Habitual Self-Knowledge: A Genetic Study of the Doctrine of St. Thomas in De Veritate, Q. 10, a. 8

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HABITUAL SELF-KNOWLEDGE: A GENETIC STUDY
OF THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS
IN DE VERITATE, Q. 10, A. 8

by
W. Jared Wicks, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
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the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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LIFE

W. Jared Wicks was born in Columbus, Ohio, June 19, 1929. He was graduated from St. Charles Preparatory School, June, 1947. He attended Ohio State University from September, 1947, to June, 1948. He also attended St. Charles College, Columbus, Ohio, from September, 1948, to June, 1949.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to work out a complete explanation of the habitual knowledge which St. Thomas says the human soul has of itself. We wish to explain the following statement of St. Thomas:

Sed quantum ad cognitionem habitualem, sic dico quod anima per essentiam suam se videt, id est ex hoc ipso quod essentia sua est sibi praesens, est potens exire in actum cognitionis sui ipsius; sicut aliquis ex hoc quod habet aliquid scientiae habitum, ex ipsa praeientia habitus, est potens percipere illa quae subsunt illi habitui. Ad hoc autem quod percipiat anima se esse, et quid in seipsa agatur attendat, non requiritur aliquis habitus; sed ad hoc sufficit sola essentia animae quae menti est praesens; ex ea anim actus progrediuntur, in quibus actualiter ipsa percipitur.¹

The text we have chosen appears as the second part of a four-part answer to the question whether the soul knows itself by means of its own essence or by means of some species. The main division of the response is two-fold: 1) concerning knowledge of the soul as existing in a particular individual; and 2) concerning knowledge of the soul leading to understanding of the nature of the soul. The first type of self-knowledge answers the question an est? and the second the question quid est? regarding the human soul.

¹De Ver., 10, 8 c.
The knowledge the soul has of itself as an existing singular takes place at two levels: actual knowledge and habitual knowledge. The knowledge of its nature also involves two levels: that of apprehension, in which the scientific notion of the soul is elaborated; and that of judgment, in which the soul comes to confirm the content of apprehension as the true nature of the soul.

Therefore, four distinct answers are given to the question whether the soul knows itself through its essence or through some species:

A. Knowledge of the individual soul — An est?
   1. Actual knowledge — through the operations of the soul.
   2. Habitual knowledge — through the essence of the soul.

B. Knowledge of the nature of the soul — Quid est?
   1. In apprehension — through the species.
   2. In judgment — through unchangeable truth, impressed on the soul.

From the words of St. Thomas, it is clear that habitual self-knowledge is a condition underlying the actual knowledge the soul has of its existence in its operations. Thus the text we will center our attention on describes the peculiar aspect of the constitution of man which is the underlying cause of the experience of self-knowledge in the soul.

The idea behind the choice of this particular text is that the body of

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{2}} \text{"anima per essentiam suam se videt, id est ex hoc ipso quod essentia sua est sibi praesens, est potens exire in cognitionem sui ipsius." Ibid.} \]
the response and the answers to the opinions in this article of the 
De Veritate comprise the most systematic elaboration of St. Thomas' thought on 
the knower's knowledge of himself. 

Our purpose is to throw more light on 
this whole area of Thomistic psychology by a thorough study of the second of 
the four parts of the response.

The method of our study will be genetic. We will first examine the texts 
in the Commentary on the Sentences which pertain to our topic. This will be 
the work of Chapter II. Next, we will study the treatment of self-knowledge 
in God and in the angels as found in the De Veritate in passages prior to our 
text. In these explanations we will try to uncover the general principles 
which govern the solution given in our central text. This is the work of 
Chapter III. In Chapter IV we will make a careful study of this central 
passage, examining the exact wording and giving special emphasis to the 
comparison of the human soul with an intellectual habit. Finally, in Chapter 
V, we will survey the later statements of St. Thomas which contribute to our 
understanding of the soul's habitual self-knowledge as described in the 
De Veritate. Our objective then is to reach a full understanding of the 

Furthermore, this article is the one place where St. Thomas explains 
habitual self-knowledge. In the Commentary on the Sentences reflective 
knowledge is treated in various passages but never with the completeness of 
De Veritate, 10, 8. De Veritate, 1, 9, develops a special type of reflection 
found in the movement from apprehension to judgment. In the Contra Gentiles, 
III, 46, the topic comes up in the course of the long argument concerning the 
end of man. The distinction of the soul's knowledge of its existence from 
knowledge of its nature is made, but the topic is not developed further. In 
the Summa Theologiae, I, 87, 1, St. Thomas compares Divine, angelic, and human 
self-knowledge. On human self-knowledge, the treatment is an abridgment of 
De Veritate, 10, 8, without mention of habitual self-knowledge. In the Summa, 
I, 93, 7 ad 4, habitual self-knowledge is mentioned but without explanation. 
Each of these texts will be examined in Chapter V.
habitual knowledge the soul has of itself, with special attention to the pertinent statements made by St. Thomas before the composition of the eighth article of the tenth question of the De Veritate.

To complete this introductory chapter we will examine briefly the previous work of Thomistic scholars on the text we have chosen. We will proceed by describing the contribution of four different writers to the elucidation of the doctrine.

Fr. Ambroise Gardeil, O.P., took up our text in the process of presenting a theological explanation of grace and mystical experience. His main idea was that the habitual and actual knowledge the soul has of itself gives an exact pattern to follow in explaining the inhabitation of God in the just soul and the consequent knowledge of God in mystical experience. Thus an explanation of the soul's habitual knowledge of itself was an important step in the first stages of the work Fr. Gardeil undertook.

Again and again, Fr. Gardeil insisted that habitual self-knowledge was

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1 Fr. Gardeil's main work in this area is La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique (Paris, 1927), 2 vols. He presented an earlier study of the matter pertaining to this thesis in "La perception experimentale de l'âme par elle-meme d'apres saint Thomas," Mélanges Thomistes (Kain, 1923), pp. 219-236.

5 Fr. Gardeil summarized his intention: "La connaissance habituelle de l'âme par soi et la conscience actuelle de soi qui actualise cette conscience habituelle ne sont pas seulement une analogie, une example, une modele de l'inhabitation de Dieu dans l'âme par la grâce de l'expérience mystique. Je regarde la structure interne de l'âme et de la conscience psychologique comme une raison explicative a radice de la structure de l'inhabitation de Dieu dans le juste, et de l'expérience mystique. C'est d'ailleurs a priori inevitable en vertue du principle que ce que est reçu se conforme au mode d'être de son sujet recepteur." Tout mon ouvrage tend a établir cette conformité structurale." In "Question de nomenclature en matiere de contemplation," Revue Thomiste, XIV (July, 1931), 727.
the particular disposition of the soul which made experimental self-awareness possible. Once the intellect is in operation, the habitual disposition passes into actual perception of the soul with the result that the knower can affirm with certitude, "It is I who thinks and knows."6

The intention in Fr. Gardiel's discussion of our De Veritate text is to show that this particular type of knowledge reaches the existing, concrete substance of the soul. Thus it is an experimental knowledge of the soul which proceeds from the habitus of self-knowledge.

The part of Fr. Gardiel's work which is relevant to us is the explanation he developed of the prior disposition of the soul for self-awareness in its operations. His explanation contains two points: first, on the nature of the soul as a spirit; and secondly, on the comparison with an intellectual habit implied in the name applied by St. Thomas.

The human soul occupies a unique position among spiritual substances. As a spirit, it is a being graced with both intelligence and intelligibility. But as a spirit united with matter, the faculty of intelligence is ordered to know in cooperation with sensation. Thus the human knowing power is in the presence of a knowable object—its own substance—but is prevented from actual

6 This mode of phrasing the result of the actuation of habitual self-knowledge is traced to San Severino, whom Gardiel singles out as contributing greatly to his own thought. Cf. Mêlanges Thomistes, p. 219, n. 1. San Severino developed this idea in an anti-Kantian epistemological context as he took up consciousness as a criterion of knowledge which reaches beyond phenomena to the concrete, existing self. Cf. Georges van Reit, L'épistémologie thomiste (Louvain, 1946), pp. 64-65.
knowledge of this object. This state of "prevented knowledge" is what St. Thomas describes as the soul's habitual knowledge of itself.\(^7\)

Fr. Gardeil, following the progression of the text of the *De Veritate*, comments on the aptness of the comparison of the relation of the soul to itself as a present but unknowable object of knowledge with the relation of a developed mind to its achieved knowledge through retained species in the mind.\(^8\)

The work of Fr. Gardeil provides the actual point of departure for the work of this thesis. We wish to expand his explanation by research into the texts of St. Thomas in which we can see the development of the idea of habitual self-knowledge in the human soul.

A second writer who has taken up our text is Fr. Blaise Romeyer, S.J.\(^9\) His work ranks as a peculiar contribution to the stream of discussion in Thomistic epistemology in the period between the World Wars. He proposed an interpretation of St. Thomas which featured a concrete intuition of material

\(^7\)"Force est donc à l'âme intelligente de demeurer en suspens vis-à-vis de cet objet qui lui est cependant immanent, qu'elle a tout ce qu'il faut pour connaître, mais dont elle ne peut réaliser la connaissance actuelle en raison de sa constitution organique présente, qui la lie au corps dans son être et dans son opération. C'est cet état de connaissance liée qui est appelé par saint Thomas du nom de connaissance habituelle." Gardeil, *Mélanges Thomistes*, p. 224.

\(^8\)"Aucun exemple ne saurait mieux nous faire entendre la structure interieure de l'âme, naturellement féconde par elle-même, dans l'ordre intelligible, comme l'esprit du savant est fécondé par l'espace imposée, (ou, ce qui revient au même, par un habitus acquis), au point d'être virtuellement prégante de l'acte de connaissance de soi." Ibid.

\(^9\)"Saint Thomas et notre connaissance de l'esprit humain," *Archives de Philosophie*, VI (1928), 137-250.
singulars and a direct knowledge of spiritual realities.

The aspect of Romeyer's work which pertains to our thesis is the survey he made of the Thomistic texts concerning the knowability of the human soul. His treatment of the doctrine of habitual self-knowledge is in the manner of a paraphrase, with an added evaluation of the aptness of the word habitual in this context. On one hand the word implies "too much" since the acquired habit supposes previous exercise of the intellectual faculty. This is more than the innate disposition described by St. Thomas. On the other hand there is a weakness in the comparison in that the word habitual ordinarily indicates knowledge determined by a group of species which are in turn formed through the influence of material objects. Habitual scientific knowledge is thus an accidental modification of the mind. But the soul's knowledge of itself is even "more habitual," since its cause lies wholly within—in the very essence of the soul. The operation of the knowing faculty on some object is merely a condition for the actuation of the soul's knowledge of itself.

A second pertinent aspect of Romeyer's work is his discussion of the soul's knowledge of itself as found in the Commentary on the Sentences. His correlation of the Augustinian intelligere with habitual self-knowledge provides us with the starting point of our textual study. Our method, however, will

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10Cf. van Reit, pp. 483-487.

11Romeyer, Archives, VI, 193-195.

12Ibid., 188-191.
differ in two major aspects from that of Romeyer. First, the focus of all our study remains on one passage of St. Thomas. As the texts are taken up, we will be seeking light on the one text on habitual self-knowledge. Secondly, we aim to use the De Veritate discussions of self-knowledge in God and in the angels for their elaboration of the general principles governing all instances of a knower's knowledge of himself.

A third author whose work has played an important part in the preliminary steps of this thesis is Fr. J. Webert, O.P. He has pointed out the major texts to be studied and has made an orderly catalogue of all the types of reflective knowledge treated by St. Thomas.

