Human Participation in the Eternal Law through the Natural Law in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas and Bernard Lonergan: Transpositions from a Classical to a Modern Mindset

by

Wayne Harry Lott

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Regis College and the Theology Department of the Toronto School of Theology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of St. Michael’s College.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to settle a question that arises from seeming divergences between Thomas Aquinas and Bernard Lonergan on the nature of the natural law and its participation in the eternal law. These divergences result from transpositions Lonergan makes to Aquinas’s thought, who writes within the perspective of a medieval theoretical horizon. Lonergan seeks to make many of Aquinas’s philosophical insights relevant for a modern mindset, the horizon of which is one of interiority and human historicity. But do these transpositions, when applied to the subject matter of the natural law and its participation in the eternal law, result in substantially different or even contradictory stances between Lonergan and Aquinas on how the natural law participates in the eternal law? Can Lonergan and Aquinas be said to substantially share the same understanding of human participation in the eternal law? Even if they do, are there still notable differences that are relevant and worthy of further study in themselves?

In order to determine whether or not Lonergan’s and Aquinas’s respective positions substantially agree or disagree, and if they agree to identify what fruitful new insights Lonergan’s account might provide, this study sets out both Aquinas’s and Lonergan’s
respective positions on the subject matter by way of comparison and contrast. Although this study finds notable differences resulting from Lonergan’s transposing natural law into the categories and concerns of the modern horizon of interiority, it also finds that Lonergan does not substantially diverge from Aquinas. Lonergan’s transpositions of Aquinas do nonetheless bring into relief at least two ways that humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law that are not as obvious on Aquinas’s own account. These ways feature Lonergan’s notions of human self-appropriation and authenticity as they take place within and impact upon a dynamic world process.
Acknowledgements

Great ideas are the typically the products of great minds, and for many years now I have sought long and hard to understand two great thinkers – St. Thomas Aquinas and Bernard Lonergan. I have learned much from these two thinkers and there is much more I will continue to learn from them. It is my hope that those who read this dissertation will likewise gather from Aquinas and Lonergan the many riches they offer to us, even if they do not necessarily agree with my own presentation of their ideas on human participation in the eternal law through the natural law.

In many different ways many different people have contributed to the writing and completion of this project, and even more broadly to my being able to pursue a graduate education in theological studies. I first of all want to thank my mother and father for their support throughout my post-secondary educational pursuits. It can be said with absolute certainty that without their support none of this would have been possible. I am also very grateful to many friends in my home community in Stirling, Ontario, who offered both financial and prayerful support throughout the years, and I am very much pleased to be able to present to them in this project some of the fruits of their investment.

My thanks extend as well to my friends, fellow students, and co-workers at Regis College. For some four years I have also worked part-time as a front desk assistant at the college, and this has given me the enviable opportunity to get to know the student community and many of the faculty and staff in a way that would not have possible
otherwise. Every student at Regis, and most especially myself, owes a debt of gratitude to Elaine Chu, whose tireless work keeps everything afloat.

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Abbreviations

Works of Thomas Aquinas

De malo Quaestiones disputatae de malo
De pot. Quaestiones disputatae de potentia
De regno De regno, ad regem Cypri
De spir. creat. Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis
De sub. sep. De substantiis separatis
De ver. Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate
De virt. Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus in communi
In Cor. Super primam epistolam ad Corinthios lectura
In De anima Sentencia libri De anima
In De hebd. Expositio libri Boetti De ebdomadibus
In De Trin. Super Boetium De Trinitate
In Decem praec. Collationes in decem praeceptis
In De div. nom. In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio
In Ethic. Sententia libri Ethicorum
In Gal. Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Galatas lectura
In Iob Expositio super Iob ad litteram
In Isaiam Expositio super Isaiam ad litteram
In Lib. de caus. Super librum de causis
In Meta. In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis exposition
In Phys. In VIII libros Physicorum
In Polit. Sententia libri Politicorum
In Post. an. Expositio libri Posteriorum
In Ps. Postilla super Psalmos
In Rom. Super Epistolam S. Paulo Apostoli ad Romanos
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<tr>
<td>In Sent.</td>
<td><em>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lect. super Ioan.</td>
<td><em>Lectura super evangelium Ioannis</em></td>
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<td>Quaes. disp. de an.</td>
<td><em>Quaestiones disputatae de anima</em></td>
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<td>Quod.</td>
<td><em>Quaestiones quodlibetalis</em></td>
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<td>S.C.G.</td>
<td><em>Summa contra gentiles</em></td>
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<td>S.T.</td>
<td><em>Summa theologiae</em></td>
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**Works of Bernard Lonergan**

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>CWL</td>
<td>Collected Works of Lonergan</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

The topic of this investigation is *Human Participation in the Eternal Law through the Natural Law in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas and Bernard Lonergan: Transpositions from a Classical to a Modern Mindset*. This project intends to set in dialogue two Roman Catholic thinkers who have contributed to the classical Christian tradition that understands human action in accordance with the natural law as a properly human manner of participating in the transcendent eternal law. As classically understood the natural law is a moral law that is in some way intrinsic to all human persons by nature,¹ and by it humans are rationally ordered to those basic goods that are the objectives of human striving. The eternal law is an intelligible order or plan (ratio) existing in the mind of God that is conceived by divine wisdom, and is that by which he providentially orders the created world and all that exists within it to their proper ends.

The reason for choosing these two thinkers stems from a recognition that Lonergan’s thought is deeply indebted to that of Aquinas – albeit not slavishly indebted – on many matters of philosophical and theological importance, while at the same time recognizing that Lonergan is also very much an independent thinker and not merely an interpreter of Aquinas. This is especially evidenced in Lonergan’s cognitional theory as he presents it in

¹ This term “nature” has a number of different meanings, and in what sense the natural law is natural to humans is contested among natural law theorists, as this investigation will show. For the present I will note three different senses of nature that will be relevant to this discussion: nature as substance or essence, nature as a principle of movement and rest (i.e., form or matter), and nature as universal order. All three of these senses will factor into the conversation on what the natural law is as this investigation unfolds.
his two major writings: *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* and *Method in Theology*.\(^2\) Lonergan develops his own cognitional theory, a theory that is grounded in interiority (i.e., attentive reflection upon one’s own inner conscious and intentional experience as a knower and a doer and its normative and recurrent operations, and to the critical implications that follow from this), with the help of Aquinas’s insights into human cognition, which is a mixture of both psychological and metaphysical analysis.\(^3\) Lonergan’s cognitional theory is original both insofar as it stands as a unified whole vigorously argued for by appealing to the inner experience of cognitional operations and intentions rather than to metaphysical principles, and as he uses it to critically ground his epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical positions. At the same time, key elements of his cognitional theory are significantly indebted to insights made by Aquinas into human knowing. So it is clear that for Lonergan the starting point for philosophy is cognitional theory that is grounded in the data of interiority. Cognitional theory, in turn, becomes the critical basis for developing an epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. It is this starting point of philosophy in cognitional theory based solely upon the categories of interiority that sets Lonergan apart from Aquinas, without failing to recognize that Aquinas also developed a cognitional theory that demonstrates a familiarity with interiority that Lonergan clearly benefits from.

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\(^2\) Throughout this study I will be referring exclusively to the following editions of these two works: Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, CWL 3, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). Hereafter, I will cite these two works simply as *Insight* and *Method*.

\(^3\) Lonergan’s analysis of Aquinas’s cognitional theory was originally published in five separate articles in the *Theological Studies* journal spanning from 1946-1949. They are all presently published together in volume 2 of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan series, which will be the exclusive source of reference in this study. See Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, CWL 2, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
This independent aspect to Lonergan’s thought means that there is no guarantee that what Lonergan conceives the natural law, the eternal law, and the former’s participation in the latter to be is identical with the position taken by Aquinas. And given that nowhere in his writings does Lonergan give any detailed exposition or analysis of Aquinas on this subject-matter there is no reason to simply assume that his own approach to the natural law is substantially the same. So the question arises: to what extent are they the same and to what extent are they different?

Lonergan quite explicitly indicates what some of these differences are and how they are generated out of a concern to meet the challenges of a modern world. Lonergan speaks of certain transpositions of Aquinas that are necessary in order to move from a classical mindset to a modern mindset. But what are these transpositions and to what extent do they go beyond Aquinas without breaking free from him entirely, assuming they do not?

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4 The closest one finds to what can be called an exposition of Aquinas on the natural and eternal law is found in Lonergan’s unpublished treatise De Verbo Incarnato Suplementum. But even here one finds only lose references to statements in Aquinas’s treatise on law in the Summa Theologiae, not a detailed exposition or analysis.

5 The idea of transposition is a key element of Lonergan’s thought. More generally, it refers to a movement from one horizon of meaning to another horizon of meaning. More specifically, it pertains to different sets of meanings resulting from different differentiations of consciousness. So Lonergan distinguishes between common sense meanings, theoretical meanings, and meanings of interiority which derive from three different differentiations of consciousness. By transposing Lonergan means moving from one of these horizons of meaning into another. Most often he has in mind moving from the theoretical horizon of meaning to a horizon of interiority of meaning. To transpose from theory into interiority does not mean forever setting aside theory for interiority, but critically grounding theory in interiority. But to this must be added a further qualification. Lonergan also speaks of a movement from a classicist mindset to a modern mindset which is not simply a movement from theory to interiority. This movement is a transposition from a specific kind of common sense cultural horizon that cloaks itself in the language of theory, even if it does not truly understand theory, to a modern cultural horizon that functions within a field of meanings that include common sense, theory, and interiority, and whose understanding of theory is critically grounded in interiority. For a helpful discussion on how theory and interiority interrelate with one another in Lonergan’s thought as it concerns transposing the early Lonergan’s theoretical account of grace into his later methodical account of grace, see Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, “Sanctifying Grace in a ‘Methodical Theology,’” Theological Studies 68, no. 1 (2007): 52-76.
In two of his later essays, Lonergan raises the topic of the continuing relevance of Aquinas today. In both of these essays, Lonergan lists a set of transpositions that need to be made in order to highlight the contributions of Aquinas’ thought in a contemporary context. The critical transpositions Lonergan calls for are the following: a movement from a priority placed upon logic and concepts to a priority placed upon method concerned with recurring and normative cognitive operations; from an Aristotelian conception of science concerned with necessity to a modern conception of science concerned with verified possibility whose judgments are probable at best; from a metaphysical account of the soul to the phenomenological and cognitional account of the subject; from human nature to human history; and from first principles to transcendental method.⁶ What Lonergan is calling for is a shift in horizon, but it is important to point out that in calling for these transpositions he is not calling for a rejection of logic and conceptual analysis, a rejection of the necessary and certain, a rejection of the soul, a rejection of human nature, and perhaps not even a rejection of first propositional principles that are naturally and self-evidently known (e.g., the principles of non-contradiction and sufficient reason), although the term “first” clearly becomes relativized, for propositions, no matter how certain they are, are not prior to those cognitive operations accounted for in transcendental method.

What separates the modern mindset from what can be called the classical mindset (as opposed to a classicist mindset) involves a shift from a horizon of meaning based on

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theory to one of interiority.\textsuperscript{7} By appropriating the horizon of interiority one may discover a transcendental method that grounds all other more determinate methods of the sciences, a methodical approach to knowledge in general that effectively results in accumulative and progressive results, the recognition of a methodical approach to science that is open to continuous discovery and so to potential revision of earlier conclusions, an account of human subjectivity and its recurrent cognitional operations, and a method that can account for historical change in meanings and values through time and from place to place.

From Lonergan’s perspective Aquinas lived in the age of theory, a classical era that dates back to the Greek discovery of the mind. It is the age in which science and the art of logic was first developed, where a theoretical account of the soul was first developed, where in the idea of nature was found a principle of permanency and universality that stood underneath the constant changes of custom and lifestyle. There are some things that are necessary, some things that do not change, and there are some foundational principles that can be said to be naturally known by the human intellect that can ground all other valid claims to scientific knowledge. Aquinas lived within this classical horizon and one cannot fault him for not sharing in a modern mindset that Lonergan sought to work within and saw as a valid development upon the earlier classical discoveries. But there are two important qualifications that need to be made to this placing Aquinas within a classical horizon.

First, Lonergan distinguishes in some of his writings between the classical ideal and classicism. In his essay “Exegesis and Dogma,” for instance, Lonergan speaks of the classical

\textsuperscript{7} This distinction between theory and interiority as two different kinds of meaning is found in \textit{Method}, 85-99, where Lonergan speaks of them as distinct stages of meaning in history, with the theoretical stage both preceding and making possible the later development of the stage of interiority. Previous to both of these stages is the first stage of common sense.
ideal that “rests upon a differentiation of consciousness, an awareness, a real apprehension of the difference between Thales and the milkmaid, between the theoretic life and the practical life.” In contrast with the classical ideal, Lonergan speaks of classicism, by which he means “the fruit of an unsuccessful education in which, first of all, there is no real grasp of theory of any kind” even though it be studied, and “in the subject there is no real serious differentiation of consciousness,” but a “haute vulgarization” of the theoretical differentiation of consciousness. The classicist not only lacks a real grasp of theory, but also fails to grasp the concrete: “Everything is just an instance of the universal, the ideal, the exemplar, the norm, the law, the model. The classicist has no apparatus for apprehending what is to go beyond the universal law, ideal, exemplar, onto the concrete.”8 For Lonergan Aquinas is, if anything, the paradigm exemplar of someone who has a truly theoretic differentiation of consciousness, and who could in no way be labeled as a classicist who speaks the language of theory but has little understanding of it.

This leads to the second point of needed qualification. Even though Aquinas lived within a classical horizon and is a clear cut case of one who enjoyed a theoretical differentiation of consciousness, Lonergan also recognizes that Aquinas in some way anticipates the modern differentiation of consciousness that is interiority. At the end of “The Future of Thomism,” Lonergan has the following to say about Aquinas in relation to his five points of needed transposition:

St. Thomas practiced a method, the method of the quaeestio. . . .

St. Thomas accepted the Aristotelian ideal of science, but he restricted a theology in accord with that ideal to the mind of God and the minds of the blessed in Heaven. His theology was content, not to demonstrate, but to show how the mysteries of the faith might be manifested.

St. Thomas treated the soul at length, but he said enough about the subject for me to be able to write my *Verbum* articles.

St. Thomas did not have the modern concern for history and for man’s historicity. But St. Thomas was an extraordinarily erudite person, and if one wishes to evade history and historicity, one wishes to live in a world that no longer exists.

Finally, while Aristotle and St. Thomas did not elaborate a transcendental method, they understood its point. This may be illustrated by Aristotle’s advice for dealing with skeptics, namely, get them to talk; and by St. Thomas’s argument against Averroës: Averroës’s position implied the conclusion that *this man does not understand* and St. Thomas concluded that therefore *this man was not to be listened to.*

While Aquinas does belong to the horizon of the classical ideal, his thought opens up to and even anticipates the modern differentiation of consciousness. Aquinas practices a method in which logic forms only a partial role. He knew the limits of Aristotelian science and the notion of necessity, and knew when and where to appropriately apply it. His analysis of the human soul, and especially its chief power, the intellect, evidences a familiarity with his own cognitional operations and the dynamism of the human desire to know all of being, and this familiarity played a central role in helping Lonergan to develop his own cognitional theory.

He was well read and this allowed him to speak to the people of his own day and age, not by rehearsing the past as normative for the present, but by building on the achievements of the past, both secular and Christian, and thereby approaching theology in a way that had never been done before so as to address the concerns of his own age. He was at least implicitly familiar with transcendental method, for he knew that there were conditions necessary for one’s own attainment of knowledge that can be known, and if rejected would

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result in one being caught up in a performative contradiction. From Lonergan’s perspective, it seems fairly clear that while modernity has advanced beyond Aquinas and the classical ideal in some beneficial ways, these differences must not be overstated or exaggerated. This similar yet dissimilar aspect of Aquinas’s thought compared with Lonergan’s is what presents part of the challenge of this investigation.

In addition to these five transpositions that Lonergan explicitly mentions, two more may also be identified. If these five transpositions concern shifts in ways of understanding the human subject and the subjective pole of human knowing, one may also identify two more shifts that Lonergan speaks of which regard the objective pole of human knowing, which is something that is known. Lonergan’s metaphysics is just as theoretical as Aquinas’s and bears a family resemblance to Aquinas’s. But Lonergan’s metaphysics can be said to transpose Aquinas’s metaphysics from the standpoint that (1) Lonergan explicitly critically grounds his metaphysical terms and relations in his intentionality analysis, and (2) his metaphysics features an explicit emphasis upon a kind of dynamic development that he calls finality that runs throughout world process. These two shifts will feature in this investigation when speaking about human participation in the eternal law, for the terms and relations considered in this discussion are primarily theoretical.

In sum, while one should anticipate notable differences between Aquinas and Lonergan and their respective treatments of the natural law, the eternal law, and the
former’s participation in the latter, those differences need not be viewed as differences of
dialectical opposition but could very well be only genetic developments.10

Indeed, the central argument of this inquiry is that Lonergan presents a genetic
development of Aquinas’s account of the natural law as participation in the eternal law, a
consistent transposition that presupposes and develops Aquinas’s valid insights. The thesis
that this investigation seeks to defend is the following: extending Lonergan’s general
transpositions of Thomistic philosophy – transpositions encompassing a movement from the
horizon of a classical theoretical mindset to the horizon of a modern mindset of interiority,
historicity, and dynamic development – to Thomas Aquinas’s theory of natural law, the
eternal law, and the former’s participation in the latter, results not in substantially
conflicting positions between Lonergan and Aquinas but in the discovery of new ways of
thinking of human participation in the eternal law through the natural law – as individuals
and communally – that emphasize self-appropriation and authenticity that are not brought
into relief or highlighted on theoretical accounts.

As this thesis suggests, there is something limiting about theory. What is limiting
about theoretical accounts of the natural law in general pertains to their third person or
“objective” perspective of something that is first encountered in conscious experience. Any
account of what the natural law is must be consistent with human experience itself, and our
experience of the natural law is always a first person experiential encounter. Theory by its
very nature approaches its subject-matter from an “objective” third person perspective.

10 Lonergan makes a distinction between genetic and dialectical differences in Method, 236. Genetic
differences regard successive stages in a process of development in which later stages presuppose earlier
stages, and therefore necessarily presuppose their integrity. Dialectical differences regard differences of
incompatibility, opposed ideas that cannot be reconciled, if one is true the other is false, if one is intelligible,
the other is unintelligible.
When taken to its extreme, theory’s emphasis upon a third person perspective may imply an implicit notion of objectivity that denies any “objective” legitimacy of appealing to human subjectivity whatsoever (e.g., materialism, behaviourism, determinism) to account for human behaviour. More moderately, theory will seek to understand human conscious experience in accordance with its own theoretical categories. In the case of philosophical accounts of the natural law, theoretical models typically seek to account for the experience of the natural law in accordance with the categories of metaphysical and physical principles of movement and rest, natures, powers, final causes, etc. What the natural law theoretician typically does not do is critically ground his or her metaphysical principles in interiority itself, as Lonergan calls for in his turn to interiority. But this concern to account for the natural law exclusively in theoretical categories comes with a price; namely, it turns one’s attention away from the very experience it seeks to account for in applying to it its theoretical categories. It is this need for attentiveness to human subjectivity as it relates to the natural law that can make the difference between an account of natural law that is distant from our concrete experience of the natural law operative in us, and an account of the natural law that accurately accounts for our first person experience and continues to glean new insights by attending to one’s own conscious experience.

Martin Rhonheimer, whose treatment of the natural law I will discuss shortly, argues that in order to properly interpret Aquinas on the natural law one must interpret him from the first person perspective of the acting person. The problem is too many of Aquinas’s readers do not. If Rhonheimer is correct this serves as an example to my point that the categories of theory, being intrinsically “objective” categories, can easily steer one away from the foundational first person experience of the natural law that interiority analysis explicitly attends to.

Additionally, while the expression “first person experience” can simply mean a general attentiveness to one’s own experience of one’s self-as-self who is engaging in some activity, and thereby refers to an attentiveness that every human person enjoys and engages in often spontaneously, a systematic attention to one’s own subjectivity as chosen existential differentiation of consciousness that is distinct from common sense and theory gives this expression added meaning. It is an intentional choice to move towards an
It is important to clarify here that the claim is not that Aquinas, or even natural law theorists in general, ignore interiority. The claim is rather quite the opposite. Indeed, the legitimacy of so many of his insights about the natural law is largely due to his accurate account of human interiority. The point is that Lonergan’s more fully elaborated account of human interiority and its metaphysical and ethical implications opens itself up to newer insights than one can find by simply appealing to Aquinas’s theoretical account of human participation in the eternal law through the natural law. One may find these new insights to be compatible with, or perhaps even hinted at in Aquinas, but they are not explicitly developed in his thought, and in order to develop them an appeal to the data of consciousness is required. The fundamental point is that any account of the natural law, including theoretical accounts, must appeal to the proper data, and the proper data include the data of human consciousness, which interiority analysis explores from a first person perspective. There is similarity and difference between Lonergan and Aquinas. The similarities underlie the reason for why the differences are not dialectical. The dissimilarities point to genetic development.

In light of this this thesis, this inquiry will have to do three things. First, it will have to present Lonergan’s actual transpositions of Aquinas regarding the natural law, the eternal law, and the former’s participation in the latter. Secondly, it will have to show that while there are obvious differences between Aquinas and Lonergan, these differences are not differences of dialectical opposition. Thirdly, it will have to point out some of the new insights that follow from thinking about human participation in the eternal law through the existential differentiation of consciousness. It is in this fuller sense of the expression that I intend by this phrase.
natural law within the realm of interiority that are not brought into relief or highlighted when considered from exclusively within the perspective of the realm of theory. Although no attempt is made to be comprehensive in listing these insights, two representative insights will demonstrate how Lonergan’s account of the natural law and human participation in the eternal law is a legitimate and fruitful genetic development of Aquinas’s account; insights into ways in which both human individuals and human communities participate in the eternal law through an account of the natural law that is known through self-appropriation and promotes authenticity.

The argument will develop over four chapters. In chapter two the chief question concerns what Aquinas considers the natural law to be. Part of the problematic in addressing this question is the recognition that there are widely differing interpretive perspectives on what Aquinas understands the natural law to be. Is it human nature and its natural inclinations? Is it reason? And if it is reason, is it speculative reason or practical reason? Is it a set of preceptive practical moral judgments or moral norms that are naturally known? Is it some mix of these elements? Furthermore, while nature and the natural inclinations, reason (speculative and practical), and judgments of reason are all key elements in Aquinas’s natural law, how do these relate to one another? Due to the variety of opposed interpretations among Aquinas’s interpreters, it is necessary to engage in a close reading of Aquinas’s teaching of the natural law in order to show how my own preferred interpretation of Aquinas coheres with and can be verified by what Aquinas says, especially as it is presented in the *Summa Theologiae* I-II, where one finds his most systematic and mature treatment on the natural law.
Before identifying the key arguments of chapter two, it will be helpful to briefly point out in a very summary fashion some of the variety of interpretations of Aquinas one finds defended in contemporary scholarship, limiting the discussion to three broadly representative schools of thought. The first interpretive perspective finds a representative in Swiss moral philosopher Martin Rhonheimer. \(^\text{12}\) One of the distinguishing features of Rhonheimer’s interpretation of Aquinas is his insistence that in order to properly understand Aquinas’s approach to the natural law one must place oneself within the first person perspective of the acting person rather than a third person perspective of an external observer.

Rhonheimer’s understanding of the natural law, as presented by Aquinas, may be summed up as follows. \(^\text{13}\) First, the natural law belongs to the order of reason and is the work of practical reason, which has its own starting point independent of speculative reason, and that starting point is the good. So formally, the natural law is practical reason, and what is natural about the natural law is that practical reason is natural to or befitting of human agents. Second, the natural law is a practical preceptive knowing of the human


good, and in order for this knowing to occur practical reason’s act of understanding the good presupposes (i.e., conditioned upon the experience of) the natural inclinations. But it is the practical reason, not the natural inclinations, that has the character of an imperium or command. Third, the goods that are the ends of the natural inclinations are only human goods insofar as they are grasped and affirmed by practical reason as constituting the human good. Both the natural inclinations and those goods they intend as their ends belong to the natural law in a participative manner insofar as they are ordered and regulated by reason. In summary, the natural law is a work of practical reason, and the natural inclinations, considered in themselves, are not, although they are necessary presuppositions or preconditions of practical reason because the object of practical reason is the object of appetite – the appetibile (i.e., the good as desirable). It is practical reason that constitutes, judges, and commands the good to be pursued and the evil to be avoided. The primary preceptive judgments and commands are properly moral commands belonging to the natural law that direct moral agents to the human good, and are the seeds and ends of the virtues.

An alternative perspective to Rhonheimer’s is the traditional neo-scholastic interpretation of Aquinas that identifies the natural law with human nature and its natural inclinations, and derivatively, with those moral norms that are practically formulated

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14 This language of “presupposition” comes from Aquinas. In S.T. II-II, q. 154, a. 12c Aquinas argues that reason presupposes things as determined by nature. Among the things determined by nature that the practical reason presupposes are those natural principles that are the natural inclinations. For a discussion of what Aquinas means by reason presupposing what nature has determined, see Martin Rhonheimer’s response to Jean Porter in his essay, “The Moral Significance of Pre-Rational Nature in Aquinas: A Reply to Jean Porter (and Stanley Hauerwas),” in The Perspective of the Acting Person: Essays in the Renewal of Thomistic Moral Philosophy, edited by William F. Murphy, Jr. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 129-157, esp. 144-151.
expressions of already existing metaphysical principles that speculative reason discovers operative in the teleological structure of human nature. Jean Porter is one of a number of contemporary advocates of this position.\textsuperscript{15} Her preferred name for this approach to the natural law is that of naturalistic ethics.\textsuperscript{16} For her interpretation of the natural law in Aquinas, Porter looks to the first half Aquinas’s respondeo in \textit{Summa Theologiae} I-II, q. 91, a. 2, where he points out that all creatures participate in the eternal law by having it imprinted upon them in those natural inclinations whereby they are ordered to their own proper acts and ends, including humans. This participation in the eternal law is for humans called the natural law. According to Porter this means that the natural law is that which is imprinted upon human nature; that is, the natural intelligible structures by which humans are teleologically oriented to their proper acts and ends.

Porter’s position may be summarized in the following points. First, the intelligible ontological structure that is human nature (both as nature and as rational) is a law due to the fact that it is intelligible, and this lawful structure is the natural law. Second, it is the role of speculative reason to reflect upon human nature – for Porter this especially consists in communal reflection – in order to discern this intelligible teleological orientation of the natural inclinations towards goods, which in turn is the basis of those moral precepts

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See Jean Porter, \textit{Nature as Reason}, 125-126. Human morality is here seen as an expression of all of those inclinations and activities that belongs to humans as substantial, sensitive, and intellectual creatures.
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belonging to the natural law as its expressions. Third, by means of this speculative knowledge, the practical reason is able to formulate those moral norms that are its first principles, as it were, translating metaphysical principles into practical norms for human action. These first principles of practical reason, it must be emphasized, are themselves only expressions of prior metaphysical principles of motion. From this perspective it is human nature that constitutes laws, not practical reason. Practical reason only formulates moral norms based upon speculative knowledge of intrinsic metaphysical natural laws.

One finds yet another alternative interpretation of Aquinas in the writings of a number of thinkers – primarily but not exclusively moral theologians – who in years shortly following the Second Vatican Council offered a new reading of Aquinas that directly opposed the neo-scholastic interpretation of the natural law and offered a teleological or consequentialist interpretation instead. One such advocate for this position is the German moral theologian Franz Böckle. Like Porter, Böckle looks to the first half of Aquinas’s respondeo in Summa Theologiae I-II q. 91, a. 2 for his definition of the natural law. Unlike

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 263-264.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 49.
\(^{19}\) It is helpful to emphasize here an important difference between Rhonheimer and Porter that is easily overlooked. For Rhonheimer a moral norm is not a procuratio or command of practical reason. He seeks to emphasize that moral norms are linguistic formulations that are the product of reflecting upon the prior practical experience of practical reason’s procuratio. As Rhonheimer states: “The praeceptum of the practical reason is not the outcome of ethics, but its very subject matter.” Rhonheimer, Natural Law and Practical Reason, 60. Porter does not make this distinction between the practical reason’s procuratio and a moral norm.

Porter, however, he comes away with a very different understanding of the natural law. The natural law is not the teleologically ordered ontological structures of human nature, but exclusively a natural rational inclination to define and impose norms.21

This natural rational inclination underlies practical reason, which is guided by its own structural principle (i.e., do what is good and avoid evil) that is distinct from that of speculative reason (i.e., the principle of non-contradiction). This means that for Böckle the natural law is the creative norm-making activity of practical reason. Furthermore, this creative activity of practical reason is in no way determined by ontological structures of human nature. What is sub-rational in humans – simply natural as opposed to rational – is not the natural law. Nor can one read the morally right thing to do off of human nature. This does not mean that the purely natural structures of human nature are irrelevant and can be ignored. These natural inclinations direct people to fundamental legal goods that must be respected, and are relevant for people in their openness of their existential potentiality (i.e., what one makes oneself and the world to be through one’s autonomously made choices).22 These goods, however, are not moral goods, but premoral or non-moral goods.23 The sub-rational natural inclinations are viewed, as it were, as unformed matter.

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23 One finds in Aquinas a distinction that could be called a distinction between moral and premoral actions. In the *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 1, a. 1 (hereafter S.T.), Aquinas distinguishes between human actions, which are actions proper to humans as human because they proceed from reason and will, and actions of a human. Human actions are actions that one has rational and volitional mastery over. On the other hand, Aquinas also speaks of “the actions of a man.” These actions are not properly human actions because they do not proceed from reason and will, and therefore one has no mastery over them, such as scratching one’s beard while being intent upon something else (i.e., an act occurring as a result of habitual reflex).

It is easy enough to see how this distinction between two distinct types of actions can get transferred from actions to goods (and evils). A good that is the end of a sensitive natural inclination, for instance, and not of reason and will is a premoral good because it does not yet fall under scrutiny of reason, which is the judge of moral truth. A good that is truly human is in some manner rational and volitional. This distinction
that marks out the territory upon which one must walk and creatively shape through acts of self-determination. It is a potency that reason and free choice can develop in vastly new ways. Hence, the ontological order of human nature is subordinated to the moral order of reason. Moral values are not the objects of natural inclinations but the attitudes or virtues that exist as qualities of the will (e.g., justice and fairness). By way of consequence, Aquinas’s first principles of the natural law are not moral laws that are in any way determinative of human behaviour. At best they can be viewed as pedagogical guidelines.²⁴

The opening section of chapter two defends an interpretation of Aquinas that lines up substantially with the interpretation offered by Martin Rhonheimer.²⁵ This chapter will

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²⁴ There is one further relevant feature to Böckle’s thought that feeds into his rejection of neo-scholastic natural law theory. Böckle explicitly adopts a Kantian notion of human autonomy. Human autonomy, in this sense, means that humans have the freedom to define themselves as rational beings by their own choices and actions. Human action should be free from heteronomous impositions either from human nature itself (i.e., having one’s actions determined by natural structures in human persons) or even by some promulgated divine law. A severance between nature and reason thus becomes necessary. See Böckle, *Fundamental Moral Theology*, 5-6.

²⁵ Here I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Rhonheimer to my understanding of the natural law as found in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. It was in reading Rhonheimer that I began to move away from an interpretation of Aquinas that was more in line with the more traditional interpretation of Aquinas that one finds in such contemporary representatives as Jean Porter and Steven Long, among many others.

Since Rhonheimer’s interpretation of the natural law is the perspective I find myself most in agreement with among the three positions I have outlined, there are a number of important points upon which, as will be made clear in the pages that follow, I agree with Rhonheimer as an interpreter of Aquinas. Here I will identify six chief areas of agreement, all of which arise in chapter two, section 2.1:

First, for Aquinas law is defined as something constituted by reason (*aliaud per rationem constitutum*). But what is true of law in general is also true of the natural law in human persons. Thus, the natural law is something constituted by reason.

Second, natural law is the work of the light of the intellect that judges between what is good and what is evil.

Third, the natural inclinations are presuppositions of the natural law. The chief text in Aquinas’s writings that serves as the source for this term presupposition is S.T. II-II, q. 154, a. 12 (*Principia autem rationis sunt ea quae sunt secundum naturam, nam ratio, praesuppositis his quae sunt a natura determinata, disposita secundum quod convenit*). Here the underlying idea is that in order for the work of reason to make any judgment at all there must be some kind of data that is the source of its foundational insights into the good.
commence with a close reading of three important articles – along with other relevant texts in his corpus where necessary – in Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* I-II dealing with whether law is something pertaining to reason (q. 90, a. 1), whether there is in us a natural law (q. 91, a. 2), and whether the natural law contains several precepts or only one (q. 94, a. 2). These texts speak to how the natural law is the work of practical reason, as that power which measures and rules human actions through knowledge of the due good, as well as those judgments that are naturally known, constituted, and commanded by practical reason. Moreover, the natural inclinations are not the natural law but are themselves measured and ruled by reason while being integrated into the order of reason such that they are rational by participation in reason. Nonetheless, insofar as the natural inclinations are ruled by reason they play a necessary role in the practical reason’s grasping of the good and formulation of the precepts of the natural law, providing the initial material determinations of the good that reason judges ought to be pursued. Apart from the natural inclinations and principles of the natural law, in their own respective ways, are seeds of virtue. This is to say that it is through the movement of the natural inclinations and the intellect’s actual grasping of the truly good ends of human action that the ends of the virtues are known and pursued, and when pursued will over time result in the acquiring of actual moral and intellectual virtues.

Fifth, humans are unique in that they have a natural inclination to their own due (debitum) act and end (*per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem. S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 2*). This inclination is very distinct from the natural inclinations found in other creatures for this inclination pertains to reason and is not determined to one thing but is a principle of self-determination. See Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, 68-69.

Sixth, practical reason has its own starting point. It does not depend upon the judgments of speculative reason for its own moral judgments.

While I hold these six key ideas in common with Rhonheimer, the argument that I make in chapter two (section 2.1), where I engage in an exposition of three key articles in Aquinas’s treatise on law in the *Summa Theologiae*, is my own exegesis of Aquinas. My selection of these three texts is due to their centrality in any discussion on the natural law in the thought of Aquinas. Some of the analysis that I give to these articles is not to be found in Rhonheimer or in much of the secondary literature in general. In them I seek to pay close attention to the important aspects of these articles that are easily overlooked: such as material found in the objections, responses to objections, *sed contras*, external sources Aquinas refers to or quotes from, and his references to other articles he previously discussed. Moreover, in my discussion of the natural inclination that is proper to human beings as rational creatures and is that by which they are directed to their own due act and end, I provide my own perspective on what this natural inclination is (see section 2.1.2).
inclinations the practical reason would be blind. They are necessary presuppositions or preconditions of the natural law, and participate in the natural law as something ruled and measured by reason.

The second section of chapter two will focus upon the natural law as a set of judgments and commands constituted by practical reason that are said by Aquinas to be naturally known and *per se nota quoad nos*. The aim of this section is to establish the significance of those preceptive judgments that Aquinas considers to be first principles of the natural law. This discussion is an anticipation of chapter four where the focus turns to Bernard Lonergan’s account of the natural law. It is precisely here that a very apparent tension arises between Lonergan and Aquinas insofar as Lonergan’s modernizing philosophical project seeks to ground the foundation of knowledge not in first propositional principles, but in the normative operations of human intentional consciousness. It is also relevant for understanding how Aquinas views humans as participating in the eternal law through the natural law by way of knowledge, which is an important theme discussed in chapters three and five.

In chapter three this inquiry proceeds to investigate how Aquinas understands human participation in the eternal law through the natural law. The eternal law is, according to Aquinas, a kind of intelligible order or plan (*ratio*) existing in the mind of God by which he moves all things to their proper acts and ends. This chapter commences by discussing what Aquinas means by participation and in what sense he uses it in relation to the eternal law. Participation, for Aquinas, means a kind of reception of something in a patient in a partial or limited way of that which belongs to another in a universal or
unlimited way. One of the ways in which participation takes place is through causation, which is the sense of participation pertinent to this investigation.

In order to understand participation through causation, attention next turns to efficient, exemplary, and final causality, and how God is the cause of both creaturely being and operation in each of these ways. The eternal law, as the *ratio* in the mind of God by which he moves all things to their proper acts and ends, is a kind of exemplary causality, but it relates to the intelligibility of creaturely operation rather than to the intelligibility of a creature’s being.

But how precisely do humans participate in the eternal law? Humans participate in the eternal law in both a passive and in an active manner: passively, through their natural inclinations, which are intrinsic principles of movement by which one is spontaneously moved to their proper ends, but can move only insofar as they are first moved by another; and actively, through knowledge of the eternal law by means of the light of the human intellect. Here chapter three links back to chapter two, for both the order of the natural inclinations and the order of practical reason, and their relationship to one another, comes into play. Since humans cannot know the eternal law directly, they can only know it through its effects, and in human persons these effects include the natural inclinations and the light of human reason. In other words, for Aquinas knowledge of the eternal law, which is the rule and measure of all truth, including human knowledge of the truly good, requires the attainment of knowledge through a natural – as opposed to supernatural – means.

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Humans know the eternal law whenever they know truth, and all humans at the very least know the most common naturally known precepts of the natural law, which cannot be otherwise known absent of those natural inclinations that initially orient one to the good as an object of desire. Aquinas speaks of this natural knowledge of the natural law as a natural participation in the eternal law, and thereby distinguishes it from participation in the eternal law through truths acquired by means of this natural knowledge. But whatever moral knowledge one discerns and judges to be true, the eternal law is the cause and veridical standard of this knowledge that guides human action.

In chapter four attention turns to Bernard Lonergan and his understanding of the natural law. As previously mentioned, the starting point of Lonergan’s philosophy is his cognitional theory that he calls transcendental method. So it is not at all surprising that his approach to the natural law is based upon his cognitional theory. Lonergan’s explicit discussion of the natural law is found in three essays: *De Verbo Incarnato Supplementum*, “The Transition from a Classicist World-view to Historical-mindedness,” and “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness.”

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Stating what the natural law is for Lonergan is complicated by the fact that Lonergan’s perspective on what the natural law is changes. In the earlier *Supplement*\textsuperscript{28} Lonergan identifies the natural law with the laws and forms found in the ontological structure of all things which participate in the eternal law. But in addition to natural laws and forms, humans have knowledge of the good and freedom of choice. At this early stage, Lonergan clearly shares the basic neo-scholastic understanding of the natural law that was the common understanding at the time. However, in his two later essays\textsuperscript{29} one finds Lonergan moving away from the neo-scholastic interpretation and beginning to identify the natural law with transcendental method, as he understands it. The natural law is the dynamism of the human spirit, which is a principle of movement and rest that raises and answers questions for understanding, judgment, and decision. Lonergan no longer identifies the natural law with all of the teleologically oriented structures of human nature but with the higher orders of human consciousness (i.e., reason and will). And not only does Lonergan affirm that the natural law is the dynamism of the human spirit but there is at least one occasion in his later career where he states that the natural law also consists in certain preceptive judgments, viz., the transcendental precepts (be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible).

An apparent tension between Lonergan and Aquinas now begins to show itself. First, if the natural law is not identified with the natural inclinations, what role or function do the natural inclinations perform in relation to the higher levels of spiritual consciousness? Are they merely the ground upon which one must act and form in

\textsuperscript{28} Frederick Crowe dates this work, with high probability, to 1958. See Crowe, *Christ and History*, 102.
\textsuperscript{29} These essays were originally delivered as lectures in 1966 and 1977 respectively.
creatively making both oneself and the world, as Böckle would suggest? Or do the natural inclinations partake of reason by being integrated into the higher levels of consciousness as their rule and measure in such a manner that by them one can intelligibly grasp and responsibly affirm those basic human goods that are the ends of human striving, as Rhonheimer would suggest? Secondly, if the natural law is said to consist of certain naturally known judgments that are universally true and necessary, are the transcendental precepts, which are purely procedural precepts, the only precepts belonging to the natural law?

In addressing the first of these questions, namely, the role of the natural inclinations, attention is especially given to what Lonergan has to say in his later writings – as found in *Method in Theology* – about the role of feelings in the apprehension of values on the fourth level of consciousness that is the level of moral decision-making. While Lonergan’s treatment of the natural inclinations tends to focus mostly upon the natural desire to know, from what he does have to say about natural inclinations and feelings in general, the following points are made. First, most, although not all, natural inclinations are feelings that intend particular goods. Secondly, Lonergan lists several different kinds of natural inclinations, among which he distinguishes between sensitive-corporeal inclinations and spiritual or intellectual inclinations. Thirdly, the particular goods that are the objects of sensitive-corporeal inclinations are elevated from the order of merely sensitive satisfactions to the order of values, namely, as vital values. Fourthly, it is in judgments of value that apprehended values are affirmed to be truly or only apparently good. In other words, feelings are not sufficient for determining whether an apparent value is truly good, and
such judgments are virtually unconditioned judgments. Virtually unconditioned judgments of value arise as a moment of rest when the questioning of unrestricted desire to know the good (i.e., the light of reason) comes to an end. The main point is that the natural inclinations do not in themselves determine the truly good (pace Porter), but they are nonetheless integral to knowing the truly good at all and are presupposed in a value judgment. They are morally significant and provide more than underlying material needing to be formed by a constitutively autonomous creative reason, as being directive toward premoral goods that reason seeks to optimize (pace Böckle). And this much stands substantially in agreement with the interpretation of Aquinas offered in chapter two.

What about the preceptive judgments of the natural law? Are they merely procedural, or are there some basic preceptive judgments that are ordered to basic goods that are the objects of human striving? The answer to this question cannot be a simple appeal to Lonergan’s rejection of first propositional principles. Lonergan’s criterion for making such judgments is the virtually unconditioned judgment: the judgment that is reached when all the relevant questions have been satisfactorily answered. So the question itself cannot be simply dismissed in a priori fashion. The argument in the final section of chapter four takes as its starting point the self-appropriation of the knower: one’s experience, understanding, judgment, and evaluative affirmation of oneself as a knower and a doer. From this starting point the argument proceeds to show that there are indeed certain basic goods that are naturally desired and naturally affirmed, some of which Lonergan explicitly affirms as true goods of human pursuit, such as goodness in general, and intelligibility, truth, and, one may add, beauty, which are the objectives of intentional
intending. Intelligibility, truth, and beauty, although indeterminate as such (i.e., as some unknown sought to be known in acts of understanding and judgment), are, nonetheless, determinations of the human good at the fourth level of human consciousness (i.e., the particular good of understanding, the particular good of reasoning).

But if one affirms these goods as truly valuable one is inevitably led to also affirm other basic goods besides, such as the ontic value of oneself as a person who is the one that intends intelligibility, truth, beauty, and the good as perfections to be possessed. One also must affirm the good of authenticity and virtue, which is the goal of self-appropriation. One must affirm the good of one’s physical and spiritual well-being and the continued preservation of one’s being, which are the starting points of the virtues of temperance and fortitude. One must also affirm the good of those who, like oneself, are persons of equal dignity and value. This valuing of the good of persons in relation to one another and to oneself is the starting point of the virtue of justice (i.e., render to others what they are due). Such a list of basic goods is very much like what one finds in Aquinas, who lists such goods as belonging to the natural law and ordained in its first preceptive judgments, which are the seeds and ends of the virtues.

In chapter five this investigation proceeds to inquire into Lonergan’s understanding of the eternal law, the notion of participation, and how humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law, and in doing so argues two points: first, that Lonergan’s account of human participation in the eternal law through the natural law is substantially the same as Aquinas’s insofar as humans both passively and actively participate in the eternal law through inclinations and knowledge; second, that Lonergan’s account of the
natural law, as based upon the categories of interiority, opens up ways of thinking of human participation in the eternal law through the natural law that are not brought into relief by strictly theoretical accounts.

Like Aquinas, Lonergan understands both the being and operation of humans (and all creatures) as caused by God’s efficient, exemplary, and final causality. The eternal law, according to Lonergan, is the idea of order, considered as existing in the mind of God. All creatures through their laws and forms participate in this idea of order. But humans do so not merely through natural laws and forms but through knowledge, through the dynamism of the human spirit that gives humans the capacity to order their own actions in a providential manner through knowledge. This means that humans participate in the eternal law both through the dynamism of the human spirit as a principle of movement and rest, as well as through knowledge of the good, which includes knowledge of basic goods that are judged to be goods that ought to be pursued and their opposites avoided (e.g., intelligibility, truth, beauty, virtue, values of self and other persons, etc.). Since some of this knowledge is naturally known, humans naturally participate in the eternal law through knowledge of the good. This twofold participation in the eternal law – a passive participation through the natural inclinations and an active participation through knowledge that is the work of the spiritual dynamism of the human spirit, especially on the fourth level of consciousness – stands in fundamental agreement with Aquinas, as interpreted in earlier chapters.

Lonergan’s account of human participation in the eternal law through the natural law can be called what Rhonheimer speaks of as a participated autonomy or participated theonomy for it is an autonomy that stands in a relationship of dependence upon God in all respects.
But besides this substantial agreement between the respective positions of Aquinas and Lonergan on how humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law, this investigation also argues that Lonergan’s intentionality analysis opens up to new insights about how humans participate in the natural law that are not brought into relief or highlighted by theoretical accounts. I point to two different insights that Lonergan’s first person interiority account of the natural law offers that are not brought into relief on third person theoretical accounts of the natural law.

First, humans imitate God and therefore participate in the eternal law through acts of self-appropriation as they originate values both within themselves and in the world. By knowing and loving himself, God not only knows and loves himself, he also knows and loves all things he can create and will create by making them in his likeness. As intellectual creatures with the capacity to reflect upon themselves and their own operations, humans can know what it means to be intellectually and morally authentic and originate values both in themselves and in the world that are consistent with the natural law and the eternal law. In this way humans imitate God while participating with God by originating values both in themselves and in the world in their own limited and finite fashion fully dependent upon God.

Second, Lonergan argues in one of his essays that the ground of legitimate authority is authenticity, which is the goal of the natural law. Not just human persons but human communities participate in the eternal law. Human communities are built upon personal relationships. And what kinds of communities built upon human relationships participate most fully in the eternal law? First, those communities with legitimate authorities whose
legitimacy is based upon authenticity participate in the eternal law. Secondly, truly good communities require authentic citizens who are subject to authority. And thirdly, when authentic leadership and authentic subjection coincide authentic communities take shape, which more perfectly reflect God’s likeness than do individual persons. Such manifestations of authenticity that participate in the eternal law stem from adherence to the natural law that is objectified through self-appropriation.

Chapter six concludes this study by doing two things. First, it begins by pointing out how the arguments presented in chapters two through five cumulatively support the thesis guiding this inquiry. Secondly, it addresses some possible objections to the arguments, especially as it concerns the recognition of some universal preceptive judgments that are naturally known and/or at least virtually unconditioned.
Chapter Two

Thomas Aquinas on the Natural Law

What, according to Thomas Aquinas, is the natural law? Is it something to do with human nature, with the natural inclinations, with reason, or with a certain type(s) of judgments made by human reason? Is it some combination of these elements? The previous chapter presented three differing interpretative perspectives. It is now time to present and defend an interpretation of what Aquinas thinks the natural law is given his own statements on the matter.

I will argue that Aquinas identifies the natural law in the first place with the active light of natural reason as a measure and rule of human action, and thereby the source of practical judgments regarding the good to be done and evil to be avoided. The natural inclinations of the human soul are not in themselves the natural law, but they are necessary presuppositions of the natural law for the material determination of its judgments. Apart from this natural orientation towards concrete goods proper to the human person, human understanding of good and evil would be blind. Only as participating in reason, however, do these natural inclinations belong to the natural law. Finally, Aquinas identifies the natural law not only with the light of the human intellect, but also with certain preceptive judgments concerning the fundamental goods of human actions.

This chapter divides into two main sections. The first section addresses the main question at issue, namely, what does Aquinas consider the natural law to be? Reaching the answer to this question will involve a close reading of three especially important articles,
along with references to other pertinent corresponding texts found in Aquinas’s treatise on law in the *Summa Theologiae* I-II. These three articles raise the questions: whether law is something pertaining to reason (q. 90, a. 1), whether there is in us a natural law (q. 91, a. 2), and whether the natural law contains several precepts or only one (q. 94, a. 2).

The second section turns attention to those universal value judgments of the natural law that Aquinas considers to be naturally known. The purpose of this section is to highlight and discuss what Aquinas means by naturally known judgments along with other related notions Aquinas attributes to these judgments.

2.1 Natural Reason, Natural Inclinations, and Naturally Known Judgments

This first section engages in a close reading of three important articles in Aquinas’s treatise on law found in the *prima secunda* of the *Summa Theologiae*. The first article (q. 90, a. 1) pertains to the question of whether law is something pertaining to reason, which he affirms to be the case. Aquinas argues that just as law is a rule and measure of actions, so too is reason a rule and measure of human action as a first principle of human actions. Furthermore, law is something constituted by reason, viz., a preceptive judgment or command. Whatever the natural law is, then, it must be something that pertains to human reason as rule and measure. Furthermore, in his response to the objections he also makes it clear that while reason is law essentially, the natural inclinations are not. The inclinations are only law due to their participation in human reason.

The second article (q. 91, a. 2), which asks whether there is in human persons a natural law, is a pivotal article insofar as it is here that Aquinas explicitly identifies what the
natural law is. The only problem is that interpreters are not agreed upon what it is that is central to his definition of the natural law. The natural law is the rational creature’s participation in the eternal law, but precisely what is the character of that participation? Aquinas’s response lends itself to differing interpretations. Is it the natural inclinations in general? Is it some specific natural inclination? Is it reason or reason’s judgment? A close reading of this article, along with references to parallel texts in Aquinas’s corpus, aims to show that the natural law, for Aquinas, is primarily the judging activity of the light of human reason whereby good and evil are known and derivatively some preceptive content that is the work of natural reason.

The third article (q. 94, a. 2) addresses the question of whether there is only one natural law preceptive judgment or many. Central to this article is the recognition that the natural law consists of several foundational preceptive judgments about the good to be done and the evil to be avoided. This plurality of preceptive judgments is possible due to the participative role of the natural inclinations in practical reason, which is the rule and measure of these preceptive judgments. The natural inclinations are not the natural law, but they do play an important role in the determination of the basic judgments of the natural law as necessary preconditions or presuppositions of the natural law (i.e., as data to be intelligibly understood by practical reason). The natural inclinations belong to the natural law through their participation in reason, which rules and measures them.

2.1.1 *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 90, a. 1: Whether Law is Something Pertaining to Reason?
Aquinas’ treatise on law commences with a discussion on the essence of law (q. 90). Over four articles he address four questions that culminate in his definition of law: law “is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated.”¹ Of the four properties that make up Aquinas’ definition of law, the association of law with reason is of special interest given the conflicts of interpretation associated with Aquinas’ understanding of what the natural law is. In this article Aquinas affirms that law is something pertaining to reason, viz., reason as rule and measure and the ordinance that it constitutes.

At the beginning of the respondeo of article one, Aquinas argues that law is a rule and measure of acts (lex quaedam regula est et mesura actuum).² But reason itself is the rule and measure of human acts, being their first principle (regula autem et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio, quae est primum principium actuum humanorum).³ The end of human action is the first principle of human action, but it is reason that directs human activity to this end. Therefore, law is something pertaining to reason (lex sit aliquid pertinens ad rationem).⁴

While Aquinas’s respondeo is fairly clear and straightforward, the objections and his responses to them add further depth of insight into how it is that law is something pertaining to reason. Aquinas presents three objections against the position that law is something pertaining to reason. In the first objection, he raises an argument attributed to the authority of the Apostle Paul. In Roman 7:23 (“I see another law in my members”) Paul

¹ S.T. q. 90, a. 4. All English translations of Aquinas taken from the Summa Theologiae are from the English Dominican Province translation of the Summa Theologica (5 volumes), unless otherwise indicated.
² Ibid., q. 90, a. 1c.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
recognizes that there is another law at work in his bodily members. But, there is nothing pertaining to reason that can be found in the bodily members. Therefore, law is not something pertaining to reason.

A few observations regarding this objection itself are in order. First, as one reads this biblical passage that Aquinas quotes from, in its immediate context one finds Paul juxtaposing the law of the members with the law of the mind. In his *Commentary on Romans*, Aquinas identifies the law of the members that captivates one to the law of sin (lex peccati) with the lex fomitis (i.e., the inclination of human sensitivity towards its proper ends no longer subject to reason as original justice demands) and contrasts it with the law of the mind (lex mentis), which he identifies with the natural law.

Second, this passage from Romans 7:23 and its surrounding context is treated thematically by Aquinas a little later in his treatise on law in q. 91, a. 6, a passage in which he raises the question whether the lex fomitis (i.e., law of sensuality), which stands opposed to the lex mentis (i.e., law of the mind), is properly called a law. Here his question is the inversion of the objection raised in the present article under investigation. Q. 90, a.1, obj. 1 asks whether reason is properly called a law if one accepts that the lex fomitis is properly identified with law, whereas in q. 91, a. 6 the question concerns whether the lex fomitis is properly called a law if law is something that pertains to reason (i.e., the law of the mind). Aquinas’s response in both articles as to the status of reason and lex fomitis is the same: reason (lex mentis), properly speaking is a law, but the inclination that is lex fomitis is not,

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5 “But I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.” *The Holy Bible*, NRSV: Catholic Edition (Nashville, TN: Catholic Bible Press, 1990), Romans 7:23.

6 See *In Rom.*, chp. 7 lect. 4, §587-588.
but is a law by participation insofar as it is a penalty resulting from a Divine command. Only in this participatory sense does the *lex fomitis* have the aspect of law.

In his response to the first objection, Aquinas identifies two different senses of law insofar as law is a kind of rule and measure. First, law in its essence is a kind of rule and measure, as is the case with reason. But in another sense, by way of participation in the essential meaning of law, law can refer to that which is ruled and measured. In this latter case, “law is in all those things that are inclined to something by reason of some law: so that any inclination arising from a law, may be called a law, not essentially but by participation as it were.” In this latter way, since the *lex fomitis* is something that proceeds from divine law, it is fittingly called a law, not essentially, but by participation. The implication being that reason is law essentially and the inclinations are not except by participation in that which is law by its very essence.

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7 See also *S.T.* I-II, q. 91, a. 6c. This language of measure and measured is often associated by Aquinas with his doctrine of participation as ways of describing the relation between a source of a perfection in which the perfection belongs to the source essentially (*per se*), and something that participates in the perfection through another (*per aliud*) in a limited manner: “Now it is obvious that anything which exists of itself (*per se*) is the measure and rule of things which exist in virtue of something else (*per aliud*) and through participation.” *In I Rom.* lect. 3, §48.

8 Aquinas, *S.T.* I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad. 1.

9 It is true, of course, that in relationship to the eternal law even human reason participates in the eternal law as a law of human action, but this does not mean that it is not law by essence. The point here is that from Aquinas’s perspective wherever there is a natural inclination that is intelligibly ordered to some end there must be some intellect that orders it to that end, whether that intellect comes from without the thing or belongs to it. Intellect is an active principle of order, whether that intellect is God’s that moves all things, or a human intellect that moves its own sensible and intellectual appetites. In every instance, an appetitive inclination is a law by participation only. But human reason is an active principle of human actions and is law by essence, even though it is a created participation in the Divine intellect. Insofar as reason is formally identified with the natural law by Aquinas (as my argument shall show), then the natural law is law by essence, for it actively and intelligently orders human actions, while at the same time participating in the eternal law as something created that reflects an imperfect likeness to the Divine intellect.

10 “The law, as to its essence, resides in him that rules and measures; but, by way of participation, in that which is ruled and measured; so that every inclination or ordination which may be found in things subject to the law, is called a law by participation.” *S.T.* q. 91, a. 6c.
So in his reply to the first objection in q. 90, a.1, Aquinas has already begun to assert his opinion on the question regarding what is properly speaking the natural law. Between the two options of the natural law as something pertaining to reason and as something pertaining to that which humans share in common with other animals, he clearly holds that reason is more properly called law, for only reason captures the essence of what law is, viz., that which rules and measures acts. Whereas the natural inclinations – whether as belonging to the natural prelapsarian human condition justly subject to reason, or in their postlapsarian state resulting from the fall (i.e., *lex fomitis*) – can only be called law by way of participation, and thus only improperly may they be called law.

The second objection brings into question whether law is something pertaining to reason. Reason can be nothing else but a power, a habit, or an act. But law is none of these. Therefore, law is nothing pertaining to reason.

In his response to the second objection, Aquinas distinguishes between the work of reason and the work done by reason. The work of reason is the act of understanding or reasoning: “*ita in operibus rationis est considerare ipsum actum rationis, qui est intelligere et ratiocinari.*”\(^{11}\) The work done by reason is something that is produced or constituted by reason’s act (“*et aliquid per hujusmodi actum constitutum*”).\(^{12}\) In practical reason, the act of reason produces a number of products: first, definitions, second, propositions, and third, syllogisms. He notes that “such like universal propositions of the practical intellect that are directed to actions have the nature of law. And these propositions are sometimes under

\(^{11}\) S.T. I-II, q. 90, a. 1c.  
\(^{12}\) Ibid. Several questions later Aquinas repeats this statement: “*lex naturalis est aliquid per rationem constitutum.*” S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 1c.
our actual consideration, while sometimes they are retained in the reason by means of a habit.”

Aquinas argues that law is properly associated with the works done by reason, i.e., universal propositions, which are derived from acts of reason, whether they are being actively considered or whether they are held in reason by habit. This would be consistent with Aquinas’ later definition of law in q. 90, a. 4, where he states the law is an ordinance of reason (\textit{quae nihil est aliud quam quaedam rationis ordinatio}).

But while he explicitly states that universal propositions have the nature of law, it is clear that he wants to emphasize that these propositions have an integral relation to reason as their source, whether they are products of actual consideration by reason, or are held habitually in reason. In other words, such propositions do not stand alone apart from reason as their source.

