itself through what it is as an act of understanding: i.e., through its form or essence

To state the matter a bit differently, the human mind or the human understanding that we have begins to know itself not by "discerning or thinking about itself as an object," but by recognizing its presence or activity (by an *intuitus*) as it discerns or thinks about something else.[80] Quoting Aquinas, in understanding, "each person is conscious that it is oneself who understands."[81] In our consciousness and solely by means of our consciousness, a degree of self-knowledge already tacitly exists.[82] It does not have to be acquired by some kind of reflection.[83] After initially asking a question which seeks an answer that is specified by a form, through the consciousness that we have of ourselves in our inquiry, we realize that we are then moving into a consciousness which engages in other acts that are all ordered by the goal orientated type of inquiry which we conduct and attempt. Cognitive consciousness emerges

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which is apprehended and known by us as it receives an understanding and knowledge of other things. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8 & ad 9. For this reason, it can be argued that the immediacy of our self-understanding is to be understood as a mediated form of immediacy.

78*De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, ad 10, 2ae ser. As this text is cited by Bernard Tyrrell S.J., *Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), p. 80: "the light of agent intellect is known *per se ipsum* [by itself]."

79*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 87, a. 3, ad 1.

80Murnion, "Aquinas's Philosophy of Mind," pp. 18-19. When speaking about how Aquinas, in his first major work, had borrowed a number of elements that he later synthesized into a coherent and systematic philosophy of mind which was presented in the context of his later writings, Murnion refers to texts in Aquinas's commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (*Scriptum super libros sententiarum,* 1.3.3.1; 4.4; 4.5c) which indicate that, from St. Augustine, Aquinas had borrowed the thesis that the human mind initially knows itself through its experience of itself as it engaged in its own operations although this knowledge is not explicit since it is not to be confused with a knowing that also understands the human mind as an object that has been understood. As Murnion paraphrases Aquinas's interpretation of St. Augustine (p. 19), "to know itself in the sense of understanding its own nature...the mind must intend to know itself as an object, and success is scarcely to be achieved even after much study."

81*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 76, a. 1; my translation. Later in the *Summa* and elsewhere (as in the *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8 & ad 5; the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 59, 10; 2, 76, 17; 2, 98, 2; and the *De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas*, n. 61), Aquinas refers to our human self-experience of understanding as the basis from which we can then move towards our self-understanding. We cannot begin to understand our own understanding unless we begin with the understanding that we already enjoy of something else, an event which can be viewed as other than the human mind or the human self or which can be viewed as the mind or the intellect itself. Cf. *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 11, ad 14. In any case, from such an understanding, we can directly advert to our human minds, to its power and nature, and to our own consciousness or experience of self, experiencing our understanding. In moving toward self-understanding, to state things a bit differently (in a metaphysical language which refers to objects and not acts), we move from the content of an act of understanding which refers to a form or a species that belongs to something other than one's self and, from there, we then move toward a form or species which is the object of one's own act of self-understanding (cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 98, 2). We move toward an understanding of our souls in a way which only begins as we first grasp a form or meaning as this exists within sensible data (cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, ad 9, 2ae ser.). The human soul is not understood in a direct fashion as external objects are understood through the reception of forms within our understanding. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3; 1, Aquinas goes on to note that "the human soul understands itself by its understanding, which is its proper act, perfectly

from the experience that we each have of ourselves as we each engage in acts that are formative of our understanding. In a number of different places, Aquinas explicitly appeals to the experience of our human performance as the necessary starting point of our analysis as it leads us toward self-knowledge which exists as an understanding of our understanding (an understanding of one's own mind or intellect).[84] And, by so doing, Aquinas reaffirms for us the fact that our understanding always begins with some type of experience even if the experience of our understanding is not itself an extroverted act of sensing. By turning instead to the data of cognitive human consciousness, not only is our understanding revealed as an element that is given to us in our human consciousness but, by the same reference, the form, order, or structure of this operation is also revealed to us in terms of its key elements, variables, or factors.

