

# The Faculties of the Human Person: Metaphysical Perspectives

Judith Ngihbi

John Paul 11 Catholic University of Lublin.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6845142>

Published Date: 16-July-2022

---

**Abstract:** During the seventeenth century the major cognitive faculties--sense, imagination, memory, and understanding or intellect--became the central focus of argument in metaphysics and epistemology to an extent not seen before. The theory of the intellect, long an important auxiliary to metaphysics, became the focus of metaphysical dispute, especially over the scope and powers of the intellect and the existence of a 'pure' intellect. The following general assertion can be drawn that man as a person lives and fulfils himself within the perspective of his transcendence. It is not only freedom, obligation, and responsibility but also the person's surrender to truth in judging as well as in acting that constitutes the real concrete fabric of the personal life of man. The will from itself is not able to work alone. It needs the support of the senses and the power to grow. The sense are tools which we can recognise the truth of good. In the same way, the sense is in control of the intellect. We cannot separate senses from the human organism because they belong to our humanity. The upshot of this paper is subject oriented to metaphysical discussion. To deals with the forms of faculties of the human person, the paper shall elaborate three aspects: the intellectual faculty, the sensitive faculty and the vegetative faculty. The human person is such a being that cannot be separated from these three faculties.

**Keywords:** Faculties, human being, metaphysics, intellectual, soul.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Rationalist metaphysicians such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche claimed that intellectual knowledge, gained independently of the senses, provides the framework for constructing a new theory of nature. Other writers, including Hobbes and the early Gassendi, denied the existence of a distinct intellectual faculty, and so challenged the metaphysicians' abilities directly to perceive the essences of substances. The theory of the senses, which had long been a part of philosophical discussion, took on a new urgency, for adherents of the new corpuscularian philosophy needed to replace the dominant Aristotelian theory of real sensory qualities and sensible species. The theory of the faculties, then, is an important key to theories of knowledge in the seventeenth century. Indeed, rather than speaking of seventeenth century epistemology, it would be less anachronistic and more informative to speak of theories of cognition. The familiar (and over-stated) point that epistemology became fundamental to metaphysics during that century can then be restated as the point that the theory of faculties became central in metaphysical dispute.

Faculty is a sense of longing or hoping for a person, object, or outcome. It is asserted in the *Summa Theologiae* that the human faculty is the fundamental motivation of all human action.<sup>1</sup> All human activity is prompted by the faculties. Man differs from other animals in one very important respect, and that is, he has some faculties which are, so to speak, infinite. Aquinas' *Summa contra gentiles*, which we analyse in the following, reproduce this same reasoning model. Taking as reference the movement of natural bodies, he tries to explain the meaning of a special category of movement, namely human knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Thus, he states that human knowledge is an expression of a natural appetite of our intelligence, the natural

desire to know, which rests as the highest object of knowledge, the first cause of the world. The intellectual appetite<sup>2</sup> is the will, which desires good adequate to it. Therefore it needs proper cognition of the good (truth about good – the intellectual cognition). The ability to choose this good (the choice concerns particular goods, common, infinite, unlimited good), as the direct object of choice always has a concrete particular goods which is realized and achieved through universal good. Therefore particular goods are means to universal good which is a final good, e.g. good in itself or perfection of being, as in the case of human being, in his/her happiness. It is necessary to posit the senses i.e. interior and the exterior senses. They are essential to all living beings in order to discern a number of operations.

## 2. THE INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES

In this section I seek to develop Saint Thomas's proposal on the intellectual faculty and in particular his arguments in the *Summa Theologiae*. My intention is to present the meaning that this faculty had in Thomist metaphysics, highlighting the fact that this faculty is a natural appetite of the mind. Indeed the most radical and primary of the various natural appetites of human reason. The intellect is a knowing faculty by which human beings learn, understand and reason. Aquinas affirms that all beings seek their own perfection, and that the perfection of each being is dependent on its nature.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the plenitude of each thing must be appropriate to its substantial form, and for humans their substantial form is a first form of being, that is the soul, and intellect is a faculty of the soul. Now, if the intellect is not able to know God, who Aquinas says is the ultimate principle of perfection of all things. It would not fully realize the natural desire because without knowing the highest Good, the source of all goods and all perfections, man would not know truth about the good which is good for him, and what is his/her perfection.

According to Aquinas, the intellect is the faculty of the soul. The other faculty of the soul is the will. The soul performs its actions through the powers or faculties and so it can be said that the soul's actions, performed through the intellect and will, can be distinguished from the essence of the soul and the latter also distinguished from the whole person, united in body and soul. God alone in His very Being has His action of understanding. Wherefore in God alone is His intellect, in intellectual creatures, the intellect is power to be the same as the mind.<sup>4</sup> Again in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas delineates this knowledge.<sup>5</sup> We know that man is not a complete being. It has many kinds of potentialities and dynamisms through which realizes the purpose of his existence. Dynamisms, potentialities and purposefulness manifest firstly in many forms of desires which characterize the human being. Certain forms of this faculty can be distinguished amongst which we have the intellectual faculty, whose object is the attainment of truth, and the volitive faculty, whose object is the possession of good. Nonetheless, the will's aspiration to possess the good is realized more fully to the extent the intellect enlightened on the true good, hence we can speak of "*recta voluntatis*" (right will).