The third objection raises the issue whether law ought to be associated with will rather than reason, since it is the will that moves people who are subject to it to act. In his reply to this objection, Aquinas points out that reason has the power to move the will:

> for it is due to the fact that one wills the end, that the reason issues its commands as regards things ordained to the end. But in order that the volition of what is commanded may have the nature of law, it needs to be in accord with some rule of reason.

In the order of execution (as opposed to the order of intention) the reason guides and moves the will, i.e., the intellectual appetite, by commanding those acts that would bring about the attainment of the good end that the will originally intends. Once again Aquinas argues that law properly pertains to the reason as it actively measures human action.

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13 S.T. I-II, q. 90, a. 1 ad. 2.
14 S.T. I-II, q. 90, a. 4c.
15 S.T. I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad. 3.
through its judgments and commands, and not the appetitive inclination of the will that is ruled by reason.

By way of summary, in q. 90, a. 1 Aquinas identifies law in its most proper or essential sense as something pertaining to reason or the work of reason, and as that which is a work done by reason (i.e., a judgment or a command). Law most properly belongs to reason because reason, like law, is that which rules and measures, and reason rules and measures human actions through those judgments that it produces which are a rational plan and rule of operation. Improperly speaking the sensitive appetite and the will can be called law, but they are only law by participation in reason as that which is ruled and measured by reason.

2.1.2 *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 91, a. 2: Whether there is in us a Natural Law?

In question 91 Aquinas considers various kinds of law, including the natural law. In article two Aquinas argues that there is a natural law and also proceeds to say something about what the natural law is. As previously mentioned, interpreters of Aquinas significantly differ in their interpretations of this important article.

In the *sed contra* of article two, Aquinas quotes from *Romans* 2:14: “When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law.” For the medieval scholastic this passage was the classical biblical text speaking of the natural law.

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16 “Besides, since law is simply a certain rational plan and rule of operation (*ratio operis*), it is fitting that law be given only to those beings who know the rational character of their work. Now, this is proper only to a rational creature.” S.C.G. 3.114.3. All English translations of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* are taken from the Notre Dame edition (5 volumes), unless otherwise indicated. Also: “Just as an assertion is a dictate of reason asserting something, so is a law a dictate of reason (*rationis dictamen*), commanding something (*praecipiendi*).” *S.T.* I-II, q. 92, a. 2c

17 *S.T.* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 s.c.
and the role it played historically in informing the minds of the Gentile pagans who did not know the revealed Mosaic Law but still had some inner awareness of the fundamental moral precepts contained in the Law.

Aquinas then quotes from the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the standard biblical commentary of the high Middle Ages, which states that “although they have no written law, yet they have the natural law, whereby each one knows, and is conscious of, what is good and what is evil.”\(^{18}\) Even though Aquinas does not quote from it here, it is worth mentioning that Aquinas was also familiar with the other classical biblical commentary of his time, the *Glossa Interlinearis*, which Anselm of Laon wrote sometime before his death in 1117 C.E.\(^{19}\) Notably, the *Interlinear Gloss* makes the following comment on this same passage: “*Naturali ratione illuminati discernunt facienda et vitanda, quod faceret lex*” (“Those who have been illumined by natural reason discern what they ought to do and avoid, which is what a law would do”).\(^{20}\) Assuming, as it is likely, Aquinas also had this gloss text in mind as he was writing this article, this quote is quite significant for three reasons. First, it attributes the source of moral knowledge of the Gentiles to the illuminating power of ‘natural reason’ (*naturali ratione*), by which they know the good to pursue and the evil to avoid. Secondly, this quote also speaks of those who have been *illumined* (*illuminati*) by natural reason. In

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Many biblical manuscripts during Aquinas’ time would have contained both the *Ordinary Gloss*, which was written both above and along the sides of the biblical text, and the *Interlinear Gloss*, which was written between the lines of the biblical text. It is likely that Aquinas used a biblical manuscript with both glosses when he references this text from Romans 7. Aquinas’s familiarity with the *Interlinear Gloss* on the Epistle of Romans is exemplified in his treatise on law, *S.T. I-II*, q. 106, a. 4, where he quotes from the glossator’s comment on Romans 8:23. See also *S.T. I-II*, q. 113, a. 1 s.c., where in his treatise on grace Aquinas quotes from the *Interlinear Gloss* on Romans 8:30.

the *respondeos* Aquinas speaks of the illuminating power of reason, which he identifies with the natural law in humans. Third, it clearly makes a connection between the common functions of natural reason and law, namely, the function of ordering human acts to do the good and avoid evil, thereby supporting a theme that was elaborated on by Aquinas in q. 90, a. 1. Aquinas addresses these three points in the latter part of his *respondeo* while quoting from and commenting on *Psalm* 4:6-7.

In his *respondeo* Aquinas begins by repeating what he stated back in q. 90, a. 1, pointing out how law is a rule and measure. He then proceeds to discuss how the law can be in a person either as that which rules and measures, which is its proper sense, or it can be that which is ruled and measured, and so partaking of some rule and measure. Aquinas then points out that this twofold way of participating in law is also a twofold way of participating in the eternal law: first, by means of having the eternal law imprinted upon them, they are lawfully ordered by their natural inclinations to their proper acts and ends; secondly, by partaking of providence and thereby being provident over their own activities for themselves and for others. Indeed, all creatures are subject to God’s providence and participate in the eternal law. But humans uniquely participate in the eternal law actively through reason, which is both their proper and due act.21

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21 That said it seems clear as well that even though human reason actively participates in the eternal law as a measure of human actions, it is nonetheless a measured and ruled by the eternal law. Human reason is a created participation in and likeness of the Eternal Reason that is the eternal law and while it rules over the appetites it is nonetheless ruled by the eternal law. As Aquinas states in *S.T.* I, q. 93, a. 6, there is found in humans the image of God (and the uncreated Trinity) because of their intellects, whereas all other parts of them alone bears a likeness of a trace to God. We imitate God because in us is intelligence, whereas in other non-rational creatures there is found only a trace of the divine intellect (i.e., they are intelligible but not intelligent). But even the image of God in us is not the intelligence by essence as it is in God, but intelligence by participation.
Now there is something distinctive about human participation in the eternal law through reason. Elsewhere, in S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 6, Aquinas speaks of two ways that a thing may be subject to the eternal law: first, by way of knowledge (per modum cognitionis); second, by action and passion (per modum actionis et passionis), that is, by a motive principle (principii motivi). In this later article, Aquinas points out that humans participate in the eternal law in both of these ways, by having intellectual knowledge of the eternal law and by having natural inclinations in harmony with the eternal law. Through knowledge humans have an internal active principle that is a rule and measure of human action, and so participate in the eternal law actively such that they have the capacity to govern their own actions and not merely be governed, as happens with all other non-intellectual creatures. Humans enjoy a freedom of choice due to the fact that human action is not directly caused by external causes (e.g., external objects stimulating the senses, which in turn move the appetite), but the intellect is the source of the good action as intelligibly understood, a knowledge of the good which “proceeds from the intellect itself as a thing conceived, and in a way contrived by it (concepta et quodammodo excogitata).”

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22 S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 6c.
23 A helpful text in Aquinas’s writings that sheds light on how human knowledge is an active participation in the eternal law is found in De veritate q. 11, a. 1. In the respondeo Aquinas speaks of seeds of knowledge that are “the first concepts of understanding” which pre-exist in human intellects insofar as they are immediately grasped by the light of the agent intellect. They are an active and completed potency that has the power to flow into a perfect act. Such “Knowledge, therefore, pre-exists in the learner potentially, not, however, in the purely passive, but in the active sense. Otherwise, man would not be able to acquire knowledge independently.” De ver. q. 11, a. 1c. All English translations of De Veritate are taken from Hackett Publishing edition (3 volumes), unless otherwise indicated.
25 S.C.G. 2.47.4. In S.C.G. 2.48.3 Aquinas further argues that human freedom is possible because it makes judgments in regard to the good to be done through moving itself to judge by reflecting upon its own act: “For the thing that moves itself is moved by intellect, imagination, or sense, to which faculties judgment belongs. Among these things, therefore, those alone judge freely which in judging move themselves. But no judging
inclinations that are intrinsic motive principles humans are ruled and measured by the
eternal law in a passive manner.\textsuperscript{26}

Returning to q. 91, a. 2c, Aquinas then proceeds to point out that all things are ruled
and measured by the eternal law and partake somewhat in the eternal law by its being
imprinted upon them, and from this imprinting of the eternal law they “derive their
respective inclinations to their proper acts and end” (\textit{habent inclinationes in proprios actus
et fines}).\textsuperscript{27} Now of the two ways in which something can be said to be a law, participation in
the eternal law by means of receiving one’s respective inclination to one’s proper acts and
ends is to speak of law in its improper participatory sense, as that which is ruled and
measured, not in the proper sense of law, as that which rules and measures.

Aquinas then proceeds to speak exclusively about rational creatures and their
unique relationship to the eternal law.

Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to the Divine providence in
the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being
provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of Eternal Reason,
whereby it has a natural inclination to its (due) act and end (\textit{habet naturalem
inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem}): and this participation of the eternal law
in the rational creature is called the natural law. Hence the Psalmist after saying (Ps.
iv, 6): \textit{Offer up the sacrifice of justice}, as though someone asked what the works of
justice are, adds: Many say, \textit{Who showeth us good things?} In answer to which
question he says: \textit{The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us}: thus
implying that the light of the natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and

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\textsuperscript{26} “There are two ways in which a thing is subject to the eternal law . . . first, by partaking of the eternal law by
way of knowledge (\textit{cognitionis}); secondly, by way of action and passion (\textit{actionis et passionis}), i.e., by
partaking of the eternal law by way of an inward motive principle (\textit{principii motivi}): and in this second way,
irrational creatures are subject to the eternal law . . . But since the rational nature, together with that which it
has in common with all creatures, has something proper to itself inasmuch as it is rational, consequently it is
subject to the eternal law in both ways; because while each rational creature has some knowledge of the
eternal law . . . it also has a natural inclination to that which is in harmony with the eternal law.” \textit{S.T. I-II, q. 93,
a. 6c.}\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 2c.}\end{flushright}
what is evil, which is the function of the natural law (*quod pertinet ad naturalem legem*), is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature’s participation in the eternal law.  

Aquinas argues that rational creatures have a natural inclination to their due or right act and end (*habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem*), and this natural inclination is their special share in the Eternal Reason by which they are provident for themselves and for others. Given this statement taken as a whole it seems clear that Aquinas does not have in mind the whole spectrum of inclinations present in the human person, but only what is proper to rational creatures as rational, for inasmuch as only rational creatures are provident over their own actions and the actions of others. So this rational natural inclination must be a movement of the intellectual desire that is the will but pertains to the act of reason as a principle and rule of human action.

That this natural inclination, which is the natural law and is proper to humans as human, pertains to reason is confirmed in the latter part of the *respondeo*. Aquinas proceeds to quote from *Psalm* 4:6, which he interprets as asking the questions: “What are the works of justice?” and “Who shows us good things?” In answer to these questions, Aquinas points to the Psalmist’s answer: it is the light of God’s countenance that makes the just and the good manifest. But what is the light of God’s countenance that the Psalmist speaks of? Aquinas’ answer is:

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28 Ibid. Note the Latin that I put in parentheses: “quo pertinet ad naturalem legem.” Compare it to Aquinas’s similar phrase in q. 90, a. 1c referred to earlier: “lex sit aliquid pertinens ad rationem” (“law is something pertaining to reason”).

29 Note Aquinas’s shift from speaking of all creatures as having a natural inclination to their proper acts and ends (*in proprios actus et fines*), and how humans have a natural inclination to their due act and end (*habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem*). The difference between a proper act and end and a due act and end is the difference reason makes as a principle of human actions.
the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law (*quod pertinet ad naturalem legem*), is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creatures’ participation in the eternal law.  

The light of the natural reason is integrally associated with the natural law in rational creatures, for it pertains to both natural law and natural reason to discern the good to be done and the evil to be avoided. The light of reason, which is the rule and judge of human actions and is the natural law *as law* in the truest sense, is the imprint of the divine light upon human creatures. Humans have a share in the eternal reason through the light of their own reason.

Aquinas’s perspective that following the rule of reason is what is proper to and thus natural to rational creatures is thematic throughout the Prima Secundae of the *Summa Theologiae*. In its opening article, Aquinas argues:

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30 Ibid. Aquinas’ use of *Psalm* 4:6 as a scriptural source for natural law in which he directly identifies the natural law with the light the intellect is found in at least one other place in his writings. One such place is in his *Collationes in decem praeceptis* in which he states the following: “Prima dicitur lex naturae; et haec nihil aliud est nisi lumen intellectus insitum nobis a Deo, per quod cognoscimus quid agendum et quid vitandum. Hoc lumen et hanc legem dedit Deus homini in creatione. Sed multi credunt excusari per ignorantiam, si hanc legem non observant. Sed contra eos dicit prophaeta in Psal. IV, 6: multi dicunt: quis ostendit nobis bona? Quasi ignorent quid sit operandum. Sed ipse ibidem 7, respondet: signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, domine: lumen scilicet intellectus, per quod nota sunt nobis agenda. Nullus enim ignorat quod illud quod nollet sibi fieri, non faciat alteri, et cetera talia.” (“The first is called the law of nature; and this is nothing except the light of the intellect impressed upon us by God, by which we know what we ought to do and what we ought to avoid. God gave this light and this law to man at creation. *But many believe themselves to be excused through ignorance*, if they do not observe this law. But against them, the prophet says in *Psalm* IV, 6: many say: Who will show us the good? As if they are ignorant of what should be done. But in the same place (7) he responds: the light of your countenance is impressed on us, O Lord: that is, the light of the intellect, through which we know what is to be done. *For no one is ignorant of the fact that he should not do to another what he does not want done to himself* [translation mine]). *In Decem Praec.*, Prooemium.

Other texts in which he quotes from *Psalm* 4:6-7 and links it with the light of the agent intellect include: *In Rom.*, chp. 1, lect. 6, §115; *Lect. super loan.*, chp. 1, lect. 3 §101; chp. 1, lect. 5; *S.T. I*, q. 79, a. 4c; *S.T. I-II*, q. 19, a. 4c; *S.T. I-II*, q. 84, a. 5c; *S.T. I-II*, q. 93, a. 4c; *De ver.*, q. 16, a. 3c; *Quod.*, bk. 10, q. 4, a. 1c; bk. 8, q. 2. a. 2c; *De spir. creat.*, a. 10c and ad. 9; *In Ps.*, chp. 4, n. 5; ch. 35, n. 5; *In II Sent.*, d., 39, q. 3, a. 1, s.c. 1; *Quaes. disp. de an.*, q. 5c; *In De Trin.*, q. 1, a. 1c; *S.T. I*, q. 117, a. 1, ad. 1; *In Isaiam*, chp. 8, lect. 3; *In Iob*, chp. 33.
Of actions done by man those alone are properly called *human*, which are proper to man as man. Now man differs from irrational animals in this, that he is master of his actions. Wherefore those actions alone are properly called human, of which man is master. Now man is master of all his actions through his reason and will; whence, too, the free-will is defined as the faculty and will of reason. Therefore those actions are properly called human which proceed from a deliberate will. And if any other actions are found in man, they can be called actions of a man, but not properly human actions, since they are not proper to man as man. – Now it is clear that whatever actions proceed from a certain power, are caused by that power in accordance with the nature of its object. But the object of the will is the end and the good. Therefore all human actions must be for an end.\(^\text{31}\)

What is proper to humans as human with respect to their acts and ends is not something shared with other animals, but something pertaining to reason and will by which humans have mastery over their own actions, unlike other animals.

Elsewhere in *S.T. I-II*, q. 91, a. 6, Aquinas speaks of various laws imprinted on different creatures by God, and as a result they have their own proper inclinations to their own proper acts and ends. In this context Aquinas speaks of the *lex hominis* and what this law consists of:

Accordingly under the Divine Lawgiver various creatures have various natural inclinations, so that what is, as it were, a law for one, is against the law for another: thus I might say that fierceness is, in a way, the law of a dog, but against the law of a sheep or another meek animal. And so the law of man (*hominis lex*), which, by the Divine ordinance, is allotted to him, according to its proper natural condition, is that he should act in accordance with reason: and this law was so effective in the primitive state, that nothing either beside or against reason could take man unawares.\(^\text{32}\)

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\(^{31}\) *S.T. I-II*, q. 1, a. 1c.

\(^{32}\) *S.T. I-II*, q. 91, a. 6c. Aquinas makes the same point later in q. 94, a. 1c: “Wherefore, since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue.” The *lex hominis* is equivalent to what Aquinas earlier spoke of as the natural inclination to virtue that belongs to all rational creatures, and although it has been diminished due to the effects of sin it still remains in every rational creature. See *S.T. I-II*, q. 85, a. 2c.

Aquinas is fond of quoting Pseudo-Dionysius’s statement in *The Divine Names*, IV that “man’s good is to be in accordance with reason, and his evil is to be against reason.” *S.T. I-II*, q. 71, a. 2c; also q. 18, a. 5c.
Humans have a natural inclination to act in accordance with reason, which is also a natural inclination to act in accordance with virtue.\textsuperscript{33} This inclination is proper to humans, and by it humans are moved to act in accordance with their due act and end.\textsuperscript{34}

Aquinas is essentially repeating Aristotle’s \textit{ergon} (i.e., function) argument that all things have a function proper to them due to the type of creature that they are, and that living in accordance with what is proper to them is their happiness (i.e., their good). What is proper to humans as human is the life lived in accordance with reason, which is what is most distinctive and highest in humans. And what makes a human person truly good and happy is to live a life in accordance with reason in a superlative fashion, viz., virtuously. The human good is a happiness attained by following reason.\textsuperscript{35}

The identification of the natural law with the activity of reason is further emphasized in the second objection and Aquinas’s response to it in article two of question 91. The second objection argues that law directs humans to their proper acts and ends. But this direction of human acts to their respective ends is not a function of nature – understanding nature as a non-rational order of purely spontaneous activity in contrast with the higher order of reason and its reflective and free activity – but of the reason and will. Therefore, there is no \textit{natural law} in humans – with the emphasis on prerational nature.

\textsuperscript{33} S.T. I-II, q. 58, a. 4 ad. 3.
\textsuperscript{34} In S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 3c Aquinas again repeats that “since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue.” This article is important for linking natural law with virtue; for what the natural law perceptively commands consists of the ends of the various moral virtues. Also of significance is Aquinas’ recognition that the natural inclination to act according to reason is effectively a natural inclination to virtue (“each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously”), for the moral virtues are intrinsic principles orienting the sensitive appetites to follow reason.
\textsuperscript{35} See \textit{In I Ethic.}, lect. 10 §§126-128.
This objection is significant in that it presupposes an Ulpian view of the natural law as that which all animals share in common, and exposes a possible tension in identifying law with a work of reason: if the natural law is something natural, how can it be identified with a work of reason? By this point in the *Summa*, Aquinas has firmly established that the natural law has something to do with reason and will, which are the highest and most distinctively human operations that distinguish human activity, and not with the lower sensitive and natural powers that humans share with other corporeal creatures. The supposed objector is making the argument that if humans are moved by some rationally promulgated law to their proper ends, then no law is natural to humans. In other words, if the natural law is identified with reason, is one not wholly neglecting what is natural about natural law; viz., that which humans share in common with other animals? Aquinas’ response to this objection shows that he is untroubled by it because he has a broader understanding of *nature* in mind which appropriately applies to reason and will.

In his response to the objection, Aquinas argues that every act of reason is based on something that is according to nature, namely, principles that are naturally known:

Every act of reason and will in us is based on that which is according to nature (*secundum naturam*), as stated above (Q. 10, A. 1): for every act of reasoning is based on principles that are known naturally (*naturaliter notis*), and every act of appetite in respect of the mean is derived from the natural appetite in respect of the last end. Accordingly the first direction of our acts to their end must needs be in virtue of the natural law.\(^{37}\)

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36 The highly esteemed Roman jurist Ulpian (c. 170 – 223) defines the natural law in the following way: “Jus naturale is that which nature has taught to all animals; for it is not a law specific to mankind but is common to all animals. . . .” Justinian, *The Digest of Justinian*, vol. 1, translated by Alan Watson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), bk. 1 §1. For a discussion on how Aquinas reinterprets and incorporates the Ulpian physicalist sense of natural law into his own intellectualist account, see William May, “The Meaning and Nature of the Natural Law in Thomas Aquinas,” *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 22 (1977), 168-189.

37 *S.T.* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 ad. 2.
What does Aquinas mean by the statement “every act of reason and will in us is based on that which is according to nature?” One should not overlook his reference back to an earlier question in the *Secunda Pars* in order to help make sense of what he means.

The question he is addressing in q. 10, a.1 concerns whether the will is moved to anything naturally. In his *respondeo* he begins to address this question by pointing to how the term nature is not a univocal term but has two different senses: nature as a principle of movement and rest, and nature as substance.\(^{38}\) In the first sense, following Aristotle, it refers to an intrinsic principle of movement in a moveable thing, and in this sense nature means either matter, which is a passive principle, or a material form, which is an active principle. In a second sense, it can mean a substance (*substantia*), in which case that which is “natural to a thing is that which befits it in respect to its substance (*convenit ei secundum suam substantiam*).”\(^{39}\)

Aquinas then proceeds to argue the following:

Now all things that do not of themselves belong to the thing in which they are, are reduced to something which belongs of itself to that thing, as to their principle. Wherefore, taking nature in this sense, it is necessary that the principle of whatever belongs to a thing, be a natural principle. This is evident in regard to the intellect: for the principles of intellectual knowledge are naturally known. In like manner the principle of voluntary movements must be something naturally willed.\(^{40}\)

Aquinas’s point is that there are some things that naturally belong to a thing as befitting to its substance, and so are natural to it. Intellect and will, for example, are natural to humans

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\(^{38}\) As Aquinas realizes the concept of nature has several different meanings and it is important to note which sense Aquinas uses it when speaking of the natural law and the natural inclinations. Later we will see how the concept of the *natural inclinations* can be understood to mean either a specific kind of inclination (e.g., natural as opposed to sensitive and intellectual) or the whole gamut of human inclinations (e.g., natural, sensitive, and intellectual).

\(^{39}\) *S.T.* I-II, q. 10, a. 1c.

\(^{40}\) Ibid.
due to the fact that they are powers that are befitting of rational creatures. Furthermore, there are also things that do not naturally belong so befittingly to the substance of a thing but do nonetheless come to belong to it due to a natural principle that does belong to the substance of that thing. Aquinas then analogically applies this notion of substance of the intellect (even though, properly speaking, the human intellect is not a substance but a power of the soul). There is a kind of knowledge that belongs befittingly to the intellect that is naturally known. This knowledge consists of naturally known principles that all human intellects know. But there is also an acquired knowledge that is known only through these principles and so does not belong to the intellect naturally. While the intellect has a natural potency for such acquired knowledge, nonetheless, apart from these naturally known principles there could not be acquired any further knowledge, either through discovery or through teaching, for such further knowledge is attained through these principles.41

Similarly, in regard to voluntary movements, their natural principle is something naturally willed, namely, the good in general and those particular goods appropriate to the other powers of the soul. Aquinas identifies the natural principle of the will with the good to which the will is naturally inclined and which is in turn the principle of all other voluntary movements that the will does not naturally will (i.e., the means to the end). Therefore, just as the intellect “naturally and of necessity adheres to the first principles, so the will adheres to the last end.”42

41 On the role of natural knowledge of universal first principles in the ways of discovery and instruction, see De ver. q. 11, a. 1; S.T. I, q. 117, a. 1; S.C.G. 2.75.15.
42 S. T. I, q. 82, a. 2c.
Returning to q. 91, a. 2 ad. 2, when Aquinas states “every act of reason and will in us is based on that which is according to nature (secundum naturam),” he is not saying that reason simply reads off human ‘nature’ (i.e., nature in the Ulpian sense of those appetites humans share in common will other animals and is of a lower order than the order of reason) some natural law already there to be discovered. By “according to nature” he means the natural adherence of the human intellect to first principles and the natural adherence of the will to end which is the intelligible good presented to it by reason, which consists of both the good in general and those particular goods proper to human persons that are correlative to the sensitive and intellectual appetites. The intellect spontaneously assents to its naturally known principles and in this assent the natural desire to know truth (at least for a time) comes to rest in reason’s judgment. It is this sense of “according to nature,” – nature as substance – that puts “natural” into natural law, not nature as an order distinct from the order of reason. It is befitting of the human intellect, whose activities are most befitting of the human substance as a rational creature.

By way of conclusion, in q. 91, a. 2 Aquinas identifies the natural law with what is most properly human in humans, viz., reason and its naturally known judgments. Reason is a power that is properly human and therefore natural to the human substance. Through its natural light – the agent intellect – the intellect naturally grasps principles of human action, necessarily adhering to these propositional judgments regarding the good, which is the natural object and principle of the will. While he identifies the natural law with the light of reason in the respondeo, he also speaks of the integral link between the intellect and its principles in his response to the second objection, showing that certain naturally known
principles properly belong to the natural law as natural to the human intellect. The natural law is both the activity of the light of the intellect whereby good and evil is discerned and its naturally known practical judgments that are directive of human action towards the good to be done.

2.1.3 *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 94, a. 2: The Natural Law and the Natural Inclinations

In this article Aquinas raises the question whether there is only one precept of the natural law or several.\(^4\) This article is important for many reasons, one of which concerns the role that the inclinations perform in reason’s grasp of those fundamental goods that ought to be pursued. It addresses how practical reason is embedded in the natural inclinations as it constitutes those judgments that are the primary principles of the natural law. The relationship between the practical reason and the natural inclinations is a relationship in which practical reason lawfully orders the natural inclinations to the due good, while the natural inclinations participate in practical reason by being ruled by it.

In the *sed contra* Aquinas argues that the precepts of the natural law stand in relation to the practical intellect in a way similar to how first principles stand in relation to the speculative reason. But there are a number of first principles of the speculative reason, and so there must also be several precepts of the practical reason.

In his *respondeo* Aquinas proceeds to show that as with the first principles of speculative reason, so too the several precepts of the natural law are self-evident, or, more

\(^4\) Dom Odon Lottin identifies Aquinas’s former master Albert the Great as the first person to address the question of whether there is one natural law precept or many. See Dom Odon Lottin, *Le Droit Naturel: chez Saint Thomas d’Aquin et ses prédécesseurs*, deuxieme edition (Bruges: Firme Charles Beyaert, 1931), 79.
accurately something “known in itself to us” (*per se nota quoad nos*),\(^{44}\) and thus known by all. But not all first principles and precepts of the natural law are known by all in such a self-evident manner. Some are known through some degree of rational reflection, while others are known only by the wise. Among these speculative principles and precepts of the natural law, there are some that are self-evident in themselves (*per se nota secundum se*)\(^{45}\) but not to human understanding. This is the case because a proposition is *per se nota quoad nos* only insofar as one first grasps both the meaning of the terms and the necessary relationship between the terms, i.e., when the meaning of the predicate is known to be contained in the meaning of the subject. If someone does not know what an angel is (i.e., an incorporeal being) then such a proposition as “an angel is not circumspectly in a place” will not be immediately grasped as self-evident, even though it may actually be self-evidently true in itself. Such a proposition may, however, be grasped as self-evident by someone who knows the meaning of the terms contained in the proposition, but only at the end of a lengthy inquiry. Consequently, all of the preceptive judgments of the natural law are self-evident, although some are known to all, while others are known only by the wise.

Aquinas proceeds to explain how one comes to grasp the natural law precepts. He continues the parallelism between speculative reason and practical reason in making his case. There is an order found among those things that are apprehended universally. For the speculative reason, being is the most universally apprehended object. No matter what else anyone might apprehend, whatever is apprehended is apprehended as having being. Being is the first thing that falls under speculative apprehension. From this apprehension of

\(^{44}\) *S.T. I-II*, q. 94, a. 2c.

\(^{45}\) Ibid.
the notion of being, and its negation non-being, one grasps the first indemonstrable principle of being: the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time.

While being is the first thing speculative intellect apprehends, it is also the first to fall under apprehension simply (simpliciter). The first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical intellect, which is directed to action, is the good. Every human action is for an end, which the intellect apprehends as good. The practical intellect apprehends the good as something desirable and sought after, and this means that practical reason must in some way be closely related to or embedded in human appetites from which the movement of desire towards another as desirable derives. It is the will that desires the good in general, and apart from this natural desire there would not be an object of desire for the practical reason to apprehend as good in general. Insofar as this notion of the good as that which is desirable is grasped, one also grasps the first indemonstrable precept of the natural law: the good is to be done and pursued and evil is to be avoided (bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum). This is the first principle of the natural law, and is the ground and unifying principle underlying all other precepts of the natural law. Furthermore, as a first principle this means that it is underived from any previous principles (factual or practical). Whatever falls under the universal notion of the good as a

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46 "Sicut autem ens est primum quod cadit in apprehensione simpliciter." Ibid.
47 This distinction between the different ends of the speculative intellect and practical intellect cannot be overemphasized. While there is only one intellect which by its nature is ordered to knowing truth, the speculative intellect seeks the truth for its own sake while the practical intellect seeks the truth as it concerns human action, which is oriented to the good. Thus the end of the practical intellect is an object of desire (i.e., the good). So while there is only one intellect, the same intellect can be ordered to either truth or the good. See S.T. 1.79.11; In III De anima, lect. 15 §820-821.
48 S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2c.
49 Jean Porter, as indicated in the introduction, holds that the first principles of practical reason are metaphysical principles of motion, and consequently practical reason functions only to formulate moral norms that express metaphysical principles as known through speculative reason (Porter, Reason as Nature, 263-
particular good belongs to the natural law as some good to be done and pursued, and its opposite, i.e., evil, something to be avoided. The unity of the natural law is thus assured in practical reason’s first principle.

Aquinas thence proceeds to explain the plurality of precepts contained within the unity of this primary precept. The universal notion of the good includes within it more determinate particular goods that are the objects of the natural inclinations. He begins his discussion of the inclinations by linking them with his previous statements about the practical reason: the good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of practical reason. Since the good has the nature of an end, and evil is its contrary:

all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law.50

The natural inclinations and the goods to which they are inclined are a source of moral orientation and knowing by which the reason is able to intelligently apprehend the truly good that is worthy of pursuit. In this way the inclinations are integrated into the order of reason. The object of the will and its natural desire is the good in general, and the practical reason grasps the good in general as an object that ought to be pursued.51 And since those goods fall under the aspect of universal good that are the object of the other natural inclinations, practical reason grasps these goods as due goods and orders them in accordance with the first principle of the practical reason as something to be pursued and

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50. S.T-I-II, q. 94, a. 2c.
51. “Now this is good in general, to which the will tends naturally.” S.T. I-II, q. 10, a. 1c.
their contraries as something evil to be avoided. Furthermore, this apprehension is a natural apprehension and thus a starting point for any more determinate knowledge of the good (e.g., secondary precepts of the natural law are known by means of reasoning from what is naturally known).52

Aquinas’s further argues that the precepts of the natural law are ordered to each other on the basis of the ordering of the natural inclinations. This order of the inclinations is threefold. First, there is in humans an inclination to the good in accordance with the nature (secundum naturam) that humans share in common with all substances (omnibus substantiis),53 namely, the inclination of all substances to seek the preservation of their own being. On the basis of this inclination in humans the practical intellect grasps “whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law.”54 Second, there is in humans an inclination to things that pertain to that nature which humans share in common with other animals (ceteris animalibus).55 Aquinas is alluding to, limiting, and re-contextualizing the Ulpian sense of the natural law as that which nature has taught to all animals. It is one kind of inclination among others. This inclination pertains to such goods as sexual intercourse and the education of children. Thirdly, there is the specifically human inclination to the good according to the nature of reason (secundum naturam rationis).56 Humans have a natural inclination to such goods as knowing the truth

52 Aquinas holds that the secondary precepts are discursively discovered through experience or through teaching by means of natural knowledge of the primary precepts. See S.T. II-II, q. 47, a. 15c.; De ver. q. 11, a. 1; S.C.G. 2.75.15.
53 S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2c.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
about God, shunning ignorance, living in society, and avoiding offending those with whom one has to live.57

Now how do these natural inclinations relate to the practical reason? The natural inclinations that are sensitive and intellective appetites are for rational creatures something governed by reason. These appetites, whether intellectual (i.e. the will) or sensitive (i.e. concupiscible or irascible), are properly ordered to follow reason.58 According to Aquinas the sensitive appetites participate in reason insofar as they have a natural aptitude to follow reason.59 Thus the strivings of the appetitive powers that are manifest in the passions, such as love and hate, in and of themselves do not constitute the moral good. This leads to the very important point that only insofar as these strivings are in some manner ordered by reason are they constitutive of the moral good:

57 As Aquinas's threefold list of the natural inclinations makes manifest, what is natural about the natural inclination is not their status as a pre-rational or even pre-sensitive order, but a threefold order of inclinations that belong to the human substance in a manner that is befitting to it. In various places in his writings Aquinas speaks of the multiple senses in which the natural inclinations are called natural: S.T. I, q. 41, a. 3; q. 80, a. 1c; I-II, q. 10, a. 1; q. 26, a. 1 ad. 1. For an alternative perspective, Steven Brock argues that all of these inclinations are natural inclinations stemming from the will, not the various powers of the soul. See Steven L. Brock, “Natural Inclination and the Intelligibility of the Good in Thomistic Natural Law,” Vera Lex, VI.1-2 (2005): 62-63. While it is true that the will does will the ends of the other powers of the soul, still, given the context of the article under discussion, Aquinas seems to clearly have in mind inclinations as arising from various powers and not just the will. See especially S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2 ad. 2-3.

58 “Reason is the first principle of all human acts; and whatever other principles of human acts may be found, they obey reason somewhat, but in various ways. For some obey reason blindly and without any contradiction whatever: such are the limbs of the body, for as soon as reason commands, the hand or the foot proceeds to action... (T)he appetitive faculty obeys the reason not blindly, but with a certain power of opposition.” S.T. I-II, q. 58, a. 2c. “We must therefore conclude that, absolutely speaking, every will at variance with reason, whether right or erring, is always evil.” S.T. I-II, q. 19, a. 5c.

59 See S.T. I-II, q. 56, a. 4c.; Thomas Aquinas, De virt., bk. I, a. 4, ad. 5 and 11; In I Ethic., lect. 20, §§236-243. Paul Gondreau speaks of this participation of the affective dimension of human persons (will and sensitive passions) in reason as a participated psychology, highlighting the mutual interaction between the higher and lower powers of a single human person such that all appetitive acts are authentically human: “What Aquinas's anthropology promotes, in other words, is what we could term a ‘participated psychology.’ In his view an intimate synergy and interpenetrability exist between the emotions and reason and will, making the emotions not merely ‘animal-like’ acts but genuine human acts.” Paul Gondreau, “The Passions and the Moral Life: Appreciating the Originality of Aquinas,” The Thomist, 71 (2007), 425.
We may consider the passions of the soul in two ways: first, in themselves; secondly, as being subject to the command of reason and will. – If then the passions be considered in themselves, to wit, as movements of the irrational appetite, thus there is no moral good or evil in them, since this depends on the reason, as cited above (Q. 18, A. 5). If, however, they be considered as subject to the command of the reason and will, then moral good and evil are in them.60

The irascible and concupiscible powers considered in themselves, as parts of the sensitive appetite, are common to us and dumb animals. But in so far as they are rational by participation, and are obedient to the reason, they are proper to man. And in this way they can be the subject of human virtue.61

While there is a natural striving towards the good and aversion from evil in the natural inclinations, it is clear that for Aquinas this striving in and of itself is not sufficient to constitute the moral or human good given that humans are rational creatures, and are so ordered in their natural makeup to act in accordance with reason, which is the *lex hominis* (S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 6). Hence, in no way can the natural inclinations, simply as inclinations, be identified with the natural law for Aquinas except by way of their actual participation in reason. The natural law is something pertaining to reason and constituted by reason. Only insofar as the inclinations and their objects are apprehended by reason, and these objects are rationally apprehended to be truly human goods, do they play a part in the constitution of the precepts of the natural law. Furthermore, it is the practical reason, not the speculative reason, which orders the natural inclinations to their end, for it is only practical reason whose end it is to apprehend the good. Insofar as the natural inclinations are ordered by practical reason, they are the beginnings or seeds of the virtues; potential

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60 *S.T.* I-II, q. 24, a. 1c.
61 *S.T.* I-II, q. 56, a. 4 ad. 1.
virtues that could be cultivated by means of repeated acts of rationally guided and wilfully
chosen activity.\textsuperscript{62}

Returning to q. 94, a. 2, in his response to the second objection one finds precisely
this participative relation between the natural inclinations and reason. Here Aquinas
addresses the moral status of the natural inclinations in their relationship to reason, and
their reduction to the first precept of the natural law. He states that “all the inclinations of
any parts whatsoever of human nature, e.g., of the concupiscible and irascible parts, in so
far as they are ruled by reason, belong to the natural law, and are reduced to one first
precept.”\textsuperscript{63} It is clear that for Aquinas the natural inclinations by themselves do not belong
to the natural law, but they do belong to the natural law insofar as they participate in the
order of practical reason and are thereby rational by participation.\textsuperscript{64} Only insofar as they
are ruled by reason and thereby participate in reason are they in any way constitutive of the
natural law. Insofar as the inclinations and their goals are grasped by reason, they are
reducible to and thus united in the primary precept of practical reason as that which ought
to be done and pursued and their opposites avoided.

Finally, it may be helpful to illustrate what it means for the natural inclinations to be
contained under the rule of reason and thereby participate in reason. One of the chief
natural inclinations Aquinas speaks of in q. 94, a. 2c is the natural desire every substance
has to preserve its own being. All substances have this inclination, but how specifically does

\textsuperscript{62} “Similarly, according to this opinion of Aristotle, before the habits of virtue are completely formed, they
exist in us in certain natural inclinations, which are the beginnings of the virtues (\textit{virtutum inchoationes}). But
afterwards, through practice in their actions, they are brought to their proper completion.” \textit{De ver.} q. 11, a.
1c.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{S.T.} I-II, q. 94, a. 2 ad. 2.

\textsuperscript{64} See \textit{In I Ethic.}, lect. 10 §126.
Continuity and perpetuity, to some extent, are also required for happiness. These qualities are naturally desired by the appetite of a person endowed with reason, who apprehends not a particular being, as our senses do, but also being in itself (*esse simpliciter*). Now being is of itself desirable. It follows then that, as an animal which apprehends a particular being by its senses desires that particular being, so also man apprehending being in itself (*esse simpliciter*) desires it as always existing and not this particular being alone. So continuity and perpetuity, which are not found in the present life, belong to the nature of perfect happiness. Hence perfect happiness cannot be had in this life. However, the happiness attainable here must extend to a complete life, that is through the whole life of man.⁶⁵

The natural desire for being belongs to all substances. But for humans this natural desire follows the intellectual apprehension of being in itself,⁶⁶ and not simply being-as-being, but being-as-desirable (i.e., good).⁶⁷ But the natural desire for being is not merely for this particular being alone, that is, for well-being at *this* moment, but for perpetual being. In other words, it is precisely because humans can conceive of the perpetuity of their being beyond the present moment, or even the present life, that they have a natural desire for perpetual being (i.e., immortality).⁶⁸ Knowledge elevates, as it were, this natural inclination so as to become a desire ordered to the good of not just the now of existence, or even just the natural good of this life, but to a good of perpetual being conducive towards perfect happiness. Perpetual being can only be desired if it can be first apprehended as a possible good. Although Aquinas does not distinguish between the speculative and practical

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⁶⁵ *In I Sent.*, lect. 10 §129; see also *S.C.G.* 2.55.13.
⁶⁶ Recall that in q. 92, a. 2c Aquinas argues that being in itself is what the human intellect first and naturally apprehends absolutely.
⁶⁷ As Aquinas elsewhere states, apart from the practical intellect apprehending the true as having the aspect of goodness and desirable, the will cannot be moved to will the good. See *S.T.* I-II, q. 9, a. 1 ad. 2.
⁶⁸ Similarly, humans have a natural desire to know God in his essence, but this natural desire cannot be attained in this life. *S.T.* I, q. 12, a. 1; I-II, q. 2, a. 8; q. 3, a. 8.
intellect in this passage, from what has been gleaned this far it is possible to say that while being is that which is first apprehended by speculative reason, insofar as being is further grasped as good (i.e., desirable) it is the objective of the practical reason which grasps it as a due good that ought to be pursued inasmuch as it is possible to do so.

By way of summary, it is evident that in q. 94, a. 2 the starting point of practical reason is the good, and by apprehending the universal good it naturally grasps that the good is that which ought to be done and pursued and its opposite avoided. The universal good is the object of the will, which it desires naturally and practical reason naturally grasps. More determinate particular goods, which are also naturally desired by the will, are the objects of various natural inclinations. The natural inclinations alone do not constitute the natural law, but participate in the natural law through the ordering of practical reason, and are as such necessary presuppositions of the natural law. Practical reason naturally grasps these goods as true or due goods that ought to be done and pursued and their opposites avoided.

2.1.4 Summary

Pulling together the conclusions reached from investigation of all three articles in Aquinas’s treatise on law, the following points are clear. First, for Aquinas the natural law pertains to reason. More precisely, it is the light of natural reason whereby good and evil are discerned. Moreover the natural law also consists in the work of reason, viz., those naturally known preceptive judgments that practical reason constitutes. Finally, while the natural inclinations, considered simply as such, are not the natural law, insofar as they
participate in reason they do participate in and belong to the natural law. Their importance should not be minimized since it is through their appetitive drive that anything is desirable at all, and the good, which is the object of both the will and the practical reason, is the desirable object of some appetite. Humans would be blind in regard to the good apart from the natural inclinations.

2.2 Natural Law Precepts: The Primary Precepts

Attention now shifts to the nature of the preceptive judgments of the natural law and how the practical reason comes to grasp these principles naturally and per se. While Aquinas distinguishes between different types of preceptive judgments, some naturally known and others discursively known, for the purposes of this investigation analysis is given only to the primary and so-called naturally known precepts of the natural law. Up to this point, this investigation has drawn the conclusion that for Aquinas there are certain preceptive judgments of practical reason that are identifiable with the natural law. This section focuses on the character of these primary preceptive judgments as naturally known and necessarily true (per se nota) and how they are known, which will prepare the ground for an engagement with Bernard Lonergan and his thoughts on natural law as preceptive judgments.

2.2.1 Natural Knowledge of the First Principles of the Natural Law

In Aquinas’s treatise on law, it is clear that the precepts of the natural law can be divided into two different types; namely, primary preceptive principles that are indemonstrable, self-evidently (per se nota) and naturally known to all human agents, and
secondary preceptive principles that are related to the first principles as their conclusions.\textsuperscript{69} Knowledge of first principles presupposes knowledge of their terms, such as the primitive concepts of being and the good, which Aquinas understands to be naturally and self-evidently known. This section continues to analyse \textit{S.T.} I-II, q. 94, a. 2, and will commence with a discussion of how speculative knowledge advances from knowledge of terms to knowledge of principles, and then move on to how in a similar fashion practical knowledge advances from knowledge of terms and to knowledge of principles. Analysis will first be given to the concept of being and its properties and principles derived from them, followed by a similar analysis of the concept of the good and certain basic determinations of the good, and the principles derived from them.

First, then, what does Aquinas mean by naturally apprehended knowledge of being and the good? In \textit{S.T.} I-II, q. 94, a. 2, Aquinas states that there is an order found in those things that are apprehended universally, and while being is the first thing universally apprehended by the speculative intellect, it is the good that is the first thing universally known by the practical intellect. There is an order in human knowledge such that some things are better known than others. In various places in his writings, Aquinas distinguishes two different types of orders in human knowing, both of which concern a contrast between things that are better known to the knower and things that are less known. The first order is an order between sensitive knowledge and intellectual knowledge. In this order sensitive knowledge is more knowable than is intellective knowledge, so that for humans the particular is known previous to and more easily than the universal. The second order

\textsuperscript{69} See \textit{S.T.} I-II, q. 94, aa. 4-6; q. 95, a. 2; q. 100, aa. 1, 3, 11; II-II, q. 47, a. 15.
concerns an order within intellective knowing itself. In this order the contrast is between that which is most universal and more knowable to the human intellect, and that which is less universal and less knowable to the human intellect. Q. 94, a.2 concerns this latter order of the more universal to the less universal in intellectual knowledge.

In S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2, Aquinas states that being is what the speculative intellect first universally apprehends and any apprehension whatsoever includes it. The principle of non-contradiction includes within its terms the concept of being, and the intellect apprehends it based on its knowledge of being. Similarly, the practical intellect first and universally apprehends the concept of the good, and because it knows the good it also knows the primary precept that the good ought to be done and pursued. This knowledge is something naturally apprehended, for he states that “whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends (ratio practica naturaliter apprehendit) as man’s good (or evil) belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided.” Aquinas obviously assumes that practical reason does naturally apprehend the human good, for if the intellect naturally grasps certain determinate goods to be truly good a fortiori it must naturally know the good.

So what does Aquinas mean by this natural apprehension of being and the good? First, it will be helpful to draw a distinction between a notion and a concept. A notion does not mean a conceived intellectual content of either a simple act of understanding (e.g.,

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71 S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2c.
72 This is a distinction Bernard Lonergan makes that, as he sees it, Aquinas was at least very much aware of even if he does not explicitly state it. Lonergan, Verbum, 56-58, esp. n. 206; also Insight, 377-388, 393-394.
concept or definition) or a judgement (e.g., a true or false proposition), but an intellectual intending of some objective that is the proper end of an act of simple understanding or an act of judgment. For Aquinas, being is the natural object of the human intellect\(^{73}\) that we wonder and ask questions about. Since it is the proper act of the intellect to understand, being must be intelligible. Since being is the proper object of the intellect, it is also its end or good, and so it is that which the intellect desires to know in any operation it performs. Being is thus the natural object of the intellect not yet as a content known, but as an object we seek to know. A concept, on the other hand, is a content that is known. And Aquinas holds that the concept of being is known by us naturally and \emph{per se}. In the following passage, one can see both being as a notion, an objective we naturally strive to know, and being as a concept naturally known present in Aquinas’s thought.

Again, since nature is always directed to one thing, of one power there must naturally be one object, as color of sight, and sound of hearing. Hence, the intellect, being one power, has one natural object (\emph{unum naturale obiectum}), of which it has knowledge essentially and naturally (\emph{per se et naturaliter cognitionem habet}). And this object must be one under which are included all things known by the intellect; just as under color are included all colors essentially visible. Now, this is none other than being (\emph{Quod non est aliud quam ens}).\(^{74}\)

A first step in understanding why Aquinas holds that being is known naturally and \emph{per se}, one must not overlook in this statement his emphasis upon the fact that being is the proper object of the human intellect. If being is the intellect’s proper object, then knowing being is natural to it: “what is primarily knowable to each power is its proper object.”\(^{75}\)

\(^{73}\) The powers of the soul are distinguished by their objects, and the object of the intellect is being: “Now, the intellect regards its object under the common \emph{ratio} of being: since the passive intellect is that in which all are in potentiality (\emph{eo quod intellectus possibilis est quo est omnia fieri}). Wherefore the passive intellect is not differentiated by any difference of being.” \emph{S.T.} I, q. 79, a. 7c. See also \emph{S.T.} I, q. 5, a. 2c; \emph{De ver.} q. 1, a. 2, ad. 4.

\(^{74}\) \emph{S.C.G.} 2.83.31. See also \emph{In De Trin.}, q. 1, a. 3c.

\(^{75}\) \emph{In De Trin.}, q. 1, a. 3c.
This quest of the intellect to know being as its proper object is expressed in a natural desire to know. This desire, like being, is unrestricted. Intellectual desire seeks to know all that is, and all that is, is being. The agent intellect, the active power of the human intellect that illuminates phantasms and thereby makes the species of a material thing actually intelligible, is an active power capable of making knowable all things, while the possible intellect is a passive potency capable of becoming all things. Implicit in any intellectual inquiry whatsoever is this natural orienting intention to know being, and apart from this intending of being (i.e., notion of being) there is no inquiry to know anything. So before anyone ever conceives a universal concept of being, everyone naturally experiences the notion of being as an intentional object of one’s cognitive operations.

According to Aquinas “what is primarily knowable to each power is its proper object.” Aquinas argues that among those things known naturally and per se by the human intellect, being is the absolute first concept it knows. All other concepts in some way conceptually add to the concept of being, but nothing can really be added to being, for there is nothing outside of being to add to being.

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76 Aquinas argues that the unrestricted desire to know has as its ultimate object and end, God. But to know God, whose essence is his being, is to know all things that participate in being, and therefore by knowing God one also knows all that God causes and gives being to as the first cause. So Aquinas argues that humans have a natural desire to know God by his very essence, even if such knowledge is naturally impossible and therefore requires divine assistance. S.T. I, q. 12, aa. 1-13; I-II, q. 3, a. 8; S.C.G. 3.25-63, esp. chapter 63.

77 “There is nothing, however, that the divine intellect does not actually know, and nothing that the human intellect does not know potentially, for the agent intellect is said to be that “by which we make all things knowable,” and the possible intellect, as that “by which we become all things (intellectus agens describatur quo est omnia facere, intellectus possibilis quo est omnia fieri).” De ver. q. 1, a. 2, ad. 4.

78 “Thus, if we are taught what man is, we must know something about him beforehand, namely, the meaning of animal, or of substance, or at least of being itself, which last concept cannot escape us.” De ver. q. 11, a. 1, ad. 3.

79 See In I Sent., d. 19, q. 5, a. 1, ad. 2; In II Meta., lect. 2, §46; bk. 4, lect. 6, §605; De ver. q. 1, a. 1c; In I Post. an., lect. 5b; In De Trin., q. 6, a. 4c; De Pot., q. 9, a .7, ad. 15; S.T. I-II, q. 55, a. 4, ad. 1.
This distinction between a notion of being and a concept of being helps to make sense of what Aquinas means in *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 2c, where he states that being is the first thing that falls under the apprehension simply (*ens est primum quod cadit in apprehensione simpliciter*). The idea of natural knowledge refers to the intellect’s ability to move towards something unknown from something previously known. Natural knowledge makes investigation possible for unlike investigation natural knowledge does not presuppose something previously known; rather, it is something known in itself.\(^8^0\) From Aquinas’s perspective all knowledge presupposes something naturally known as its starting point, and knowledge of being is the ultimate starting point. Being is the proper object of the speculative intellect, which it naturally intends, and it is also that which the intellect first knows, and it knows it naturally.

Aquinas also identifies other naturally known common concepts that are closely associated with the concept of being. Some of these concepts are attributes of being, including the terms whole and part, equality and inequality, both sets of which he lists in *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 2c. In his *Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, Aquinas lists several more terms that are proper attributes belonging to being-as-being, which include: whole and part, prior and subsequent, genus and species, sameness and otherness, likeness and

\(^8^0\) “But it is proper to human nature to reach the knowledge of truth by investigating and moving from one thing to another. . . . Hence it is that human nature, in so far as it comes in contact with the angelic nature, must both in speculative and practical matters know truth without investigation. And this knowledge must be the principle of all the knowledge which follows, whether speculative or practical, since principles must be more stable and certain. Therefore this knowledge must be in man naturally, since it is a kind of seed plot containing in germ all the knowledge which follows.” *De ver.* q. 16, a. 1c. See also *S.T.* I, q. 79, a. 8c; *S.C.G.* 1.57.
unlikeness, equality and inequality, privation and negation, and contraries. Since Aquinas explicitly recognizes that those principles containing such common terms as whole and part, equality and inequality are naturally known, it would seem that he considers all of these properties of being to be naturally known just like being is naturally known.

Now just because knowledge of being is natural, this does not mean that it simply pre-exists in our understanding; rather, we come know it and this cannot be done apart from the employment of cognitive operations and habits. It is clear that for Aquinas knowledge of the terms of first principles requires the habit of wisdom, which Aquinas associates with critical reflection of the intellect and judgment. So the knowledge of first principles requires knowledge of their terms, and even terms as universal as being, non-being, whole, part, etc., that are naturally known by the intellect, are known insofar as it is wisdom that judges them.

Just as the simple concept of being and its proper attributes are known naturally, so too are those complex principles whose terms include the concept of being, such as the principle of non-contradiction, and principles whose terms include the previously listed attributes of being. Besides a natural knowledge of being, the intellect also has a

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81 In IV Meta., lect. 4, §587. All of these terms, like the concept of being, transcend any genus. Thus, one should not confuse the terms whole and part in this context with quantitative whole and quantitative part as belonging to the genus of quantity.
82 “The truth and knowledge of indemonstrable principles depends on the meaning of the terms: for as soon as we know what is a whole, and what is a part, we know at once that every whole is greater than its part. Now to know the meaning of being and non-being, of whole and part, and of other things consequent to being, which are the terms whereof indemonstrable principles are constituted, is the function of wisdom: since universal being is the proper effect of the Supreme Cause, which is God.” S.T. I-II, q. 66, a. 5, ad. 4.
83 “Wisdom denotes a certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal law.” S.T. II-II, q. 45, a. 2. See also S.T. I, q. 1, a. 6.
84 “If simple apprehension of these terms is a matter of direct understanding, still it is wisdom that passes judgment on the validity of such apprehensions and so by validating the component terms validates even the first principles themselves.” Lonergan, Verbum, 80.
speculative natural habit of first principles that Aquinas names the habit of understanding (*intellectus*). This natural habit is a habit residing in the possible intellect.\textsuperscript{85} One must distinguish a natural habit from such acquired speculative intellectual habits as science and wisdom, which presuppose naturally known principles through which one grasps conclusions with certitude.\textsuperscript{86} This natural habit resides in the intellectual power and inclines it to grasp and assent to the truth of first principles\textsuperscript{87} apart from any discursive inquiry (i.e., reasoning from something known to something yet unknown by means of what is already known). While the habit is natural, knowledge of the terms of first principles comes through intelligible species received through insight into phantasms.\textsuperscript{88} The principles known by means of this natural habit are known naturally,\textsuperscript{89} immediately,\textsuperscript{90} *per se*,\textsuperscript{91} without error,\textsuperscript{92} most known,\textsuperscript{93} known first,\textsuperscript{94} most certain,\textsuperscript{95} known by all,\textsuperscript{96} known in the same way,\textsuperscript{97} cannot be unknown,\textsuperscript{98} cannot be extinguished from the mind,\textsuperscript{99} cannot be

\textsuperscript{85} S.T. I-II, q. 54, a. 4. Aquinas argues in *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 1, ad. 13 that the agent intellect, as an active power, cannot be the subject of habits. On the other hand, possible intellect as a passive power can receive, and therefore can be the subject of habits.

\textsuperscript{86} S.T. I-II, q. 57, a. 2c and ad. 1.

\textsuperscript{87} “For we are naturally inclined to those things of which we have natural habits – for instance, to assent to first principles.” *S.T.* I, q. 83, a. 2c.

\textsuperscript{88} S.T. I-II, q. 51, a. 1; see esp. *In Il Post. An.*, lect. 20, esp.n. 11. See also Frederick E. Crowe, “Universal Norms and the Concrete Operabile in St. Thomas,” in *Three Thomist Studies: Supplementary issue of Lonergan Workshop* 16, edited by Frederick Lawrence (Boston: 2000), 8-17.

\textsuperscript{89} The following list of texts is not exhaustive: *S.T.* I, q. 79, a. 12c.; *S.C.G.* 2.83.29, 31; *In De Trin.*, q. 6, a. 4c.

\textsuperscript{90} *De ver.* q. 11, a. 1c; *In Il Sent.*, d. 39, q. 3, a. 1c.

\textsuperscript{91} S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2c; *In I Post. an.*, lect. 5b; *S.C.G.* 2.47.3; 4.92.7.

\textsuperscript{92} S.T. I, q. 79, a. 12, ad. 3; *In III De anima*, lect. 15, §826; *S.C.G.* 3.46.4.

\textsuperscript{93} *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 5, §1181.

\textsuperscript{94} *In De Trin.*, q. 1, a. 3, ad. 3.

\textsuperscript{95} *S.C.G.* 4.54.4, *S.T.* I-II, q. 100, a. 11c.

\textsuperscript{96} *S.C.G.* 3.83.29; 3.47.7; 4.95.2; *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 2c, 4c.

\textsuperscript{97} *S.C.G.* 3.83.29; 3.85.7.

\textsuperscript{98} *S.C.G.* 2.83.9.