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demonstrating its power and its nature," as translated by Bernard Lonergan, "*Insight*: Preface to a Discussion," *Collection*, p. 143 and cited in Latin by Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, p. 133. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 9, a. 10, ad 3, 2ae ser. where Aquinas notes that understanding is not properly an act of the intellect but of the soul through the intellect. The human intellect does not know itself by what it is (though its essence) but by what it does in its acts of understanding: by its activity, or in Aquinas's words, to the degree that "it is made actual" where understanding has ceased to be only potential (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 87, a. 1; Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 202). It does not come to an understood self-knowledge through some kind of habit or disposition (q. 87, a. 2) which already exists, but by a painstaking and subtle analysis that tries to reflect upon itself as our inquiry seeks to understand something which was first given to it by our sense perception (q. 87, a. 1; q. 87, a. 3). Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Analysis of Faith," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 20 (2002): 151. In understanding, what is understood with reference to an external object is the same as an act of understanding which a human person experiences as a cognitive subject. Intelligence in act is the intelligible in act. An identity exists with respect to intelligible object and act of understanding as *intellectus* or, in other words, understanding becomes *intellectum*, the understood. Cf. William A. Mathews, *Lonergan's Quest: A Study of Desire in the Authoring of Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 139. As Lonergan speaks about this relationship in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 188, "the object of an act corresponds to the species through which the act occurs." And so, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, 3, 9, 724; p. 217, Aquinas is able to say that "we only know the intellect through our knowledge that we are using it." The knowledge which Aquinas refers to is the self-awareness or the self-consciousness of our understanding which we have whenever we are engaged in any of our acts of understanding. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 87, a. 1, q. 76, a. 1; q. 93, a. 7, ad 4; and 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 1. See also Murnion, "Intellectual Honesty in Aquinas," p. 9 & n. 59; p. 10, n. 62; p. 11; and "Shankara and Aquinas," pp. 343-344, where Murnion summarizes Aquinas's position: "at one and the same time...we know *what* we are understanding or doing and [we] are conscious *that* we are thus understanding or acting."

In "Christ as Subject: A Reply," *Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 174, Lonergan translates the immediate context of the passage (cited above) that is taken from Aquinas's *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, 3, 9, 724:

> The species [or form] therefore of the thing understood in act is the species [or form] of the understanding itself; and so it is that understanding can understand itself through this species [or form]. Thus the philosopher [Aristotle] in an earlier passage studied the nature of possible intellect by studying the very act of understanding

In seeking to understand understanding, the ultimate object is admittedly an understanding that grasps a nature or essence (since our human intellects or, appositely, our understanding exists as an incarnate form or species of understanding). However, as we seek such an understanding, the heuristic of our inquiry assumes a form that specifies exactly where we must begin when we attend to the data of our cognitive consciousness.[85] To understand the nature of our understanding, we must first try to grasp exactly what our understanding is able to do as a potency or capacity. We must attend to what could be its potencies or powers. However, if any potency or capability is to be understood, we must understand how a certain type of act is related to a certain type of potency and so, by this means, it is able to raise or convert a potency into an act. A potency that is open to a specific type of actualization or realization

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and the object that is understood.

From an individual, first-person kind of self-knowledge of one's own experience of understanding, a person is able to move to a general, third-person kind of self-knowledge of human understanding which articulates a philosophy of mind that serves as a primary analogy for the subsequent discussion of every other issue in Aquinas's thought. Cf. Murnion, "Intellectual Honesty in Aquinas," p. 1, p. 4. As Murnion (p. 5) summarizes Aquinas's introspective method of analysis for moving toward a more adequate and articulate self-knowledge of the nature of our own acts of understanding (cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8) which moves from objects to activities and then to abilities:

> By recognizing that we understand the universal natures of things, we realize that the species by which we apprehend them must be immaterial, and thus that the intellect itself as the recipient of the species must also be something independent of matter. And from that we can proceed to knowledge of the other properties of our intellectual ability.

82Lonergan, *Incarnate Word*, p. 182.