It is in the realization of the true good, that man attains a more approximate perfection of his nature. Since the intellect is the highest power of the soul, the intellectual soul is sometimes called intellect, as from its chief power; and thus we read that the intellect is a form of Substance. This also has an attached meaning to what Augustine postulated as the mind is both spirit and essence. There are different genera of the soul: The appetitive and intellective. The appetitive and intellectual powers are different kinds of powers in the soul, by different formalities of their objects of reason. But the appetitive power agrees partly with the intellectual power and partly with the sensitive in its mode of operation either through a corporeal organ or without it: for appetite follows apprehension. And in this way Augustine puts the will in the mind.<sup>6</sup> Ascribe to the angels, there are no other power besides the intellect, and the will, which follows the intellect. That is why the angel is described as 'mind' or an 'intellect'; since his whole power is made up of this. The soul is a composition of many other powers, namely the sensitive and nutritive powers. The intellect is not an immaterially created intelligent substance; but its power of intelligence is through its immateriality. So, the intellect is the substance of the soul, and it is its virtue and power.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the intellect can be described as only being passive. The name Passive intellect is given by some philosophers to the sensitive appetite in which are the powers of the soul, which appetite is also called "rational by participation," because

it submit to the authority of reason.<sup>8</sup> There are other names given to the passive intellect known as the cogitative power, which is called the 'particular reason.' In each case 'passive' may be taken in the two first senses; in as much as the intellect is the act of a corporeal organ. But the intellect which is in potentiality to things intelligible, and which for this reason Aristotle calls the "possible" intellect<sup>9</sup> is not passive except in the third sense: for it is not an act of a corporeal organ. Hence it is incorruptible. So the intellect has a passive power in respect to the entire universal being. Conversely the vegetative power is active in respect to some specific thing described in the body as integrated to the soul. Wherefore nothing prevents such a passive force of being nobler than such an active one.

There is also one active intellect for all. In case the active intellect is something in affinity with the soul, as constituents of its powers, we are restrained to utter that there are multiply active intellects as there are souls, which are divided according to the number of men, as we have said. In this case it is implausible that the same power be a property to various substances. The Philosopher proves that the active intellect is separate, by the fact that the passive intellect is separate: because, as he says, the agent is nobler than the patient. In the same light, the passive intellect is known to be separated, since it is not the act of any corporeal organ. And in the same understanding the active intellect is also known to be separated; but not as a distinct substance. The principle cause of the universals is the active intellect, by abstracting it from matter.<sup>10</sup> For this reason it need not be a similar intellect in all intelligent beings; but must be possessed in itself one in its connection to all those things from which it abstracts the universal, with regard to the oneness of the universals. This becomes beneficial inasmuch as the active intellect is in itself immaterial.

All things which are of one genre take delight in common to the action which coexist with the nature of the species, and accordingly becomes the power which is the fundamental of such action. Note that, such powers are not identical to all. Now to know the first intelligible principles is the action belonging to the human species. Therefore all men enjoy in common the power which is the principle of this action and this power is the active intellect.<sup>11</sup> But there is no need for it to be identical in all though it must be derived by all from one principle. The proprietorship ascribed to all men in common of the first fundamental principles demonstrate the unification of the discrete intellect, when Plato estimate with the sun, but not the integration of the active intellect, which Aristotle compares to light. Although it is by the nature of the memory to maintain the species of those things which are not actually comprehended, we must first of all presuppose whether the intelligible species can thus be preserved in the intellect because Avicenna held that this was impossible.<sup>12</sup> For he recognized in the sensitive part, that this could take place as to some powers, forasmuch as they are acts of corporeal organs, in which certain species may be maintained apart from actual comprehension. Therefore the intellect has no corporeal organ, apart from the existence of what is intelligible.

Wherefore everything of which the likeness exists in the intellect must be actually understood. According to Avicenna, as soon as we cease to understand something actually, the species of that thing ceases to be in our intellect, and if we wish to understand that thing anew, we must turn to the active intellect, which he held to be a separate substance, in order that the intelligible species may thence flow again into our passive intellect.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, from the practice and habit of turning to the active intellect there is formed, according to him, a certain aptitude in the passive intellect for turning to the active intellect; which natural ability he named the habituation of knowledge.

Accordingly, to this supposition, nothing is preserved in the intellectual part that is not actually understood. It seems not plausible to locate the memory in the intellectual part of man. This position was clearly disapproved in the doctrine of Aristotle. Aristotle says that, when the passive intellect "is identified with each thing as knowing it, it is said to be in act, and that this happens when it can operate of itself. So then, it is in potentiality, but not in the same way as before learning and discovering.<sup>14</sup> At this point, the passive intellect is known to be a unique thing, forasmuch as it accepts the intelligible species of each thing. To the fact that it receives the species of intelligible things it owes its being able to operate when it

wills, but not so that it is always operating. For even then is it in potentiality in a certain sense, though otherwise than before the act of understanding. It is in the sense that whoever has habitual knowledge is in potentiality to actual consideration.