\textsuperscript{99} *In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 3, a.1c; *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 6.
doubted,⁹⁰ are immutable and infallible,⁹¹ are the seeds of knowledge,⁹² are seeds and ends of virtue,⁹³ and apart from knowledge of them nothing else can be known.⁹⁴ This natural habit of understanding presupposes as present some potentially intelligible object in the intellect made actually intelligible by the agent intellect, the understood conceptualization of which is the simple terms or concepts which as understood allows one to apprehend the truth of first principles.⁹⁵ In this way the natural habit is something caused by the light of the agent intellect in the possible intellect⁹⁶ as its first act,⁹⁷ and it is in virtue of the agent intellect that through this habit a person knows first indemonstrable principles.⁹⁸ This natural habit thus presupposes the light of the agent intellect. The light of the agent intellect is a natural causal source of knowledge of first principles insofar as it renders images actually intelligible⁹⁹ and rightly disposes one to assent to principles.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ S.T. I, q. 18, a. 3c.
¹⁰¹ Quod., bk. 10, q. 6, a. 1c; S.T. I, q. 79, a. 12, ad. 3; I-II, q. 94, a. 5c.
¹⁰² De ver. q. 11, a. 1c.
¹⁰³ De ver. q. 14, a. 2c.; S.T. I, q. 79, a. 12, obj. 3; I-II, q. 63, a. 1c.; II-II, q. 47, aa. 6-7; De virt., bk. 1, a. 8, ad. 10.
¹⁰⁴ Quod., bk. 10, q. 4, a. 1c.
¹⁰⁵ In III De anima, lect. 10, §729.
¹⁰⁶ “The habit (synderesis) is innate to our mind in a certain way on account of the light of the agent intellect, just as the habit of speculative principles like “every whole is greater than its part” and such things [translation mine].” (“sed per habitum, qui est quodammodo innatus menti nostrae ex ipso lumine intellectus agentis, sicut et habitus principiorum speculativorum, ut, omne totum est majus sua parte.”) In II Sent. d. 24, q. 2, a. 3.
¹⁰⁷ Sometimes (the possible intellect) is in the first act, which is knowledge, and thus it is called intellect in habit.” S.T. I, q. 79, a. 10.
¹⁰⁸ “Understanding (intellectus) is not taken here for the intellect itself but for a particular habit by which (quo) a man in virtute (ex virtute) of the active intellect, naturally knows indemonstrable principles.” In VI Ethic., lect. 5, §1179.
¹⁰⁹ In De Trin., q. 1, a. 3; q. 6, a. 4c; In IV Meta., lect. 6, §599; De ver. q. 11, a. 1c.; Quaes. disp. de an., q. 5c. See especially In II Post. an., lect. 20, where Aquinas comments on how universal knowledge is derived from knowledge of particulars. Aquinas consistently refers back to it whenever he discusses how the agent intellect causes knowledge of first principles in human understanding.
¹¹⁰ S.T. I-II, q. 56, a. 3c; De ver. q. 16, a. 3c; In De Trin., q. 6, a. 4c; In IV Meta., lect. 6, §599.
From the perspective of human cognitive operations, Aquinas holds that on the basis of two distinct operations of the intellect simple terms like being, whole and part, and principles derived from these simple concepts, are naturally known:

Now for the purpose of making this evident it must be noted that, since the intellect has two operations, one by which it knows quiddities, which is called the understanding of indivisibles, and another by which it combines and separates, there is something first in both operations. In the first operation the first thing that the intellect conceives is being, and in this operation nothing else can be conceived unless being is understood. And because this principle – it is impossible for a thing both to be and not be at the same time – depends on the understanding of being (just as the principle, every whole is greater than its part), then this principle is by nature also the first in the second operation in the intellect, i.e., in the act of combining and separating. And no one can understand anything by this intellectual operation unless this principle is understood. For just as a whole and its parts are understood only by understanding being, in a similar way the principle that every whole is greater than one of its parts is understood only if the firmest principles is understood.  

As this passage makes reasonably clear, the concept of being is known first absolutely by the first operation of the intellect, while its attributes are known subsequently. The principle of non-contradiction is based upon the previous knowledge of being, and is known naturally in the second operation of the intellect, that of composition and division. Notable as well, Aquinas points out that the principle that “the whole is greater than its parts” presupposes knowledge of both the principle of non-contradiction as well as knowledge of its own simple terms -- whole and part -- which in turn presuppose knowledge of being. So when Aquinas states in S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2 that a certain order is found among those things that are apprehended universally, within the order of things naturally known by the speculative intellect there is an order of knowing among both universal terms and principles ranging from what is first known to something that is known subsequently.

111 In IV Meta., lect. 6, §605.
Aquinas extends this order of knowledge to the universal good and principles derived from knowledge of the good. Just as universal being is the natural object of the intellect, so too is the universal good the natural object of the will. But the will cannot desire anything as its object unless this object is intelligibly presented to it by the intellect, and this is the task of the practical intellect. And, Aquinas argues, just as the concept of being and the principles based upon it are naturally known both immediately and per se by the speculative intellect, so too is the concept of the good the first to fall under the apprehension of the practical intellect, and is naturally known by all people:

*Insunt enim nobis naturaliter quaedam principia prima complexa omnibus nota.* . . .

*Et similiter in intellectu insunt nobis etiam naturaliter quaedam conceptiones omnibus notae, ut entis, unius, boni, et hujusmodi.*

While being is known absolutely first by the human intellect and the good subsequently, still the good is also naturally known first by the practical intellect.

There is in Aquinas’s thought a certain order of knowing that exists between knowledge of the concept of being, on the one hand, and other transcendental concepts like the true, unity, and the good. While the concepts of true and the good are really

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112 *S.T.* I-II, q. 1, a. 1c; q. 2, a. 8c.
113 *S.T.* I-II, q. 27, a. 2c; q. 9, a. 1 ad. 2. Love is for Aquinas the first inclinational movement of the appetite towards the good for which it has an aptitude or connaturalness, as “love implies a certain connatural or complacency of the lover for the thing beloved.” *S.T.* I-II, q. 27, a. 1c; also *S.T.* I-II, q. 23, a. 4c.
114 *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 2c.
115 “For belonging to us naturally are certain complex first principles known by all people. . . . And similarly naturally belonging in our understanding are also certain conceptions known by all people, such as being, unity, the good, and of such a kind as these.” Translation mine. *Quod.* , bk. VIII, q. 2, a. 4c.
116 For Aquinas’s explanation of how being is known prior to other transcendental concepts as unity, essence, the true, and the good, and the logical unfolding of this order, see *In I Sent.* , d. 19, q. 5, ad. 5; *De ver.* q. 1, a. 1c; q. 21, a. 1c.; *S.T.* I, q. 5, a. 2c, ad. 2 and ad. 4; *S.T.* I-II, q. 55, a. 4, ad. 1; *De pot.* , q. 9, a. 7, ad. 15. There is debate as to whether when Aquinas affirms being is first known he means logically first -- all other concepts are reducible to being -- or psychologically first -- all human knowledge presupposes actual knowledge of being before anything else can thence be known. Or, depending on the context, he may have both in mind. See Michael Tavuzzi, O.P., “Aquinas on the Preliminary Grasp of Being,” in *The Thomist* 51, n. 4 (1987), 555-574.
identical with the concept of being, they add to the term (nomine) ‘being’ a relation between being and the intellect (true) and being and the appetite (good), while unity, also really identical with being, adds to being the aspect being indivisible.\(^{117}\) While the concept of being can be understood apart from the concepts of the true or the good, the true and the good cannot be understood without the concept of being.\(^{118}\) The concepts of truth, unity, and the good therefore share with being something in common but add something consequent upon the concept of being.\(^{119}\) And like the simple concept of being, this knowledge is naturally grasped by means of the agent intellect illuminating sensitive experience and memory and making them actually intelligible.\(^{120}\) Such natural knowledge also requires the habit of wisdom residing in the possible intellect, which Aquinas regularly identifies with reflective understanding and critical judgment.\(^{121}\)

\(^{117}\) *De ver.* q. 1, a. 1c.
\(^{118}\) *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, ad.5. It is important to be clear on what is meant by saying that the concepts of the true and the good cannot be understood without the concept of being. This is *not* the equivalent to saying that we can know being apart from knowing truth. As Lonergan argues from his intentionality analysis, it is in first making a judgment of truth that we affirm that something exists (i.e., we know what ‘is’ by knowing that our hypothetical claims about the world are true). From this perspective one would say knowledge of being follows knowledge of truth. But what Aquinas is speaking of is something different, viz., being is the first concept. Here he is speaking about an order of knowledge with respect to the meaning of the concepts: the true, the good, and being. There is a movement in human learning from the simple to the complex in which the more complex presupposes what is less complex. Aquinas’s point is that forming a concept of each of these terms involves a priority of knowledge of the concept of being over the true and the good because the concepts of truth and the good presuppose being while adding to it the idea of a relationship between two things that have being. The concept of being is the most fundamentally basic of all concepts, even among the transcendental concepts. On the priority of being as a concept among concepts, but posterior to cognitional acts of understanding, see Lonergan, *Verbum*, 57.

\(^{119}\) *De ver.* q. 1, a. 1c.
\(^{120}\) *De ver.* q. 11, a. 1c; *In II Post. an.*, lect. 20.
\(^{121}\) *S.T.* I-II, q. 66, a. 5 ad. 4: “Now to know the meaning of being and non-being, of whole and part, and of other things consequent to being, which are the terms whereof indemonstrable principles are constituted, is the function of wisdom (*pertinet ad sapientiam*).”

While Aquinas holds that being and the good are naturally known, it is also true that how precisely Aquinas’ understands this to be the case is not so evident due to the fact that Aquinas does not address in sufficient detail how this natural knowledge is comes about cognitively. Aquinas often enough refers to Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* bk. 2, chp. 19 to account for how the terms of first principles are derived in some way from sense knowledge, but how concepts like being and good are specifically derived is not explicitly
Like the speculative intellect, the object of the practical intellect is the true, but it directs what it apprehends to operation. This means that the practical intellect is ordered to being not simply as being or as true, but being as desirable, the true good that satisfies natural desire. It is in this way Aquinas holds that being as good is the first thing apprehended by practical reason as its proper object. But in order for the practical intellect to apprehend the universal good or any particular instance of the good, and to command the will to choose the good as intelligibly grasped, the object must first be a potentially desirable object, and in order for this to be the case such an object must be the object of a natural inclination. The will is an appetitive intellectual power whose proper object is the universal good, which it naturally desires. The practical intellect naturally apprehends the good in general as the natural object of the will’s desire. And from this knowledge of what the good is, and from its contrary, viz., evil, in its operation of composition and division the

stated. Not surprisingly one finds a disparity of opinions among his interpreters as to how precisely this comes about. For present purposes it is only necessary affirm that Aquinas holds that being and the good are naturally known through an intellectual abstractive process that presupposes sensitive experience, and this knowledge is conceptualized and judged by the intellect. But because I will be later addressing Lonergan’s position on natural knowledge, something about this debate needs to be said.

One way of interpreting Aquinas is to hold that being is some conceptual content that is abstracted from the senses, which first encounter being, and is affirmed in a judgment. See Jacque Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, translated by Lewis Galantiere and Gerald B. Phelan (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1948), 25, also p. 26, n. 13. For a similar yet slightly different approach, Michael Tavuzzi suggests that by sense perception we encounter things in act (i.e., existing), from which the agent intellect excises the being-in-act and impresses it upon the possible intellect and thereby moving it to act as its primary actualization. See Michael Tavuzzi, “Aquinas on the Preliminary Grasp of Being,” 568.

In contrast to Maritain’s and Tavuzzi’s positions, Bernard Lonergan holds that the concept of ens, like all ultimate concepts, is “not just another concept, another quod quid est, any essence, when considered, not as some highest common factor nor again simply in itself, but in its relation to its own actus essendi, which is known in the act of judgment. Only on the condition that human intellect is potens omnia facere et fieri is the concept of all concepts really commensurate with reality – really the concept of ens. On the other hand, if intellect is potens omnia facere et fieri, then since we know by what we are, per se and naturally we do know ens.” Lonergan, *Verbum*, 97; see also 56-58, 69-70, 96-97; *Insight*, 393-396. The concept of being, since it is not knowledge of an essence, cannot be directly defined, but only indirectly defined as the objective of a pure and natural desire to know, as that which is affirmed in a totality of true judgments (Lonergan, *Insight*, 372-376). One thus “reflectively conceptualizes the preconceptual act of intelligence that utters itself in the concept of being,” Lonergan, *Verbum*, 58.

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122 De ver. q. 1, a. 1c.; S.T. I, q. 79, a. 11c.
practical reason naturally grasps that the good is that which ought to be pursued and done
and evil as that which ought to be avoided.\(^{123}\)

There are also within the human person a number of other natural inclinations
besides the desire of the will for the good in general that Aquinas identifies throughout his
writings, three of which are listed in *S.T. I-II*, q. 94, a. 2c. These objects of the natural
inclinations are ends of action, and therefore principles of human action. The ends of the
appetites are what the practical intellect apprehends, and according to Aquinas it
apprehends them naturally:

Since, however, the good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a
contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are
naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of
pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance.\(^{124}\)

The practical reason naturally apprehends not merely the good in general but also
those goods that are the ends of the various natural inclinations. The end (i.e., object) of
the appetite is the practical reason’s starting point, for “what is first desired provides the
end whence its deliberations begin.”\(^{125}\) If the end is the practical reason’s starting point,
just as being is the starting point for the speculative intellect, then this end must be the
practical intellect’s proper object. If the proper object of the practical intellect is the true
good, and what is primarily knowable to each power is its proper object,\(^{126}\) it follows that
the good is what is first known by the practical intellect. But there are a number of goods

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\(^{123}\) *S.T. I-II*, q. 94, a. 2c.
\(^{124}\) *S.T. I-II*, q. 94, a. 2c.
\(^{125}\) *In III De anima*, lect. 15, §821.
\(^{126}\) *In De Trin.*, q. 1, a. 3c.
that are the objects of the natural inclinations that are basic determinations of the good in general.

Just as there is an order of knowing of things naturally known within the speculative intellect between being and its attributes, and an order between the speculative intellect and practical intellect insofar as being is known before the good, similarly there is also an order of knowing in the practical knowledge of things naturally known. There is an order of knowing within practical knowledge between the general good and those first basic determinations of the good according to the natural particular ends of the human person. The practical intellect first knows the good in general before it knows particular basic human goods (e.g., truth, life, education of children, living in society with others, follow reason). Encompassed within the universal good desired by the will are certain basic particular determinations of the good that are the ends of the various other human inclinations:

Now this is good in general, to which the will tends naturally, as does each power to its object; and again it is the last end, which stands in the same relation to things appetible, as the first principles of demonstrations to things intelligible: and, speaking generally, it is all those things which belong to the willer according to his nature. For it is not only things pertaining to the will that the will desires, but also that which pertains to each power, and to the entire man. Wherefore man wills naturally not only the object of the will, but also other things that are appropriate to the other powers; such as the knowledge of truth, which befits the intellect; and to be and to live and other things like which regard natural well-being; all of which are included in the object of the will, as so many particular goods.¹²⁷

This passage is perhaps helpful in shedding some light on how is it that the practical intellect is said to naturally understand basic particular goods (e.g., truth, life, harmony with others, virtue, etc.), which are further determinations of the good in general. All natural

¹²⁷ S.T. I-II, q. 10, a. 1c.
knowledge of principles, both speculative and practical, presupposes some kind of experience. The experience required for the grasping of and apprehension of practical principles by the practical intellect is the experience of natural desires towards some object as its proper good. The good as desirable is practical reason’s starting point, and so it is of necessity conditioned by the natural inclinations from whence desire arises. This experience may be an intellectual desire for the good in general, which is the object of the will, which is experienced every time some particular good is sought after. Or it can be the experience of a more determinately directed natural inclination towards some particular good which the will also naturally desires as the good of the whole person. These particular apprehended goods, naturally grasped by reason as the debitum finem (due or right end), in turn are the starting points of practical reason’s discovery of more determinate principles as well as prudential deliberations about concrete actions. These judgments about basic goods of the human person, because they are starting points of more determinate knowledge of the good, as naturally known, are underived.

Through its first principle – the good ought to be pursued and done – practical reason commands as objects of pursuit those particular goods that are the objects of human striving, and commands their opposites to be avoided. These foundational preceptive judgments are the starting points of human action, and as such are the seeds and ends of the virtues.

Just as the speculative intellect has a natural habit by which it naturally and immediately knows first principles that are derived from the naturally known concept of being, so too does the practical intellect know first practical principles that belong to the
naturally known concept of the good as its fundamental parts. This natural habit Aquinas names synderesis. By means of the natural habit of synderesis the possible intellect is able to naturally and immediately grasp certain universal practical principles once its terms are known which are ordered to human action. The function of synderesis is “to incite to good, and to murmur at evil, inasmuch as through first principles we proceed to discover, and judge of what we have discovered.” These principles are naturally known, known per se, known immediately, known without error, most known, known first, most certain, known by all, known in the same way, no one is ignorant of them, apart from them no one can know anything, cannot be extinguished, cannot be doubted, are immutable and infallible, exist in the human agent as both seeds of knowledge and as seeds and ends of virtue. This habit is formed in the possible intellect by the causal agency of the agent intellect. Again, the light of the agent intellect is a natural causal source of knowledge of first principles insofar as it renders images actually intelligible and rightly disposes one to assent to first principles once its terms have been grasped. Through the habit of synderesis, the intellect naturally grasps in one single act of understanding several terms in one proposition.

In summary, in the order of human knowing both the simple concepts of being and the good and those principles that are based on these concepts are naturally known.

Aquinas argues that both simple and complex notions are known via the light of the agent

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128 See De ver., q. 16, a. 1c; S.T. I, q. 79, a. 12; In II Sent., d. 24, q. 2, a. 3c, ad. 1 and ad. 2.
129 S.T. I, q. 79, a. 12c.
130 Bernard Lonergan refers to this as the synthetic character of understanding: “The psychological fact that insights are not unrelated atoms, that they develop, coalesce, from higher unities, was familiar to Aquinas. . . . Knowledge of first principles is not exclusively a matter of comparing abstract terms or concepts; no less than the terms, the nexus between them may be directly abstracted from phantasm, so that, just as the concept, so also the principles may be an expression of an insight into phantasm.” Lonergan, Verbum, 65.
intellect. Most fundamentally, being and the good are naturally known, and through this knowledge of being and the good one naturally also grasps those principles based upon them (i.e., the principles of non-contradiction and the good ought to be done). Aquinas also grants that certain attributes of being and principles based on them are also naturally known by all, even if knowledge of them presupposes knowledge of being first. The first determinations of the good are also known naturally as the intellect apprehends the natural suitability of certain goods for the soul’s appetites. Thus, encompassed within the naturally known universal good, which the intellect naturally apprehends as the object naturally loved and desired by the will, are those particular goods that are the proper objects of those other natural inclinations that are subject to reason’s rule and measure.

Based upon its simple apprehension of various objects as due goods that are naturally desired by the appetites of the soul, the practical intellect is able to naturally grasp as per se and necessarily true those first principles of action. What ought I to seek? I ought to seek what is good and avoid what is evil. What goods are truly good for me to pursue, and what things are harmful to me? Seeking knowledge, living in harmony with others, seeking the preservation of my own being, etc., are true goods that I ought to seek and their opposites avoid. It is by means of the activity of the agent intellect and the dispositive function performed by the natural habit of synderesis in the possible intellect that one is able to arrive at these fundamental judgments: firstly, the principle that the good ought to be pursued and evil avoided; and secondly, the first most general determinations of the good.
The first principles known by the practical intellect are the starting points of all further knowledge that is reached through inquiry, deliberation, and teaching. They are the most common precepts of the natural law which are known naturally, known per se, known immediately, most known, known first, most certain, known by all, known in the same way, cannot be unknown, cannot be extinguished, cannot be doubted, are immutable and infallible, apart from which no further knowledge of the good can be known, are thus the seeds of moral knowledge, and seeds and ends of virtue in the moral agent.

2.3 Summary of Conclusions

The goal of this chapter has been to answer the question: what is the natural law in the thought of Thomas Aquinas? The first section of this chapter directly answers this question, showing that according to Aquinas the natural law is something pertaining to reason, a work of reason that measures and rules; that is, it is the activity of the agent intellect functioning in its capacity as the illuminating power by which the judgments regarding the good to be done and evil to be avoided are made. In this instance the natural law is identified with the activity of the practical intellect in knowing the good of human action. Furthermore, Aquinas also explicitly identifies the natural law with certain propositional judgments that are known and constituted by the practical intellect. But it is not just any kind of practical judgment that Aquinas has in mind, but especially those judgments that the intellect naturally assents to. These judgments are the primary precepts of the natural law.
There is also a sense in which one may speak of the natural inclinations as belonging to the natural law. Considered simply as such, they are not the natural law. But considering them as ruled and measured by reason, the natural inclinations make possible the intellectual ordering of the human agent toward the possible good. The object of practical reason is the object of desire, and it is through the natural inclinations of the soul’s appetites that the object of reason is apprehended as good and not merely as being. The natural inclinations are therefore necessary presuppositions of the natural law, and as ruled by reason they participate in the natural law.

The second section moves beyond identifying what the natural law is (and is not) and proceeds to analyze the nature of the primary preceptive judgments of the natural law as naturally and self-evidently known. What this section highlights is how these preceptive judgments are above all else naturally and self-evidently known by the practical intellect, and consequently are known with certainty, are necessary, and cannot be unknown, etc. The purpose of this analysis is to prepare the ground for chapter four in which Lonergan’s account of the natural law is featured, and where an apparent conflict between Aquinas and Lonergan arises precisely on the issue of the natural law as preceptive judgments ordering human actions to determinate particular fundamental goods.
Chapter Three

Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in the Eternal Law through the Natural Law

Attention now shifts to Aquinas’s understanding of the eternal law and how humans participate in it through the natural law. This chapter argues that for Aquinas humans participate in the eternal law in both a passive manner and an active manner. They participate passively in the eternal law through the natural inclinations that God has imprinted upon their natures. They participate actively in the eternal law through both the light of reason and through knowledge of the true good that ought to be done, especially the naturally known preceptive principles of the natural law.

This chapter consists of two main sections. In the first section, it is necessary to determine what Aquinas means, first, by participation. The notion of participation previously arose in chapter two while discussing the relationship between the natural inclinations and reason. This section presents a deeper analysis of participation in Aquinas’s thought, and especially highlights a specific kind of participation that is participation through causation. Secondly, this section also addresses what Aquinas means by the eternal law. The argument will show that the eternal law is a kind of exemplary causality that relates specifically to the good of creaturely operations. The eternal law pertains to God’s causal activity as wisely directing the world and all that exists within it to their proper acts and ends. It concerns the second perfection of creatures which regards creaturely operation. God not only creates all things, giving them their being (i.e., their first perfection), but he also moves all things so as to bring about their ultimate creaturely
perfection (i.e., their second perfection).\(^1\) He does this not only through his causal activity as the exemplar cause and the eternal law, but also as final cause and efficient cause. So whatever else human participation in the eternal law through the natural law is, it involves a relationship of causal dependence of humans upon God as the source of their movement toward their proper acts and ends.

The second section then proceeds to pull together some of the conclusions from chapter two about the nature of the natural law as the activity of reason and its naturally known judgments, and the participative role of the natural inclinations in reason, and thence explain how all of these relate to the eternal law by way of participation. The argument proceeds to show that for Aquinas humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law in both a passive and an active manner. Passively, humans participate in the eternal law through their natural inclinations, of which God is the efficient, final, and exemplary cause of both their being and their movement. Actively, humans participate in the eternal law by partaking of the divine reason through the created light of human reason and its naturally known judgments, which Aquinas calls a natural participation in the eternal law. This participation of rational creatures might also be called both an intelligible and intelligent participation in the eternal law, as distinct from a merely intelligible participation

\(^1\) Like the terms potency and act, the terms first and second perfection are relational terms: first perfection is to second perfection as potency is to act. Aquinas also speaks of the relationship between the substantial being (1st perfection) of a thing and its operation (2nd perfection) as a relationship between first act and second act, which consists in a relationship of potency to act between something’s act of being its further act of operation. The soul or substantial form of a thing gives being to a physical body, thereby constituting a composite thing in its first state of actuality, but is also related to its further operation as potency to act (In II De anima, lect. 1 §229; S.T. I, q. 76, a. 4 ad. 1; q. 77, a. 1c; S.C.G. 2.59.16; De pot. q. 1, a. 1). It should be noted, however, that the language of first and second act is often used to speak of at least one other kind of relationship, viz., the relationship between habit and operation (see In III De anima, lect. 8 §701; S.T. I-II, q. 49, a. 3 ad. 1; De ver. q. 2, a. 1 arg. 7).
in the eternal law that all non-intellectual creatures partake in. All things participate in the eternal law by being intelligibly ordered by God, but humans also intelligently order their own actions to pursue the good that God has intelligently designed them to pursue. God is the efficient, final, and exemplar cause of both the being and operation of human reason. Furthermore, the naturally known preceptive judgments of the natural law find their veridical causal ground in the eternal law that exists in the divine mind and is identical with God’s very being. Consequently, humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law in such a way that every aspect of their being is moved by God’s providential ordering, while doing so in a way that imitates and participates in God’s providential knowledge and freedom by being provident over their own actions. Human participation in the eternal law may be an active participation, but it is still a measured and ruled participation, viz., a participated autonomy.2

3.1 Eternal Law and Participation

All creatures are subject to divine providence and participate in the eternal law. Such is Aquinas’s argument in S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 2, explored in the previous chapter. The eternal law is imprinted upon all creatures and manifests itself in their respective inclinations toward their proper acts and ends (“ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in

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2 The basic structure of this chapter owes much to John Rziha, whose book Perfecting Human Actions: Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2009) is the most focused and thorough treatment of human participation in the eternal law that I am aware of. Like Rziha I employ a movement from a general understanding of participation in Aquinas to participation of all things in God through causation (i.e., God as efficient, exemplar, and final cause of first and second perfections), to a more narrowed focus upon participation in God as it relates exclusively to human persons, who participate both passively, through the natural inclinations, and actively, through human cognition. I also apply this same basic structure to Bernard Lonergan’s thought on human participation in the eternal law in chapter five.
Humans, as rational creatures, partake of the eternal law in a special way insofar as they partake of a share of providence through knowledge. They have a natural inclination imprinted upon them by which they are moved to act according to their own proper act and end, and this inclination is a rational inclination that underlies the human capacity to freely plan their own actions through knowledge. This inclination in humans pertains to the light of reason by which humans are able to discern good from evil by way of knowledge. Indeed, this light of natural reason, Aquinas states, is the imprint of the Divine light in which they participate. By means of the light of reason in them, which pertains to natural law, humans participate in the eternal law.

So what is this notion of participation? The previous chapter discussed Aquinas’s distinction between what is law by essence and what is law by participation, as well as what is rational by essence (i.e., reason) and what is rational by participation (i.e., natural inclinations). This section further elaborates how participation presupposes a contrasting relationship between something having some perfection in a partial and non-essential way that in another belongs in a complete and essential way. Furthermore, it adds that while Aquinas distinguishes between different ways in which something can participate in another, human participation in the eternal law through the natural law pertains to a specific kind of participation, namely, participation through causation.

Moreover, what, according to Aquinas, is the eternal law? How does God relate to creatures through this law? While the previous chapter to some extent touched upon these

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3 S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 2.
4 "Unde patet quod lex naturalis nihil aliud est quam participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura." S. T. I-II, q. 91, a. 2c.
questions, this section sets out to discuss thematically what God’s eternal law is, and does so by contextualizing it in its relationship to God’s exemplary, efficient, and final causality, as they each relate to those perfections of creatures that is their being and operation. The eternal law is a kind of exemplar causality insofar as it regards God as cause of the intelligible ordering of creatures with respect to their proper operations, which pertains to a creature’s second perfection. The eternal law is a *ratio* (i.e., an intelligently conceived intelligible order) conceived by divine wisdom that directs all things to their proper acts and ends through the intelligible structuring of their natures that is manifest in their natural inclinations (i.e., intrinsic principles of action). By means of their intrinsic intelligible structures, God moves all creatures to their proper acts and ends through his efficient causality. And by attaining their proper goods, all creatures attain God as the final cause of their being.

### 3.1.1 Participation

#### 3.1.1.1 Aquinas’s Notion of Participation

Aquinas’ most detailed discussion on the notion of participation is found in his *Expositio libri Boetii De ebdomadibus* within a discussion centering on Boethius’ distinction between ‘to be’ (*esse*) and ‘that which is’ (*id quod est*). Here Aquinas points out three differences between ‘to be’ and ‘that which is,’ the second of which is most pertinent to the present discussion.

In regard to this second difference, Aquinas points to a difference between the notions ‘to be’ and ‘that-which-is’ which is to be taken in accord with the notion of
participation. Here he defines and elaborates upon the notion of participation in the following manner:

For ‘to participate’ is, as it were, ‘to grasp a part’ (*Est autem participare quasi partem capere*). And therefore, when something receives in a particular way (*particulariter recipit*) that which belongs to another in a universal way (*ad alterum pertinent universaliter*), it is said ‘to participate’ in that, as human being is said to participate in animal because it does not possess the intelligible structure of animal according to its total commonality (*totam communitatem*); and in the same way, Socrates participates in human. And similarly, too, a subject participates in accident, and matter in form, because a substantial form, or an accidental one, which is common by virtue of its own intelligible structure, is determined to this or that subject. And similarly, too, an effect is said ‘to participate’ in its own cause, and especially when it is not equal to the power of its cause, as for example, if we should say that ‘air participates in the light of the sun’ because it does not receive that light with the brilliance it has in the sun.\(^5\)

Aquinas defines participation as something receiving in a particular (i.e., restricted) way that which belongs to another in a universal (i.e., unrestricted) way. Participation (*participare*) includes the idea of a part (*pars*). In the context of his discussion on ‘that-which-is’ (*id quod est*) and ‘to be’ (*esse*), ‘to be’ (i.e., the act of existence [*actus essendi]*) is related to ‘that-which-is’ (i.e., being [*ens*] or substance [*substancia*]) as something universal to something particular. But the particular participates in *esse* as that which receives *esse* in a partial way, but not in the fullness of the universality of *esse*, just as a human person does not possess the full intelligible structure of animal in its total commonality. So ‘that-which-is’ merely participates in ‘to be’ without the fullness of ‘to be’ in all of its total commonality. Hence, the notion of participation concerns a partial or limited receiving (*particulariter recipet*) in something of that which belongs to another in a universal or unlimited way (*ad alterum pertinent universaliter*).

\(^5\) *In De hebdomad.* 2 (60-80)
The above quote is also informative insofar as in it Aquinas gives three examples of ways in which something participates in another. His first example is that of either the species human (*homo*) participating in the genus animal, or a particular such as Socrates participating in a universal, such as humanity. The second example is that of either a subject participating in an accident, or matter participating in form. The third example is that of an effect participating in its cause, especially when the cause is equivocal or disproportionate with its effect in regard to the power of the cause in relation to its effect. As an example of causal participation, Aquinas speaks of the sun causing light in the air. The sun, which has light essentially, causes the form of light that is received by the air. But the light in the air is inferior in brilliance in comparison with the brilliance of the sun. The air has light, but only in a partial and non-essential manner, and thereby depends upon the sun for its light. Similarly, for creatures whose own *id quod est* is not their *esse*, they causally depend upon another who has *esse* by its very essence for their existence, and thereby participate in *esse* in a partial way.

These three examples, as examples, fall short of providing a full explanatory account of different senses of participation, but the third example does hit on the type of participation that this investigation is especially interested in. It is participation through causation that is the kind of participatory relationship that exists between the eternal law in God and the natural law in humans that is the focus of this investigation.\(^6\) Causal participation involves not merely a conceptual comparison of two things that share a given perfection but have it in qualitatively differing degrees of completeness. Rather, it involves

\(^6\) Here I agree with and follow John Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 30, see also n. 3.
a relationship of dependence of that which participates in a perfection upon that which has
the perfection essentially. The eternal law is, as Aquinas states, the ratio in the mind of God
by which he moves all things to their due ends, and all creatures participate in the eternal
law to the extent that the intelligibility of their operations are what they are because of
God’s wisely ordered and eternally conceived plan for them. 7 So to participate in the
eternal law through the natural law is to participate in the eternal law by way of causation,
and for Aquinas causation involves a real relationship of dependence of an effect upon its
cause. Participation pertains to a relationship of dependence involving the reception of
some intelligible perfection from another in partial and restricted manner what belongs to
its ultimate cause (i.e., God) in a universal and unrestricted manner. 8 But in order to fully
explain how creatures depend upon God for their finite and participated perfections
requires appealing to three different kinds of extrinsic causality.

3.1.1.2 Ways of Participating in God: Efficient, Exemplary, and Final Causality

The notion of participation through causation plays an important role in Aquinas’
theory of eternal law and its relationship to the finite created order. This relationship

7 “Wherefore as the type (ratio) of the Divine Wisdom, inasmuch as by It all things are created, has the
character of art, exemplar or idea; so the type of Divine Wisdom, as moving all things to their due end (ad
debitum finem), bears the character of law (rationem legis). Accordingly the eternal law is nothing else than
the type of Divine Wisdom (ratio divinae sapientiae), as directing all actions and movements.” S.T. I-II, q. 93, a.
1c.
8 As I conclude this discussion on Aquinas’s notion of participation, it is worth briefly highlighting the novelty
with which Aquinas appropriates the Platonic notion of participation and applies it to Aristotelian categories of
act and potency, which encompasses his (as some would argue) novel notion of esse as a principle of
perfection really distinct from essentia, which limits the act of existence in creatures. William Norris Clarke
highlights this novelty in Aquinas’s thought in a couple of essays. See William Norris Clarke, S.J., “Limitation of
Act by Potency in St. Thomas: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism,” in Explorations in Metaphysics: Being – God –
Thomas,” in Explorations in Metaphysics: Being – God – Person (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame
between Creator and creature is for Aquinas an extrinsic causal relationship that includes efficient, exemplary, and final causation. But before proceeding to elaborate upon these three forms of causation in relation to the eternal law, a few qualifying preliminary points of are in order.

First, according to Aquinas a cause is what is known whenever someone asks the question: “why”? But this “why” question yields four different types of answers. First, it may yield an answer to the question regarding what a thing is that is captured in a definition (formal cause). Secondly, it may yield an answer to the question regarding what it is that reduces something from potency to act (efficient cause). The efficient cause is that from which change takes place in something and so is the starting point of a motion or action that is received in a patient. Thirdly, it may yield an answer to the question regarding what it is that is capable of being reduced from potency to act (material cause). The material cause is that from which a thing comes to be and is intrinsic in it. Finally, it may yield an answer to the question regarding what for the sake of which (cuius causa alicuiq fit)

9 In II Phys., lect. 10 §239.
10 While I do not have the space to elaborate on this point at length, it is helpful to point out how Aquinas, following Aristotle, links together efficient causality with action and passion, and concomitantly with extrinsic predication. Three of the chief texts in which this is discussed are In III Phys., lect. 4-5; In III De anima, lect. 3; and In XI Meta., lect. 9. I will summarize some of the key aspects of Aquinas’s thought in the following points. (1) The act of the mover, which is in potency to move something, and the act of the mobile object, which is in potency to be moved by something, is really one act of motion (In III Phys., lect. 4 §306-307). (2) Action is the act of the mover and passion is the act of the mobile object. And while there is really only one act, conceptually (i.e., according to reason only), action and passion are distinct acts, for action has the aspect of being “from it” (ab eo, ab hoc) while passion has the aspect of being “in it” (in ipso, in hoc) (ibid., lect. 5 §§317, 320). (3) Efficient causality is unique among the four main types of causes (formal, material, efficient, and final) insofar as it is the only cause by which a thing can be denominated by something extrinsic because it causes something outside of the agent, while the other causes pertain to effects that remain inside the agent and thereby involve intrinsic predication (ibid., §322). And so whatever is predicated of the efficient cause or of its effect is predicated of them through extrinsic predication. (4) The extrinsic predication of action and passion presupposes efficient causality. Insofar as something is denominated by its agent cause, there is the predicament of passion (e.g., the dessert is made by the chef). Insofar as the agent cause is denominated by its effect there is the predicament of action (e.g., the chef makes the dessert) (ibid.).
something is (final cause), which in the order of intention is the reason for acting and in the order of execution is the terminus of the action.\textsuperscript{11} From the perspective of intention, then, the final cause precedes the efficient cause as the reason why there is a movement of efficient causality, while from the perspective of the terminus efficient causality precedes the final cause.\textsuperscript{12} In the case of a finite world of finite things, the “why” question arises whenever there is something that is what it is and does what it does that could have been otherwise (i.e., its being and operation is not self-explanatory). One must look beyond the finite thing itself to find the ultimate cause(s) and explanation of its being and operation. All such causal relationships involve a real relation of dependence of an effect upon its cause.\textsuperscript{13}

Among these four causes, two are intrinsic causes of things, viz., material and formal causes. Final causality and efficient causality, on the other hand, are extrinsic causes. But to these two extrinsic causes Aquinas also includes the exemplar cause. Like a formal cause, an exemplar is a form and pattern of a thing. But unlike a formal cause, it is extrinsic to a thing and “is that in likeness to which (something) is made.”\textsuperscript{14} So the exemplar cause is an extrinsic intelligible pattern that is the paradigm of the intelligible intrinsic structures (i.e., forms) existing in things as principles of their being and operations.

The notion of eternal law is for Aquinas very closely related to the notion of exemplar causality. In S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 1, Aquinas argues that the eternal law is a sovereign

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{11} \textit{In II Phys.}, lect. 10 §239.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{In V Meta.}, lect. 2 §775.
\textsuperscript{13} On Aquinas’s Aristotelian understanding of causality as a real relation of dependence of an effect upon its cause, see Bernard Lonergan, \textit{Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas}, CWL 1, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 67-73.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{In V Meta.}, lect. 2, §764.
\end{footnotes}
type (*ratio*) pre-existing in the mind of God. In order to facilitate understanding of what the eternal law is, he appeals to an analogy in which he draws a parallel between an exemplar in the mind of a craftsman and a law in the mind of a governor of a community. The eternal law and divine exemplars are ideas (*rationes*) existing in the mind of God and are the products of Divine Wisdom. Divine exemplars and the eternal law refer to the same thing, viz., the *ratio* existing in the mind of God, but differ conceptually. Exemplars pertain to an idea or types of things that are made by art (“*ratio eorum quae constituantur per artem*”), whereas law pertains to an idea as directive of the actions to be done by subjects belonging to a community so as to bring about the good of order of the community (“*ratio ordinis eorum quae agenda sunt*”).  

Both involve knowledge of an intelligible order, but the difference between them is one between a plan directed to *poiesis* (making) and a plan directed to *praxis* (doing). The Divine ideas (*rationes*), both as exemplars and as laws, are

15 S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 1.

16 Perhaps Aquinas's clearest distinction between making and doing is in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here Aquinas points out that it is the work of intellect to know order and that there are different types of order it knows. First, there is the order that reason beholds, namely, the order of things in nature. Corresponding to this order is the philosophy of nature that seeks to know this order. Secondly, there is the order that reason establishes in its own acts of consideration, namely, order between concepts and words that express concepts. Corresponding to this order is the rational philosophy of logic. Thirdly, there is the order that deliberating reason establishes in the operations of the will. Corresponding to this order is moral philosophy. Fourthly, there is the order that reason by planning establishes in external things. Corresponding to this order is the mechanical arts. The distinction between praxis and poiesis pertains to the third and fourth types of order that reason establishes. What distinguishes these two types of rational ordering concerns what it is that it orders. In praxis what is ordered is the intrinsic operations of the will, while in poiesis what is ordered is something extrinsic, viz., something produced. See *In I Ethic*, lect. 1 §§1-2.

Martin Rhonheimer elaborates on Aquinas's distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* by pointing out that the actions of poiesis are transitive actions whose effects remain outside of the agent. In praxis, on the other hand, the actions of praxis involves immanent actions whose effects make a person good or bad based on the choices one makes. Practical goods that are sought in praxis have the effect of remaining in the agent when they are attained. The perspective of praxis, which is the perspective of morality, "is not 'one's attitude to objects,' or 'affecting something outside of ourselves,' 'producing,' but rather, the realization of what we can be, to realize one's own human nature. Good action makes a person a good person; through just actions we become just men. In moral action we change first and foremost the little part of the world that we are." Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality*, 59. One can note the distinction between poiesis and praxis in the analogy of someone making cabinets for a living. While I as a craftsman engage in actions of making when I
causally related to creatures, just as a craftsman causes his product to be produced in accordance with a plan pre-existing in his mind, and as a governor causes his subjects to act toward their proper end and the good of the community in accordance with a pre-existing plan.

But while participation through exemplar causality is especially important for understanding participation in the eternal law, the notion of participation in God in a certain sense extends to God’s efficient and final causality as well. This is because a complete explanation of creaturely perfections must also take into account the reason for why God creates and moves things (final cause) the way he does (exemplar cause), and why creatures actually have being and are moved to operation (efficient cause). Exemplar causality alone does not explain the reason why God conceives such plan (ratio) and how he actually enacts it. It merely explains what he plans (i.e., an intelligible good) and how he plans it (i.e., wisely). A complete explanation requires consideration of God’s efficient and final causality.

Furthermore, the three of these forms of causality – efficient, exemplar, and final – extend both to the being (i.e., existence) and the operation of creatures in their relationship to God. These distinctions factor into the different ways in which humans participate in the eternal law with respect to their inclinations and through the cognitive operation by which humans grasp the good to be done and evil to be avoided.

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build cabinets (poiesis), I may also be engaging in praxis by making cabinets for the sake of providing for my well-being and the well-being of my family. By choosing to provide for me and my family by making cabinets I make myself a good person. By making cabinets well I do not make myself a good person; only a well-made cabinet and a (more) skilled cabinet maker.
Finally, the ideas or rationes in the divine mind serve three principal roles. First, they serve an epistemological role insofar as by means of them God knows creatures. Second, they serve an ontological or causal role insofar as it is in accordance with their intelligible likeness that God creates or moves all things to their proper ends. Third, they are veridical principles of all knowledge. The intellectual and rational judgments of finite creatures are true inasmuch as they share a likeness or similitude with the divine rationes. This similitude comes not from knowing the eternal law as it is in itself, for the eternal law is the divine essence and the divine essence cannot be known apart from the special grace that is the light of glory. Rather, the eternal law that is the measure of all truth is known by rational agents through knowledge of its effects in things, which are knowable in themselves by the light of human reason. This incapacity to know the eternal law in itself should not be confused with the ability to affirm its existence as the first cause of the truth in the order of things and in human intellects. The divine rationes functioning as causal

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18 “The types of the Divine intellect do not stand in the same relation to things, as the types of the human intellect. For human intellect is measured by things, so that a human concept is not true by reason of itself, but by reason of its being consonant with things, since an opinion is true or false according as it answers to the reality. But the Divine intellect is the measure of things: since each thing has so far truth in it, as it represents the Divine Intellect. . . . Consequently the Divine Intellect is true in itself; and its type is truth itself.” *S.T. I-II, q. 93, a.1 ad. 3.*

“A thing may be known in two ways: first, in itself; secondly, in its effect, wherein some likeness of that thing is found. . . . So then no one can know the eternal law, as it is in itself, except the blessed who see God in His Essence. But every rational creature knows it in its reflection, greater or less. For every knowledge of truth is a kind of reflection and participation of the eternal law, which is the unchanging truth.” *S.T. I-II, q. 93, a.2c.*

19 In the *Summa Theologiae* knowledge that there is an eternal law comes at the end of a lengthy discursive inquiry that first begins with the affirmation of the existence of God as the first cause of the being of all things, their perfections and their intelligible orderings to their proper ends, God’s goodness and knowledge, and culminates in the judgment that he must also order all things to their proper ends and ultimately to himself as their last end. If he does so then he must have the type or ratio of everything pre-existing in him that is the cause of the movements in things created. See *S.T. I, q. 2, a. 2; q. 6; q. 14; q. 22, a. 1.*
principles of the being and operation of creatures and as veridical principles of knowledge are the two chief concerns of this investigation.

3.1.1.2.1 First Perfections of Creatures and their Relations of Dependence upon God

The first perfections of beings regard creatures insofar as they have substantial being. In *S.T.* I, q. 44, Aquinas addresses a question regarding the procession of all creatures from God insofar as God is the creator of primary matter, the efficient cause, the exemplary cause, and the final cause of all beings. Over four articles Aquinas argues that the constitutive intrinsic metaphysical principles of all creatures have their ultimate source in God: essence and existence, matter and form, substance and accidents.

Before dealing with q. 44 on how all creatures proceed from God as Creator, it will be helpful to outline those intrinsic metaphysical principles that constitute finite creatures. According to Aquinas, every creature exists as a composite. The only simple being is God, whose essence is his existence and in whom there is not potency whatsoever. All other creatures partake of those various perfections to greater or lesser degrees that God has essentially and universally. They do so in accordance with their potential capacities to receive these perfections.

Aquinas’s distinction between first and second perfections of creaturely being and operation can be found in various places throughout his corpus. A non-exhaustive sampling of such texts include the following: *In II Sentences*, d. 15, q. 3, a. 1; *De ver.* q. 1, a. 10, ad. s.c. 3; q. 9, a. 1, ad. 7; *De malo*, q. 1, a. 5, ad. 2; *S.C.G.* 2.46.3; 2.73.11; 3.3.5; 3.25.3; 3.64.11; *S.T.* I, q. 48, a. 6, ad. 2; I, q. 73, a. 1c and ad. 1; III, q. 29, a. 2c; *In Gal.*, chp. 5, lect. 6.

Aquinas occasionally speaks of a three-fold perfection in creatures. See *S.T.* I, q. 6, a. 3c and his *In I Ethic.*, lect. 10, §119. Also notable is *S.T.* I, q. 73, a. 1, where Aquinas applies this twofold perfection (being and operation) to the universe as a whole, such that the first perfection of the completeness of the universe at its first founding on the seventh day of creation, while the attainment of the ultimate end of the whole universe at the consummation of the world is the second perfection.
For Aquinas there may be as few as one or as many as three different types of composition in creatures. These three compositions include essence and existence, matter and form, and substance and accident. All three kinds of composition consist of really distinct and opposed sets of co-principles related to each other as potency to act. Insofar as they are metaphysical principles of a thing, they are not real beings in themselves.\(^{21}\) Insofar as these are co-principles, they exist only in union with one another and not apart from the other.\(^{22}\) Insofar as these principles are caused by some ultimate cause, namely, God, they are not themselves created as distinct things, for only actual things are created; rather, they are con-created (concreari) by God in individual concrete beings.\(^{23}\) Finally, all of these principles are intrinsic principles of a creature’s being.

Two of these three sets of metaphysical co-principles are especially pertinent to Aquinas’s understanding of the first perfection of creatures through God’s extrinsic causality: essence and existence, and matter and form.\(^{24}\) First, all created beings are compositions of essence and existence. Aquinas understands all created reality as an ordered system of creatures arranged in a hierarchy of being ranging in degrees of participation in existence. The degree to which some creature participates in existence, the principle by which a thing is (quo est), is determined and limited by its essence which

\(^{21}\) According to Etienne Gilson, Aquinas’s real distinction between essence and existence was not maintained by philosophers who followed in his wake, including later Thomists. See Etienne Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers (Toronto: PIMS, 1952). See also W. Norris Clarke, S.J., The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 82, 85.

\(^{22}\) For a clear presentation of Aquinas’ thought in regard to all three of these sets of metaphysical principles, including the principles of act and potency, see W. Norris Clarke, S.J., The One and the Many. For a more detailed treatment, see also John F. Wippel, The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

\(^{23}\) “unde neque materia neque forma neque accidens propric dicitur creari, sed concreari. Proprie autem creatur res subsistens, quaecumque sit.” De pot., q. 3, a. 1 ad. 12.

\(^{24}\) The following summary of Aquinas on essence and existence, and matter and form, finds one of its most systematic treatments by Aquinas in De spir. creat., q. 1.
determines the kind of being of a thing is, i.e., what it is (quod est). In other words, all created things are composites of essence and existence, in which essence is related to existence as potency to act. The essence of a creature is its limiting principle, determining the degree to which this creature participates in existence and makes it some kind of being. Existence is the principle by which this creaturely essence actually exists. Essence and existence thus constitute the two most fundamental intrinsic metaphysical co-principles that are intrinsic causes of any creature’s being, spiritual or corporeal.

Secondly, insofar as a creature is a corporeal creature, a creature’s essence is a composition of two further intrinsic co-principles, namely, matter and (substantial) form, which are likewise understood to be related to one another as potency to act. The substantial form of a creature specifies what kind of being this creature is, while the matter is that which individuates the substantial form through quantitative material extension such that it is an individual instance of this kind of being limited to being here and not there, now and not then in the world.

The first perfection of a being pertains to each being insofar as it has being.25 Thus, the composition that pertains to first perfection of all creatures is that of existence, that by which (quo est) a thing is, and essence, which makes something what it is (quod est). For

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25 More fully it may be said that first and second perfections concern both the being and the goodness of a creature. The division between first and second perfection is, on the one hand, equivalent to Aquinas’s distinction between substantial good and accidental good. According to Aquinas, substantial goodness of a thing (i.e., a thing’s substantial being as good) is good in a certain respect whereas the accidental goodness of a thing (i.e., its operation) is good absolutely, for by its essential principles a thing is complete so as to subsist, but in order to stand in relation to things outside of itself it requires accidental principles added to its essence to further perfect it. It is also equivalent, on the other hand, to Aquinas’s distinction between substantial and accidental being. Substantial being, which is a creature’s first act, is being absolutely, whereas accidental being, which is a creature’s second act of operation, is being in a certain respect, for accidents can only subsist in a substance that has being in itself. See De ver. q, 21, a, 5.
corporeal creatures their essence is further constituted by the metaphysical principles of form and matter. However, while these intrinsic principles are also intrinsic causes of a thing’s being, these principles by themselves are not sufficient to explain a creature’s being. A creature’s essence is not its existence, and so it does not have existence necessarily. But all existent beings that do not have existence in a universal and essential way must be said to participate in existence. So the sufficient explanation of their being must be due to their participating in some cause whose essence is its existence, and so essentially self-subsistent. For Aquinas the one and only being whose essence is his existence is God, who is esse subsistens (subsistent existence) or ipum esse (existence itself), in whom the whole universal, unconditioned, and unrestricted perfection of existence resides. In other words, all creatures participate in existence insofar as God has existence essentially and chooses to extrinsically cause existence in them.

One kind of causation by which each creature participates in the perfection of existence, according to Aquinas, is efficient causality. In response to the question of whether it is necessary that every being be created by God acting as an efficient cause, Aquinas states the following in the respondeo of S.T. I, q. 44, a. 1:

Whatever is found in anything by participation, must be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially. . . . Now it has been shown above . . . when treating the divine simplicity that God is the essentially self-subsisting Being; and also it has been shown . . . that subsisting being must be one; as, if whiteness were self-subsisting, it would be one, since whiteness is multiplied by its recipients. Therefore all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation. Therefore it must be that all things which are diversified by diverse participation of being, so as to be

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26 See S.T. I, q. 3, a. 4; q. 4, a. 2; De pot., q. 7, a. 1; S.C.G. 1.21-22; 2.52; De ver. q. 21, a. 5; De spir. creat., q. 1; In De hebdl., chp. 2 (250); In Lib. de caus., IX (65-66); In VIII Phys., lect. 21 (1153); In De div. nom., V, lect. 1; Quod., 2, q. 2, a. 3c, ad. 2; 3, q. 1, a. 1; 12, q. 5, a. 5.
more or less perfect, are caused by one First Being, Who possesses being most perfectly.\textsuperscript{27}

According to Aquinas “it is becoming that everything should have an efficient cause in proportion to its being,”\textsuperscript{28} and only God, who is essentially self-subsistent being, is an efficient cause proportionate to cause the effect of the act of being in another. Elsewhere Aquinas argues that finite creatures are efficient causes as well, but they can only efficiently cause this act of being (\textit{essendi hoc}), or this being or such a being (\textit{hoc ens vel tale}). They cannot be the efficient cause of the act of being absolutely (\textit{essendi simpliciter}), which presupposes creation \textit{ex nihilo}.\textsuperscript{29} It is the nature of efficient causality to produce an intrinsic act of perfection in another, and in the case of all finite creatures God is the universal efficient cause causing them ‘to be.’ The degree of creaturely perfection depends upon the degree of existence they participate in, which God causes in them. Only one who is Subsistent Being itself can be the efficient cause of the participated being in others.

But the degree to which a creature participates in \textit{esse} depends on its capacity to receive it, and it is the essence of a creature that determines or limits the degree to which a creature participates in \textit{esse}. Here too God acts as a cause of a creature’s essence, but not simply as an efficient cause of that essence, but as an exemplary cause of it as well. If efficient causality corresponds with the power of God to make something to be, exemplar causality pertains to God’s wisdom in knowing what he can produce by his power. Aquinas considers an exemplary cause to be a kind of formal cause that is an extrinsic cause of a

\textsuperscript{27} S.T. I, q. 44, a. 1c.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., ad. 3.
\textsuperscript{29} S.C.G. 2.21.4.
thing, which is the intelligible pattern to which the essences and forms of finite created things bear a resemblance.\textsuperscript{30}

Thus, in q. 44, a. 3, Aquinas extends his discussion on the procession of creatures from God to that which links essence of a creature to a pattern or type existing in the divine mind, which is the exemplar cause of the created essence of a creature. He argues using the analogy of a craftsman making some artifact that in the production of anything there must be an idea in the mind of the producer that is the pattern based upon which the product will receive its determinate form. In God this determination of the form to be received by the thing produced is constituted and known by the divine wisdom.

Now it is manifest that things made by nature receive determinate forms. This determination of forms must be reduced to the divine wisdom as its first principle, for divine wisdom devised (\textit{excogitavit}) the order of the universe, which order consists in the variety of things. And therefore we must say that in the divine wisdom are the types (\textit{rationes}) of all things, which types we have called ideas – i.e., exemplar forms existing in the divine mind . . . . And these ideas, though multiplied by their relations to things, in reality are not apart from the divine essence, according as the likeness to that essence can be shared diversely by different things. In this manner therefore God Himself is the first exemplar of all things. Moreover, in things created one may be called the exemplar of another by the reason of its likeness thereto, either in species, or by the analogy of some kind of imitation.\textsuperscript{31}

Here Aquinas argues that corresponding to the determinate form of a thing created by God is a divine idea (\textit{ratio}) or exemplar that is thought out (\textit{excogitavit}) by the divine wisdom.

Furthermore, although these ideas are many due to the relationship of the divine intellect

\textsuperscript{30}“In another sense cause means the form and pattern of a thing, i.e., its exemplar. This is the formal cause, which is related to a thing in two ways. In one way it stands as the intrinsic principle form of a thing, and in this respect it is called the formal principle of a thing. In another way it stands as something which is extrinsic to a thing but is that in likeness to which it is made, and in this respect an exemplar is called a thing’s form.” \textit{In V Meto.}, lect. 2, §764.

\textsuperscript{31}S.T. I, q. 44, a. 3.
to things, in God these ideas are really one and are identical with the divine essence.\textsuperscript{32} Thus, this one ratio is conceptually multiplied only insofar as the divine essence can be imitated or participated in by finite creatures.\textsuperscript{33} Creatures thereby bear an imperfect likeness to the divine essence, not merely individually, but especially as existing in an intelligible universal order that is a good of order.\textsuperscript{34} All creatures therefore share in varying degrees of likeness to God insofar as they bear some likeness to God’s essence. The entire universal order and all the creatures in it participate in the divine exemplar, each participating in some perfection pre-existing in the divine mind as a divine ratio, and so in the perfection of the divine essence itself, in which all perfections exist.\textsuperscript{35}

Finally, all creatures participate in God in their first perfection through final causality. If efficient causality especially corresponds with God’s power to create ex nihilo and give being to creatures, and exemplar causality especially corresponds with divine understanding or wisdom that is the source of the order of the universe and the kind of beings that exist in it, then final causality especially corresponds with the divine will that freely chooses to create a world of creatures for the sake of communicating his own goodness to others.

In S.T. I, q. 44, a. 5, Aquinas argues that God is the final cause of the being of all creatures through the act of creation. While every agent acts for an end, it is clearly not the case that this applies to God in the same way it applies to creatures. All creatures act

\textsuperscript{32} “God is the similitude of all things according to His essence; therefore an idea in God is identical with His essence.” S.T. I, q. 15, a. 1, ad. 3.

\textsuperscript{33} There is no real multiplicity in God, and all that is predicated of God in regard to his effects are predicated of him only extrinsically due to his agent causality, for his causal actions involve no real change in God but in creatures only.

\textsuperscript{34} See S.T. I, q. 15, a. 2c.

\textsuperscript{35} See S.T. I, q. 14, a. 6c.
according to some natural inclination, an appetite, a desire within them as agents for some end in order to attain some perfection they have potency for, but which they lack. By attaining some end one attains some perfection of their nature, and thus a good. But there is no potency in God. God is pure act and all perfections belong to him essentially. So when God acts so as to create something, God does not act out of a necessity of his nature, but according to intellect and will. The reason why God creates at all, the final cause of his creativity, is, according to Aquinas, the intention to communicate his goodness:

But it does not belong to the First Agent, who is Agent only, to act for the acquisition of some end; He intends only to communicate His perfection, which is His goodness; while every creature intends to acquire its own perfection, which is the likeness of the divine perfection and goodness. Therefore the divine goodness is the end of all things.\(^{36}\)

God who is good by his very essence, which is identical with his existence, freely chooses to create, and in choosing to create he communicates his goodness to all creatures. All creatures therefore participate in God’s goodness in a partial or restricted manner by the very fact that they have subsistent being. All creatures are good insofar as they partake of existence and thereby show a likeness unto God who exists essentially, for existence which comes from God is a good. So everything is good insofar as God freely chooses to communicate to each thing the good of being whereby each being has its own substantial form and act of existence and thereby bear a likeness unto God.\(^{37}\)

Along with their act of existence, each creature also participates in God’s goodness through its form or essence. In giving to each creature its own form or essence each

\(^{36}\) S.T. I, q. 44, a. 5c.

\(^{37}\) "But everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it exists; for it is existence that makes things actual." S.T. I, q. 5, a. 1c. The goodness spoken of here is the ontological or substantial goodness of things, and is not to be confused with the operational goodness of intellectual creatures that is called moral goodness. See De ver. q. 21, a. 5.
creature shows forth a likeness to God. Since God’s essence is also his goodness, whatever is like him in his essence is also like him in his goodness. Thus, the first perfection of creatures includes the goodness that comes to them by their form or essence, for by their forms or essences they participate in the rationes in the divine mind.\footnote{“If, therefore, the first goodness is the effective cause of all goods, it must imprint its likeness upon the things produced; and so each thing will be called good by reason of an inherent form because of the likeness of the highest good implanted in it, and also because of the first goodness taken as the exemplar and effective cause of all goodness.” \textit{De ver.} q. 21, a. 4c.}

Taken together, all three forms of causation are integrally interrelated. As final cause God willingly desires and freely chooses to communicate his goodness to creatures so they too can participate in his goodness, and so provides the reason why all finite things exist as they do. Through exemplar causality God knows his own essence, which is the fullness of perfection, and thereby knows all the ways in which he can communicate the likeness of his perfection on to a created good of order made up of many grades of creatures. Through his power as an efficient cause, he creates a world order made of up finite creatures, upon which he bestows their proper forms and participated acts of existence as the first agent cause.

