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**LOVE AS THE PRINCIPLE OF
THE DYNAMISM OF BEINGS
(AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENTS OF
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS)**

It would be no great discovery to say that love is one of the most important and meaningful facts of man's life. Nonetheless, we rarely consider that although love is something that is universally experienced and known, love in fact remains a very mysterious fact that is difficult to explain. Love accompanies man at almost every moment of his life, especially at the most vitally important and decisive moments. Nonetheless love really remains un-intelligible for us, and we also do not often try to delve more deeply into it. This peculiar paradox will possibly be less acute when we try to make at least an elementary reflection on the nature as such of love, and so, when we resort to the ways in which love has been explained in the history of human thought.

In ancient times, people pondered “cosmic love” (*eros*, *philotes*, *thymos*), i.e., the universal power that underlies the phenomena of the universe. The force of love extends to all things, including man and his action. Philosophers remarked rather early that love is, as it were, the foundation for the phenomena and actions that are experienced. As love is both of the character of a source and is strongly present in its manifestations, it turns out to be something that, on the one hand, is best known, but on the other hand, not easy to understand. In parallel, people also considered the strictly

Extensive passages of this paper, in a somewhat changed form, were earlier published as part of the article: Arkadiusz Gudaniec, “Miłość dobra jako podstawa dynamizmu bytowego,” in S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Quaestiones disputatae de bono, de appetitu boni et voluntate – Dysputy problemowe o dobru, o pożądaniu dobra i o woli*, trans. into Polish by A. Białek (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2003), 283–298.

personal form of love—*philia*, whereby people are joined with each other in a special relation, which is friendship (Aristotle started this conception).¹ The analogical scholastic conception of love was an interesting combination of those two tendencies; love is the foundation of action and in the metaphysical order it becomes the principle that explains the domain of being that we call dynamism. Thomas Aquinas developed this doctrine in his groundbreaking metaphysics, and I would like to refer to this proposal in particular in this work.

At the beginning, one additional remark seems necessary. When we speak of love as a fact that underlies the dynamism of being, we have in mind being in general, i.e., reality as a whole, including man (and man in a particular way). The dynamism of the human being, which obviously has its own unrepeatable specific character, in the aspect of being, which is what we are interested in here, is analogical in relation to other active beings that possess their own determined nature. For this reason as well, the essential questions concerning the connection between love and the dynamism of being are considered upon the background of acting being as such, i.e., in the case of appetitive action that is analyzed here (*appetitus*), upon the background of beings that know in general (i.e., animals and human beings), with a consideration of the knowledge and intellectual appetite (will) that sets apart the human being. Also, sometimes the scope of the consideration of dynamism takes in the whole of reality, in which the nature of beings is the principle of action. The order of considerations, in accordance with the function that St. Thomas attributes to this aspect, is thus fundamentally metaphysical, and is only secondarily anthropological.

In order fully and soundly to understand being in the dynamic aspect, i.e., most generally speaking in the relation of being to the good, the consideration of the fact of love turns out to be indispensable. This is because love is especially important on account of its priority in the order of appetite and action. Love is the first and fundamental act of appetite, hence love's fundamental role is the real connection of the subject with a good, so that there may be an appetitive movement to that object and action of whatever kind in relation to the object. In *Summa theologica*, question 26, article 1, Aquinas calls love the “principle of motion (action) aiming at

¹ On various conceptions of love in the history of philosophy, and also in connection with the philosophical understanding of love as such, cf. A. Gudaniec, M. A. Krąpiec, “Miłość” (“Love”), in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii (Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*, vol. 7 (Lublin 2006), 237–251.

a loved end” (*principium motus tendentis in finem amatum*).² An analysis of certain essential questions in the article should indicate what the role of love is in the context of the dynamism of being, and may also throw more light on how being as such and the action of being should be understood. Since the explanation of many metaphysical questions (such as the general understanding of nature, the good, knowledge, and appetite) that are necessarily raised when we consider the aspect that interests us is not possible here, we should assume that the reader possesses sufficient knowledge of these questions to gain an adequate perception of the questions raised below.

The first intuitive perceptions concerning the phenomenon of love as it is ordinarily understood are sufficient to present the general thesis on the essential connection of love with action, or more precisely, the connection of love with causal action. This is because action occurs as the realization of desire or as the expression of appetite. In each case, the object of action is the end of action, i.e., the object is wanted, or more broadly speaking, it is loved. Love therefore turns out to underlie action as the cause of action. Here we should make a distinction between relations of causation in two different systems of relations: (1) causal relations between the act of love and the action that is a consequence of the act (*motus tendens in finem amatum*); (2) causal relations between the act of love and the factors that call forth that act and act it as conditions. Although in the act of love, both systems of relations sometimes occur together when one explains them, yet it seems necessary to separate logically the fact of the causation of action because of love³ from the cause of the causation of love itself at the moment the act is brought forth.⁴ This analysis will first concern the first question (love as the principle of action), with a special con-

² “Amor dicitur illud quod est principium motus tendentis in finem amatum,” *Summa theologiae*, I-II, 26, 1, cited according to the edition: *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, vol. IV–XII (Roma 1888–1906) [further cited as: S.Th.].

³ Efficient causality is an essential source of action, and therefore here it is a question of the factors that influence the bringing forth from the subject of real action (in the sense of the efficient causation of effects—although this meaning does not always adequately describe efficient causal action, even though it is in connection with the very word efficacy (or efficient causality)).

