

THE AFFECTIVE UNION - WHICH IS LOVE ESSENTIALLY

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## INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will endeavor to present a general outlook of the union of affections which obtains between the wills of lover and beloved. This subject is quite involved and hence if it's explanation is somewhat confusing, it is the fault of the writer. St. Thomas has written much on the subject, but in many and diverse works - hence necessitating much research.

The plan to be followed is simply this. First of all, we will treat of the seemingly contradiction involved in the very act of this union. For we all know that the formal object of the will is bonum in communi; whereas in the act of love, a particular good becomes the object of the subject's will. Next will be presented the means the will uses to break down this indifference. There is a twofold means used - that through the intellect and also through the will itself.

After this introduction to the matter, we will get to the main topic of the paper - that of the nature of this affective union. The reason that this nature of the affective union is treated when it is, is that all the material which precedes it is important to unfold the nature. One important point to stress here is the fact that the role of this new nature or weight formed in the subject, is to carry the subject out to the object loved. This point is sometimes not regarded as a factor in the act of love and hence should be mentioned here.

Finally, to conclude this treatment, we will mention some practical conclusions which immediately follow upon the affec-

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tive union. These, too, are often forgotten in an effort to develop the nature of the affective union. With this insight as to the nature of this paper, it would be best now to get into the matter.

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In general, love is the union between lover and beloved. The "why" is seen clearly from the very nature of love - a desire to be one with the object and the "how" will be the immediate purpose of this paper. Since to love is the act of the will, it will first be necessary to investigate the nature of the human will.

Now, the human will, by its very nature is free and not determined to this or that particular good. That is, it desires as its end, the common good; but in reality, we know the action of the will, in the act of love, to be determined to some particular object - this or that good. Now, if it is not of the nature of the will to be inclined to the particular good there must be some quality superadded to the will in some way which compensates for the change from indifference to one of choice. Thus, there must be something definite produced in the will which inclines the will to the particular good. Thus again, it would seem correct to posit this act of inclination on the part of the will to the particular loved object itself as existing in the will itself. The reasoning behind this is clear enough if we understand the nature of the will and its relation to the object; for no third thing could enter into this operation or else it would hinder the operation and act themselves.

Now that we have presented the main problem of the matter, we can investigate more closely the nature of the affective union. But, before we discuss the nature of this union, it would be advantageous to first discuss the existence of the above mentioned fact - the existence in the will of the object loved.

This fact is best pointed out by demonstrating the necessity of the presence of the beloved in the will of the lover.

No act is perfectly and determinately produced by any active potency unless the potency is made con-natural to the act by means of some form which is the principle of the action.<sup>1</sup>

That is to say that no active potency can act in a perfect or determined manner unless it is proportioned to its object. Thus, there must be some added form whereby the potency is made proportionate to the act. Even though it is true that the will is proportioned to its object - the good as such - there is nothing in the will itself which would incline it to one or the other good object; for otherwise it would not be free. Therefore, we can conclude that there is another form produced in the will and specified by the good object whereby the will can proceed in a perfect and determined manner to this good object. St. Thomas states:

For every power tends by one operation or act to its object and the formal aspect of that object: even as by the one sight, we see light and color made visible by light. Now, when we will something solely for the sake of an end, that which is desired for

the sake of the end is compared to it as the formal aspect to an object, as light to color.<sup>2</sup>

Concisely the above can be explained through the natural appetite. Every appetitive power, by nature, has its proper inclination or natural appetite (sight to see), and is diversified according to the mode of each power. The will, therefore, has a natural inclination or appetitibility to its proper object - bonum in communi and thus is called natural love. But by nature of its object, the will is left indifferent in regard to the particular good. Therefore, this indifference must be destroyed for the will to have an affinity to this or that good.<sup>3</sup> And this is the next problem to investigate - how the indifference of the will to its proper object is destroyed.

First the intellect plays a role in the destroying of the indifference by means of the object apprehended. But this object as apprehended is not the goal of the will, for its object is bonum est in rebus, and the representation is only a principle influencing the will by means of representation and not formally as loveable - i.e. as a good having the ratio of end. Thus the mere representation of the good object does not fulfill the desire of the will. Further, the will is a vital potency (must move itself through itself) and thus the intellect cannot determine the will by the representation of a concrete particular good in the realm of appetite.

A form considered by the intellect neither moves

nor causes anything except through the medium of the will, whose object is an end and a good by which one is moved to act.<sup>4</sup>

Next the will itself plays its role in the breaking down of this indifference. For, just as the intellect upon apprehension and understanding its object, forms the word (dictio), the will inclining towards its object forms a certain impulse (quality) within itself by which it is rendered proportionate to and affected by, the object itself.<sup>5</sup> It is this presence of the beloved in the willing subject which constitutes the affective union. Thus affected, the will is determined or bent to this particular good. "...and thus, the will in choosing its object, loves it; and by loving it chooses it, so too does the intellect in understanding speak, and by speaking know."<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps to gain a fuller knowledge of the interplay of intellect and will in the production of the affective union, it would be well to investigate the nature of the causality exercised by the intellect on the will. Since John of St. Thomas treats this matter quite extensively, we shall treat this matter best by summarizing his treatment here.

