

## METAETHICS: AQUINAS, HUME AND MOORE

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### ABSTRACT

*This article concerns Aquinas' practical doctrine on two philosophical difficulties underlying much contemporary ethical debate. One is Hume's Is-ought thesis and the other is its radical con-sequence, Moore's Open-question argument. These ethical paradoxes appear to have their roots in epistemological scepticism and in a deficient anthropology. Possible response to them can be found in that Aquinas' human intellect (essentially theoretical and practical at the same time) naturally performs three main operations: 1º) To apprehend the intellecta and universal notions ens, verum and bonum. 2º) To formulate the first theoretical and practical principles. 3º) To order that the intellectum and universal good be done and the opposite avoided. Thomistic philosophical response to both predicaments will not be exclusively ethical, but will harmonically embrace ontology, anthropology and epistemology.*

**Keywords:** ontology; anthropology; epistemology; ethics;

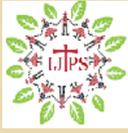
### 1. HUME'S LAW AND MOORE'S OPEN QUESTION

The first part of this article will study Aquinas' possible response to *Hume's law*. According to shared interpretation, David Hume sought to reform philosophy (Mackie 1980) and this paper will focus on his moral philosophy, by arguing against his famous *Is-ought thesis* or *Hume's Law 1*. It may be briefly defined as being unlawful to derive *ought* (*what ought to be*) from *is* (*what is*). That means, between *is* and *ought* there is such a dichotomy and separation that it is impossible to derive norms (*ought*) from beings (*is*) (Hudson 1969). In particular, this article will dispute the illegacy of deriving universal rules (*ought*) from persons (*is*).

The second part of this article will examine Aquinas' possible riposte to *Moore's open-question argument*. George Edward Moore sharpened *Hume's law* taking it to its final consequences with his *Open-question argument* (Baldwin 1990). Moore already supported in his youth work *The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics* (Moore 1897) the argument that any attempt to define good is a *naturalistic fallacy*, hence it is recognized as a precursor to *Principia Ethica* (Moore 1903). This book is considered as a revolutionary ethical work (Hutchinson 2001: 88-90). Fundamentally, his thesis maintains that the possibility of defining good must be denied, since it is indefinable (Butchvarov 1982); to confuse good with something temporary or with any natural property would result in a *naturalistic fallacy* (Moore 1903: I,10). If you want to avoid this fallacy, you cannot identify or confuse good or evil with anything (Moore 1903: *Preface*: 3).

### 2. HUME'S LAW AND AQUINAS' HUMAN INTELLECT

This section will analyse Thomas Aquinas' possible solution to *Hume's law*. It seems that Thomistic moral philosophy, based on ontology, anthropology and epistemology, could



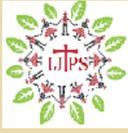
have already satisfactorily addressed the *Is-ought thesis*; since in his doctrine it is possible (using Humean language) to derive *ought* (universal norms) from *is* (person), without falling into *Hume's law* (Lichacz 2008).

The argument must begin with three fundamental premises in Aquinas' ethical doctrine. 1°) It is not from every *is* that is possible to infer a moral *ought*. From a mineral being (*is*) is not possible to infer a moral *ought*. From a vegetal being (*is*) is not possible to infer a moral *ought*. From an irrational animal being (*is*) is not possible to infer a moral *ought*. But only from a rational animal being (*is*) is possible to infer or conclude a moral *ought* (natural law). 2°) According to Aquinas universal good is good, not because it is a result of mere social consensus (contractualism), or just a calculus of consequences (consequentialism) or just a pure duty (Kantian deontology). But good is good because the human intellect apprehends it as an *intellectum* and universal good (Gilson 2002) 3°) The universal good is not God or Beatific Vision **2**. Since both things, in this earth, are not universal goods. Because the human intellect does not apprehend, in this earth, the reality nor essence of those goods, so the will does not naturally tend to these goods **3**.

