

My

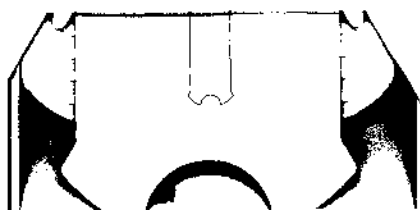
A second topic of discussion ~~that may arise~~ has to do with the notion of being. No doubt, you will agree that there is one and only one ens per essentiam, being by essence, that it is not an immediate object of our knowledge in this life, that the only immediate objects of our present knowledge are ~~en~~ entia per participationem, beings by participation.

It follows that we do not know being directly by abstracting its essence, quiddity, nature, form, species; for if I abstract the essence of a horse, what I conceive is ~~not the~~ essence not of being but of a horse; if I abstract the essence of a man, what I conceive is the essence, not of a being but of a man

from a horse I abstract essence, what I abstract is the essence not of 'being' but of 'horse'; if from a man I abstract essence, what I abstract is the essence not of 'being' but of 'man'; and the same holds for every other being by participation.

It cannot yield us knowledge of the essence of being because it does not possess the essence of being. Further, since what is true of essence, is equally true of quiddity, nature, form, species, it follows that ~~being cannot be~~ the proper object of our intellects in this life ~~cannot be being~~

Obviously, this gives rise to a ~~problem~~ problem. If intellect is ~~defined~~ ^{differentiated from sense} by its capacity to grasp essence, quiddity, form, species, nature, and if in this life we do not grasp the essence, quiddity, form, species, nature of being, then how can we have any intellectual notion, concept, or knowledge of being. Indeed, to put the problem with the sharpness that



Now to the major premiss which I have been outlining
 you may readily add a minor premiss and a conclusion. Since
 St. Thomas wrote there has occurred a vast development in
 man's understanding of the whole material universe. Therefore,
 there is possible a complementary development in our understanding
 of understanding itself and of our power to understand
 (1) of understanding itself, (2) of our power to understand,
 and (3) of the ontological causes correlative to our power
 to understand.

→ note on "intellect"
 metaphysics A's physics
 metaphys: dominant
 developing from
 both
 not vicious circle
 based on metaphys
 → note on Kant's
 subject

My investigations of this contemporary possibility have
 run on three distinct lines. First, on the historical side,
 in my Verbum articles in Theological Studies, 1946-49, I
 investigated Aquinas' doctrine on intellect with special
 attention to his trinitarian theory. Secondly, in Insight
 I proceeded from the objects of contemporary mathematics, ^{and}
 of natural ~~science~~, ^{and} of human science to an account of
 human understanding and of the correlative metaphysics.
 Thirdly, I have ~~worked out, mainly from an ontolo~~
~~substance, the hypostatic union, the consciousness of~~
~~Christ.~~

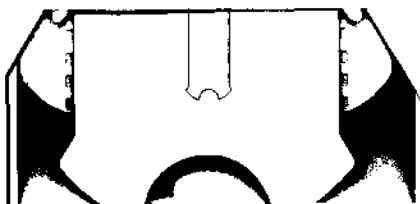
Thirdly, while Insight is restricted to a cognitional viewpoint,
 I have worked out, ^{mainly, largely} from an ontological viewpoint, such questions
 as subsistence, the unicum esse of Christ, the divine subject
 of His human consciousness, and Trinitarian theory in ^{two main} Latin
^{publications} books, De Constitutione Christi Ontologica et Psychologica
 and Divinarum Personarum conceptio analogica.



Indeed, not only is there no incompatibility; there is interdependence, and the interdependence is universal. We cannot assign ontological causes without having cognitional reasons for assigning them; nor can we have cognitional reasons without assigning the ^{corresponding} ontological causes. / Moreover, this interdependence is not limited to knowledge of our own souls; from the nature of the case it is universal.

Thus, many of you, I believe, maintain that ~~existence~~ St. Thomas added existence, the actus essendi, to Aristotle's ontological causes; but those that affirm existence as a distinct ontological cause, ~~will~~ also point to the judgement of existence as a distinct cognitional reason. Similarly, Aristotle affirmed matter ~~and~~ and form as ontological causes; but Aristotle did not affirm these ontological causes without having cognitional reasons, namely, sense and insight into phantasm. / Finally, as is obvious, development begins from the cognitional reasons: what began with Aristotle, was not form but knowledge of form; what began with ~~St~~ Aquinas, was not existence but knowledge of existence.

