

Aquinas and Emotional Theory Today: Mind-Body, Cognitivism and Connaturality

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The theory of emotions in Aquinas has been attracting attention in recent years. Many of the present-day matters of controversy — the relationship between knowledge and emotion, the role of emotion in knowledge and the unity of the cognitive and physiological dimensions of emotion — also found a place in St. Thomas' treatment. Sometimes regarded as an *ante litteram* 'cognitivist' theory, also regarded as an 'impulse' theory, forerunner of modern concerns and yet innocent of the disjunctions that modern emotional theory faces, Aquinas' emphases in this area have a lot to offer to the discussion, especially that among phenomenologists, cognitivists and impulse theorists¹.

His treatise of the passions of the soul in the *Summa Theologiae* and parallel passages in other works reflect interests which are still with us, perhaps most importantly of all, the way in which the unity of the person, soul and body, is profoundly felt and displayed in emotion. This article, dealing with such shared concerns, begins with the unity of emotion in Aquinas, showing how recent

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¹ On St. Thomas and *cognitivism*, see W. LYONS, *Emotion*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1980, pp. 35-37, R.C. ROBERTS, *Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of the Emotions*, «History of Philosophy Quarterly», 9 (1992), pp. 287-305 and A. MALO, *Tre teorie sulle emozioni* (prima parte), «Acta Philosophica», 3 (1994), pp. 97-111; on St. Thomas' version of the *intentionality* of the emotions, see A. KENNY, *The Metaphysics of Mind*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989, pp. 50-65 and M. DROST, *Intentionality in Aquinas' Theory of Emotions*, «International Philosophical Quarterly», 31 (1991), pp. 449-60; on the paradoxicality of his theory of the emotions as actions of the *body-soul* composite, see R.C. ROBERTS, *Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of the Emotions*, cit., as well as M. SAROT, *God, Emotion and Corporeality: a Thomist Perspective*, «The Thomist», 58 (1994), pp. 61-92.

thought of a cognitivist type has found difficulty with the unity, in emotion, of feelings and more intentional features (section 1). It then goes on to turn to two aspects of the relationship between knowledge and emotion: in the first place, the question of cognitivism itself: is emotion to be thought along perceptive, even propositional lines? (section 2); and the effect of emotion on our knowledge, its ability to render objects of knowledge more present to us (section 3). I claim that Aquinas' clear distinction between the intentionality of emotion and of knowledge actually permits him to offer a profound treatment of the influence that the connaturality forged by emotion can have on knowledge.

1. Do emotions straddle mind and body?

Emotion is shot through with the most diverse dimensions: a sense of bodily involvement, intentionality, objectivity, a sense of ecstasy, being beside oneself and at the same time being in a state of heightened self-awareness. Emotions involve many features, differing from one another quite profoundly. It is also noted that the experiencing of the emotion implies that these features are able to blend with one another. Thus conviction goes hand in hand with a marked level of physical perturbation, a practical determination is compatible with a sense of exaltation, and all appear to have a role and a place in the definition and above all in the unfolding of the passion².

It is also often claimed that emotions are, typically, phenomenologically experienced as *unified* states of mind, rather than as sets of components. Some thinkers associate emotion with passivity and place it on a lower level of the self; others still claim that 'later' Pathos is taken up and integrated into Logos, while it may even be argued that they cannot be separated from one another in the first place³.

It would be difficult to imagine Aquinas sharing the concern of modern thinkers for distinguishing and yet uniting the features of emotion. The thought that basic features of passions are separate, only later and problematically united, is linked, as Marc Neuberg has shown, to Descartes' treatise on the passions. He established the conceptual patterns which are used by the main competing modern approaches: the physiological and the cognitive⁴. As Descartes had claimed,

² F. DUNLOP, *The Education of Feeling and Emotion*, Allen & Unwin, London 1984, pp. 31-56, reduces the many facets of affective experience to four fundamental aspects: being 'taken over', by an 'object', with a desire for 'completion', and, finally, a subjective colouring or 'mood'.