The human intellect, which is at once theoretical and practical, apprehends the *intellecta* and universal notions of being (*ens*), truth and good; and their respective opposites, non-being (*non ens*), non-truth (false, illogical) and non-good (evil), in an intentional way. As a consequence, the human intellect naturally understands and formulates the first theoretical principles and the first practical principles or natural law **4**. Rational beings (anthropology) naturally follow the natural universal inclinations or natural law's precepts (ethics); because Aquinas maintains the substantial unity and rationality of the human being (Henle 2012). In the human intellect or human reason, there is a full analogy between its two speculative and practical aspects, one focused more on truth the other focused more on good and operation (Vanni 2007). In consequence, the human reason naturally understands and formulates *per se et quoad nos* the first universal, theoretical and practical, principles. The universal precepts refer to seek the *intellecta* and universal goods and to avoid the contrary. All *intellecta* and universal concepts are abstracted by the reason from the senses and the sensible experience; because in Aquinas' doctrine, "there is nothing in the intellect that has not been in the senses before" (De veritate, q. 2 a. 3 ad 19).

The abstraction occurs in two phases (Lobato 1991). Firstly, the cogitative prepares the phantasm (from the impressions of the senses) for the active intellect. Secondly, the active intellect abstracts from the phantasm the intelligible species (*species impressa*), which presents it to the passive intellect that finally, expresses the *intellecta* notion (*species expressa*). The passive intellect makes explicit the *intellectum* and universal good, which is good *per se*; thus, the will desires it *simpliciter*. For that reason, the impressions of the senses and the sensible experiences pass to another ontological level, from the sensible one to the intellectual one.

The universal norms are naturally understood and formulated by the intellect and desired by the will; as a consequence, these superior faculties naturally order that the person inclines towards the *intellecta* and universal goods seeking them and avoiding the contrary, evil or defect of good (Stump 2008). That is to say, the whole person naturally seeks and persecutes the *intellecta* and universal goods avoiding the opposite. For instance, to preserve your life, to raise your children, to avoid killing yourself, to avoid killing your children (filicide) **5**, etcetera **6**. Therefore, the order essentially is a rational act. It is the superior faculty (intellect and will), which orders the natural universal inclination towards the *intellectum* and universal good (Dewan 2008), not in the opposite way. The sensible



experience does not make the practical intellect apprehends the object as universal good; therefore the intellect and will do not command the universal inclination to seek the object avoiding the contrary (Pizzorni 1962). The universal inclinations exclusively occur as a consequence of an intellectual process which orders that persons incline towards the universal goods. It can happen that a particular man chooses to act against an universal good, this is because persons are naturally free and responsible for their actions (McCluskey 2017). Even so, human beings always have to seek good under any aspect, *sub specie boni*; because if not, they would not pursue it neither voluntarily nor guiltily (Henle 2012). For example, someone who commits suicide to stop suffering or a particular man who kills his own daughter (filicide) to satisfy his hatred against her mother 7.

Just as the practical intellect and the will the first thing that respectively apprehend and desire is the *intellectum* and universal good, (abstracted from the sensible experience) and with it the human reason formulates the first practical principle; analogously, it occurs with the rest of the *intellecta* and universal goods of natural law. The practical intellect intentionally apprehends that the object is good *per se*, thus it presents it to the will that desires it *simpliciter*; in consequence, the practical reason naturally formulates the universal precept of preserving the own life. As a result, the reason and the will naturally order that the whole person inclines towards the *intellectum* and universal good by pursuing it and avoiding the opposite. The same happens with the good of natural law of caring for and raising your own children. The intellect apprehends the notion as universal and good *per se*, thus, the intellect presents it to the will that naturally desires it (*voluntas ut natura*) 8; in consequence, the reason naturally formulates the universal precept of caring and raising your own children. As a result, the reason and the will naturally order that the whole person inclines towards the *intellectum* and universal good by seeking it and avoiding the opposite. Aquinas' natural law (ethics, *ought*) is a natural consequence of the rational being (anthropology, *is*) (Sellés 2008).

In order to understand and formulate the universal precept of raising your own children avoiding the contrary, or preserving your life avoiding the contrary; the boy or girl must have felt some experiences; therefore he or she must have lived some years of life (Artigas 2003). Aquinas does not enter into details of age, nevertheless it is clearly stated in his texts that it is only from a certain period of life that you can properly speak of use of reason. The use of reason properly means having the capability to intellectualize (intellect) and to will (will) in act (Sanguinetti 2011). Although the intellect *per se* does not use any corporeal organ, nevertheless, it receives the phantasm from the sensible faculties that do use corporeal organs. According to Aquinas, it is impossible for our intellect, which is united to a body, to understand in act anything without using the images received by the bodily organs 9. Therefore, the person cannot intellectualize, nor formulate judgments, nor will in act because of defect in the corporeal organs.