⁴ Here it is a question of facts that really influence the will (appetite) in the bringing forth of the will’s proper action, which is love. Also, the will as the direct source of the action of the soul (i.e., as a faculty of the soul) is the subject of a special efficient causality connected with the soul’s nature.

sideration of the context of the end and of knowledge, and then the second question, providing a broader understanding of the general nature of love.

Love and Action

Love, considered in the broad context of the action of being, shows its nature in connection with other facts that underlie action. How love is understood in this aspect thus acquires an essential and indispensable “background” of a functional ordering to the subject as to the substantial whole. Love is a fact that is given for explanation and which appears in the life of the subject-substance. Therefore how this fact is understood must by necessity be referred to this subject, which is a being in a fundamental sense. By putting love in this way in the context of the acting subject we can connect the way we understand love with the fact of the subject’s action.

Every real being, according to the measure of its actualization, possesses the ability to act. To act means to lead to the rise of a new being of some sort (“to cause a being”). The efficacy, or efficient causality, of a being has its source in the being’s act of existence (*esse*), since, as we know, “operatio sequitur esse.”⁵ Therefore we can say that action is a prolongation of existence, and that it is the moment of being through which a being perfects itself.⁶ However, we cannot speak of action without a metaphysical understanding of the structure of being, i.e., the composition of being out of act and potency. An important manifestation of this composition is the special actualization of being, that is, the aspiration or appetite to achieve a fitting act. This aspiration (*tendere*) is an inseparable manifestation of every composite being insofar as the being exists.⁷ We call this same manifestation of being, considered in the dynamic order, “appetite” (*appetitus*). As we know, we make a distinction between “natural appetite,” which is nothing other than the very nature of beings as that

⁵ “A being and its action are two moments of one and the same actuality,” since an action is a “second” act of a being (existence is the first act). É. Gilson, *Elementy filozofii chrześcijańskiej (Elements of Christian philosophy)*, Polish trans. T. Górski (Warsaw 1965), 225.

⁶ Cf. M. A. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics. An Outline of the History of Being*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York, 1991), 152–153.

⁷ “The act of being of each substance is that same act of ‘aspiration to:’ esse est tendere” (Gilson, *Elementy...*, 226).

nature aspires to (has an appetite for) its own perfection, and “conscious appetite” (sensory and rational appetite).⁸

In such a conception of the dynamism of being, action turns out to be coupled with appetite, in this way expressing the ordering of being to its own perfection. Appetite and action, which express essentially the dynamism of being, describe two different and opposing orders of being: appetite describes the order of intention, and action describes the order of execution. Ultimately we can say that “to be, to act, and have appetite for some end possess the same meaning for each being.”⁹ If we add yet another cognitive moment, one that is necessary for appetite (and so for action), since appetite is dependent upon knowledge, we obtain the following relation of dependence: knowledge and appetite, as two “branches” of the subject’s contact with reality, are “intermediaries” between the being-subject as the first act (*esse*), and the action through which the being is manifested (i.e., the second act of the being).¹⁰

Action is in fact the most evident manifestation of the dynamism of beings and of their appetite for perfection. Action, as it is a property of beings, is their most perfect manifestation, and it is identified with the causing of effects, that is, with a certain “power of being.” However, we should forget that if action means efficient causality, then in knowledge and in appetite there are constituted exemplarity (exemplary causality) and finality (final causality), which are moments without which action is impossible.

Action, as an expression of the being-subject’s efficient power, has its source in appetition. Thus the end to which appetite moves is the motive for action, since action happens only on account of some desired good. This is because action is inconceivable without some sort of end, i.e., a motive for the action. Moreover, according to the scholastic principle, *ab indeterminato nil sequitur*, the determination of action to one sort of content and not some other is necessary. This is because action must have a certain plan that directs the execution of the intended work. That plan is

⁸ Cf. (among others) J. Paszyński, “Appetitus,” in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii (Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*, vol 1 (Lublin 2000), 301–303.

⁹ Gilson, *Elementy...*, 226.

¹⁰ This situation thus mainly accents action, which is directed to outside of the subject, leaving aside the fact that knowledge itself and appetite are also certain actions that are manifestations of a being’s nature. However, at that moment it is a question of efficacy, or efficient causality, in a narrower sense, i.e., as the causing of effects (external effects); in the constitution of that efficient causality the cognitive and appetitive moments play a role.

an idea-exemplar, that is, a cognitive form that performs the function of determining action in one and not some other direction.¹¹

All these moments, i.e., both reasons of action (the end and the exemplar), and the efficacious power itself, essentially “collaborate” with each other, and therefore each of them is found in a certain relation to love as the fundamental act of appetite.

Love and the End

“Amor dicitur illud quod est principium motus tendentis in finem amatum” (love is the principle of motion that aims at a loved end). This proposition is a special “definition” of love that we find, along with other definitions or descriptions, in the above mentioned question from St. Thomas’ *Summa* (S.Th., 26, 1). This concept of love connects love first with the end of desire, and second, it ascribes to love a fundamental role (*principium*) in the awakening of desire itself. Love is the principle of a motion that aspires to a loved end, and therefore love makes the subject, at the moment of its first appetitive movement, begin to act, to be inclined to an object that as the end was loved in the act of love. This desire or aspiration is manifested in various acts that express various ways or stages of the aspiration. The appetitive movement itself can pass (and this usually occurs) into another motion (an “extra-appetitive” or “non-appetitive” motion) that corresponds to the achievement of the given good. In connection with this, it should be noted that in the above definition, the expression “motus” means first the motion as such of appetite; that motion refers in a strict sense to its movements, the special mental motions which are the feelings or the acts of the will.¹² Second, this expression means action of any sort insofar as it flows from appetite and aims at a loved end in the act of love.