³ This argument is developed by R.T. ALLEN, *Passivity and the Rationality of Emotion*, «The Modern Schoolman», 68 (1991), pp. 321-30, especially p. 322.

⁴ M. NEUBERG, *Le traité des passions de l'âme de Descartes et les théories modernes de l'émotion*, «Archives de Philosophie», 53 (1990), pp. 479-508. Susan James and Amélie Rorty are more reluctant to apply the 'contemporary distinction' between cognitive and physio-

his aim in writing the treatise was to deal with passions not as an orator (Aristotle had dealt with emotion in the context of persuasive speech-making) nor yet as a moral philosopher (Aquinas) but as a physician⁵. His development of a physiological theory of emotion, founded on the workings of the body alone is well known; but Neuberger points out that Descartes also finds room for psychological and even cognitive explanations of the genesis of the passions. Neuberger criticises both theories, but stresses the influence that both types of conceptual pattern had on how we think these aspects of emotion and, by implication, on how difficult it is to reconcile them⁶.

Aquinas' heritage is less clear-cut. He may be regarded as an intentionalist, a cognitivist, an impulse theorist. A central feature of his thought and its influence, however, is the way that he can think the various features of emotion *together*.

In Aquinas' theory there is a conception of passion which permits him to deal with passions as single events: the hylomorphic approach. At times he deals with it directly:

In the emotions [...] the formal element is an appetitive reaction and the material element a physical reaction. There is a certain ordered arrangement between the two, in which the physical reaction reproduces (*secundum similitudinem*) the characteristics of the appetitive reaction⁷.

It would be wrong to concentrate on either side of a passion, to the exclusion of the other. If we try to reduce them to the material side, we will be left with the physiological aspects of emotion, while if we ignore that dimension, passion will have become a quasi-intellectual 'point of view' which we would take up in a detached style, without any involvement on our part. If we take St. Thomas' approach and successfully blend the two, then we find that there is a union rather like that between the formal and material side of the subject of the passion, and

logical analyses of the emotions to Descartes, since his passions are always being transmuted by the influence of evaluations and sensations (S. JAMES, *Passion and Action*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1997, p. 105; A. RORTY, *Descartes on Thinking with the Body*, in J. COTTINGHAM (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992, p. 386).

⁵ «[...] mon dessein n'a pas été d'expliquer les Passions en Orateur, ny mesme en Philosophe moral, mais seulement en Physicien» (*Les Passions de l'âme* (Reply to the Second Letter-preface), AT XI 326).

⁶ «Cependant l'analyse séparée de chacun des éléments a pu être interprété, tantôt comme un intellectualisme, tantôt comme une anticipation des thèses de James et Lange sur l'émotion» (G. RODIS-LEWIS, *Introduction and notes to Les passions de l'âme*, Vrin, Paris 1970, p. 17).

⁷ «In passonibus animae est sicut formale ipse motus appetitivae potentiae; sicut autem materiale transmutatio corporalis: quorum unum alteri proportionatur. Unde secundum similitudinem et rationem appetitivi motus sequitur corporalis transmutatio» (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 44, a.1). I have taken this and subsequent translations as well as the original text from *Summa Theologiae*, Blackfriars edition, Eyre & Spottiswode, London 1964.

the various aspects of the emotion will all point, together, at the good of the individual⁸. This union reflects the hylomorphic theory of soul and body; but the passion itself has this structure of matter and form for Aquinas⁹. The material or generic considerations correspond to what is common to all the passions, notably the fact that they involve alteration or exchange of forms and are corporeal; the specific consideration has to do with the identity of each individual passion.

This permits Aquinas to say that passions are acts of the sense appetite but also passions of the soul. In St. Thomas' brief introduction to his treatise on the passions he stresses that he will be studying the '*passiones animae*', not merely passions of the body. And of course they are passions of the soul, since they belong to the matter-soul composite, and so, *per accidens*, they belong to the soul¹⁰.