The foregoing opinion is also opposed to reason. Whatever is experienced into something is experienced in accord with the state of the recipient. The intellect is of a more firm nature, and is more solidify than corporeal nature. If corporeal matter holds the forms which it receives, not only while it actually does something through them, but also after ceasing to act through them, much more cogent reason is there for the intellect to receive the species unchangeably and lastingly. It receives them from things sensible, or derives them from some superior intellect. Therefore, if we regard memory only for the purpose of preserving species, we must affirm that it belongs to the intellectual part. "But if in the notion of memory we include its object as something past, then the memory is not in the intellectual, but only in the sensitive part, which apprehends individual things."<sup>15</sup>

The memory when considered as preservation of species, is not familiar to man and other animals. For species are not preserved in the sensitive part of the soul as an integration of body and soul. The act of some organ is the memorative power. The intellect plays a role of preserving its species, without the connection of any corporeal organ. Wherefore the Philosopher says that the soul is the seat of the species, not the whole soul, but the intellect.<sup>16</sup> The condition of past may be referred to two things: to the object which is known, and to the act of knowledge. The object known and the act of knowing are present in the sensitive part. It apprehends something from the point of its present sensible being immuted. At the same time an animal remembers to have sensed before in the past, and to have sensed some past sensible things. As regards the intellectual part, the accidental is the past, and is not in itself belong to the object of the intellect. For the intellect understands man, as man: and to man, as man, it is accidental that he exists in the present, past, or future.

Now on the part of the act, the condition of past, even as such, may be understood to be in the intellect, as well as in the senses. Because our soul's act of understanding is an individual act, existing in this or that time, inasmuch as a man is said to understand now, or yesterday, or tomorrow.

And this is not incompatible with the intellectual nature. For such an act of understanding, though something individual, is yet an immaterial act. As we have said above of the intellect and as the intellect understands itself, though it be itself an individual intellect. So it understands its act of understanding, which is an individual act, in the past, present, or future.<sup>17</sup>

In this way, the notion of memory, in as far as it regards past events, is preserved in the intellect. Forasmuch as it understands that it previously understood, but not in the sense, it understands the past as something 'here' and 'now.' The intelligible species is sometimes in the intellect only in potentiality, and then the intellect is said to be in potentiality. Sometimes the intelligible species is in the intellect as regards the ultimate completion of the act, and then it understands in act. Similarly, the intelligible species is in a middle state, between potentiality and act having a habitual knowledge. In this manner the intellect preserve the species, although it does not apprehend the act.

The intellect and the reason in man cannot be two separate powers. This is fully cognized if we take into account their specific actions. "For to understand is simply to apprehend intelligible truth, and to reason is to advance from one thing understood to another, so as to know an intelligible truth."<sup>18</sup> As for the angels according to their nature, they possess perfect knowledge of intelligible truth and have no need to advance from one thing to another, but apprehend the truth simply and without mental discussion.<sup>19</sup> Man is called a rational being when he reaches the knowledge of intelligible truth by proceeding from one thing to another and so on and so forth. Reasoning is compared to understanding, as movement is to rest, or acquisition to possession; of which one belongs to the perfect, the other to the imperfect. And since movement always come from something stable, and finishes at something at rest; it connote that human reasoning, by way of investigation and findings, proceeds from simply from things understood. Here the first principles; and, again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found. Expressively, it is

authentic that both rest and movement are not to be mentioned to distinct powers, but all to one and the same power, so too in natural things though by the similar nature a thing is directed towards a particular place.

However, by the same power do we understand and reason. It is clear that in man reason and intellect are the same power.<sup>20</sup> The enumeration is made according to the order of actions, not according to the distinction of powers. The intellect by the Boethian demonstration is estimated as the intellect measured to eternity, and on the other reason is measured to time. The level of other animals is so much underneath than man that they cannot approach to the knowledge of truth, which reason search for. But man achieve this knowledge, even though is imperfect, to the knowledge of intelligible truth, which is known by the angels. In the angels the power of knowledge is not of a different genus from that which is in the human reason, but is compared to it as the perfect to the imperfect.

### The Will

The will is a faculty which employs what is good. According to the *Summa Theologiae*, “a man is said to be good, not by his good understanding; but by his good will”<sup>21</sup> Aquinas provides a comprehensive discussion of the ‘will’ in ‘Question 82’ of the *Summa Theologiae*. The human nature is natural because it acts in accordance with inclination. Similarly, the human person acts voluntarily in accordance with the inclination of the ‘will’. The will adheres to the last end of the human person which is perfection. Consequently, we must observe that as the intellect naturally and of necessity adheres to the first principles, so the will adheres to the last end.<sup>6</sup> In the same way, the object of the intellect is similar to the appetible good. This appetible good (cognized by the intellect) is the object of the will.

As already mentioned in the first chapter of the work, two powers constitute the reason. They are the cognitive and the appetitive. The ‘intellect’ is the cognitive power. Its function in man is the capacity to know and understand. It apprehends the goodness in things. The ‘will’ is the appetitive power of reason. It is that native longing for the understood good. The appetite is responsible for the intellectual degree of what is good. To this, all acts of the will rest on the acts of the intellect. Hence the intellect prepares for the will, its proper object. In turn, the intellect moves the will as a final cause “because the good understood is the object of the will, and moves it as an end”<sup>6</sup>

From Aquinas’s demonstration of the intellect and the will it may seem that the intellect necessitates the will’s acts to what is good. However, Aquinas thinks the good cannot necessitate the will to movement. This is because some goods cannot lead man to the end (perfection). In this case we do not need these good in other to achieve perfection. Also, there are some goods which have a necessary connection to perfection. These goods are connected with virtues. Rather Aquinas thinks will does not necessarily incline to these goods. Man’s connection with virtues and perfection rather appear unclear. To this he writes as follows “until through the certitude of the Divine Vision the necessity of such connection is shown, the will does not adhere to God of necessity, nor to those things which are of God”<sup>6</sup>. Man’s intellectual limitation is a barrier of reaching to what is good. There are various goods to which man must choose. In this sense, there are some goods which serve as man’s gratification. This gratification in man is in a short-term. Also, there are goods which are difficult to achieve. Such goods make man better. Consequently, the will in this case acts on the intellect. This exercise is a sort of instruction on the point of considering some goods rather than others. The choice of such goods is governed by the will. Aquinas does not think that our character is determined by the choice of good. He thinks we sometimes make decisions that are contrary to our habits. Therefore, a good choice can be achieved even when man is evil. Man’s action is based on what is good. This choice of good is based on the function of both the intellect and the will.