Another part of Webert's contribution to this thesis is his discussion of "the metaphysics of reflection" in which he pointed to the Commentary on the Liber de Causis, Proposition Fifteen, as a significant part of St. Thomas' thought. Our approach will be to study the importance of the Liber de Causis proposition in two ways. First, we will examine carefully the use St. Thomas makes of the proposition in passages prior to our central text. Secondly, we will evaluate the Commentary of St. Thomas for its contribution to our understanding of the ground of all self-knowledge in the human soul.

A fourth author who has treated the doctrine of habitual self-knowledge is


14 Ibid., 320-324.
Fr. Georges Ducoin, S.J. 15 The intention of Ducoin's paper was to show that for St. Thomas man is radically self-consciousness. He finds this idea implied in the very text we have chosen from the De Veritate. This equation of habitual self-knowledge and a radical, or ontological, self-consciousness is greatly reinforced by the explanation St. Thomas gives in his commentary on the fifteenth proposition of the Liber de Causis. Fr. Ducoin justifies his stress on the commentary by evidence from two texts of the De Veritate 16 which, he argues, show that the explanation of this proposition is more than just the exposition of the thought of another, but actually contains the personal thought of St. Thomas.

In our study we will treat the use St. Thomas made of the Liber de Causis proposition both in the Commentary on the Sentences and in the De Veritate. However, the evidence will force us to minimize the importance of this text in the thought of St. Thomas. In our final chapter, we will examine the Commentary of St. Thomas and our argument will be to interpret the passage as an instance of St. Thomas giving a full literal exposition of the thought of another without any significant interjection of his own thought.

In view of these earlier studies of De Veritate, q. 10, a. 8, we can restate the aim of this thesis. We propose to study the movement of the mind


16 De Ver., 2, 2 ad 2; and 1, 9 c.
of St. Thomas through his earliest writings toward the formulation of the doctrine of habitual self-knowledge as stated in this part of the De Veritate.
CHAPTER II

THE ELEMENTS OF HABITUAL SELF-KNOWLEDGE

IN THE COMMENTARY ON THE SENTENCES

We will start our quest for understanding the doctrine of habitual self-knowledge in the human soul by examining a text in the Commentary on the Sentences in which St. Thomas states that the essence of the soul has a very close similarity to an intellectual habit:

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ad esse habitus intellectivi duo concurrunt: scilicet species intelligibilis et lumen intellectus agentis quod facit eam intelligibilem in actum unde si aliqua species esset quae in se haberet lumen, illud haberet rationem habitus, quantum pertinet ad hoc quod esset principium actus. Ita dico, quod quando ab anima cognoscitur aliquid quod est in ipsa non per sui similitudinem, sed per suam essentiam, ipsa essentia rei cogitant est loco habitus. Unde dico, quod ipsa essentia animae, prout est mota a seipsa, habet rationem habitus.1

The context of this passage is a question about St. Augustine's second description of how an image of the Trinity is found in man. The question is whether the triplet, mens, notitia, et amor, really differs from the set, memoria, intelligentia, et voluntas, which was discussed in the articles of the preceding question.

The answer given by St. Thomas is that the first image refers to three different powers of the soul, while the second image considers the essence of

1 In I Sent., 3, 5, art. un. ad l.
the superior part of the soul (mens) and the two consubstantial habits (notitia: habitus memoriae and amor: habitus voluntatis).²

The first contrary opinion is based on the earlier affirmation that an image of the Trinity is found in the human soul especially when the soul itself is the object of its operations.³ The argument in the objection is that the soul knows itself by means of its own essence and not through the mediation of any habit. Thus, since a habit is not found in the soul's knowledge of itself, an image involving the soul's habits, notitia and amor, is a poor representation of the Trinity.

The response to this opinion aims to show how the essence of the soul resembles an intellectual habit, since the soul knows itself through its own essence. It is to be noted that St. Thomas makes no formal acceptance of the proposition that the soul knows itself through its own essence. The force of the response is that if the soul does know itself in the manner stated in the opinion—per essentiam suam—then the image is saved because in this self-knowledge the essence of the soul functions very much in the manner of an intellectual habit.

The argument of the response is based on the nature of an intellectual habit as an intelligible species in the intellect. The second factor in the

²"Hæc assignatio sumitur secundum essentiam et habitus consubstantiales; praedicta autem secundum potentias." Ibid. sol.

³Ibid., 3, 4, 4 sol.
constitution of an intellectual habit is the light of the agent intellect by which the species is made intelligible in act. A middle step in the argument is to consider how a species having intellectual light of itself would be like a habit, since it could of itself be a source (principium) of an act of knowledge. Thus, if the essence of the soul leads to the knowledge of something, and since that essence is the source of intellectual light, that essence would be functioning just like a habit—est loco habitus. Thus, in the knowledge of itself, involving no species but only the soul's essence, that essence is the source of the act of knowledge just as an intellectual habit is the source of the act of knowledge concerning something known habitually.

This first passage of our study of habitual self-knowledge in the Commentary on the Sentences is important as the one place before the central passage in the De Veritate in which the soul's knowledge of itself is directly compared with habitual scientific knowledge. Thus, we have some explanation of the name used in the central passage in this thesis. However, the actual value of the passage in our quest for understanding is small. First, the hypothetical strain running through the passage has been noted. Secondly, no precise determination is made of the exact kind of knowledge the soul has of itself through its essence. Thirdly, only one causal factor regarding this

Footnotes:

4 Ibid., 3, 5, art. un. ad 1.

5 All habits are sources of activity in operative powers: "habitus, secundum proprietatem sui nominis, significat qualitatem quandam quae est principium actus, informament et perfecientem potentiam." In II Sent., 24, 1, 1 sol.
kind of self-knowledge has been mentioned: the fact that the soul has of itself the light of agent intellect. We must seek explanation of the ultimate ground of this knowledge the soul has of itself.

We can move to the second phase of our study of habitual self-knowledge in the Commentary on the Sentences by seeking to supply for the second deficiency noted above. We will seek to answer this question which we will phrase in terms of the passage just studied: since the soul has intelligible light of itself, does the soul know itself always?

Twice this question is given explicit treatment in the Commentary on the Sentences. In the article immediately before the one we have just examined, St. Thomas asks whether the rational powers are always in act with regard to the objects towards which the soul best exemplifies an image of the Trinity. These two objects of knowledge and love are God and the soul itself. In a later article he discusses our knowledge of our own habits and powers, and in the response to the fourth objection in this second article he touches on the soul's knowledge of itself.

We will find it helpful to study St. Thomas' treatment of the question in both passages since his negative answer in the first passage is based on a

6 Though the comparison with habitual self-knowledge appears to rule out continual actual knowledge, still this question deserves attention. Twice St. Thomas describes the soul as being present to itself: "etiam anima sibi ipsi prae sens est," (Ibid., 3, 1, 2 ad 3); and "cum ipsa anima naturaliter sit sibi prae sens," (Ibid., 3, 1, 4 sol.). The question then remains whether this presence constitutes the union with the intelligible object which is essential in knowledge.

7 Ibid., 3, 1, 5.

8 Ibid., 17, 1, 1 ad 1.
reason of fact and in the second on a reason of right proceeding from the necessary mode of human knowledge. Thus, in both articles we will find an early treatment by St. Thomas of a question of continual self-knowledge, a question allied to ours of the habitual knowledge the soul is said to have of itself.

The first solution begins with a distinction of the three words used by St. Augustine regarding knowledge. There follows the first part of the answer to the question whether the soul knows itself (or God) always:

Secundum Augustinum, De Utilitate Credendi, cap. xi, differunt cogitare, discernere, et intelligere. Discernere est cognoscere rem per differentiam sui ab aliis. Cogitare autem est considerare rem secundum partes et proprietates suas: inde dicitur quasi coagitare. Intelligere autem dicit nihil aliud quam simplicem intuitum intellectus in id quod sibi est praesens intelligibile. Dico ergo, quod anima non semper cogitat et discernit de Deo, nec de se, quia sic quilibet sciret naturaliter totam naturam animae sue, ad quod vix magno studio pervenitur; ad talem enim cognitionem non sufficit praesentia rei quolibet modo; sed oportet ut sit ibi in ratione objecti, et exigitur intentio cognoscentis.

Thus the reason that the soul does not know itself always, in the sense of cogitare or discernere, is the clear fact that all men do not know the nature of their soul— a necessary consequence if the questioned proposition were true.

In saying that discernere and cogitare require presence precisely as an object, St. Thomas has touched on the reason of right which is the sole answer in the other passage on this question. The natural mode of human knowledge is

9Ibid., 3, 4, 5 sol.
indicated when he says that an intention (or species\textsuperscript{10}) is required in knowing the nature of the soul.

In proceeding to treat the Augustinian intelligere, St. Thomas does allow some type of continual self-knowledge: "Sed secundum quod intelligere nihil aliud est quam praesentia intelligibilis ad intellectum quocumque modo, sic anima semper intelligit se et Deum."\textsuperscript{11}

We can enter almost parenthetically the last sentences of the first passage which give, as another way the soul could be said to be known always, the fact that in every act of knowledge the light of agent intellect and the receptivity of the possible intellect are involved.

\textit{Alio tamam modo, secundum philosophos, intelligitur quod anima semper se intelligit, eo quod omne quod intelligitur, non intelligitur nisi illustratum lumine intellectus agentis et receptum in intellectu possibili. Unde sicut in omni colore videtur lumen corporale, ita in omni intelligibili videtur lumen intellectus agentis; non tamem in ratione objecti, sed in ratione medi cognoscendi.}\textsuperscript{12}

The second passage in which St. Thomas touches on the question of continual self-knowledge gives us an answer based on the necessary mode of human knowing. The principle is announced in the body of the solution:

\textsuperscript{10} Cf. De Ver., 10, 8, where St. Thomas quotes Averroes, "intellectus intelligit per intentionem in eo, sicut in alia intelligibilis." St. Thomas then explains, "quae quidem intentio nihil aliud est quam species intelligibilis."

\textsuperscript{11} In \textit{I Sent.}, 3, 1, 5 sol. The Parma edition adds the word indeterminate as the last word of the sentence and so renders this type of knowledge even more tenuous.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
Quia cum intellectus noster potentialis sit in potentia ad omnia intelligibilia, et ante intelligere non sit in actu aliquod eorum; ad hoc quod intelligat actu, oportet quod reducatur in actum per species acceptas a sensibus illustratas lumine intellectus agentis . . . Unde cum naturale sit nobis procedere ex sensibus in intelligibilia, ex effectibus in causas, ex posterioribus in priora . . . ideo est quod potentias animae et habitus non possimus cognoscere nisi per actus et actus per objecta. 13

Thus we see that to be present to the intellect precisely as an object of understanding means to be present as derived from sense data. This is the natural orientation of the human intellect which governs all our knowledge, even of the interior realities such as the powers of the soul and the habits or virtues.

In the answer to the fourth opinion in the article, St. Thomas applies this principle to the case of the soul's knowledge of itself. In the last sentence he returns to the Augustinian sense of intelligere as a possible way of having continual self-knowledge in the soul.