The application to the book, Insight, is transparent. ~~Acts are known by their objects. But since St. Thomas wrote, there has been a vast development in our ~~know~~ understanding of material objects. Therefore, on Thomist principles, there is possible a ~~an~~ corresponding development in our understanding of understanding itself. Moreover, since the cognitional and the ontological are interdependent, a development of our understanding of understanding involves a development ~~not only~~ in our grasp not only of cognitional reasons but also of ontological causes.~~

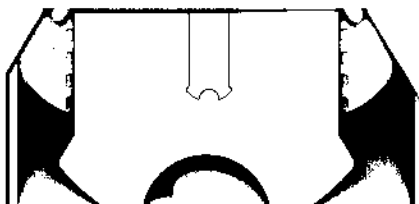


873 De An 5⁴
45a 16ss.
L. 26 & 30f

Further, I am not just arguing from a stray sentence. It is Aristotelian and Thomist doctrine ~~and that~~ that knowledge of ~~abstract~~ objects precedes knowledge of acts, knowledge of acts precedes knowledge of potencies, knowledge of potencies precedes knowledge of the essence of the soul. Nor does contemporary Scholasticism ~~prove~~ adopt a different method. It appeals to the potency, intellect, to distinguish the human soul from the brute. It knows the potency, intellect, only through prior knowledge, if not of the act of understanding, at least of the ~~act of taking a spiritual look at a~~ universal ^{concept}.

Further, this clear-cut instance of the primacy of the cognitional fits in with a larger doctrine. For there is a standard Aristotelian ~~and~~ and Thomist distinction between what is first quoad se and what is first quoad nos. If one asks for ontological causes, then the essence of the soul grounds the potencies, the potencies ground the acts, and the acts ground knowledge of objects. But if one asks for cognitional reasons, the order is inverted: knowledge of objects grounds knowledge of acts, knowledge of acts grounds knowledge of potencies, knowledge of potencies grounds knowledge of the essence of the soul.

It appears, then, that there is no incompatibility between the primacy of the ontological and the primacy of ^{both} the cognitional. One and the same view of ~~metaphysics~~ metaphysics and cognitional theory can be expressed in two manners. If the aim is to assign the ontological causes then, of course, one must begin with the metaphysics. If the aim is to assign cognitional reasons, then one must begin with cognitional theory.



The most shocking aspect of the book, Insight, is ~~its~~ the primacy it accords knowledge. In the writings of St. Thomas, cognitional theory is expressed in metaphysical terms and established by metaphysical principles. In Insight, metaphysics is expressed in cognitional terms and established by cognitional principles. The reversal ^{appears} ~~is~~ complete. If Aquinas had things right side up -- and that is difficult to ~~deny~~ ^{deny} -- then I have turned everything upside down.

m In attenuation of ~~my misstatement~~ ^{turns}, I should like to urge that even Aquinas occasionally ~~puts~~ things upside down. He wrote: ~~that~~

Anima human^a intelligit ~~se ipsam~~ se ipsam per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam. Sum. theol., I, q. 88, a. 2 ad ^{3m.} ~~ad~~

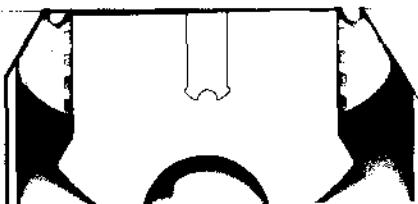
This I should be inclined to translate,

The human soul understands itself through its understanding, which is its proper act, perfectly demonstrating its power and its nature.

But however the passage is translated, it is clear that a psychological act named intelligere is the basis of a perfect demonstration of the nature and the power of the human soul.

Now power and nature are metaphysical ^{entities.} ~~terms~~. To demonstrate ^{them} perfectly ~~the power and the nature of the human soul~~ involves one in a long list of metaphysical theorems. Yet we have

that Aquinas' own word for it, that ~~such~~ a perfect demonstration ^{of metaphysical entities} may be derived from a ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{intelligere,} consideration of ~~the acts~~ ^{intelligere,} which is the proper act of the human soul.



Insight: Preface to a Discussion

When the Reverend President of the American Catholic Philosophical Association so generously invited me to address you, he asked me to speak on my book, Insight. ~~At the time there was reason to hope that I could do so in person but provision was made for the eventuality that, unfortunately,~~
~~keeps me very far away~~

Since then, I have had to drop
to my deep regret, both my original hopes to be present at
this meeting and, ~~with it~~, as well, my original plans to correlate
personal development with philosophic differences. I must
be content to provide a preface for a discussion, and to
this end I have selected three ~~major~~ questions that my
book seems to have raised, namely, the primacy of the
cognitional, the ^{judicial} notion of being, and knowledge of concrete,
actual existence.