According to Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, there is a distinction between the intellect and the will. This can be demonstrated by the fact that “good and evil, which are the value readings of objects of the will, are in things whereas truth and error, which are corresponding value readings objects of the intellect, are in the mind.”<sup>5</sup> We can also consider another comparison in the order of cognitive sequence as the intellect precedes the will i.e. the good understood in this sense moves the will. The will is moved by the intellect because good is understood as the object of the will. The object of the will is moved as an end.

We can describe the intellect in two ways, namely as an apprehension of universal beings and truth, and as particular powers having determinate act. In the same way, the will is described in two ways; one way is in accordance to the common nature

of its objects (appetitive of universal good). The second way is the determinate power of the soul having determinate act.<sup>13</sup> In comparison with respect to the universality of objects we can come to the conclusion that the intellect is higher and nobler than the will. The intellect is under the notion of both being and truth which is also contained in the will's act and object. There seem to be such other possible relation between the intellect and the will, which Fr Woroniecki points out. He describes this with an imaginative story. "His illustration lies on a giant but blind strong man taking on his shoulders a paralysed man who can see, and saying to him Let us live in symbiosis: you show me where to go and what to do and how, and I will do what I please."<sup>12</sup> The will represent the strong man which is controlled by different possibilities of the intellect.

Truth, which belongs to the intellect and freedom, which belongs to the will determine the spiritual imprint which marks the various manifestations of human life and human activity, as they penetrate the remotest recesses of human action and experience.<sup>9</sup> The real free commitment of the will is possible only on the basis of truth. Every volitive situation has its own intellectual correlate in so far it is a conscious state. In fact, we can speak of psychological circumstances of a cognitive experience of truth and freedom; sensual desire has one truth, emotional commitment another. These can be said to be subjective assessment of the phenomenon of the truth of our inner life as free activations of our natural emotions. For instance, a man truly desires a woman, since he discovers in his inner life an explicitly free (unfeigned) feeling, directed specifically towards her. Originating in the impression which she has made on him- just as a woman may be truly committed emotionally to a man because she finds in her inner life such emotions, like disposition to emotion, such as desire to be near and to lean upon him, resulting from the impression made by his male strength that she must recognize her interior state of love.<sup>9</sup>

The following general conclusion can be drawn that man as a person lives and fulfils himself within the perspective of his transcendence. It is not only freedom, obligation, and responsibility but also the person's surrender to truth in judging as well as in acting that constitutes the real concrete fabric of the personal life of man. The will from itself is not able to work alone. It needs the support of virtues because it is destroyed by some elements. Similarly, the will need some help which are connected with virtues to choose the goods in a proper way.

### 3. SENSUAL FACULTY

Sensuality is a name which seems to be taken from the sensual movement, of which Augustine speaks just as the name of a power is taken from its act; for instance, sight from seeing.<sup>22</sup> Man is not purely spiritual and intellectual being, but also bodily. His intellectual desires cannot realize in separation from sensual and organic dynamisms. The realisation of human perfection is needed strictly cooperating of all forms of dynamisms-desires. Also the sensual desire must be considered. Therefore the sensual movement is an appetite resulting from sensitive apprehension. The act of the apprehensive power is not so properly referred to any motion as the act of the appetite. The activity of the apprehensive power is accomplished in the very essence that the thing perceived is in the one that perceived it. The function of the appetitive power is accomplished in the very essence that he who longs is turned towards the thing sensible. Consequently the functioning of the apprehensive power is compared to rest, notwithstanding the functioning of the appetitive power is rather compared to movement. Although by sensual movement we apprehend the operation of the appetitive power, so that sensuality is the name of the sensitive appetite.<sup>5</sup>

The sensitive appetite is one generic power, and is named sensuality; albeit it is divided into two powers, which are kinds of the sensitive appetite i.e. the *irascible* and the *concupiscible*.<sup>4</sup> In order to elucidate this point we must investigate that in natural corruptible things there is need for a tendency not only to acquire what is valuable and the prevention of what is harmful, but also the refusal against corruptive and conflicting agencies which are an impediment to the accession of what is valuable, and are productive of harm. Moral virtue which I shall discuss in the next part the powers of sensuality, the *irascible* and the *concupiscible*, as the Philosopher makes clear when he says that temperance and fortitude belong to the non-rational parts. But because sensuality designates these powers as having an inclination which is natural to sense but to something contrary to reason, and not as participating in reason, on this account vice is more properly said to be in sensuality, and virtue to be in the *irascible* and the *concupiscible* powers.<sup>5</sup> The sin which is in sensuality, however, is not opposed to virtue as its contrary.