Ad quartum dicendum, quod ad hoc quod aliquid cognoscatur ab anima, non sufficit quod sit sibi praessens quocumque modo, sed in ratione objecti. Intellectui autem nostro nihil est secundum statum viae praessens ut objectum, nisi per aliquam similitudinem ipsius, vel suo effectu acceptam: quia per effectus devenimus in causas. Et ideo ipsam animam et potentias ejus et habitus ejus non cognoscimus nisi per actus, qui cognoscuntur per objecta. Nisi largo modo velimus loqui de cognitione, ut Augustinus loquitur, secundum quod intelligere nihil aliud est quam praesentialiter intellectui quocumque modo adesse. 14

13Ibid., 17, 1, 4 sol.
14Ibid., ad 4.
Thus our question whether the soul knows itself always has been answered with a definite negative answer regarding knowledge in its proper sense. The reasons are that 1) de facto, men do not naturally know the nature of the soul; and 2) de jure, the soul is not always present to the intellect in the manner which human knowledge requires. In a very wide sense, however, it can be said that the soul knows itself because of the presence of the soul to the intellect. This presence can be termed the ontological presence of a subject to the power which emanates from itself.

The type of presence indicated by the Augustinian sense of intelligere may well aid us in understanding habitual self-knowledge. In the De Veritate the likeness to a habit is based on the presence of the essence of the soul to itself. In the two passages we have just examined these two phrases were indirectly applied to the soul's mode of presence: "praesentia intelligibilis ad intellectum quocumque modo"; and "praesentialiter intellectui quocumque modo adasse." Thus the ontological presence described in these passages may be 1) a middle term joining habitual self-knowledge and the Augustinian intelligere into an equivalence; and 2) an indication of the cause of habitual self-knowledge. This last point is right at the heart of this thesis and we will return to it when we take up the explanation of our central passage.

A third phase of our study of the Commentary on the Sentences will be to expand what we have read above about the method the soul must follow in coming to know its habits, powers, and eventually itself. How are these interior realities to be known which cannot be present to us as derived from sense data?

In two passages we have already touched on the method. It has been
described by the general name of "reasoning from objects to acts and from acts to the power."  
Secondly, its necessity was based on our natural orientation to reach intelligible objects through the sensible.

We find a more systematic explanation of this method in a later passage. The question is whether we can know our own habits. St. Thomas first divides the question into 1) a treatment of knowing them in their quiddity (secundum id quod est); and 2) a treatment of knowing them in their properties (quantum ad ea quae ipsam consequuntur). Then he divides the question of knowledge of the quiddity of habits into 1) knowledge of what they are (quid est); and 2) knowledge that they are (an est). This last division parallels the division of the body of the response in our central passage in the De Veritate; thus, we stand to gain from examining St. Thomas' discussion of the second half of the question.

In explaining our knowledge of the nature of a habit, St. Thomas specifies the reasoning process described above as a movement from the actions to their proportionate cause: "habitus ipsos per actus cognoscimus, sicut causam per effectum. Et quia nos sumus causa actuum, ideo actus cognoscimus per actum rationis investigantis quid sit necessarium in actu illo ex proportione objecti boni et finis."

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15 "maxima difficultas est in cognitione animae, nec devenitur in ipsam nisi ratiocinando ex objectis in actus et ex actus in potentiam." Ibid., 3, 1, 2 ad 3.

16 Ibid., 17, 1, 1 sol. Cf. p. 17 above.

17 In III Sent., 23, 1, 2 sol.

18 Ibid.
Far more important for us is the description of the way one knows the existence of his own habits:

Sed ille qui habet habitum . . . cognoscit se habere habitum inquantum percepit inclinationem sui ad actum, secundum quam se habet alqualiter ad actum illum. Et hoc quidem cognoscit homo per modum reflectionis, in quantum scilicet cognoscit se operari quae operantur. Et ideo dicit Augustinus quia huius modi habitus cognoscuntur per suam praeesentiam quantum ad hunc modum.19

There are four things to be noted from this passage: 1) By the use of the word percepit we can establish a similarity with our central De Veritate text, a similarity over and above the methodological structure of the two articles. In both cases the word percepit refers to our knowledge of the existence of an inner reality of the human person. 2) A step toward this knowledge of one's own habits is that a person knows himself to be the agent or source of an activity.20 3) The action by which a person comes to this knowledge is called a reflection. 4) The cause of this knowledge is said by Augustine to be simply the presence of the habit.

These points indicate that this question bears definitely on our study of the soul's knowledge of itself. If a tentative analogy may be made, we can say that because of the presence (1) of the soul to itself, there is a reflection (3) involved in its operations in which it perceives (1) that it exists as the

19 Ibid.

20 Here we find a remote textual justification for the interpretation of San Severino and Gardeil. Cf. p. 5 above.
agent (2) or proportionate cause of the operation.

We will proceed by seeking to amplify our understanding of reflection as treated in the Commentary on the Sentences. We can begin by examining the answer to the third opinion in the question studied above. St. Thomas first describes the reflection leading to knowledge of the nature of the soul:

"Intellectus autem, ut dicitur in III De Anima, sicut alia, cognoscit seipsum, quia scilicet per speciem non quidem sui, sed objecti, quae est forma ejus; ex qua cognoscit actus sui naturam, et ex natura actus naturam potentiae cognoscentis, et ex natura potentiae naturam essentiae, et per consequens aliarum potentiarum." 21 This is the method described in the second half of our central De Veritate text, and the way we have already seen the soul's knowledge of itself described. 22

The advance made in this treatment of the soul's knowledge of itself is in the mention made of a second kind of reflection which leads to knowledge of the existence of the soul's acts. In the present passage, the fact of such a reflection is just stated along with the explanation that such an operation can only be had in a power that has no bodily organ:

Alic modo anima reflectitur super actus suos cognoscendo illos actos esse. Hoc autem non potest esse ita quod aliqua potentia utens organo corporali reflectitur super actum proprium, quia oportet quod instrumentum caderet medium inter ipsam potentiam et instrumentum quo primo cognoscebat. . . . Intellectus autem cum sit potentia non utens organo corporali, potest cognoscere actum suum, secundum quod patitur quodammodo ab objecto et informatur per speciem objecti. 23

21 Ibid., ad 3.

22 Ibid., 3, 1, 2 ad 3 and 17, 1, 4 sol.

23 In III Sent., 23, 1, 2 sol.
Thus we may draw this distinction between the two kinds of reflection: 1) Reflection on the nature of the soul or of a habit is a type of inquiry or study of a discursive nature beginning with study of the objects of knowledge or volition and leading to understanding of the nature of the act, or of the power, or even of the nature of the soul, the subject of such operations. The emphasis in all of this is on the quiddity or taleity of these interior realities. 2) Reflection on the existence of the acts or habits is based on the independence of the intellect and will of material organs in their operations. This last kind of reflection calls for further study.

Two times in the Commentary on the Sentences St. Thomas has mentioned this reflection which tells us that our operation exists. In the first passage, 2\textsuperscript{2b} he is explaining how our desire for, and enjoyment of, an end coalesces with desire and enjoyment regarding the operation by which we reach that end. This aspect of the will's operation is parallel with the act of the intellect where we understand an object and understand that we understand in the same operation. The second passage 2\textsuperscript{25} finds the identity of the intellect's understanding of itself and of its act of self-understanding as an analogy with the Trinity where there is not another act of love by which the love between Father and Son is an object of love. Thus this reflection in which we know

\textsuperscript{2b} "et cadem fruiitio frueitur fine et operations, cuius objectum est finis ultimus; sicut cadem operationem intelligo intelligibile, et intelligo me intelligere." In I Sent., 1, 2, 1 ad 2.

\textsuperscript{25} "non alio actu potentia fertur in objectum et in actum suum, eodem enim actu intellectus intelligit se et intelligit se intelligere." Ibid., 10, 1, 5 ad 2.
our intellectual act is concomitant (eadem operations) with those acts and is characterized by directness and immediacy.

The cause of this second kind of reflection has been indicated as the immateriality of these intellectual operations. 26 This is significant since the aim of this thesis is to explain the passage where the cause of the soul's actual knowledge of itself is given as its habitual knowledge of itself through its essence. For a complete explanation of habitual self-knowledge in the soul we will have to determine the exact relationship of the soul's immateriality to the state of habitual knowledge of the soul.

We will now turn to the fourth part of our study of the Commentary on the Sentences and examine more in detail how immateriality is the cause of immediate reflection. In one of the treatments of reflection St. Thomas states that a material power does not reflect on its operations, but that an immaterial power does reflect. 27 Two lines of explanation for this fact are taken up:

1) Et ideo dicendum quod potentiae immateriales reflectuntur super sua objecta; quia intellectus intelligit se intelligere, et similiter voluntas vult se velle et diligere. Cuius ratio est, quia actus potentiae immaterialis non excluditur a ratione objecti. Objectum enim voluntatis est bonum; et sub hac ratione diligere actum suum inquantum est bonus; et similiter est ex parte intellectus;

2) et propter hoc, libro De Causis, propositio xv, dicitur quod cujuscumque actio reedit in essentiam agentis per quamdam reflectionem, oportet essentiam ejus ad seipsam redire, it est

26 In III Sent., 23, 1, 2 sol.

27 In I Sent., 17, 1, 5 ad 3.
in se subsistentem esse, non super aliud delatam, id est non dependentem a materia. 28

The first reason behind immediate reflection is that the acts of the immaterial powers are included in the transcendent objects of these same powers. The implication is that the operation of the intellect is itself able to be understood fundamentally because it is and so is convertible with the true—the transcendent object of the intellect. Surely this is an explanation which can be amplified into a metaphysical explanation of the knowability of the habits of the intellect, of the power itself, and of the soul as the source of the power. Thus, as the intellect comes to know an intelligible object there are at once a group of knowable, and de facto known, realities present in the act of knowing. 29 Still, we have not reached an explanation of immateriality as a ground of the possibility of reflection. Let us study the second part of the above passage for such a causal explanation. 30

It will be helpful to analyze the content of the last five lines of the text into four parts:

28 In I Sent., 17, 1, 5 ad 3. The author has divided the text.

29 This suggests a description of knowing as having a first stage in which objective and subjective (the act, the power, the soul) elements are known as confused parts of the whole. We read that such an occurrence is possible: "partes possunt intelligi dupliciter: uno modo sub quadam confusione, prout sunt in toto; et sic simul cognoscuntur per unam formam totius, et sic simul cognoscuntur.—S.T., I, 85, i ad 3.

30 This passage does not contain a literal quotation of the Liber de Causis. It is a paraphrase of the passage including the fifteenth proposition and the five explanatory statements which accompany the proposition. The same proposition, "Omni sciens qui scit essentiam suam, est rediens ad essentiam suam reditione complete," is also used in In II Sent., 19, 1, 1, to substantiate a proof for the immateriality of the soul which has been built on the reflective act of the soul.
1) A given: An agent with immediately reflective operations.

2) A consequence: The essence of that agent "returns" upon itself.

3) First explanation of that "return": Subsistence—not being spread through matter.


Here we meet a radically different way of speaking about the human soul. The Neo-Platonic description has the soul "bent back" on itself in its essence. Such a picture is suggestive to the imagination, but it is not of itself satisfying to the understanding. However, it is clear that a familiar principle governs the transit from the first part of the text to the second part. The movement is according to the principle that the mode of operation follows the mode of being. Thus, if the soul returns upon itself in its operation of knowledge, it must also be marked by a substantial or essential return upon itself.

The fourth part of the text connects the Neo-Platonic description with the immateriality of the soul. From what we saw above,31 this is pertinent to the problem of the soul's habitual self-knowledge.

Let us draw up the results of our study of the Commentary on the Sentences into definite conclusions:

First, there is no proper sense in which the soul knows itself continually. Thus, habitual self-knowledge cannot mean continual self-knowledge in the human soul.

Secondly, the natural orientation of the human intellect is to find its

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31 Cf. p. 23, above.
intelligible object in what is presented in phantasms. Thus the soul does not have itself as a direct object of knowledge but must use a discursive process in coming to know what it is.