If children's organs (particularly the brain) are still evolving, the use of reason (intellect and will) will be hindered, too. The internal senses, because of the malfunction of the bodily organ, are not able to provide the phantasm for the active intellect. Consequently, it cannot present any intelligible species (*species impressa*) to the passive intellect, which as a result cannot express (*species expressa*) any *intellectum* and universal concept, with which the reason formulates the first theoretical and practical judgments. Therefore, to use the reason (use of reason) properly means to intellectualize and to will in act (De Finance 1997), which implies, being morally free and responsible of own actions (free will) 10.



The natural inclinations that conform the natural law, tending to the universal goods and avoiding the opposite are exclusively the universal natural inclinations proper to man as man. Not the particular natural inclinations, that someone could feel, even if the inclinations subjectively look more or less good to us (Tonello 2009).

The nature of each thing is primarily the form, according to which each being (*ens*) belongs to a species (Pincemin 1997); thus, persons are constituted in their species by their form, a rational form **11**. Therefore, the human nature impels persons to act rationally, that is, to act according to the natural law; consequently, what is against the order of reason is against the nature of man as man. Aquinas' natural law presupposes rationality **12**; hence, non-rational animals cannot follow the natural law; they are just following their non-rational needs toward or against objects (Elders 1996: 179-186). The natural universal inclinations towards the *intellecta* and universal goods are a result of the judgment of the practical intellect, naturally desired by the will (*voluntas ut natura*) and rationally ordered; as a result persons naturally tend to seek the *intellectum* good avoiding the contrary **13**. For instance, the natural universal inclination to preserve your life, to raise your children, to know the truth; as well as the natural universal inclination to avoid the opposite, like committing suicide, committing filicide or living in ignorance (Dewan 1990).

Thomas Aquinas sometimes uses the expression "natural inclination" (*inclinatio naturalis*) to refer to non-universal or particular natural inclinations. The natural non-universal inclinations are countless and may tend towards particular good goods (such as caring for sick people), towards particular less good goods (such as drinking alcohol), or towards particular bad goods (like raping). Toward these goods, the will does not feel naturally attracted (*voluntas ut ratio*) **14**. Therefore, in Aquinas' texts, there are two completely different senses of *natural inclinations* (Brock 1988). However, some famous Thomistic scholars (Finnis 1988; Finnis-Grisez 1981) confuse the two senses (*voluntas ut natura* y *voluntas ut ratio*). They consider the universal natural inclinations of man as man toward *intellecta* goods *per se*, or natural law; just like non-universal inclinations toward non-universal and particular objects. Nevertheless, according to Aquinas, the particular natural inclinations are neither universal nor of man as man, hence do not conform the natural law (McInerny 1997).

Following this introduction, it is argued that Aquinas, with his integral vision of moral philosophy, which harmonically embraces ontology, anthropology and epistemology, seems to have satisfactorily addressed the *Is-ought problem*. This is because in his integral ethics it is possible (using Humean language) to derive universal norms (*ought, what ought to be*) from persons (*is, what is*) without falling into *Hume's law*, using two arguments.

1<sup>o</sup>) As the human intellect, in its theoretical aspect, apprehends the notion of *intellectum* and universal being (*ens*) and apprehends the notion of *intellectum* and universal truth, then naturally formulates the first theoretical principles (principle of non-contradiction, of identity, etcetera). Analogously, the human intellect, in its practical aspect, apprehends the notion of *intellectum* and universal good and formulates the natural law's precepts; or natural universal inclinations of man as human toward the universal goods. Aquinas' natural law does not start from the sensible experiences, and as a result, persons pursue or avoid the sensible objects. The process is radically the opposite; we could represent it (although in Aquinas' doctrine the person with all his faculties is substantially one being) (Goyette 2009) from top to bottom not from bottom to top. This means, the natural universal inclinations of man as human, or natural law, have been formulated and ordered after a judgment, from above, from the rational faculty; as a consequence the person



naturally inclines towards the universal goods avoiding the contrary. The person is free and responsible for his action; the person is praiseworthy or guilty for his actions (Pizzorni 2000). If the process were from bottom to up, meaning, if actions were directed by sensibility; persons would not be praiseworthy or guilty for their actions, since these actions would not be human as human, they would be like actions of non-rational animals (Brock 2015).