¹¹ Cf. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics*, 417–420. St. Thomas speaks of the necessity of the soul-subject’s movement in terms of its twofold potency with respect to many things: “Dupliciter autem aliqua vis animae invenitur esse in potentia ad diversa: uno modo quantum ad agere vel non agere, alio modo quantum ad agere hoc vel illud . . . Indiget igitur movente quantum ad duo; scilicet quantum ad exercitum vel usum actus, et quantum ad determinationem actus” (S.Th., I–II, 9, 1).

¹² The motion of appetite thus determines all movements of appetite that realize the aspiration for the object (the good) that can cause the real action of other faculties.

Thus love is the principle of all other acts of appetite¹³ and of every action that the moving faculty commands (i.e., the will in the case of man, or sensory appetite in the case of animals).¹⁴ The commanding of actions of this type is another act, which performs the role of a certain cause in relation to the actions.¹⁵ Every action aims at an end and is commanded with regard to an end that has been loved (and thus in some way has been connected with the subject) in an act of love. This is precisely what the definition that we are analyzing states, and it is said directly in the *Summa theologiae*, I–II, question 28, article 6: “every agent, whatever it be, does every action from love of some kind.”¹⁶

Love, as it joins all action with an end, is not only the beginning of action, but is the cause (or principle) of action, and it “sets” the goal for action. It is thus the cause that causes action generally to come into existence, since there is no action without an end or purpose. This means that love must be something that is the real and sufficient reason for action’s coming into existence or being elicited. Indeed, we find this element in the definition we are now analyzing. It is the “*finis amatus*,” the end insofar as it has been loved.

Each thing insofar as it exists is a good. For this reason it is “desirable” or “appetible,” that is, it is capable of arousing the appetite of other beings that need their perfection.¹⁷ When some good is found “in the field of perception” of a suitable subject, that good will become a good of the subject (i.e., a bond is formed in the form of complacency, the state of being pleased). This means that the good becomes the end of appetite and action.¹⁸ This is because the end or purpose is the good insofar as the good

¹³ “*Omnes aliae affectiones animi ex amore causantur*” (S.Th., I–II, 27, 4, s.c.). “[O]mnes alii motus appetitivi praesupponunt amorem, quasi primam radicem” (Id., I, 20, 1).

¹⁴ Acts commanded by the will are based on the will’s elicited acts, of which the first and fundamental act is love. Cf. M. A. Krapiec, *I-Man*, group trans. (New Britain, Connecticut, 1983), 202–204.

¹⁵ Action is commanded with regard to a good to which other feelings or acts of the will also refer; their object is a given good apprehended in a certain aspect. They are then proximate causes of the action, but love always remains the first cause. Cf. S.Th., I–II, 28, 6, ad 2.

¹⁶ “*Omne agens, quodcumque sit, agit quaecumque actionem ex aliquo amore*” (Id., corpus).

¹⁷ All beings as finite are incomplete, and so are capable of receiving completion from other beings. Cf. Gilson, *Elementy...*, 227.

¹⁸ Still with reference to the end and to finality, which operate at various ranges of being analogically (and so not in one and the same way for what are called natural beings, animal beings, and rational beings), it is necessary to accept one most evident exemplar of finality, which is the human being. Finality, as strictly connected with intelligibility, is most evident in the human world, where the end is understood and is freely chosen. The treatment of this

is actually desired, i.e., insofar as the good is loved. Love, of the first adaptation (*coaptatio*) of the subject to the object, which has been “recognized” as a good (for the subject), makes a particular being the end of the subject’s appetite and action.¹⁹ Thus if the good is the objective reason for action, since there is no action that does not aim at a good,²⁰ then love is the subjective reason. Therefore we can say that insofar as a good actualizes a subject, love dynamizes the subject. This is because by virtue of this adaption, or by virtue of a certain “experience” of correspondence (between the object and the subject), which precisely is love, a given being becomes really and actually an end, arousing appetite and the corresponding action of the subject. Love is the first and fundamental act of appetite, consisting in the transformation of the faculty into an operation of living. Therefore actual appetite simply designates love (including other acts, as rooted in love and coming from love).

In the light of the assertion in this formulation, the thesis that St. Thomas draws out in another way seems clear, that action (i.e., efficient causality) is elicited by the end, in other words, the final cause moves the efficient cause.²¹ This is because the end performs the function of reason

type of finality as the model when discussing “universal finality” (i.e., the transfer of it to other levels of being) is thoroughly justified in metaphysics, since we discover the essential elements of purposeful action, evident in the case of man, in all beings (although those elements of finality are realized differently: analogically). The object that the laws of human thinking have been extended to reality is removed by the metaphysical principle of the identity of the laws of thought and of being. Cf. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics*, 439–440.

¹⁹ The fact that appetite is accompanied by the desire or appetite for an end was expressed by St. Thomas by the comparison of desire to love; desire expresses a certain movement, while love the principle of that movement and cannot be apprehended except in desire, which requires its own principle, just as do appetite and action. Cf. S.Th., I–II, 26, 2, ad 3, and id., 25, 2, ad 1.