\textbf{3.1.1.2.2 Secondary Perfections and Their Cause}

The principle \textit{agere sequitur esse} (acting follows existing) is a staple principle for Aquinas, for nothing can operate unless it first exists.\footnote{See \textit{In III Sentences}, d. 3 q. 2 a. 1c; \textit{S.C.G.} 3.69.20; \textit{S.T.} I-II, q. 4 a. 5, arg. 2; \textit{Quod.} 10, q. 3 a. 6c.} Aquinas also argues in various places that every substance exists for the sake of its operations, which is its greater perfection and what makes it good without qualification.\footnote{See \textit{S.T.} I, q. 105, a. 5c; \textit{S.C.G.} 3.64.11; 3.113.1, \textit{De ver.} q. 21, a. 5c; \textit{De malo}, q. 1, a. 5, ad. 2; \textit{In Gal.}, chp. 5, lect. 6.} Furthermore, from the
perspective of human knowing, it is through a thing’s operation that its powers, substance
and existence are known.\textsuperscript{41} If the first perfection of a thing regards its existence, the second
perfection of a thing regards its operation. And from Aquinas’s perspective, existing
substance is related to the actuation of its accidental capacities and habits as potency to
act, for the end of substance is its operation in the same way that the end of potency is act.

Here one finds a third type of composition of opposed but complementary intrinsic
metaphysical co-principles that constitute a created being and are related to one another as
potency to act, viz., substance and accident. What is a substance? Relying on Aristotle’s
*Metaphysics* V, Aquinas points out in numerous places in his writings that the many senses
of substance are reducible to two, viz., either an individual concrete thing or an essence
that may be otherwise called nature or quiddity.\textsuperscript{42} The sense of substance being used here
is that of individual substance that is variously called hypostasis, suppositum, and first
substance. These two senses of substance are closely related for first substances are
concrete particular instantiations of essences, quiddities, or common natures. A first
substance is what it is due to its essence.

Substance, as first substance, is a subsistent being, a thing that exists in itself and
maintains its self-identity while being capable of undergoing accidental change.\textsuperscript{43}

Substance in this primary sense has a couple of distinctive characteristics, viz., that it
subsists and that it sub-stands. First, it includes the aspect of that which has being or

\textsuperscript{41} See S.T. q. 77, a. 1, ad. 7; S.C.G. 2.79.4; 2.94.5.

\textsuperscript{42} See *In V Meta.*, lect. 10; *De pot.*, q. 9, a. 1c; S.C.G. 4.49.13; S.T. I, q. 29, a. 2c; III, q. 2, a. 6, ad. 3; q. 17, a. 1,
ad. 7.

\textsuperscript{43} Among the several characteristics of substance, Aristotle identifies its most distinctive mark as that “while
remaining numerically one and the same, it is capable of admitting contrary qualities.” Aristotle, *Categories*,
chp. 5, 4a, 10.
subsists in itself (per se subsistens), and so exists in itself and is capable of existing apart from other things as being distinct from them. This stands in contrast with an accident, which is that which has being in another (in alio), namely, in a substance as its subject. A substance is that which is apt to exist in itself and not in another. It is an instance of a concretely existing individuated essence.

Secondly, substance, as it relates to finite creatures, is that which sub-stands (i.e., stands under) accidental changes. Viewed from the perspective of its relationship to accidental forms (accidere: to happen to) which it receives, it is a subject that unifies different accidental attributes and properties held simultaneously here and now. It is this perduiring intelligible unity that is a thing that undergoes changing phases, standing under these changes while being acted upon, receiving accidental forms as further perfections. Moreover, substance is a principle of limitation of an accidental form. So, for example, an accidental form like whiteness that by its nature is universal becomes ‘this white thing’ by being received in a substance (e.g., Socrates is white) as its subject. Not only then is a substance a unity that perdures, it is also the unifying center of accidental change.

An accident, on the other hand, is that which perfects a substance properly disposed to receiving it. Substance stands to the accidental form as potency to act, as that which is capable of receiving some new perfection of its being. Therefore, a substance simply as

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44 See In IV Meta., lect. 1, §542; In VII Meta., lect. 1, §1254.
45 William Norris Clarke points out that for Aquinas the two main roles of substance (subsisting and sub-standing) have two notably different qualities: one dynamic and the other static. As a concretely instantiated nature (i.e., an active or passive principle of movement and rest) that is a perduiring self-identity through accidental change, substance performs a dynamic role as “a centre of acting and being acted upon,” a “dynamic act of presence ordered naturally to flow over into self-expression, self-communicative action.” Self-identity is not immutability but “the active power of self-maintenance in exchange with others.” On the other hand, being the unifying centre of many different attributes and properties, it performs a static role. W. Norris Clarke, The One and the Many, 129-130.
having its own act of existence is a first perfection of a creature by which a thing is present in the world, but it exists for the sake of its further perfection, its second perfection, which is its operation or the actualization of its accidental forms. And by being moved to operation by another, a substance is further rendered capable of communicating its perfection to others.  

So the operation of a creature is a further perfection of a creature beyond the perfection of a creature’s mere substantial being, which is its first perfection. But this second perfection is conditioned and so ultimately depends upon the extrinsic causal activity of particular causes, and most especially the universal cause that is God. God is the efficient, exemplary, and final cause that ultimately brings about the fulfillment of these conditions.

Every creature acts in accordance with the form it receives for some end proper to its own form, but the end for which it moves, and the power by which it operates, and the ground of the intelligibly by which it operates, comes from God as final, efficient, and exemplar cause.

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46 Concerning the perfection that operation adds to being, see: *S.T.* I, q. 105, a. 5c; *S.C.G.* 1.45. 4, 6; 3. 113.1; 3.64.11.

That by its operation a substance, insofar as it is in act, communicates its likeness to others, see: *De pot.*, q. 2, a. 1c; *S.T.* I, q. 19, a. 2c.

For Aquinas the operation of a creature has a twofold end: (1) it operates so as to receive its own perfection (i.e., intrinsic action), and (2) it operates so as to communicate its own perfection on to others (i.e., production of another as other). As Norris Clarke puts it: “It follows that, for Aquinas, finite, created being pours over naturally into action for two reasons: (1) because it is poor, i.e., lacking the fullness of existence, and so strives to enrich itself as much as its nature allows from the richness of those around it; but (2) even more profoundly because it is rich, endowed with its own richness of existence, however slight this may be, which it tends naturally to communicate and share with others.” W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being*. The Aquinas Lecture, 1993 (Marquette University Press, 2008), 10.

47 See *S.T.* I, q. 105, a. 5c.
It is God’s efficient causality that ultimately effects the movement of all creatures to their operations (i.e. second act). The world consists of a hierarchy of finite causal agents moving each other to action. Insofar as a creature is in potency to its operation it cannot move itself to its own operation. Such an order of finite causal agents is not sufficient to explain the movement of all creatures to their proper operation, since all creatures partake of potency to some extent. A sufficient explanation is found only in an agent who is pure infinite act whose operation is identical with his essence, and this agent is God. Thus God, who is actus purus, is the ultimate source of operation in the world, even though his causal activity upon all creatures is typically performed medially through the instrumental causal agency of secondary causes.  

By his efficient causal activity, God applies all creatures to their proper operation. In the case of humans, this means that God moves them to their proper operations through their powers. With respect to human intellects, “since in each order the first is the cause of all that follows, we must conclude that from Him (i.e., God) proceeds all intellectual power.” Through the power of the light of the human intellect, humans participate in the light of the divine light, which is the source of its power to attain truth and knowledge. Similarly, with respect to the human will, God is the agent cause that moves the will to its

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48 According to Aquinas God immediately governs all things insofar as he conceives a plan for how the world is to be governed, but for the execution of that plan God governs some things through the mediation of others ("Deus gubernat quaedam mediantibus alis"), establishing some things as causes of the governing of others. S.T. I, q. 103, a. 6. Aquinas’s qualifying term ‘quaedam’ (some things) in reference to God’s execution of his governance makes room for those peculiar cases where God does act immediately upon creatures, such as in God’s original act of creation ex nihilo. See S.T. I, q. 104, a. 2 ad. 1.
49 S.T. I, q. 105, a. 3c; also S.T. I, q. 79, a. 4c.
50 For just a few among the many numerous places where Aquinas speaks of the light of the human intellect participating in the light of the divine intellect as the source of its own power, see S.T. I, q. 79, a. 4; q. 84, a. 5; q. 89, a. 1; I-II, q. 19, a. 4; q. 91, a. 2.
proper end, for it is God who creates the power of willing, which is an interior intellectual
inclination towards the universal good.\textsuperscript{51}

As exemplary cause, God is the source of the intelligibility of the operational
movements of all creatures to their proper ends by the \textit{ratio} in the divine mind. It is this
kind of exemplar causality that is properly speaking God’s eternal law and providence.
Aquinas analogously relates it to the human virtue of prudence, by which one directs one’s
action to some end.\textsuperscript{52} If the first perfection of creatures through God’s exemplar causality
consists in the participation of creatures in the divine \textit{ratio} through the \textit{intelligible} natures
given to them, here the secondary perfection of the operation of a creature consists in each
creature’s being \textit{intelligibly} moved to their proper end as established by the eternal law.
The second perfection concerns the actualization of potentialities belonging to each
creature. This intelligible ordering of the distinctive kinds of operations of all things towards
their proper ends pre-exists as a \textit{ratio} in the divine mind, which is the eternal law.\textsuperscript{53} The
intrinsic ground of a thing’s operation comes from its form or essence, which is the source
of its powers (e.g. nutritive, sensitive, and intellective) and their respective natural
inclinations towards their proper goods. So whereas the exemplar cause of the first
perfection in a creature pertains to the divine type that is the unconditioned intelligible
ground of every creature’s form or essence, the exemplar cause of a thing’s secondary
perfection pertains to the divine type that is the unconditioned intelligible ground of a

\textsuperscript{51} See \textit{S.T.} I, q. 105, a. 4c.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{S.T.} I, q. 22, a. 1c.
\textsuperscript{53} “(S)o the type (\textit{ratio}) if the Divine Wisdom, as moving all things to their due end, bears the character of law.”
\textit{S.T.} I-II, q. 93, a. 1c. “Just as the mode of the first act of \textit{esse} is determined by participation in God as
exemplary cause, the mode of all secondary acts are determined by participation in the eternal law. In other
words, God moves creatures to cause acts of a particular type that are like the \textit{ratio} in the divine mind.” Rziha,
\textit{Perfecting Human Actions}, 63.
thing’s intelligible ordering towards its proper end, which is the object and the proper good of a natural inclination in a thing. And again, Aquinas identifies this peculiar kind of participation of all creaturely operations in the rationes of the divine mind with participation in the eternal law.

Human action is at least in part intrinsically grounded in various natural inclinations that emerge from different powers within the soul. But as rational creatures, mature human action does not simply proceed towards some good in conformity with the natural inclinations in a determined manner, but freely through intellectual knowledge of both ends and means, and willing consent to a course of action. Hence God instrumentally moves humans through their own proper intellectual and volitional powers and operations, and these acts in turn often presuppose sensible natural inclinations in response to sensible apprehensions. With respect to the human intellect, God moves the intellect through intelligible species, which is a formal principle of actual understanding, the likeness of the thing understood. The intelligible species by which the intellect understands is itself a participation in the ratio of the divine intellect:

In like manner, since He is the First Being, and all other beings pre-exist in Him as their first cause, it follows that they exist in Him, after the mode of His own Nature. For as the intelligible types of everything (rationes rerum intelligibles) exist first of all in God, and are derived from Him by other intellects in order that these may actually understand; so also are they derived by creatures that they may subsist.54

By knowing things through their intelligible species, the human intellect knows truths about things that pre-exist in the divine mind. Knowledge of the good also involves understanding by means of some intelligible species, although in this case the intelligible species that is the

54 S.T. I, q. 105, a. 3c.
likeness of the object desired has the aspect of an end. In intelligently grasping what the
good is to be done and the evil to be avoided, as Aquinas points out, humans participate in
the eternal law by coming to know the eternal law mediately through secondary causes.\footnote{55}

Finally, God is the final cause of human operation. By means of its operation a finite
creature is made perfect absolutely (\textit{simpliciter}), and God is the final cause that brings
about this ultimate perfection in the creature. Any subsistent thing that is in potency to its
operation is in potency to some further act of perfection, and this perfection is a good.
Anything is a good insofar as it is desirable to something as an end, and is thereby a cause of
another’s movement from potency to act. God is the final cause of all things insofar as he is
the object of all the striving of all things, the desirable good they seek to possess.

It is important to note that Aquinas distinguishes between two different senses in
which God is the end of creaturely operations. First, God is the final cause of creaturely
operations insofar as he is an object of desire – the thing itself that is desired. Secondly,
God is the end of creaturely perfection as something attained or possessed through
creaturely operations. In the former case, God is the uncreated good that is the object and
cause of creaturely striving. In the latter case, the good that is attained is some created
perfection that is the attainment and enjoyment of God.\footnote{56} To speak of God as the final
cause of creaturely operation is to speak of God as the uncreated good that is the object of
creaturely striving, not a created good resulting from possessing God. Nonetheless, it is in
possessing God according to its own manner of being and operation as its true good that

\footnote{55} “But every rational creature knows it (i.e., the eternal law) in its reflection, greater or less. For every
knowledge of truth is a kind of reflection and participation of the eternal law.” \textit{S.T. I-II}, q. 93, a. 2c. See also
\textit{S.T. I}, q. 84, a. 5c; \textit{I-II}, q. 93, a. 3c.

\footnote{56} See \textit{S.T. I-II}, q. 1, a. 8; q. 2, a. 7; q. 3, a. 1.
the creature attains its highest perfection and happiness, which is a created perfection in
the creature itself.

But all creatures attain God as their ultimate end by attaining their proper ends in a
manner that is in accordance with their natures:

All things desire God as their end, when they desire some good thing, whether this
desire be intellectual or sensible, or natural, i.e., without knowledge; because
nothing is good and desirable except forasmuch as it participates in the likeness to
God. Since in pursuing created particular goods, all creatures are ultimately pursuing God since all
things are objects of desire because they participate in the likeness of God, who is goodness
itself. In attaining their own proper ends through their operations by being moved by God
as the final cause, all creatures participate in God’s goodness who is actus purus. A creature
participates in God’s goodness to the extent that it bears a likeness to God, and since God
is pure act, the more a creature is in act the more it participates in God’s goodness. In other
words, all creatures are like God insofar as they are active.

Furthermore, Aquinas also holds that what is most like God and participates in his
goodness is the universal order itself, within which all creatures are ordered to each other
as particular agents and particular goods. All creatures are, as it were, particular goods
existing within the common good of order of the world. This means that every individual

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57 S.T. I, q. 44, a. 4 ad. 3.
58 “Furthermore, everything tends through its motion or action toward a good, as its end... Now a thing
participates in the good precisely to the same extent that it becomes like the first goodness, which is God. So,
all things tend through their movements and actions towards the divine likeness, as toward their ultimate
end.” S.C.G. 3.19.5.
59 While all creatures participate in God’s goodness through their operations, not all operations are equally
perfect. So, for instance, Aquinas argues that creatures whose operations are the cause of others attain the
divine perfection in a more perfect way as God’s coworkers. See S.C.G. 3.21; 2.46.4.
creature exists for the sake of the good of the world community. As each creature pursues its own perfection through its proper operation, it also contributes to the common good that is the order of the universe as a whole that God wisely planned and willed to create and sustain as a good which is most like his own goodness among all imperfect created goods. It is also through this good of order that the operations of creatures are brought from potency to act through instrumental causality of secondary causal agents as they operate in accordance with their own proper ends.

The highest operations in humans flow from their intellectual and volitional capacities, by means of which they act freely in the pursuit of their proper and ultimate good. Through intelligence and will humans participate in God, whose being is identical with his act of understanding and his will. But since the end of human intellect is universal truth and being and the end of the will is the universal good, and the universal truth, being and good is God, the attainment of God is the ultimate end of human striving. God is the ultimate good of human striving, and thus the final cause that moves the human intellect and will to their proper operations. God is the universal good that totally satisfies the intellectual desire to know being and the will’s desire for the universal good. While any attainment of knowledge of being proportionate to human knowing or any willed particular good proper to the human person is a participation in God’s goodness and attains God insofar as these proper goods bear some likeness to God, human intellect and will are also capable of seeking universal being and universal good that is God himself and thereby be

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60 See S.C.G. 3.64.10.
61 S.T. I, q. 105, a. 4c; I-II, q. 1, a. 8; q. 9, a. 6; q. 94, a. 2c.
truly united with God cognitively and volitionally and thereby perfectly fulfilled and perfected.\textsuperscript{62}

In summary, God moves all creatures to their proper acts and ends as efficient, exemplary, and final cause. The eternal law is especially associated with exemplary causality insofar as it is a \textit{ratio} conceived by divine wisdom and exists in the mind of God. It differs from exemplar causality insofar as it concerns a plan by which God orders all things to their proper acts and ends, and towards the good of the universe, whereas exemplary causality is the eternal \textit{ratio}, comprehensively encompassing all things made or can be made by the divine power. Furthermore, all of the different types of divine causation are integrally interrelated. God is the source of movement of things as author of their powers (efficient causality). All created powers and inclinations in creatures have intrinsic principles of movement in them by which they are able to attain their proper goods in accordance with a divine plan (eternal law). And in pursuing and attaining their proper goods, they also pursue and attain the ultimate good of their perfection who is God himself (final cause). This second perfection of creatures through their operation is a participation in God who is pure act and goodness itself.

\subsection*{3.1.2 Summary of Participation and Eternal Law}

The aim of this first section of this chapter is to present what Aquinas means by his notions of participation and eternal law. According to Aquinas participation is a kind of reception of something in a particular way of that which belongs to another in a universal way. This general definition of participation fits a number of different kinds of relationships

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{62} S.C.G. 3.25.8; S.T. I, q. 105, a. 2c.}
between things. What this investigation seeks to highlight is how humans participate in the eternal law, which is a very specific kind of participation. The kind of participation involved in this relationship is participation through extrinsic causation.

But there are different kinds of extrinsic causal relationships between God and humans, viz., efficient, exemplary, and final causality, that together provide the ultimate explanation of a every finite creature’s being and operation. The argument of this section has shown that human participation in the eternal law is especially associated with exemplar causality, while at the same time showing how it is also distinct from exemplary causality in a certain respect. Exemplary causality especially pertains to the first perfection of creatures that concerns their substantial being. The kind of creatures that they are as determined by their substantial forms correspond with some ratio in the mind of God. The eternal law, like the exemplary cause, is also a ratio in the divine mind, but it is a ratio that corresponds with creaturely operation. It is a rule and measure of creaturely action that orders them to their proper acts and ends. This participation in the eternal law is also integrally related to God’s efficient and final causality as the source of creaturely operations. The ultimate reason why all things are moved to their own perfection is because they seek to attain God as their ultimate perfection (final cause). Creatures are able move to their proper goods because God is the ultimate source of power by which they are moved to their proper good (efficient cause). He is the first mover that applies all things to their proper ends through the mediation of secondary efficient causes.

3.2 The Notion of Participation in the Eternal Law
In this section the focus narrows exclusively to human participation in the eternal law through the natural law. The argument it presents is as follows. Humans participate in the eternal law in both a passive and an active manner. They passively participate in the eternal law through the natural inclinations that God has imprinted upon their natures. Actively, they participate through knowledge that comes by the power of the light of human reason and the truth that is known through the light of reason, especially those truths of the natural law Aquinas says are naturally known, which are likenesses of uncreated truth. While God is the efficient, final, and exemplary cause of both the being and operation of both the natural inclinations and human reason, the eternal law more precisely is the cause of human operation as the exemplary causal ground of both the passive and active principles in human creatures by which they are both intelligibly moved and intelligently move themselves to their proper acts and ends. Furthermore, the eternal law is the veridical ground of all truth, including the naturally known preceptive judgments of the natural law that are a created likeness of the *rationes* of the eternal law that exist in the divine mind. Consequently, human participation in the eternal law, while it includes an active component, does not nullify the fact that human reason is a measured measure. Humans are to a certain extent provident over their own actions, but this does not negate their dependence upon the eternal law, which is an unmeasured measure.

According to Aquinas the eternal law fits the essential meaning of law. It comes from God who is the governor of the universe, ruling and measuring all things, moving all things to their proper acts and ends. By imprinting the eternal law upon the natures of
creatures, he promulgates this law, which is a dictate of the divine reason, ordering all things toward the common good of the universal community.

As stated above . . . a law is nothing else but a dictate of practical reason emanating from the ruler who governs a perfect community. Now it is evident, granted that the world is ruled by Divine Providence . . . that the whole community of the universe is governed by Divine Reason. Whereby the very Idea (ratio) of the government of things in God the Ruler of the universe, has the nature of a law. 63

Now just as man, by such pronouncement (denuntiando), impresses (imprimit) a kind of inward principle of action on the man that is subject to him, so God imprints (imprimit) on the whole of nature the principles of its proper actions. . . . And thus all actions and movements of the whole of nature are subject to the eternal law. Consequently, irrational creatures are subject to the eternal law, through being moved by Divine providence; but not, as rational creatures are, through understanding the Divine Commandment. 64

With Aquinas’s understanding of participation in the eternal law, which is law by its very essence, in hand, it is now time to explore human participation in the eternal law through the natural law in human creatures.

3.2.1 Natural Law as Human Participation in the Eternal Law

Among all of God’s creatures, humans are unique in that they are in a sense a microcosm of the universe of creatures taken as a whole. This is the case because humans stand on both sides of the divide between material corporeal creatures and purely spiritual creatures. This means that while humans share in all the limitations that comes with being material compositions (e.g. limited to time and place, subject to corruption, etc.) they also share with spiritual creatures the capacity to intelligently know being within the parameters

63 S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 1c.
64 S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 5c. Recall as well Aquinas’s statements from q. 91, a. 2: “Wherefore, since all things subject to Divine Providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law . . . it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends.”
of their manner of knowing. Humans are rational animals and this means that their own participation in the eternal law encompasses both aspects of corporeal-sensitivity and rationality.

Chapter two explored how Aquinas deals with both of these aspects of the human substance in his treatment of the natural law. It is this dual aspect to the unity to the human substance that leads Aquinas to address how humans have a twofold participation in the eternal law. He speaks of it in the following manner:

There are two ways in which a thing is subject to the eternal law, as explained above . . . : first, by partaking of the eternal law by way of knowledge; secondly, by way of action and passion, i.e., by partaking of the eternal law by way of an inward motive principle: and in this second way, irrational creatures are subject to the eternal law, as stated above. But since the rational nature, together with that which it has in common with all creatures, has something proper to itself inasmuch as it is rational, consequently it is subject to the eternal law in both ways; because while each rational creature has some knowledge of the eternal law, as stated above . . . it also has a natural inclination to that which is in harmony with the eternal law.65

As this passage clearly states, humans participate in the eternal law by way of knowledge of the eternal law and by way of natural inclinations. It is to this twofold manner of participating in the eternal law that attention now turns.

3.2.2 Passive Human Participation in the Eternal Law through the Natural Inclinations

One of the ways humans participate in the natural law is by being ruled and measured through action and passion, i.e., through the natural inclinations. For irrational creatures this passive yet intelligible form participation in the eternal law is through the

65 S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 6c. This passage is also a central passage for John Rziha in making his distinction between the two ways human participate in the eternal law: as governed and moved, and through cognitive participation. See Rziha, Perfecting Human Actions, 71. It will also be recalled that Franz Böckle denies that there is any passive human participation in the eternal law through the natural inclinations, a point that I here contest. See above, p. 20, n. 26
natural inclinations, by which they are moved to act by external agent causes acting upon them. Their movement is exclusively determined by the natural inclination itself once it has been moved to act by another, viz., the motive object. For humans, however, this movement by means of the natural inclinations is only part of the story. For humans the natural inclinations are not themselves the natural law. Nonetheless, the natural inclinations are part of the constitutive make-up of the human person and thereby perform a necessary and integral function in natural reason’s judgments about the human good that belong to the natural law.

The natural inclinations, Aquinas points out, are intelligible impressions of the eternal law imprinted upon human nature by God and function as inward principles of action. Human participation in the eternal law through the passive intrinsic movements of the natural inclinations are a participation in God as exemplary cause, for the intrinsic principles and their intelligible ordering to their proper goods bear a likeness of intelligibility to the eternal rationes, and therefore bear a likeness to God. Moreover, by means of the rationes God both knows what goods are properly human goods and by means of this knowledge moves humans to their proper acts and ends as the universal efficient cause. God knows what actions and ends are suitable to them as individuals (e.g., to preserve one’s being, know truth), as a species (e.g., to preserve the species through procreation), and how such human actions are ordered to the good of the whole universe (e.g., human stewardship over animals). In this way humans participate in the eternal rationes, which

\[66 \text{ S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 5c.} \]
\[67 \text{ S.T. I, q. 96; I-II, q. 92, a. 2.} \]
in turn is the perfect likeness of the perfection of the divine essence itself.⁶⁸ Considering the natural inclinations as belonging to the first perfection of creatures, humans participate in God as exemplary cause through their natural inclinations as some intelligibility produced in them belonging to their essence or form. But considering the natural inclinations as intelligible intrinsic principles of movement, they are principles of human operations, second perfections. In this way humans participate in the eternal law through their natural inclinations.

For humans, these principles of movement also move them to their ultimate good that is God, both by moving them to particular goods proper to their being, but also to know and love God, and thereby to participate in the eternal law in a more perfect way. The natural inclinations, as effects imprinted upon humans by God based upon the divine plan, are part of God’s promulgation of the eternal law to them.⁶⁹

Furthermore, as created and given actual existence (first perfection), and moved to operation (second perfection) by God, the natural inclinations in humans owe their being and operation to God as their efficient cause. As produced by God for the sake of communicating his own goodness (first perfection), and by being moved to operation by the universal good so as to attain their proper and ultimate good as its perfection (second perfection), God is the cause of these natural inclinations in humans as final cause.

### 3.2.3 Active Human Participation in the Eternal Law through Knowledge

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⁶⁸ Through appropriation Aquinas identifies the inner word, or conceived idea, in the mind of God with God the Son, who is the perfect likeness of God. In so doing, Aquinas further identifies the eternal law with God the Son. See *S.T.* I, q. 27, a. 2; q. 34; esp. I-II, q. 93, a. 4 ad. 2

⁶⁹ *S.T.* I-II, q. 93, a. 5 ad. 1.
Among corporeal creatures humans are unique in that they have rational souls and the capacity to freely pursue the good through knowledge. This also means that humans are not content with material goods, but have a natural striving for spiritual goods (e.g., truth, justice, union with God). Humans enjoy a kind of participation in the eternal law by which they rule and measure and are provident over their own acts. This capacity for this active participation in the eternal law is due to large extent to the active power of the agent intellect by which one judges the good to be done and the evil that is to be avoided.\textsuperscript{70} It is this active power that Aquinas identifies with the natural law through which humans participate in the light of the divine intellect.\textsuperscript{71} By means of the light of reason human participation in the eternal law also consists in participation through knowledge of the good. The eternal law is a rule and measure of all truth, and thus a veridical principle of human knowledge of the good. Consequently, human active participation in the eternal law is a measured measure, unlike the divine intellect that is an unmeasured measure. The remainder of this section now focuses on these two forms of cognitive participation in the eternal law: the activity of the light of the intellect and its preceptive judgments.

\textbf{3.2.3.1 The Light of the Agent Intellect}

\textsuperscript{70} I say that human participation is an active participation “to a large extent” due to the activity of the agent intellect because such active participation also presupposes actual knowledge, which results when the possible intellect is moved from potency to act, and free will. Providential control over one’s actions presupposes both knowledge of the intellect and freedom of the will.

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{S.T.} I-II, q. 91, a. 2c; \textit{In Decem praec.}, proem. Closely associate with human participation in God is Aquinas’s understanding of human imitation of God, and it is through intellect that humans most closely imitate God, especially as it is in act and actually understanding and is a principle of their own actions. See \textit{S.T.} I, q. 93, aa. 6-7; \textit{S.T.} I-II, proem.
According to Aquinas this participation in the eternal law through knowledge is a participation of the power of the light of the human intellect in the power of the divine light of the divine mind, and a cognitive participation in the eternal law:

Hence the Psalmist after saying (Ps. iv. 6): *Offer up the sacrifice of justice*, as though someone asked what the works of justice are, adds: *Many say, Who showeth us good things?* in answer to which question he says: *The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us*: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature’s participation of the eternal law.\(^{72}\)

Here the eternal law is identified not directly with the *rationes* or divine ideas in the mind of God, but with the divine light itself.

Humans not only share a likeness to God but are even images of God because they have in a partial way this perfection that God has essentially and infinitely, viz., the capacity that allows for humans to both know and love God.\(^{73}\) The light of natural reason makes possible this human capacity to understand and love God to some degree even in this lifetime. In its function of discerning what is good and what is evil, the light of reason enables one to grasp that knowledge and love of God is a good that ought to be pursued.\(^{74}\) This capacity is the natural law in humans and is the imprint of the divine light in them. By actually knowing and loving God, humans imitate God, who knows and loves himself, more perfectly than non-intellectual creatures who are like God but do not participate in his image. This participation in the eternal law is not only intelligible, but intelligent.

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\(^{72}\) *S.T.* I-II, q. 91, a. 2c. See also *De ver.* q. 11, a. 1c.

\(^{73}\) See *S.T.* I, q. 93, a. 4c; *S.T.* I-II, Prologue.

\(^{74}\) *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.
The divine light is the exemplar cause of the natural light of the intellect in humans insofar as it is intelligible (and intelligent) paradigm that created human intellects bear a likeness unto. But insofar as the natural light of the human intellect discerns and judges of ends proper to humans, which is the function of the natural law, the light of the human intellect is an imprint of the divine light in a manner such that humans participate in the eternal law. Like God, humans have a certain degree of freedom and providential control over their actions through knowledge of the good that is prefigured in the eternal law, and thereby bearing an imperfect likeness to the freedom and providence of God.\footnote{According to Aquinas, providence pertains to both knowledge and will, not simply one or the other. See \textit{S.T. I}, proem.}

Furthermore, as efficient cause, God both produces this power in humans (first perfection) and through it moves them to their proper operations (second perfection). As final cause God both creates the light of the intellect as a good that is a likeness to his own goodness (first perfection) and is the ultimate good that is the end and cause of its operation, which is to know and love God, who is universal good (second perfection).

3.2.3.2. Primary Precepts of the Natural Law

Aquinas states that for humans living in the present life the eternal law is unknown in itself (\textit{in seipso}) to human reason, but that it becomes known by natural reason through its effects (\textit{suo effectu}).\footnote{\textit{S.T. I-II}, q. 93, a. 2, Aquinas argues the following:}

\begin{quote}
A thing may be known in two ways: first, in itself (\textit{in seipso}); secondly, in its effect (\textit{suo effectu}), wherein some likeness of that thing is found. . . . So then no one can know the eternal law, as it is in itself, except the blessed who see God in His Essence. But every rational creature knows it in its reflection, greater or less. For every knowledge of truth is a kind of reflection and participation of the eternal law, which
\end{quote}
is the unchangeable truth. . . . Now all men know the truth to a certain extent, at least as to the common principles of the natural law: and as to the others, they partake of the knowledge of the truth, some more, some less; and in this respect are more or less cognizant of the eternal law. 77

While humans in this life do not have access to the divine mind, they do know something of the eternal law through its effects. By knowing these effects one comes to grasp truths that are a kind of reflection and participation of the unchanging truth that is the eternal law. And every human person at the very least knows the common principles of the natural law.

So what are these effects? The effects at least in part would include those natural inclinations – sensitive and rational – which are the natural source of human striving towards their proper goods, and thereby passively participate in the eternal law as ruled and measured. The light of the human intellect, in grasping those goods that are the objects of the inclinations as truly good and due ends of human action, grasps and formulates those principles of the natural law that are a participation in the rationes of the eternal truth.

Aquinas points out that all people know at least some truths, namely, the most common naturally known principles of the natural law. As previously discussed, the naturally known primary precepts of the natural law are the starting points of all further more determinate knowledge of the good to be done. According to Aquinas these naturally known first principles are a likeness of the divine truth in the mind of God, and so participations in the divine truth:

I respond, saying, that just as a certain Gloss on Psalm 11:1 says (“the truths are diminished,” etc.), from one first truth are reflected many truths in the minds of men, just as from one face of a man there are reflected many faces in a shattered

77 S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 2c.
mirror. But this is a reflection of the (first) truth in two ways. The first is according to intellectual light, about which Psalm 4:7 says “the light of your countenance is signed over us, O Lord”; and the second is according to first principles that are naturally known, whether they are complex or simple. But we cannot know any truth unless from first principles and from the light of the intellect; which are not able to show the truth, except according as they are a likeness of the first truth; since from the (first truth) they have a certain unchangeableness and infallibility.  

By means of knowledge of first principles together with the light of the agent intellect, all knowledge is in a certain sense implanted in all persons from the beginning, for all other knowledge is virtually known through first principles and the agency of the agent intellect.  

To the extent that the precepts of the natural law are known or unknown, Aquinas holds that all people “partake of the knowledge of truth, some more, some less, and in this respect are more or less cognizant of the eternal law.” And by means of this knowledge of the most common principles of the natural law humans enjoy a natural participation in the eternal law.

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78 Respondeo. Dicendum, quod, sicut dicit quaedam Glossa supra illud Psal. XI, 1, diminutae sunt veritates, etc., ab una prima veritate multae veritates in mentibus hominum resultant, sicut ab una facie hominis resultant multae facies in speculo fracto. Haec autem resultatio veritatis est quantum ad duo: scilicet quantum ad lumen intellectuale, de quo in Psal. IV, 7: signatum est super nos lumen vultus tu, domine; et quantum ad prima principia naturaliter nota, sive sint complexa sive implexa. Nihil autem possimus veritatis cognoscere nisi ex primis principiis, et ex lumine intellectuali; quae veritatem manifestare non possunt, nisi secundum quod sunt similibudo illius primae veritatis: quia ex hoc etiam habent quamdam incommutabilitatem et infallibilitatem. Quod., 10, q. 4, a. 1c. Translation mine. See also De ver. q. 10, a. 6, ad. 6; q. 11, a. 1c; S.C.G. 3.47.7; S.T. I, q. 84, a. 5c.

79 See De ver. q. 10, a. 6c.

80 S.T. I-II, q. 93, a. 2c.

81 “The human reason cannot have a full participation in the dictate of the Divine Reason, but according to its own mode, and imperfectly. Consequently, as on the part of the speculative intellect, by a natural participation of Divine Wisdom (per naturalem participationem divinae sapientiae), there is in us the knowledge of certain general principles, but not proper knowledge of each single truth, such as that contained in the Divine Wisdom; so too, on the part of practical reason, man has a natural participation of the eternal law (ita etiam ex parte racionis practicæ naturaliter homo participat legem aeternam secundum quaedam communia principia), according to certain general principles, but not as regards the particular determinations of the individual cases, which are, however, contained in the eternal law.” S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 3 ad. 1. Although Aquinas does not say so, it would seem that any knowledge that is acquired by means of naturally known principles is an acquired participation in the eternal law in contrast to natural participation.
The eternal law’s relationship with the human intellect can be seen as both a causal relationship and a veridical relationship. Insofar as the divine ideas stand to the human intellect as their cause, one must view this relationship from the perspective of the relationship of the divine intellect to the human intellect. The divine ideas are the cause of things created and moved by God, giving things their original directedness to their proper acts and ends. While knowledge of the good that ought to be pursued and the evil that ought to be avoided is actively attained by the light of natural reason and is knowledge of the eternal law, it is nonetheless knowledge of the eternal law attained through knowing its effects. The causal efficacy of the eternal law extends to both the power of the human intellect and the natural ordering of the natural inclinations towards their proper goods. In other words, the human intellect does not create values ex nihilo as a first cause. Rather, it grasps as its due good what God has already eternally wisely predetermined and belongs to the eternal law. God is the first cause and measure of all laws that human intellects intelligibly grasps, conceives, judges, and promulgates.

Insofar as the divine ideas stand to human ideas in a veridical relationship, this relationship is viewed from the perspective of the relationship of the human mind to the divine mind as that which is measured to that which measures. Eternal truth resides only in the divine mind, which is eternal.\textsuperscript{82} It is the standard, the measure, and supreme rule by which the veracity of all other intellects and the goodness of all wills are measured.\textsuperscript{83} The human intellect is a measured measure, a finite participation in the one who is intelligence.

\textsuperscript{82} S.T. I, q. 16, a. 7.
\textsuperscript{83} S.T. I-II, q. 21, a. 1c.
and truth by his very essence. All finite truth regarding the human good finds its ultimate veridical ground in God, who is its exemplary, efficient and final cause. Hence all precepts of the natural law are participations in the eternal law insofar as they share in a likeness with the divine *rationes*, which are eternal truths grounded in the essence of the one Eternal Truth that is God himself.

### 3.3 Summary of Conclusions

By means of the natural law within them, humans participate in the eternal law. The aim of this chapter has been twofold: first, to elucidate what Aquinas means by participation and the eternal law; second, to specify how Aquinas understands human participation in the eternal law through the natural law. The argument of the first section has shown that for Aquinas participation in the eternal law is a causal relationship in which something receives in a partial or restricted way that which belongs to another in a universal or unrestricted way. The eternal law, according to Aquinas, is the *ratio* or intelligible order pre-existing in the divine mind and conceived by divine wisdom that moves all things to their proper acts and ends. Furthermore, the eternal law is a kind of exemplar cause. It is a likeness of the divine essence itself, while at the same time being the paradigm of creaturely operation, the likeness of which God imprints upon all creatures according to their kind, and thereby giving to them natural inclinations to their own proper acts and ends. God conceives and enacts this intelligible order due his desire to communicate his goodness to creatures, and orders them to himself as their final cause and ultimate perfection. Through his power he enacts this plan, creating creatures with natural

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84 See *S.T.* I-II, q. 93, a. 1, ad. 3; *S.T.* I, q. 14, a. 8, ad. 3; q. 16, a. 1c; *S.C.G.* 1.61.7; *De ver.* q. 1, a. 2c.
inclinations by which they can be moved to their proper acts and ends, and further actuates these inner principles, thereby moving them to their proper acts and ends by his power as first efficient cause of all things.

The second section argues that according to Aquinas human participation in the eternal law includes both a passive intelligible participation through the natural inclinations residing in the various powers of the soul, and an active participation in the eternal law, by which humans are provident over their own actions and know the eternal law to some extent through its effects. Aquinas identifies the natural law in humans with this active intellective capacity to know the good and order their actions accordingly. But this active intellective capacity necessarily presupposes the passive component of the natural inclinations by which the practical intellect is able to intelligently grasp those due acts and ends proper to human persons and perceptively formulate and command naturally known practical truths about the good to be done and pursued. Through the agency of the light of the human intellect that is the source of insight into the goods that are the objects of the natural inclinations, human participation in the eternal law also includes knowledge of those practical truths that the light of the intellect naturally grasps as the good to be done and the evil to be avoided. All humans intelligently participate in the eternal law to the extent that they at least know the first principles of the natural law, and by knowing these naturally known truths humans enjoy a natural intelligent participation in the eternal law. Due to the fact that the eternal law is both cause and veridical principle of human knowledge of the good, it must be said that human active participation in the eternal law is a measured measure, unlike the divine intellect that is an unmeasured measure.
Chapter Four

Bernard Lonergan on the Natural Law

While it is fair to say that Bernard Lonergan is not known for being a natural law theorist, still the natural law does receive some explicit mention by him. What he does have to say is enough for one to grasp the basic features of what the natural law is from his considered opinion.

This chapter argues for an interpretation of Lonergan’s understanding of the natural law focused on three salient points. First, in its primary sense, the natural law is the transcendental intending of the human spirit; that is, the intrinsic principle of persistent questioning about the intelligible, the true, the real (being), beauty,1 and the good.

Secondly, in its secondary sense, the natural law consists of a set of preceptive propositional judgments. Lonergan explicitly recognizes that the natural law does consist of some procedural transcendental precepts whose aim is to promote intellectual and moral conversion through the acting subject’s self-appropriation of herself or himself as a knower and a doer. This claim is not controversial. Much more controversial is the added claim that the natural law may also consist of some preceptive judgments that are not merely procedural but substantive (i.e., directive of human actions towards fundamentally basic

1 Nowhere in his writings does Lonergan explicitly identify beauty as a transcendental objective of the unrestricted desire to know, but one does find in Method in Theology, for instance, a very suggestive remark that would seem to indicate that beauty is a transcendental logically distinct from the good: “Indeed, so intimate is the relation between the successive transcendental notions, that it is only by specialized differentiation of consciousness that we withdraw from more ordinary ways of living to devote ourselves to a moral pursuit of goodness, a philosophic pursuit of truth, a scientific pursuit of understanding, an artistic pursuit of beauty.” Lonergan, Method in Theology, 13. Here I am following the lead of other Lonergan interpreters in suggesting that beauty is a distinct transcendental notion that Lonergan’s cognitional theory can be developed to include. That said this is not a central claim of my thesis.
goods). At least some of these preceptive judgments are naturally known,\textsuperscript{2} but all of them are self-evidently known from the standpoint that they are virtually unconditioned judgments of value. It is in making this further claim that it is possible to argue that Lonergan’s understanding of the natural law is not in dialectical opposition to Aquinas’s position, for whom there are some common universal judgments about the good that are naturally known by all, \textit{per se nota}, and are the seeds and ends of the virtues. Thirdly, the argument also aims to show that, unlike his earlier perspective in his \textit{De Verbo Incarnato Supplementum}, the natural inclinations are not themselves the natural law, but they are nonetheless elevated or sublated both by and into the higher levels of consciousness, especially the level of decision, and thereby participate (to use Aquinas’s term) in the natural law as something ruled and measured. There is the one major exception to this general rule, however, and that is the pure, detached, and disinterest desire to know, which for Lonergan is identical with the dynamism of the human spirit, and therefore is the natural law.

This chapter will commence with a discussion of the different senses of term \textit{nature} that Lonergan identifies. Recognition of these distinct senses will help clarify what Lonergan thinks is \textit{natural} about natural law. The second main section of this chapter will then address Lonergan’s understanding of the natural law as the dynamism of the human spirit. The third main section will then address Lonergan’s understanding of the role of the natural inclinations as intentional feelings in moral deliberation, and how they relate to

\textsuperscript{2} That is given Lonergan’s understanding of what natural knowledge is, for he limits “natural” knowledge to intellectual knowledge of transcendental concepts and those naturally known principles based upon this knowledge of the transcendental concepts. All other knowledge is categorical knowledge that gives determinate meaning to the transcendental concepts and arises from insight into experience.
satisfactions, values, and value judgments. This section will help make clear the participative character of the natural inclinations. Finally, the last main section of this paper will address the secondary sense of the natural law as a set of practical judgments, both procedural and substantive, and will argue that the natural law consists in both procedural and substantive precepts which are rightfully called the natural law even if only in a secondary sense. This last argument goes beyond anything Lonergan explicitly states and is an extension of his thought, arguing that it is consistent with some of his key positions.

4.1 Lonergan’s Three Senses of Nature

“Any assertion that this or that is, or is not, ‘right by nature’ must remain void of meaning unless we know what is nature.” Underlying any theory of natural law there is presupposed some idea of what is natural about it. Lonergan is well aware that this term is not a univocal term. So before asking what Bernard Lonergan thinks the natural law is it is necessary to indicate the different senses the term ‘nature’ Lonergan recognizes. One finds in Lonergan three very distinct but interrelated senses of this term.

His fullest listing of the different meanings of nature is found in some notes on marriage Lonergan wrote in the early to mid-1940s. In this work Lonergan lists three different senses of nature:

Praeterea nomen “natura” est ambigua: saltem enim tripliciter dicitur natura.

(1) forma accidentalis: principium intrisecum motus et quietis;
(2) essentia, ex qua profluent omnes formae vel potentiae accidentales;

4 For background information regarding the occasion and dating of this presently unpublished document, see Gordon Rixon, S.J., “Bernard Lonergan’s Notion of Vertical Finality in His Early Writings,” (PhD dissertation, Boston College, 1995), 181-229.
According to Lonergan the term “nature” can refer to either a principle of motion and rest, such as an accidental form, the essence or quiddity of a thing that is the source of forms and accidental powers, or an intelligible order of things such as the universe considered as a whole.

Among these three senses of nature there is an intelligible order that exists between them. Commenting on this passage, Gordon Rixon, S.J. points out that accidental forms and essences only exist within a “prior ordered intelligibility of the universe.” It is also the case that nature, as accidental form, is more restrictive than nature as essence, for accidental forms only exist within a higher order that is an existing essence or substance. So each of these senses of ‘nature’ are related to each other insofar as actually existing accidental forms only exist in actually existing orders that are essences, and actually existing essences exist only within an actually existing world order.

In *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, Lonergan lists two out of the three senses of nature listed in *De Matrimonio*. Here Lonergan identifies the first sense of “nature” as a principle of movement and rest, a sense which originated with Aristotle, as

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5 “Furthermore, the name “nature” is ambiguous: for nature is spoken of in at least three ways. (1) accidental form: an intrinsic principle of motion and rest; (2) essence, from which flows all forms or accidental potencies; (3) The nature of things, the order of the universe: thus we speak of the “beneficence of nature,” the “order of nature,” etc.” Translation mine. Bernard Lonergan, “De Matrimonio,” File A238a, (2008), Bernard Lonergan Archive: Resources in Lonergan Studies, www.bernardlonergan.com (accessed March 23, 2014), 21.

6 Lonergan’s distinction between the orders of nature and grace serves as an example of what Lonergan means as nature as the universal order. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, 14-20, 185.


found in his *Physics*, II, I, 192b 21-22, who identifies nature with both form and matter. The second sense of nature is substantial essence considered in relation to operation.

Of these three different senses of nature, nature as a principle of movement and rest features significantly in Lonergan’s account of the natural law, to which topic this discussion now turns.

4.2 Bernard Lonergan and the Natural Law

Lonergan’s most explicit and detailed discussions on the natural law are found in three of his writings: the *De Verbo Incarnato Supplementum*, “Transition from a Classicist Worldview,” and “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness.” Interestingly, Lonergan adopts not just one but two different perspectives over the course of these three writings. In his early *Supplement on the Redemption*, Lonergan identifies the natural law with the natural inclinations as found in all creatures. In his later two works, Lonergan moves away from his earlier perspective and identifies the natural law with either the cognitional operations of human consciousness or the dynamism of the human spirit that are objectified in his transcendental method. Elsewhere in his later thought he also affirms, at least once, that the natural law consists of certain transcendental precepts.

This section will analyze this shift in Lonergan’s thought, which takes place over a period of about twenty years. It will build up to the conclusion that from the perspective of the later Lonergan the natural law is first of all the dynamism of the human spirit, transcendental intending that seeks to grasp the intelligible, to know what is true and real,

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9 This identification of nature with form is also found in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* V, 4, 1014b 35- 1015a 19.
10 The reader will recall from chapter two how for Aquinas it is nature as substance that underlies what is natural about natural law. See Aquinas, *S.T. I-II*, q, 10, a. 1c; q. 91, a. 2 ad. 2.
and to both know and choose what is truly good. This section will also introduce Lonergan’s later claim that the natural law also consists in preceptive judgments affirming the transcendental precepts to be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible. I will give more detailed consideration of this claim in a later section of this chapter when I treat both the transcendental precepts and substantive precepts of the natural law.

4.2.1 De Verbo Incarnato Supplementum

Lonergan’s treatise De Verbo Incarnato Supplementum11 (1958) is the earliest writing of the three documents under present consideration. In chapter one (On Good and Evil) Lonergan presents a threefold structure of the good consisting of particular goods, the good of order, and the good of culture. In chapter two (On the Justice of God) one finds Lonergan’s explicit discussion on the natural law, which he relates to his threefold structure of the good. In this early writing Lonergan associates the natural law in general with the immanent forms and laws that orient each creature to its proper act and end, and correlates this immanent law with a particular good as its intentional objective.

There are two especially relevant bits of information in chapter one relevant to the discussion at hand. First, Lonergan presents a threefold structure of the good which consists of particular goods, the external good of order, and cultural good. Lonergan correlates the particular good with the object of appetite or desire, the good of order with an intelligible arrangement of particular goods, and the good of culture with rational

11 Hereafter, abbreviated simply as Supplement.
reflection and choice. This threefold structure applies to both the human good and the ontological good, which he calls here the created good.\textsuperscript{12}

The second point concerns four natural inclinations Lonergan identifies while discussing the cultural good. Lonergan notes that there are four natural spontaneous desires that are the very root of distinctively human activity. These “four desires are implanted in us by nature herself,”\textsuperscript{13} and they include:

(1) the natural desire to understand, which will not be satisfied until we know God through his essence; (2) the natural desire for rectitude, and the obligation of the will to carry out whatever reason commands; (3) the natural desire for happiness which, however indeterminate in itself, receives its determination principally from our higher nature; and (4) the natural desire for immortality.\textsuperscript{14}

These four natural desires are all spiritual desires and so are not to be identified with other natural human desires such as the sensitive appetites or inclinations.

Lonergan also notes that besides these spiritual desires humans also share in “the remarkable elevation of feeling and plasticity of human sensibility, which reveal us to be enfleshed spirits more than animals having the use of reason.”\textsuperscript{15} Unlike the natural spiritual inclinations, however, Lonergan does not elaborate any further upon natural inclinations relating to human sensitivity, but it is very notable that he speaks of the elevation and plasticity of human sensitivity. The significance of this elevation and plasticity of the sensitive inclinations and the distinctive features of the four spiritual inclinations are part of

\textsuperscript{12} See Lonergan, \textit{Supplement}, 7. All the following references to this Latin treatise are taken from Fr. Michael Shields’ translation provided by the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto. The Latin version of this work can be found online in the Bernard Lonergan Archive at \texttt{http://www.bernardlonergan.com} under the title \textit{Redemption} (five chapters). I would like to thank Dr. Jeremy Wilkins, Director of the Lonergan Research Institute, for permission to use Fr. Shield’s translation for this project.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 14-15.
the central focus of a later section in this chapter, but for now it will suffice to draw
attention to them in anticipation of what Lonergan has to say the natural law is in chapter
two of the *Supplement*.

In chapter two on ‘The Justice of God,’ one finds three explicit references to the
natural law. The first reference to natural law arises in a discussion on the notion of divine
justice.\(^{16}\) Lonergan states that “(t)he idea of order, considered as being in the mind of the
Creator, is the eternal law; participation by creatures (*creaturis*) in this eternal law is natural
law.”\(^{17}\) In conjunction with this brief statement, Lonergan references Aquinas twice. Once
he references *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 91, a. 1, wherein Aquinas discusses whether there
is an eternal law. The second reference is to *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 91, a. 2, wherein
Aquinas discusses whether there is a natural law. What is especially intriguing about this
statement is that Lonergan does not specifically identify only humans as having the natural
law in them, but, more generally, all creatures (*creaturis*). Lonergan is speaking about how
all things in this universe are ordered by God’s wisdom and justice, not simply humans.\(^{18}\)

From this brief statement one can glean that the natural law is something that belongs to all
creatures as participating in the eternal law.

At the beginning of the section entitled ‘The Just Order of Reality,’ one finds
Lonergan’s second reference to the natural law. Lonergan proposes an inquiry into the

\(^{16}\) Chapter two consists of seven articles, articles nine through fifteen of the total forty-five articles contained
in the supplement as a whole. Article nine is entitled “The Notion of Divine Justice,” wherein is found
Lonergan’s first reference to the natural law.

\(^{17}\) Lonergan, *Supplement*, 61 (p. 69 in original Latin version).

\(^{18}\) Lonergan’s use of the term *creaturis* seems to be a paraphrase of Aquinas’s term *omnia* (all things):
“Wherefore, since all things (*omnia*) subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law . . .
.; it is evident that all things (*omnia*) partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being
imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends.” Aquinas, *S.T.* I-II, q. 91, a. 2c.
nature of a just order that is divinely conceived, chosen, and put into execution. In doing so he identifies a threefold structure belonging to a just order. The first element of a just order is the nature of a creature:

First, all things have an order, since they have forms and laws that are innate, that is, naturally implanted in them. The natural law is simply a participation in the eternal law whereby non-human material creatures spontaneously proceed to their proper activity and end and human beings are moved not only to act but also to know how they ought to act and to freely choose on the basis of this knowledge. In this statement Lonergan very clearly identifies the natural law with the “forms and laws that are innate” in all creatures, both non-human material creatures and human beings. All creatures partake of the natural law, and now he specifies that the natural law is some form or law that is innate in a creature.

Furthermore, these forms and laws are the principles by which non-human corporeal creatures spontaneously are moved to their proper acts and ends. But for humans these forms and laws include principles by which they know how they ought to act and to freely choose on the basis of this knowledge. Evidently, the natural law in human beings is closely associated with reason, which is a principle of knowledge by which humans freely choose their actions. At the end of this statement Lonergan again references Summa Theologica I-II, q. 91, a. 2, in which Aquinas speaks of both a natural inclination peculiar to humans by which they are moved to their own proper acts and ends, and the light of reason in humans by which they judge what is good and evil. It would seem that the forms and law in humans that are the natural law at least include forms and laws pertaining to human rationality.

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19 Lonergan, Supplement, 62.
What is perhaps less obvious from this passage is whether Lonergan thinks that the natural law in human beings is simply limited to these purely spiritual natural inclinations that are the source of human knowledge and freedom (e.g., the natural desire to know), or whether the natural law includes all the non-spiritual (i.e., sensitive) inclinations as well that are equally constitutive of human persons. But given that Lonergan identifies the natural law with the forms and laws innate in *all creatures* by which they are moved to their proper acts and ends, it seems more likely that Lonergan does not exclusively identify the natural law with just the spiritual inclinations in humans.

The final reference to natural law is found at the beginning of article eleven that is entitled ‘The Historical Order of Justice.’ Here Lonergan addresses the specifically human order of justice. Since humans are rational creatures that live in a world of meaning and value that is subject to development and decline, humans are historical creatures, and so the historical order of justice must be considered as well. Lonergan summarizes what he has said up to this point about the structure of the good and of the just order, and sets them in relation to each other, stating the following:

We have distinguished three elements in the order of divine justice: (1) the natures and the laws of natures; (2) schemes of operation, whether serial or circular, which result from the arrangement of things and the complex of laws; (3) the order of divine wisdom, justice, and providence which so devises and arranges this series and hierarchy of schemes that the common course of events and order of the universe ensues.

We also distinguished three levels in human goods: (1) particular goods; (2) the external good of order; and (3) cultural good. Now a particular good follows the operation of some law of nature; the external good of order is a serial or circular scheme; and cultural good has to do with the spread of that interior order and perfection by which human beings in the exercise of their reason and will provide for themselves and so in some way participate in divine providence. Furthermore, just as with regard to beings in general divine providence puts into effect a series and hierarchy of schemes, so in human affairs it directs cultural good and improves the
external good of order; and just as these schemes make natural beings operate with constancy according (to) the rules of their nature, so the external good of order provides a continuous flow of particular goods.\textsuperscript{20}

Just as there are three elements in the order of the good, so too are there three elements in the order of divine justice, and the order of justice and the order of the good correspond to each other on three levels. Natures or laws of natures of things correspond with particular goods, since particular goods are the proper ends of individual natures. The external good of order is itself a serial or circular scheme in which individual natures and natural laws are so related to each other so as to function as conditioned and conditioning parts of this order. The cultural good pertains to the use of reason and will in human persons, who freely choose to interiorly order their lives so that human sensitivity is subject to reason, reason is subject to God, and by means of reason and will they further seek to improve the exterior good of order whereby many people are provided for routinely with those particular goods their well-being requires.

Most notably, Lonergan correlates natural law with particular goods that are its ends. This seems to confirm that for Lonergan the natural law in humans is not simply identified with spiritual inclinations, or reason and will, but with natural inclinations in general and all their various ends, for the end of the will is the general good that reason apprehends, not a particular good. It seems to follow that while the natural law in humans belongs to the order of reason as that which is most properly human and opens them up to the world of meaning and value (i.e., culture), it cannot be said that the natural law is only

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 70-71.
something belonging to this order, but must also belong to the order of human sensitivity as well.

In light of these three passages from Lonergan’s *Supplement*, it is readily apparent that the natural law is not something peculiar to humans, even though the natural law in them is peculiarly human, but belongs to all creatures. It is the forms and laws that are interior principles of movement (i.e., nature) by which they are moved to those particular goods that are proper to them. While Lonergan identifies the natural law in humans with their capacity to know the good, it does not seem as though he limits the natural law in humans to the order of reason and the good of culture. The natural law also includes the order of those laws of nature that intend particular goods as objects of desire. At this early stage, Lonergan still stands within the traditional neo-scholastic understanding of the natural law.

**4.2.2 Transition from a Classicist Worldview to Historical-mindedness**

Lonergan’s influential 1966 essay entitled “The Transition from a Classicist Worldview to Historical-mindedness” evidences a definite shift in his thought on the natural law.21

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Evidence that Lonergan’s (amongst others) concern to replace the classicist-essentialist account natural law with a new approach concerned with a concrete account of human nature and recognition of historical mindedness has not gone unnoticed by the Catholic Church hierarchy, see “In Search of a Universal Ethic: A New Look at the Natural Law,” *International Theological Commission*, 2009, <www.vatican.ca> (9 March 2014).
In this essay Lonergan addresses change within the forms, structures and methods of the Roman Catholic Church. In his discussion of change, he raises the general question of law and the particular question of the natural law. Lonergan criticizes what he identifies as a classicist approach to natural law and suggests a new way of approaching natural law through the starting point of transcendental method with its concrete account of human nature and openness to the vicissitudes of history.22

Lonergan’s criticism of the classicist natural law position focuses upon its abstract account of human nature (i.e., nature as essence).23 When one abstracts from all accidental differences between all human persons throughout time and place, only those properties which are held in common by all are left. Such an account of human nature is an unchanging abstract concept that simply considered as such does not exist. From this abstract account of human nature the classicist then deduces ethical norms that are equally as abstract as human nature.24 This classicist methodological approach to law is concerned with reaching the universal ideal, beginning with a universal conception of human nature from which is deduced universal primitive propositions. From primitive universal propositions one then proceeds to deduce further universal norms. These norms in turn are applied to concrete cases, and in difficult cases such applications require the methodological practice of casuistry.