2º) The *intellectum* and universal being (*ens*) and the *intellectum* and universal good are real and ethically one in human beings. The *intellectum* and universal good is totally real and normative; although, as so many things in philosophy are real while abstract (Polo 2011). In Aquinas' doctrine, there is no dichotomical derivation from *is* to *ought* in the human being, because *is* (human being) and *ought* (natural law) are harmonically apprehended by the human intellect, both theoretical and practical at the same time. That means, any person for being human, naturally inclines to the *intellectum* and universal good. There is no dichotomy, but harmony, between *is* (*what is*) and *ought* (*what ought to be*); because every human being who understands that he is a person naturally understands that he must be, behave and act as a rational being. Hence, the natural law (ethics) is a natural consequence of the rational being (anthropology); this is because Aquinas defends the substantial unity and rationality of the human being (Mondin 1992).

In Thomistic ethics *ought* (*what ought to be*) that are derived from *is* (*what is*) are only and exclusively the universal natural inclinations of man as man or natural law. Any rational being (anthropology, *is*) naturally inclines to seek the *intellecta* and universal goods avoiding the contrary (ethics, *ought*). However, there are some individuals who choose not to obey this rational mandate or natural law. This is because, as said before, persons are essentially rational beings free and responsible for their actions (Palma 2009).

The natural particular inclinations towards particular goods are countless, such as taking care of old people, drinking alcohol, raping, and so on. Hence, as said before, they will never conform the natural law, since they are mere natural particular inclinations towards non-universal goods. Namely, the human reason apprehends these goods as what they are; particular and non-universal goods. Therefore, neither the intellect naturally apprehends these goods as goods *per se*, nor the will naturally desires (*voluntas ut ratio*) these goods as goods *per se* (Clavell-Pérez de Laborda 2009). The first practical precept is to seek the *intellectum* and universal good avoiding the opposite, evil or defect of good; all other universal precepts are based on this first. The other precepts of natural law refer to pursue the other *intellecta* and universal goods; such as preserving your own life, caring for your own child or knowing the truth; avoiding the opposite, such as killing yourself, committing filicide or living in ignorance 15.

Essentially, what Aquinas maintains is that our intellect apprehends the *intellecta* and universal goods intentionally, in an intentional way; therefore, not as a concrete concept but as an *intellectum* one (*verbum mentis*) (Sanguinetti 2011). Aquinas' natural law exclusively refers to the universal natural inclinations of man as man to seek the *intellecta* and universal goods avoiding the contrary. All *intellecta* concepts are abstracted from the senses by the reason; since there is nothing in the intellect that has not been in the senses before. Therefore, it can be said that according to Aquinas' ethics (using Humean language), from *is* (person) derives *ought* (natural law) without falling into *Hume's law* (Lichacz 2008).

### 3. Moore's Open Question and Aquinas' Human Intellect



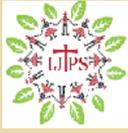
This section will study Aquinas' possible response to *Moore's open-question argument*, which is a radical consequence of *Hume's law*, because it carries the naturalistic fallacy doctrine to the end (Brink 1989). Aquinas seems to have satisfactorily addressed this ethical problem, since in his doctrine the *intellecta* and universal notions being (*ens*), truth and good are intentionally apprehended by the human intellect both theoretical and practical. In consequence, the first theoretical and practical principles are naturally understood and formulated by the human intellect.

*Moore's open question* sagaciously questions the ultimate foundations of ethics **16**. Why is good good? Why is evil evil **17**? Why is suicide bad *per se*, or bad? Why is preserving one's life good *per se*, or good? Why is raising your own child good *per se*, or good? Why is killing your own child (filicide) bad *per se*, or bad? Is good good? Is evil evil **18**? Although Moore admits that, he does not know how to answer why some realities are good and others the opposite, evil; he maintains that this is still an *open question* for moral philosophy **19**. Moreover, anyone who tries to define good would fall into his *naturalistic fallacy* **20**. However, the answer may be that Thomistic ethics is fundamentally different from ethics that qualify an action as good by mere social consensus (*contractualism*) or just calculating its consequences (*consequentialism*) or just a pure duty (Kantian deontology). Good is both abstract, because it includes all the problematics about the foundations of moral philosophy, and at the same time it is real, as real as being (*ens*) (Melendo 2008). Good *per se* is good because the human intellect apprehends it as *intellectum* and universal good: as such. The human reason apprehends also being (*ens*) as being (*ens*) and truth as truth; because of that, these concepts are called *intellecta* and universal notions. As a consequence, from the *intellecta* and universal notions and their opposites, non-being (*non ens*), non-true or false, non-good or evil, the human intellect naturally formulates the first theoretical and practical principles.