A different approach to the union of material and formal aspects of emotion is taken by Robert C. Roberts:

Emotions aren't feelings [...] Seldom is much trouble taken to say what kind of feelings emotions aren't, but such items as tightness in the chest, a prickly or flushing sensation on the neck or face, awareness of perspiring or clamminess, an uncomfortable glowing feeling in the midsection, and generally the sensations characteristic of what physiological psychologists call 'arousal,' come to mind¹¹.

That such feelings cannot be emotions, for Roberts, follows from the fact that he explains emotions in cognitive terms. Roberts argues that the feelings to be associated with emotions are merely the subjective registering of the physiological changes¹². Anger, hope, gratitude are, like beliefs and desires, necessarily *about, of, or for* something, whereas such feelings, flushes, prickles, gnawings and constrictions embody no such reference beyond themselves.

This approach does not explain the fact that the flushes, prickles and constrictions may yet be inextricably bound up with the intentionality of the emotion

⁸ It is difficult to put this point more tersely than he does himself: «[...] ira, et similiter quaelibet passio animae, dupliciter potest considerari: uno modo secundum proprium rationem irae, et sic per prius est in anima quam in corpore; et alio modo in quantum est passio: et sic per prius est in corpore; ibi enim primo accipit rationem passionis. Et ideo non dicimus quod anima irascatur per accidens, sed per accidens patiatur» (*De Veritate*, q. 26, a. 2, ad 5).

⁹ R. QUINTO, "Timor", "timiditas" nella lessicografia tomista, «Rivista di filosofia Neo-scolastica», 77 (1985), pp. 387-410: «La distinzione tra forma e materia, e l'attribuzione attenda di ciò che, in ciascun fenomeno, spetta all'una e all'altra, è il cardine della concezione scientifica con cui ST affronta lo studio delle passioni [...]» (p. 403); «La natura e la possibilità della passione sono spiegate in base alla concezione tomistica dell'unione psicosomatica» (p. 402).

¹⁰ *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 22, a. 1, ad 2, 3.

¹¹ R.C. ROBERTS, *What an Emotion is: A Sketch*, «The Philosophical Review», 97 (1988), p. 185.

¹² *Ibidem*.

(*secundum similitudinem*), in such a way that dealing with them separately is unhelpful. J. Arregui has pointed to Wittgenstein's remark a propos of the emotions and sensations, that the sensations are not the emotions, but this in the sense *in which the numeral 2 is not the number 2*¹³.

This confirms Aquinas' approach in two ways: the way in which the numeral 2 is not the number 2 is rather like the way in which the matter is not the form; and the notion that there can be characteristic sensations bound up with emotions reflects Aquinas' '*quorum unum* (the material side) *alteri* (the formal side) *proportionatur*'. A pain in the stomach, to use Wittgenstein's example, does not tell us all there is to be told about fear, and it could have to do with other emotions, but it 'makes sense' when one realises that it has to do with a stressful situation¹⁴. It is 'proportionate to' or 'characteristic of' stress, and there is a true unity between them which precedes the undeniable conceptual differences between emotions as such and feelings to which Roberts draws attention. Arregui's conclusion is that sensation and emotion «are not two events nomologically and causally linked but only one event described in two different ways, material and formal»¹⁵.

2. Are emotions cognitive?

St. Thomas makes a firm distinction between knowledge and appetite and shows that emotion involves a 'conquest' of the subject by its object in passion and that this is at home in the appetite, since the appetite acts by being drawn or moved to its object. Cognition is not drawn to things as they are in themselves, but aims rather to generate within us representations of external things. The known, in fact, is drawn to the knower and comes, intentionally, to have the mode of being of the knower. This is why love can achieve greater objectivity, or more exactly, a more complete identity with the being of the object than knowledge can, for it undergoes the influence of things precisely as they are in reality. Love can reach things which cannot (because of the knower's condition here and now) be known in themselves¹⁶.

In Aquinas' theory of emotions, 'movement' is a key *literally*, for passion is

¹³L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Volume II, p. 148, Blackwell, Oxford 1980, quoted in J. ARREGUI, *Descartes and Wittgenstein on Emotions*, «International Philosophical Quarterly», 36 (1996), p. 329.