But there is a problem. Beginning from this classicist approach to law “it seems unlikely that in this fashion one will arrive at a law demanding the change of laws, forms,

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22 For Lonergan’s notion of classicism, I refer the reader back to the introduction for comments made there about what Lonergan means by classicism, as opposed to the classical ideal.
24 Ibid., 6.
structures, methods”\textsuperscript{25} that quite evidently does occur over time. Universals do not change, so finding a reason for change cannot be located in universal precepts. On the other hand, there is the practice of casuistry that deals with cases which concern the accidental chance situations people actually find themselves in. But as Aristotle points out, there is no science of the accidental, “and so from casuistry’s cases one can hardly conclude to some law about changing laws.”\textsuperscript{26} Consequently, given its conceptualist methodological approach to law, the classicist lacks any way of accounting for change in laws and institutions.\textsuperscript{27}

In contrast to the classicist approach, Lonergan proposes instead an approach to law that is concerned about concrete persons with concretely experienced conscious and intentional operations:

One can note that, apart from times of dreamless sleep, they are performing intentional acts. They are experiencing, imagining, desiring, fearing; they wonder, come to understand, conceive; they reflect, weigh the evidence, judge; they deliberate, decide, act. If dreamless sleep may be compared to death, living is being awake; it is a matter of performance of intentional acts; in short, such acts informed by meaning are precisely what gives significance to human living and, conversely, to deny all meaning to human life is nihilism.\textsuperscript{28}

A little later Lonergan makes these similar remarks:

On the other hand, one can apprehend mankind as a concrete aggregate developing over time, where the locus of development and, so to speak, the synthetic bond is the emergence, expansion, differentiation, dialectic of meaning and of meaningful performance. On this view intentionality, meaning, is a constitutive component of

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. Lonergan’s reference is to Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics} VI [E], 2, 1027a19f.
\textsuperscript{27} Implicit in classicist accounts of law is a conceptualism that cannot reconcile the universal with the particular. What the conceptualist misses, from Lonergan’s perspective, is the role of insight into phantasm that precedes cognitional formation of concepts, and is involved in the application of laws to particular concrete situations. See Frederick E. Crowe, “Law and Insight,” in \textit{Developing the Lonergan Legacy: Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes}, edited by Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 267-282. On how Aquinas recognized this important role of insight, see Frederick E. Crowe, “Universal Norms and the Concrete Operable in St. Thomas Aquinas,” 1-69.
\textsuperscript{28} Lonergan, “Transition from a Classicist World-view,” 3-4.
human living; moreover, this component is not fixed, static, immutable, but shifting, developing, going astray, capable of redemption; on this view there is the historicity, which results from human nature, an exigence for changing forms, structures, methods; and it is on this level and through this medium of changing meaning that divine revelation has entered the world and that the Church’s witness is given to it.\textsuperscript{29}

Intentional operations are the source of meaning in human history as it emerges, expands, becomes differentiated, and is found in dialectical tension. Accounting for differences in laws, institutional structures, methods, and so forth, must be sought in the concrete intentional operations of real people that are the source of all laws, institutions, common meanings, etc. Consequently, common meanings, such as laws, and performance:

\begin{quote}
are not some stock of ideal forms subsistent in some Platonic heaven. They are the hard-won fruit of man’s advancing knowledge of nature, of the gradual evolution of his social forms and of his cultural achievements.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

In place of the classicist account of the natural law, Lonergan proposes, following a suggestion made several years earlier by Karl Rahner, “that natural law should be approached through a transcendental method.”\textsuperscript{31} One should seek a more “concrete and historical apprehension” of human nature, thereby providing oneself with “its appropriately concrete foundations in structural features of the conscious, operating subject.”\textsuperscript{32}

Lonergan’s approach to natural law through transcendental method is through his own

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 5-6.
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{31}Lonergan, “Transition from a Classicist Worldview,” 6. Lonergan refers to Karl Rahner’s article on the Naturrecht in the Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (7:827), where Rahner argues that in order to arrive at more particular precepts of the natural law, one must arrive at more exact knowledge of human nature. But one may come to knowledge of human nature in one of two ways: one must distinguish between an empirical factual account of human nature and a transcendental account of human nature. By means of a factual or empirical account of human nature one arrives at what is merely a physical-psychological structure of a human. By means of a transcendental account one arrives at human nature as it should be, that is, an outh-inducing transcendental verifiable structure. Rahner sees the transcendental account of human nature as providing the needed insights into the discovery of more concrete and particular precepts of the natural law. See “Naturrecht,” Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, vol. 7, herausgegeben von Josef Hofer und Karl Rahner (Verlag Freiburg: Herder, 1962), 827-828.
\textsuperscript{32}Lonergan, “Transition from a Classicist World-view,” 5.
transcendental method, which will undergo further important refinements between the
time Lonergan wrote this essay and the publication of Method in Theology in 1972.33

From this account of the natural law it is clear that the natural law is now
approached through transcendental method. Lonergan identifies natural law with a set of
concrete, recurrent, and normative operations. This suggests that the thing that makes the
natural law natural is the principles or operation immanent in human persons underlying
intentional operations (i.e., nature as principle of movement and rest). On the other hand,
Lonergan’s emphasis on concrete “human nature” as a starting point for recasting the
natural law in a non-classicist paradigm further suggests that what is natural about natural
law in some way still pertains to natural law’s ground in nature as substance or essence.

Finally, there is no mention that the natural law is something belonging to all creatures,

33 It is beyond the scope of this investigation to address the differences between Lonergan’s two major works Insight and Method in Theology, it is necessary to alert the reader to two significant differences. First, in Method Lonergan argues for four levels of intentional consciousness as opposed to three in Insight. The forth level is the level of decision, and on this level value becomes a distinct notion from the notions of intelligibility and the true arising at the levels of understanding and judgment respectively. The implications of this development are significant. One important implication is that it addresses the problem of deriving an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’ that Lonergan seems to be guilty of in Insight. On the problem of the naturalistic fallacy in Insight, see Brian Cronin, CS.Sp, “Deliberative Insights: A Sketch,” Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies 22, no. 1 (2004): 25-26. On the importance of Lonergan’s new notion of value and how it addresses the naturalistic fallacy, see Joseph Fitzpatrick, Philosophical Encounters: Lonergan and the Analytic Tradition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 177-186.

The second key difference between Insight and Method is the role that feelings play in
the apprehension of values in Method. The importance of feelings will be addressed in the next section of this investigation.

The development of Lonergan’s thought on the notion of the good and its structure is complex.
although perhaps this is due to Lonergan’s limited focus on humans and human law. What is nonetheless clear is that Lonergan is making a clear break with the neo-scholastic tradition and its classicist account of the natural law in humans, and he makes this break by turning to interiority and through interiority to transcendental method.

4.2.3 Natural Right and Historical Mindedness

“Natural Right and Historical Mindedness” (1977) represents Lonergan’s most mature thought on the natural law and builds off his most mature thought on transcendental method, now fully equipped with a fourth level of consciousness and its transcendental notion of value that is distinct from the other transcendental notions arising on lower levels, and a new account of the role of feelings in apprehending values. In this essay Lonergan’s account of the natural law is thoroughly transposed into the categories of interiority.

Concrete human reality consists of two components: a constant human nature which is unchanging through time and place, and a variable human historicity.34 Human culture and social institutions develop, decline and are reborn through history. They are the products of the human spirit, and thus the products of human experience, understanding, judgment, and decision. To know the concrete human reality is to know not “man in the abstract,”35 but to know both the changing and the unchanging in the human reality. One

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34 Lonergan, “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” 170. This distinction between something constant and something variable is only implicit in “Transposition from a Classicist World-view,” where Lonergan emphasizes change, but makes no mention of a constant human nature except to reject a conceptualist account of a constant human nature.

35 Lonergan’s phrase “man in the abstract” and his criticism of it is very similar to the phrase “man in general” employed by Carl Becker, whose writings Lonergan was familiar with, in his book The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers. Becker is likewise critical of the abstract account of human nature employed
may study the individual and come to understand a constant human nature. But to know
the variable in human persons “one has to study each instance in its singularity.”36

It was the genius of the ancient Greeks to identify nature as a permanent and
unchanging force. But nature can be understood in more than one way:

It may be placed in universal propositions, self-evident truths, naturally known
certitudes. On the other hand, it may be placed in nature itself, in nature not as
abstractly conceived, but as concretely operating. It is, I believe, the second
alternative that has to be envisaged if we are to determine norms in historicity.37

Lonergan is suggesting that the notion of natural right be rethought. Is what is natural in
natural right to be located in a set of self-evident and naturally known universal
propositional certitudes, or is it to be located in nature as concretely operating? Lonergan’s
preferred option is the latter.

So what is nature? Lonergan answers this question by looking to Aristotle’s concept
of nature as a principle of motion and of rest.

Now Aristotle defined nature as an immanent principle of movement and rest. In
man such a principle is the human spirit as raising and answering questions. As
raising questions, it is an immanent principle of movement. As answering questions
and doing so satisfactorily, it is an immanent principle of rest.38

What is natural about natural right is something that is concrete and universal in all human
persons at all times and in all places. Transposing Aristotle’s theoretical account of nature

by eighteenth century philosophers in their own natural law theorizing. See Carl Becker, The Heavenly City of

For Lonergan’s own similar, albeit brief, criticism of the eighteenth century’s philosophical fascination
with abstract human nature to the neglect of concrete human nature, see “Natural Right and Historical
Mindedness,” 178-179.

36 Lonergan, “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” 171.
37 Ibid., 172.
38 Ibid. The reference to Aristotle’s definition of nature is found in Aristotle’s Physics: “nature is a source or
cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily.” Aristotle, Physics, II, 1, 195b
21-22.
Lonergan argues that natural right is the concrete unfolding of the human spirit that manifests itself in questions and answers. As a principle of movement, it raises questions. As a principle of rest, it sets the criteria and verifies that questions are sufficiently answered.

All questions are of three basic kinds. First, there are questions for intelligent understanding that intend the intelligible, asking why, how, and what for in response to an underlying “spontaneous flow of sensible presentations, images, feelings, conations, movements.” With the attainment of a relevant insight or a series of relevant insights into sensitive presentations, comes the satisfying rest of the achieved answer to the original question.

Second, the human spirit is not wholly satisfied with intellectual satisfaction, and so it manifests itself at a higher level as a principle of movement in the raising of questions for critical reflection that intend the true and the real: Is it so? Is it true? Are you sure? These questions seek sufficient evidence in order to affirm as true what is only hypothetical at the level of understanding. Insofar as sufficient reason or sufficient evidence is grasped through an act of reflective understanding, one reaches a virtually unconditioned judgment (i.e., a hypothetical conditioned whose conditions have been sufficiently met). When the virtually unconditioned is reached and there are no more relevant questions needing to be answered, the principle of movement that is the human spirit becomes a principle of rest.

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39 Ibid., 172.
Beyond intellectual and rational inquiry and accumulated insights and factual judgments, there is a higher level of deliberation regarding human action. The principle of movement unfolds in questions intending the good to be done at the fourth level of consciousness: What is in it for me? What is in it for us? Is it really worthwhile? In deliberation questions about the human good are raised. Through intentional feelings goods are affectively revealed. By means of self-regarding feelings one grasps various goods as pleasurable or painful, desirable or something to be feared. Through disinterested feelings one comes to grasp excellence; that is, self-transcending values, whether vital, social, cultural, personal, or religious. Insofar as answers to these questions are reached by arriving at a judgment of value that some thing or action is truly valuable or worth doing, the principle of movement becomes a principle of rest. The notion of value and its unfolding into questions has its criterion “in what we no longer name consciousness but conscience” and the “nagging conscience is the recurrence of the original question that has not been met.”

Each kind of question, as it arises on the levels of understanding, judgment and decision, is a principle of motion, an immanent norm, a criterion, and a principle of rest. Since each of these questions forms a linked series in which the later questions emerge from, move beyond, and complete the previous questions, all these questions are linked together as aspects of a more comprehensive principle, which is a nature:

Further, if what the several principles attain are only aspects of something richer and fuller, must not the several principles themselves be but aspects of a deeper and more comprehensive principle? And is not this deeper a more comprehensive

40 Ibid., 173.
41 Ibid., 174.
principle itself a nature, at once a principle of movement and of rest, a tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all these? I think so.  

So there is a more comprehensive single nature, a more comprehensive principle of movement and rest, a tidal movement, which is the source of all questions at the levels of intelligence, rational reflection, and responsible deliberation. This more comprehensive principle precedes these levels, emerging from the subconscious, unfolds through them, and moves beyond them.

On the basis of this account of natural right, it is clear that for Lonergan “every person is an embodiment of natural right. Every person can reveal to any other his natural propensity to seek understanding, to judge reasonably, to evaluate fairly, to be open to friendship.” Natural right is the unfolding of the dynamism of the human spirit that underlies those normative operations that produce cumulative and progressive results that Lonergan identifies with transcendental method.

But does this mean that for Lonergan the natural law does not consist in preceptive judgments in any way? If one were to judge based only by statements made in “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” the answer would seem to be that the natural law is not identifiable with preceptive judgments, or at least preceptive judgments of a certain kind.

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42 Ibid., 175.
43 See also Lonergan, Method, 12-13.
45 Lonergan, “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” 182.
(i.e., naturally known, self-evident, and certain). However, there is at least one occasion late in Lonergan’s career (Boston College Lonergan Workshop, 1974) where he does explicitly identify a set of transcendental precepts with the natural law: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible. These precepts “have a prior existence and reality in the spontaneous, structured dynamism of human consciousness.” What is the natural law? It is the demands of the movement of the human spirit itself: “The natural law is ‘be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible,’ and any precept you arrive at from observing those precepts.” Lonergan’s identification of the procedural transcendental precepts as natural law judgments, and the consideration of whether the natural law may consist of other preceptive judgments substantial in nature, will be further considered in a later section of this chapter.

4.2.4 Summary: What is the Natural Law?

In his most mature work, “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” Lonergan identifies that natural law with the dynamism of the human spirit, which is the source of questions at the levels of understanding, judging, and deciding. What is natural about the natural law is that the dynamism of the human spirit is a principle of movement and rest.

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As a principle of movement, it is the source of questions, and as a principle of rest, it is the source of answers. This seems to be a minor development on his earlier essay “Transition from a Classicist World-view” where Lonergan speaks more of the operations than the dynamism of the human spirit as the foundation of the natural law in humans. It is a major development when compared to his even earlier Supplement that identifies the natural law with forms and laws (i.e., natural inclinations) found in all creatures.48

This identification of the natural law with the dynamism of the human spirit in its capacity as a principle of movement and rest (i.e., as a nature) raising and answering questions seems consistent with Aquinas’s position that the natural law pertains to the light of human reason that is the source of wonder and the ruling and measuring judge of what is truly good and truly evil. It is perhaps ironic that it is the later Lonergan, not the earlier Lonergan, who is closer to Aquinas in his understanding of what the natural law is.

Furthermore, the later Lonergan also identifies the natural law with the transcendental precepts. These precepts, however, are purely procedural and are not the primary preceptive judgments that Aquinas identifies with the natural law, which are the very thing Lonergan seems to reject: preceptive judgments that are naturally known, self-evident, and certain. That said, as quoted above, he does also say that “any precept you arrive at from observing those [transcendental] precepts”49 is the natural law, and it may be

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48 If I am correct in locating a significant intellectual shift in Lonergan’s thought between from a broadly neo-scholastic perspective to one based upon transcendental method, this shift was not without precedent for a Catholic theologian living and writing in the 1960s. Joseph Fuchs’ understanding of the natural law, for instance, also underwent considerable revision during this period. Details of Josef Fuchs’ conversion from a neo-scholastic naturalistic viewpoint to a revisionist reinterpretation of the natural law based upon Karl Rahner’s transcendental method are detailed in Mark E. Graham’s book, Josef Fuchs on Natural Law (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), especially chapter 3.

that Lonergan is hinting in the direction of natural law precepts that are substantial but in some way presuppose the transcendental precepts as necessarily prior (i.e., cognitionally prior, for authentic operations precede authentic substantial judgments). Unfortunately, this is only a guess as to what Lonergan means by this additional statement. But if Lonergan only has transcendental procedural precepts in mind, then it is at this very point that an apparent tension arises between the two thinkers, and it is the intention of the last major section of this chapter to determine whether or not this tension is real or not. But before getting to that, something must first be said about Lonergan’s treatment of the natural inclinations, which in the early *Supplement* are identified with the natural law in all creatures, but in his later writings no longer appear to be, or at least not all of them.

### 4.3 Natural Inclinations as Intentional Feelings Intending Satisfactions or Values

In Aquinas’s account of the natural law, the natural inclinations serve a very important function. Quite unlike a Kantian practical reason that issues categorical imperatives independent of natural desire, for Aquinas practical reason is imbedded in the natural inclinations, for its very function is to grasp and judge what is the true human good that ought to be pursued, and the good by its very nature is an object of the appetite. That said the natural inclinations, considered simply, are not the natural law, but they can participate in the natural law by being ordered by reason, which is the rule and measure of human action. The natural inclinations are the seeds or starting points of moral virtue. As
ruled by right reason, they participate in reason and become a source of acquired virtue. If they are not ruled by reason, they are conducive to vice.  

The question now turns to the role natural inclinations play in Lonergan’s ethics. This section will argue the following four points: first, most, but not all, natural inclinations are feelings that intend particular goods either as satisfactions or as values; secondly, Lonergan lists several different kinds of natural inclinations, among which he distinguishes between corporeal-sensitive inclinations and spiritual inclinations; thirdly, the particular goods that are the objects of corporeal-sensitive inclinations may be elevated from the order of mere satisfactions to the order of values, as vital values; fourthly, it is in judgments of value that apprehended values are affirmed to be truly or good, not in the simple apprehension of value through intentional feelings alone. When all of these points are put together, one finds a perspective similar to that of Aquinas, who holds that the natural inclinations participate in the higher order of the human spirit (reason) and thereby in the natural law as well. The major exception or exceptions are the natural spiritual desires with transcendental objectives which stem from the dynamism of the human spirit, which Lonergan identifies with the natural law.  

First, most natural inclinations are experienced as feelings that intend particular goods that when attained bring satisfaction, although there is at least one spiritual inclination that is directed to the universal good, viz., the will’s desire for the universal good. Lonergan speaks of particular goods as that which give satisfaction to a particular  

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50 See Aquinas, *S.T. I-II*, q. 58, a. 4 ad. 3.
He further distinguishes particular goods from goods of order that are grasped by acts of understanding, and goods of value that are known in a value judgments in which particular goods and goods of order are judged to be truly good or not. Natural inclinations, as natural feelings of desire directed to some particular good, qualify as what Lonergan would come to speak of in his later writings as intentional feelings (i.e., feelings that respond to goods, whether apparently good or truly good). It should be noted that not that all intentional feelings are natural inclinations. Many feelings develop and are reinforced or curtailed through decisions people make. Feelings stemming from natural inclinations can be reinforced or curtailed, but they are never newly acquired or wholly eliminated.

As previously mentioned, Lonergan also distinguishes between feelings that intend satisfactions and feelings that intend values. Given that Lonergan speaks of particular goods as goods that when attained bring feelings of satisfaction one might infer that natural inclinations are directed only at particular goods as objects of satisfaction. But this is certainly not exclusively the case. In Insight Lonergan also points out that there is at least one kind of natural inclination that although it has its satisfaction in the attainment of its proper good it is not satisfied with satisfaction. This natural inclination is the detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know, which intends what is truly valuable.

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52 See Lonergan, Method, 32.
53 Lonergan’s understanding of the polymorphism of human consciousness, it seems to me, illustrates this point. The pure desire to know conflicts with other desires, but it is never wholly suppressed. See Lonergan, Insight, 410-411.
54 Lonergan, Insight, 619. In his book The Eclipse of Beauty, John Dadosky quotes a previously unpublished statement from Lonergan in which he states: “The pure desire to know: that is the transcendents generally or the first one and then moving on to the second and then moving on to the third. Really, that desire is value
Indeed, the attainment of knowledge, which is a particular good of a human person, does involve feelings of satisfaction, but this desire to know moves beyond the goal of satisfaction that comes with the attainment of an insight to pursue an unconditioned in a judgment that is independent of one’s likes and dislikes. In other words, the unrestricted desire to know is unique in that it moves one to transcend self-interested pleasure so as to seek self-transcending values that are true goods and not just apparent goods. Lonergan calls it a detached, disinterested, and pure desire because it is a source of self-transcendence. This means that Lonergan would distinguish between two different types of natural inclination, which leads to the second point.

Secondly, again, Lonergan lists several different kinds of natural inclinations, among which he distinguishes between corporeal-sensitive inclinations and spiritual inclinations. Recall that in his Supplement Lonergan identifies four natural inclinations that are spiritual inclinations: the natural desire to understand that seeks knowledge of God, the natural desire for rectitude that seeks to do what reason commands, the natural desire for as opposed to satisfaction – that is what makes it pure." See John Dadosky, The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty: A Lonergan Approach (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 42.


56 The term corporeal-sensitive is my own term, not Lonergan’s. In the Supplement Lonergan distinguishes spiritual inclinations from intellectual inclinations. Given that sensibility is embedded in corporeality, a point Lonergan emphasizes in Insight (206-207) while discussing the biological pattern of experience, I have decided to emphasize both the corporeal and sensible features of certain non-spiritual natural inclinations. A more thorough and accurate treatment of the natural inclinations from the perspective of Lonergan’s treatment of explanatory genera would distinguish between a hierarchy of conjugate forms operating at the levels of the physical, the chemical, the organic, the psychic, and the intellectual in human persons. One could then speak of a hierarchy of goods that are the objectives of the inclinational movements at each of these levels. In a very insightful essay, Patrick Byrne has argued that Lonergan’s scale of values needs to be grounded in his account of explanatory genera that would at the same time result in an explanatory differentiation among values that are easily descriptively conflated. See Patrick H. Byrne, “Which Scale of Value Preference? Lonergan, Scheler, Von Hildebrand, and Doran.” In Meaning and History in Systematic Theology: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Doran, S.J., edited by John Dadosky (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2009), 40-46.
happiness that receives its determination from reason, and the natural desire for
immortality whereby it is possible to be in union with God both in this life and in eternity.\textsuperscript{57}

What characterizes all four of these desires is that they intend self-transcending
goods; for one moves beyond mere satisfaction to something truly perfective by attaining
them. These natural desires are spiritual feelings that intend values, and stand opposed to
sensitive feelings that intend satisfactions, unless they are habitually formed to be ruled and
measured by a higher spiritual order that is intelligent, reasonable, and responsible.\textsuperscript{58}

In \textit{Insight} Lonergan also speaks of a number of other natural inclinations, some of
which are corporeal-sensitive, others that are spiritual, while speaking of different patterns
of consciousness.\textsuperscript{59} First, there is the biological pattern of consciousness that emerges from
biological drive and purpose. There are certain vital processes that when undisturbed lie
outside of conscious control, but when disturbed enter into consciousness. When these
vital processes are disturbed they manifest themselves consciously in acts of
intussusception, reproduction, and self-preservation. These terminal activities are ordered
to such goods as food, drink, procreation, health, and the avoidance of objects that would
harm organic vitality. As these vital processes enter into consciousness they are
experienced as conations responding to particular goods and as aversions in response to
those things that would do harm, as apprehended in sensations, memories, and images.

\textsuperscript{57} Lonergan, \textit{Supplement}, 14.

\textsuperscript{58} Lonergan’s value ethics does not make use of the theoretical terms of habits, virtues, and vices, but it seems
to me that when he speaks if the development of feelings does have in mind those feelings that are acquired
through repeated virtuous action that habitually makes choosing values over satisfactions easy and pleasant.

\textsuperscript{59} One of the patterns of consciousness is the intellectual pattern whose underlying natural desire is the
unrestricted desire to know, which I have discussed earlier.
Lonergan also speaks of the aesthetic pattern of experience, which is an experience that presupposes the biological pattern but aims at something different than pain and pleasure.\textsuperscript{60} It is an orientation towards experiencing for the sake of the joy of experiencing that Lonergan refers to as a spontaneous liberation of self-justifying joy. He implicitly draws attention to two spontaneous responses peculiar to this pattern of experience. He speaks, first, of the spontaneous joy of conscious living that is the liberation of the senses from the merely biological pattern of living, and, secondly, of the spontaneous joy of intellectual creation that is the liberation of intelligence from the labours of practical and speculative intelligence. If joy is a spontaneous response to an object obtained, it is reasonable to suggest that it must be preceded by a natural spontaneous desire for the object one takes joy in. Indeed, Lonergan points out that the source of this aesthetic pattern of experience lies in deep-seated wonder that is the source of all questioning. In the aesthetic pattern of experience, the subject shows forth this wonder not in concepts but in symbols.

In his book \textit{The Eclipse of Beauty}, John Dadosky argues that along with the four spiritual natural inclinations Lonergan mentions in the \textit{Supplement}, one should also add a natural desire for beauty, an aesthetic-dramatic operator whose meaning it expresses is elemental and cannot be exhausted by human conceptualization. This operator intends the beautiful, and is a desire to constructively create and receptively contemplate beauty.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60} See Lonergan, \textit{Insight}, 207-209.

\textsuperscript{61} John Dadosky, \textit{The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty}, 182. Dadosky’s development of the notion of beauty is a development not only of elements in Lonergan’s own thought, but also from that of Robert Doran who was the first to argue for the need to posit a symbolic or aesthetic-dramatic operator that underlies the intellectual, rational, and moral operators, as an extension to Lonergan’s cognitional theory from below. On Robert Doran’s treatment of the symbolic or aesthetic-dramatic operators, see Robert M. Doran, \textit{Theology and the Dialectics of History} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); \textit{What is Systematic Theology}? (Toronto:
Such being the case, this natural desire is an intentional feeling that intends the qualitative value of beauty.\textsuperscript{62}

Lonergan also identifies a dramatic pattern of experience which aims at getting things done, but doing so in a dignified way.\textsuperscript{63} Every person must attend to their biological needs, such as eating, drinking, procreating, working, etc., but in doing so one is not content simply with satisfying mere biological desire, but seeks to do so in a dignified way. Each person seeks to make a work of art out of one’s own life, seeking the fair, the beautiful, the admirable, and the honourable, and avoiding their opposites. Furthermore, the dramatic pattern of living would not be dramatic if there were not others to witness and participate in this drama. Lonergan notes that humans are social animals, and such communal living involves one in the aesthetic value of good performance that others recognize and mutually share in.

Although Lonergan does not explicitly name any natural inclinations that underlie the dramatic pattern of experience, there are at least two that seem to present themselves: first, the natural desire for dignified living that seeks to transform one’s merely biological pattern of living into a work of art; and secondly, spontaneous intersubjectivity. The desire for a dignified life seems to encompass both an aesthetic dimension – a desire for beauty – and a social dimension – the desire to be admired by others. Lonergan speaks at some length about spontaneous intersubjectivity.\textsuperscript{64} Humans are social animals and spontaneous intersubjectivity is the primordial basis of community. Spontaneous intersubjectivity is

\textsuperscript{62} On the qualitative value of beauty, see Lonergan, \textit{Method}, 31.
\textsuperscript{63} Lonergan, \textit{Insight}, 210-212.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 237-244.
Lonergan’s equivalent of Aquinas’s natural desire to live in society that Aquinas identifies as a rational desire. These desires transcend the biological pattern of living and can be identified among the spiritual desires that intend the values of dignified living and friendship with other persons.

Thirdly, the goods that are the objects of corporeal-sensitive inclinations may be elevated, as it were, from the order of satisfactions to the order of values, which are the objectives of disinterested self-transcending feelings. For Aquinas human sensitive appetites participate in reason insofar as they are ordered by human practical reason to the due good, resulting in the formation of moral virtues and acquired affective responses that makes following reason easy and pleasant. By themselves the sensitive appetites cannot discriminate between what is truly good and what is apparently good apart from reason. This same idea seems to be present in Lonergan, although articulated in a somewhat different fashion.

According to Lonergan sensitive feelings, considered simply as such, exclusively intend satisfactions, not values that are the source of self-transcendence. Unlike feelings that intend values, sensitive feelings do not discriminate between what is truly good and what is only apparently good. But in his Supplement, Lonergan remarks that “besides these spiritual desires, we note the remarkable elevation of feeling and plasticity of human sensibility, which reveal us to be enfleshed spirits more than animals having the use of

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65 Aquinas, S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2c.
66 In “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness” Lonergan speaks of a natural propensity “to be open to friendship” (p. 182).
67 See Aquinas, In III De anima, lect. 15, §§826-827.
Particular sensitive goods can be pursued simply as satisfactions or as values. In other words, the same particular good that is the object of sensitive inclinations can also be the object of feelings that intend vital values, and it is known to be truly valuable in a value judgment. In other words, they can also be the objects of feelings that intend values.

According to Aquinas it is the light of the agent intellect that judges what is the truly good. According to Lonergan it is the dynamism of the human spirit operating at the fourth level of human consciousness that is the ultimate criterion and judge of what is truly good.

Particular goods like food, drink, and reproductive union that are the objects of sensitive appetites may be intended as vital values by falling within the purview of the notion of value and later judged to be truly good. A term the later Lonergan uses to speak of the elevation of something belonging to a lower order into a higher order is sublation. Human sensitivity is elevated or sublated both by and into the higher orders of understand, judgment, and decision, and this sublation is roughly equivalent to what Aquinas means by participation.

Finally, it is in judgments of value that apprehended values are affirmed to be truly or not truly good, not in the apprehension of values through feelings alone. Lonergan holds that certain intentional feelings apprehend and respond to values, but this is not the same as saying that one knows that some good is truly good simply by having a positive felt response towards some potential good of value. Moral feelings still have to be critically

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71 For Lonergan’s notion of vital value and its relationship to higher orders of value (i.e., social, cultural, personal, and religious), see Lonergan, *Method*, 31-32.
72 Ibid., 241.
scrutinized. While there is some ambiguity about just what Lonergan means by saying that feelings apprehend and respond to values, while Lonergan seems to be fairly clear that in acts of deliberation value is known to be truly valuable in a value judgment. A judgment at the fourth level of consciousness is the cessation of an inquiry that begins with the intention of value expressed in questions regarding what ought to be done. A value judgment is a conclusion reached at the end of deliberative acts of understanding, not an impulsive emotive response. “We feel values before we know values in value judgments.” Truth is always known only in a judgment.

So it would seem that for Lonergan the natural inclinations, considered simply in themselves as intentional feelings, may intend satisfactions, or they may even intend values if they are spiritual inclinations, but they do not simply as inclinations determine as such what is truly good. The human good is reached in a value judgment, and a value judgment

73 Michael Vertin, for instance, attempts to overcome a potentially problematic ambiguity by interpreting “Lonergan’s statement that values are apprehended ‘in feelings,’” to mean “that values are apprehended by means of feelings that are self-transcendent, not within feelings (as within data). That is to say, one apprehends value ‘in’ feelings as in a *terminus quo*, not a *terminus quod*. “ See Michael Vertin, “Judgments of Value for the Later Lonergan,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13, no. 2 (1995): 235.

74 While Lonergan speaks of intentional responses to values through feelings and subsequent judgments of value, a number of Lonergan’s interpreters have spoken of the need to speak instead of special kind of deliberative insight or reflective act of understanding that precedes a value judgment and is structurally analogous to the reflective act of understanding that precedes factual judgments on the third level of judgment based upon Lonergan’s own statement that judgments of value do not differ structurally from judgments of fact (*Method*, 37). Patrick Byrne, for instance, speaks of a value reflective understanding, while Michael Vertin and Brian Cronin speak of a deliberative insight. See Patrick H. Byrne, “What is Our Scale of Value Preference?” *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 21 (2008), 46; Brian Cronin, *Value Ethics: A Lonergan Perspective* (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy, 2006), 187-190; Michael Vertin, “Judgments of Value for the Later Lonergan,” 231ff; and “Deliberative Insight Revisited,” unpublished paper previously delivered at West Cost Methods Institute, Loyola Marymount University, (April 28th-30th, 2011), pp. 1-16.

75 Byrne, “What is Our Scale of Value Preference?” 46.

76 There is an important issue that will be raised later and cannot be raised here which concerns the issues of natural practical judgments. If human intelligence naturally knows some speculative and practical truths, e.g., principle of non-contradiction, do good and avoid evil, etc., then one must distinguish between natural judgments about the good and deliberative judgments of value, which would presuppose natural practical judgments (i.e., of synderesis). If the natural law consists of some naturally known precepts it is natural judgments, not deliberative judgments that are at issue. Does Lonergan have a place for natural judgments of synderesis in his thought?
is something constituted and evaluated, as Aquinas would say, under the scrutiny of the light of reason, or as Lonergan would say, as the termination of the questioning of an unrestricted desire to know what is truly valuable. It is easy to see how natural inclinations as intentional feelings function as necessary conditions of practical reasoning functioning on the fourth level of consciousness. Insofar as this is the case, they participate in the natural law but are not the natural law.

That said there seem to be some exceptions to this general rule. There is the spiritual natural inclination that is a natural desire with transcendental objectives (e.g., intelligibility, truth, value, beauty) that Lonergan identifies with the dynamism of the human spirit that intends being as its object. This is the principle of movement and rest that Lonergan explicitly identifies with the natural law. But this dynamism also underlies the natural desires for rectitude (i.e., to be obedient to this dynamism in its quest for self-transcendence), to seek transcendent happiness, and to seek transcendent truth.

Inclinations stemming from this dynamism are the exception to the rule due to the fact that they not only incline to their own proper good, but stem directly from a dynamism that naturally knows its ends as transcendent goods in every act of deliberation on some determinate good or course of action. This spiritual dynamism can reflect upon itself and know its own proper objectives, its operations, its own inclination, and itself, and thereby both apprehend, judge, and command its own due good and the good of the whole person.

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77 “The intention of being is the light of the intellect, the origin of wonder, the origin of all questions asking Why? How? What? and again, Is it so? It is the ground of human intelligence.” Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 173.

78 In the following section (4.4) I will discuss the issue of natural knowledge of the good in the thought of Lonergan.
All other inclinations simply respond to those goods they are naturally inclined towards upon some determinate or categorical apprehension, whether sensitive or intellective.79

By way of conclusion, it is evident that from Lonergan’s perspective the natural inclinations, as intentional feelings, perform an integral function within his ethical methodology. It is important to distinguish between two different kinds of natural inclinations in Lonergan: corporeal-sensitive and spiritual. Corporeal-sensitive inclinations manifest themselves in feelings of desire for their proper goods, but considered simply in themselves they do not intend or know values. Insofar as these natural desires fall under the purview of the notion of value, however, these goods are judged to be either truly good or not truly good. As judged to be truly good, these particular goods, while remaining materially the same particular goods, are objects of choice that if chosen instantiate a true vital value in the world (i.e., they bring about a real good in one’s corporeal being, such as health). This means that even the corporeal-sensitive natural inclinations participate in a higher order that arises on the fourth level of consciousness, viz. the level of decision. Consequently, insofar as the sensible-corporeal natural inclinations participate in the higher order of value arising on the fourth level of consciousness they are not merely subpersonal inclinations aimed at premoral or ontic goods but responsibly ordered and fully personal inclinations that intend moral values. These inclinations do more than “merely provide potential for or set limits upon human living.”80 The ends of these natural inclinations as

79 This distinction between transcendental and categorical or determinate will be raised and further discussed in the section 4.4.
intelligibly grasped are responsibly affirmed goods are ordered to the life, well-being, and perfection of human agents, and are as such are moral goods.

The spiritual inclinations or desires, such as the natural inclinations to immortality, the good of living in community with others, etc., are intentional feelings that intend and affectively respond to values, but by them alone one does not yet know these goods as truly valuable. These feelings make possible – as necessary conditions – judgments of value by giving the moral agent the original affective orientation towards certain goods as possible objects of judgment and choice. Apart from these feelings one would never ask such categorical questions about value as: Is seeking perpetual life truly good? Is living in just relationships with others in community truly good?

Finally, some spiritual natural desires stem from the dynamism of the human spirit that intends such transcendental objects as the intelligible, the true, being, the beautiful, and the good. This human spirit is also the source of the desire to live a life of rectitude and authenticity that is present in all acts of deliberation. These natural desires are unique among the natural inclinations as stemming from the dynamism of the human spirit, which is, according to Lonergan, the natural law. It is the principle of movement and rest that raises questions for deliberation about the good, and is also the principle of rest that judges what is truly good when all questions are satisfactorily answered. It knows and commands the good of the whole person by attending to the natural inclinations of the whole human person – both sensible-corporeal and spiritual.

4.4 Natural Law and Substantive Preceptive Judgments
As stated earlier, on at least one occasion Lonergan speaks of the transcendental precepts to be attentive, intelligent reasonable, and responsible, and any precept you arrive at from observing those precepts as the natural law. This investigation will now focus the question of whether or not the natural law consists only in purely formal procedural preceptive judgments or whether it may also include, even if only in a secondary but still meaningful sense, substantive preceptive judgments as well.

The argument will seek to show that it is possible to speak of substantial precepts that belong to the natural law, and it will do so by beginning with Lonergan’s own starting point to his existential ethics, viz., the self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and doer. Since what is truly foundational is not a set of propositions but one’s conformity (through intellectual and moral conversion) to the immanent norms that lie at the source of one’s knowing and doing, it is imperative to know oneself. By beginning with self-appropriation one can come to grasp and affirm a set of virtually unconditioned universal preceptive judgments that are not merely formal and procedural, but substantive, and share a family resemblance with those primary preceptive judgments of the natural law that Aquinas speaks of as being naturally and self-evidently known, and are the seeds and ends of the virtues. To this argument I will add one important caveat. Given Lonergan’s understanding of what natural knowledge is one would have to conclude that not all of the universal substantive judgments that will be listed are naturally known. This does not mean that all of them are not virtually unconditioned and self-evident, at least *per se nota quoad se*. Lonergan distinguishes transcendental concepts (intelligibility, being, value) and the principles that are based upon them that are naturally known by the intellect due to the
very nature of intelligence itself being what it is and categorical concepts that are known through insight into a determinate field of experiential data and is therefore acquired.\textsuperscript{81} Whatever is a categorical determination of the transcendental concept of the good comes as a result of an insight into a determinate field of inclinational experience and is not naturally known but acquired.

Arriving at this conclusion will require two main steps. The first step will argue that one of the primary goals of the transcendental precepts is to promote intellectual and moral conversion through self-appropriation. Second, while the transcendental precepts are merely functional, implicit within them are basic goods (e.g., intelligibility, truth, value) that one can discover through self-appropriation that are the basis of substantive preceptive judgments, and that the affirmation of these goods becomes a starting point that leads to the affirmation of other basic goods (e.g., self-transcending authenticity and virtue, life, relations with other persons) that one must judge to be true goods that ought to be pursued and done and their opposites avoided if one is to be an intellectually and morally authentic subject. Although not central to my argument, I will also point out how these substantive moral precepts are linked with the moral virtues traditionally denominated as justice, temperance, and fortitude.

Before proceeding, I do need to reemphasize a point that relates to the functional specialty Lonergan calls foundations, and is something I have mentioned previously. It is necessary to bear in mind that for Lonergan what is ultimately foundational is not a set of

propositions but an immanent set of norms that belong to the structure of human knowing and a person’s choice to conform one’s behaviour to these norms through intellectual and moral conversion that results in authenticity.\(^{82}\) If there are universal preceptive judgments of the natural law that can be affirmed in virtually unconditioned universal value judgments there must be a clear recognition that these judgments are not first principles in any absolute sense (although perhaps they are first in a relative sense as being first within the sphere of propositional knowledge of the good, just as the concept of being is the first among concepts).

4.4.1 Natural Law, Self-Appropriation, and Conversion

According to Lonergan the transcendental precepts are the natural law. They are also representative of Lonergan’s turn towards interiority. The transcendental precepts regard the need to responsibly attend to one’s own cognitional activities while engaging in cognitional actions. These precepts presuppose that human agents have some degree of reflective control over these activities.\(^{83}\) While most people do not customarily reflect upon their own cognitional activities while they are engaged in acts of experiencing, understanding, reasoning, and deliberating, still given the nature of human cognition such reflective activity is possible, and according to Lonergan integral to becoming authentic knowers and doers.


\(^{83}\) While the concern of this investigation is Lonergan’s ethics insofar as it informs our understanding of the natural law, also worthy of mention is Dalibor Renić’s study on how Lonergan’s epistemology is a form of responsibilist virtue epistemology, which is to say that there is an ethical element involved in Lonergan’s theory of knowledge due to the fact that humans have some reflective control over their knowing. See Dalibor Renić, *Ethical and Epistemological Normativity: Lonergan & Virtue Epistemology* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2012).
This reflective engagement with one’s own cognitional activities is the basis of Lonergan’s cognitional theory. From Lonergan’s perspective, when one attends to one’s own cognitional activities one finds that one’s cognitional processes do “not lie outside of the realm of natural law.” Every person experiences sensations, percepts and images, feelings of wonder that give rise to questions for understanding, questions regarding truth and what is real, and questions regarding the good that ought to be done. By attending to one’s own conscious experience, understanding the unity of relations within this experience, affirming this intelligible reality, and affirming the value of these intentional operations and the good to which these operations are aimed, one discovers a natural normative pattern of operations that are aimed at intelligibility, truth, the real, beauty, and value that ought to be followed faithfully insofar as it falls within one’s ability to do so.

Despite the lawful spontaneity of these operations, their actual performance is never assured. Human consciousness is polymorphic, and the pure, unrestricted, detached, and disinterested desire to know is not the only spontaneous desire one experiences, but is one among many oftentimes conflicting desires. So living in accordance with the normative pattern of operations arising from the unrestricted desire to understand the potentially intelligible, to judge what is true, and to deliberate about the truly good, is never a sure thing.

Through self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and a doer comes the possibility of intellectual and moral conversion. Intellectual conversion occurs when one comes to realize that knowing is not a matter of taking a good look and thereby “seeing what is there

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85 Ibid., 410-411.
to be seen and not seeing what is not there, and that the real is what is out there now to be looked at.”\textsuperscript{86} Instead, one discovers that the real is not just what is sensitively experienced, but what is experienced, understood, and judged to be real. The real world is a world mediated by meaning, and meaning is a product of human understanding whose truth is reached in a judgment. Through moral conversion, on the other hand, one comes to change “the criterion of one’s decisions and choices from satisfactions to values.”\textsuperscript{87} It is through self-appropriation of oneself that one comes to fully realize the true nature of what is real and what is valuable.

Thus, while the transcendental precepts proximately prescribe one to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, remotely and ultimately they prescribe the integral good of the human person as an experiencing, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible subject. Their goal is promoting authentic subjectivity, self-transcendence, and conversion.\textsuperscript{88} In the words of the classical tradition, they promote the goal of becoming a truly virtuous person. Insofar as the transcendental precepts are the natural law, these precepts promote self-appropriation and are the seeds of conversion, of authentic subjectivity, and of virtue.

\textbf{4.4.2 Natural law and Substantive Preceptive Judgments}

\textsuperscript{86} Lonergan, Method, 238.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 240.
Classically, the natural law is thought to consist of certain naturally known and self-evident preceptive judgments regarding human action. Lonergan, on the other hand, clearly resists the identification of the natural law with preceptive propositions. The only exception being the transcendental precepts and these precepts are procedural in that they command actions for properly attaining knowledge (although they are substantial in the sense that they regard concrete operations). It is now time to show that despite Lonergan’s seeming hesitation to identify the natural law with substantive preceptive judgments that aim at basic goods, beginning with self-appropriation I shall argue that one can grasp and affirm a number of basic goods that constitute a set of substantive universal preceptive judgments that are true and certain. These universal preceptive judgments are virtually unconditioned judgments of value that show a family resemblance with those primary preceptive judgments of the natural law that Aquinas speaks of as being naturally known, self-evident, and certain.

Lonergan calls for a shift away from basing any science or ethics upon logically first principles, and calls for a shift towards transcendental method instead. What is ultimately foundational are not propositions that function as a set of logical first premises, but concrete normative operations which are first in the ordered set that “consists in an ongoing, developing reality.”89 Lonergan seeks to move beyond the Aristotelian paradigm of science as presented in the Posterior Analytics, which is a science of the universal, the necessary, and self-evident.90 Given this stance it might seem as though Lonergan rejects

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89 Lonergan, Method, 270.
90 Lonergan’s most focused criticism of Aristotelian science as it concerns how first principles are known (as articulated in Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics, bk 2, chp. 19) is found in his “Second Lecture: Religious
any judgments, factual or value, as attaining the status of being necessarily true and self-evident. But such an inference would be a mistake. Lonergan argues, for instance, that one can reach a virtually unconditioned judgment that his cognitional theory is true, and that for each person the factual judgment ‘I am a knower’ is not only possible, but can be known with certainty.

Moreover, when one considers the transcendental precepts, one finds precepts that are undoubtedly considered by Lonergan to be universally valid, self-evidently true, and applicable to everyone at all times. All people share the same structure of human knowing that is latent and operative within them. The transcendental precepts prescribe that one ought to act in accordance with the operational norms latent in the structure of human knowing. In both *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, Lonergan argues that one can verify with certainty that human knowing consists of experiencing, understanding, judgment, and decision. As one can reach the virtually unconditioned knowledge about the fundamental structure of human knowing in a factual judgment, so too one can affirm with equal certainty the good of acting in accordance with the normative operation immanent in *Knowledge,*" in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.,* edited by Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 136-137. Lonergan’s argument boils down to pointing out that what Aristotle lacks is a clear articulation of the virtually unconditioned, which is a judgment that is reached only when all the relevant questions have been fully answered.

For a thorough examination of Lonergan’s critique of Aristotle’s notion of science, see Michael P. Maxwell, Jr., “Lonergan’s Critique of Aristotle’s Notion of Science,” *Lonergan Workshop,* 18 (2005): 155-187. For a different take on what Aristotle is up to in the last chapter of the *Posterior Analytics,* Patrick Byrne, argues that in all due fairness to Aristotle, Aristotle’s principle aim is not to show how first principles come to be known, but to address the question of how psychic habits develop. See Patrick H. Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 170-179.

91 Michael Vertin, who is skeptical that universal substantive moral preceptive judgments ever reach the status of the virtually unconditioned, affirms the exceptionless and self-evidential status of the transcendental precepts: “When expressed as the basic precept, rule, commandment of human living, that criterion (i.e., the transcendental notion of value) may be formulated as follows: ‘Live attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly!’ That basic precept is an exceptionless law that is self-evidently certain.” Michael Vertin, “Lonergan on Sexual Morality: The Moral Status of Homosexual Acts,” presented at the Lonergan Research Institution Graduate Seminar, (Toronto, Regis College, November 11, 2011), 8.
this cognitional structure in a value judgment. One can reach a virtually unconditioned judgment that adhering to the transcendental precepts ought always to be done.

Through self-appropriation I grasp and affirm not only my own cognitive operations (sensing, understanding, etc.), but also the objectives of my transcendental intending at the levels understanding, judgment, and decision, viz., intelligibility, truth, beauty, and value. Furthermore, falling under the scrutiny of the notion of value I raise the question whether these objectives are goods truly worth pursuing, and I come to realize that I cannot deny these objectives as true goods without being caught up in a performative contradiction. Since it is by my acting in accordance with the normative pattern of operations of human knowing and doing that these goods are most readily attained, I grasp and affirm that the transcendental precepts ought to be always followed. I decide “to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one’s experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding.” Thus, I can reach a virtually unconditioned value judgment about the good of acting in accordance with the immanent norms of my cognitional structure and take responsibility for it.

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92 Since I am taking self-appropriation as my starting point, it is fitting that I should now switch from third person to first person “I” as needed.

93 In order to deny that intelligibility, truth, the real, beauty, and value ought to be pursued as truly good, I can only do so by proposing their opposites as goods worth pursuing: unintelligibility, falsity, unreality, ugliness, and disvalue. But if asked to give reasons for why I should choose these latter objectives instead of the former, I must either remain silent and not speak, or give reasons by arguing that these opposite objectives are worth pursuing while being intelligent, reasonable, and responsible when doing so, and showing how these objectives are realistic and therefore achievable, attractive, and truly valuable. But I then only affirm the goodness of intelligibility, truth, the real, beauty, and value in doing so. On Lonergan’s use of performative/self-referential inconsistency arguments in his ethics, see Mark E. Frisby, “Lonergan’s Method in Ethics and the Meaning of Human Sexuality,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 63 (1989): 238-240.

But are the transcendental precepts the only universal preceptive judgments that enjoy universal and self-evidently true status, or are there also substantive judgments that are universal in scope, naturally known and self-evidently true, such as those listed by Aquinas in his treatise on law? In response to this question, there is a lack of agreement among Lonergan scholars.95 Lonergan does make some statements that might suggest he has no problem with affirming there are some such substantial precepts, but they are only suggestive, not argued for.96 And at no point does he say that if there are such precepts, they are the natural law.

Before taking a stab at this question, a few clarifications regarding terminology are in order so as to not cause confusion. The first term is ‘notion.’ As employed by Lonergan, the term ‘notion’ has a technical sense and is not to be confused with a concept.97 A notion is

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95 Among Lonergan scholars there appears to be no consensus on whether Lonergan would approve of there being any substantive principles of the natural law. For instance, Frederick Crowe suggests that Lonergan would have no problem with Aquinas’s account of the natural law that includes substantive precepts. He states that Aquinas’s synderesis “was definitive for all morality, and Lonergan’s four transcendental precepts (‘Be attentive,’ ‘be intelligent,’ ‘be reasonable,’ ‘be responsible’) would lie behind the synderesis and be even more definitive – not in the sense of being more universal but in the sense of being more basic. Synderesis and the transcendental precepts, then, are fixed till God makes us something other than we at present are as a human race.” Lonergan’s contribution to Aquinas is on the subjective side from which the moral principles are derived. See Frederick E. Crowe, “Rethinking Moral Precepts,” in Lonergan and the Level of Our Time, edited by Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 326-327. R. J. Snell takes an agnostic position on whether there are any propositional first principles that are self-evident and exceptionless on Lonergan’s view, but argues if there are any, “those propositions still are not the natural law but the result of the natural law”. See R.J. Snell, The Perspective of Love: Natural Law in a New Mode (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 181-182. Michael Vertin denies that there can be any such necessary principles other than the purely procedural transcendental precepts. Substantive universal precepts are useful as heuristic tools, but they are not exceptionless and self-evidently certain. Michael Vertin, “Lonergan and Sexual Morality: The Moral Status of Homosexual Acts,” 8, 11; and Michael Vertin, “Deliberative Insight Revisited,” 11.


97 While Lonergan has a technical sense of meaning for the word ‘notion,’ he also uses this word in a variety of contexts where it has the more conventional meaning of a concept or idea. On Lonergan’s technical use of
an intentional intending (*intentio intendens*) arising from the dynamism of the human spirit that Lonergan juxtaposes with an intended intention (*intentio intenta*), which is something known and formulated in a concept. For instance, Lonergan speaks of an intelligent intending that is the notion of intelligibility. Preceding any formulation of the concept of *intelligibility* that one arrives at by objectifying the content of intelligent intending, there is the notion intelligibility which constitutes the dynamism of one’s conscious intending. It is the notion of intelligibility that moves one to seek unrestricted understanding of all that is intelligible.

A concept, on the other hand, is a content of an act of conceiving that follows a previous act of insight into experience, which in turn follows a desire to understand (stemming from the notion of intelligibility) some data of experience. Here one must make a further distinction between a transcendental concept and a categorical concept. More generally, a concept is a content of something understood or known by prior cognitional operations. As mentioned above, one arrives at a transcendental concept by objectifying the content of intelligent, reasonable, or responsible intending. The content of any act of understanding is something intelligible. The content of any act of judgment is true and real, and any content of acts of value judgment and decision is a value (truly good). In this

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98 In *Topics in Education* Lonergan identifies the intention of being with the light of the intellect. See Lonergan, *Topics*, 173.

99 Lonergan’s identifies several transcendental notions that arise at different levels of consciousness: there is the intelligent intending that is the transcendental notion of intelligibility, the reasonable intending that is the transcendental notions of the true and the real, and the responsible intending that is the transcendental notion of the good. See Lonergan, *Method*, 11-12.
respect the transcendental concepts are completely indeterminate. Categorial concepts, on the other hand, are determinate and therefore have a limited denotation. While every act of understanding seeks to know something intelligible, a chemist’s knowledge of the periodic table, Aristotle’s four causes, a physicist’s knowledge of falling bodies, etc., is categorial knowledge for it has a limited denotation.

When one speaks about substantial basic goods, one is speaking about something that is pursued as a good and conceptually known, and what is pursued as a good and conceptually known can be either transcendental or categorial. But before one ever conceives of a basic good, there is the preconceptual intentional intention that is the notion of value that is an unrestricted seeking after what is truly good that arises in questions for deliberation: Is this truly good?

Now what is a basic good? A basic good, as I define it, is a good that is an ultimate end or reason\(^\text{100}\) for acting within a particular category or class of goods.\(^\text{101}\) Life, for

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\(^{100}\) When I use the word “ultimate” as qualifying an end or reason for acting I use it in a qualified or relative sense. One may speak of the absolute ultimate end of action, which in the Augustinian-Thomist tradition, is God and only God. Here I use ultimate end not as signifying an absolute ultimate end, but ultimate end as the ends of the natural inclinations or various moral virtues. So, for instance, life is the end of a natural inclination to live, while to act according to reason is the end of a natural inclination to virtue and the proximate end of temperance and fortitude. As ends, these are different ends of human striving, but I make no suggestion that all these ends are not ordered to each other in some ultimate hierarchy.

\(^{101}\) Another qualification is necessary here as well. Are not truth, intelligibility, beauty, value, and being transcendental? And if they are transcendental objectives that we strive for, how can it be said that they are also particular goods? Here I am not suggesting that truth, beauty, etc., are categorial and not transcendental objectives of the human spirit. The thing to keep in mind is that the transcendentals are indeed transcendental, and are therefore not confined to any category, but it is also the case that when we purse truth, for instance, truth is the end of one of many specific desires in us. It is not the end of a sensitive inclination to food and drink, or even to a natural desire to at the level of understanding, or even the proper end of deliberation; rather, it is a particular good that is the objective of a judgment. So truth is a transcendental objective that opens me up to knowing all things at the level of judgment, it falls under the aspect of a particular good at the fourth level of consciousness. The good, on the other hand, is at the fourth level of responsibility, a transcendental objective, and all other particular goods are included within it as parts to a whole. So truth, intelligibility, beauty, life, etc., insofar as they come under the aspect of the good are
instance, is a basic good that is an end of human striving. Many other goods are pursued as means to this end, such as eating healthy foods, drinking clean water, physical exercise, etc. Basic goods are substantial goods, and as such they are objects sought through human operations.102

With these distinctions in mind it is possible now to proceed. If there are any generalized moral laws or precepts that enjoy the status Aquinas attributes to them (naturally known, self-evident, certain, etc.) the answer will have to come from one’s own inquiry into the matter. The answer I propose here is yes there are some, and my argument proceeds as follows.

particular goods of human striving, even if, considered in themselves, beauty, truth, and intelligibility are transcendental.102 There is some overlap between what I consider a basic good and what the New Natural Law theorist considers a basic good, but I would not claim any more than an overlap. We both share the sense that a basic good is always an end and never a means for acting and so is an end in itself. However, unlike the New Natural Law theorists, I do not hold that there is no single objective hierarchy among basic goods. See John Finnis, Fundamentals of Ethics (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1983), 51. They do hold that an objective hierarchy can exist between basic interests regarding basic goods, since “unfettered practical reason in various ways establishes priorities among basic interests in goods independently of anyone’s situation or choice. Such priorities will hold always and everywhere; they are moral requirements for all human persons precisely as such.” There are according to these moral theorists established by unfettered reason “certain natural priorities among a good person’s basic interests.” Germain Grisez, Joseph Boyle, and John Finnis, “Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends,” The American Journal of Jurisprudence 32 (1987): 138-139. But there is not an objective order among basic goods simply as such. It is true that distinctively different kinds of goods are not commensurable with one another in accordance with some kind of rational calculation based upon some not fully explained common rationalist standard (e.g., how do I measure whether an hour of exercise is better for me than going to a two hour long Shakespeare play?). Nor do we know the difference between higher and lower values based on some moral intuition. Rather, they are measurable in some way accordance with a standard intrinsic to human striving. The dynamism of the human spirit is oriented towards self-transcendence, and this striving unfolds over four levels of consciousness. Basic goods, as ends of human striving, are first encountered on different levels of consciousness. But if lower levels of consciousness are sublated by higher levels of consciousness in the human spirit’s movement towards self-transcendence, so too it would seem are their objective correlates, viz., basic goods. According to this reckoning, the degree of self-transcendence provides the criterion. All of the basic goods are ends and not means because they are all equally integral to the well-being of every person. However, some basic goods are more perfective of the human person-as-human than are others. This is why I believe basic goods can be correlated to Lonergan’s scale of values, as I will a little further on propose.
First, Lonergan actually does affirm at least one preceptive judgment that is not a merely procedural precept and that is naturally known, self-evident and certain. It is the preceptive judgment Aquinas calls the first principle of the natural law that one ought to pursue the good and avoid evil:

Accordingly, in this active intellectual consciousness we can distinguish a general fundamental and utterly general light and further determinations of the same light. The fundamental and utterly general light is our created participation in uncreated light, the source in us that gives rise to all our wonder, all our inquiry, all our reflection. Again, we attribute to this light those most general principles that contain no determination drawn from experience; for example, the principles of identity, non-contradiction, and sufficient reason, or the precept that good must be done and evil must be avoided.¹⁰³

Lonergan follows Aquinas in holding that being is naturally known, and because it is naturally known so too are those principles whose meaning are based upon the knowledge of being, such as the principles of identity, non-contradiction, and sufficient reason.¹⁰⁴

Likewise, the good is also naturally known, and because the good is naturally known so too is the first principle of practical reason: good must be done and evil avoided.¹⁰⁵ While this

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¹⁰⁴ Lonergan’s interpretation of Aquinas’s understanding of how being is naturally known is Lonergan’s own position. Being is the natural object of the agent intellect that is able to make all things and the possible intellect that is able to become all things, and is known conceptually through the intellect’s reflection upon its own operations. A key text Lonergan refers to in Aquinas for his interpretation is S.T. I-II, q. 66, a. 5 ad. 4, where Aquinas states that the truth of principles depend up their terms, and terms such as being and non-being, whole and part, are known through wisdom. Lonergan recognizes that for Aquinas such knowledge of terms through wisdom presupposes reflective acts of understanding and judgment. See Lonergan, Verbum, 56-59, 68-70, 96-97; Insight, 393-396.
¹⁰⁵ It is fairly clear that for Lonergan all of the transcendental concepts are naturally known. In Verbum Lonergan states that “The concept of being is natural to the intellect; for intelligibility is natural to the intellect, for it is its act; and conceptualization is natural to the intellect, for it is its activity; but the concept of being, on the above showing is the conceptualization of intelligibility as such, and so it too is natural to intellect” (Verbum, 58; also Understanding and Being, 161-163). Natural knowledge is distinguished from acquired knowledge which presupposes natural knowledge. Natural knowledge of being is, in a certain sense, known a priori, albeit in a qualified Kantian sense of a priori insofar as here knowledge that is not absolutely independent of experience. It is known a priori in the qualified sense insofar as one does not require an insight into a determinate field of experience in order to know being; that said, one “cannot wonder or inquire
principle is transcendental, universal, and indeterminate, it is nonetheless substantial, for it
commands that the good ought to be pursued and the good is something concrete,
otherwise it would not be the objective of human striving. In fact, all of the procedural
transcendental principles in a certain sense presuppose the knowledge of the good and the
principle that the good ought to be done and evil avoided.\textsuperscript{106}

According to Aquinas the good in general is the proper good of the human will.
Similarly for Lonergan, the notion of value is the objective of the transcendental intending
or unrestricted desire for value. But when I objectivize it by reflecting upon my own
cognitional intending on the fourth level of consciousness, I grasp the transcendental
concept of the good of value. When the good is conceived along with its opposite concept
(disvalue or evil), through a further insight into the meaning of these terms in relation to
without having something about which to wonder or inquire” about (Understanding and Being, 164). And so
the concept of being “is naturally known because it proceeds from any intelligibility in act (= any intelligence in
act)” (Verbum, 69). Knowledge that is acquired comes through insight into this or that phantasm (Verbum, 70), and all such knowledge is categorial and determinate. Like the concept of being, all of the transcendental
concepts (intelligibility, truth, beauty, and value), which are convertible with being, are all naturally known in this a priori sense. For this reason I restrict my claim that the substantive precepts of the natural law are
naturally known only to such transcendental judgments as one ought to pursue intelligibility, truth, the real, beauty, and value. Further determinations of the good, such as the good of authenticity or virtue, the good of one’s being and well-being, the good of other persons and living in community, etc., would not seem to qualify
as naturally known since they require insight into some limited field of inclinational experience. That said, I do nonetheless claim that they are virtually unconditioned, per se nota (at least quoad se if not quoad nos), and
necessarily true universal value judgments.