Fire has a natural tendency, not only to emanate from a lower position, which is inappropriate to it, directed to a higher position which is appropriate, but also to avoid whatever destroys or prevents its action. Consequently, since the sensitive appetite is a person's natural tendency following sensitive apprehension, as natural appetite is a natural tendency accompanied by the natural form, it implies that there must exist two appetitive powers in the sensitive faculty. In one of the faculty the soul is simply inclined to search what is appropriate, relating to the senses, and to escape from what is hurtful, and this is called the concupiscible: and another, whereby an animal resists these attacks that hinder what is suitable, and inflict harm, and this is called the irascible.<sup>21</sup>

It is likened to postulate the object is something difficult, since its inclination is to prevent and rise above hurdles. These two therefore should not be limited to one principle. In sometimes the soul occupies itself with displeasing things, against the natural tendency of the concupiscible appetite. According to a particular sequence the instinct of the irascible potential, it may fight against hindrances. Moreover there exist an opposition in the passions of the irascible appetite with the passions of the concupiscible appetite. When the concupiscence on being evoke, decreased anger; and anger being evoke, decrease concupiscence in several instances. This is seen also from the very point that the irascible is, as it were, the promoter and preserver of the concupiscible when it rises up against what prevents the accession of the appropriate things which the concupiscible wants, or against what cause harm, from which the concupiscible avoid.

On this ground all the powers of the irascible appetite emanate from the desires of the concupiscible appetite and end in them; for example, anger advance from sadness, and having wrought vengeance, ends in joy. Whereas, the quarrels of animals are about things concupiscible for instance, food and sex, as the Philosopher says.<sup>20</sup> The irascible and concupiscible powers obey the higher part in two ways, namely the intellect or reason and the will. In the first way, it is directed to reason and secondly as directed to the will. They obey the reason in their own acts, because in other animals the sensitive appetite is naturally moved by the estimative power; i.e. a sheep, esteeming the wolf as an enemy, is afraid.

“In man the estimative power, as we have said above is replaced by the cogitative power, which is called by some 'the particular reason, because it compares individual intentions.’”<sup>21</sup> The sensitive appetite has a natural movement in the reason of man. This kind of reason is guided naturally, and directed in accordance with the universal reason. It is a form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from universal propositions. It is stated that the universal reason tends the sensitive appetite, which is split into concupiscible and irascible; and this is obeyed by the appetite. But to draw particular conclusions from universal principles is not the work of the intellect, as such, but of the reason. Conversely, the two separated powers of the irascible and concupiscible are known to obey the reason instead of obeying the intellect.

Anyone can experience this in himself by applying certain universal considerations, anger or fear or the like may be modified or excited. To the will is the sensitive appetite subject in execution, which is accomplished by the motive power. In the case of animals the movement is accompanied at once the concupiscible and irascible appetites, for example the sheep, fearing the wolf, escape at once, because it has no supercilious counteracting appetite. In contrast, man is not previously moved at once, as stated by the irascible and concupiscible appetites. He awaits patiently for the will to command, as it is the superior appetite. For there is order among a number of motive powers, the second only moves by virtue of the first. Subsequently, the lower appetite is not enough to cause or arise a movement, except the higher appetite permit. “And this is what the Philosopher says that ‘the higher appetite moves the lower appetite, as the higher sphere moves the lower’ in this way, the irascible and concupiscible are subject to reason.”<sup>5</sup>

The serpent is identified with sensuality, in what is appropriate to it as a sensitive power. Both the irascible and concupiscible powers denominate the sensitive appetite base on the part of the act, to that which is led by the reason as directed. We observe in an animal a despotic and a politic principle: for the soul dominates the body by a despotic power; but the intellect dominates the appetite by a politic and royal power. For a power is called despotic whereby a man rules his slaves, who have not the right to resist in any way the orders of the one that commands them, since they have nothing of their own.<sup>5</sup> In as much as a power is called politic and royal by which a man take controls over a free subjects, who, are subjected to the head of the government of the ruler, have nonetheless something of their own, by reason of which they can overcome the orders of him who gives the commands.

The soul is said to control the body by an autocratic power, because the members partaking to the body cannot in any way prevent the sway of the soul, but it is commanded by the soul both in hand and foot. A voluntary movement is directed naturally to its and are moved at the same time. Although the intellect or reason is said to control the irascible and

concupiscible by an autocratic power since the sensitive appetite in itself has something, by virtue of that it can withstand the commands of reason. The sensitive appetite has a natural movement of the imagination and the senses by the estimative power in other animals, and in man by the cogitative power which the universal reason directs.

We perceived that the irascible and concupiscible powers do withstand reason, in so far as they perceived sense or imagine something pleasant, which reason prohibit, and what is distasteful, which reason commands. “So from the fact that the irascible and concupiscible resist reason in something, we must not conclude that they do not obey.”<sup>1</sup> The exterior senses require for action exterior sensible things, whereby they are affected, and the presence of which is not ruled by reason. In the interior powers constituting the appetitive and apprehensive power, they do not need things that are exterior. They are inclined to the order of reason, whose form cannot basically provoke or modify the tenderness of the appetitive power, but can also structure the phantasms of the imagination. The sense power of the soul is the lowest form of knowledge we can experience in the universe. When we consider sense knowledge in its totality, we see that it must possess five functions in order to take care of the necessities of life.<sup>8</sup> Some of these functions in themselves can be divided into kinds of subsidiary operations. The simplest of all is determine upon particular sense (*sense proprius*), which is the primary order of the sense power and functions together with the soul by sensible realities. The particular sense in turn is subdivided into distinct powers according to the different kinds of sensible impressions it is equipped to receive. Sensible things act on the particular sense by the species they impress upon it.