¹⁴«Is it so disagreeable, so sad to draw down the corners of one's mouth, and so pleasant to pull them up? What is it that is so frightful about fear? The trembling, the quick breathing, the feeling in the facial muscles. When you say: this fear, this uncertainty is frightful! Might you go on "If only I didn't have this feeling in my stomach!"?» (*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Volume I, p. 728).

¹⁵J. ARREGUI, o.c., p. 330.

¹⁶Cfr. *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 27, a. 2 ad 2.

an *alteration*, a species of movement, which always involves the reception of one form or quality and the loss of its contrary¹⁷. But movement also plays a role in the theory as *metaphor*. Passions are seen as processes of movement towards or away from and ending in rest in that which is perceived as good or as evil. The movement of the appetite is further compared by Aquinas to the movement of inanimate bodies in the natural world (fire rising, heavy bodies falling)¹⁸.

This theory is often criticized by cognitive theorists, for two reasons, which often dovetail and merge. Firstly, for locating the emotions in the sense appetite, since this does not permit one to develop a truly *human* account of emotion. Surely the will is also involved in this sort of affectivity. Secondly, for denying the cognitive nature of emotion, which must always surely involve a belief or evaluation about the object that is intended.

Robert C. Roberts criticises St. Thomas for developing a good account of the intentionality of emotion, explaining the logic of emotion, and then making this untenable by situating emotion in the sense appetite.

[Aquinas'] view is promising in that it stresses that emotions have a 'logic' lent them by their 'objects'—that is, by what goes into the construal of whatever the emotion is about¹⁹.

He accepts Aquinas' point that the emotion is a movement of the sensory appetite, that is, that it is intentional. Roberts, however, goes further: an emotion is a concern-based construal, and human emotions are shaped by propositions concerning their objects. He does not believe that human emotions can be explained on the basis of movements of the sense appetite in the way that Aquinas does.

For William Lyons, Aquinas has moved from Aristotle's cognitive account of emotion towards an impulse-based account. Where Aristotle wrote of anger as a feeling and impulse caused by a state of mind, Aquinas put the emphasis on the impulse or desire component. Emotion is first and foremost a felt tendency, a desire²⁰.

For others, however, Aquinas' theory is in fact cognitive, at least in a broader sense than Lyons and Roberts are using. Since emotions have a logic, they are

¹⁷«Passio non est nisi secundum motum alterationis» (*De Veritate*, q. 26, a. 1, c). This is also often termed physical transmutation, or *transmutatio corporalis*. It goes without saying that, for St. Thomas, such transmutation of forms is only possible in bodily things susceptible of generation and corruption (*ibidem*).

¹⁸Cfr. *Summa Theologiae*, I-II q. 23, a. 4, c, and q. 36, a. 1, c, where Aquinas states that «orectic movement is, in the operations of the soul, what physical movement is in the physical world».

¹⁹R.C. ROBERTS, *Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of the Emotions*, cit., p. 299.

²⁰W. LYONS, o.c., pp. 35-37.

not merely contingently bound up with their objects. Arregui claims that insofar as the connection between emotion and object is not contingent but necessary and logical, a cognitive dimension returns to emotion, via the notion of intentionality²¹. Mark Drost draws attention to the fact that for Aquinas emotion follows perceptual cognition and is definitely evaluative; this is particularly noticeable in the irascible emotions, which are distinguished from one another in terms of intending the object as a good or as an evil²².

In a recent summary article on cognitivism in emotion theory, John Deigh questions whether it is truly necessary to call on the cognitivists' model of 'a complete thought' or a proposition in order to do justice to the intentionality of emotions²³. He believes that «something can be an intentional object even if the subject has no beliefs about it» (p. 835). But cognitivists may believe that the objects of emotion have a special character that justifies the transition from emotions as intentional realities to emotions as thought. No doubt, he admits, cognitional theory is a lot better than introspectionism or mere behaviourism at explaining and especially at differentiating emotions, no doubt either that intentionality cannot be readily replaced by mechanistic relations, as the moderns since Locke and Descartes attempted, but he is sceptical about cognitivists' assumption that intentionality must involve propositional thought. One may well be sensible of something without having a concept of it (p. 840). As he concludes, cognitivism systematically infers propositional thought from intentionality, but this is an equivocation since intentionality — being directed at an object — is a property of emotions whether or not their subjects possess reason.