\textsuperscript{106} I say that the transcendental precepts presuppose the principle to do the good and avoid evil “in a certain sense” and not absolutely. From the perspective of conceptualization the first principle of the natural law
precedes our knowledge of the transcendental precepts for the reason just given. On the other hand,
Frederick Crowe is correct in saying that “Lonergan’s transcendental precepts . . . would lie behind the
synderesis and be even more definitive” (Crowe, Rethinking Moral Precepts,” 326) from the standpoint of
the priority of cognitive operations to concepts; that is, it is through the actual performance of actions consistent
with the transcendental precepts that one comes to know anything, including the good in general and the
principle to pursue the good and avoid evil. So while the first principle of the natural law structures all other
formulated judgments of the good to be done, such as the transcendental precepts, the first principle as a
formulated judgment is itself a product of the normative operations of human knowing. On the other hand,
the first principle of practical reason, like the transcendental precepts, is also an immanent norm within the
structure of human knowing, for the proposition is the conceptualized expression of human striving for the
good that is the notion of value. In this respect the whole notion of priority disappears.
one another, I am able to formulate the first principle of the natural law and affirm its truth. The good is the objective of my human striving and it ought to be pursued. Since I cannot deny that the good is that which I ought to pursue and its opposite avoid without involving myself in a performative contradiction (e.g., it is good that I choose to do what is evil instead of what is good), I reach a virtually unconditioned judgment.

Next, the objectives of questions that I seek on the levels of understanding, judgment, and decision, are respectively the intelligible, the true, beauty, and value, which are sought whenever I seek to know any categorial instance of intelligibility, truth, beauty, or value. The question of what is the good that I ought to pursue arises on the fourth level of consciousness. This means that I know only at the fourth level of consciousness that the intelligible, the true, and beauty are true goods that ought to be pursued, and so it is on the fourth level that the transcendental precepts are formulated and their ends affirmed as particular goods proper to understanding and judgment. But just as the transcendental precepts in a certain way presuppose the first principle of the natural law, so too do they presuppose other value judgments, viz., they presuppose that knowledge of the intelligible, the true, the real, and beauty are basic goods that ought to be pursued and their opposites avoided (i.e., it is good that all pertinent questions for intelligibility and truth be fully answered and obfuscation and falsehood avoided). I should be intelligent, reasonable, and responsible because the operations that I engage in to attain the intelligible are directed to an end that is truly good. The procedural transcendental precepts in a certain way presuppose the affirmation of transcendental intelligibility, truth, and value as true goods, and I affirm the transcendental precepts are the necessary means to attaining these good
ends. Since it is impossible for me to intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly deny the goodness of intelligibility, truth, reality, and beauty without getting caught in a performative contradiction (i.e., without attending to experience, intelligently scrutinizing the data, seeking only to affirm what is true, striving for something that is real, and enjoying what is truly beautiful), I reach a virtually unconditioned judgment that these goods are true goods. And in affirming that transcendental intelligibility and truth are true goods that I ought to pursue, I also agree with Aquinas that intelligibility and truth are goods of reason that ought to be pursued, and that these preceptive judgments are naturally known, self-evidently true, and certain.  

Now recall that Lonergan also speaks of four natural inclinations that are spiritual in nature: the natural desire to know, the natural desire for happiness, the natural desire for rectitude, and the natural desire for immortality. What about the goods of rectitude and immortality? Can one reach virtually unconditioned value judgments with respect to these basic goods?

Is rectitude (virtue) a basic good that can be affirmed with certitude as something that ought always to be pursued?  

Thus far I have come to affirm that intelligibility, truth,
the real, beauty, value are true goods that ought to be pursued. If these are real goods then my responsibly engaging in those operations that directly aim at these goods are also good, and not engaging in them responsibly is an evil. The transcendental precepts to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible direct me to engage in those operations as means to attaining these goods. They do so by directing me to appropriate myself as a knower and a doer, to reflectively attend to my cognitional operations, to seek to understand them, to affirm them in a judgment, and to assent and choose to be faithful to the unrestricted desire of the human spirit as it unfolds through the four levels of consciousness. Self-appropriation of the norms immanent within my own subjectivity is a first step towards intellectual and moral conversion. But if the goal of the transcendental precepts is conversion through self-appropriation, to become an authentic subject, to transcend myself, then it is equally their goal to make me truly virtuous,¹⁰⁹ that by obeying them I become an originating value who chooses myself as a terminal value, and thereby to become an authentic subject.¹¹⁰ The transcendental precepts are as it were seeds of virtue and authenticity, moving me towards self-transcending value not simply on this or that occasion, but to be habitually oriented towards choosing values rather than satisfactions, tempering the conflicting desires that arise in the polymorphism of my consciousness that satisfaction. Both virtues and authenticity pertain to properly ordered affectivity such that the higher levels of human consciousness rule over the lower levels of human sensitivity, and value judgments guide choice. One becomes an authentic or virtuous subject only through choices made that follow reason (i.e., the judgments that arise from dynamism of the human spirit).

¹⁰⁹ “While Aristotle spoke not of values but of virtues, still his account of virtue presupposes the existence of virtuous men, as my account of value presupposes the existence of self-transcending subjects.” Lonergan, Method, 41, n. 41.
¹¹⁰ Ibid., 51.
interfere with the unrestricted desire of my human spirit. So by seeking intelligibility, truth, the real, beauty, and value, I am seeking true goods that I ought to pursue. If by means of obeying the transcendental precepts I am able to attain these goods, then obeying these precepts is a good that ought to be done. But the goal of the transcendental precepts is my attainment of authenticity, self-transcendence, conversion, and virtue, by which I am well disposed to faithfully seek these transcendental goods, and so authenticity and virtue are goods that ought to be sought and their opposites avoided. Therefore, I ought to seek rectitude as a true good, and this substantive judgment is self-evidently true and certain.

What about the natural inclination for immortality as good? Is immortality a truly valuable basic good that I can affirm with certitude? Here I will argue that while immortality is a basic good we desire, it not a basic good we can affirm with certainty from the perspective of natural knowledge unassisted by supernatural revelation and faith. Nonetheless, this natural desire presupposes another natural desire for being, life, and its perfection through operation as good that can be affirmed with certainty as truly good. In what follows I will work my way up to the question of the good of immortality, but I will do so dealing first with the goodness of my being and its operations. This natural inclination to preserve my being and attain its operational perfections presupposes some kind of factual knowledge about my own being as a self that operates, the practical consideration of myself and its operations as true goods, and the further considered possibility of the attainment of the ultimate perfection of my potentialities.

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First, the very notion of self-affirmation presupposes knowledge of the self that has being and strives for its perfection through operation. What is this ‘self’ that is the object of self-appropriation? According to Lonergan it is a unity-identity-whole. Through my operations I become conscious. But there are many operations and so there are many ways of being conscious. My conscious and intentional operations include sensing, perceiving, remembering, imagining, inquiring, understanding, conceptualizing, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, speaking, etc. Yet there is an intelligible unity uniting this plurality of conscious and intentional operations that is me the conscious subject, who is the one consciously and intentionally engaging in these operations. I know myself as a unity-identity-whole not by taking an inner look and seeing a self by some kind of intellectual intuition, but by intelligently grasping a unity-identity-whole in the ongoing flow of my own conscious experience, and affirming the reality that is my-self in a judgment. So in order for me to affirm myself as a knower and doer, I must first affirm myself as a unity-identity-whole by intelligently grasping myself as a unity-identity-whole in my own conscious experience:

Hence in the self-affirmation of the knower the conditioned is the statement ‘I am a knower.’ The link between the conditioned and its conditions is cast in the proposition ‘I am a knower if I am a unity-identity-whole to be grasped in data as individual and the kinds of acts to be grasped in data as similar. But the fulfilment of the conditions in consciousness is to be had by reverting from such formulations to the more rudimentary state of the formulated, where there is no formulation but merely experience.112

Second, besides knowing myself to be a unity-identity-whole at the levels of understanding and judgment, I can also affirm the value of myself as a unity-identity-whole

at the level of decision; that is, I can value myself as a person with ontic value. Indeed, if
the qualitative values of intelligibility, truth, and virtue are goods judged to be truly valuable
_for me and never a source of evil, must I not affirm the goodness of my own being who is
the one that pursues these self-transcending goods as further perfections of _my_ being? My being and life is a necessary condition for the possibility of any of these qualitative
values to be realized in me, and I cannot choose the conditioned without choosing its
conditions. I pursue these goods because they are perfections of my own being. And so
because I have affirmed as true goods the objectives of human knowing and doing,
therefore I must also affirm as truly good the being that is me who strives for these goods
and is perfected by them. Furthermore, only certain kinds of beings are able to pursue
these transcendental goods. I am a being with an intellectual, rational, and deliberative
consciousness, which is to say, I am not just any being, but a person. The ontic value I
affirm is the ontic value of a person, and it is the value of my personhood and its openness
to further perfections that I have a natural desire to preserve.

Thirdly, to affirm (1) the good of authenticity and virtue and (2) the goodness of my
being as a person is to affirm that I am good that I ought preserve and sustain my _whole_
being, organism, psyche, and spirit, recognizing that both my being and my well-being
depends both upon the acquisition of various bodily goods and spiritual goods in a

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113 Lonergan distinguishes between the two types of value, viz., the value of persons and the value of qualities (e.g., beauty, truth, virtuous acts, etc.). The value of persons he calls ontic value. Lonergan, _Method_, 31, 50.
114 Recall what was said in chapter three about the first and second perfections of creatures. The goodness of their being is their first perfection (they are good because they exist) while the second perfection is the
goodness of their operations, and in the case of humans this pertains to the moral good that they pursue through knowledge and freedom.
115 “(A)nd rational self-consciousness cannot consistently choose the conditioned and reject the condition, choose the part and reject the whole, choose the consequent and reject the antecedent.” Lonergan, _Insight_, 629.
responsible manner. Among those bodily and psychic goods that I strive for are those vital values that promote good health, physical and psychic vitality, and are the objectives of the categorical determination of the notion of value that is the notion of temperance, which asks: what is worthwhile responsibly pursuing as necessary for this life?\footnote{“Now all the pleasurable objects that are at man’s disposal, are directed to some necessity of this life as to their end. Wherefore temperance takes the need of this life, as the rule of the pleasurable objects of which it makes use, and uses them only for as much as the need of this life requires.” S.T. II-II, q. 141, a. 6. Classically, the proximate end of temperance is that one order one’s concupiscible passions that desire food, drink, and sex, according to reason; hence my emphasis upon the word “responsibly,” for responsibility for Lonergan implies acting in accordance with the judgment and dictate of the dynamism of the human spirit at the fourth level of consciousness, which is equivalent to “act according to reason.”} If true values are hard to attain, they are the objectives of the categorical determination of the notion of value that is the notion of fortitude, which asks: what is worthwhile responsibly pursuing as necessary for this life despite obstacles?\footnote{For Aquinas on fortitude, see S.T. II-II, q. 123.} It is here that the moral significance of the non-rational natural inclinations arises, for it is through them that I come to knowledge of what my bodily and psychic needs are and the goods I need to pursue in order to meet these needs. By recognizing the ontic value of my whole person, I grasp that those goods that are the ends of my corporeal-sensitive inclinations are truly valuable goods, and in this way the lower inclinations participate in or are sublated by that higher order that is my intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness that orders them responsibly. And particular goods that are the objects of satisfaction I grasp as vital values conducive to preserving my life and health.

Among the spiritual goods that I find myself striving for is transcendent intelligibility, transcendent truth, transcendent being, transcendent beauty, and transcendent value. I naturally desire and value not only what I presently am but also what I can become and
possess, and many of these goods are spiritual goods that I cannot attain within my lifetime but I can only attain in eternity by divine assistance (e.g., beatific vision, bodily immortality). Given that the dynamism of my human spirit unrestrictedly seeks an infinite good that cannot be attained in this lifetime I find that I naturally desire immortal life so as to attain those goods that would bring me ultimate fulfillment and happiness even if its actual possibility is not certain apart from divine revelation and faith. If the possibility of immortality was certain, it would indeed be a basic good that I could affirm are truly good with certainty. Nonetheless, the good of my own being, its preservation and well-being, organic, psychic, and spiritual, are values that I can affirm as true goods that I ought to pursue and their opposites avoid in a virtually unconditioned judgment.

Not only do I ask questions about my own good, but I also ask questions about the good of others: what is the good that is due to others? Here the notion of value that asks what is worthwhile becomes the more categorically determinate intending of the just, and so arises the notion of justice. If I affirm the goodness of my own person, the ontic value of a unity-identity-whole who seeks transcendent values and seeks to be an originating value, then I must also affirm the ontic value of persons in general. For in affirming the goodness that is me, the goodness that I affirm is that I am a person. But then I can only intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly affirm the value of other persons as persons, to treat similar things similarly and equals equally, for it is only reasonable to treat similar things and equal things similarly. Insofar as I affirm the being of other persons as unity-identity-wholes who share the same experiential, intellectual, rational and moral consciousness that makes them human persons, I must also affirm their value as persons with ontic value who share the
same needs as me. Self-transcendence now involves a relationship of me to other persons, and it is at this point that the notion of the good becomes specified in terms of the notion of justice: how am I to act in relation to other persons?

Furthermore, I can affirm them not merely as persons, but persons in relations of mutual dependence with myself. I cannot value the conditioned without also valuing the conditions that make the valued condition possible. I cannot affirm myself as an ontic value without also recognizing the ontic value of other persons whose actions condition my own being and well-being. The value of the family: the value of parents, who gives one life, protects, provides, and sustains it, introduces one to the world of meaning and value by teaching and exemplifying meaning and value; the value of children, who provide for and protect their parents in their old age; the good of participating in institutions, of living in primitive or civil communities where vital goods are more readily accessible through relationships of cooperation. I cannot deny the good of personal relations that make up the community in which I am born and raised is a value without denying my own value. When Aquinas argues that humans have a natural desire to live in community with one another, he recognizes that this desire is a spiritual desire peculiar to humans as human. The natural desire for the good of community, a desire Lonergan speaks of as spontaneous intersubjectivity and a natural propensity to be open to friendship, presupposes my own valuing of myself as ontic value as well as the recognition of my own dependence upon others for my own being and well-being (and vice-versa). It is this affirmation of the good

\[\text{118}\text{ See S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2; De regno, bk. 1, chp. 1, §§5-7; In I Ethic lect. 1 §4; In I Polit. chp. 1 §§20-23.}\]

\[\text{119}\text{ Now it may be asked: how does the nonspontaneous care for the stranger or even one’s foe relate to the good of community? It is important to remember that a natural desire to live in community does not equate}\]
of personal relations that underlies the good of just relationships between persons – giving to others what they are due – which make up the good of community that seeks to affirm the ontic good of all persons and thereby collectively contributes to the well-being of all members of the community.\textsuperscript{120}

Moreover, straddling the natural inclination to preserve my own life and the natural inclination to live in community is the natural inclination to procreate. I must affirm the good of procreation for it is the condition of possibility not only of my own being, but of the species of human persons in general.

According to Lonergan the functional specialty foundations corresponds with the fourth level of consciousness and concerns a foundational decision one must make about one’s horizon and the choice to surrender to the demands of the human spirit.\textsuperscript{121} The flow of the argument I have been making in this section is to identify some fundamentally basic goods that arise within the horizon of the dynamism of the human spirit that this same dynamism demands one to affirm. Some of these goods are naturally intended by this

\textsuperscript{120} “Every person is an embodiment of natural right. Every person can reveal to any other his natural propensity to seek understanding, to judge reasonably, to evaluate fairly, to be open to friendship.” Lonergan, “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” 182.

\textsuperscript{121} See Lonergan, Method, 268.
dynamism as its transcendental objectives, while others that are categorical determinations of the good but nonetheless are judged by the dynamism of the human spirit to be necessarily true goods. There is an intelligible movement in this argument that proceeds from knowledge of one’s transcendental striving through self-appropriation that then spreads out to the discovery and affirmation of a number of basic goods. These goods are not simply deducible one from another, but they are intelligibly interrelated. There are several basic goods because human persons are composite beings with a plurality of capacities and needs. These basic goods are integrally and intelligibly interconnected because they are united in a unity-identity-whole that is a human moral agent—a distinct subsistent with a sensitive, intellectual, rational, and deliberative consciousness.

It is noteworthy how these basic goods relate to Lonergan’s hierarchy of values. These basic goods are intelligibly apprehended by means of intentional feelings and can be identified with vital values, social values, cultural values, and personal values. What are vital values but values that are conducive to the well-being of one’s life as organic and sensitive? What are social values but the practical affirmation of the value of other persons as ontic values through living together in personal relations having as its aim the good of the whole community of persons? What are cultural values but the contemplative seeking of intelligibility, truth, value, and beauty, both for their own sake and for the sake of the human community? Seeking cultural values for the good of community involves engaging in reflective and critical evaluation of the authenticity of present day cultural meanings and values in light of their historical development. One engages in reflective operations that are to culture what self-appropriation is to persons. What are personal values but the
recognized importance of the total flourishing of one’s self, the goal driven actions of a person who chooses to act in accordance with the transcendental precepts, who seeks to constitute him or herself as a virtuous person and an authentic subject? What are religious values but the seeking after and falling in love with God who is the object of one’s intellec
tive and affective striving for unconditioned truth and goodness? A more detailed understanding of how basic goods and Lonergan’s scale of values is called for, but is beyond the scope of the task at hand.

If the foregoing argument is correct, then it follows that there are indeed substantive preceptive judgments that belong to the natural law that are the starting points of the moral virtues (justice, temperance, fortitude), even if one speaks of them as being the natural law only in a secondary sense. These preceptive judgments are virtually unconditioned value judgments. The starting point for reaching these judgments is the self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and a doer. There is no attempt to claim that this is a comprehensive account of all such basic goods and preceptive judgments. The aim is limited only to that of arguing that there are virtually unconditioned substantial precepts, and consequently, there is no dialectically opposed conflict between Lonergan’s own account of the natural law and its judgments and Aquinas’ s.

122 Frederick Lawrence also finds a potentially instructive compatibility between Lonergan’s scale of values and the basic goods identified by John Finnis, which significantly overlaps with Aquinas’s list of basic goods: “Indeed, I think Lonergan’s normative scale of values would be quite compatible with Finnis’s list of indispensable basic goods, and that list (with some modifications, perhaps) could help to clarify the meaning of the normative scale of values.” Frederick G. Lawrence, “Finnis on Lonergan: A Reflection,” Villanova Law Review 57 (2012), 867. Finnis’s list of basic goods includes self-integration consisting of harmony among one’s judgments, feelings, and choices; peace of conscience and consistency between one’s self and its expression; peace with others; peace with God; human life; knowledge of truth and proper appreciation of beauty, play and skill; and marriage. See John Finnis, Germain Grisez, and Joseph Boyle, “Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends,” 107-108; also Germain Grisez, The Way of the Lord Jesus: Christian Moral Principles, vol. 1. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 121-125.
Now it is one thing to agree that there are virtually unconditioned substantial judgments of value, and it is another thing to hold that they are the natural law. Undoubtedly, Lonergan’s insistence is that the natural law be identified not with propositional precepts but with the dynamism of the human spirit as a principle of movement, the source of wonder that leads to the raising of questions for understanding, judgment, and decision, and the criterion of correct answers as the source of movement comes to rest. Lonergan calls the transcendental precepts the natural law because they are objectifications of norms immanent in the structure of human knowing. But if one discovers substantial precepts which commands those very goods (i.e., intelligibility, truth, etc.) that are the objectives of the dynamism of the human spirit, there seems to be no reason for not calling these judgments the natural law, even if only in a secondary sense. But once one affirms these goods, one is inevitably led to affirm the good of authenticity and virtue that makes these transcendental goods a constant goal of pursuit, the good of one’s own being and well-being as a person who is the one who seeks these goods, and the good of the well-being of others and personal relationships. Lonergan’s reasons for prioritizing the dynamism of the human spirit and its immanent norms over conceptual content are fundamentally valid: if one prioritizes concepts over that which is the true source of conceptual knowledge of the good, the natural law easily falls prey to a static conceptualistic norm ethic that loses sight of the concrete good that is the object of human pursuit, that is caught up in a casuistry of applying universal norms to concrete situations with no account of what a concrete insight is and why it is needed, and cannot account for the development (and decline) of moral norms in history. Perhaps the proper thing to say is
that the natural law, for Lonergan, is in its primary sense the dynamism of the human spirit, and, in a secondary sense, certain preceptive judgments, both procedural and substantial, that are products of this dynamism. The starting point for affirming these substantive judgments is not an abstract account of human nature, but the concrete self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and doer.

4.5 Summary of Conclusions

This chapter has sought to address the question of what from Lonergan’s perspective the natural law is. First, the argument has shown that in his most mature thought Lonergan identifies the natural law with the dynamism of the human spirit as it raises questions for understanding, judgment of facts, and judgments of value, and is not satisfied until it reaches the virtually unconditioned and with it the cessation of all further pertinent questions. For Lonergan this is what the natural law is in its primary and fullest sense.

Secondly, Lonergan also identifies the natural law with the procedural transcendental precepts: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible. However, Lonergan does not seem to leave any room for identifying substantive preceptive judgments with the natural law. Yet while Lonergan is clearly hesitant to identify the natural law with substantive preceptive judgments, he does not deny that there are any universally valid moral precepts, and the argument in this last section of this chapter has shown that there are at least some substantial judgments that are indisputably virtually unconditioned judgments. The starting point of this inquiry that culminates in the
affirmation of these judgments is the self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and doer. Undoubtedly, Lonergan’s chief reason for moving away from identifying substantive preceptive judgments with the natural law centers on his concern to avoid the stale conceptualism that blinds people to what stands at the true source of these judgments – the dynamism of the human spirit. Perhaps the best way to balance Lonergan’s concerns with the fact that there are substantial precepts that are universally valid, naturally known, self-evident, and certain, is to hold that the natural law is primarily the dynamism of the human spirit, and, secondarily, that it consists of preceptive judgments, both procedural and substantial, regarding which one can reach virtually unconditioned judgments.

Finally, for the later Lonergan the natural inclinations are not the natural law. But there is one major exception, viz., the pure, detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know. This natural inclination is the dynamism of the human spirit that Lonergan identifies with the natural law. The corporeal-sensitive natural inclinations are not the natural law, but they are sublated by the higher level of deliberative moral consciousness which judges the true or merely apparent value of those particular goods that are the objects of their desires. Neither are the other spiritual inclinations the natural law, but they are experienced as feelings that intend values, and such intending of values conditions the possibility for a judgment of value. They thereby participate in the order of deliberative reason on the fourth level of consciousness. While Lonergan never speaks about the natural inclinations as belonging to the natural law by participating in the natural law, as Aquinas explicitly holds, Lonergan’s own understanding of the natural inclinations is
congruent with Aquinas’s position, in which case one must say that they belong to and participate in the natural law.

Finally, there is one further summary point that, although not central to the argument of this chapter, is still significant and worth highlighting. While Lonergan speaks exclusively of transcendental notions that intend intelligibility, truth, being (the real), beauty, and value, I have further introduced several other notions that are not transcendental notions, but categorical notions, which are determinations (although still highly general) of the notion of the value. If there are basic goods, and these goods are categorical determinations of the good in general, and the good in general is the objective of the human spirit on the fourth level of consciousness, then these goods are themselves intended by the dynamism of the human spirit as having the character of the good. But if these goods are intended under the aspect of the good by the human spirit, then they are intended as ends in questions of deliberation over means. I have identified three very general questions that are categorical determinations of the transcendental notion of the good of value: What is worthwhile pursuing as necessary for this life? What is worthwhile pursuing as necessary for this life despite obstacles? What is the due good that is owed to others? These are all questions that arise from the notion of value, but they are categorical determinations of it, so that the notion of value manifests itself in (at least) three general ways with respect to human actions: the notions of temperance, fortitude, and justice. Aquinas holds that the first principles of the natural law are the seeds and ends of the virtues because they command actions that when acted upon repeatedly make a person virtuous. If Lonergan’s understanding of the natural law is expanded to include substantive
precepts that regard basic goods, then Lonergan’s account of the natural law can also be extended to ground a virtue ethics as well.
Bernard Lonergan on Human Participation in the Eternal Law through the Natural Law

Like Aquinas, Lonergan holds that humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law. The previous chapter explored three key elements that factor into Lonergan’s understanding of the natural law: the role of the natural inclinations, the dynamism of the human spirit, and preceptive knowledge. The present chapter will now explore how through each of these three elements humans participate in the eternal law.

This chapter seeks to argue for the following two main points. The first argument seeks to show that for Lonergan humans participate both passively and actively in the eternal law. Passively, humans participate in the eternal law through the natural inclinations by which they are passively moved to their proper acts and ends. Actively, humans participate in the eternal law through the dynamism of the human spirit that is the natural source by which they ask and answer questions, and through knowledge of the good. In making this argument, I will also be defending a major point of my thesis, viz., that there is no dialectical opposition between Lonergan and Aquinas in terms of their respective understandings of how humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law.

The second argument demonstrates the ability of Lonergan’s reflexive intentionality analysis to identity aspects of human participation in eternal law easily overlooked by the third person perspective of a theoretical account. Two insights arise from this perspective of interiority. First, Lonergan’s analysis of authenticity and conversion contextualizes the

1 Lonergan, Supplement, 61-62.
natural law as a uniquely human manner of imitating God. Just as God is the originator of all created value through knowing and loving himself as good, in a similar but imperfect manner humans can also originate value in the world by first knowing themselves as knowers and doers, choosing to be authentic subjects, and thereby becoming originators of value in the world as authentic subjects. This moral authenticity belongs to the natural law as the goal of the transcendental precepts that are, as it were, seeds of authenticity and virtue.

Secondly, his approach to the natural law as the ground of authentic subjectivity also helps to show how humans, as mutually dependent social animals, participate in the eternal law through the natural law at a communal level through authentic authority, authentic subjection to authority, and authentic community. This authenticity is an imperfect participation in God’s authentic care for the world as its legitimate ruler.

In making these two arguments, I will be defending another major point of my thesis, viz., that Lonergan’s turn to interiority brings into relief ways that humans participate in the eternal law that a theoretical account is less likely to account for insofar as it does not systematically begin with and work out the implications of interiority as Lonergan expressly does.

The first major section commences with a discussion on how for Lonergan the question of a transcendent law arises in a world that is dynamically developing. It first points out how the unrestricted dynamism of human intentionality strives to know the ultimate cause of order in a contingent universe, seeking an efficient, exemplar, and final cause of this order. It then proceeds to show how on Lonergan’s view this quest for an
ultimate cause of order arises from our encounter with a world order that consists not merely of lawful relations, but one of gradually emergence and development that takes place through an intrinsic principle of upward striving that Lonergan calls finality. The second major section turns to Lonergan’s notion of participation and the eternal law. This section begins by setting forth what Lonergan understands participation to be. It also addresses Lonergan’s understanding of what the eternal law is and how all creatures causally participate in the eternal law in a dynamic world order. God is the efficient, exemplar, and final cause of both the first perfection and second perfection of all creatures. The third major section then addresses human participation in the eternal law, a participation that is both passive through the natural inclinations and active through the dynamism of the human spirit and through knowledge. The fourth main section points out a couple of ways that Lonergan’s account of the natural law, which begins with interiority and highlights authenticity and self-transcendence, adds to our understanding of how humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law; additional insights that could easily go unnoticed in theoretical accounts.

5.1 The Intentional Quest for Order: Law and Causality

Besides finding a law at work within myself guiding my cognitional operations, choices, and external actions, I find lawful order throughout this world. I find not just a lawful order in the natures of things, but between things. Even in a world where life is complemented by death, successes complemented with failures, even death and failure seems to have an intelligible place in an overriding order of being. The whole universe is
diffused with order at many levels. But why should there be any order at all? This is a question regarding ultimate explanation, and it is a question that arises from the unrestricted exigency of the human spirit. From the unrestricted exigency of the human spirit arise questions regarding the ground of the intelligibility, being, beauty, and value of the universe in which I find myself. Almost inevitably the question arises whether there is an eternal transcendent source of power, law, and goodness that grounds the actual, intelligible, and valuable order of the universe and all that is in it. And inevitably this leads to the question of God, which lies within the horizon of the unrestricted intending of the human spirit.²

For Lonergan the quest for the ground of all intelligible lawful order, being, and goodness in the universe raises the question of causality. But what is causality? According to Lonergan causality is a real relation of dependence of something upon another.³ All such relations of dependence are objects of inquiry: “causality denotes the objective and real counterpart of the questions and further questions raised by the detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know.”⁴ Different kinds of questions correspond to different kinds of causes, and the kinds of causes that are the objectives of different kinds of questions can be either intrinsic or extrinsic. Among the intrinsic causes, Lonergan includes central (i.e., substantial) and conjugate (i.e., accidental) potency, form, and act. Among the extrinsic causes, he includes efficient, exemplar, and final causality. These latter three

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² See Lonergan, Method, 101-103.
⁴ Lonergan, Insight, 674.
extrinsic causes ground any given existent or occurrence by grounding its possibility, realization, and reasonableness:

It follows that contingent being must be a reasonably realized possibility. Its possibility is grounded in the exemplary cause, its realization in the efficient cause, but its reasonableness in the final cause.\(^5\)

As objective and real counterparts of the different questions raised by the unrestricted desire to know, exemplar causality, efficient causality, and final causality correspond to three distinct types of questions that arise on three different levels of human consciousness: questions for understanding (What is it?) relate to exemplar causality; questions for judgment (Is it real? Did it occur?) relate to efficient causality; and questions for deliberation (Is it truly valuable?) relate to final causality.

Bernard Tyrrell, commenting on Lonergan’s association of extrinsic causes with the levels of human conscious intentionality, states the following:

Thus, just as the internal causes are conceived in relation to experience, understanding and judgment, so final, efficient and exemplary causes must be conceived in similar fashion: final cause in relation to the conditionedness of judgment of value, efficient cause in relation to the conditionedness of judgments of existence and occurrence, exemplar causality in relation to conditioned intelligibility. Within such a heuristic conception there remains in the realms of proportionate being a three-sided incompleteness of intelligibility which is lifted only in so far as the proportionate universe is conceived of and judged as reasonably realized possibility. The proportionate universe cannot be truly so judged without there being a self-explanatory transcendent being.”\(^6\)

It is necessary to highlight Tyrrell’s repeated use of the term “conditionedness” in this statement. Human judgments of value, judgments of fact, and understanding of intelligibility are conditioned insofar as acts of judgment and understanding are contingent

\(^5\) Ibid., 680. 
upon answers to all relevant questions being sufficiently reached. But conditionedness exists throughout the universal order of things. Is the existence of this world, all existent things, and all happenings that occur within it simply an unexplainable fact, or do they have an ultimate explanation? If this world is a reasonably realized possibility, and not merely a sheer matter of fact, it will require an exemplar, efficient, and final cause that is a self-explanatory transcendent being. Only a cause that is perfectly intelligible, whose existence and goodness is self-explanatory, can sufficiently explain the intelligibility, existence, occurrence, and goodness of this universe.

So the extrinsic causes that are efficient, exemplar, and final causality are heuristically defined by Lonergan as objectives of three different kinds of questions that arise on the levels of understanding, judgment, and decision of human consciousness. Questions for understanding regard the intelligible, and anything that is intelligible is possible. Questions for judgment regard the real, the actual existence or occurrence of that which is intelligible. Questions for deliberation regard that which is purposeful or intentional, the reason for why some intelligible thing or occurrence exists or occurs.

Thus, within the horizon of the intentional quest of the human spirit for law and order there arises the question of a transcendent ground of all immanent laws and orders that constitute the actually existing universe. This search for an ultimate ground arises through questions for understanding, judgment and decision. Through these questions there arises inquiry into whether there is an exemplar, efficient, and final cause that is the ground of all law and order in this universe. This ultimate ground of all law and order that is
found in this world has for many been historically identified with God, who is himself the eternal law in which all things participate through both their being and operation.

5.1.1 Developing World Order and Lonergan’s Notion of Finality

Three extrinsic causes provide the ultimate explanation for any given existent or occurrence in this world, including the world order itself, by grounding its possibility, realization, and reasonableness. Before venturing into a discussion on Lonergan’s understanding of the notion of eternal law and how it factors into this ultimate explanation, it is necessary to say something about Lonergan’s dynamic understanding of world process. If the unrestricted desire to know raises questions about ultimate source of this world’s possibility, realization, and reasonableness, it does so because of the kind of world we live in. An important feature of world process is that there belongs to it a finalistic striving that renders it a dynamic process of continuously emerging development, rather than a static unchanging order of fixed essences. Since this finality belongs to the immanent intelligibility of things, special attention must first be given to Lonergan’s dynamic understanding of the interrelationship between the metaphysical elements of potency, form, and act, and secondly to Lonergan’s notions of finality, development, and emergent probability.

A parallelism between knowing and objective order – the order of human conscious and intentional subjectivity versus the order that is the objective of its questions for

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7 Finality must not be confused with the Aristotelian notion of final causa. Final causality is an extrinsic cause that causes movement in another as a reason for its movement (*id cuius gratia*), while Lonergan’s notion of finality is more closely associated with Aristotle’s notion of a nature as an intrinsic principle of motion (*principium motus in eo in quo est*). See Lonergan, *Insight*, 476.
knowledge – stands at the very heart of Lonergan’s metaphysics. This parallelism is grounded in the isomorphism between knowing and what is known, and this allows him to transpose Aristotelian metaphysical notions into a dynamic worldview by defining them heuristically in relation to human conscious intentionality as elaborated in his cognitional theory.\(^8\)

Lonergan defines the notion of being heuristically as the objective of questions for understanding and judgment. The notion of proportionate being is heuristically defined as what is known by means of operations at the levels of experience, understanding, and judgment.\(^9\) Likewise, the metaphysical elements of potency, form, and act are defined in relation to the three levels of human consciousness that are experiencing, understanding, and judgment: potency is what is known in experience, form is what is known in understanding, and act is what is known in judgment.

Since human knowing is not separate from proportionate being but is part of proportionate being, one should not be surprised to find further parallels between the two orders of human knowing and objective order. One of the parallels between these two orders of proportionate being is an upward striving in things that Lonergan calls finality, which Lonergan associates with the metaphysical element potency. Potency, both central potency (i.e., potency as it relates to central forms and its central act of existence) and conjugate potency (i.e., potency as it relates to conjugate forms and conjugate acts or occurrences), is that aspect of proportionate being that is known in experience.

\(^8\) Lonergan, Insight, 424-425, 456-463.
\(^9\) Ibid., 416.
Potency is both a principle of limitation and of finality. As a principle of limitation, potency limits form. In a world consisting of emerging higher orders or integrations of things and schemes of recurrences, Lonergan notes that “every higher genus is limited by the preceding lower genus.”

A substance or thing of a higher genus is constituted by a series of conditioned schemes of recurrence (e.g., a human is constituted by organic, psychic, and intellectual operations that recur in accordance with a lawful systematic regularity caused by conjugate forms). Higher conditioned schemes cannot emerge or survive apart from the coincidental manifold of conjugate acts of a lower genus that it systematizes (e.g., acts of understanding are dependent upon a lower manifold of psychic images). The universal principle of limitation is pure potency, which is the equivalent of Aristotle’s notion of prime matter. So given the isomorphism between knowing and what is known, just as in the subjective order cognitional judgments are limited by acts of understanding, and acts of understanding are limited by the data of experience, so too in the objective order is act limited by form, and form limited by potency.

But besides being a principle of limitation, potency is also a principle of finality. Lonergan defines finality as “the upwardly directed dynamism of proportionate being.” In Insight Lonergan lists nine characteristics of finality, but only five of the more significant ones will be listed here due to limits of space. First, potency as a principle of finality is the dynamic character of proportionate being that is in process. Proportionate being is not a static finished reality, but a reality that continues to change.

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10 Ibid., 467.
11 Ibid., 467-468.
12 Ibid., 490.
13 For Lonergan’s full list, see Ibid., 473-475.
Secondly, this dynamic aspect of potency is *directed*. Potency is directed towards receiving form, form is directed to receiving act, and a coincidental manifold of occurrences is directed to receiving higher forms.\(^{14}\)

Thirdly, finality is *not deductivist*. Neither the emergence nor the survival of higher forms is certain, but probable. While accurate predictions may be possible, one cannot determine with deductive certainty how finality will work itself out over time.

Fourthly, finality is *not determinate*. Finality “is not headed to some determinate individual or species or genus, of proportionate being. On the contrary, the essential meaning of finality is that it goes beyond such determinations.”\(^{15}\) In other words, it keeps striving and attempting to transcend all limitations, even if the conditions are such that transcendence is not possible.\(^{16}\)

Fifthly, finality is an *effectively probable realization of possibilities*. Just as potency makes form possible, so too does form make act possible, and likewise a manifold of acts makes possible higher forms, and higher forms in turn make possible higher acts, and so on. The realization of these possibilities however is never certain but still *effectively probable* given enough numbers and long enough intervals of time.

Lonergan’s notion of finality as an upwardly directed but indeterminate dynamism of proportionate being finds its cognitional parallel in the unrestricted desire to know. Just as the unrestricted desire to know is a dynamic conscious and intentional movement that is directed at knowing being, often in fits and starts, so too is finality a dynamic and directed

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 472.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 473.
\(^{16}\) “Even if one cares to assert that finality can go no higher than man, it is clear enough that man’s unrestricted desire to know provides concrete evidence that the alleged maximum of possibility is not the maximum of aspiration.” Ibid., 473.
dynamism heading for more perfect being amidst both successes and dead ends. Just as the inquiring subject moves from the data of experience to understanding, from understanding to judgment, from judgments to further questions about data, so too does one find a similar movement in the finalistic striving of objective order.

World process is a process of ongoing development towards fuller being, and finality integrally features into Lonergan’s understanding of development. He defines development as “a flexible, linked set of dynamic and increasingly differentiated higher integrations that meet the tension of successively transformed underlying manifolds through successive applications of the principles of correspondence and emergence. Put less technically, lower and higher integrations of schemes of recurrence are linked in such a manner that the lower integrations both invite the emergence of more determinate higher integrations (principle of emergence) and condition the kind of integration that can emerge (principle of correspondence). So it is that amongst the different genera of things and events, lower orders condition the emergence of higher orders, just as the genus of chemical things and events emerges from and is a development of a lower coincidental manifold of physical events, organic emerges from chemical, psychic from organic, and intellectual from psychic.

Furthermore, while each scheme of recurrence that integrates a lower manifold recurs in a lawful fashion in accordance with classical laws, its actual emergence is only a probable realized possibility. There is no certainty or inevitability in either its emergence or its survival. And so Lonergan also speaks of the developmental processes existent in world

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17 Ibid., 479.
process as emergent probability.\textsuperscript{18} Higher schemes integrate lower coincidental manifolds such that otherwise coincidental events are transformed into a set of relationships that are ordered by classical laws. But the actual emergence and survival of this higher integration is only probable, as is its possible demise. The probability of emergence and survival of things and events thereby occur not in accordance with classical laws, but statistical laws.\textsuperscript{19} But because world process consists of both classical and statistical laws it is intelligible.

World process is a probable realization of possibilities.\textsuperscript{20} It is a world order that is guided by both classical and statistical laws. Since world process is guided by classical and statistical laws and is thereby intelligible, this raises the question of whether or not it is ultimately a \textit{reasonably realized possibility}. Does this world have a transcendent exemplar, efficient, and final cause?

\textbf{5.2 Eternal Law and Participation}

Lonergan’s understanding of creaturely participation in the eternal law bears a very close likeness to the main features of Aquinas’s, although Lonergan must ensure it is flexible enough so as to apply it to a world order that is more dynamic than the world as Aquinas understood it. Like Aquinas, Lonergan holds that the eternal law is the \textit{ratio ordinis} or the one plan (\textit{unum consilium})\textsuperscript{21} existing in the divine mind by which he moves all things to their

\textsuperscript{18} On emergent probability, see ibid., 144-148.
\textsuperscript{19} “Abstractly, the scheme itself is a combination of classical laws. Concretely, schemes begin, continue, and cease to function in accord with statistical probabilities.” Ibid., 141.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{21} See Lonergan, \textit{Supplement}, 61, 67, 221; \textit{Insight} 687; “On God and Secondary Causes,” 56. While Lonergan frequently speaks of the divine exemplary cause as a plan, in at least one place in his writings, one finds Lonergan reluctant to speak about the order of the universe as a plan that is based upon the analogy of a governor imposing a plan upon a community. It is more precise to speak of this order as an intelligibility or intelligible order that is understood. See \textit{Insight}, 691.
proper acts and ends. This section commences with a discussion of Lonergan’s understanding of participation and affirms that he holds the same understanding as one finds in Aquinas: a causal relationship between something having some perfection in a universal and essential way that another has in a partial and non-essential way. It proceeds to discuss how all creatures receive both their first and second perfections from God who is at once their efficient, exemplar, and final cause. The section concludes with a summary account of how all creatures participate in the eternal law.

5.2.1 Lonergan on Participation

Lonergan makes mention of participation in a number of places in his writings, especially within contexts that concern differences between God and creatures. In one such place, Lonergan argues that being by essence must be distinguished from being by participation. In *Topics in Education*, Lonergan points out that to ask what being is or why being is what it is, one is asking a question about “an *ens per essentiam*, a being that in virtue of its own intelligibility *is*.“\(^{22}\) This knowledge can only be attained through supernatural beatific vision. On the other hand, to “understand an *ens per participationem* is to understand, not being, but a kind of being – the being of a rose, or the being of a man, but not being simply.”\(^{23}\)

For one to know what God is to know what being is, i.e., *ens per essentiam*, because God’s essence is identical with his being. However, in knowing what some creature is, one does not know what being is. One only knows what kind of being this creature is by

\(^{22}\) Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 172.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
knowing its essence, which is that by which it is has being (ens quo), not being itself. Creaturely being is only being by participation (ens per participationem) for its essence is not identical with its being. By understand what a creature is, one does not know what being is simply. Creatures have being in a partial way while God has being essentially.

Furthermore, this relationship between God, who is good by essence, and creatures, which are good by participation, is a causal relationship in which the cause is disproportionate or equivocal with its effect. In the Supplement, Lonergan argues that while God by his causal power could have prevented all evils in this world from happening he did not do so because the purpose of this universe to which all things are directed “is to manifest not the goodness of creatures but the goodness of God.” God justly allows evil to occur “so that creatures may act in accordance with the truth of their limited and imperfect natures, and also in order that created good, good by participation, may be only a means towards the manifestation of that which is good by essence.” Since God is good by his essence and creatures are good by participation, what goodness they enjoy comes from God who created them and who is goodness itself. Thus, when creatures manifest their own goodness by acting in accordance with their own limited natures, they ultimately show forth the goodness of God. This limited participation in Divine goodness and being is a disproportionately imperfect imitation of the goodness and being that God enjoys essentially and perfectly.

24 See Lonergan, Supplement, 5-6.
25 See Lonergan, Understanding and Being, 155.
26 Lonergan, Supplement, 68-69.
27 Ibid., 69.
28 Ibid., 5.
It is fair to say that Lonergan closely follows Aquinas in his understanding of the notion of participation. Creatures participate in certain perfections such as being and goodness that God has essentially. To ask what God is or why God is what he is, is equivalent to asking what being is and what goodness is. By asking what a creature is, one does not arrive at being itself or goodness itself, but at an understanding of this or that kind of being or qualified goodness. Lonergan would agree with Aquinas’s definition of participation as a receiving in a restricted, conditioned, or partial way that which belongs to another in a universal, unrestricted, unconditional, or essential way. Furthermore, this participation of creatures in the divine perfections is participation through causation. Creaturely participated perfections are participations in God who is perfect by his own essence. God is the cause of these finite created perfections in creatures.²⁹

5.2.2 Ways of Participating in God through Extrinsic Causation

Creaturely participation in God involves for Lonergan, as for Aquinas, a causal relationship, which includes efficient, exemplar, and final causation. God is the exemplar, efficient, and final cause of both the being and operation of all creatures.

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²⁹ Given that Lonergan aims at critically grounding all metaphysical categories in intentionality analysis, one may ask whether participation is itself capable of being critically grounded in his cognitional theory. While I do not have space to discuss this at length, I would suggest that (a) the notion of participation is similar to Lonergan’s notion of sublation, (b) Lonergan’s notion of sublation is grounded in intentionality analysis (see Lonergan, *Method*, 241), and (c) that participation can likewise be grounded in intentionality analysis. The only qualification that must be made is that in the case of participation, as it relates to the divine-creature relationship, one cannot infer any dependence of God upon creatures, whereas Lonergan’s notion of sublation (at least in some contexts in which he defines it) does include the aspect of a conditioning relationship of the higher orders upon lower orders. But once this feature of sublation is removed in contexts where it is applied to God-creature relationships, sublation and participation are adequately comparable terms accounting for the same reality of relations.
By Aquinas’s reckoning the eternal law is very closely related to the notion of exemplar causality, especially as it concerns the operation of creatures. Aquinas argues that the eternal law is a sovereign type (ratio) in the mind of God. Similarly, Lonergan defines the eternal law as “The idea (ratio) of order, considered as being in the mind of the Creator.”\(^3\)\(^0\) One finds scattered throughout Lonergan’s writings references to the divine idea of order or plan by which God providentially orders the universal order of created things as a transcendent first cause.\(^3\)\(^1\)

Lonergan holds that the order of the universe first exists as an idea in the mind of God that grounds the continuously emerging intelligible order of the universe along with everything in it, both as an exemplar cause of their being and as a transcendent law that guides their movements towards their ultimate perfection. From the perspective of Lonergan’s dynamic view of world process, while the eternal law existing in God is eternal and unchanging, the universal order that exists within the world is contingent and continuously developing.

In what follows it is necessary to keep in mind Lonergan’s understanding of dynamic emergence in world process and how God is the first cause of this entire process, but this bigger picture will not be the primary focus. The primary focus is to draw attention to the first and second perfections of creatures as they actually exist and operate in this world in accordance with their proper laws and forms. In other words, the focus narrows to God’s causal activity at the level of things as they belong to some genus and species, which is the


realm of classical laws and classical investigation. But one cannot fully account for God’s causal activity at the level of creaturely perfections without taking into account those very conditions that are needed for the very possibility of their emergence in a dynamic world process, so this too features into Lonergan’s understanding of creaturely perfections.

With this limited focus in mind, attention now turns to addressing how the three forms of extrinsic causality (efficient, exemplar, and final) extend to the perfection of both the being and operation of creatures, the eternal law being the exemplary cause of all creaturely operation. Lonergan mentions in his *Supplement* that “each individual creature is good to the extent that it exists in act and is perfected by act.” Like Aquinas, Lonergan recognizes a twofold perfection of goodness within every creature in their act of being and their act of operation. So it is necessary to look at how from Lonergan’s perspective God causes creatures both to exist and to operate through his efficient, exemplar, and final causality.

5.2.2.1 First Perfection: Being

According to Lonergan causality denotes a relationship of dependence of an effect upon its cause. God is the first cause of the being of all things as efficient, exemplar, and final cause. Since Lonergan correlates each of these three causes with different questions that arise on three different levels of human consciousness, each of these three causes will be treated in the order of human conscious and intentional unfolding: beginning with understanding (exemplar causality), unfolding through judgment of fact (efficient causality), and culminating in a judgment of value (final causality). The world of contingent beings is a

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32 Lonergan, *Supplement*, 266.
“reasonably realized possibility”33 because God is the exemplary cause that makes finite existence possible, the efficient cause that makes what is possible a reality, and the final cause that is the reason for why any finite being exists rather than not exist.

Lonergan’s most explicit, albeit somewhat laconic, analysis of the notion of exemplar causality as it relates to creaturely being is found in Insight. In his first explicit mentioning of exemplar causality in Insight, he states the following:

Again, if there are conditioned beings, there also is the fulfilling of their conditions; and if there are no mere matters of fact that remain ultimately unexplained, then no conditions are fulfilled simply at random. But if no conditions are fulfilled simply at random, then all are fulfilled in accord with some exemplar; and so there must be an exemplary cause that can ground the intelligibility of the pattern in which are or would be fulfilled all the conditions that are or would be fulfilled.34

Exemplar causality is an ultimate explanation of intelligibility of contingent things. That intelligibility can refer more narrowly to the intelligibility of this or that being insofar one asks “What is it?” (e.g., what is its quiddity or central form?). Or it can refer more broadly to an overriding dynamic world order or process within which the fulfillment of the being of many things of different genera and species is fulfilled over long stretches of time and space. Lonergan’s chief concern in this statement is with the latter, although implicit within it is also the former since exemplar causality is the ground of all intelligibility and each thing’s central form is also an intelligible pattern.

But here he seeks to express the point that if the being of things is completely intelligible then an exemplar cause is required to explain the intelligibility of the pattern at a

33 Lonergan, Insight, 680.
34 Ibid., 679.
cosmic scale in which are or would be fulfilled all the conditions that are or would be fulfilled. The existence of contingent beings is a conditioned existence, and the fulfillment of these conditions is either a mere matter of fact that lacks an ultimate explanation, or it has an ultimate explanation, and here the focus is placed upon the intelligibility of the pattern of relationships that lead up to and result in the fulfilment of conditions of this and that being.

From Lonergan’s critically argued perspective whatever has being is intelligible because being is the objective of acts of understanding, and whatever is intelligible is possible. If being is intelligible, and being is all that there is, then mere matters of fact that are not intelligible are nothing. Either Lonergan is wrong in holding that whatever has being is intelligible, in which case the existence of things in this contingent world including the world itself is a mere matter of unexplainable unintelligible fact, or this contingent world and all that is in it is completely intelligible and has an ultimate explanation. An exemplar causality that provides an ultimate explanation is both an intelligible and intelligent source of the possibility of contingent things and occurrences. So to ask if there is a transcendent exemplar cause is to ask whether this world is completely intelligible.

But this world does seem to exhibit random or chance events and this would seem to bring into question whether this world is completely intelligible. The question of random occurrence arises due to the fact that the classical scientific methodological approach to understanding things and occurrences abstracts from the concrete data of time and place leaving behind an empirical residue or coincidental manifold of things and events that is not

35 Ibid., 675.
subject to classical investigation.\textsuperscript{36} This abstraction makes possible a kind of abstract insight that leads to the discovery of classical scientific laws in answer to the question: what is it? By accumulating knowledge of classical laws, a scientist is able to investigate systematic processes that are intelligible unities, such as planetary motions, that exhibit an intelligible pattern of regular recurrences and will continue to do so, all things considered. The coincidental manifold, however, is an aggregate of things and events with a spatiotemporal unity but not an intelligible unity that can be understood in a single insight or a set of unified insights, which is the objective of classical investigation. Because this aspect of randomness belongs to world process, world process taken as a whole is a non-systematic process, even though it includes within it systematic processes. Because it is a non-systematic process it cannot be fully understood in a single comprehensive insight or a collection of unified insights expressed in classical laws.

But even this randomness is not absent of intelligibility of a certain kind of insight into concrete situations. Occurrences within a random situation do have causes that can be grasped that are spread out over time and space, but the relationships between each of the occurrences in a random situation do not form a unified intelligible pattern. Random situations contain an intelligibility that is open to statistical investigation that seeks to know

\footnote{Lonergan defines a situation as random if it is “‘any whatever provided specified conditions of intelligibility are not fulfilled’” (Ibid., 74). That which defines a random situation is not an utter lack of intelligibility but a lack of intelligibility from the perspective that all of the events encompassed within a given situation defies a \textit{unified intelligible explanation} captured by a single insight or a set of unified insights; that is, the situation cannot be fully explained by appealing exclusively to classical laws known to empirical science. The random situation does have a \textit{spatiotemporal unity}, but the unity is not an intelligible unity. Random situations – also called coincidental manifolds or coincidental aggregates – are situations that give rise to unsystematic processes that are only partially subject to classical investigation insofar as systematic processes occur within them. But what is not open to classical investigation is still open to statistical investigation and concrete insights into antecedent conditions, and therefore intelligible.}
how often certain kinds of spatial juxtapositions and temporal successions actually occur out of a total number of occasions which either falls within the range of an ideal numerical ratio or does not. Actual frequencies of multiple data sets that occur within the ideal frequency are treated as random deviations not requiring further explanation, but when the actual frequency of multiple data sets deviates systematically from an ideal frequency this signals that there is a further intelligibility to be investigated.

The non-systematic process that contains systematic processes that is world process is in principle knowable to human understanding through both classical, statistical methodological investigation, and concrete insights into specific antecedent conditions (e.g., events $x$, $y$, $z$ conditioned the being of $p$). While de facto, comprehensive knowledge is for human intelligence impossible due to the almost infinitely large number of unique concrete situations present throughout the history of world process that can be known only by concrete insights – there is too much data for finite minds to grasp, from the perspective of an unrestricted act of understanding that comprehensively and concretely comprehends everything about everything and is outside of the totality of temporal sequences, every concretely intelligible event that is situated within a related pattern of events that makes up part of the story-line of world order is intelligible and immediately comprehended. Non-systematic process is from the perspective of an unrestricted act of understanding comprehensively intelligible and fully understood in all its concreteness. A transcendent exemplary cause explains why world process is intelligible and therefore possible.\[^{37}\]

\[^{37}\] For helpful articles on Lonergan’s understanding of unsystematic world process and God’s unrestricted understanding of world process, see Patrick H. Byrne, “God and the Statistical Universe,” *Zygon* 16, no. 4
As the omniscient exemplar cause, through his wisdom God “grasps the intelligible order of every possible universe of beings in their every component and aspect and detail.”神, who is the idea of being itself, knows all things through his knowledge of himself: “Because it understands itself, the unrestricted act of understanding understands in consequence everything about everything else.” So through his infinite wisdom God understands all possible orders – and all kinds of things that can emerge within these orders – which he could instantiate by his omnipotent power, and through knowing these orders he knows all things within these orders. The actual world that God has created is thus one that God knows through his infinite wisdom, knowing not only what things do exist but their relations to each other as conditioning and conditioned. And whatever God’s wisdom understands, he can possibly choose to bring into being.