The answer has been simplified as a syllogism.

Just as being (*ens*) is being because it is, and the human intellect apprehends the *intellectum* and universal being (*ens*) as what it is: real; and the human intellect apprehends the contrary as what it is: non-being (lack of being or *non ens*). Just as truth is truth because it is, and the human intellect understands the *intellectum* and universal truth as what it is: true; and the human intellect apprehends the contrary as what it is: false (defect of truth or non-true). Just as logic is logical because it is, and the human intellect apprehends logic as what it is: logical; and the human intellect apprehends the contrary as what it is: illogical (lack of logic or non-logical). Thus, good is good because it is, and the human intellect apprehends the *intellectum* and universal good as what it is: good; and the human intellect apprehends the contrary as what it is: evil (defect of good or non-good). For this reason, the first theoretical and practical principles are first principles; because the human intellect apprehends and understands the first theoretical principles (principle of non-contradiction, of identity, etcetera) and practical ones (to seek the *intellecta* and universal goods avoiding the contraries) as real, true, logical and good. Similarly, the human intellect understands the opposite of these principles as lack of reality, truth, logic and good. The first theoretical and practical principles cannot be demonstrated, because they are first principles of human knowledge **21**. Therefore, the answer will always be the same, the first principles are true because they are first principles of any knowledge **22** and deny or questioning them is an *petitio principia* **23**.

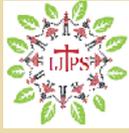
Thomas Aquinas affirms that the first thing that apprehends the intellect, abstracting from the sensible experience, is being (*ens*) as being (*ens*), not as a concrete notion but as an



intentional one. The second thing that it understands is itself understanding being (*ens*) as theoretical truth, not as a particular but as an intentional concept. The third thing that it wants is being (*ens*) as practical truth, not as a particular but as an intentional notion. For that reason, firstly the intellect apprehends the notion of *intellectum* and universal being (*ens*); then that of *intellectum* and universal truth; finally, that of *intellectum* and universal good (Henle 2012). Therefore, when Moore is questioning whether good is good, he is also questioning if being is being and if truth is truth **24**. Because, it is the human intellect (theoretical and practical at the same time) that apprehends, in an intentional way, the *intellecta* and universal notions. Subsequently, the human intellect formulates the first theoretical and practical principles. Aquinas' natural law (ethics) is a natural consequence of the rational being (anthropology); for the reason that, he defends the substantial unity and rationality of the human being (Gilson 2002). Hence, in Thomistic ethics it seems that good is definable without falling into *Moore's open-question argument*.

Aquinas response to *Moore's naturalistic fallacy* is similar to *Hume's Is-ought thesis*. When the human reason apprehends the *intellectum* and universal good, the intellect presents it to the will, which desires it *simpliciter*. As a result, the intellect naturally formulates the practical principle and orders the whole person to seek the *intellectum* and universal good avoiding the opposite. Therefore, the natural universal inclinations or precepts of the natural law are naturally formulated and ordered from top to bottom, not from bottom to top -as sustains some Thomistic scholars- (Finnis 1980). In addition, when Aquinas writes about the natural law does not refer to the multitude of non-universal and particular natural inclinations toward the countless number of particular and concrete goods (Brock 2005). For example, the natural inclination to take care of old or ill people, the natural inclination to drink alcohol or the natural inclination to rape. Thomistic natural law exclusively refers to the universal natural inclinations of man as man toward the *intellecta* and universal goods; such as preserving one's life, not suicide, caring for your children, not committing filicide. The innumerable particular goods (taking care of old or ill people, drinking alcohol or raping) are not apprehended by the reason as universal goods. They are apprehended by the intellect as what they are: particular and non-universal goods; consequently the will does not naturally desire them (*voluntas ut ratio*) **25**. For this reason, they will never conform the natural law (Luño 1992). Therefore, it seems that Aquinas' ethics does not fall into *Moore's naturalistic fallacy*.