Contrary to the general opinion, these species are not taken into the sense in a material way, otherwise the sense would become the sensible object itself, and the eye would become colour and the ear sound.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, some types of sensation are accompanied by very definitive organic modifications in the animal experiencing them. Now, there is a composition of the outer senses e.g., the *sense of sight*, there is a spiritual change, and in other sensory powers, the spiritual change is followed by a natural change either on the part of the object or the organ.<sup>18</sup> In respect to the object, the natural change is with respect to place in the case of sound, which is the object of the *sense of hearing*. For sound is caused by vibration and movement in the air. And as for alteration, in the case of odour, which is the object of the *sense of smell*, a body has to be altered in some way through heat in order to give off an odour.

Presently on the part of the organ, a natural alteration is present in the *sense of touch* and the *sense of taste*; for example, when a hand gets in contact something hot, it itself becomes hot; and the tongue is moistened by the moistness of various tastes. Conversely, both the organ of the sense of smell and the organ of the sense of hearing do not experience any natural alteration in sensing, other than incidentally. As the sense of sight does not undergo a natural alteration in both the organ and the object, it is assumed to be spiritual, and becomes the most perfect and the most universal concern with the sensory powers. Subsequent to the sense of sight follows the sense of hearing and next the sense of smell. Both of which undergo a natural alteration on the part of the object. Sensible objects although received immateriality in the sense modify materially the animal experiencing them. Such are the qualities causing changes in material things, namely, heat cold, dryness, humidity etc. sensible objects of this kind produce material impression is made by contact, these sensible objects must touch us in order that we may perceive them, so the sense power that apprehend them is called touch.<sup>14</sup> Here then, we arrive at the five external powers of the sense. Among them the role played by the four internal sense powers can be ascertained.

It's not enough to have just the sense power whose function is to distinguish white from black and so on. It cannot distinguish a white colour from a sweet flavour. The sight can distinguish one colour from many others because it perceives them. But it cannot distinguish between a colour and a flavour because it does not perceive flavour. It is necessary to posit four interior senses of the sentient part of the soul. They are Common sense, imagination, estimative power and the power of remembering.<sup>14</sup> The common sense is needed at which all the perceptions of the particular senses terminate, so that it may judge them and distinguish them.<sup>19</sup> The common sense functions both in perceiving sensible object, and plays the role of sensory functions themselves. It is obvious that we are aware that we see. Therefore, this knowledge does not merely belong to one particular sense which only knows the sensible form that impinges on it. But when the modification this form has impressed upon it has caused the act of seeing, the visual sensation in its turn modifies the common sense, which then perceives the act of seeing.<sup>7</sup>

It is not sufficient for an animal to perceive things while they are present, living things must be capable of representing them while they are absent. Now, since the movement and actions of the animal are being determined by the object which it perceives, it cannot be satisfied if the object cannot represent itself in their absence. The general idea is that the animal's sensory soul must be capable of receiving sensible things and also preserving them within itself. It's here that the soul's



power of the sense is the act of the bodily organ. It performs two distinct powers, the power to receive sensible species and the power to preserve them. This capacity to preserve is called imagination. It is a kind of treasury which forms apprehended by the senses is stored. The sense knowledge that is essential to a living being must, in the third place, be able to discern a number of properties in things that the sense by themselves would be unable to perceive.<sup>11</sup> The humans being can distinguish different perceptions. Some are useful and some are harmful. This is done by particular reason or cogitative power. Since animals have no reason to comprehend what is useful and harmful of things. It requires an additional power to do this. It is by the power that the sheep is aware it must flee when it sees the wolf. This power is called the estimative power. It makes possible the fourth internal power of the sense known as the memory.

The human beings have to make effort in searching for the species stored by the imagination. Recollection plays the role of presenting the character of something past. When we examine the highest sensory powers of the soul, we are drawn to the threshold of intellectual activity. As recollection resembles memory in animals, so in human beings, corresponds to the estimative power i.e. in which animals apprehend what is harmful and useful. The particular reason also called the passive intellect remains a power of the sensible order because it only acquires knowledge of particulars, while it is characteristics of the power of intellect to apprehend the universals.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the sensory soul must perform numerous functions which are required for the perfection of life for human beings. These functions cannot be reduced to one common principle. The power of the soul is approximately the principle activity of the life.

In a nutshell, the sense are tools which we can recognise the truth of good. In the same way, the sense is in control of the intellect. We cannot separate senses from the human organism because they belong to our humanity.

#### 4. ORGANIC FACULTY

The organic faculty is the lowest part of the soul whose function is to vivify the body to which it is united. The organic faculty is another name for the vegetative powers of the soul. Its function is only performed on the body which is immediately united upon. It should be noted that the vegetative function is not reducible to the way in which the body act. Above the vegetative functions of the soul there is room for actions of a higher order, surpassing those exercised by natural forms both from the point of view of what they do and how it is being done. These functions depend on the soul's natural propensity of receiving at things into itself with an immaterial mode of being. The object of the vegetative power is, as we have said, the body considered as receiving the life of the soul that informs it.<sup>14</sup> The nature of the body demands that the soul exercise a threefold function corresponding to a threefold division of the vegetative power. In the first function, the body receives existence from the soul, and it is to this that its generative power is directed. It is to this that natural inanimate things receive at the same time their specific being and their due size or quantity. This cannot be the case with living beings. As from the beginning of their existence, they can only be imperfect being, as far as quantity is concerned.