Thirdly, two types of reflection have been noted: a) the discursive return of the intellect to gain knowledge of its own nature—what it is; and b) immediate return by which a man knows concomitantly with his operation that the operation is taking place.

Fourthly, the reason for the immediate reflection is the independence of the soul from matter. This last fact has also been described as a substantial or essential return of the soul upon itself.

Along with these conclusions, we can point to four questions regarding habitual self-knowledge which call for answers:

First, is the habitual knowledge the soul has of itself to be understood as equivalent to the immateriality of the soul?

Secondly, is the immediate reflection of the soul on its operations the actuation of its habitual knowledge of itself.

Thirdly, is it possible to have knowledge that something is, apart from all knowledge of the nature of that thing? This seems to be implied from the distinction of the two kinds of reflection.

Fourthly, what is the complete explanation of these two descriptions of the soul: a) "present to itself," and b) "essentially returning upon itself"? How are these phrases to be connected with the habitual knowledge the soul has of itself?
These are the questions we will seek to answer in our study of the De Veritate. First, we will seek to expose the general principles governing all knowledge and especially all reflective knowledge. Then, we will turn to our study of habitual self-knowledge in the human soul.32

32 We must explain the omission of De Veritate, 1, 9, a passage in which St. Thomas surely does treat of the knower's knowledge of himself. We pass it over in this thesis since it describes a special instance of reflection on the nature of the soul. According to this text, along with the scientific study of the nature of the soul, we must include the knowledge of the nature of one's knowing power which is had in every judgment. It is of the nature of the judgment that the intellect come to an immediate grasp of itself as a knower. In its act, the mind knows its own dynamic quality. This is more than perception of the existence of one's operation. But it is not formal scientific knowledge of the nature of the intellect and of the soul. All St. Thomas points to is that the mind judging of reality knows itself as a being made to know what is. This is beyond the scope of our study of the habitual disposition underlying the soul's knowledge of its own existence.
CHAPTER III

THE DE VERITATE: GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ALL KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

In this chapter we will examine the articles on divine and angelic self-knowledge in the De Veritate with the aim of singling out the general principles which guide St. Thomas in working out his explanation of each of these subjects. We will then put these principles to use in the next chapter in elaborating a complete explanation of habitual self-knowledge in the human soul.

In taking up the question of God's knowledge of Himself, St. Thomas indicates that his solution is to begin with an absolute consideration of the requirements for knowledge itself: "Unde ad considerandum qualiter Deus seipsum cognoscat, oportet videre per quam naturam aliquid sit cognoscens et cognitum."

The first step is a discussion in clear and simple terms of what knowledge is, considered according to its ontological purpose. Knowledge is one way for a creature to increase its perfection over and above the perfection it has as a member of a particular species.

The problem is that of the ontological limitation of created beings:

\[De Ver., 2, 2 c.\]
Sed quia esse specificum unius rei est distinctum ab esse specifico alterius rei, ideo in qualibet re creatae huiusmodi perfectionis habitae in unaquaque re, tantum deest de perfectione simpliciter, quantum perfectius in aliis speciebus inventur; ut cuiuslibet rei perfectio in se considerata sit imperfecta, veluti pars totius perfectionis universalis, quae consurgit ex singularum rerum perfectionibus, invicem congregatis. 2

The solution to this ontological limitation is knowledge, by which one creature can appropriate to itself the proper perfections belonging to other things.

Unde ut huic imperfectioni aliquod remedium esset, inventur alius modus perfectionis in rebus creatis, secundum quod perfectio quae est propria unius rei, in altera re inventur; et haec est perfectio cognoscentis in quantum est cognoscens, quia secundum hoc a cognoscente aliquid cognoscitur quod ipsum cognitum aliquo modo est apud cognoscentem. 3

From this introduction to the problem at hand, we can learn something about the place held in the mind of St. Thomas by such a question as ours of human self-knowledge. We see in these texts that knowledge is fitted into a teleological scheme of universal proportions. The knowledge spoken of is wholly objective. It fulfills its function in assimilating other beings—objects—to the knower and thus carrying him along to greater perfection. Even possession of the whole universe in this manner is not too great an achievement for the human spirit. 4 By some, just such a conquest of reality is posited as

2Ibid.
3Ibid.
4"Et secundum hunc modum possibile est ut in una re totius universalis perfectio existat. Unde haec est ultima perfectio ad quam anima potest pervenire, secundum philosophos, ut in ea describatur totus ordo universi, et causarum eius; in quo etiam finem ultimum hominis posuerunt, qui secundum nos, erit in visione Dei."—Ibid.
the goal of human life. Questions of the subject's conscious possession of himself are relegated to a secondary level of importance. 5

From treatment of the purpose of knowledge, St. Thomas goes on to a general consideration of the mode of its realization. How will the known perfection be at the same time in the knower and in its proper subject? It cannot be assimilated according to the same determined mode of existence which it has in the natural subject. It must be in the knower somehow without its natural determination. 6

Thus, with brevity and careful directness, St. Thomas has come to the point of stating the primary principle governing all the instances of knowledge:

Et quia formae et perfectiones rerum per materiam determinantur, inde est quod secundum hoc est aliqua res cognoscibilis secundum quod a materia separatur. Unde oportet quod etiam id in quo suscipitur talis rei perfectio, sit immateriale; si enim esset materiale, perfectio recepta esset in eo secundum aliquid esse determinatum; et ita non esset in eo secundum quod est cognoscibilis; scilicet prout, existens perfectio unus est nata esse in altero. 7

The first consideration is that the determination of forms and perfections is by matter. The conclusion is that knowability demands separation from

5 Thus St. Thomas remarks in In XX Met., 11, n. 2617, "Hic videtur principalis actio, ut aliquis intelligat intelligibile. Quod autem aliquis intelligit se intelligere intelligibile, hoc videtur esse praeter principalem actum, quasi accessorium quodam."

6 Perfectio autem unius rei in altera esse non potest secundum determinatum esse quod habet in re ills; etideo ad hoc quod nata sit esse in re altera, oportet eam considerare abaque his quae nata sunt eam determinare." De Ver., 2, 2 c.

7 Ibid.
determining matter. Regarding the power to know, the conclusion is parallel: a knower must be a receiver of perfections. The reception must take place in an immaterial manner. The reason appears in considering how matter receives a perfection according to one determined mode of existence and so rules out the otherness of the form which is received in knowing.

A first conclusion of this part of our study is that things have the power to know proportionately to their immateriality: "secundum ordinem immaterialitatis in rebus, secundum hoc in eis natura cognitionis inventur." The same proportion is found concerning the knowability of things: "Similiter est etiam ordo in cognoscibilibus."

A brief general application of this principle shows that the universe is divided into things only potentially knowable and things of themselves knowable. The things potentially knowable require the operation of agent intellect upon them to render them immaterial and thus apt for assimilation in knowledge. St. Thomas adds that the immaterial things, though more knowable by their nature, are less knowable by us, since, as we have seen, the human mind is by nature orientated to take its object from sensible things.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 "Sed res immateriales sunt intelligibiles per seipsas; unde sunt magis notae secundum naturam, quamvis minus notae nobis." Ibid.

11 Cf. p. 17, above.
The conclusion of the article is brief. God, as purely spiritual, is at once the supreme knower and the most knowable being. Thus, His existing nature is wholly knowable and knowing. The perfect identity of the objective and subjective requirements for knowledge grounds the perfect self-grasp which is God's knowledge of Himself. This is the first application of the universal principle that knowledge is proportionate to immateriality on the part of both subject and object.

In the answer to the second opinion in this same article, St. Thomas gives an explanation of the Liber de Causis proposition on self-knowledge, "Omnis sciens essentiam est rediens ad essentiam suam reditio completa." We shall study the text in detail since it is the definitive statement St. Thomas makes on his understanding of the proposition.

The objection proposes on the authority of the Liber de Causis that a thing which knows its own essence must experience a complete return—reditio

12 "Quia igitur Deus est in fine separationis a materia, cum ab omni potentialitate sit penitus inanimis; relinquitur quod ipse est maxime cognoscitivus, et maxime cognoscibilis." Ibid.

13 The two places where the proposition appeared in the Commentary on the Sentences were literal synopses of the proposition and its explanation in the Liber de Causis. In De Veritate, 1, 9, it is used to substantiate the description of the reflective powers of intellectual beings, but the proposition is not explained. The explanation found in S. T., I, 11, 2 ad 1, synopsized the explanation found here in the De Veritate. The Summa text shows some verbal precisions: "Dicendum quod redire ad essentiam suam nihil aliud est quam rem subsistere in seipsa. Forma enim, inquantum perficit materiam dando ei esse, quodammodo supra ipsam effunditur; in quantum vero in seipsa habet esse, in seipsam redit. Virtutes igitur cognoscitivae quae non sunt subsistentes, sed actus aliquorum organorum, non cognoscunt seipsas, sicut patet in singulis sensibus. Sed virtutes cognoscitivae per se subsistentes cognoscunt seipsas." We will take up the content of St. Thomas' Commentary on the Liber de Causis in Chapter V.
complete--upon its own essence. However, in God there can be no return upon the essence, since in no way does God go out away from Himself. Thus, if self-knowledge must involve this return, there can be no self-knowledge in God.

In the first part of the answer to the opinion, St. Thomas explains the metaphorical way in which the return must be understood. The first part of his explanation concerns understanding as such and not just as found in God.

Ad secundum dicendum quod locutio haec qua dicitur, quod sciens se, ad essentiam suam redit, est locutio metaphorica; non enim in intelligendo est motus, ut probatur in VIII Physicorum. Unde nec, proprio loquendo, est ibi recessus aut reditus; sed pro tanto dicitur esse processus vel motus, in quantum ex uno cognoscibili pervenitur ad alium.14

St. Thomas then proceeds to show how the proposition can be applied to describe the discursive type of reflection found in the knowledge a man has of his own soul. However, this use of the proposition to describe self-knowledge cannot be applied to God:

Sed in nobis processus vel motus fit per qundam discursum, secundum quem est exitus et reditus in animam nostram, dum cognoscit seipsam. Primo autem actus ab ipsa exiens terminatur ad objectum; et deinde reflectitur super actum; et deinde super potentiam et essentiam, secundum quod actus cognoscutur ex objectis et potentiae per actus. Sed in divina cognitione non est aliquis discursus, ut prius dictum est quasi per notum in ignotum devanit.15

The final part of the answer gives the basic explanation of what this return upon one's essence really is.

14 De Ver., 2, 2 ad 2.

15 Ibid. A possible type of discursive movement in God is seen in considering the objects of his knowledge. Considering creatures, God finds a likeness to Himself and thus is brought back to His own essence again where He views these creatures in the first place.
Sed tamen sciendum, quod reditio ad essentiam in libro de Causis nihil aliud dicitur nisi subsistentia rei in seipsa. Formae enim in se non subsistentes, sunt super aliud effusae et millatenus ad seipsas collectae; sed formae in se subsistentes ita ad res alias effunduntur, eas perficiendo, vel eis influendo, quod in seipsas per se manent.16

Here, in St. Thomas' explanation, as in the actual text of the Liber de Causis,17 the return involved in self-knowledge is the ground for explaining the mode of being of the knower which is capable of such a return. The value of the present explanation is that it is a causal explanation based on the relation of a form to its receptive subject.

The subsistent form is wholly self-contained, and remains so through all its operations. If a form is received in a subject, it loses this quality of self-containment and is spread out through another principle to form a composite being.