The human intellect, theoretical and practical at the same time, apprehends *ens*, *verum* and *bonum* not as mere concrete notions, but instead apprehends being, truth, good and its contraries intentionally, in an intentional way. As a consequence, the human intellect intentionally formulates the first theoretical and practical principles (Vanni 2007). That means, for a person to understand that murder is evil; he does not need to have assisted one or committed it. Simply the human intellect intentionally understanding what "person" and "own child" means, naturally knows what that entails: human nature, life, love, family, and so on. In the same way, the reason intentionally knowing what "murder" means, naturally understands what it entails. In consequence, the human intellect naturally formulates that to murder a person is evil and that it must be avoided; and that even worse would be to kill your son (Polo 2015). According to Aquinas, for the intellect to formulate the first theoretical and practical principles, the person should have lived a certain period (some years of life) of sensible and intellectual experience. For the reason that, the human intellect cannot understand, nor formulate judgments, nor reasoning in act without the body (Bergamino 2002). Although the intellect *per se* does not use any bodily organ, it receives the phantasm



from the sensible faculties that do use a corporal organ. Therefore, it seems that Thomistic ethics does not fall into *Moore's naturalistic fallacy*.

Regarding Moore radical scepticism, it can be said that ultimately, all knowledge and science relies on infallibility of human intellect in understanding the *intellecta* and universal concepts being, truth, and good, and in formulating the first theoretical and practical principles formed by the *intellecta* concepts and their contraries. This truth has been blurred over the centuries due to a misunderstanding epistemological scepticism (particularly all kind of rationalisms from Descartes) (Llano 2003). May be because the human intellect exclusively is infallible with respect to the *intellecta* and universal concepts and the first universal principles. However, with respect to the reasonings from the first principles and, especially, with respect to all other reasonings, the human intellect is fallible (Hoffmann-Michon 2017), very fallible.

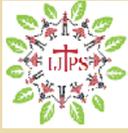
Professor Moore questioning if the human intellect could apprehend (know) being (*ens*) and its contrary (*non ens*), or the capability to apprehend truth and its contrary (false) **26**, or the capability to apprehend good and its contrary (evil) **27**. He is not only questioning the capability to apprehend (know) the *intellecta* and universal notions, ultimately, he is questioning the capability of the human intellect to apprehend (know) anything. Actually, Moore seems to doubt about the principle of the principle, that is, the capability of the human intellect of understanding (Moore 2006: 130-132). In fact, he has doubts about everything because he wants to demonstrate everything by building an universe of absolute certainties (Llano 2003). This radical scepticism, as Moore experiences (Moore 2006: 169-170), is not an intellectual virtue but an intellectual defect **28** ; that if carried to the end, would finish in an absolute subjectivism<sup>29</sup>, eliminating the science and the language itself **30**, falling in chaos and mental confusion **31**.

## CONCLUSION

This article tried to argue that Aquinas' ethical doctrine, which will harmonically embrace the whole person, could have already satisfactorily addressed both *Hume's law* and its radical consequent *Moore's open-question argument*. Regarding *Hume's law* Aquinas would argue that human beings (anthropology, *is*) naturally tend to seek the *intellecta* and universal goods (ethics, *ought*). Therefore in Thomistic ethics (using Humean language) from person (*is, what is*) derives the natural law (*ought, what ought to be*) without falling into *Hume's law*. Regarding *Moore's open question* and his *natural fallacy*. Aquinas would similarly argue that the natural law (ethics, *ought*) is a natural consequence of the rational being (anthropology, *is*); this is because Aquinas defends the substantial unity and rationality of the human being. The natural law does not refer to the multitude of non-universal and particular natural inclinations toward particular and concrete goods. Nonetheless, the natural law refers solely and exclusively to the natural universal inclinations towards the *intellecta* and universal goods, which are intentionally abstracted by the intellect from the senses and the sensible experience. Therefore, in Thomistic ethics it seems that good is definable without falling into *Moore's open question* or in his *naturalistic fallacy*.