Besides the generative power, there must have an augmentative power through which they grow to their natural size. This increase of being would be impossible unless there is a change in substance of the being to be increased and thereby added to it. This change is the work of the bodily warmth that works upon and digests all the foods introduced from without. However, the conservation of the individual demands a nutritive power to restore continually what is has lost, and to bring to it what it lacks in order to reach it perfect size, as well as what it needs to produce the seed necessary for its reproduction. Thus the vegetative power itself presupposes a generative power that gives the living thing its existence, an augmentative power that gives it its fitting size, and a nutritive power that keeps it alive and in its proper quantity.<sup>6</sup> The nutritive and augmentative powers produce their effect in the being in which they reside. It is the body which forms a union with the soul increases and preserved by the soul. The generative power on the other hand does not produce effect but in someone's body. The generative power is closer to the sensory soul than the other two and it exercise it function on external objects. We can generally say the nutritive power is subordinate to the augmentative, the augmentative to the generative, and with the generative power we almost arrive at the power of sense, which will definitely free the individual from its restriction to its limited mode of being.

According to Aquinas, One is whereby it acquires existence, and to this is directed the 'generative' power. The next is when the living body possessed its due quantity; to this is ascribed to the 'augmentative' power. Another is whereby the body of a living thing is preserved in its existence and in its due quantity; to this is directed the 'nutritive' power.<sup>3</sup> These powers have their differences. The nutritive and the augmentative impinges on their existence, as the body united to the soul grows and is kept safe by augmentative and the nutritive powers which has its existence in the soul. However, the generative power

impinges not in the same body but in another, since a thing cannot generate its own self. Thus the generative power is closer in a way to the dignity of the sensitive soul which extends its function to extrinsic things, albeit in a good and more general way. Of the three powers of the soul mentioned above, the generative has the greater finality, nobility, and perfection.<sup>3</sup> It is part of a thing which is already perfect to make another like itself.

In Aquinas, the vegetative powers are called inclusive properties. These powers are active powers in the sense of being capacitated for action. However, since these powers to grow are simply properties we can point to the fact that anybody is living that has the capacity to grow and generate its own species. The fact is that not all living things have the capacity to grow and generate their own kind.

However, there are some animals which never have a capacity to generate their own kind — in the case of sterilization, for example, or as is the case with mules. These cases demonstrate that we cannot consider the augmentative and generative powers to be simple properties. But we must consider the nutritive power to be a simple property, for the exercise of this power is necessary for the exercising of the other two vegetative powers.<sup>1</sup> Whereas it is possible for a living thing to lack the capacities for growth and reproduction, while having the capacity for nutrition, the converse is not possible.<sup>8</sup> Now, to be called 'living' a body must have at least one of the vegetative capacities. The nutrition is a capacity which all living organisms must have, for if any being lacks this capacity it cannot have the other two vegetative powers. We may summarize this discussion of the vegetative powers by expressing these powers in the following manner: (x) {x is a living body  $\wedge$  [^ (for x to « nutritive »  $\vee$  for x to grow  $\vee$  for x to reproduce)  $\cdot$  < > for x to « nutritive »]}.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note here that the second conjunct of the predicate in this formulation is not redundant, since this conjunct expresses the fact that nutrition is a simple property of living bodies. Furthermore, nutrition must be included among the disjunctive properties of the vegetative soul since the other two disjuncts cannot be predicated convertibly and necessarily of living bodies either alone or as a disjunction.

Moreover, the discussion of the vegetative powers shows a conceptual hurdle. A question may arise: is it possible for a living organism to exist without performing any action? It should be noted that this question is not empirical. In other words, we are not asking how often an organism needs to act, and what actions it must perform, to ensure its survival. Rather we are asking whether or not the nature of animate bodies involves some kind of necessary action.<sup>12</sup> As shown above, we could say the result is not only a logical possibility, but in fact an ontological possibility. There is essentially nothing in the nature of living organism which necessitates that they perform any action, but the propensity to nourish themselves.

The question which applies to whether a living organism performs action is determined by empirical science. One way to avoid this consequence is to interpret one of the powers of the vegetative soul as not an active power in the sense of a capacity, but an active power in the sense of an action which can have an effect. From what has been said above concerning the vegetative powers it seems that the only possible candidate for such a reinterpretation would be the nutritive power, since this is the only power which is necessary for all living organisms. Consequently nothing can be called a living organism unless it at least maintains itself through nutrition.<sup>13</sup> According to Richard W, this was not the view of Aquinas. In his argument the soul is in connection with the opinion that the power of the soul constitutes the soul's essence. According to Aquinas, the soul is not always actual with respect to its vital operations.<sup>20</sup>

In Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* he speaks of nutrition in this way in connection with Aristotle's discussion of this power: it is simply that faculty by which a living being is able to maintain itself as such; while food is the condition of this faculty's activity, that by means of which it maintains its subject.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, it seems that for Aquinas only the nutritive capacity, and not nutritive activity, is a necessary property of an organism. According to Richard W, we can see in Aquinas' work a theological reason for his reluctance to consider nutritive activity as a property of living organisms.<sup>2</sup> For a power which is an activity, as opposed to a capacity, does not involve a reduction of potency to act. For Aquinas, the creative activities of God are not the product of potency. God is purely actual therefore devoid of potency. It seems to be clear for Aquinas that the power of created things is always a potency which must be reduced to act by some agency.