²⁰ “Furthermore, every agent acts in so far as it is in act, and in acting it tends to produce something like itself. So, it tends toward some act. But every act has something of good in its essential character, for there is no evil thing that is not in a condition of potency falling short of its act. Therefore, every action is for the sake of a good.” *Summa contra gentiles*, III, 3, 6 (trans. Vernon J. Bourke, accessed at: <http://dhsprory.org/thomas/ContraGentiles3a.htm>), cit. after: Gilson, *Elementy...*, 227–228.

²¹ Cf. S.Th., I, 5, 2 & 4, and id., I–II, 1, 2: “Prima autem inter omnes causas est causa finalis. Cuius ratio est, quia materia non consequitur formam, nisi secundum quod movetur ab agente: nihil enim reducit se de potentia in actum. Agens autem non movet nisi ex intentione finalis: si enim agens non esset determinatum ad aliquem effectum, non magis ageret hoc quam illud. Ad hoc ergo quod determinatum effectum producat, necesse est quod determinetur ad aliquem certum, quod habet rationem finis.”

for the aspiration to the good.²² Second, if we consider action from the side of the subject, we can speak of the motive of action (i.e., the reason why action is elicited in the subject), and that is precisely love.²³ The commensurability (*proportio*) of the subject to the end, which establishes or makes real love in the subject, designates the appetite or desire (actual appetite) for this end.²⁴ However, appetite is not the perfect possession of the end, and the being by its nature is predestined to this. Therefore the act of appetite (love) elicits immediately a tendency to the real possession of the end, and so, to possess the end in a perfect way, that is, it elicits the being's action oriented to a given end-good.²⁵

The above remarks lead to the following conclusions. To explain action, or to explain a being in the dynamic aspect, the power as such to cause effects is insufficient, a power that is contained in a being "according to the measure" of its existence.²⁶ The final cause is still needed as the reason that elicits action. In the most general sense, the good is this cause, since anything can only aspire to or tend to a good. Let us repeat that on the objective side the act of loving the good, or complacency in the good, adaptation to the good, and so love, is this cause. This cause, however, is the motive for the fact that action comes into existence in the subject, that an aspiration or tendency to the end comes into existence, insofar as the motive becomes somehow "its own" personally loved motive. Love thus becomes the principle of aspiration or tendency to a beloved end, and love becomes this as an act of the will (appetition) that fully engages a given subject.

On this basis we can assert that in the act of love, final causation occurs from the side of the good; that causation elicits action (efficient causation) in the being that is the subject. This is because the efficient agent, or being (through its faculties) is the source of motion. The subject (the potential efficient cause or agent) passes into act, i.e., it actualizes its own po-

²² Cf. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics*, 439–440.

²³ Latin *motivum*—a factor that moves something, that elicits action.

²⁴ Namely, the act of love causes a given being to become an object of desire in its "successive" acts, which are affected by additional aspects of the object that are apprehended in cognition.

²⁵ See S.Th., I–II, 16, 4: "Sed sic habere finem est imperfecte habere ipsum. Omne autem imperfectum tendit in perfectionem; et ideo tam appetitus naturalis quam voluntarius tendit ut habeat ipsum finem realiter, quod est perfecte habere ipsum."

²⁶ According to the doctrine of Aristotle, the efficient cause is not an internal perfection of a being, but it is a perfection that produces effects in direct contact with its object. It is therefore in potency to something else, i.e., to the end that direct the subject to a given object.

tency insofar as sufficient conditions have been met. These conditions are first, a good that becomes an end in the act of love, and second, an internal (subjective) aspiration or tendency to the end, that is, love as a motive.²⁷

Love and Knowledge

In order for a real and determinate action to exist, one more condition must be met, a condition of which we have already spoken. This is the moment of the determination of action in the efficient factor or agent, which takes place in the act of knowing, because the cognitive form performs the function of exemplar causation. In the natural course of things, acts of knowledge always occur along with acts of love, interweaving with them in various bonds that affect each other. However, they are structurally different acts that at many moments are opposed to each other, or if we look from another viewpoint, they complete each other.

1. The relations between love and knowledge are considered in various places, including the article *Utrum cognitio sit causa amoris* (S. Th., I-II, 27, 2). In the text of this article we notice at least two interesting assertions. First, which is very important, knowledge, although it precedes each act of love, is not in the strict sense a cause of love. The role of knowledge is only to “unveil” the good so that the good can be loved by the subject who has appetite. The good cannot be loved unless it is first known.²⁸ This is because knowledge in an original and fundamental way puts us in touch with a thing, and therefore no act of the subject in relation to any sort of thing is possible without making cognitive contact. Knowledge is therefore a condition for love²⁹ in the sense that it “opens access” to the good, to

²⁷ For more on the connection of love with final causation, see my article: “Miłość jako forma przyczynowania celowego” (“Love as a form of final causation”), in *Spór o cel* (The controversy over the end), ed. A. Maryniarczyk, K. Stępień, P. Gondek (Lublin 2008), 139–162.

²⁸ “[Bonum] non potest amari nisi cognitum” (S.Th., I-II, 27, 2). However, we should remember that the appetitive and cognitive faculties form one thing in one being-subject. Therefore, although in terms of things (in a structural apprehension) it is right to say that *nil amatum nisi praecognitum*, however temporally (in the functional apprehension), knowledge and love are elicited at the same moment. Cf. my article: “Piękno i miłość. Relacja między miłością a poznaniem” (“Beauty and love. The relation between love and knowledge”), in *Spór o piękno (Controversy over beauty)*, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, K. Stępień, Z. Pańpuch (Lublin 2013), 409–442.