But are emotions not necessarily bound up with rational creatures? According to Deigh, this is a final, related difficulty with cognitivist theory: it tends to exclude primitive, animal and infantile emotions from true emotionality, since such cases are not able to do justice to the cognitive model of emotion and also since cognitivists generally specialise in *human* psychology. But this will not do, he claims, if inattention to the emotions of babies and beasts were based on a distinction between human beings and other animals that was as implausible as Descartes'. And «whatever differences in psychological capacities exist between humans and beasts, or grown-ups and babies, they cannot [...] imply that mature human thought and feeling are phenomena utterly incomparable to their bestial

²¹He contrasts Aquinas (and other cognitive theorists) to the Cartesian position in emotions which regarded sentiment as a change operated within oneself, not referring to an outward object (J. ARREGUI, o.c., p. 332).

²²M. DROST, *Intentionality in Aquinas' Theory of the Emotions*, cit., pp. 451-53.

²³J. DEIGH, *Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions*, «Ethics», 104 (1994), pp. 824-54. In *The Significance of Emotions*, «American Philosophical Quarterly», 31 (1994), pp. 319-31, Bennet Helm suggests that cognitivists' account of emotion are bound to fail because they try to make significance conceptually prior to emotion, thus ignoring emotion's contribution to significance.

and infantile counterparts» (p. 849)²⁴. Aquinas' theory was criticised by Roberts, as we have seen, precisely for being so sensitive to such points of comparison and continuity. Roberts rejects Aquinas' claim that «intrinsically considered, the emotions are common to men and the other animals» since he believes that there is no such thing as an emotion «intrinsically considered», that is, independently of its relation to reason²⁵. On this account, all that is common to human emotion and animal 'emotion' and animals is physiological response and resultant behaviour, and as I point out in the first part of this article, the relationship of such physiological responses to the intentional dimension of emotion will always cause problems for cognitive theorists.

3. Knowledge through emotion

After discussing Aquinas' distinction between knowledge and emotion, I now want to turn to the real and close links he finds between emotion and knowledge. Does he not claim that emotion or passion is the response to the perceived good? And is it not true that emotions cause the knowledge they are caused by, or at least have a big impact on it? Emotion also produces a sense of «being entirely contained within oneself and at the same time in an intimate nearness to the object, that is, to the value with which contact is spontaneously established»²⁶, and this is likely to charge our knowledge with greater immediacy and depth.

This theme can be discerned even in Descartes' well-known physiological theory of emotion. While he regarded them as primarily physiological events, products of the animal spirits at work, his whole theory was prompted by the puzzlement expressed to him by Princess Elizabeth that such merely corporeal events could, apparently, have a part to play in the full life of the individual, such that all the good and evil of this life depend on them alone²⁷. Those they can

²⁴A. KENNY, o.c., p. 51, also refers to this: «Most human emotions are shot through with thoughts, often of a highly intellectual character; yet it is in the realm of feeling and emotion that we can see most clearly the continuity between the child and the adult, the kinship between human and animal».

²⁵R.C. ROBERTS, *Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of Emotions*, cit., p. 293. Other cognitivists also warn against overstating the parallels between human and lower animals. Cfr. R.S. LAZARUS - A.D. KANNER - S. FOLKMAN, *Emotions: a Cognitive-Phenomenological Analysis*, in R. PLUTCHIK - H. KELLERMAN (eds.), *Emotion: Theory, Research and Experience*, Volume I: *Theories of Emotion*, Academic Press, New York 1980, p. 213.

²⁶K. WOJTYLA, *The Acting Person*, p. 249.