Thus St. Thomas turns the imaginative conception of the Neo-Platonic movement of a being back upon itself into an ontological explanation based on the mode of being of subsistent forms.

Once the proposition has been explained in this manner, we find that it can be applied to God: "secundum hunc modum Deus maxime ad essentiam suam redit, quia omnibus providens, ac per hoc quoddammodo in omnia exiens et

16 Ibid. Cf. the parallel passage from S. T., I, 14, 2 ad 1, p. 34, n. 13, above.

17 Cf. pp. 26-27, above, for St. Thomas' paraphrase of the text and our analysis of the argument found in the commentary on the text.
We will move ahead now to consider St. Thomas' explanation of self-
knowledge in the angels in De Veritate, Question Eight, Article Six. Here we
find a treatment of the same universal character we found in the approach to
the question of God's self-knowledge; the conclusion is an application of the
premises to the peculiar ontological situation of the angels.

The body of the article takes as its point of departure the distinction
between operations: transient operations, which change another; and immanent
operations, which are perfections in the agent. The aim is to solve the
difficulties proposed in the third and eighth opinions against the possibility
of self-knowledge in the angels.

Both of these difficulties are based on the proposed principle that in
knowledge the knower and known are related as agent and patient. Since the
same thing cannot be both agent and patient in an operation, an angel cannot
be a knowing subject grasping itself in an act of knowledge. Perhaps with one
part of its being an angel can come to know another part, but the stated
principle will exclude knowledge of an angel's whole being by itself.

\[16^1\]De Ver., 2, 2 ad 2. The application is not restricted to God's knowl-
edge of Himself, but is made in a general manner to His operations on all
creatures. The application of the principle in the Summa Theologiae
emphasizes God's return in knowing Himself: "Per se autem subsistere maxime
convenit Deo. Unde secundum hunc modum loquendi ipse est maxime rediens ad
essentiam suam et cognoscens seipsum." SS. Tert. I, li, 2 ad 1.

\[19^2\]Prætereas, idem non potest esse agens et patiens, movens et motum, nisi
hoc modo quod una pars eius sit movens vel agens, et alia nata vel passa; ut
patet in animalibus, ut probetur in VIII Physicorum. Sed intelligens et
intellectum se habent ut agens et patiens. Ergo non potest esse ut angelus
totum se intelligat."—De Ver., 6, 6 arg. 3.
The first point made after the initial distinction of transient and immanent operations is that operations of both kinds require that the subject must be in act in the line in which he operates: "Haec autem duas actiones in hoc convenient quod ultraque non prograditurn nisi ab existente in actu, secundum quod est actu." 20

The next point is the explanation of knowledge as an immanent operation proceeding from the union of knower and known.

Actio autem appetitus et sensus et intellectus non est sicut actio progradiens in materiam exteriores, sed sicut actio consistens in ipso agente, ut perfectio ejus; et ideo oportet quod intelligens, secundum quod intelligit, sit actu; non autem oportet quod intelligendo intelligens sit ut agens, intellectum ut passum. Sed intelligens et intellectum, prout ex eis est effectum unum quid, quod est intellectus in actu, sunt unum principium huius actus qui est intelligere. 21

Thus the knower is not alone the agent, since he is not in act as a knower before the union with the known object. Consequently on this union, the intellect in act—power completed by object—is the single source of the act of knowledge.

The union of knower and known can be had in two different ways: by the essence of the known being joined to the knower or by a likeness being so joined. Now it can happen that action and passion may be necessary to bring about the union of intellect and intelligible object. Thus in human knowledge the agent intellect renders the intelligible species actually knowable, and

20 Ibid., c.
21 Ibid.
the possible intellect is a patient in receiving the species. However this action and passion is not knowledge, but only the way to knowledge.

The conclusion of this analysis is that knowledge follows on the union of intellect with something which is in act in the intelligible order. This is the second major principle which we will use in explanation of habitual self-knowledge in the human soul: "Intellectus intelligit omne illud quod est actu intelligibile in eo." 22

The rest of the exposition concerns the self-knowledge of an angel as following from the presence of its essence, which is in act in the intelligible order, to its intellect, which consequently knows this intelligible object to which it is united. It will be instructive to us to follow the steps of the argument to see the way St. Thomas works out a comparison between the angel and the human possible intellect.

The first step is an explanation of how things exist in the intelligible order. The second step is an explanation of operation in the intelligible order. In both parts St. Thomas draws the explicit parallel between this treatment of the intelligible order and the aspects of the entative order which would be more generally known to his reader. The first part gives the grades of intelligible being, the second, the modes of intelligible operation.

1) \[\text{Sciendum est igitur, quod nihil prohibet esse aliquid actu unum et in potentia alterum . . . ; et similiter est possibile aliquid esse actu ens, quod in genere intelligibilium est potentia tantum. Sicut enim est gradus actus et}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
potentiae in entibus, quod aliquid est potentia tantum, ut materia prima; aliquid actu tantum, ut Deus; aliquid actu et potentia ut omnia intermedia; sic est in genere intelligibilium aliquid ut actu tantum, scilicet essentia divina; aliquid ut potentia tantum, ut intellectus possibilis. . . . Omnes autem substantiae angelicae sunt medias, habentes aliquid de potentia et actu, non solum in genere entium, sed etiam in genere intelligibilium.

2) Sic ut igitur materia prima non potest agere aliquam actionem nisi perficiatur per formam; et tunc actio illa est quaedam emanatio formas ipsius magis quam materiae; res autem existentes actu posse agere actionem secundum quod sunt actu; ita intellectus possibilis noster nihil potest intelligere ante quem perficiatur forma intelligibili in actu. Tunc enim intelligit rem cuius est illa forma; nec potest se intelligere nisi per formam intelligibilem actu in se existentem. Intellectus vero angeli, quia habet essentiam quae est ut actu in genere intelligibilium, sibi praesentem, potest intelligere id quod est intelligibilem apud ipsum, scilicet essentiam suam, non per aliquid similitudinem, sed per essentiam.23

The crucial point in the first part of the explanation is that the angels are in act (though not in pure act) in the intelligible order. The second movement of explanation brings us to the conclusion that an angel knows itself since its own essence is in act in the intelligible order and naturally united with its intellect. Thus our second principle governing knowledge is applied perfectly to the case of angelic self-knowledge—a being understanding that which is united with its intellect and in act in the intelligible order.

We also have a further explanation which shows why there is no continual self-knowledge in the human soul. The reason is in the nature of the possible

CHART I
SCHEMATIC ANALYSIS OF ANGELIC SELF-KNOWLEDGE
IN DE VERITATE, Q. 8, A. 6

I. Comparison of orders according to being:

Entative Order
1. God (actu tantum)
2. Prime Matter (potentia tantum)
3. All intermediate existing things (actu et potentia)

Intelligible Order
1. Divine Essence (actu tantum)
2. Possible Intellect (potentia tantum)
3. Angelic Substances (habentes aliquid de potentia et actu)

II. Comparison of orders according to operation:

Entative Order
1. Prime Matter—
a. can act only when perfected by form.
b. action is of the form more than of the matter.

2. Beings in act—
can act in the line in which they are in act.

Intelligible Order
1. Possible Intellect—
a. can understand only when perfected by intelligible form.
b. understanding is of the natural subject of the form; self-knowledge is consequent and secondary.

2. Angelic intellect—
understands that which is in act and united with itself, i.e., its own essence.
intellect: it is bereft of an intelligible object until the agent intellect performs its function of abstraction and illumination on a phantasm. We will work out the consequences of this necessity in the next chapter in handling the causes of the habitual knowledge the human soul has of itself.

In response to the fifth opinion opposing the possibility of self-knowledge in the angel we see our first governing principle brought into action.

The major premise of the argument in the opinion is exactly the principle we found operative in explaining the necessity of God having knowledge of Himself: "Nihil intelligitur nisi secundum quod denudatur a materia et a conditionibus materialibus."24 The minor premise proposes that being-in-potency is a material condition from which one can never separate the angelic essence and therefore this essence is not knowable.

The answer is that the material conditions which prevent knowledge are those which restrict natural forms to determined material dimensions. Thus there is no need for separating an angel from the potency found in it, since it is not the potency of a determined and extended material object.25 The implied conclusion is the correct application of the first governing principle of knowledge: since the angelic essence is completely immaterial, it is of

24 Ibid., arg. 5.

25 Ibid., ad. 5.
By way of conclusion to this chapter let us briefly review the two governing principles of knowledge derived from St. Thomas' expositions of divine and angelic self-knowledge.

The first principle is that both the power to know and the capacity to be known require immateriality. Here is the statement of the disposition or mode of being required before knowledge can take place. As we saw, the source of this principle was the consideration of knowledge as the way in which some beings can assimilate greater perfection. That this assimilation take place, it is absolutely necessary that it take place immaterially, or the whole meaning of knowledge as of "the other" is denied.

The second principle was that a knower understands whatever is actually knowable, and united with his intellect. This describes the effect of immateriality: actual knowability; and the relation which subject and object must have: identity, through essence or species.

We will turn now to work out a full explanation of the habitual knowledge the human soul has of itself, keeping these two governing principles in view.

26 Thus St. Thomas also explains in the course of treating the knowledge an angel has of another angel. The context is a reference to their self-knowledge: "Tunc enim non oportet quod sit aliud forma in intellectu, et forma qua res in se subsistit; eo quod ipsa forma qua talis res in se subsistit, est intelligibilis in actu propter immunitatem suam a materia." De Ver., 8, 7 c.
CHAPTER IV

HABITUAL SELF-KNOWLEDGE

IN THE DE VERITATE

The aim of this chapter is to reach an exact understanding of the paragraph in the De Veritate in which St. Thomas describes the human soul's habitual knowledge of itself.

Our first consideration is to determine the exact subject of discussion in the article. What is to be understood by the term mens? The whole of the tenth question of the De Veritate is concerned with this subject and we can find the definition we seek in the first article of the question.

The nominal origin of the word mens regarding the human soul is the fact that the soul has a mensura within itself in first principles. In knowing, the soul can be said to measure things by these principles. The fact is that these principles are implicitly operative in every judgment. Thus, mens has to do with the intellectual faculty.

St. Thomas further explains that whenever the name of a power comes to be

1 The title: "De Mente, In Qua Est Imago Trinitatis."

2 "Nomen mentis hoc dicitur in anima, sicut et intellectus. Solum enim intellectus accipit cognitionem de rebus mensurando eas quasi ad sua principia." De Ver., 10, 1 c.

3 "Aliqua naturaliter cognoscimus ut per se nota, ad quae omnia alia examinamus secundum ea de omnibus judicantes." Ibid., 10, 8 c.
used for the subject of that power, the name is always taken from the highest power of the thing in question. 4

The conclusion of the article is that mens either denotes the highest power of the soul, or it is used regarding the essence of the soul, and then it denotes the essence precisely as the source of the highest power. 5

In answering the various arguments proposed in the question, St. Thomas makes some further precisions of the meaning of mens. In answer to the second argument he shows that mens includes more than just the intellect. He calls it "quoddam genus potentiarum, ut sub mente intelligantur comprehendi omnes illae potentiae quae in suis actibus omnino a materia et conditionibus materiae recedunt." 6 The reason for this inclusion of the will is that it enjoys the same dignity and supremacy among the soul's powers as the intellect since both have equally universal objects. St. Thomas again adds that the name mens can also refer to the soul precisely as the source of these two powers. 7

If we now turn to the introductory paragraphs of De Veritate, 10, 8, we can determine exactly how mens is used in this article. The first step in

4"Et idem si aliqua res per suam potentiam debeat designari, oportet quod designatur per ultimum potentiae suae." Ibid., 10, 1 c.