According to Aquinas, it is proper that rational creatures should tend to an end, whereas it is proper to the irrational nature to tend to an end, as directed or led by another, whether it apprehend the end, as do irrational animals, or do not apprehend it, as is the case of those things which are altogether void of knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, Aquinas' discusses things tending to it end as an action or a movement. There is one action by which all things perform, viz, the activity of moving towards an end.<sup>1</sup> This action is different for quite different substances i.e. rational creatures moved themselves towards an end, while irrational creatures tend to their end but are not self- moved, albeit, the activity of non- living substances is not elicited through apprehension of an end: that there must be in all animate things an action or activity of moving toward an end, and that this action or activity must be one which is characterized of living bodies *qua* living bodies. One way we can speak of an activity which is always present in a thing but not a property of that thing is to speak of a capacity for action which is always exercised. Aquinas speaks of this type of capacity as a potentiality which is always perfected by its act.<sup>17</sup>

We can say that this capacity is necessarily exercised because of a living organism's necessary relation to a certain end. All things are necessarily related in some way to an end by consequence of their nature and the order of the universe as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Aquinas would say that a necessary activity of a living organism is not necessary in the sense of natural or absolute necessity, but can only be necessary in relation to a particular end. Aquinas explains this distinction in this manner. That a thing must belong to it by an intrinsic principle, either material, as when we say that everything composed of contraries is of necessity corruptible; or formal, as when we say that it is necessary for the three angles of a triangle to be equal to two right angles. And this is natural and absolute necessity.

In another way, that a thing must belong to it by reason of something extrinsic. On the part of the end, as when without it the end is not to be attained or so well attained: for instance, food is said to be necessary for life, and a horse is necessary for a journey.<sup>2</sup> The most plausible suggestion as to the type of activity this might be is nutrition. For, as we have seen, nutrition is, according to Aquinas, the most basic power which a living organism possesses. But this suggestion does necessitate a denial of Aquinas' assertion that living organisms are not always in act as regards to their vital actions, since nutrition is a vital activity of a living organism.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Aquinas in conceiving of a universe which is teleologically ordered, must hold that animate things have a power which is of necessity always exercised. This is the case not because of the essential nature of animate things, but rather because of the end which all animate things have. On this basis we can say that there is an action which all living bodies, *qua* living bodies perform and that all animate bodies must do something. In rational being, we have one soul and different faculties. The soul is the whole of man's action. The human person is made up of three faculties which are identified as intellectual, sensible and vegetative. Human being is a specific being that cannot be separated from these faculties. The whole human faculty has an influence on the intellect. When we speak of persons, it is also included that we speak of rational beings since persons are said thereof only of beings which are of rational nature. By rationality, persons participate in the 'personal' nature of a rational Creator since without rationality; products or creatures of an efficient causality would lack purposes or ends.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Aquinas, Thomas. *On The Soul*, trans. John Patrick Rowan. St. Louis: B. Herder, 1949.
- [2] Aquinas, Thomas. Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima: in Aristotle's De Anima, in the Version of William of Moerbeke and the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. Kenelm Foster and Sylvester Humphries. New Haven: Yale, 1951.
- [3] Contreras, S. García-Huidobro, J. *Teleology, Natural Desire and Knowledge of God*. In *The Summa Contra Gentiles*, (Chile: Universidad de Los Andes, 2015), p. 282.
- [4] Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa contra gentiles*, vol. I, trans. Anton C. Pegis, F.R.S.C, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.
- [5] Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa contra gentiles*, vol. III, trans. Vernon Bourke. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.
- [6] Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Westminster: Christian Classics, 1981.

- [7] Aquinas, Thomas. *The Treatise on Human Nature*, trans. Pasnau Robert. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002.
- [8] Aristotle. *Metaphysics*, trans. Joe Sachs. Green Lion Press, 1999.
- [9] Aristotle. *On the Soul*, trans. Joe Sachs. Green Lion Press, 2001.
- [10] Aristotle. *Physics*, trans. Joe Sachs. Rutgers U. P., 1995.
- [11] Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- [12] Kant, Immanuel. *Kant's Critical Account of Freedom*, trans. Andrews Reath, in: *A Companion to Kant*, ed. Graham Bird. Blackwell: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- [13] Brock, Stephen. *Action and Conduct: Thomas Aquinas and the Theory of Action*, London: T & T Clark International, 1998.
- [14] Field, W, Richard. "St. Thomas Aquinas on Properties and the Powers of the Soul." *Universite Laval*, 40. 2 (1884): 1- 14.
- [15] Gilson, Etienne. *Thomism The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Laurence K. Shook and Armand Maurer. Canada: National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication, 2002.
- [16] Krapiec, Albert Mieczystaw. *I- man. An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. Lescoe, M. New Britain: Mariel Publication 1983.
- [17] Krapiec, Albert Mieczystaw. *Metaphysics*, trans. Theresa Sandok, New York: Peter Lang, 1991.
- [18] Kenny, A. *Aquinas on Mind*, New York: Routledge, 1994.
- [19] Klima, G. "The Semantic Principles Underlying Saint Thomas Aquinas's Metaphysics of Being", *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, Canada: Western University, 1996.
- [20] Taylor, Jameson, "Beyond Nature: Karol Wojtyla's Development of the Traditional Definition of Personhood" *The Review of Metaphysics*, Volume LXIII, (September 2009-June 2010).
- [21] Wojtyla, Karol. *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Dordrecht-Boston: Reidel, 1979.
- [22] Wojtyta, Karol. *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981.
- [23] Contreras, S. García-Huidobro, J. *Teleology, Natural Desire and Knowledge of God*. In *The Summa Contra Gentiles*, (Chile: Universidad de Los Andes, 2015), p. 282.