²⁷Cfr. *The Passions of the Soul*, transl. by S.H. Voss, Hackett, Indianapolis 1989, p. 212. See also G. RODIS-LEWIS, o.c., pp. 6-8. «In a letter of May 1643, [...] [she] had asked how the soul, being only a thinking substance, can determine the bodily spirits to perform voluntary actions» (*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, transl. by Cottingham - Stoothoff - Murdoch - Kenny, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991, Volume III, p. 217, translators' footnote).

move the most are capable of tasting the most sweetness in this life. Body and soul both benefit. «In examining the passions I have found almost all of them to be good, and to be so useful in this life that our soul would have no reason to wish to remain joined to its body [...] if it could not feel them»²⁸.

Amélie Rorty has drawn attention to this aspect of Descartes' theory of the passions. She regards them as an enrichment because a coarsening of the Cartesian 'ego' beyond the impersonal mind of the early parts of the *Meditations*, and an injection of realism to his theory of knowledge²⁹. Descartes' theory also guarantees an 'attunement' to reality, which goes beyond knowledge but also enriches knowledge with new immediacy and depth³⁰.

What can Aquinas offer in this regard? I would like to point to his emphasis on knowledge by connaturality, which he often referred back to Pseudo-Dionysius' dictum: «Hierotheus was taught not only in the process of learning but also in being affected by divine things» (*patiens divina et ex compassione ad ipsa*)?³¹ The presence to us of the things that we know can become more or less vivid, according to a certain emotional participation in them, which, in its turn, can make a significant contribution to our grasp of reality. One can learn by 'suffering', that is, receiving and being conquered by the object of our love. This is a possible propaedeutic to knowledge, arising not so much out of the factual information available to the person, as from his very being. He may be possessed of an inclination towards the object of any of these types of knowledge. The love of God, for example, may produce an inclination towards the object of mystical knowledge, the practice of virtue may produce an inclination towards the objects of ethical knowledge, and the poetic spirit possesses an unconceptualisable union with the world, which gives fruit in an original, personal and still most real perception of some feature of the world³².

²⁸Letter to Chanut, 1.11.1646 (AT IV 538) in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes III*, cit., p. 300.

²⁹*From Passions to Emotions and Sentiments*, «Philosophy», 57 (1982), p. 161 and *Descartes on Thinking with the Body*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, cit., p. 386.

³⁰Cfr. P. GOREVAN, *The Passions of the Soul: Descartes' Shadow on Theories of the Emotions*, «American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly», 68 (1994), pp. 515-28, especially 527-28.

³¹*De divinis nominibus*, ch. 2, 648 A 60. Cfr. St. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 6, a. 3, c and *In librum Beati Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus Expositio*, ch. 2, lectio 4, 191, Marietti, Torino-Roma 1950. (Pseudo-Dionysius' words are quoted according to the translation given in the Marietti edition.)

³²In the moral area, this theory finds quite a lot of application, for there are two chief ways by which one can be judge of moral matters, according to St. Thomas. One is by way of knowledge, and in this way a person who is well versed in moral matters would be well equipped to pass judgements on action. The second is by way of inclination, and, in this sense, he quotes Aristotle to the effect that the good man is the measure and rule of human acts, for he possesses, in his habitual goodness, a sure yardstick of the morality of his own and others' actions (cfr. *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3). Someone possessing the

Emotions, too, can provide this inclination or kinship and Aquinas' explanation of this '*patiens divina*' passage in Pseudo-Dionysius concludes that this kind of *passio* belongs to the appetitive part of man³³. The argument used here is equivalent to the argument he uses in the *Summa Theologiae* to show that passions in the more strict sense are actions of the sense appetite, rather than aspects of knowledge or perception³⁴. So it is not surprising that Aquinas' general theory of the passions should stress the passions' ability to make us more at one with things, and thus able to know them more intimately and personally. His theory of love offers many indications in this regard.

The analogy of motion, which helps him to explain emotions, is a teleological one. Love is compared to motion in the physical world³⁵. The movement of appetite is comparable to a light or heavy body seeking its natural place on the basis of what is harmonious with its nature, for «everything has a built-in sense of affinity with whatever accords with its nature»³⁶. 'Suffering' the influence of another form, which emotion involves, permits a sense of kinship or connaturality which will enhance knowledge and give it new realism.