5"Et sic mens, prout in ea est imago, nominat potentiam animae et non essentiam; vel si nominat essentiam, hoc est nisi inquantum ab ea fluit talis potentia." Ibid.

6Ibid., ad 2. In answer to the ninth opinion mens is further explained as a general power of the soul having different powers as its parts.

7Ibid., ad 8.
St. Thomas' exposition is to clarify the meaning of *per essentiam* in the question posed at the head of the article: "Utrum mens seipsam per essentiam cognoscat an per aliquam speciem."

*Per essentiam suam* does not refer to the object of knowledge, as if the question were whether we know the essence or only the accidents of the soul. The present question refers to the medium of our knowledge of the soul. What is particularly significant is the way St. Thomas at least nominally bypasses the question regarding *mens* and takes the soul (*anima*) as the subject of the whole discussion.

Alio modo ut referatur ad id quo cognoscitur; et sic intelligitur aliquid per essentiam cognoscit, quia ipsa essentia est quo cognoscitur. Et hoc modo ad praesens quaeritur, utrum *anima* per essentiam intelligat se.

Ad cuius rei evidentiam, notandum est, quod de *anima* duplex cognitio haber potest ab unoquoque, ut Augustinus dicit in ix De Trinitate.  

Thus we can conclude from the substitution of *anima* that the subject of the article is the soul itself. The precise intention would seem to be to take the second way in which *mens* was explained in the first article in this tenth question. Thus, we are dealing with the soul as the source, or ontological subject, from which the powers of intellect and will proceed.

The next point in our approach to the article is to point out the two types of knowledge of the soul that are possible. The distinction is between knowing the nature of the soul and knowing its existence, as we saw in the

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8 *Ibid.*, 10, 8, c. Italics added. *Anima* is used through the body of the article, with two exceptions, until the conclusion.
Commentary on the Sentences:  

Duplex cognitio haberi potest ab unoquoque, ut Augustinus dicit in ix De Trinitate. Una quidem, qua uniuscuiusque anima se tantum cognoscit quantum ad id quod est ei proprium; et alia qua cognoscitur anima quantum ad id quod omnibus animabus est commune. Ila enim cognitio quae communiter de omni anima habetur, est quo cognoscitur animae natura; cognitio vero quam quis habet de anima quantum ad id quod est sibi proprium, est cognitio de anima secundum quod habet esse in tali individuo. Unde per hanc cognitionem cognoscitur an est anima, sicut cum aliquis percipit se habere animam; per alien vero cognitionem scitur quid est anima, et quae sunt per se accidentia eius. 

The last named approach is explained in the second half of the exposition as based on a discursive reasoning process proceeding from the objects of the soul's operative powers. Thus proceeds the philosophical investigation which ends in knowledge of the common nature and properties of the soul. St. Thomas repeats the comparison of the intellect with prime matter to indicate why such a discursive process is necessary.  

Just as prime matter is only known through our knowledge of form, so the intellectual power is known through the perfections of other beings received in knowledge. 

The second way of knowing the soul is for an individual to come to know that he has a soul: "sicut cum aliquis percipit se habere animam." This knowledge is then shown to take place at two levels: that of actual knowledge,

9 In III Sent., 23, 1, 2 sol. Cf. pp. 18-21 above.

10 De Ver., 10, 8 c.

11 Cf. p. 39, above.

12 De Ver., 10, 8 c.
and that of habitual knowledge. For the purpose of easily distinguishing the reasoned knowledge of the soul's nature and the perceived knowledge of the soul's existence, we will use the term "understanding" to denote the former and "awareness" to denote the latter. This usage is roughly equivalent to that of intelligere and percipere in the text of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas then explains that this awareness, at the level of actual knowledge, does not require a discursive process, but is had directly and without a logical medium. It occurs in the awareness of the soul's activities which is concomitant with the activities themselves. The implication is that in our operations we are aware that we do operate and this awareness involves awareness of the soul which is operating. Thus, in the first part of his fourfold answer to the question posed in the article, St. Thomas says that actual awareness of the soul is had through the operations of the soul:

Quantum igitur ad actualem cognitionem, qua aliquis considerat se in actu animam habere, sic dico, quod anima cognoscitur per actus suos. In hoc enim aliquis percipit se animam habere, et vivere, et esse, quod percipit se sentire et intelligere, et alia huiusmodi vitae opera exercere.13

A striking contrast between the types of knowledge of the soul—awareness and understanding—is the absolute certainty of one's awareness of the existence of his soul compared with the difficulty of understanding the nature

13 Ibid.
From this comparison we can learn something about the content of our awareness of the soul's existence. We can put the question in this fashion: What is affirmed as existing in the judgment which results from this actual awareness? The subject of the affirmation cannot be understood to be the "form of the body," or "some immaterial principle." These aspects of the soul are known only in understanding the nature of the soul and are gained through the process of discursive investigation.

In the text it was stated that this awareness of the soul is involved in the awareness that one is acting in a particular way. The awareness of the soul is then an implication, though an implication about which we have complete certainty. It follows that, just as one comes to affirm, "I know this thing; I sense that thing I live," from the awareness of his acts, so one would come to affirm, "There is in me the source of knowing, the source of sensing, and the source of life." The latter is implied, and it indicates the soul in a vague and general manner. We must rigorously exclude from the notion of this source any content beyond a most primitive idea of something which operates. It cannot be specified as wholly identical with the person,

"Secundum hoc scientia de anima est certissima, quod unusquisque in seipso experitur se animam habere, et actus animae sibi inesse; sed cognoscere quid sit anima difficillimum est." Ibid., ad 8 in contr. Also: "Nullus erravit unquam in hoc quod non perciperet se vivere, quod pertinet ad cognitionem qua aliquis percipit quid in anima qua agatur; secundum quam cognitionem dictum est quod anima per essentiam suam cognoscitur in habitu." Ibid., ad 2.
or as being a distinct part of him. Nothing of its nature or properties can be affirmed; all that we make is an affirmation in all certainty that this source does exist.\textsuperscript{15} The ground of the affirmation is the actual perception of this source operating in some definite way. We might add that the way in which we most commonly meet this experience is in the certainty we have, consequent on our acts, that some act of our did take place. What St. Thomas is pointing out is that the perception of "me operating" is in reality a perception of the soul operating, even though a man cannot formulate the ontological relationship of supposit, formal principle, and operative power in the human operations which he daily performs.

We can turn to the second type of awareness of the soul's existence.

Sed quantum ad cognitionem habitualem, sic dico, quod anima per essentialiam suam se videt, id est ex hoc ipso quod essentia sua est sibi praeens, est potens exire in actum cognitionis sui ipsius; sicut aliquis ex hoc quod habet alicuius scientiae habitum, ex ipsa praeessential habitus, est potens percipere illa quae subsunt illi habitui. Ad hoc autem quod percipiat anima se esse, et quid in seipsa agatur attendat, non requiritur aliquis habitus; sed ad hoc sufficit sola essentia animae, quae menti est praeens; ex ea enim actus progrediuntur, in quibus actualiter ipsa percipitur.\textsuperscript{16}

The first thing to be pointed out in the paragraph is that two relationships are established. First the notion of habitual self-awareness is

\textsuperscript{15}In this explanation of actual self-awareness of the soul, we have followed J. Peghaire, C.S.Sp., Intellectus et Ratio selon saint Thomas d'Aquin (Paris-Ottawa, 1936), pp. 201-205.

\textsuperscript{16}De Ver., 10, 8 c.
developed by the phrase "essentia animae est sibi prae sens." Secondly, this state of being present to itself constitutes the power the soul has to come to be actually aware of itself in the manner described above. Thus two equivalences are made:

1) Cognitio habitualis — Essentia animae sibi prae sens

2) Essentia animae sibi prae sens = Potentia ut anima se actu cogno scat

In the first equivalence we see that habitual self-knowledge is a disposition of the soul, a particular mode of being. In the second, it is stated that this disposition or state of the soul makes the soul capable of self-awareness in its operations.

We will take up three approaches to the passage to gain a full understanding of what exactly this disposition of the soul is. First, we will examine the import of the comparison with an intellectual habit. Secondly, we will apply the general principles on knowledge to the human soul to see how the state of self-presence merits the name of knowledge. Thirdly, we will work out an analysis of the explanatory final sentence in the paragraph.

First, to the question of intellectual habits. Habits, generally speaking, are qualitative modifications of human powers which incline the power to specific acts. In the intellectual power, a habit is a disposition of the possible intellect to know a particular thing. Intellectual habits are constituted by retained intelligible species which become more or less

17 In II Sent., 2h, 1, 1 sol. and S.T., I-II, 95, 1 c.
permanent modifications of the possible intellect. 18 The intellect with retained knowledge stands mid-way between the initial state of no determination and the state of actual knowledge. 19

The general result of the comparison is clear. The state of the soul—being present to itself—establishes a disposition which inclines the soul to know itself as acting whenever it does act. The state does not immediately cause actual knowledge. 20 Still, there is no species which sets up this disposition; but the essence of the soul alone brings the state about. 21

The conclusion that develops is that there is a definite parity between the relation of the retained species to the possible intellect and the relation of the essence of the soul to the intellect. Both are dispositions

18"Species intelligibiles in intellectu possibili remanent post actualem considerationem, et harum ordinatio est habitus scientiae." De Ver., 10, 2 c.

19S.T., I-II, 50, 4 ad 2.

20Thus we have another point of similarity between an intellectual habit and the power for awareness of the soul; just as self-awareness is had only in operations of knowing another thing, so a habit is actuated only when the agent intellect illuminates a proper phantasm. "Cum phantasmata se habent hoc modo ad intellectum possibilem sicut sensibilia ad sensum, . . . quantumcumque aliquam speciem intelligibilem apud se habeat, nunquam tamen actu aliquid considerat secundum illum speciem, nisi convertendo se ad phantasmata." De Ver., 10, 2 ad 7.

21"Intellectus noster nihil actu potest intelligere antequam a phantasmatibus abstrahat; nec etiam potest habere habitualem notitiam aliorum a se, quae scilicet in ipso non sunt, ante abstractionem praedictam, eo quod species aliorum intelligibilium non sunt ei innatae. Sed essentia sua sibi innata est; ut non esse necesse habeat a phantasmatibus acquirere; . . . et ideo mens antequam a phantasmatibus abstrahat, sui notitiam habitualem habet, qua possit percipere se esse." De Ver., 10, 6 ad 1.
for particular kinds of knowledge: the species for knowledge of what it represents, and the essence of the soul for knowledge of the soul's existence, or as we were led to develop the point, for certain knowledge that there is in the knower a principle of a determined kind of act.

In moving to the second part of our explanation, we ask how this disposition of the soul can be called knowledge. As we take up this point, it is well to recall the frame of reference within which we are moving in dealing with human knowledge. The central point is what we spoke of earlier as the orientation of the human knowing power to grasp its object through what it finds in phantasms. The point is of such capital importance in St. Thomas' work that we are surely pointing to a definite part of the intellectual atmosphere surrounding the writing of this passage, by recalling it here.

We turn now to the question of how St. Thomas comes to call the soul's essential state a kind of knowledge. Our first governing principle of knowledge is the proportionality between freedom from matter and knowledge. Since it is established that the human soul is independent from matter, it is demonstrated that the soul is graced with the power to know—it has a faculty of intellect. A second conclusion would be that the soul is of itself knowable, though of course not actually known since not reached through a

22 It is to be noted that our procedure here is a downward movement of demonstration through causes. We assume the temporally prior movement of invention from perceived effects.
The second governing principle of knowledge is that knowing follows on the union of intellect with a thing which is in act in the intelligible order. What then do we have in the human soul? There is surely no aboriginal union of intellect with something completely other than itself. But there is a constant union of intellect with the soul, and this union is established and preserved by the soul being the ontological subject from which flows the intellectual power. This then is the relation signified in saying that the soul is present to itself. The fact we face is that in the mind of St.