Since exemplar causality pertains to God’s wisdom in knowing through a single act of understanding what He can produce by His power, God’s exemplar causality cognitionally relates to questions for understanding, whose object is intelligibility. The divine ratio is the cause of all the intelligible relations that constitute the order of the universe and the intelligibility of the natures of individual creatures, and in this order, God knows the parts by knowing the whole. Insofar as it relates to individual creatures, the divine ratio is the ultimate ground of those intrinsic causes by which creatures are the kinds of creature that they are, viz., their forms and essences, which answer to the question “What is it?” Just as


38 Lonergan, Insight, 684.
39 Ibid., 672.
40 See Lonergan, Supplement, 60.
understanding seeks to know intelligibility, God’s exemplar causality is the cause of the intelligibility both of creatures themselves and of the universe as a whole.\(^{41}\)

But not only does God know the universe of created being in all of its parts and relations, he is also the source of its actual existence as a realized possibility. In *Insight* Lonergan’s description of efficient causality focuses upon the significance of the intelligibility of conditioned being in the following manner:

For one misses the real point to efficient causality if one supposes that it consists simply in the necessity that conditioned being becomes virtually unconditioned only if its conditions are fulfilled. On that formulation, efficient causality would be satisfied by an infinite regress in which each conditioned has its conditions fulfilled by a prior conditioned or, perhaps more realistically, by a circle illustrated by the scheme of recurrence. However, the real requirement is that, if conditioned being is being, it has to be intelligible; it cannot be or exist or occur merely as a matter of fact for which no explanation is to be asked or expected, for the nonintelligible is apart from being. Now both the infinite regress and the circle are simply aggregates of mere matters of fact; they fail to provide the intelligibility of conditioned being; and so they do not succeed in assigning an efficient cause for being that is intelligible yet conditioned. Nor can an efficient cause be assigned, until one affirms a being that both is itself without any conditions and can ground the fulfillment of conditions for anything else that can be.\(^{42}\)

If the intelligibility resulting from exemplar causality assures that this world of contingent being is an intelligible order capable of being understood through human inquiry, even if not comprehensively in this lifetime, the intelligibility of efficient causality explains how this intelligible order is in fact a reality. Lonergan’s argument can be more clearly articulated in a cumulative series of four syllogisms.

**Syllogism A: Being is Intelligible**

1. If conditioned being is intelligible then it cannot be or occur as a mere matter of fact with no explanation.

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\(^{41}\) As Lonergan is fond of pointing out in several places, the good of order of the universe participates more perfectly in God than do individuals. See Ibid., 9, 266.

(2) Conditioned being is intelligible.
(3) Therefore, conditioned being cannot be or occur as a mere matter of fact with no explanation.

**Syllogism B: Infinite Linear and Circular Regresses are Unintelligible**

(4) If the infinite linear and circular regresses are simply aggregates of mere matters of fact, then they fail to provide the intelligibility of conditioned being.
(5) The infinite linear and the circle regresses are simply aggregates of mere matters of fact.
(6) Therefore, the infinite linear and circular regresses fail to provide the intelligibility of conditioned being.

**Syllogism C: Infinite linear and Circular Regresses Do Not Assign Efficient Causes of Conditioned Being**

(7) If the infinite linear and circular regresses fail to provide the intelligibility of conditioned beings, then they do not succeed in assigning an efficient cause for being that is intelligible yet conditioned.
(8) The infinite linear and circular regresses fail to provide the intelligibility of conditioned beings.
(9) Therefore, the infinite regress and circle do not succeed in assigning an efficient cause for being that is intelligible yet conditioned.

**Syllogism D: Only an Unconditioned Efficient Cause Can Assign an Efficient Cause for Conditioned Being**

(10) Only if there is a being that both is itself without any conditions and can ground the fulfillment of conditions for anything else that can be can an efficient cause be assigned to conditioned being.
(11) There is a being that both is itself without any conditions and can ground the fulfillment of conditions for anything else that can be.
(12) Therefore, an efficient cause can be assigned to conditioned being.

Lonergan’s argument points out the need to posit an unconditioned being whose power can extend to fulfilling the conditions of all conditioned beings in order to explain the actual fulfillment of conditions of all conditioned beings through efficient causality. Such a being must be an absolutely unconditioned efficient cause. In order to show this, he must show why only an absolutely or formally unconditioned efficient cause will suffice and an aggregate of virtually unconditioned efficient causes will not. One could not then posit
either an infinite linear regress or a circular regress as possible explanations for the existence of conditioned beings.

The key point to his rejection of both these forms of regresses is his first syllogism that argues that being is intelligible, but mere matters of fact are not completely intelligible and so no mere matters of fact can exist. As aggregates of conditioned causes, neither infinite linear regresses nor circular regresses overcome having to posit mere matters of fact. But if being is completely intelligible then there cannot be any mere matters of fact, and so both infinite linear and circular regresses must be rejected as ultimate explanations for the fulfillment of conditions of conditioned beings through finite efficient causes. From Lonergan’s viewpoint, only God can truly be an efficient cause of being, for only God as a formally or absolutely unconditioned being with the power capable of grounding the fulfillment of conditions for the existence of any finite being. All other creatures are efficient causes not of being or existence, but only of the essential order of things as instrumental causes.43

God is the omnipotent efficient cause that grounds the existence of the universe of things that is the actual world.44 The actually existing world order would otherwise be no more than an object of the divine mind apart from God’s efficient causal activity. As efficient cause of all that exists, God is the creator and conserver of all things who gives things being and preserves them in being.45 Therefore, corresponding to questions for

43 “Only God exists by his very nature, and therefore only God is a cause proportionate to the production of existence. From this it follows that all created causes are causes only in the essential order. This is to say, they are not efficient causes causing the effect to exist, but only cause the effect to be such (ut effectus sit tali).” Lonergan, “God’s knowledge and Will,” 318-319.
44 Lonergan, Insight, 683.
judgment which intend the reality of intelligible possibility is God’s efficient causality that is
the ultimate cause of all real existents.

Finally, God is the final cause of the being of all creatures and the universal order in
which they exist. Because God is the final cause this contingent world is a *reasonably*
realized possibility. For Lonergan the good consists of three elements: potential good
(particular good), formal good (good of order), and actual good (good of value). Potential
goods are a manifold that are potentially intelligible insofar as they come under some good
of order. A formal good is the good as intelligible, and insofar as it is intelligible it is a
potential object of choice. An actual good is an object that is reasonably and responsibly
chosen as a good of value. As an object of divine choice, the actual world is a good of value
that is freely chosen. Because God is good and whatever he chooses to create is chosen by
him as a good to be brought into being by his power, all that he freely creates is good and
participates in his goodness. Because God’s choice to create is not an arbitrarily made
decision but a reasonably made decision, the actual world is a *reasonably* realized
possibility.

The ground of the intelligibility stems from God as exemplary, efficient, and final
cause, but its intelligibility ultimately lies in the final cause of the world and all that is in it.

As Lonergan notes, the

final cause, then, is the ground of value, and it is the ultimate cause of causes for it
overcomes contingency at its deepest level. It follows that contingent being must be
a reasonably realized possibility. Its possibility is grounded in the exemplary cause,
its realization in the efficient cause, but its reasonableness in the final cause.
Without that reasonableness, it would be arbitrary, and so it would be apart from
being; but what is apart from being is not possible; and what is not possible cannot be realized.\textsuperscript{46}

For an intellectual being, the final cause is the reason for choosing to perform some action. As intelligent and free God freely chooses to create this world and all that is in it. Because he \textit{freely} chooses to create this world, its existence is conditioned and therefore contingent. Because God \textit{reasonably} chooses to create this world, it does not exist arbitrarily but is a \textit{reasonably} realized possibility.

Since God is the exemplar, efficient, and final cause of all that exists, all things participate to varying degrees in God’s perfections.\textsuperscript{47} According to Lonergan, God is the primary intelligible, the primary being, and the primary good.\textsuperscript{48} Since God is an unrestricted act of understanding who understands his unrestricted self, God is the primary intelligible, viz., intelligibility itself. Since what is known by true understanding is being, God is the primary being, viz., being itself. Since the good is identical with intelligible being, God is the primary good, and so is goodness itself.\textsuperscript{49} Therefore, the being of this world and all that is in it, as effects of the one who is exemplar, efficient, and final cause, all participate in the

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 680.
\item\textsuperscript{47} Lonergan’s ontological hierarchy of creaturely value arises from his understanding of how different explanatory genera emerge from lower explanatory genera, such that there is a hierarchy of genera in the world of proportionate being consisting of the physical, chemical, organic, psychic, and intellectual. For Lonergan on explanatory genera, see Ibid., 280-283, 463-467.
\item\textsuperscript{48} Lonergan distinguishes between the (one and only) primary intelligible and the many secondary intelligibles. The primary intelligible is what God understands by an unrestricted act of understanding when the unrestricted act of understanding unrestrictedly understands itself. The primary intelligible is identical with the unrestricted act of understanding. Secondary intelligibles are that which an unrestricted act of understanding intelligently understands when it understands itself but they are not identical with the unrestricted act of understanding. The secondary intelligibles are all those things that God’s unrestricted understanding understands by understanding himself, and so they designate either those things that God could create if he chose to create them or those things that he does in fact create. God does not know other things by confronting things other than his self, but knows other things by knowing himself. See ibid., 671, 683.
\item\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 681.
\end{itemize}
intelligibility, being, and goodness of God who is intelligibility, existence, and goodness by his essence.

5.2.2.2 Secondary Perfection: Operation

It is a well-recognized Thomistic metaphysical principle, and one that Lonergan likewise holds, that agere sequitur esse (acting follows existing).\(^{50}\) If the first perfection of being is for something to be in act as existing, the second perfection of a thing is for it to actively operate in accordance with its capacities. The purpose or end of everything is its operation. Every creature acts in accordance with the form it receives for some proper end that is its perfection, and the intelligible source of a thing’s form, its end, and its power to move from potency to act ultimately comes from God, who is the final, efficient, and exemplar cause of the operation of all things.

God is the exemplar cause of creaturely action. As exemplar cause of the operation of creatures, God is the eternal law, the idea of order (ratio ordinis) existing in the mind of God that is the intelligently understood idea of the ordering of the movement of things to their proper ends for their own good for the good of the universe. In a number of places in his writings, Lonergan quotes Aquinas’s statement that “God by his intelligence moves all things to their proper ends.”\(^{51}\) In his Supplement Lonergan paraphrases Aquinas as follows:

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\(^{50}\) “Agere sequitur esse: perfection in the dynamic field of operation is radically one with perfection in the static order of being.” Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, 45; also 47-48.

\(^{51}\) Lonergan, *Insight*, 687; *Supplement*, 60, 68, 222; “God’s Knowledge and Will,” 323. Lonergan takes this phrase from Aquinas, who states that “Deus igitur per suum intellectum omnia movet ad propios fines.” *De sub. sep.*, chp. 15.
Therefore inasmuch as the idea of order in the divine mind regards the attainment by creatures of their proper ends, it is called divine providence; inasmuch as this providence is carried out by God’s will and power, it is called divine governance.\(^{52}\)

Lonergan speaks of divine providence in a manner equivalent to his notion of the eternal law, meaning the idea of order existing in the mind of God as it relates to the operation of creatures in their movements toward their respective ends. He further conceives divine governance as the carrying out of divine providence by God’s will and power. Lonergan thus identifies both the eternal law and providence with the divine idea of order. This idea of order is an exemplar cause pertaining to creaturely action that is closely linked with both divine will, which is the final cause and reason for all creaturely action, and God’s power, which is the efficient cause of all movement and operation.

Later in the same essay, Lonergan states that “[i]t is the plan of divine wisdom to govern all things and bring them to the attainment of their ends through secondary causes and in accordance with their respective natures.”\(^{53}\) This statement is helpful in pointing out that God moves all things to their proper ends in accordance with their respective natures that are themselves known by God as exemplar cause of their being. But it also points out another important emphasis in Lonergan’s thought, viz., that God knows not just the order of creatures’ natures to their ends, but he also knows how creatures as instrumental causes are ordered to each other as secondary causes in such a way so as to fulfill the concrete conditions necessary for all created agents to operate in accordance with their natures.\(^{54}\)

\(^{52}\) Lonergan, Supplement, 60.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 220.

\(^{54}\) “The only solution is to postulate a master plan that envisages all finite causes at all instants throughout all time, that so orders all that each in due course has the conditions of its operation fulfilled and so fulfils conditions of the operation of others. But since the only subject of such a master plan is the divine mind, the principal agent of its execution has to be God.” Lonergan, “God and Secondary Causes,” 56.
This intelligible pattern of causal relations that makes up the order of the universe is grounded in God’s eternal law.

As the first efficient cause, God typically brings all things to the attainment of their ends through his power by applying things to their proper acts. God, as efficient cause of all operations, moves all things to their proper acts and ends not immediately but mediately through created instrumental causes. God is the primary agent cause of movement of all created things whose power is proportionate to producing all creaturely operations absolutely (i.e., not merely this or that kind of operation, but every operation), but created things themselves are moved proximately by each other as conditioned created causes producing effects of a given kind that is proportionate to their own respective natures.\textsuperscript{55}

This world consists of finite creatures of different genera and species, causal agents moving and being moved by each other to action. All finite creatures to some extent must be moved by another to operation, for no creature can move itself to operation from a previous state of potency. However, this universal order of finite causal agents is not sufficient to explain the movement of creatures to their proper operation. A sufficient explanation can only be found in an agent who is a sufficient ground of the order of the universe and any occurrence that happens within it, and this agent is God:

God would be the first agent of every event, every development, every emergent. For every such occurrence is conditioned, and either the conditions diverge and scatter throughout the universe or else they form a scheme of recurrence which, however, emerges and survives only on conditions that diverge and scatter throughout the universe. It follows that only the cause of the order of the universe can be the sufficient ground for the occurrence of any event; further, since every development and every emergence depends upon a complex of events, only the

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 56.
cause of the order of the universe can be the sufficient ground for any development or emergence.\textsuperscript{56}

Lonergan links God as first agent of every conditioned occurrence in a developing universe with God as the cause of the order of the universe, thereby grounding all conditioned occurrences in providence rather than unintelligible chance, and linking God’s efficient causality with his exemplar causality.\textsuperscript{57} As intelligently directed the execution of God’s efficient causality is the sufficient causal ground of all conditioned occurrences, whether they arise in systematically regulated schemes of recurrence or cluster in coincidental manifolds with diverging and scattered conditions. God’s efficient and exemplar causality together intelligibly order and move all secondary causes so as to fulfill the conditions of all other secondary agents.

Again, as God providentially moves all creatures through secondary causes, he does so by moving secondary agents as instruments by means of application.

It follows, further, that God applies every contingent agent to its operation. For the agent operates in accord with the pattern of world order when the conditions of the operation are fulfilled; but the conditions are fulfilled when other events occur; and God is the first agent of each of those occurrences. Moreover, it follows that every created agent is an instrument in executing the divine plan; for its operation is the fulfillment of a condition for other events; and so it is used by a higher agent for an ulterior end. Finally, it follows that God by his intelligence moves all things to their proper ends; for God causes every event and applies every agent and uses every human operation inasmuch as he is the cause of the order of the universe.\textsuperscript{58}

Secondary causes are not proportionate causes of operation in others, since their own operations are conditioned. But God is the first agent in applying things to action and all

\textsuperscript{56} Lonergan, \textit{Insight}, 686-687,

\textsuperscript{57} See note 50 above.

\textsuperscript{58} Lonergan, \textit{Insight}, 687. For other contexts in which Lonergan discusses the notion of application, see especially, “God and Secondary Causes,” 53-65; “God’s Knowledge and Will,” 317-337.
secondary agents are used instrumentally by God. Only God can be truly said to be a cause that is proportionate to the cause of all movements and operations in the universe.\textsuperscript{59}

Finally, God is the final cause of all operations in creatures. God is not only the final cause of the universe as the ground of its value and all that is in it, but he is also “the ultimate objective of all finalistic striving.”\textsuperscript{60}

Instead of an upward but indeterminately directed dynamism, there is the intended ordination of each potency for the form it receives, of each form for the act it receives, of each manifold of lower acts for the higher unities and integrations under which they are subsumed. So it is that every tendency and force, every movement and change, every desire and striving is designed to bring about the order of the universe in the manner in which in fact they contribute to it; and since the order of the universe itself has been shown to be because of the perfection and excellence of the primary being and good, so all that is for the order of the universe is headed ultimately to the perfection and excellence that is its primary source and ground.\textsuperscript{61}

As this passage makes clear, it is not just individual things that strive for ends proper to their nature, but the order the universe itself strives, and all such striving is from the perspective of divine causality an intended ordination. Within the universe taken as a whole, all such striving occurs both horizontally (i.e., horizontal finality of a thing or substance acting for an end proper to its nature as an object of striving) and vertically or upwardly (i.e., movement of vertical finalistic striving towards fuller being).

Lonergan is making the link between finality as the dynamic and indeterminately directed dynamism of proportionate being with final causality. Potency, as a principle of finality, is an openness to receive form, form to receive to receive act, a manifold of acts in turn becomes a potency to receive a higher form, and so forth. It is not determined to

\textsuperscript{59} See Lonergan, “God and Secondary Causes,” 56.
\textsuperscript{60} Lonergan, \textit{Insight}, 687.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 688.
come to an end once a certain type of new genus or new species emerges. It has an ongoing tendency to transcend the limits of any given generic or specific order. Final causality reveals that what is from the perspective of secondary causality by all accounts a largely non-conscious yet intelligible movement of potency towards fuller being to be an intentionally ordered and ordained unfolding development from the perspective of the Divine Goodness. In other words, that potency strives to receive form, form to receive act, and a manifold of lower acts to receive higher forms, and so on, is something a scientist can affirm. But why potency has this openness can only be explained by appealing to final causality. The ultimate explanation of the emergence of all things and all occurrences requires appealing to a transcendent final cause.

In his Supplement Lonergan states that this universal order “is that of divine wisdom and providence, which embraces all things down to the smallest detail of each being, arranges and directs all things and brings each one to its proper end.” As each being strives for its proper end, it not only brings about some perfection in its own being, it also contributes to the higher good that is the good of order of the universe. It is not just “all

62 I say “largely” because from Lonergan’s perspective human action, for instance, is conscious intentional activity that is capable of intentionally contributing to the fuller emergence of proportionate being. See Ibid., 474.

63 “Furthermore, from the viewpoint of unrestricted understanding, even the coincidental manifolds which form the basic situations of nonsystematic process would, in a certain sense, be intelligible. That is, an act of understanding which understood everything about everything would grasp why spatiotemporal juxtapositions occur. Human understanding cannot grasp such a “why” because, as Lonergan noted, classical investigations – even when complimented by statistical investigations and insights into the concrete situations – methodically restrict themselves to understanding the immanent intelligibility of data. The why of coincidental spatiotemporal juxtapositions would not have the immanent intelligibility of classical correlations, probabilities, or insights into concrete situations. Rather the why would be cast in terms of an ultimate plan or purpose of the universe – ‘final causality,’ in traditional terms.” Patrick H. Byrne, “God and the Statistical Universe,” 360. For the scientific method’s restriction of investigation to the immanent intelligibility of formal causality, abstracting from questions concerning material, efficient, instrumental, exemplar, and final causality, see Lonergan, Insight, 99-102.

64 Lonergan, Supplement, 64.
things” but “the smallest detail of each being” (i.e., the conjugate potencies, forms, and acts of things) that is arranged by God. But the good that is the good of the universe is itself ultimately directed to the ultimate perfection who is God. In other words, all things, and every aspect of their being, in this universe are ultimately ordered to God, and strive towards this ultimate good by being moved toward their own proper good which is determined by their respective forms.

Creatures are good by participation through their operations, and through their operations they are good by being perfected in act.65 This striving for perfection is true as well for the universal order itself, which “as a whole is a more perfect participation in and representation of the divine goodness than any individual creature.”66 God as final cause is the ultimate object of all striving that takes place in the world, a striving that is, from the perspective of divine understanding, not indeterminate, but a divinely intended ordination of all things to God. Apart from this ultimate final cause, individual creatures would not nor could not strive for their own perfection.

By way of concluding summary, the eternal law is God’s providential idea of order by which God moves all things to their proper acts and ends within an all-encompassing emergent good of order. This participation of all creatures in the eternal law through their operations depends upon God as exemplar, efficient, and final cause of their operations. God, who is the eternal law, is the source of the intelligible ordering of each creature to its proper act and end as the exemplar cause. As the first efficient cause of all things, God is the sole proportionate source of power that moves all creatures from potency to act of

65 Ibid., 266.
66 Ibid., 9; also 266.
creaturely operations. And God is the ground of all striving toward perfection and goodness as the final cause, the ultimate end of all operations of all things in the universe. As exemplar, efficient, and final cause of the operation of all things, world process finds its ultimate and complete explanation. If being is intelligible then emergent world process must be intelligible. But if world process is intelligible it must be completely intelligible, and therefore completely explainable. According to Lonergan, an account of the full intelligibility of the universal order can be given only by appealing to a transcendent exemplary, efficient, and final cause.

5.2.3 Participation in the Eternal Law

It is now time to conclude this second section with a few remarks on participation in the eternal law. According to Lonergan the divine rationes – or, as Lonergan also calls them, the secondary intelligibles67 – are the eternal law, causal principles in the mind of God. And given God’s simplicity, he himself is the eternal law, the divine ratio, the primary intelligible. Since God is the eternal law by his very essence, then whatever likeness creatures display through their operations to this divine measure and standard is not the eternal law itself but the creature’s participation in the eternal law. All creatures that act in accordance with the eternal law participate in the eternal law and show forth a likeness to God, and do so in various ways according to their various ways of being what they are as they pursue their own proper goods. The eternal law, the idea of universal order in which creatures

participate, is the ontological ground of the truth of things, and through this grounding of the truth of all creaturely natures in the eternal law all creatures are disposed toward their proper ends as promulgated by the just divine lawgiver.

While law by its very nature is a formal intelligibility or set of intelligibilities underlying a pattern of systematically recurrent events capable of being understood by acts of abstract understanding that makes up a systematic process, Lonergan integrates his understanding of law within an overriding developing dynamic world process that includes both systematic and non-systematic processes. The very natures of creatures are themselves not simply the structures of various entities that have always been since the beginning, but are the immanent intelligible structures of things that have emerged over time through the finalistic striving of proportionate being. This upward striving of proportionate being is from a human perspective an indeterminate development whose future determinations can be predicted only with a degree of probability at best, for there is a degree of randomness involved in non-systematic process that escapes definitive prediction by human intelligence. This finalistic striving, however, does not escape God’s knowledge, but is itself part of the unfolding of an idea of order in the mind of God by which he orders all potencies to forms, forms to acts, manifolds of acts to higher forms, and so forth. The eternal law is the rule and measure not only of creaturely operations

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68 “Inasmuch as the idea of order, containing in an intentional way all things ordered, is related to these ordered things, it is considered to be the logical truth of divine knowledge; and the correspondence of ordered things to the idea of order in the divine mind is the ontological truth of things.” Lonergan, Supplement, 61.

69 “But it is inadmissible that infinite wisdom should order possible realities in such a way as to deny to each one what properly belongs to it. . . . Therefore inasmuch as the idea of order in the divine mind regards the attainment by creatures of their proper ends, it is called divine providence.” Ibid., 60.

70 Finalistic striving includes not only the intelligibility of the successes of development but the false starts and breakdowns, the surds of moral and basic sin, which can also be understood by inverse insights (Note: inverse
considered abstractly as individual natures striving for their perfection, but of the whole order in which they come into being through secondary causes. Such natures concretely exist in creatures living in an overriding universal order within which they emerge, and in which God instrumentally moves them to their proper acts and ends through relationships of dependence upon other things. It is the perfection of the universal order that most of all reflects God’s likeness.

5.3 Human Participation in the Eternal Law through the Natural Law

It is now time to be more precise as to how, according to Lonergan, humans participate in the eternal law, as being moved to operation in accordance with the likeness of the divine ratio. This section seeks to show that from Lonergan’s perspective humans participate in the natural law in both a passive and an active manner: passively, through their natural inclinations; actively, through the dynamism of the human spirit that is the natural law and through knowledge that is the product of this spiritual dynamism.

5.3.1 Participation as Moved and Governed by the Eternal Law: Natural Inclinations

insights affirm some empirical element in one’s experience but deny an expected intelligibility [see Lonergan, Insight, 43-45]). Lonergan speaks of false starts and breakdowns as physical evils, or, in the case of the exercise of human actions, moral evils, which are the consequences stemming from the basic evil of irrational and irresponsible choices (Ibid., 115, 474, 689, 691, 716). Notably, all such surds are events – except basic evils which are the negation of events that should occur – and because they are events they have causes. And if they have causes, God knows them, wills, and gives them being as their first cause. To this the qualification must be made that for Lonergan the proper criterion of the good is not pain and pleasure but intelligibility. This means that everything in the universe that is intelligible and has being is good. But basic evils are a lack of intelligibility and being. All events, including physical and moral evils, are potential goods that can develop and become integrated into a higher formal good of order that is intelligible and truly good. So the consequences of human choices that stem from basic evil of volitional choice and result in a social surd can become an opportunity for some good to arise from it through attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible human action (ibid., 691). Basic evils that are the failure to choose to do the good and avoid evil when one knows what the good is that must be done and the evil that must be avoided, are not events but a failure of occurrence; it is a failure to yield to reasons and reasonableness. Because it is not an event but a lack of an event that should have occurred, it does not have a cause. God does not cause basic evils, but forbids them while permitting people to make them (ibid., 690).
In beginning this section on human passive participation in the eternal law through the natural inclinations, it will be helpful to recall some of Lonergan’s statements from the *Supplement* about what he then considered the natural law to be, and how he understands all creatures to participate in the eternal law through the natural law. While Lonergan’s understanding of what the natural law changed sometime after writing the *Supplement*, this change in no way negates his earlier understanding of how it is that creatures passively participate in the eternal law.

In the *Supplement* Lonergan states that it is by means of the natural law that all creatures participate in the eternal law: “The idea of order, considered as being in the mind of the Creator, is the eternal law; participation by creatures in this eternal law is natural law.”\(^{71}\) Upon pointing out that the natural law is that in which all creatures share, Lonergan states that all things have an order, since they have forms and laws that are innate, that is, naturally implanted in them. The natural law is simply a participation in the eternal law whereby non-human material creatures spontaneously proceed to their proper activity and end and human beings are moved not only to act but also to know how they ought to act and to freely choose on the basis of this knowledge.\(^{72}\)

Humans, like all other creatures, have forms and laws that are intrinsic to their being. These forms and laws naturally orient them towards goods proper to them. Some of these laws orient them to particular goods, while through reason and will humans seek not merely particular goods or goods of order, but the cultural good\(^{73}\) (i.e., the good of value). Those forms and laws that belong to human sensitivity that are part of the constitution of the

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\(^{71}\) Ibid., *Supplement*, 61.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 61-62.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., 70-71.
human person are the source of those natural desires by which one participates passively in the eternal law. Humans are not pure intellects, but “enfleshed spirits” who both undergo change as moved by another and actively move themselves through knowledge.\(^7^4\)

So by means of the forms or laws naturally operative in them by which they are moved to their proper ends, humans participate in the eternal law. Apart from these conjugate/accidental forms and laws, humans would not be able to operate so as to attain ends proper to their nature or essence. These forms or laws are what Lonergan calls ‘natures’ in the sense of accidental or conjugate forms that are principles of movement and rest in a thing. It is by means of these ‘natures,’ which are the immanent intelligible structures in human persons that have their ontological ground of truth in the divine rationes of the eternal law, that God moves them to their proper acts and ends in his providential governance of the universe.

The first perfections of human persons are the subject of God’s providential activity insofar as God creates and conserves their human natures as their efficient cause, does so according to an idea of order as exemplar cause, and is made good and ordered to God as their final cause. Likewise the second perfections that are the operations of all creatures by which they move towards their proper ends, fall under God’s providential causal ordering.\(^7^5\) By means of God’s exemplar causality, humans are “ordered and directed, they cannot fail

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\(^7^4\) Ibid., 15. Also: “For we are conscious in two ways: in one way, through our sensibility, we undergo rather passively what we sense and imagine, our fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness; in another way, through our intellectuality, we are more active when we consciously inquire in order to understand, understand in order to utter a word, weigh evidence in order to judge, deliberate in order to choose, and exercise our will in order to act.” Lonergan, The Triune God: Systematics, 139.

\(^7^5\) “Beings would be created and conserved in vain if they did not operate; and they could not operate without an ordering and direction from divine wisdom.” Lonergan, Supplement, 66.
in effecting the common course and order intended by divine wisdom.”76 Thus, through his wisdom does God

arrange and connect things in such a way that serial or circular schemes of operation may result, and to order these schemes both in the course of time and in a simultaneous hierarchy in such a way that the common course of events and order of the universe may ensue.77

As efficient cause God applies humans to their proper activity in accordance with his divine wisdom such that the conditions required for the proper operation of each person are fulfilled through the operations of other created secondary causes, while God is the cause of all operations and occurrences in general:

For just as each individual thing receives from others the fulfillment of the conditions requisite for its own operation, so all things taken together receive from God that arrangement and ordering from which a well-ordered common effect follows.78

Finally, as final cause “the ultimate end to which all things are to be directed is the manifestation of the divine goodness.”79 While the proper end of each person’s operation is directed toward some good that is perfective of his or her own being, all things are so ordered to one another within the order of the universe that they are directed toward God as their final end; and so by being the type of creature that they are, each one manifests God’s goodness individually but most of all collectively through the function they perform within the good of the universe as a whole.

So it is that all humans participate in the eternal law in a passive manner through their forms and laws, which manifest themselves through natural inclinations toward their

76 Ibid., 66.
77 Ibid., 67.
78 Ibid., 66.
79 Ibid., 66-67.
proper acts and ends. God as exemplar, efficient, and final cause of the being and operation of all creatures’ forms and laws moves all things to their proper acts and ends according to the *ratio ordinis* of his divine wisdom.

### 5.3.2 Cognitive Participation in the Eternal Law: Human Spirit and Knowledge

But to speak of human passive participation in the eternal law is only a part of the story. Lonergan especially highlights the active dimension of human participation in the eternal law. Humans enjoy an “active intellectual consciousness” and by it “we can distinguish a general fundamental light and further determinations of the same light. The fundamental and utterly general light is our created participation in uncreated light, the source in us that gives rise to all our wonder, all our inquiry, all our reflection.”

Human intelligence is at once both a capacity to make and become all things through its intellectual light (*potens omnia facere et fieri*) for it regards everything (i.e., being). Through the dynamism of the human spirit then humans have the capacity to intelligently order and freely choose what course of action they judge to be truly good. And so it is that humans can imitate God insofar as they intelligently order their actions through their understanding of the good they can choose to bring about both for themselves and for...

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80 Natural inclinations as forms and laws enjoy a relative permanence (otherwise they would not be forms or laws), but only a relative permanence from the perspective of the history of world order in Lonergan’s perspective. They are what they are due to a history of emergence and development that Lonergan seeks to account for and understand by employing such explanatory ideas as finality, development, and emergent probability. While my present focus is limited to God as exemplar, efficient, and final cause of the being and operations of humans are they are, in the larger picture God is also the exemplar, efficient, and final cause of the whole history of development that has led up to and perhaps will move beyond the forms and laws that presently constitute humans as intelligent, psychic, organic, chemical, and physical beings. The question of the changeableness of the natural law due to these changes of forms and laws in things that occurs throughout the history of world process will be raised in chapter six.

others. The active principle that is the dynamism of human intelligence in raising and answering questions gives humans the capacity to attain knowledge of the good to be done and the evil to be avoided. This principle that Lonergan identifies with the natural law is the active principle by which humans actively participate in the eternal law. It is now time to speak more in detail about human participation in the eternal law through the natural law both as the dynamism of the human spirit and as preceptive knowledge of the good attained by means of this dynamism.

5.3.2.1 Participation through the Created Light of the Dynamism of the Human Spirit

At least in his later writings, Lonergan is unequivocal in his exclusive identification of the natural law with the higher spiritual capacities and operations of the human subject, especially the dynamism that underlies and unfolds through intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness. This also means that human participation in the eternal law through the natural law pertains to this spiritual principle of movement and rest in human persons. Unlike human sensitive spontaneities that unfold in accordance with certain particular laws that move a creature to some particular good in a determined manner, the created intellect moves in accordance with transcendental laws that are ordered to the transcendentals (e.g., truth, good, etc.).  This difference between the exclusively passive participation of non-intellectual creatures in the Uncreated Light and human active participation in the Uncreated Light through intelligence is articulated by Lonergan in the following statement:

Every created being is an outward imitation of divine perfection. Other created things manifest some particular aspect of the divine excellence and operate of their own accord according to particular laws that are appropriate to each. But the

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82 See, Ibid., 175.
created intellect is a participated likeness of uncreated Light. Since this uncreated Light is the source and origin of all natures and all laws, even the created light has a certain omnipotence about it, whence it is said to be potens omnia facere et fieri – able to make and to become all things. Nor is the operation of the created intellect controlled by any particular law, whether implanted in it by its very nature or imposed upon it from without: the intellect itself is, as it were, a transcendental law unto itself. What are generally regarded as laws of the intellect, such as the principles of identity, of noncontradiction, of the excluded middle, or of sufficient reason, express no rule, whether particular or specific or generic, but rather state the conditions of possibility of any rule or law. But although the created intellect is in some sense capable of everything, and although it is not controlled by any determinate law, nevertheless it does not operate by whim or by change. Its supreme norm is that it operate only in accordance with any intelligibility that it has grasped; indeed, the whole force and efficacy of intellectual operation and emanation lies in this, that it is from its apprehended intelligibility and in accordance with it that both in the intellect and acts of the will proceed. An inner word proceeds from grasping a quiddity; a judgment proceeds from grasping the evidence; an act of love proceeds from grasping goodness.¹⁸³

The human intellect is an intentional omnipotence, capable of both making and becoming all things insofar as it is capable of asking questions about all things, understanding all things, and reaching virtually unconditioned judgments about all things. But this is only a capacity, not an actual reality. It is not directed in a determined fashion by any particular law, like a lion is spontaneously attracted to eating meat, but by the supreme norm that it should operate only in accordance with any intelligibility that it has grasped: concepts and definitions proceed from grasping a quiddity (understanding), judgments proceed from grasping sufficient evidence (judgment), and acts of love proceed from grasping goodness (decision).

In a similar manner, at various other places scattered throughout his writings, Lonergan states that humans participate in the uncreated light through human rational consciousness:

¹⁸³ Ibid., 613.
For rational consciousness is the image of God in man, a likeness by participation of uncreated light and a personal orientation towards that personal light which enlightens every human being.\textsuperscript{84}

Insofar as human persons “become actually inquiring, understanding, judging, and willing, not by their own intention, but by a natural spontaneity,” this natural movement of the human spirit “in us is a created participation in uncreated light.”\textsuperscript{85} By means of this natural spontaneity the created human intellect is an intentional omnipotence – a capacity and desire to make and become all things – participating in a real omnipotence that is uncreated light.\textsuperscript{86} Formulated rules of logic are objectifications and expressions of intrinsic exigencies and norms of intellectual light whose implications impact upon propositions, and these “fundamental exigencies and norms . . . proceed from our created participation of uncreated light.”\textsuperscript{87} Finally, paying proper heedfulness to the fundamental exigencies and norms of the created intellect is the very basis of subjective authenticity, “a summit towards which one may strive, and only through such striving may one come to some imperfect participation of what Augustine and Aquinas named Uncreated Light.\textsuperscript{88}

It is clear from Lonergan’s perspective that God is the source of both the being and operation of created intellectual, rational and, moral consciousness in human persons. God, who is uncreated light, is the exemplar cause of the created intellect, which imperfectly imitates the uncreated light’s omnipotence, who is the ultimate ground of its exigencies and norms. God, as efficient cause, is the source and origin of all created

\textsuperscript{84} Lonergan, \textit{Supplement}, 129-130; see also Lonergan, \textit{The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ}, 19.
\textsuperscript{85} Lonergan, \textit{The Triune God: Systematics}, 405.
\textsuperscript{86} Lonergan, \textit{Understanding and Being}, 390.
intellects, and the source of their power whereby they move from a state of ignorance to a state of actual knowledge. God, as final cause, is the source of the goodness of all uncreated intellects, the reason why there should exist creatures with intelligence, and the reason for their intellectual, rational, and moral striving.

5.3.2.2 Participation through Knowledge: Preceptive Judgments of the Natural Law

God is not only the cause of the being of created intellects, but the source of their operations as well. But the operation of intelligence is ordered to knowledge of intelligibility, truth, reality, beauty, and true value. Indeed, Lonergan explicitly follows Aquinas in holding that humans participate in the eternal law by means of the natural law in an active way through knowledge:

The natural law is simply a participation in the eternal law whereby . . . human beings are moved not only to act but also to know how they ought to act and to freely choose on the basis of this knowledge.  

So human participation in the eternal law pertains not just to the powers they enjoy, both sensitive and intellective, but also to the knowledge that they attain by means of these powers. The eternal law especially pertains to a ratio ordinis (idea of order) in the mind of God that all creatures participate in through their operations. And insofar as human intellectual operations attain knowledge, that knowledge either corresponds or fails to correspond with the divine rationes that are the ultimate ontological cause and veridical ground of its truth.

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89 Lonergan, Supplement, 61-62.
Again, for humans this participation is participation through the knowledge assented to by the light of their own intellects, and is a knowledge that is first known and prefigured in the divine intellect:

For the society that love creates is first known by that uncreated intellectual light of which our natural intellectual light, as well as the light of faith and the light of glory, is a created participation.90

In various places in Lonergan’s writings one finds reference to how the truths that are the content of human judgments participate in the truths of the Eternal Reasons (Augustine), or, as Aquinas puts it, participate in the Uncreated Light. Like Aquinas, Lonergan argues that while it is through the exigencies and norms of intellectual and rational consciousness that virtually unconditioned judgments of truth are proximately grounded, still all virtually unconditioned judgments of truth (i.e., unconditioned judgments whose conditions happen to be fulfilled due to the sufficiency of the evidence) are themselves ultimately grounded in the uncreated light, whose knowledge of truth is formally unconditioned (i.e., an unconditioned that has no conditions whatsoever, whose very being is truth itself):

On that higher level (of judgment), there becomes operative what Augustine named a contemplation of the eternal reason, and what Aquinas attributed to our created participation of uncreated light, what a modern thinker might designate as rational consciousness. On that level there emerges the proper content of what we mean by truth, reality, knowledge, objectivity.91

All truth, speculative and practical, that is known by human minds is ultimately grounded in the mind of God, which is truth itself. Like Aquinas, Lonergan holds that no one knows the

90 Ibid., 79.
eternal law directly, but it is known through its effects in the things God has made. Things are true inasmuch as they are like God, while human judgments are true inasmuch as they are like things and so bear a likeness to the *divine rationes*. The eternal reasons are not only God’s knowledge of all that is possible and actual, it is not only the ontological ground of the truth of things, but it is also the veridical ground of all human knowledge.

Human knowledge as participation in the eternal law especially consists in knowledge of the natural law that is naturally known, self-evidently true, and certain, but also includes knowledge that is acquired through naturally known knowledge. While the main thrust of Lonergan’s thought is a movement way from naturally known first propositional principles, he does affirm natural knowledge of being and certain properties of being (e.g., ‘whole’ and ‘part’) and principles based upon it. He also affirms as naturally known the fundamental natural law principle that the good ought to be pursued and done and evil avoided, which normatively guides the natural light of human intellects in regard to more determinate goods. This first principle is nothing less than an expression of an intrinsic transcendental law present in the transcendental intending of the human spirit as it unfolds on the fourth level of consciousness. It guides every categorical value judgment that is ever made. The true good (i.e., value) is the objective of human striving at the fourth level of consciousness, and in all responsible acts of deliberation the striving of the human spirit is not satisfied until what is truly good is known and attained. Moreover, moral conversion, which for Lonergan is foundational in all acts of deliberation, is precisely the choice to conform to this intrinsic norm of the human spirit, for the choice of values over
satisfactions is a choice for what is truly good over what is not truly good but only appears good. Such natural knowledge is a natural participation in the eternal law.\footnote{S.T. I-II, q. 91, a. 3 ad. 1.}

Moreover, it would also seem that for Lonergan the transcendental precepts are self-evidently true and certain, are arguably naturally known as well, and are operative in every authentic act of seeking what is intelligible, true, real, beautiful, and valuable. And if the argument set forth in chapter four is correct, then there are indeed other preceptive judgments, at least some of which are naturally known and certain (e.g., seek intelligibility and truth), and others that are at least virtually unconditioned universally valid preceptive substantial judgments that bear a family resemblance to those found in Aquinas’s account of the natural law (e.g., seek just relationships with others, life, well-being). Knowledge of all these basic goods and the preceptive judgments that are constituted based upon this knowledge is human knowledge that participates in the eternal law by knowing the eternal law, and if naturally known is a natural participation in the eternal law. All knowledge, natural or acquired, of the eternal reasons is knowledge attained through the created light of human understanding that bears a participated likeness to the Uncreated Light.

God is the ontological cause and veridical ground of all human truth and value. Given Lonergan’s position that both the light of human reason and the knowledge that it produces is ultimately caused by God as efficient, exemplar, and final cause, it follows that all human knowledge of the good is ultimately a participated knowledge. All human autonomy, while god-like (\textit{imago Dei}) insofar as humans pursue the truly good through knowledge and freedom, by planning their own actions and means to achieve the good, is
nonetheless a *participated* autonomy. Insofar human autonomy is based on human knowledge and freedom it is what some moral theologians and philosophers have called *theonomous*. But insofar as it is a knowledge that is ultimately caused and measured by God, prefigured in the divine intellect, and related to God as its ultimate end, it is what Martin Rhonheimer and Pope John Paul II have called a participated theonomy, viz., an autonomy comes from God, completely dependent upon God, and is an imperfect likeness of God’s formally unconditioned autonomy.⁹³

In summary, God is the exemplar, efficient, and final cause of all intrinsic norms, operations, and contents of human knowing and doing. As exemplar cause, God is the intelligent ground that wisely orders all things so that humans have the natural intrinsic principles that they have, and that brings about the fulfilment of the conditions necessary for human cognition to achieve knowledge of the good. Human cognition is a potency both to make and to become all things. But it can only make and become all things if the appropriate conditions are fulfilled. The attainment of knowledge can only reach virtually unconditioned judgments if God so arranges things that these conditions are in fact fulfilled. And God, who is the unrestricted act of understanding, by knowing himself, has complete comprehensive knowledge of all secondary intelligibles, their conditions, and the whole

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According to Lonergan God’s causal agency is not limited merely to the original constitution of reason, its laws, and its transcendental desire, but also in its autonomous self-determining: “There is also a spontaneity of intellectuality but it is such that it is governed by transcendental laws, laws that are bound to no particular nature, but are ordered to the transcendentalists themselves; to being (the concrete, the all, the existing), the one, the true, the good. For this reason, intellectuality is self-governing, self-determining, *autonomous*. It is indeed under rule inasmuch as it is constituted by its own transcendental desire; still, it rules itself inasmuch as under God’s agency it determines itself to its own acts in accordance with the exigencies of its own intellectuality.” Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, 175.
gamut of concrete events that have to occur for these conditions to be met. As exemplar cause that is the eternal law, God is truth and knows all participated truths, and is thereby the causal and veridical ground, the unmeasured measure, of human intellects that are measured measures.\(^{94}\) Secondly, since human understanding and knowing is only an intentional omnipotence, viz., a capacity to ask questions about everything, it must be moved from potency to act, viz., from a state of unknowing to a state of actual knowing. But without phantasms there can be no understanding, and apart from the appropriate sensitive object there can be no image. All of these conditional factors, among many others, must be fulfilled in order for acts of understanding and knowing to occur. God as first agent or efficient cause applies all things to their proper operations through secondary causes, and so God is ultimately the first efficient cause of human understanding. Thirdly, human understanding is an intentional omnipotence whose objective is transcendental intelligibility, truth, being, beauty, and value. God is intelligibility, truth, being, beauty, and value by his very essence, so God is the ultimate objective of human understanding and knowledge. Thus, God is the final cause of all human cognitive operations that moves them to their proper operations.

5.3.3 Summary: Human Participation in the Eternal Law through the Natural Law

This section has argued that human participation in the eternal law consists of both a passive and an active aspect in Lonergan’s thought. Passively, humans participate in the eternal law through their natural inclinations. This participation is possible because God is the efficient, exemplar, and final cause of both the being and operation of these

\(^{94}\) See Lonergan, *Insight*, 394.
inclinations. Actively, humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law, which is to say, through the intentional intending of the dynamism of the human spirit and through the knowledge of the good that is produced by this dynamism. God is also the efficient, exemplar, and final cause of both the being and operation of the human spirit, and the veridical ground of all truth it comes to affirm. Because humans can actively participate in the eternal law by being intelligent, reasonable, and responsible for their own actions, they enjoy an intelligent autonomy or providential control over their own actions, which is an imperfect likeness of God’s providential action in the world. But because God, who is the eternal law, is the source of both these passive and active aspects of human operation, human participation in God is most properly called a participated autonomy. Human autonomy is not creative in the absolute sense like God’s, but is a ruling and measuring autonomy that is itself ruled and measured by the eternal law.

This means then that Lonergan’s understanding of human participation in the eternal law through the natural law is in no way dialectically opposed to the position of Aquinas, but in fundamental agreement with it. For Aquinas, humans participate both actively and passively in the eternal law: passively through the natural inclinations, and actively through the natural law, which is the light of human reason and knowledge of the good, such as those principles it naturally knows that belong to the natural law and are known by all. This leads to the affirmation of the second key point of the thesis guiding this discussion, namely, that there is no dialectical opposition between Lonergan and Aquinas despite their differences in approaching the natural law through either the categories of theory or the categories of interiority.
5.4 The Turn to Interiority and Insights into Human Participation in the Eternal Law

Thus far this investigation has cumulatively accomplished two important tasks: first, it presents some of the key transpositions that Lonergan makes to the natural law by moving from a theoretical horizon into one of interiority, or at least explicitly grounding theory in interiority; and secondly, it has shown that these transpositions do not result in dialectical opposition between Lonergan and Aquinas on how humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law.

It is now time to address the third key point of the thesis that underlies this investigation which is to show that Lonergan’s turn to interiority helps illuminate important features of natural law that can easily escape the notice of theoretical accounts of the natural law – due to the more abstract third-person perspective of theory that stresses objectivity – that has implications for one’s understanding of how humans participate in the eternal law. This section will now present two insights that Lonergan’s interiority account of the natural law makes manifest due to its emphasis on the first person-perspective of self-appropriation and authenticity that illuminates some ways in which humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law, both on personal and communal levels, that traditional theoretical accounts are less likely to attend to.95

95 A similar attempt to show the benefits of Lonergan’s turn to interiority and a developmental account of world process that escapes some of the disadvantages that comes with working within an Aristotelian theoretical paradigm, as Aquinas does, is Jeremy D. Wilkins’ article “Grace and Growth: Aquinas, Lonergan, and the Problematic of Habitual Grace,” Theological Studies 72, no. 4 (2011): 723-749. Wilkins shows how “intentionality analysis illuminates, more clearly than faculty psychology, the dynamics of the spirit” that “yields more control over the meaning of sanctifying grace than a procedure that begins with metaphysics” (768-749), and is thereby better positioned to address the problematic of habitual grace. Unlike Wilkins, I do not have a particular problematic in mind. What I hope to show is that Lonergan’s turn to interiority expands our understanding of ways we participate in the eternal law that can agree with Aquinas while going beyond him, expanding on ideas that may be hinted at in Aquinas but not systematically developed.
First, humans participate in the eternal law through intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness, and by originating values both in themselves and in a dynamically emerging world to which they actively contribute. And this participation is truly participatory when human persons do so authentically. According to Lonergan God is an unrestricted act of understanding who is both intelligent and intelligible, and who understands himself unrestrictedly. Furthermore, since God is an unrestricted act of understanding who understands himself unrestrictedly he also understands everything to which his power extends, all those things that could exist if God chose to create them. But whatever God’s power extends to so too does his wisdom, which understands and orders all things well, and is identical with his power. And God’s love extends to whatever his wisdom conceives, since it shows forth God’s own likeness, for whatever is like God, who is goodness itself, is good. God’s love then extends to that which his wisdom conceives as an object of possible choice, i.e., something truly valuable. So whatever God freely chooses to create is truly valuable since it is an imperfect likeness of his own perfection that is goodness itself. Consequently, due to the fact that God knows himself and loves himself, and therefore loves all that his wisdom (exemplar causality) and power (efficient causality) can conceive and make, God, who is transcendent value (final cause), is the originator of all created value that exists.

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96 “What is basic is authenticity. It is a summit towards which one may strive, and only through such striving may one come to some imperfect participation of what Augustine and Aquinas named Uncreated Light.” Lonergan, “Horizons and Transpositions,” 410.
97 “First, then, if there is an unrestricted act of understanding, there is by identity a primary intelligible. For the unrestricted act understands itself.” Lonergan, *Insight*, 681.
98 Ibid., 687-688. Also: “To conceive God as originating value and the universe as terminal value implies that God too is self-transcending and that the world if the fruit of his self-transcendence, a work of his love, the expression of his benevolence, the realization of his beneficence.” Lonergan, “Transcendental Philosophy and the Study of Religion,” 550.
Humans, who enjoy the self-reflexive capacities of intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness, imitate God in a similar manner through self-appropriation. Humans have an unrestricted desire to make and become all things. Like God, humans are both intelligent and intelligible, and therefore capable of understanding, knowing, and loving themselves as truly valuable. While God knows all things unrestrictedly by knowing himself, through self-appropriation of one’s own subjectivity each human person is capable of understanding “the broad lines of all there is to be understood and thereby possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.”

Not only can human persons know themselves as knowers and doers, they can also value themselves as knowers and doers. Just as God knows himself and loves himself and utters an inner judgment of value that proceeds in an act of love, so too can human persons know themselves both for what they are and for what they can become, and judge themselves to be valuable as intellectual, rational, and moral subjects, while also choosing to make themselves more authentic self-transcending existential subjects and virtuous persons.

People thereby become originating values, choosing themselves as terminal values.

Furthermore, every subject is also an originating value through their external actions and interactions in a created universe:

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100 “The psychological analogy, then, has its starting point in that higher synthesis of intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love. Such love manifests itself in its judgments of value. And the judgments are carried out in decisions that are acts of loving.” Bernard Lonergan, “Christology Today: Methodological Reflections,” in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 93.
101 “God has made us in his image, for our authenticity consists in being like him, in self-transcendence, in being origins of true values, in true love.” Lonergan, “Transcendental Philosophy and the Study of Religion,” 550.
Since we are made in the image and likeness of God, we participate in the divine perfection in such a way that we are not only a created good but also are ourselves originators of goods. . . . Therefore, as originated goods are those which are imagined, ordered, and chosen, so the originating good, as that which originates, is we ourselves, and, as that by which goods are originated, is the work of the imaginative representation, intelligent ordering, and choosing.\textsuperscript{102}

Through the self-appropriation of oneself as a moral subject, one chooses to become an originator of those personal, cultural, social, and vital values that promote self-transcendence in oneself, in others, and in the world. And such actions impact not just upon the present, but upon human history, for authenticity promotes progress while unauthenticity promotes decline.

God is the transcendent Originator of all created values (only God is himself an uncreated value), and directs all things to their proper ends through their forms, and ultimately through the universal order that he freely chose to create through his wisdom and power. Humans can actively participate in the eternal law by imitating God though their own acts of authentic subjectivity reinforced through self-appropriation by which they imperfectly imitate God as originators of created values.

A theoretical account of the natural law that seeks to understand human participation in the eternal law through analysis of natures, powers, inclinations, habits, acts, objects, and conceptualized laws based upon this theoretical analysis, is less likely to highlight how humans imitate God through self-appropriation and authenticity, by means of which they become originators of values both in themselves and in the world. A first person perspective of oneself as a knower and a doer is a requisite starting point that must be at first thematized and then its implications worked out.

\textsuperscript{102} Lonergan, \textit{Supplement}, 25.
Again, this participation in the eternal law is an imperfect imitation of God, who is the uncreated Originator of value. God is intelligence, truth, and goodness itself, while humans are not. The good of self-appropriation, the good of originating value in one’s self and in the world is ultimately seeking after participated goods whose goodness bears a likeness to God who is goodness itself. In other words, all things that seek their own good ultimately seek the ultimate Good that is God, so all human action is ultimately ordered to knowing and loving God even when such actions appear to be merely self-related (i.e., aimed at one’s own self-perfection). But human self-relatedness, from the perspective of participation, is only a means toward God-relatedness. The universal order that humans participate with God in consciously and intentionally bringing about is itself a participated likeness of God’s goodness.

The second insight that Lonergan’s transposition of the natural law into the categories of interiority lends itself to regards how humans actively participation in the eternal law through just social relationships: i.e., through authentic authority, authentic subjection to authority, and authentic community. One will recall that part of Aquinas’s definition of law includes the property that law must originate from and be enforced by one who has care over a community; that is, one who is a legitimate authority figure. In order to speak about authentic communities one must speak of authorities, people under authority, and the community as a whole that is a good of order.

103 “If the intellectuality of God means that He knows and loves Himself, the participated intellectuality of man does not mean that man is related to himself in the same way as God is to Himself, but rather than he has been created for this relatedness to God, and this is to be related in acts that possess a character of divine likeness — in order words, through an intellective knowing and loving.” Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, 239.

104 Aquinas, *S.T.* I-II, q. 90, a. 4c.
First, one may speak of authentic authority. In one of his later essays, Lonergan argues that legitimate authority derives from authentic subjectivity.\(^\text{105}\) Authenticity legitimizes authority and authorities while unauthenticity delegitimizes authority or authorities. God, who is goodness itself, has legitimate authority over all his creation. God rules his creation not by mere acts of power or arbitrary acts of will, but by his wisdom and goodness, ordering all things to the common good that he himself is.

Unlike God, authenticity in human persons is far from a sure thing. But by abiding by the transcendental precepts which promote self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and a doer, through intellectual and moral self-transcendence, through becoming a truly virtuous person, through seeking fairness and genuine friendships with others, one becomes an authentic subject. Knowing is not a matter of looking but the product of experiencing, understanding, and judging. Doing is not a matter of pursuing self-interest, but of self-transcendence, seeking values instead of mere satisfactions. Likewise, exercising authentic authority over a community (e.g., legislating, executing law, judging in accordance with the law) is ordering a community of persons to the truly common good and not seeking after one’s own personal interests (e.g., power, wealth, honour, ideological bias) that results in an order that may be common due to coercive force, but is not truly good.

The point is that just as at the level of the individual person authentic subjectivity is a participation in the eternal law, so too at the level of human community (e.g., family, institutions, local, regional, or natural government, etc.) there is an authentic authority that presupposes authentic subjectivity, and consequently a participation in eternal law. If

\(^{105}\) See Lonergan, “Dialectic of Authority,” 5-12.
authentic subjectivity is grounded in the natural law, so too is authentic authority, which means that authentic authority is a participation in the eternal law. As God, whose very being is authenticity itself, rules over the good of order that is the created universe, so too can human persons who live in accordance with the natural law be authentic rulers and leaders in human communities by imitating God’s goodness with true care for the community.

But human authority is not absolute since it is only a participated authority. And corresponding with authentic authority there must also be an authenticity of those subject to authority, whose authenticity, at least in part, consists in a willingness to submit themselves to the interests of the common good, and therefore to those who have authority over the community. Aquinas speaks of a political prudence that is complimentary to regnative prudence. Prudence is the virtue by which one governs and commands in all matters connected with moral virtue, and always presupposes knowledge of the natural law which is knowledge of the end (i.e., the human good).

Regnative prudence is the prudence by which one who has care over the community executes justice by directing all such acts to the human good that is the common good, as opposed personal vainglory and cupidity. Political prudence is the virtue by which people direct themselves in relation to the common good as its end (i.e., the good life in

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106 “As stated above, it belongs to prudence to govern and command, so that wherever in human acts we find a special kind of governance and command, there must be a special kind of prudence.” Aquinas S.T. II-II, q. 50, a. 1c. “All matters connected with moral virtue belong to prudence as their guide, wherefore right reason in accord with prudence is included in the definition of moral virtue.” Ibid., ad. 1.
107 Ibid., q. 47, a. 6.
108 Ibid., a. 2; also S.T. I-II, q. 96, a. 4c: “On the other hand, laws may be unjust in two ways: first, by being contrary to the human good. . . . either in respect of the end, as when an authority imposes on his subjects burdensome laws, conducive, not to the common good, but rather to his own cupidity or vainglory.”
general), by which they are disposed “so that they may direct themselves in obeying their superiors.”

Now as Lonergan points out:

Authenticity and unauthenticity are found in three different carriers: (1) in the community, (2) in the individuals that are authorities, and (3) in the individuals that are subject to authority. Again, unauthenticity is realized by any single act of inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility. But authenticity is reached only by long and sustained fidelity to the transcendental precepts. It exists only as a cumulative project.

In order for a community to be a good of order that is truly good, authenticity must be found in both those who lead and those who are subject to authority. In the good of order that is the created world, God, who is the universal good that is goodness itself, rules as the paradigm of authentic authority, which all human authority participates in, but all human authority is itself subject to a higher authority that is God, who is the eternal law.

Finally, as the previous quote indicates, not just individual persons belonging to a community, but communities themselves participate in the goodness of God, who is the universal good, insofar as they are authentic communities. A community is a people with “a common field of experience, with a common or at least complementary way of understanding, people and things, with common judgments and common aims.”

Moreover, there is both a minor and major authenticity of community. There is a minor authenticity insofar as people living within a community respect the meaning and values, laws and institutional structures belonging to a community, such that the good of

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109 Ibid., II-II, q. 50, a. 2.
111 A Trinitarian theology that emphasizes the community of the Godhead and the relations between the persons of the Trinity would make this account of human communal participation in God even stronger.
112 Lonergan, “Dialectic of Authority, 5.”
order is preserved. Secondly, there is a major authenticity insofar as the good of order is truly good. In the first instance of minor authenticity, a good of order may be authentic only from the standpoint that a good of order is held in place, even if that order may be unauthentic from the perspective of major authenticity. It may be enforcing unjust laws upon its people, yet the people may still submit to and accept that order because they affirm its common meanings and values or are afraid to challenge them. Or it may be that there is a minority of authentic subjects who, living in accordance with the natural law, disagree with the order, yet yield their rights so as to “to avoid scandal or disturbance” that would make a bad situation worse not only for themselves, but for the whole community.