Aquinas goes further: love is a transformation: «*transformatio [...] affectus in amatum*»³⁷ or a «*conversio appetitus in amatum*»³⁸. In love, the beloved becomes the 'form' of the lover. The appetite is pervaded by the object of its love. In a certain sense the appetite *is* the thing loved, the appetite in act *is* the thing desired, the *appetibile* in act. St. Thomas contrasts this kind of union with accidental or *secundum quid* unions, in which things are superficially contiguous. In love, however, the object is brought within that which it loves. Love is a union *simpliciter*, comparable to that between matter and form, because «love brings the beloved to be the form of the lover»³⁹. A real and effective union may be forged as a result of love, but love itself is this union formally speaking, even in cases where it is not possible for the lover to achieve real union with the object of desire⁴⁰.

virtue of chastity, for example, judges correctly about matters pertaining to it by means of the natural kinship forged by the virtue, rather than by means of intellectual inquisition (cfr. *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 45, a. 2, c).

³³ «Passio magis ad appetitum quam ad cognitionem pertinere videtur, quia cognita sunt in cognoscente secundum modum cognoscentis et non secundum modum rerum cognitarum, sed appetitus movet ad res, secundum modum quo in se ipsis sunt, et sic ad ipsas res quodammodo afficitur» (*In librum beati Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus expositio*, cit., c. 2, lect. 4, n. 191. See also c. 4, lect. 10, n. 427).

³⁴ Cfr. footnote 19 above.

³⁵ Cfr. M. DROST, *In the Realm of the Senses: Saint Thomas on Sensory Love, Desire and Delight*, «The Thomist», 59 (1995), pp. 48-49.

³⁶ *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 26, a. 1, ad 3.

³⁷ *Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum III (In III Sent.)*, ed. Mandonnet, Paris 1929, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1, sol.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, a. 3 ad 5.

³⁹ *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1, ad 5.

⁴⁰ Cfr. *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 28, a. 1, c.

According to Saint Thomas every other passion in the soul presupposes love⁴¹. Love is the forming of the appetite by the form of the thing loved. From form actions follow, and so all the operations of the appetite, the passions, will proceed from the form we know as love⁴². At the heart of emotional engagement with things there is a profound connaturality with the objects of emotion, and this has reverberations in the way that such things may be known.

4. Conclusions

The unity of emotion, a way of thinking emotions as one without losing sight of the disparate elements that go to make them up, is perhaps the most characteristic feature of Aquinas' theory. It renders him liable to criticism from those who give preferential treatment to cognitive and intentional aspects, but it does show up the one-sided way in which these theories deal with some aspects of emotion.

So while Aquinas' theory of emotions is attentive, as we saw above, to the difference between the intentionalities involved in emotion as opposed to knowledge, it does pinpoint the mutual interplay of these two forms of intentionality. As Maritain puts it with regard to knowledge by connaturality,

In this knowledge through union or inclination, connaturality or congeniality, the intellect is at play not alone, but together with affective inclinations and the dispositions of the will, and is guided and directed by them. It is not rational knowledge, guided and directed through the conceptual, logical and discursive exercise of Reason. But it is really and genuinely knowledge, though obscure and perhaps incapable of giving account of itself, or of being translated into words⁴³.

St. Thomas' own account of the passions is difficult to classify. He seeks for unity among aspects of human life which we are tempted to separate and know in a conceptually complete yet fragmentary way. His very ambiguity offers room for a complete approach to this most teasing of issues, in particular to the unity of the various features of emotional experience and the relationship between emotion and cognition, an approach in line with Descartes' remark that «the passions are numbered among the perceptions which the close bond between the soul and the body renders confused and obscure»⁴⁴.

⁴¹Cfr. *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 3, ad 22.

⁴²Cfr. *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 1, sol.

⁴³*The Range of Reason*, London 1953, p. 23.

⁴⁴*The Passions of the Soul*, cit., p. 28.