23 Thus the soul is classed with those things which St. Thomas calls "intelligibiles per se ipsas; unde sunt magis notae secundum naturam, quamvis minus notae nobis." De Ver., 2, 2 c. Thus we come to agree with the contention of Fr. Gardeil that the reason for no continual awareness of the soul is wholly from the necessary mode of operation of the soul as the subject of knowledge. Cf. "La perception experimentale de l'ame par elle-meme," Mélanges Thomistes (Kain, 1923), p. 22h.

24 "Ita etiam non oportet quod semper intelligatur actualiter ipsa mens, cuius cognitio inest nobis habitualiter, ex hoc quod ipsa eius essentia intellectui nostro est praessen." De Ver., 10, 8 ad 11. Italics added. On the reciprocal relation: "intellectiva potentia est forma ipsius animae quantum ad actum essendi; eo quod habet esse in anima, ... sed quantum ad actum intelligendi nihil prohibet esse e converso." Ibid., ad 13.

25 In confirmation: "illud proprie dicitur praessen cuius essentia intellectui vel sensui presentatur." In III Sent., 24, 1, 2 ad 4. It is here that we have a satisfying explanation of the Neo-Platonic notion of the soul as substantially "bent back" on itself. The first "movement" is the emanation of intellect from the essence of the soul. The "return" is the relation of this intellect to the essence considered as object of habitual knowledge. Since both "movements" are wholly in the spiritual realm, with no intermediate organ, the return is well termed, "subsistentia rei in seipsa," in De Ver., 2, 2 ad 2.
Thomas the ontological relationship of essence to power in the human soul constituted a kind of knowledge. For him it was knowledge just as it is knowledge when a species remains habitually in the intellect and disposes it to know what the species represents.

Thus the presence of the soul to itself is actually the presence of the essence of the soul to its own intellect. As presence of an intelligible (because immaterial) being it is called knowledge. As presence to its own intellect it is called self-knowledge. Finally, as presence of the principle of human operations it is alone the ground of the awareness which the soul has of itself in those operations. This third point we will expand in analyzing the final sentence of the paragraph on habitual self-knowledge.

Ad hoc autem quod percipiatur anima se esse, et quid in seipsa agatur attendat, non requiritur aliquis habitus; sed ad hoc sufficit sola essentia animae quae menti est praeitio; ex ea enim actus progredivuntur, in quibus actualiter ipse percipitur.26

The heart of the statement is that the essence of the soul suffices for awareness of the soul to take place. This essence is again described as menti praesens.27 As present in this way it grounds awareness of operations (quid in seipsa agatur), as well as awareness of its own existence (quod percipiatur anima se esse).

26 Ibid., 10, 8 c.

27 Again the relation of intellect (mens here) to essence as to the object of habitual knowledge is underscored.
The reason that the soul so grounds its self-awareness is that in its essence it is a source of the acts perceived—ex ea anim actus progressuntur. The acts of the powers are rooted in the soul as in their formal principle. Thus we can point out a perfect parallel of being with operation: in the line of being, the essence of the soul is the subject from which the acts proceed through the various powers; in the line of operation, the awareness that is had of the soul is precisely that of an existing subject performing definite operations.

Thus we come to formulate our explanation of habitual self-knowledge in the human soul as the relationship, found in the soul in first act, of the intellectual power to the essence of the soul, not merely as to the source from which it emanates, but to a knowable thing immediately present.

A developed understanding of that situation in the constitution of the human soul can come from comparison with the state of self-understanding in an angel, where the intellectual power has an immediate grasp of the angelic essence in actual knowledge. In man, the result is not immediate actual self-understanding, since all such understanding follows the operation of agent intellect on a phantasm. The result in man, however, is not a purely potential state of knowledge. It is the mediate and developed state of habitual retention of its essence—of a disposition inclining the human

intellect to actual self-awareness in the operations grounded in the soul.

In conclusion to this chapter, let us refer briefly to the concluding paragraphs in our study of this doctrine in the *Commentary on the Sentences*.29

The first observation to be made is that we have seen a striking example of the mind of St. Thomas in development. We moved with him from scattered statements on the topic of human self-knowledge through the formulation of general principles and on to a systematic treatment in which the problem is divided and succinctly explained in each of its parts according to the guiding principles.30 The explanation is clearly thought out by way of causal relationships and in our analysis we found the reasons driven back to the ontological structure of the being in question.

Secondly, we can finish by giving answers to the difficulties that were remaining at the end of our study of the *Commentary on the Sentences*. 1) Habitual self-knowledge is partially equivalent with the immateriality of the soul, since immateriality makes the soul a knower—a habitual knower regarding its own existence. 2) Immediate reflection is the actuation of habitual

29 Cf. pp. 25–26, above.

30 We would admit that the governing principles of knowledge were formulated and were operative in the work of St. Thomas long before the disputation *de veritate*. However it is indicative of his ontological approach to the main problems of knowledge that the principles preceded the systematic explanation of the possibility and operations of human understanding. Thus we feel we have caught an authentic part of St. Thomas' development in this thesis, even though the texts we are dealing with are formulations of earlier intellectual labors.
knowledge, because this reflection is equivalent with actual self-awareness experienced in human operations. 3) There is knowledge that a thing is, apart from knowledge of its quiddity, since that is what occurs in our awareness of our own soul. 4) Self-presence and the substantial return in the human soul are completely explained by our understanding that habitual self-knowledge expresses the relation of intellect to its ontological source—the soul—in man who must gain actual knowledge through phantasms.
CHAPTER V

HABITUAL SELF-KNOWLEDGE IN THE LATER WORKS OF ST. THOMAS

We can conclude the work of this thesis by considering St. Thomas' later treatment of man's knowledge of his own soul. In turn we will take up three texts: first, a chapter in the Summa Contra Gentiles; secondly, an article in the Summa Theologiae; and thirdly, the commentary on the fifteenth proposition of the Liber de Causis. Our purpose in studying these texts is to search out any further development in the notion of the soul's habitual knowledge of itself.

In the Summa Contra Gentiles, the soul's reflective knowledge of itself is formally treated as a part of the long discussion of the end of man in the first sixty-three chapters of Book Three. The immediate context is St. Thomas' rejection of the possibility of man coming to know God through knowledge of the separated intellectual substances. In turn, he rejects the different variations on this doctrine as proposed by Avempace (ch. 41), by Alexander of Aphrodisias (ch. 42), and by Averroes (ch. 43). Then St. Thomas shows that the ultimate happiness for man cannot be in such knowledge of the separated substances (ch. 44). Then he lays down the general solution that in

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1C. G., III, 46. The title: "Quod anima in hac vita non intelligat seipsam."
this life we can have no understanding of the separated substances since they exceed the scope of the human intellect (ch. 45).

At the beginning of the next chapter, St. Thomas recognizes that certain words of St. Augustine seem to propose a difficulty in this matter. Augustine is quoted, "Mens, sicut corporearum rerum notitias per sensus corporis colligit, sic incorporearum rerum per sametipsam." St. Augustine has also said that the soul knows itself "per seipsam." Thus one could argue that the soul knows itself directly and thus comes to understand the incorporeal separated substances.

St. Thomas then proceeds to solve the apparent difficulty. The body of the article can be outlined as having three parts: first, arguments against direct understanding of the human soul (quid est); secondly, the distinction based on Aristotle between awareness (quod est) of the soul and understanding (quid est); and thirdly, a correlation of the knowledge had of the soul with the knowledge had in this life of the separated substances.

We have already touched on the matter of the first part in our study of the Commentary on the Sentences, and the matter of the third part is outside the scope of this thesis. Therefore we will review only the two paragraphs (beginning Nec Aristoteles and Sic igitur) where St. Thomas makes the familiar distinction between understanding and awareness of the human soul and the respective methods to these two kinds of knowledge.

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2 De Trinitate, Book 10, Ch. 3.

3 Cf. above, pp. 14-18.
At the end of the first section of the chapter, St. Thomas has shown that Augustine really agrees with him in denying that the soul can understand itself directly. We will take up the second section of the chapter in four parts.

First, Aristotle certainly denies direct self-knowledge in the soul. The possible intellect knows itself in the same manner as it knows other things—through the intelligible species which bring it into act in the intelligible order.

Secondly, St. Thomas immediately shows the reason for Aristotle's position: considered in itself, the possible intellect is in potency in the intelligible order. Consequently, it is through the act (ex ipso intelligere) of the intellect that its nature is manifested to itself.

Thirdly, as a consequence, it must be that Augustine meant that we have direct knowledge of the soul in the sense of awareness of its existence.

Fourthly, in a very brief explanation St. Thomas shows that this awareness is not a matter of demonstration with the species or the act used as a logical medium. Rather it is a direct perception in the operation of the soul: "ex hoc enim ipso quod percipit se agere, percipit se esse. Agit autem per seipsam. Unde per seipsam de se cognoscit quod est."

4 "Intellectus possible intelligit se sicut et alia. Intelligit enim per speciem intelligibilem qua fit actu in genere intelligibilium." C.G., III, 46 (in med.).

5 Ibid.
There are three observations to be made on this passage. First, it is clear that behind the natural flow of quotations, explanations, and arguments in the passage, there lies the same doctrinal outline which we saw in the Commentary on the Sentences and in the De Veritate. There are two ways we know the soul and the reason for this is in the natural orientation of the human intellect to understand what it finds represented in phantasms. The subject is not treated in further detail and so no mention is made of self-knowledge as a habitual disposition of the soul. The chapter thus adds nothing directly to our understanding of the central passage we are treating in this thesis.

Secondly, the awareness of the soul is proposed as a fact. In this sense the problematic words of St. Augustine are true—here the soul has direct (per seipsam) knowledge of itself. Our observation is that for St. Thomas simply to point out this kind of knowledge as a fact is sufficient in this context. The fact is enough to save the authority of St. Augustine. It would be pursuing a tangent to elaborate on habitual self-knowledge as the disposition underlying this way of knowing the soul.

Thirdly, a discussion of habitual self-knowledge would have impeded St. Thomas in carrying out the purpose of this chapter. Mention of this

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6 This is especially true in the concluding summary of the chapter: "Sicut autem de anima scimus quia est per seipsam, in quantum ejus actus percipimus; quid autem sit inquirimus ex actibus et objectis per principia scientiarum speculativarum; ita etiam de his quae sunt in anima nostra, scilicet potentis et habitibus, scimus quidem quia sunt, in quantum actus percipimus. Quid vero sint, ex ipsorum qualitate invenimus." Ibid., (ad fin.).
knowledge which, in the ordinary sense, is not knowledge would have further complicated the removal of the difficulty which made the chapter necessary. Nominally at least, more would be granted to the opposition, and then a further explanation would be required that the soul's disposition for self-awareness in no way contributes to knowledge of the separated substances. St. Thomas avoids these further discussions and returns to his pursuit of the topic of human destiny from which he turned aside six chapters earlier.

We will turn now to the article in the Summa Theologicae in which St. Thomas answers a question very similar to that treated in the De Veritate article in which we found the central text of this thesis.

The context of the article is the explanation of how the human mind comes to know different kinds of being. The three previous questions are on our knowledge of material realities; the subsequent question is on our knowledge of the separated substances. This article is the first in the question on our knowledge of the interior spiritual realities of the human person.