83*De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 2; q. 10, a. 8 & ad 11; q. 10, a. 8, ad 8, 2ae ser; q. 10, a. 9; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 2, ad 1; q. 79, a. 10; q. 93, a. 7, ad 4. Aquinas distinguishes between a residual, habitual self-knowledge or self-presence of the human mind and an acquired, articulate, actual self-knowledge or self-presence of the same mind which presupposes a residual, habitual, conscious self-knowledge or self-presence that is never acquired (unlike the understanding which exists in any of the sciences). Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8: "to understand something is prior to understanding that one understands." See also Murnion, "Shankara and Aquinas," p. 344.

84*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 49, 8; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 87, a. 1; cf. Giovanni B. Sala, "Da Tommaso d'Aquino a Bernard Lonergan: Continuità e novità," *Rivista di Teologia* (Napoli) 36 (1995): 413; Murnion, "Intellectual Honesty in Aquinas," p. 10, n. 62, where Murnion cites a number of texts from the *Summa Theologiae* in order to argue that, in Aquinas, self-awareness or the "consciousness of our inherent intelligence functions as a criterion for judging the validity of any theory of understanding": 1a, q. 14, a. 1, ad 1; q. 79, a. 10; q. 87, a. 1; q. 88, a. 2, ad 3; q. 93, a. 7, ad 4. As Murnion summarizes how Aquinas accounts for the intelligence of the human intellect (p. 11) by constantly referring to our implicit cognitive self-awareness:

> ....we know from experience that we can understand only what we intend to. We rely upon the light of our own intellects to formulate the principles by which we investigate, analyze, and demonstrate

can only be understood if we attend to the acts which effect all of the appropriate realizations. A potency is understood if it is related to what is not in potency: its corresponding acts or corresponding operations.[86] However, if, in turn, acts are themselves to be understood and distinguished from each other, we must attend to what objects or objectives specify the orientation and character of different kinds of acts. Objects or objectives reveal the orientations of different acts. Acts intend goals and they are defined by the goals that they are seeking. Hence, as an inquiry into our understanding begins with experiences of understanding that we already possess, we begin with the goals or objectives that govern the whole pattern or the form of our human inquiry. We begin with an object or an intelligible relation that is grasped by us in our understanding and which exists in this understanding which we have and, then from there, we ask about all the acts or operations that lead to these objects and which can be regarded as their proper correlatives.[87] Then, from these acts or operations, we can ask about the potencies or the powers which belong to us if we think about our humanity (if we think about the character and quality of our human souls from which, in different ways, these acts have emerged). From an understanding which thus grasps what these potencies and powers are, we can then move toward an understanding that grasps that which exists as the nature or the essence of our human understanding: how our human intellects exist as a specific center of activity and reception which can move persons from a state of ignorance about any topic toward an understanding or apprehension which would exist as a knowledge of real things.

The teological character of our human inquiry serves as a strategic pivot since it allows us to move from what is understood in a specific, concrete case toward that which exists as the subject of understanding: toward ourselves when we refer to the functioning of our understanding, the functioning of our human minds. Aquinas's procedure is borrowed from Aristotle.[88] From objects, we move toward subjects although use of this procedure does not thwart the possibility that we could begin our analysis of human cognition with the human subject as it currently functions and exists and, then from there, move toward objects by a study that attends to the structure of our human inquiry since the structure of our human questioning is ordered into a form or pattern that is governed by specific goals which attend our asking of certain types of questions. Questioning leads to acts or operations that intend objects which are much more fully revealed as soon as acts of understanding occur as a response to the questions that we are asking.

> whatever we understand. When we want to understand something in particular, we are conscious of directing our intellects to empirical data to render them intelligible, abstract intelligible species from them, and distinguish within them reality from appearances. And we know that it is only through the power of our own minds that we can express whatever we have understood.

85*Sentencia Libri De anima*, 2, 6, 304-8. In Appendix 2A, the *Triune God: Systematics*, p, 603, citing *De anima*, II, 4, 415a 14-22, *In II De anima*, lect. 6, 304-308, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 77, a. 3; q. 87, a. 3, Lonergan argues that, in Aquinas, "operations of the soul are distinguished by their respective objects."

86*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 77, a. 1; q. 79, a. 1.

87*De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8; cf. Murnion, "Aquinas's Philosophy of Mind," p. 21.

88*Verbum*, pp. 87-88; Murnion, "Aquinas's Philosophy of Mind," p. 21; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 8.