In the second case of major authenticity, an otherwise unauthentic community may become authentic, in which case both the authorities and its citizens experience intellectual and moral conversion, resulting in a transformation of society that aims to attain a truly good social order. So the authenticity of the local community, which is a part of the universal community that is the order of the universe, is an authenticity grounded upon the

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113 Lonergan speaks about minor and major authenticity with respect to traditions, which is not exactly the same as communities. See Lonergan, Method, 79-80. It seems to me that his notions of minor and major authenticity can be equally applied to social orders – such as a family, city, or a country – as well as cultural traditions, without reducing one to the other. It seems to me that traditions are to communities what cultural values are to social values, on Lonergan’s reckoning. They are intelligibly distinct yet related orders of meanings, for the meanings of a tradition gives life significance and value while the meanings that inform a social order makes living and well-being easier to attain and defines relationships as either just or unjust. A tradition (or cultural tradition) is a set of commonly held meanings and values that can and do inform social arrangements and the status of persons within a community, but these meanings and values are distinct from the meanings and values that are the social arrangements themselves. So when the meanings and values of a cultural tradition change, for better or worse, often enough the meanings and values that structure a social order change as well. But changes in social structures impact upon the meanings of a cultural tradition too. In either case the authenticity of the tradition or of the social order depends upon the authenticity of the people, and that authenticity can be either minor, as when all the people stand in agreement or at least conform to the status quo, or major, as when meanings and values change for the betterment of all.

114 On unjust laws, how such laws are not laws at all but perversions of law, and the recognition that while these laws do not bind consciences it may in some circumstances most prudent to obey even unjust laws, see Aquinas, S.T. I-II, q. 96, a. 4c.
natural law, and is an authenticity that bears a likeness to God and thereby participates in God who is the eternal law and the end of all universal striving. Indeed, one could argue that an authentic community more perfectly reflects God’s likeness than individual persons, just as the good of order that is the created universe more perfectly bears God’s likeness than do individual that belong to it.

As Lonergan states, the fruit of authenticity is progress. The fruit of unauthenticity is decline. Beyond progress and decline there is redemption. Progress is the fruit of abiding by the natural law. It involves attentiveness to the present circumstances the community faces. It involves the employment of intelligence to grasp how things can be done better. It involves a reasonableness that is open to change. And it involves a responsible decision-making that seeks to know whether proposed courses of action are truly good, fair, and beneficial to the whole community. Furthermore, an authentic community is not a community that aims at progress for the sake of some good of order that is an end in itself to the exclusion of concern for the good of its members as persons. If by the natural law I come to affirm both my dignity as a person and the dignity of other persons as persons, a truly good community will progress towards establishing a good of order that with justice affirms the value of persons who belong to and contribute to the good of the community.

A community organized around the goal of establishing a good of order for the sake of

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115 As previously pointed out, according to Lonergan all individual things through their desires and striving are ordered to the good of the universe, which in turn “is headed ultimately to the perfection and excellence that is its primary source and ground.” Lonergan, *Insight*, 688.

116 “There is the conflict between order and person. . . . And the two can be united insofar as the person emerges with personal status within the order. Then the order is an order between persons, and the good of order is apprehended, not so much by studying the notion of schemes of recurrence and determining the schemes in which human goods occur, but by apprehending human relations.” Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 40-41.
creating wealth as an end in itself, or establishing the power of a small group of elitists within the community, or for the sake of a power of one community over other communities, is not an authentic community for the people within the order are viewed not as persons with personal status within the good of order, but means to some other end. A community that fails to value its members as persons is a sign of decline that is the fruit of unauthenticity.

5.5 Summary of Conclusions

This chapter has sought to set forth how from a Lonergan perspective humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law. It argues that for Lonergan, humans participate in the eternal law both passively, through their natural inclinations, and actively, through the dynamism of the human spirit and through knowledge grasped and affirmed by this dynamism. Since God is the efficient, exemplar, and final cause of both the natural inclinations and the dynamism of the human spirit in regard to both their being and operations, God, who is the eternal law, is the causal source and veridical ground of all human knowledge of the good. While humans are originators of value both in themselves and in the world, they are not the ultimate source of value. God, who is the eternal law, is the unmeasured measure of all human actions, which means that human intelligence is a measured measure, dependent upon the eternal law for its ontological and veridical ground of truth. But this position is in fundamental agreement with Aquinas’s position. Therefore, one must conclude that there is no dialectical opposition between the respective positions of Lonergan and Aquinas on human participation in the eternal law through the natural law.
despite transposing the natural law from the differentiation of consciousness that is theory into the differentiation of consciousness that is interiority.

This chapter has also brought forth the argument that Lonergan’s approach to the natural law through self-appropriation not only transposes Aquinas’s basic positions, but in at least in a couple of ways also goes beyond them. Human participation in the eternal law through self-appropriation offers an insightful perspective that includes but also goes beyond what one finds in Aquinas’s theoretical account. From the perspective of interiority, the natural law is a uniquely human manner of imitating God: first, through reflectively appropriating oneself as knower and doer, and attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly being an originator of values both in oneself and in the world; and, secondly, by living as an authentic subject in the world – whether as one in authority or as one subject to authority. When a community as a whole seeks authenticity, authentic communities develop which even more perfectly reflect the image of God, who rules the world by his eternal law.
Chapter Six

Conclusion

It is now time to conclude this investigation, which will unfold over two sections. The first section will recall the thesis underlying this inquiry and assess how adequately chapters two through five support its claims. The second section will then address three potential objections to the thesis, particularly objections claiming that there is dialectical conflict between Aquinas and Lonergan. The three objections charge that the transpositions I propose do not meet the requirements of a modern understanding of science that remains open to revision as it proposes only probable knowledge, continuously developing world process, and human historicity. If the proposed transpositions remain incomplete, as these objections would suggest, then the question remains open whether or not dialectical opposition between Lonergan and Aquinas exists and whether the differences are only genetic developments.

6.1 Thesis Statement Revisited

This inquiry has argued that extending Lonergan’s general transpositions of Thomistic philosophy – transpositions encompassing a movement from the horizon of a classical theoretical mindset to the horizon of a modern mindset of interiority, historicity, and dynamic development – to Thomas Aquinas’s theory of natural law, the eternal law, and the former’s participation in the latter, results not in substantially conflicting positions but in the discovery of new ways of thinking of human participation in the eternal law through the natural law – as individuals and communally – that emphasize self-
appropriation and authenticity that are not brought into relief or highlighted on theoretical accounts. The arguments supporting this thesis have accomplished three things: first, they elucidated Lonergan’s actual transpositions of Aquinas regarding the natural law, the eternal law, and the former’s participation in the latter; secondly, they identified differences between Aquinas and Lonergan and clarified that these differences are not differences of dialectical opposition; and thirdly, they explored some of the new insights into human participation in the eternal law that flow from Lonergan’s transpositions into the categories of interiority (e.g., self-appropriation, authenticity, conversion). I shall now assess whether each of these points have been adequately dealt with in the previous chapters.

6.1.1 Lonergan’s Transpositions of Human Participation in the Eternal Law

This study has examined Lonergan’s transposing of Aquinas’s thought on the natural law from the horizon of theory into a horizon of interiority. It has considered both the objective and subjective poles of Aquinas’s thought on human participation in the eternal law and its transposition; the subjective pole of human knowing, and the objective pole of what is known. From the standpoint of the subjective pole that is the knowing and acting subject, Lonergan’s key transposition is from soul to subject, as highlighted in chapter four. Lonergan agrees with Aquinas in identifying the natural law with the light of human reason, but he transposes it out of its metaphysical context of faculty psychology into the richer context of human subjectivity that is open to the transcendental method that experiences, understands, judges, and values one’s own acts of experiencing, understanding, judging,
and deciding; a transcendental method, whose normative and recurring operations are consciously and intentionally directed by the dynamism or eros of the human spirit to seeking intelligibility, truth, being, and value. This dynamism of the human spirit and its cognitive operations is the source of all meaning and value, including all universal preceptive judgments and norms, moving the subject from the world of the immediacy of mere sensitive experience into the world that is mediated through meaning and value. On this picture transcendental method is more fundamental than propositional principles, including primitive or first propositional principles.

By giving primacy of place to transcendental method, Lonergan moves away from approaches to the natural law that give priority to self-evidently known first principles and a consequent emphasis placed upon logic. Fundamental to Lonergan is the position that propositional principles are not the true starting points of human knowing. What is first is the dynamism of the human spirit and its normative operations that both constitutes and judges the truths of propositions. From the priority of the spiritual dynamism one cannot infer the total abandonment of universal propositional principles that are naturally known, self-evident and certain; nor does Lonergan make this inference, at least not from this premise. The question is mainly one of priority, and this proper understanding of what is truly first impinges upon his understanding of the natural law. Consequently, for Lonergan the natural law is the dynamism or eros of the human spirit, and is not a set of propositional preceptive judgments except insofar as the dynamism or eros of the human spirit and its
normative operations can be perceptively conceptualized in the transcendental precepts.\(^1\) This grounding of the natural law in the dynamism of the human spirit that underlies a normative pattern of related and recurrent operations highlights Lonergan’s shift from a neo-scholastic approach to natural law working within a logical paradigm concerned with properly defined terms and valid inferences, to a dynamic method oriented towards ongoing discovery. The natural law is from Lonergan’s perspective not a static body of ethical norms, but a starting point for the ongoing discovery of true values in a constantly changing world.

The previous chapters have also dealt with Lonergan’s call for a transposition from human nature to human history, albeit in a qualified manner. In light of Lonergan’s mature thought on the natural law, more properly this transposition is from a theory-based account of human nature that does not anticipate human historicity, to an interiority-based account of human nature that is open to human historicity. Lonergan obviously does not abandon human nature, but he does transpose it into the concrete categories of interiority that allow him to address the problem of permanence within the ongoing flow of human history. The natural law is no longer to be identified with an abstract unchanging human nature from which norms are deduced, but with the immanent and concretely operative dynamism of the human spirit that is a nature insofar as it is a principle of movement and rest, whose movement begins before consciousness, penetrates the several levels of human consciousness, and finds its rest beyond them. This dynamism is the source of meaning and

\(^1\) The question of whether one can extend the meaning of the natural law to universal propositional truths about basic human goods, which I do, is a movement beyond anything Lonergan espoused, but is argued to be consistent with his position insofar as such universal preceptive judgments are (1) virtually unconditioned judgments and (2) are only deemed to be the natural law in a secondary sense.
value in the world. While this dynamism is universal and permanent as long as there are humans in the world, history testifies that meanings and values do change. Lonergan recognizes, nonetheless, that there is a certain sense in which meanings and values can have permanence as well, a point which I will address in the second section of this chapter.\(^2\) Meanings and values change over time for good or for ill as cultures change, hence part of Lonergan’s reluctance to identify the natural law with a set of propositions.

From the perspective of the objective pole of human knowing, which is something that is known by human experience, understanding, and judgment, there are a couple of other transpositions that Lonergan makes to a classical Thomistic understanding of how humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law. Discussion of human participation in the eternal law employs theoretical categories, such as those of participation, law, and causation. This project has not set out to entirely transpose the whole subject-matter of discussion into the categories of interiority.\(^3\) As chapter five evidences, even when Lonergan continues to draw upon the resources of theory, he systematically grounds his metaphysical categories in his intentionality analysis. This same chapter also highlights Lonergan’s dynamic account of world process that is consistent with modern notions of science and history in which the indeterminate and directed dynamism is world process that is finality develops in time. Lonergan transposes the discussion of

\(^{2}\) Lonergan is not a relativist, and he recognizes that there is a certain sense in which truth is permanent.

\(^{3}\) I have not made it the aim of this project to exclusively transpose the whole discussion of human participation in the eternal law into categories of interiority. Such a project perhaps can be done, but my aim is more limited. Just as in his later writings Lonergan begins the process of transposing Aquinas’s theory of grace into categories of interiority, the same process can in principle be done with respect to law, causation, and participation. But completing this transposition from theory to interiority can take its starting point in theory. On the mutually-informing dialogue that can occur between theory and interiority, which Lonergan refers to as completing the circle, see Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 177-178.
human participation in the eternal law within a new context in which the theoretical
categories employed to explain the relationship between the natural law and its eternal
ground are explicitly grounded in interiority and are thereby capable of accounting for a
dynamic world process that evidences finalistic striving. This development that occurs
within world process is not outside of the reaches of eternal law, but is in fact brought
about by the eternal law as its ultimate formally unconditioned ground.

6.1.2 No Dialectical Opposition between Aquinas and Lonergan

These transpositions are not insignificant. Lonergan is well aware that the
transpositions he is suggesting would be met with resistance, especially from those still
committed to a classicist mindset. But as I state in the introduction, while Aquinas certainly
belongs to a classical mindset, he is not a classicist. Lonergan himself seems to suggest that
the transpositions he promotes are developments upon key aspects of Aquinas’s own
thought. And so the differences one finds in Lonergan’s account of human participation in
the eternal law need not be viewed as differences of dialectical opposition, but could be
understood as complimentary genetic developments.

Undoubtedly the preeminent apparent opposition between Lonergan and Aquinas
concerns Lonergan’s call for a movement away from first propositional principles that are
naturally known and self-evidently true to the principle of human action that is truly first as
the transcendental source of all meaning and value, viz., the dynamism of the human spirit.
Aquinas's account of the natural law certainly does consist of preceptive judgments of the
natural law that he considers to be naturally known and *per se nota quoad nos*. I dealt with this apparent tension in chapter four in which I made the following points of argument.

First, Lonergan does not deny that there are some naturally known truths that are necessarily true and known with certainty. In fact, he quite explicitly agrees with Aquinas that being, for instance, is naturally known, and that the principles of non-contradiction, identity, and sufficient reason that are based upon knowledge of being are also naturally known. Furthermore, Lonergan also lists the practical principle that one must pursue the good and avoid evil along with these other principles as naturally known, which in turn implies that he also holds that the concept of the good, which is the content of responsible intending, is naturally known. This conceptual knowledge of the good in turn is the basis of the foundational practical judgment that the good ought to be pursued and its opposite avoided. This transcendental intending of the good, like the transcendental precepts, expresses a normative drive of the human spirit that is present in every act of human deliberating at the fourth level of consciousness.

Additionally, Lonergan explicitly recognizes the transcendental precepts to be the natural law (be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible), and these propositional precepts are undoubtedly for him naturally knowable and self-evidently true preceptive judgments. They command that one act attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly, which is to say that one ought to act in accordance with the normative demands of the inner dynamism of the human spirit as it unfolds through the four levels of human consciousness. But if one can affirm these preceptive judgments as necessarily true, always right to obey and never right to disobey, it must also be said that there are other
preceptive judgments that must also be necessarily true and certain. This must be the case because these transcendental precepts presuppose basic goods towards which the operations which they command are oriented towards as their natural goal, viz. intelligibility, the true, beauty, and the good. In other words, the transcendental precepts presuppose the truth of those preceptive judgments that command the acting subject to pursue intelligibility and avoid obfuscation, pursue truth and avoid falsity, pursue beauty and avoid ugliness, pursue self-transcending value and avoid self-centered disvalues.

But if one can affirm these basic goods as truly good and always worthy of pursuit, one must also affirm the ontic value of oneself as a person who is the subject that seeks intelligibility, truth, the real, beauty, and self-transcending value as goods that bring about his or her own perfection. Moreover, because the ultimate end of the transcendental precepts is self-transcending authenticity, one must further affirm the value of making oneself an authentic subject through a self-appropriation that leads to intellectual and moral conversion. One ought to make of oneself a truly virtuous person. And if one affirms the ontic value of oneself, one must also affirm the ontic value of one’s whole being, which consists of many different conjugate forms (physical, chemical, organic, psychic, and intellectual), along with those goods, both temporal and spiritual, that bring about one’s well-being and perfection. And if one can affirm one’s own ontic value as a person, one must also equally value all other persons who share in personhood, both present and future generations.

So through self-appropriation of one’s subjectivity one can affirm with certainty as necessarily true these other basic goods as goods that ought to be pursued, and which
intellectually and morally converted subjects will attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly pursue and their opposites avoid. Yet once one has affirmed these basic goods as truly good and always worthy of pursuit and their opposites avoided, one finds Lonergan to be in fundamental agreement with Aquinas that there are some basic practical moral judgments that guide all moral human action, directing people to those basic goods that Aquinas speaks of as the ends of the virtues.

If this argument withstands criticism, then there is no good reason not to hold that the natural law includes some naturally known and acquired *per se nota* preceptive judgments. Lonergan’s concern to give priority to identifying the natural law with the dynamism of the human spirit can be affirmed while at the same time recognizing that the natural law is not absent of substantial content as to the good that ought to be pursued. And if this is the case then one can also affirm that for Lonergan, as for Aquinas, humans participate actively in the eternal law through the natural law that is both the dynamism of the human spirit that judges the good to be done and evil to be avoided, and preceptive knowledge of the good, at least some of which is naturally known, self-evidently true and certain. Insofar as natural knowledge of the good is possible, humans enjoy a participation in the eternal law that Aquinas calls a natural participation (*naturalem participationem*) in the divine wisdom that is the eternal law.⁴

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⁴ Aquinas, *S.T.* I-II, q.91, a. 3 ad. 1. It will be recalled that given Lonergan’s understanding of what natural knowledge is that I do not hold that all moral knowledge that I have identified which can be known with certainty is natural knowledge. Natural participation in the eternal law, according to Aquinas, consists only in natural knowledge of the good, not knowledge that is acquired by means of natural knowledge. It may be that for Lonergan such natural knowledge consists only in our knowledge of the transcendental objectives of human intentional intending and the transcendental precepts.
Besides this active participation in the eternal law through the natural law that all human persons enjoy, there is also a passive participation in the eternal law through the natural inclinations that both Aquinas and Lonergan recognize. Apart from the natural desire to know, these inclinations, both spiritual and corporeal-sensitive, are not themselves the natural law but belong to the natural law insofar as they constitute the affective striving of human persons towards those goods that are proper to them and thereby condition the possibility of attaining knowledge of these goods as truly good. For both Aquinas and Lonergan, apart from natural intentional feelings of desire practical reasoning would be blind to the good because the good, which is the end of practical reasoning (i.e., the objective of the intentional intending of the human spirit), is by its very nature desirable. On the other hand, the natural desire to know that Lonergan identifies with the dynamism of the human spirit, and Aquinas (so I argue in chapter three) identifies with the light of the agent intellect, is the natural law, for it is the source of human active participation in the eternal law.

If the arguments I have made are indeed sound then the apparent dialectical opposition between the positions of Aquinas and Lonergan with respect to the preceptive judgments of the natural law vanishes. Lonergan’s concern to avoid a natural law of first propositional principles that is grounded upon an essentialist deduction of norms from an abstract account of human nature and a stale conceptualism that knows nothing of the basis of concepts and propositions in insight, is affirmed, but without rejecting Aquinas’s insight that there are some universal truths about the good that are beyond assail and are
The two thinkers stand in fundamental agreement with each other on how humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law.

6.1.3 **New Ways of Understanding Human Participation in the Eternal Law**

But while there may be fundamental agreement between Lonergan and Aquinas that does not mean that their respective positions are identical. This leads to the third component of the thesis that Lonergan’s transposition into a new horizon of interiority is especially fruitful in pointing to ways in which humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law that strictly theoretical perspectives easily miss out on due to a lack of critical control of meaning and a first person existential perspective that is better capable of highlighting the creative dimension of human participation in divine providence. I distinguish here between “strictly theoretical perspectives” that abstract from interiority entirely and Aquinas’s largely theoretical perspective because, as Lonergan highlights, Aquinas was not unfamiliar with interiority. But while Lonergan finds in Aquinas important anticipations of the modern turn to interiority that informs his cognitional theory and critically informs his metaphysics these anticipations are not explicitly made the basis of his philosophy so that his metaphysical terms and relations are routinely and systematically grounded in interiority. It is this thematic turn to the subject that opens Lonergan’s thought up to new insights that a strictly theoretical paradigm is likely to miss, unless it demonstrates some awareness of interiority.

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5 The end of actions and the ends of virtues can only be a *concrete* good. Aquinas was well aware of this and it seems to me that his link between the natural law precepts that command actions with respect to basic goods and the moral virtues makes this emphasis upon the concrete good all the more manifest. Without a concrete end of action in mind there can be no deliberation about the means of our actions that the moral virtues assist us in deliberating upon and performing.
Central to Lonergan’s project in imparting transcendental method is his concern to encourage his readers to engage in the activity of self-appropriation of themselves as knowers and doers. Lonergan’s approach suggests that a necessary prerequisite for assuring that one does the right thing by one’s external actions is to begin by doing the right thing in one’s internal actions. This emphasis upon self-appropriation for the sake of achieving authentic subjectivity is especially fruitful when thinking about human participation in the eternal law. In chapter five two ways in which humans participate in the eternal law thought the natural law were advanced that build upon yet go beyond the insights achieved by Aquinas.

First, the argument in chapter five shows that by engaging in acts of self-appropriation, through which one explicitly becomes aware of the natural law in oneself, one becomes aware of oneself as an originator of self-transcending value both within oneself and in the world. Through self-knowledge and awareness of the normative demands of the human spirit, summed up in the transcendental precepts, one faces the challenge of choosing intellectual and moral conversion that can result in authenticity. 6

By engaging in acts of self-appropriation and seeking self-transcending value both in oneself and in the world, one engages in actions that imperfectly imitate God, who, through his own self-knowledge knows all other potential world orders which bear his likeness as truly good, and through his creative agent causality is the transcendent Originator of all

6 Authenticity can be considered either as the quality of an operation or as the quality of a person who performs actions authentic actions regularly and with ease. By obeying the transcendental precepts regularly one can become an authentic subject, but being obedient to the transcendental precepts only occasionally or inconsistently in one’s operations does not make one an authentic subject. Again, it seems to me that Aquinas’s notion of virtue and Lonergan’s notion of authenticity are largely compatible if not corresponding notions, the latter being Lonergan’s transposition of the former into the category of interiority from the category of theory.
created values that participate in his goodness. God knows the good because he knows
himself as goodness itself. God is the first cause of all things, and so he is more the cause of
all the effects of secondary causes than the secondary causes themselves, including those
effects that are caused by free human action. God is therefore the Originator and first
cause of all created values.

As intellectual, rational, and moral agents, humans have a similar reflective capacity.
They can know their own conscious and intentional operations, and consequently they can
know themselves as knowers and doers, and thereby choose to follow the norms of
transcendental method. Such being the case, humans can imitate God by knowing
themselves as knowers of truth and doers of the good. In turn humans imitate God as
originators of values while choosing values over satisfactions, both in themselves and in the
world. In choosing to be authentic subjects, human persons become like God who is the
paradigm of authenticity.

While humans are like God as originators of value, this origination of value is a
participated theonomy; not the product of a theonomous autonomy to freely create norms
within a sphere of immunity from all extrinsic laws including divine law, as found in the
thought of some moral theologians (e.g., Franz Böckle). Humans cannot originate values in
a God-free zone of immunity because there is no such zone, at least not within a world of
divine providential ordering of human actions that both Aquinas and Lonergan hold to.
Human autonomy is always a participated autonomy directed and guided by the eternal
law, empowered by God’s efficient causality, and moved by God who is the final cause—the
universal good itself – towards which humans strive. Human reason is a measure of moral
action, but it is a measured-measure. Only the Divine Reason is an unmeasured measure that judges all things, but can never be judged by another law that is above it for no such other law exists. God is the formally unconditioned source of all law.

Secondly, self-appropriation of the natural law also highlights what it means for authority, submission to authority, and human communities to be authentic. Two of the four essential properties Aquinas attributes to law include that law be ordained by a proper authority that is tasked with the care of a community and orders that community towards the common good as its end. But what is authentic authority? As Aquinas recognizes good forms of governance involve leaders who rule the community with the common good always in mind, whereas bad forms of government have rulers who seek their own self-interest at the expense of the good of the community.

Lonergan adds depth to this Aristotelian-Thomist position by pointing out that the difference between authority and mere power is the authenticity of the authority figure who rules. God’s providential governance over the created order is one marked by the character of authenticity. God cannot but love and care for that which he has created in his own likeness, and governs all things directing them to the common good of the created community, which is to be united to God as its proper end.

Human authorities imitate and participate in authentic authority through authentic subjectivity, and self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and as a doer is the starting point for becoming authentic subjects who originate values both in themselves and in the world. But human authority is not absolute, and is ultimately subject to a higher authority that is the eternal law. But any good of order depends on not only authentic authorities, but
authentic subjects as well. So the ground of any good community is authentic authority and authentic subjects, all living by the natural law and thereby participating in the eternal law.

Finally, communities themselves can be authentic or not authentic. Insofar as a community is authentic, its members, both authorities and subjects, abide by the natural law. Shaped by authentic authorities and subjects, this community makes up part of the created world order and bears a likeness to the God, who is the exemplary cause of the created world order. Authentic communities, therefore, also participate in the eternal law through the natural law and not just individual members within the community.

6.2 Responses to Three Objections

I will now present three objections to the position I have advanced from within a Lonergan perspective. Someone may argue that I have not sufficiently addressed some of Lonergan’s key transpositions. The first objection pertains to my argument for there being foundational moral judgments of the natural law that are substantial and not merely procedural, and suggests that I have not adequately considered Lonergan’s called for transposition from an Aristotelian paradigm of science that aims at certainty to an ideal of science that aims only at what is at best only probable. The second objection arises from Lonergan’s dynamic understanding of world process and questions whether there is a problem in holding to universally true substantive precepts of the natural law given that all that comes to be within world process, including creaturely essences/natures, change over time. The third objection concerns whether positing universally true substantive preceptive judgments results in a conceptualism that ignores the historical nature of meanings and
values. I now aim to show that one can hold that humans participate in the eternal law
through knowledge of self-evidently true preceptive moral judgments that are certain
without compromising Lonergan’s positions on scientific knowledge, dynamic world
process, and human historicity.

6.2.1 Certain or only Probable Knowledge of Moral Goods

The first objection calls into question my argument that the natural law does consist
of some basic universal moral judgments that are substantial and not merely procedural,
and which are necessarily true and certain. Michael Vertin raises such an objection on the
basis of his interpretation of Lonergan’s ethics:

Analogously, for deontological ethicists such as Kant, W.D. Ross, and Germain Grisez,
the basic norms of ethics are universal intelligible and real values that at least in
principle are grasped by means of intellectual, rational, and evaluative intuition.
One hallmark of this tradition is that various kinds of human acts are deemed
intrinsically evil, quite apart from any consideration of concrete particular instances.
For Lonergan, by contrast, ethics (like every other investigative venture) begins by
experiencing, understanding, and judging concrete individuals, in this case human
acts; the substantive (as distinct from procedural) “laws” of ethics are abstract
generalizations of one’s knowledge of individual human acts; such generalizations
are expressive of real moral value exactly insofar as they are verified; at best the
verifications of substantive ethical laws are neither less nor more than highly
probable; and “intrinsically evil” as a substantive ethical category is set aside as an
intuitionist mistake. On the other hand, “intrinsically evil” as a category of
procedural ethics – or more broadly as a methodical category, whether in ethics or
mechanics or any other investigative venture – retains its full force. It includes any
act that violates the natural law, where “the natural law” is ‘be attentive, be
intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible,’ and any precept you arrive at from
observing those precepts.7

The question of whether there are universal precepts that are certain or uncertain,
probable or not probable, raises a number of issues that simply cannot be dealt with here

due to limitations of space.⁸ So what I do have to say can only be a partial yet focused answer to the question of the certainty of some substantial moral principles. There are two issues that I would like to distinguish that are relevant to addressing Vertin’s expressed concern.

The first issue pertains to Vertin’s distinction between substantial and procedural precepts. Vertin argues that substantial universal precepts are generalizations in need of verification, and the verification of these precepts can only at best be highly probable, and therefore not certain.⁹ By way of implication, there cannot be any intrinsically evil acts insofar as general substantial precepts forbids certain kinds of actions – presumably such negative precepts as ‘do not murder’ and ‘do not lie’ are what he has in mind.

The first issue that I want to raise is this: are there not any naturally known substantial goods that are the ends of human actions that constitute naturally known substantive precepts that, like the transcendental procedural precepts, belong to the

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⁸ Here I especially have in mind the need for an action theory to address disputed questions on what the moral object of choice is, and different action theories propose different understandings of the moral object. Of course, universal commands concern moral actions, and moral actions are defined by their object. Until this issue is fully treated, my argument can only be partial.

⁹ Vertin’s reference to generalizations is undoubtedly a reference to Lonergan’s comments on generalization in *Insight* as discussed in his chapter on reflective understanding. There Lonergan argues that because the human intellect cannot help but treat similar things similarly, for it is a law of our minds, we generalize based upon analogy: if situation A is properly understood, some other situation B is to be understood in the same fashion. Such generalizations are present in inductive knowledge. The truth of the generalization depends upon the truth of one’s understanding of the original concrete situation A. The danger lies in not properly understanding situation A and treating situation B as if it were identical when it is not. The two situations must be similar in all relevant respects. Does my true insight about A actually true about situation B? (See Lonergan, *Insight*, 312-314).

Vertin argues that the moral generalizations are never certain but probable at best. In his chapter on reflective understanding Lonergan does not speak about moral generalizations specifically, but he does talk about analytic propositions (i.e., tautologies), analytic principles (i.e., analytic propositions whose terms are existential – i.e., grounded in judgments), and probable judgments (i.e., judgments that approach a limit and converge upon true judgments but do not attain it). The question at issue here is whether the moral judgments in dispute are more akin to probable judgments or analytic principles, whose terms are existential and known in judgments of fact (see ibid., 324-334).
natural law and are just as certain? There are, it seems to me, at least three key assumptions that Vertin makes that need highlighting. The first assumption is that whatever universal precept is substantial is categorical (i.e., “abstract generalizations of one’s knowledge of individual human acts”), and that only the transcendental precepts are the procedural transcendental precepts. The second assumption is that certainty in the realm of universal precepts pertains only to what is transcendental. The third assumption is that there is no certainty in the realm of universal precepts as it pertains to the categorical. This distinction between the categorical and the transcendental at work in these three assumptions is important in Lonergan’s thought for it distinguishes, on the one hand, between the transcendental notions and transcendental concepts that are present in every discursive act of understanding, reasoning, and deciding, and, on the other hand, all categorical questions and concepts that arise in and are the product of particular acts of inquiry. If one were to cast this in the language of Aquinas one would say that all questioning emerges from the agent intellect (i.e., the source of the transcendental notions), the transcendental concepts and certain principles based upon them are concepts that are naturally known and make all discursive inquiry possible, while all categorical knowledge is knowledge acquired through insight into some limited domain of experience.

Now the question is whether these three assumptions are correct — my focus at present being on the first two. What is uncontroversial is that the transcendental precepts command cognitional acts of understanding, judging, and deciding, in every act of thinking about anything and that one do so the right way. The transcendental precepts are like the principle of non-contradiction insofar as one cannot credibly deny them without engaging in
those very acts that they command (or, in the case of the principle of non-contradiction, you cannot deny it without invoking it and thereby implicitly assuming its truth). One is caught in a performative contradiction if one tries to deny their validity. Consequently, there is a certainty about the truth of the transcendental precepts, and to willingly act against them is intrinsically evil.

What Vertin explicitly denies is that there are substantial precepts that enjoy a similar status as the procedural transcendental precepts enjoy both as being transcendental and as being certain. But is this the case? One of the chief points of my argument in chapter four was to argue that there are indeed at least some universal substantial precepts that enjoy the status of being naturally known, per se nota, and certain. Why should we think there are any? Well, at the very least even the transcendental precepts presuppose that there are some basic goods that one ought to seek and their opposites avoid. What are they? The transcendental precept that commands us to be intelligent implicitly commands us to seek intelligibility and to avoid unintelligibility. The transcendental precept to be reasonable implicitly commands us to seek truth about what is real and to avoid falsity about what is real. The transcendental precept to be responsible commands us to seek value (i.e., true good) and to avoid its contrary, viz., disvalue or evil. Intelligibility, truth, and the true good are real substantial goods that are the objectives of our unrestricted desire to know being. Moreover, all of the transcendental precepts aim at self-transcendence and authenticity, or, to use an older term, virtue. Lonergan’s transcendental precepts are a transposition of an older precept to act according to reason, which is to act virtuously, to seek virtue, to order one’s passions (temperance and fortitude) and operations (justice)
according to the order of right reason (prudence). It is difficult to see how one can affirm
the certainty of the procedural transcendental precepts and deny that there are any
substantial precepts that share the same status as transcendental and certain when these
substantial precepts are implied by the transcendental procedural precepts. And if this is
the case, then some substantive precepts are transcendental (contra assumption one) and
certain (contra assumption two).

And so I would argue that when Lonergan states that “the natural law” is ‘be
attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible,’ and any precept you arrive at from
observing those precepts,” the last phrase of this statement could be interpreted to include
some universal substantial precepts. If my judgment here is correct then I would suggest
that there is something missing from Vertin’s analysis that needs further consideration; viz.,
the consideration of what Aquinas calls synderesis and how it spontaneously
factors into all
acts of concrete moral deliberation and any generalization one may make from concrete
cases.10 The good is the end and thus principle of human action. We cannot engage in
congrete acts apart from some knowledge of the end. And if all deliberation presupposes
knowledge of the end, then there must be natural knowledge of the end that is the starting
point for deliberation. The transcendental precepts alone do not give this to us.

10 Dominic Farrell, L.C. has pointed out how William of Auxerre, followed by Philip the Chancellor, Albert the
Great, and Thomas Aquinas, appeal to the need to posit a natural habit of practical knowledge (i.e.,
synderesis) that underlies practical wisdom in order to explain how one who is not virtuous can become
virtuous even in light of Aristotle’s vicious circle of needing to be morally virtuous to attain practical wisdom,
and needing to be practically wise in order to become morally virtuous. These theologians did not see
themselves as presenting any new idea that was not already there in Aristotle, for Aristotle had already argued
that the ends of the virtues are principles of action and practical wisdom only concerns knowledge about
means, not ends, of action. A natural habit was needed to explain how we come to know ends of action.
Finally, the second issue that needs to be raised is simply to point out that the issue of certainty in moral philosophy and theology can be confusing because there are different senses in which certainty, or lack of it, is present in the sphere of morals. Within this overriding discussion I will address Vertin’s third assumption that all categorical substantial universal precepts are at best highly probable and never certain.

The ambiguity of how certainty features into moral reasoning is evident in Aquinas’s treatment of the natural law precepts, some he considers to be primary, naturally known precepts, others he considers to be secondary precepts that are discovered by means of knowledge of the primary precepts, which function as first principles. Secondary precepts differ in degrees of proximity and remoteness from the primary precepts. Through deliberative reflection strengthened by the cognitive virtue of prudence along with the assistance of the other moral virtues, one is able to grasp the virtuous action that is the means to some end that the natural law commands. There are, I find, at least four different senses in which certainty or lack of certainty enter into Aquinas’s thought on the natural law precepts.

First, certainty arises at the level of primary precepts of the natural law whereby the agent intellect and synderesis judges and commands what the good is that ought to be done and the evil is that ought to be avoided. The preceptive judgments it makes regard the truth of those fundamental goods that are the ends of the natural inclinations. The judgments it makes are said to be naturally known and both per se nota quoad nos and per se nota secundum se. At this level of knowledge concerned with the truth of the ends of action, the first principles of action are known with certainty.
Secondly, certainty also arises not only at the level of the primary precepts, but at the level of the secondary precepts, which are known through the process of discovery. Here too the secondary precepts of the natural law, regardless of the proximity or remoteness to the primary precepts, are said to be self-evident in themselves (*per se nota secundum se*), but may not be known by all, and may only be known by the wise.\(^1\) In other words, such general moral truths may be certain in themselves but not to all moral agents.

Thirdly, there is also a sense in which moral knowledge is increasingly less certain the more general it is. For the more general a preceptive judgment the less certainty there is in knowing what one ought to do here and now. The natural law may command that I ought to love my neighbours and not do harm to them, but this tells me very little about how, when, or where I ought to love them in concrete acts.\(^2\)

Fourthly, lack of certainty is found (only) in the more determinate more remote general principles in regards to application to concrete situations in which rare circumstances arise that render the letter of the more determinate commands problematic. It is here that Aquinas says that in matters of action, truth and rectitude is not the same for all people due to the problem of rare circumstances such that to obey the command to its very letter would result in some evil (e.g., returning a weapon to its owner who you know intends to use it for evil against another).\(^3\)

\(^{11}\) See the role of the wise in grasping more remote conclusions of both speculative and practical intellect that *are per se nota secundum se* but not *per se nota quoad nos*: *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 2c.; q. 100, a. 1c, a. 3c., a. 11c.
\(^{12}\) On the uncertainty due to the indeterminacy of universal precepts as they relate to concrete actions and how many scholars have failed to recognize this holding that the more universal the precepts the more certain they are in directing action due to a “law of decreasing certainty,” see Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality*, 303-305.
\(^{13}\) See *S.T.* I-II, q. 94, a. 4. It is precisely here that Lonergan’s and Vertin’s concern about generalizations rears its head. One must properly understand situation A the gives rise to the general precept, but one must further
truth and rectitude is not the same for all people? Aquinas is not saying that the command
that fails is in this instance is invalid or untrue, or does not bind as to its intention to order
actions to a just good. What he is saying is that the true and binding command – it is still
per se nota secundum se -- whose end is to establish the order of justice does not apply to a
situation that under more usual and anticipated circumstances it would apply to. To apply
the letter of the law and return property to its rightful owner where it should not be applied
would go against the intention of justice that the primary precept of the natural law
commands and that the intention of the more determinate command is ordered to as its
end. If I give back to someone his gun and ammunition I am obeying a command of the
natural law that commands me to return to another that which belongs to another as his
due good. On the other hand, if I give back the gun and ammunition to another knowing
that he is likely to use it to harm another, the concrete situation is no longer one that
involves the justice of ownership but the justice of not doing harm to another and (not)
preventing it from happening. Situation A is not similar to situation B and so precept P that
applies to all situations sufficiently similar to A does not apply to situation B because it is
not similar. The truth or rectitude of the letter of the law fails, but the truth of the
intentionality of the same law remains true and right. Given the contingency and therefore
uncertainty of circumstances, the application of these more determinate commands of the

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know whether situation B is sufficiently similar to situation A before applying the precept to B. A concrete
insight and correct judgment about B is required before application of the precept can responsibly be applied.
natural law requires prudential insight into the concrete situation to know what command actually applies to it.  

My response to Vertin’s third assumption that universal categorical substantial precepts that are known through a process of discovery is not to give a complete and definitive response but to suggest that it may not be correct, presupposing a particular understanding of the moral object. Vertin’s third assumption would directly bring into question (at least) the second sense of certainty one finds in Aquinas, for some of the secondary precepts warn against engaging in intrinsically evil actions. A comprehensive and definitive response cannot be given here because the only way to give a definitive response is to enter into a discussion on action theory and to raise the controversial issues surrounding the moral object of choice, and this needed conversation goes way beyond the scope of this chapter. But here may I suggest that my argument in chapter four, if sound, would deny this assumption at least insofar as it can be argued that there are some preceptive judgments that are substantial, universal, not naturally known but discovered that are certain in the sense of per se nota secundum se. There I suggested that Lonergan’s understanding of natural knowledge would not seem to extend to some preceptive judgments that Aquinas considered to be naturally known and belonging to the natural law as primary precepts. Here, for instance, I am thinking about the preceptive judgment regarding the good of living in society with others, which the virtue of justice is concerned with. If such substantial precepts that prescribe giving to others their due good, such as “do good to others, and avoid doing them harm,” “do not do to others what you would not have  

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14 See Aquinas on the virtues of gnome and epikeia that deal with situations in which obeying the letter of the law brings about an injustice and that appeal to a higher principle is needed. S.T. II-II, q. 51, a. 4; q. 120.
them do to you,” “do to others what you would have them do to you,” or “love your
neighbour as yourself,” are not naturally known, then they are very proximate precepts to
the primary precepts. But these precepts prescribe as good an end that seems to be
absolutely necessary in order for any individual to be an authentic subject who obeys the
transcendental precepts. The good of society is a necessary condition for my existence, my
physical and psychological health, my education, etc. In other words, if there is no society
then there is no possibility for me to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible.
If authenticity is a true good and the obeying the transcendental precepts is a good that
makes me authentic, and both of these are conditional upon human persons living in
society cooperatively in accordance with just relationships then I cannot responsibly accept
the conditioned as truly good and reject the conditions as truly good. To do harm to others
is ultimately to do harm to myself and my capacity to become an authentic subject.

6.2.2 Dynamic World Process and Changing Natures

Proceeding now to the second objection, the question arises whether universally
true substantive precepts (judgments or norms) can be affirmed given a developmental
view of world process. One of the main concerns of chapter five was to point out how
Lonergan’s understanding of world process is a dynamic view, one in which one finds both
development and decline occurring in accordance with laws of probability at all levels of
world process. The nature of each species of creature only enjoys a relative or conditioned
permanency. In light of this dynamic developmental feature in Lonergan’s thought it may
then be questioned whether the end of human moral activity is ever fixed, or is it something
constantly subject to change over time as human nature changes. After all, do not all central and conjugate forms and laws emerge and develop over time, including those forms and laws that constitute human persons? If human nature can change, so too can those ends towards which it is ordered.

It is important to keep in mind that both Lonergan and Aquinas recognize a difference between absolute necessity (i.e., that which absolutely cannot be otherwise, e.g., the eternal law) and the conditional necessity of a contingent fact or necessity of supposition (i.e., that which is necessary only insofar as certain conditions are met). The necessity of laws that constitute humans’ being what they are and their ordering to their proper ends, as both Lonergan and Aquinas would argue, is a necessity of supposition, not absolute necessity. Things could be otherwise, but in fact they are what they are because certain conditions have been and continue to be met. If human nature were to so change that the ends that are proper to humans were to change the result would be a change in preceptive judgments about the basic good that ought to be pursued.

However, the change would also be one in which one would no longer be talking about a lawful ordering proper to humans but a law belonging to some other species of

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15 Jerome Miller, applying the Heideggerian critique of metaphysics to Lonergan, makes the argument that since Lonergan historicizes “both our understanding of nature and nature itself” his conception of world-process is one that is open to an unprecedented future. Unlike Aristotle, for whom the not-yet future is determined by the already (i.e., nature), for Lonergan the future of the natural order is open to a process of emergent probability in which what emerges “is not explanatorily reducible to terms of an already extant order.” Consequently, nature cannot dictate a fixed and certain moral order. “If we know only by entrusting ourselves to the throe of inquiry, then not just our knowledge of the universe of being but also our knowledge of normative order is groundless. We cannot bring a knowledge of normative order with us when we enter into the throe of history because we are always already caught in its throe, and have no knowledge prior to or independently of our participation in it. And if knowledge of normative order is groundless, so too are the choices the existential subject makes.” Jerome A. Miller, “Historicity and Normative Order,” Lonergan Workshop 18 (2005): 193, 194, 196.

16 See, for instance, Aquinas, S.T. I, q. 19, a. 3; S.C.G. 1.83; Lonergan, Grace and Freedom, 327; Insight, 353.
creature. The point being, and here I quote Frederick Crowe, both “Synderesis and the transcendental precepts, then, are fixed till God makes us something other than we at present are as a human race.”\(^\text{17}\) So when Aquinas argues that “the right ends of human life are fixed; wherefore there can be a natural inclination in respect of these ends,”\(^\text{18}\) this might strike a modern person as a very static view of the world, yet his position is not incorrect even in light of a developmental view of nature that one finds in Lonergan’s dynamic metaphysics. Even a dynamic account of world process like Lonergan’s acknowledges that there must be something permanent, even if only for a short while, in order for change to occur, viz., the relative stability of higher and lower genera and species of creatures. The notion of change presupposes something permanent that undergoes change. Likewise, knowledge of change presupposes knowledge of identity.\(^\text{19}\) The future of world process may be open, but while humans exist and are what they are the same transcendental precepts will still be valid, the same objectives of human intentional striving will still be intended as goods to be pursued, persons will continue to be persons with ontic value living in relationships of dependency upon other fellow human persons.

But there is an element of truth to the general idea that the future is an open future due to the nature of creature that humans are: intelligent creatures. History is, in a certain sense, an experiment in which inquiry leads to new insights resulting in new conceptualizations of something to be done, which upon being acted upon results in a new situation; and this processes reoccurs over and over again as learning occurs and previously

\(^{17}\) Crowe, “Rethinking Moral Judgments,” 327.
\(^{18}\) Aquinas, *S.T. II-II*, q. 47, a. 15c.
made incomplete insights are corrected or complimented. And so it is that history can and
does oftentimes progress. On the other hand, sometimes inquiry is fueled by bias and not
all insights and ideas are truly good insights and ideas, and in the place of progress one finds
decline instead. And so there is the experiment of history in which the natural law is either
observed or dismissed. As creatures that are not only intelligible (i.e., creatures with a
central form and conjugate forms) but intelligent makers of our own history. So while we
are organic-psychic-intelligent creatures who can attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and
responsibly seek our own well-being and the well-being of others by knowing that these are
goods that we ought to pursue, how it is we go about pursuing these ends is very much
open in constantly changing situations.

6.2.3 Historical-mindedness and Preceptive Judgments of the Natural Law

The third and final objection concerns whether positing universally true substantive
preceptive judgments results in a conceptualism that ignores the historicity of meanings
and values. What exactly is meaning and in what sense does it change?

Meaning and value are products of acts of meaning: potential acts (e.g., sensing and
understanding), formal acts (e.g., conceiving, defining, supposing), full acts (e.g., judging),
and constitutive or effective acts (e.g., value judgments, deciding, and acting). 20 Concepts,
factual judgments, and value judgments are all meanings. All human meanings are
historically conditioned. Meanings and values change from one time to another and are
different from one place to another. With every new insight, factual judgment, and value
judgment, new meanings and values emerge, and often enough older insights and

20 See Lonergan, Method, 74-75.
judgments pass away into history. As Lonergan recognizes, concepts and propositions have
dates.\textsuperscript{21} This perspective stands opposed the “the conceptualist extremism for which
concepts have neither dates nor developments and truth is so objective that it gets along
without minds.”\textsuperscript{22}

But while Lonergan affirms that concepts have dates this does not lead him to affirm
the problematic position that is often referred to as cultural relativism. Relativism,
according to Lonergan, is the position that affirms the following three premises:

(1) the meaning of any statement is relative to its context; (2) every context is
subject to change; it stands within a process of development and/or decay; and (3) it
is not possible to predict what the future context will be.\textsuperscript{23}

While these premises are true as far as it goes, they nonetheless lack the added
qualification that while it “is true that the meaning of any statement is relative to its
context” it
does not follow that the context is unknown or, if it is unknown, that it cannot be
discovered. Still less does it follow that the statement understood within its context
is mistaken or false. On the contrary, there are many true statements whose
context is easily ascertained.\textsuperscript{24}

Lonergan is arguing that while truth claims are historically conditioned that does not
imply that a truth claim as understood in its original context is not permanently valid, even
for one who does not belong to the original community of meaning in which the judgment
was made.

\textsuperscript{21} See Bernard Lonergan, “Metaphysics as Horizon,” in Collection, CWL 4, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and
Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 204, 299-300 m.
\textsuperscript{22} Bernard Lonergan, “The Dehellenization of Dogma,” in A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan,
\textsuperscript{23} Bernard Lonergan, “Doctrinal Pluralism,” in Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980, CWL 17,
edited by Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 75.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 76.
This permanency of truth does not apply to all knowledge claims grasped by human understanding and judgment. For instance, scientific knowledge, which is capable of being more accurately understood as science progresses, does not enunciate meanings that can enjoy claims to permanency.\(^{25}\)

On the other hand, Lonergan does seem to hold that virtually unconditioned truths are permanent insofar as they are understood in their original context. Lonergan argues, for instance, that the transcendental method he argues for does not admit revision: “the objectification of the normative pattern of our conscious and intentional operations does not admit revision.”\(^{26}\) Perhaps a fuller more detailed account of the structure of human conscious intentionality can be advanced, but Lonergan firmly believes that what he has understood and judged to be true is permanently true. It may be a challenge to rearticulate these insights to different cultures with different differentiations of consciousness and different conceptual schemes that are more or less conducive to transposing these insights into their own context (e.g., explaining the insights of interiority to someone whose has only a common sense differentiation of consciousness will require that person to seek new insights about themselves they have probably never sought before), but the meaning as he understands it and it can be understood by others when properly contextualized is permanently true.\(^{27}\)

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 92.
\(^{27}\) This idea of permanency of meaning also arises in Lonergan’s recognition of some of Aquinas’s philosophical and theological achievements: “I have done two studies of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. One on *Grace and Freedom*, the other on *Verbum*. Were I to write on these topics today, the method I am proposing would lead to several significant differences from the presentation by Aquinas. But there also would exist profound affinities. For Aquinas’s thought on grace and freedom and his thought on cognitional theory and on the Trinity were genuine achievements of the human spirit. Such achievement has a permanence of its own. It
The point here is that if there are virtually unconditioned preceptive judgments expressed as norms of the natural law that are historically contextualized it does not mean that the permanency of their truth is thereby nullified. These foundational insights into the good may be linguistically expressed as moral norms in many different forms. They may not be linguistically formed at all, but are nonetheless present at least implicitly in value judgments people regularly make, and evidenced by their performance. Human historicity certainly does present a challenge to the ability to communicate truth from one context to another, but it does not render the affirmation of truth and its permanency impossible. Consequently, one can affirm the permanent validity of the preceptive judgments of the natural law while at the same time affirming that they are insights that will necessarily receive different linguistic expressions in different cultural contexts with different degrees of clarity and precision. And among these different cultural expressions they may be objectified as moral norms more or less adequately depending to a significant extent upon the differentiation of consciousness of the people, as well as the intellectual and moral (and religious) authenticity of the people.

Still historicity does complicate dialogue, and so something must be said about dialogue between different cultural communities, and even different groups within a single cultural group. At the end of his essay “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” Lonergan speaks of a transition that needs to take place between dialectic – which critiques meanings and values of human history based upon what is known from the data of research, its interpretation, and its context within an historical narrative – and dialogue. This involves a

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can be improved upon. It can be inserted in larger and richer contexts. But unless its substance in incorporated in subsequent work, the subsequent work will be a substantially poorer affair.” Ibid., 352.
transposition of issues from “a conflict of statements to an encounter with persons.”28

Lonergan then adds:

For every person is an embodiment of natural right. Every person can reveal to any other his natural propensity to seek understanding, to judge reasonably, to evaluate fairly, to be open to friendship.29

Human persons are embodiments of natural right for there is, as Lonergan states, a natural propensity in us for certain goods. Here I want to highlight nuances in Lonergan’s statement that qualify his otherwise commonplace elaboration of the transcendental precepts, viz., to evaluate fairly, and to be open to friendship. Both of these movements of the human spirit towards fairness and friendship are an embodiment of natural right. And both of these nuances are significant for they say something about the dynamism of the human spirit that I attempted to highlight in my discussion on how the transcendent notion of value receives expression in more determinate and categorical ways in the notions of temperance, fortitude, and justice. By highlighting fairness and openness to friendship, Lonergan is highlighting a specific determination of the notion of value that is the notion of justice: what is the due good that is owed to others? More colloquially, the notion of friendship raises the questions: “Who is by neighbour?” and “Am I my brothers’ and sisters’ keeper?” It is a specific determination of the notion of value because the notion of value opens up to other goods besides relations between persons involving fairness.

My elaboration upon basic goods in chapter four, both transcendental (intelligibility, truth, being, beauty, goodness) and categorical (self-transcending authenticity and virtue, both bodily and spiritual life and well-being, the good of others) are in many ways only

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28 Lonergan, “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” 182.
29 Ibid.
starting points to a conversation about the human good that emerges from the unrestricted desire to know and do the good, not a set of answers intended to bypass legitimate inter and intra-cultural disagreements about the good. For the question of dialogue among differences even to arise there must be the presupposition of the goals of fairness and friendship; there must be a previous notion of justice that aims at a very concrete good – the good of other persons – that raises the question of what the due good is that we owe to one another. There must be some grasp of the value of other persons and that to truly value other persons is to make oneself a better person. To choose not to engage in dialogue or to give dialogue a chance is to stultify the very dynamism of consciousness that seeks self-transcendence by opening itself up to the good of other persons. For me to consider the good of others is to concern myself with their physical, psychic, and spiritual well-being. If, as I have argued, the judgments we make about basic human goods are the seeds or ends of the virtues, and that these basic goods are intended under questions arising from the notions of justice, temperance, and fortitude, then the discussion of basic goods is a potential starting point for dialogue, not an end to dialogue.

6.2.4 Summary of Conclusions

If these three responses to potential objections are correct then this investigation has addressed some of the apparent tensions that arise from Lonergan’s called for transpositions. These transpositions include, from the side of the subject, the turn to the subject, to transcendental method, to method, to a modern conception of science, and to historical-mindedness. On the side of things that are known, these transpositions include
the grounding of metaphysical categories in interiority and the recognition of development in world process resulting from finalistic striving. These last three objections have especially focused in on whether a conception of human participation in the eternal law through a natural law that identifies the natural law not simply with the dynamism of the human spirit but with reasonably affirmed preceptive judgments, at least some of which are naturally known, is truly consistent with Lonergan’s called for transpositions.

In regard to the first objection, the fact that there are some self-evidently true preceptive judgments that are known with certainty does not conflict with Lonergan’s position that science deals only with truths that are probable at best. What is true of science in general is not true of every sphere of knowledge. While it is not proper to look for certainty where none is to be found, neither is it proper to deny certainty where it can be found. While moral knowledge can never reach certainty in more than one respect, this is not to affirm that it cannot reach certainty in all respects. And if one begins with self-appropriation of oneself as a knower and a doer, one can reach virtually unconditioned judgments regarding certain substantial goods. Now it needs to be emphasized here that the certainty that one has about ends of human action and virtuous development does not in any way guarantee certainty in the concrete choices that we make that are the products of deliberation that take their starting point in knowledge of the end. The preceptive judgments of the natural law move us to deliberation, but they do not give us hard and fast answers to what concrete action(s) I must do. If the ends of action provide an answer to questions regarding why some action is good, deliberative knowledge provides an answer to questions regarding whether I should do this action or that action, should it be done now
or should it be done at all. It is one thing to know that seeking truth is a good and quite another to know when to seek truth and when to go to bed and get some rest, or to put off contemplation in order to help someone who is drowning.

Secondly, Lonergan’s dynamic understanding of world process holds that creaturely natures develop and cease to be over time, and along with this development comes a change in the forms and laws that orient creatures to their proper ends. But this does not mean that the natural law preceptive judgments are subject to change insofar as they are the ends of human natures as they do in fact exist. The natural law, which presupposes that humans have natures of a very specific kind, exists as long as there are humans. The necessity of the natural law is a conditional necessity.

Thirdly, Lonergan’s concern for historical-mindedness does not render problematic a natural law that consists of universally and necessarily true value judgments. The recognition of human historicity is the recognition that concepts, propositions, spoken and written words all have dates. But this does not mean that virtually unconditioned propositional truth claims are not permanent or cannot be understood and affirmed even by people living in different cultural backgrounds. While truth claims are made in historical contexts, these historical contexts are in principle capable of being understood, and their claims verified. Therefore, it does not follow that recognition of historical-mindedness conflicts with a view of natural law that consists of necessarily true preceptive judgments that can be expressed in normative statements.

6.3 Implications
I now conclude this investigation with a discussion about some of the implications that follow from the conclusions I have reached. In what follows I will address the following two implications: first, the importance of recognizing continuities between Aquinas and Lonergan that allows Aquinas to be a continued source for assisting in the project of developing Lonergan’s moral philosophy while working within the stage of meaning that is interiority; second, the opening up of new avenues of further inquiry.

First, if the continuity between Lonergan and Aquinas is as strong as I have argued it to be, these continuities can only be of assistance to those who wish to further develop Lonergan’s moral philosophy beginning from within the perspective of interiority and taking a stand upon transcendental method as the ground of critical ground of meaning. Just as Lonergan benefitted from Aquinas’s insights into human cognition that allowed him to develop his cognitional theory, if Aquinas’s theoretical account of that natural law and its close connection with the virtues is substantially positional, then Aquinas’s insights on the natural law and the virtues can only help in this process of developing Lonergan’s moral philosophy. At the same time, this is not simply a matter of transposing Aquinas into the categories of interiority, but developing both his and Lonergan’s insights through the help Lonergan provides us by turning to the subject and taking a stand on transcendental method. So with Aquinas we can affirm that humans participate in the eternal law through the natural law in the various ways he affirms we do, while also addressing others ways that develop and go beyond his original insights.

Second, this first implication leads directly to the second implication that some of the discoveries made in the present inquiry opens up to new lines of inquiry. Here I will list
two. First, I have shown how Aquinas ties together what are often in a post-Kantian and post-utilitarian context assumed to be two opposed approaches to morals. Unlike contemporary deontologists, emotivists, and teleologists, Aquinas does not set in opposition law and virtue, reason and feelings. The precepts of the natural law are the starting points of virtue and the inclinational desires of human nature condition the possibility of moral knowledge of the good. If the affective and cognitive dimensions of moral action fit together as Aquinas says they do then a theory of the natural law cannot be treated apart from a treatment of human affections and virtues. If, as I have argued, this link between the natural law and the virtues finds a similar grounding in Lonergan’s account of the natural law, then there is much to be learned by developing Lonergan’s ethics in a manner that transposes the virtues into a context of interiority. Arguably, Lonergan’s exploration of ethics and values, which gives an important role to intentional feelings, already heads in this direction.

Secondly, there is also the need to correlate the natural law with Lonergan’s philosophy of human bias and cultural decline and his theology of sin and grace. Concrete reality is not one in which people always live in accordance with the natural law. Rather, it is a world in which basic sin is at work as a principle of moral, social, and cultural decline. But it is also a world in which grace is also present and functioning as a principle of redemption. Any moral theology would have to explore the interrelationship between the natural law, sin, and grace. Systematic theology would have to explore the relationship between the new law given in Jesus Christ and poured out into human hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and how through this gift humans participate in the eternal law. It is
hoped that this investigation into the natural law and its participation in the eternal law makes a positive contribution to this larger project.
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