The article itself has three main points: first, an explanation of the principle which governs the solution; secondly, the solution of the problem

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7 S.T., I, 87, 1. "The title: Utrum anima intellectiva seipsam cognoscat per suam essentiam."

8 In De Veritate, 10, 8, the title was: "Utrum mens seipsam per essentiam cognoscat, vel per aliquam speciem."
posed in the title; and thirdly, an explanation of the two ways of knowing the human soul.

First, St. Thomas gives a very full explanation of the principle, "Unumquodque cognoscibile est secundum quod est actu." This is first shown to be clear from consideration of sight and understanding in general. St. Thomas moves ahead to the applied principle that to the degree a being is put in act by its essence, to the same degree will it be knowable by its essence. The next point is to apply this developed principle to God, an angel, and to the human soul. Both God and the angel have immediate knowledge of themselves since by their essences they are in act in the intelligible order. The human possible intellect however is purely potential in the intelligible order. Thus the possible intellect will not come to know itself or the soul's essence until it goes into act.

The second part of the article is a brief discussion of the mode of actual knowing in the human mind. It is carried out by setting up the Platonic explanation of knowledge through grasp of separated intelligible forms in contrast with St. Thomas' explanation through abstraction by the light of agent intellect. Since it is by abstractive knowledge that the possible intellect goes into act in the intelligible order, so also in this manner does the mind come to know itself.

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9S.T., I, 87, 1 c.

10This is the same method employed by St. Thomas in De Veritate, 8, 6. Cf. above, p. 40.
In the third section of this article, St. Thomas proceeds to describe the two ways in which this knowledge of the soul takes place. Knowledge of one's singular existence (in particulari) is contrasted with knowledge of the nature of the soul (in universali). The second, or scientific, manner of knowing the soul is ultimately justified by the fact that the agent intellect is a participation in the divine light of eternal truth. In further explaining the difference between these two ways of knowing St. Thomas points to the fact which was explained in the De Veritate passage which is the principal topic of this thesis.

Est autem differentia inter hæs duas cognitiones. Nam ad primam cognitionem de mente habendam sufficit ipsa mentis praesentia, quae est principium actus, ex quo mens percipit seipsam; et ideo dicitur se cognoscere per suam praesentiam. Sed ad secundam cognitionem de mente habendam non sufficit ejus praesentia, sed requisitum diligens et subtilis inquisitio. Unde et multi naturam animae ignorant, et multi etiam circa naturam animae erraverunt.

Thus the source (principium) of the operation is described as being present to the mind and for this reason grounding the self-awareness had with the soul's operations. Thus we have an immediate awareness contrasted with knowledge gained by careful intellectual labor. And the reason for the

11"Judicium et efficacia huius cognitionis, per quam naturam animae cognoscimus, competit nobis secundum derivationis luminis intellectus nostri a veritate divina, in qua rationes omnium rerum continentur." S.T., I, 87, 1 c. The thought of this passage is exactly parallel with that of the fourth part of the corpus in De Veritate, 10, 8.

12S.T., I, 87, 1 c.
immediacy of the former is simply stated as the presence of the source of human operations. Our judgment is that this state of presence is exactly what St. Thomas discussed in our De Veritate passage on habitual selfknowledge. It is the same disposition of the soul, but here not given the ample description through comparison with habitual knowledge through retained species.

We will make two observations on this treatment of the soul’s knowledge of itself in the Summa Theologiae.

First, let us point out the reasons why St. Thomas did not make explicit mention of the soul’s habitual knowledge of itself. One might bring forth as a reason the need for brevity and clarity in a manual of doctrine such as the Summa Theologiae. This reason does have some weight when one compares the corpus of this article with other articles and finds that in size it is definitely beyond the average.

A more cogent reason would lie in the difference of intellectual atmosphere surrounding the writing of the De Veritate and the Summa Theologiae. In the earlier work, especially in the tenth question, the authority at hand is St. Augustine. From the concluding summary of the eighth article we see that two of the four explanations are consonant with the doctrine and words of St. Augustine. When we move to the Summa, the

13 De Ver., 10, 8 (ad fin. corp.). It would be reasonable to argue that the treatment of habitual self-knowledge in the De Veritate is aimed indirectly at establishing a sense in which the words of Augustine, "Mens seipsum per seipsum novit," are true. A closely related purpose is to leave intact the Augustinian explanation of the soul as an image of the Trinity. This is clearly the purpose when St. Thomas mentions habitual self-knowledge in the Summa Theologiae: "Sic patet quod anima semper intelligit et amat se, non actualiter, sed habitualiter." I, 93, 7 ad 1.
unchallenged authority is Aristotle. In the article we have been studying, it is an Aristotelian principle which governs the extended discussion in the first part of the corpus. Correlatively with the dominance of Aristotle, we find the express rejection of a Platonic position.

Now if habitual self-knowledge had been introduced, St. Thomas would have had to do more than simply insert a distinction in the final part to show that self-awareness is had in two ways, actu and habitu. He would need a distinction right in the middle of the elaboration of the Aristotelian governing principle. For then the human mind would not appear in all respects a purely potential knower, but regarding itself the mind would be in the modified disposition described in the De Veritate as the soul's habitual knowledge of itself through its essence. It is easy to see this sense of a need for brevity and clarity as an adequate ground for omitting treatment of habitual self-knowledge in this article of the Summa.

A second observation on the article concerns methodology. We find a confirmation of our own choice of approach in this thesis in the manner in which St. Thomas proceeds to explain his answer in this article. First, he elaborates a general principle to guide his search for the answer. With the parity between actuality from essence and self-knowledge from essence established, it is a simple matter to find how the soul knows itself by showing how the possible intellect is actuated. Speaking generally, our procedure was to find the elements of an explanation in the Commentary on the Sentences, then the guiding principles in the earlier sections of the De Veritate, and then to apply these principles to show exactly what was to be understood by the habitual knowledge the soul has of itself. The present article shows us
that such is an authentically Thomistic methodology.

We will turn now to consider St. Thomas' commentary on Proposition XV of the Liber de Causis. Our consideration will proceed in three steps: first, a brief consideration of the circumstances and intention of St. Thomas' Commentary on the Liber de Causis; secondly, an examination of his text on Proposition XV; and thirdly, our observations on the contribution of the passage to the understanding of the De Veritate passage on habitual self-knowledge.

The facts surrounding the writing of the Commentary can be set forth in brief. In May, 1268, William of Moerbeck presented St. Thomas with a Latin translation of Proclus' Elements of Theology, a deductive and axiomatic exposition of the world-picture of Neo-Platonism.

Immediately, St. Thomas saw that the Liber de Causis was nothing more than a digest of the doctrine of Proclus, made up of excerpts from the Elements of Theology. Thus, a full explanation of the Liber de Causis could

11 Our references will be to the paragraph numbers in the new Marietti edition: In Librum de Causis Expositio, ed. Ceslaus Pera, O.P. (Turin, 1955).

15 Peter Caramello, "Pertinenta ad Librum 'de Causis,'" Ibid., p. xx.

16 Thus St. Thomas: "In arabico vero invenitur hic liber qui apud Latinos 'de Causis' dicitur quem constat de arabico esse translatum et in graeco penitus non haberi. Unde videtur ab aliquo Philosophorum arabum ex praedicto libro Procli excerptus, praesertim quia omnia quae in hoc libro continentur, multo plenius et diffusius continentur in illo. Ibid., Proemium, n. 9."
be made by fitting its various propositions into their original context in the thought of Proclus. This is the work of St. Thomas' Commentary. 17 For example, in the section of the commentary we are about to take up, six different propositions are taken from Proclus' Elements to aid our understanding of the words of the Liber de Causis. 18

The actual text of St. Thomas can be broken down into three parts: first, the insertion of the six Proclean propositions to expand the Liber de Causis text (nn. 302-307); secondly, St. Thomas' analysis of the three parts of the text of the Liber de Causis (nn. 308-311); and thirdly, the comments of St. Thomas on the doctrine found in this passage (nn. 312-313).

The first aspect of this commentary pertinent to our thesis is the idea, presented in both the first and second parts of St. Thomas' text, that since the soul returns upon itself in the operation of self-knowledge, it must also return upon itself in its own substance. 19 This substantial return is shown

17 The work also fits into the controversial current of the time. Thus: "Genuinum sensum et valorem libri de Causis patet faciens, [St. Thomas] hunc librum a sectatoribus Averroismo et Avicennismo, 'tanquam ab injustis possessoribus', in usum suum 'vindicat' et sic tutius defendere potest tum multiplicationem intellectus in singulis hominibus (contra Averroistas) tum unitatem formae substantialis in un quoque (contra Avicennizantes), ideoque veram et sanam doctrinam de hominis natura servare." Caramello, p. xxvi.


19 These doctrinal points are given twice. The substantial return is given, first, as found in Proclus, Ibid., nn. 305-306, and secondly, as in the Liber de Causis, Ibid., n. 310 (ad fin.). We saw this idea explained by St. Thomas in the De Veritate section on divine self-knowledge. Cf. above, pp. 32-35.
to be equivalent to the soul's subsistence or independence of matter. This, in turn, points to the human soul's spirituality, or separability from matter. Thus far the formal exposition of the doctrine of Proclus and the Liber de Causis.

The most pertinent aspect of the Commentary for our thesis is the third part where St. Thomas gives his observations on the text. It is here that we must determine whether the Commentary on the Liber de Causis contains any manifestation of St. Thomas' thought on the ground of self-awareness.

Our conclusion is that the entire passage of the commentary on Proposition XV is the transmission and comparison of the thought of others, not the personal doctrine of St. Thomas. The evidence grounding the conclusion is found in the last two paragraphs of the passage (nn. 312-313). First, St. Thomas refers to another proposition of Proclus as proof of the initial statement of the Liber de Causis that the soul does know itself. This proof is in the fact that the soul is a participant in the same nature as the superior intellectual beings which know themselves. Secondly, he refers to an earlier section of the Liber de Causis to show that the First Intellect does know itself. Thirdly, he refers to the De Divinis Nominibus of Pseudo-Denis, to

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20 In Librum de Causis, nn. 304, 311.

21 Ibid., nn. 303-307, 311.

22 As noted above (p. 9) Fr. Georges Ducoin pointed to this passage as being of capital importance as he presented St. Thomas' doctrine on self-knowledge. Sapientia Aquinatis, pp. 247-251.
show more precisely the import for self-knowledge of participation from separated intellectual beings. Fourthly, St. Thomas adds that the human soul participates in an inferior manner in this intellectual nature and so does not have immediate grasp of itself. Fifthly, St. Thomas repeats what we saw in the Summa Theologica on the contrasting ways proposed by Plato and Aristotle on the way the human soul comes to know itself. Thus it appears that St. Thomas' Commentary on the Liber de Causis, in treating Proposition xv, is an historical study in philosophic thought on the implications of human reflective knowledge. As such it makes no significant addition to our understanding of St. Thomas' mind as expressed in the De Veritate section on the soul's habitual knowledge of itself.

With our study of the Commentary on the Liber de Causis we are given an ample review of the Neo-Platonic picture of the soul as substantially bent back on itself. St. Thomas does explain to us that this return is ultimately a result of the soul's participation in the perfectly self-knowing First Intellect. Thus Neo-Platonism would point to the history of this disposition of the soul, present to its knowing power, which underlies the self-awareness a man has in his operations. Our De Veritate text points to the exact nature of this disposition.

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23 S.T., I, 87, 1 c. Cf. above, p. 62.
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C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL


The thesis submitted by W. Jared Wicks, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

January 1, 1940
Signature of Adviser