²⁹ On the dependence of love on knowledge, Thomas writes: “intellectus movet voluntatem, sicut praesentans ei obiectum suum” (S.Th., I-II, 9, 1); “intellectus regit voluntatem, non

being, which as known becomes interesting for the subject (i.e., it arouses corresponding action). On the other hand, knowledge is necessary since otherwise the proper cause of love, which is the good, could not act on the subject.

Moreover, not all known things arouse love: knowledge without any judgement concerning good or evil does not arouse love.³⁰ Complacency, being pleased, in the object occurs only when the practical reason³¹ makes the “concrete judgement that a given object is good and suitable for the knowing subject . . . since the fittingness of the object for the subject is the concrete good of the latter.”³² Love thus depends on what knowledge considers in the object.³³

2. We find the next important statement in the same article in response to the second objection, where Aquinas compares love and knowledge with regard to perfection. Namely, knowledge needs more for its perfection than does love, i.e., love becomes perfect more quickly than does knowledge, upon which love is dependent. This is because for knowledge, knowledge of a thing as existing or as being in itself (*res prout in se*) is sufficient, while knowledge requires a deep and detailed acquaintance with a thing. Thus despite love’s essential dependence on knowledge, the perfection of love does not depend on the perfection of knowledge, since “minimal” knowledge that apprehends a thing scarcely as existing in itself is sufficient for perfect love. As St. Thomas says further on, it is precisely love that is the impulse that arouses the subject to know the beloved thing further, also showing here its “power” of the principle of action and aspiration to the end, which is the beloved good.³⁴ Thus between love and knowledge there is a peculiar disproportion, which makes love have its

quasi inclinans eam in id in quod tendit, sed sicut ostendens in quod tendere debeat” (*Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, 22, 2, ad 5).

³⁰ “[S]icut imaginatio formae sine aestimatione convenientis vel nocivi non movet appetitum sensitivum, ita nec apprehensio veri sine ratione boni et appetibilis” (S.Th., I-II, 9, 1, ad 2).

³¹ In the case of non-rational beings, the faculty of sensory estimation (*vis aestimativa*).

³² M. A. Krąpiec, *Psychologia racjonalna (Rational psychology)* (Lublin 1996), 250.

³³ “[S]ecundum diversas rationes obiecti apprehensi, subsequuntur diversi motus in vi appetitiva” (S.Th., I-II, 40, 2).

³⁴ “Amans vero dicitur esse in amato secundum apprehensionem in quantum amans non est contentus superficiali apprehensione amati, sed nititur singula quae ad amatum pertinent intrinsecus disquirere, et sic ad interiora eius ingreditur” (S.Th., I-II, 28, 2). The object, becoming an end (i.e., being loved), elicits in an object action toward itself. However, for that action to be able to come into existence, there must take place a more precise knowledge of the object (in order to determine action).

own autonomy, as it were, and love “is ruled” by its own laws, since it is not completely dependent on knowledge. Moreover, since love is at the source of every feeling, appetite, and action, love is not a conscious act, and cannot even be apprehended in concomitant reflection. Love eludes the control of the intellect and therefore, as M. D. Philippe says, “love as such is found above consciousness.”³⁵

The next remark that the analyzed response to the second objection sets forth concerns the assertion already mentioned that knowledge of a thing *prout in se* is sufficient for perfect love. The reason for this is the essential character of love as an act of appetite. This is because love, unlike knowledge, aspires to the thing as it is in itself (“*respicit rem secundum quod in se est*”). This means that love does not need deeper knowledge, but original and spontaneous knowledge of a thing as something that exists is sufficient for love. This is because existence, or the being as such, is the “measure” of the good that elicits love in the subject.

3. In other words, a being known as existing (as a real thing) is a good for appetite, and thereby it already arouses the first act of appetite, which is love.³⁶ This is the subject’s response to a being that is known as good and becomes in some sense the end or purpose of the subject.³⁷ In the act of love, the good as such (*absolute*) becomes loves, just as in spontaneous knowledge, being as such is apprehended. The next naturally appearing acts of knowledge add new elements also to the “concept” of the good, and in this sense they determine the known good. These acts are accompanied by successive movements of the cognitive powers, and love is the root of those movements. Those movements are the most proximate causes of the concrete actions for which love, however, remains the first

³⁵ M. D. Philippe, *O miłości (On love)*, Polish trans. A. Kuryś (Kraków 1995), 98.

³⁶ Just as a being that apprehended fittingly for the faculty (e.g., an individual-material being in the case of sensory knowledge, and being as being in the case of the intellect) falls right away under the corresponding faculty of knowledge, so the good, apprehended at the same moment in which knowledge “grasps” being, right away falls under the appetitive power. Of course, here we are assuming that a judgement concerning the good is contained in this spontaneous knowledge of being as the first elementary ordering of being to the subject (the good of the subject).

³⁷ Love and the recognition of a being as a good flow from the fact that being as existing is capable of enriching the (fragile) existence of every being-subject. Cf. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics*, 155–156. The real existence of being means the origin of that being from the Absolute, that is, its connection with the Will of Absolute (being, since it exists, is wanted by God). Cf. id., 153–145.

cause and principle.³⁸ This is because concrete action is elicited as the result of the determination of the object that occurs in particular acts of knowledge.³⁹

In this way we have established the entire course of the process whereby action arises, in which love and knowledge perform a dual function, as it were. Along with the first spontaneous act of knowledge, love is elicited, which according to our earlier conclusions, constitutes the motive for action, i.e., the reason why any sort of action exists at all in relation to a germinally known object. The following detailed acts of knowledge have the character of an exemplar cause, i.e., a cause that determines action. Thus they are the reason why one sort of action and not some other occurs; the action is caused by a concrete appetitive “response” that accompanies a given act of knowledge. Love is constantly presented in these detailed cognitive acts; love inclines the subject to aspire to the end; love does so as the impulse that establishes the term of the will’s operation.⁴⁰ Love is the term of the motion of appetite (i.e., loving) and is present in every act of appetite.