## REFERENCES

1. Cfr. D. HUME, *A treatise of human nature, vol. 3, part. 1, sect. 1*. "In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of



propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence”.

2. Cfr. S. Th. I-II, q. 5, a. 5, co. “Videre autem Deum per essentiam est supra naturam non solum hominis, sed etiam omnis creaturae”. I have followed the original texts from *Corpus tomisticum* [on line] URL: <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/> [accessed: 10/03/2018].

3. Cfr. S. Th. I, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2 “Ille qui audit hoc nomen Deus, non intelligit significari aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit, cum quidam crediderint Deum esse corpus. Dato etiam quod quilibet intelligat hoc nomine Deus significari hoc quod dicitur, scilicet illud quo maius cogitari non potest; non tamen propter hoc sequitur quod intelligat id quod significatur per nomen, esse in rerum natura”. Critics to the ontological argument of Anselm of Canterbury.

4. Cfr. S.Th I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co. “Illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione, est ens, cuius intellectus includitur in omni-bus quaecumque quis apprehendit. Et ideo primum principium indemonstrabile est quod non est simul affirmare et negare, quod fundatur supra rationem entis et non entis, et super hoc principio omnia alia fundantur, ut dicitur in IV Metaphys. Sicut autem ens est primum quod cadit in apprehensione simpliciter, ita bonum est primum quod cadit in apprehensione practicae rationis, quae ordinatur ad opus, omne enim agens agit propter finem, qui habet rationem boni. Et ideo primum principium in ratione practica est quod fundatur supra rationem boni, quae est [...] bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum. Et super hoc fundantur omnia alia praecepta legis naturae”.

5. Aquinas talk about filicide that is, killing the son or daughter already born; not about aborting the fetus before birth, inside the womb. His teachings about abortion, fetus and human being are controversial. Cfr. S. Th. I, q. 76, a. 3, ad 3; S. Th. I, q. 118 a.2 ad 2; S. Th. II-II, q. 64, a. 8, ad 2.

6. Cfr. S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co. “Primum principium in ratione practica est (...) bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum. Et super hoc fundantur omnia alia praecepta legis naturae (...). Vita hominis conservatur, et contrarium impeditur (...).coniunctio maris et feminae, et educatio liberorum, et similia (...).naturalem inclinationem ad hoc quod veritatem cognoscat (...), et ad hoc quod in societate vivat. Et secundum hoc, ad legem naturalem pertinent ea quae ad huiusmodi inclinationem spectant, utpote quod homo ignorantiam vitet, quod alios non offendat cum quibus debet conversari, et cetera huiusmodi quae ad hoc spectant”.

7. Cfr. [on line] <http://www.therichest.com/rich-list/most-shocking/10-horrific-cases-of-parents-who-killed-their-children> [accessed 10/03/2018].

8. Cfr. S. Th. I-II, q. 10, a. 1, co “Principium motuum voluntariorum oportet esse aliquid naturaliter volitum. Hoc autem est bonum in communi (*universal good*), in quod voluntas naturaliter tendit (*voluntas ut natura*)”. My brackets.

9. Cfr. S. Th. I, q. 84, a. 7, co.

10. Cfr. S. Th. I, q. 83, a. 1, co. Over the minimum age of criminal responsibility. Cfr. M.A. CORRIERO. *Judging children as children: a proposal for a juvenile justice system*, Philadelphia: TUP, 2006.

11. Cfr. S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 3, co.”Ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur secundum suam naturam. Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam (...). Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem”.

12.Cfr. S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 3, co. “Ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur secundum suam naturam. Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam”.

13. Cfr. S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 5, co.

14. Cfr. S. Th. III, q. 18, a. 4, co. “Voluntas, per se loquendo, est ipsius finis; electio autem eorum quae sunt ad finem. Et sic simplex voluntas est idem quod *voluntas ut natura*, electio autem est idem quod *voluntas ut ratio*, et est proprius actus liberi arbitrii”. My italics.

15. Cfr. S. Th. I-II, q. 94, a. 2, co.

16. Cfr. G. E. MOORE, *Principia ethica*, Ch. I, § 10-11. “Let us consider what it is such philosophers say. And first it is to be noticed that they do not agree among themselves. They not only say that they are right as to what *good* is, but they endeavour to prove that other people who say that it is something else, are *wrong*”. My italics.