Both moments that make efficient causation, or the subject’s real action, possible have thereby been discussed. The first of these is the causation of the end, and so love as the motive, and the second is the causation of the exemplar (i.e., of an external and “objective” form); in that causation knowledge plays a role as it has a fundamental influence on the kind and character of the good, and the factors that as conditions affect the good,

³⁸ “[O]mnis actio quae procedit ex quacumque passione, procedit etiam ex amore, sicut ex prima causa. Unde non superfluum aliae passiones, quae sunt causae proximae” (S.Th., I-II, 28, 6, ad 2). Therefore it should be established in what causal order love is the cause of other feelings and acts of the will. Only the material cause comes into play, since the other causes should be firmly excluded (St. Thomas excludes the formal cause in: id., 26, 1, ad 2, saying that love is not essentially, i.e., formally identical to other feelings; it cannot be the efficient cause since it is not a faculty (an active potency) or a substance; the good is the final cause, the subject itself, as the reason for every act of appetite). In the proper sense, the appetitive faculty itself is the material cause of feelings; in the case of love St. Thomas speaks of the adaptation or preparation of matter (for the reception of concrete forms), i.e., material disposition (*dispositio materialis*), which is a secondary material cause, i.e., insofar as it sets the “species” of the new form that will appear in concrete matter (in the subject). Cf. Krapiec, *Metaphysics*, 336–353.

³⁹ For example, the presence or absence of the object, the privation of a good, etc., which are determinants that play the role of criteria in the division of feelings. Cf. S.Th., I-II, 23.

⁴⁰ A very interesting question is connected with this: the way love exists in the subject, as opposed to the way a concept exists in the subject. I have written more on this in the article: “Piękno i miłość,” op. cit.

which has already become the end.⁴¹ Both these moments, i.e., love and knowledge, constantly accompany each other and in a special way they affect each other.⁴²

The Place of Love in the Order of the Causes of Action

The culmination of these reflections is the problem of how the act as such of love becomes a cause at the moment it is elicited. The conclusions gained in this way should constitute the rational justification for the above statements on love's connection causation (upon the background of the structure of love's act), and should also constitute the rational justification for the unity of this act in relation to the passive-active character that it possesses. This sort of "antithetical" character is proper to all feelings, and moreover it is proper generally to all acts of any faculty whatsoever, since from the side of the object the act is something passive, and from the side of the subject it is an active element as flowing from it as an efficient cause.⁴³ This is because we may speak of love as of an act (action) or as

⁴¹ "In noncognitive conditions, we can also perceive the presence of these same three factors, which are, however, proportional to the nature of the noncognizing being. Thus we perceive the existence of: (1) A subject of activity [the English text reads "object" but the word here is "podmiot"—"subject"]; (2) A factor determining the direction of activity—in this case, the acting being's own nature . . . form, conceived as either a substantial or accidental element *organizing matter* to be "this here kind" of content; (3) . . . [T]he "natural inclination" (love) of a given acting being. This natural inclination is a necessary consequence of the presence of form in the existing being" (Krapiec, *Metaphysics*, 159–160).

⁴² I also discuss the specific character of this relation at greater length in the article: "Piękno i miłość," op. cit.

⁴³ This is because very operation is active as coming from its source (its subject), and passive as "set" upon a certain object, from which it takes its form: "Hoc idem ipsum est de ratione actus, ut scilicet sit ab aliquo quantum ad actionem, et ut sit ad aliquod quantum ad passionem" (S.Th., I–II, 1, 3, ad 1). In a special way, this passivity and activity concerns appetition (esp. in comparison to knowledge), since, first, appetition is subordinated to the thing as such, as the thing is in itself, without imposing anything upon the thing (in knowledge, the subjective way in which the thing as an image is apprehend is "imposed"), and so, we may say, it is completely passive. However, on the other hand, such passivity makes appetite become more active than the other faculties in the sense that the thing as such (and not, for example, the image of the thing) elicits an aspiration or tendency for it: "vis appetitiva dicitur esse magis activa, quia est magis principium exterioris actus; et hoc habet ex ipso ex quo hoc habet quod sit magis passiva, scilicet ex hoc quod habet ordinem ad rem, prout est in seipsa; per actionem enim exteriorem venimus ad consequendas res" (Id., 22, 2, ad 2). Therefore also, love as the source-act of appetition should provide the explanation by its internal structure for the two aspects so clearly seen in appetition.

a movement (a motion), i.e., something active, and on the other hand we may speak of love as a feeling or complacency, i.e., as something passive. The basic question that arises in this context is this: in what way can the will (appetition) simultaneously act in relation to its object and passively receive movements (influences) from the object? In realistic metaphysics, the rational justification for every fact consists in showing a corresponding factor or cause that explains the fact in a given order. The indication of all four causes is a complete rational justification.

The problem concerns precisely the external causes of the act of love, since we have in view its reference to the subject and to the object.⁴⁴ Thus we need to investigate in what order the will is active, and in what order it is passive, and what role knowledge plays. This question was finally resolved by the commentators on St. Thomas in the seventeenth century. In the controversy between Cajetan, Sylvester de Ferrara (Francis de Silvestris), and John of St. Thomas, the position of John of St. Thomas ultimately prevailed. I will limit myself here to an account of the basic positions.⁴⁵

Following St. Thomas, the basis of our reflections is that we hold that there is a difference between the execution (or eliciting, *exercitio*) of an act, and the act's specification (*specificatio*). Cajetan said that the active and the passive element of love both belong to the order of the efficient cause, since just as the will is the efficient cause of the execution of its act (the will is the active element), so also the object causes the act's content (specification), of course through the mediation of knowledge (the passive element). Francis Sylvester de Ferrara defended the freedom of the will in this conception and recognized the will's activity in both orders (i.e., in the performance and in the specification of the act); he ascribed passivity of love to the exemplary cause, which only suggests or presents the model of content (for the object). In turn, such a position contradicts the experiential

⁴⁴ If it is a question of internal causes, it is enough to say that in each of its acts, the faculty-subject is connected with its object as matter with form (or potency with act), and constitutes a new being: the action (i.e., the matter of an act is its subject, and the form is the object). The essence of action is thus determined in principle by the subject and the object, and in various ways in various orders.

⁴⁵ This controversy is analyzed precisely by H. D. Simonin, "Autour de la solution thomiste du problème de l'amour," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 6 (1931): 174–276. On the position of John of St. Thomas, see among other works, M. Forlivesi, *Conoscenza e affettività. L'incontro con l'essere secondo Giovanni di San Tommaso* (Bologna 1993), 253–290.

facts of the will's dependence on an object (which is not explained by an exemplar cause). For that reason, this conception comes too close to the existential aspect (the will's connection with the thing itself as existing) and the content-aspect (the apprehension of the thing as known) of the act of love, erasing the act of love's essence in relation to knowledge.

John of St. Thomas' conception, which was developed in polemics with the other two mentioned above, is today regarded as an exhaustive and final solution to the problem. The central point of his position is that love is connected with the causation of the end (which we discussed earlier), and that this causality is generally explained in the manner of love.⁴⁶ He accepted from Sylvester the proposition that the will has an active character in the order of the efficient cause (against Cajetan), and also the proposition concerning exemplar causation from the side of the object (as known), and he remarked that in the order of the eliciting and specification of the act, the will is passive in some aspects, while the active principle is in reality the same, i.e., the good. Thus if the separateness of both these orders should be preserved, as St. Thomas clearly emphasized, then it is necessary to hold that there are separate ways of causation in both orders. Since the reason for the specification of the act is the object in the order of the exemplar cause, then the reason for the eliciting of the act is the good as the end, and so, in the way of the final cause.⁴⁷ Passivity in relation to the object that acts in the order of the efficient cause is one thing (it is connected with the physical reception of the effect of action), and passivity in the order of final cause is another thing (where the object becomes an end only due to a change in the subject, which is connected with a special sensitivity of the latter). John of St. Thomas uses terms that refer to Aristotle to describe the influence of the end (cf. *On generation and corruption*, 324b15), since in St. Thomas there are no considerations of this type. He uses the following and other descriptive terms: *modo intentionali, motione metaphorica, modo metaphorico, metaphoricæ*.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ According to John, the texts: *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, 12, 2, and S.Th., I-II, 28, 6, allow us to draw precisely such conclusions. Cf. Forlivesi, *Conoscenza...*, 255f.

⁴⁷ "The known good does not move the will in the order of the true and real physical cause, but only as an objective principle of specification, which belongs to the order of the exemplar cause, and in the order of the final cause, which also cause metaphorical or moral, since it is only an incentive that attracts the subject to itself" (John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*, I, 13, 1).

⁴⁸ Cf. id., a. 1-3.

In this way, John of St. Thomas provided a rational justification for the unity of the act of love, showing that the opposing passive and active elements contained in it concern different orders of causation, in keeping with the scholastic principle: “effectus pendet a causa secundum quod causa” (the effect is dependent on the cause in the aspect in which it is the cause of the effect).⁴⁹ Thus the act of love is in its essence a product of the efficient cause and the final cause (the efficient cause expresses the subject’s ability to act, and the final cause expresses the determination that flows from the object as the end). Such a consideration convincingly shows that the act of love depends on the simultaneous action of the end and of the corresponding faculty. Since this is so, then the influence as such of the end on the subject should be explained by an appeal to love as what is called *first love*, which has the form of the passive movement of the will.⁵⁰ This movement is expressed in feeling (analogically understood), and so John of St. Thomas also calls it *passio* or *spiratio*.⁵¹

The stages of love obtained by way of such an analysis (first love, as the action of the end, and “second” love, as the act elicited by the will)⁵² allow us to apprehend the internal structure of the act of love, in which feeling (*passio*), i.e., passive movement consisting in the adaptation (*adaptatio*) of appetite to the known good (even germinally known), and in

⁴⁹ Cf. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics*, 441–442. On several occasions Aquinas implies such a solution, for example, when he speaks of how the subject and the object of love are contained (*contineri*) in each other: “[amatum] est impressum in affectu per complacentiam” (the moment of final causation, the first stage of love—complacence), “amans sequitur . . . illud quod est intimum amati” (the moment of efficient causality, the aroused subject elicits an act of aspiration toward the object) (S.Th., I–II, 28, 2, ad 1). In the first stage, the object is contained, as it were, in the subject (the subject’s passivity), then the subject is contained in the object (the subject’s activity): “nihil enim prohibet diverso modo esse aliquid continens et contentum” (Id.).