17. Cfr. G. E. MOORE, *Preface to Principia ethica*. “What is good in itself? (...) good and evil in themselves”.



18 Cfr. G. E. MOORE, *Principia ethica*, Ch. I, § 13. “When we think that A is good [...]. The original question [should be], ‘Is A good?’. My brackets.

19. Cfr. G. E. MOORE, *Principia ethica*, Ch. II, § 27. “I myself am not prepared to dispute that health [either to preserve the own life, or not to commit filicide] is good. What I contend is that this must not be taken to be obvious; that it must be regarded as an open question”. My brackets.

20. Cfr. G. E. MOORE, *Principia ethica*, Ch. I, § 10. “Ethics aims at discovering what are those other properties belonging to all things which are good. But far too many philosophers have thought that when they named those other properties they were actually defining good; that these properties, in fact, were simply not other, but absolutely and entirely the same with goodness. This view I propose to call the naturalistic fallacy”.

21. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4, c. 4 (BK1006a). “Some indeed demand that even this shall be demonstrated, but this they do through want of education, for not to know of what things one should demand demonstration, and of what one should not, argues want of education. For it is impossible that there should be demonstration of absolutely everything (there would be an infinite regress, so that there would still be no demonstration)”.

22. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 11, c. 6 (BK1063b). “For those [...] is not easy to solve the difficulties to their satisfaction, unless they will posit something and no longer demand a reason for it; for it is only thus that all reasoning and all proof is accomplished; if they posit nothing, they destroy discussion and all reasoning. Therefore with such men there is no reasoning”.

23. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4, c. 4 (BK1006a). “Begging the question”.

24. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 11, c. 6 (BK1062b). “Protagoras [...] said that man is the measure of all things, meaning simply that that which seems to each man also assuredly is. If this is so, *it follows that the same thing both is and is not, and is bad and good, and that the contents of all other opposite statements are true*”. My italics.

25. Cfr. S. Th. III, q. 18, a. 3, co. “Voluntas enim, (...) et est finis, et est eorum quae sunt ad finem, et alio modo fertur in utrumque. Nam in finem fertur simpliciter et absolute, sicut in id quod est secundum se bonum, in id autem quod est ad finem, fertur cum quadam comparatione, secundum quod habet bonitatem ex ordine ad aliud. Et ideo alterius rationis est actus voluntatis secundum quod fertur in aliquid secundum se volitum, ut sanitas, quod (...) vocatur *voluntas ut natura*, et alterius rationis est actus voluntatis secundum quod fertur in aliquid quod est volitum solum ex ordine ad alterum, sicut est sumptio medicinae (...) vocatur *voluntas ut ratio*. Haec autem diversitas actus non diversificat potentiam, quia uterque actus attenditur ad unam rationem communem obiecti, quod est bonum”. *Cursiva mía*.

26. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4, c. 7 (BK1011b). “To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, *is false*, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, *is true*”. My italics.

27. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4, c. 4 (BK1008b). “Why does he not walk [...] over a precipice [committing suicide]? [...] *Evidently because he does not think that falling in is alike good and not good?* Evidently, then, he judges one thing to be better and another worse”. My italics and brackets.

28. Cfr. Sent. *Metaphysicae*, lib. 4 l. 15. “Sed istae dubitationes stultae sunt”.

29. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4, c. 4 (BK1008b). “*If all are alike both wrong and right, one who is in this condition will not be able either to speak or to say anything intelligible*; for he says at the same time both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. And if he makes no judgement but ‘thinks’ and ‘does not think’, indifferently, what difference will there be between him and a vegetable?”. My italics.

30. In these sense, it is very interesting to read the critics that Wittgenstein does to Moore’s radical skepticism. Cfr. Wittgenstein 1969. *On Certainty*: 341-343, 456.

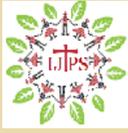
31. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4, c. 4 (BK1006a). “It is impossible that there should be demonstration of absolutely everything [*there would be an infinite regress, so that there would still be no demonstration*] [...]. It is absurd to seek to give an account of our views to one who cannot give an account of anything, in so far as he cannot do so. For such a man, as such, is from the start no better than a vegetable [...] will not be capable of reasoning, either with himself or with another”. My italics.

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