⁵⁰ “Metaphorica motio, qua finis dicitur causare secundum veritatem, est *primus amor* finis, ut passive pendens ab appetibili, non ut active elicited a voluntate” (*Cursus Philosophicus*, I, 13, 2, emphasis A.G.).

⁵¹ The second description of the two comes from St. Thomas’ thoughts on the origin of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. John relates them to human love, where it expresses the aspect of love apprehended as an act that comes from its object, and is set in opposition to *processio*, i.e., the act in the aspect of its origin from the efficient cause (the subject), where the act is understood as a motion toward an object. This second aspect has often been called in his work simply *amor*, designating an act that is actively emanated by appetite. Cf. Forlivesi, *Conoscenza...*, 274f.

⁵² This distinction or difference is also present in metaphysical analysis concerning the end and finality. Cf. Krąpiec, *Metaphysics*, 440–441.

a certain tendency or direction toward it (as an end).⁵³ It has the form (when the cognitive aspect is emphasized) of *complacence*, or a state of being pleased, which in appetite becomes the motor that inclines the will or inspires it to elicit its own act.⁵⁴ This act, as the term of the operation of loving directed toward the good, is already a real action of will that expresses the will's power as an efficient cause. It has the form of an impulse that provides an inclination to action, i.e., to the eliciting of successive appetitive and non-appetitive acts in relation to the object-end.⁵⁵

At this moment, a proper relation and bond with the object is formed; that relation is expressed from the side of the subject. In the faculty of appetite, i.e., in its first act, which is love, we are thus dealing with like a completion of the elements of the object's action (or passion) and the subjective "response" to being; the faculty is capable of that response by nature. This is the specific form of the cooperation of the subject with the object; this form in its own way determines the essence of the act of love.⁵⁶ Here finally we can speak of the proper way to understand love—as an act (or expression) of the entire being-subject. Love-complacence as a spontaneous act is independent of consciousness and freedom of choice, and so it does not join the entire subject with the good, but only joins the will as such (appetition), as it finally becomes the incentive, as John of St. Thomas saw, for such a full (free) engagement of the subject.

The act of love in its highest (and most interior) form is manifested in the human being (or, in general, in a rational being) in the form of personal love. Therefore metaphysical considerations on the nature of love in general are the foundation for an understanding of love where love is a special expression of personal life. At the level of personal love, the elements of love as such that are drawn out in a metaphysical analysis are brought to the highest perfection (hence metaphysical propositions turn out not only to be helpful, but indispensable). The specific character of the

⁵³ However, it seems that we should distinguish first love as the causation of the end from love as a passion, since despite the real identity of those moments, they indicate different aspects of love: *first love* (*spiratio* is a good word to describe it) concerns the cause of action, while *passio* indicates the passivity of the subject. However, adaptation is the reason for aspiration and here it converges with the meaning of *spiratio*.

⁵⁴ On complacence as the first phase of love, and on the connection of complacence with knowledge, see my article: *Piękno i miłość*, 418–424.

⁵⁵ Cf. id., 425–433.

⁵⁶ "The good attracts us and arouses love in our interior, so that we can respond to its action on us. In this way we become «partners» of the good . . . to love is to be a partner of the good" (Philippe, *O miłości*, 100).

human person's dynamism, which is manifested in typical personal actions, should obviously be considered along with a consideration of the original data proper to the human person, i.e., the personal experience of the "I," which constitutes the starting point for philosophical anthropology—nonetheless the metaphysical order, which unveils corresponding aspects of action as such and explains the essential factors of dynamism, remains the fundamental order in this case.⁵⁷

**LOVE AS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE DYNAMISM OF BEINGS
(AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENTS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS)**

SUMMARY

In ancient times, people pondered "cosmic love" (*eros, philotes, thymos*), i.e., the universal power that underlies the phenomena of the universe. The force of love extends to all things, including man and his action. Philosophers remarked rather early that love is, as it were, the foundation for the phenomena and actions that are experienced. As love is both of the character of a source and is strongly present in its manifestations, it turns out to be something that, on the one hand, is best known, but on the other hand, not easy to understand. In parallel, people also considered the strictly personal form of love—*philia*, whereby people are joined with each other in a special relation, which is friendship (Aristotle started this conception). The analogical scholastic conception of love was an interesting combination of those two tendencies; love is the foundation of action and in the metaphysical order it becomes the principle that explains the domain of being that we call dynamism. This article discusses Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of love; first, it analyzes love's relationship with action, end, and knowledge, then, secondly, investigates the place of love in the order of the causes of action.

KEYWORDS: love, being, dynamism, action, knowledge, end, cause, metaphysics, Thomas Aquinas.

⁵⁷ On the specific character of philosophical anthropology in the realistic conception, and in connection with how its dependence on metaphysics is understood, see S. Kamiński, "Z metafizologii człowieka" ("On the meta-philosophy of man"), in his *Jak filozofować (How to philosophize)* (Lublin 1989), 257–262; S. Kamiński, "Antropologia. Wątki systematyzujące" ("Anthropology. Systematizing elements") [part of an entry], in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii (Universal Encyclopedia of Anthropology)*, vol. 1 (Lublin 2000), 261–263; M. A. Krąpiec, A. Maryniarczyk, "Metafizyka" ("Metaphysics"), in *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii (Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*, vol. 7 (Lublin 2006), 114–116.