The object loved, as represented by the intellect, does not move the will by a true physical motion. Rather, "it moves the will only as a specifying principle and by way of final causality."<sup>7</sup> The motion is thus a moral motion and is not as the motion of an efficient cause. Thus we say that the motion proper to the final cause is one of attraction, by which the

end attracts or draws the will.

Still further treatment can be found in the Summa Contra Gentiles.

The first of the motive powers in intelligent beings is the will: because the will applies every power to its act. For we understand because we will, we imagine because we will, and so forth. And the will has this because its object is the end - although the intellect, not by way of efficient and moving cause, but by way of final cause moves the will, by putting its object before it which object is the end.<sup>8</sup>

Now, since "...a thing is not loved because it is known, but because it is good"<sup>9</sup> the will must be moved by the object as it is in nature. Thus the representation of the object by the intellect is not a cause distinguished from the object in re but rather a conditio sine qua non the exercise of the object as end is not possible. Thus it is the object as represented by the intellect which operates on the will only as a final or moral cause and not by any physical motion. To clarify this point:

....if the object or end, as represented by the intellect does not concur efficaciously but finally - and if the representation or apprehension itself operates only by virtue of the object - then the representation itself cannot operate itself except as the condition required for the application of the cause, and hence is not a different power or another genus of causality than that of extrinsic formal or final causality.<sup>10</sup>

Now that we have glanced at the interplay of intellect and will, we can investigate the nature of the causality exercised by the good object - whose motion we have just seen; is



moral, but whose causality is nonetheless - real. This moral motion, by which the good is said to cause, is nothing other than the prima immutatio appetitus<sup>11</sup> by the object, under the aspect that the modification depends passively on the object and is not actively elicited by the will. Thus we note a two-fold dependence of the will on the object. Firstly, we note the act of love is actively and efficiently elicited by the will and secondly the act of love is passive to the modification by the object. The object, by its elicitation set up in the will, moves the will to actively elicit its act of love. And hence we say that the causality of the end or object is thus effected through the medium of love. That is to say that the end exercises its causality in proportion as it is good. Therefore the object (presupposing the condition of its being known) moves the will only in the genus of causality in which the good is said to move which is final causality.

But this attraction as the final cause would not efficaciously attract unless the will was determined to do so. But as has been previously mentioned, the will is free and hence not determined to one particular good. Therefore inasmuch as the act of love depends on the object, we have the causality proper to the object; it specifies and finalizes. And inasmuch as the act of love, confronted with this attraction, is actively and efficaciously elicited by the will, we have the exercise of the efficient cause.

Now that we have determined the necessity of the production as well as the manner of the production of the affective union, it remains to determine the nature of this union.

We have already seen the analogy between love and knowledge. For the very nature of knowledge is the union of the knower and known object, likewise the union of the lover and beloved is the very nature of love. For the action of the two powers are somewhat similar and somewhat dissimilar. The latter is in the subject known and is seen in the fact that the object is given another existence in the intellect of the knower. Whereas in the act of loving, the object loved remains outside the subject loving. There is only a union of the inclinations or affections between the lover and beloved.

Now since there is in the affective union an action which remains totally within the power, we call this action - immanent.

Since the will is modified and determined in a certain accidental state of being by the act of love, love inheres in the will as in its proper object. Any act, however, which remains within its subject as perfecting it, is not an act in the usual sense of the word, as painting or driving. These latter acts are motions called transient acts; they are acts of imperfect subjects - imperfect under the aspect in which they remain in potency, which potency remains to be actualized in the further continuance of the motion. Love is not act in this sense of motion; it is an immanent act, a state of being, a quality, which is the perfection of the subject, not of a term produced outside the subject.<sup>12</sup>

In this quote, Fr. Faraon summarizes what St. Thomas

treats in various passages of the act of love and its effect on the subject. The point we wish to stress here is that this act of the affective union is an immanent one - one which remains in the subject as perfecting it. This fact is deeply important to the understanding of this treatise on the affective union; for on it is based the whole structure of the union. For as St. Thomas states: "for in describing it as uniting he (St. Augustine) refers to the union of affection, without which there is no love: and in saying that it seeks to unite, he refers to real union"...<sup>13</sup>

There is a difference in the immanent acts of knowledge and love which helps to bring out the nature of love. For in knowledge, the knower is the object known by means of representation, whereas in love, the lover is the object loved by means of inclination or affection. Now it is the very role of this 'inclinatio' to bear the subject out to the object. Thus to give a definition of the affective union between the lover and the beloved we can state now that it is the will of the lover, affected, modified or colored by the beloved in such a way as to incline the lover out to the beloved as it exists in reality.

By reason of this affective union with the object the lover is actually transformed into the object itself. "Love ... makes the lover to be according to the thing loving."<sup>14</sup> This union, however, is not one of essences as is the case in

intellectual knowledge, nor one by means of representation as in sensitive cognition, but rather it is a union of the affections of the lover and beloved. "Love is not a union of the two things essentially, but of affections."<sup>15</sup> Lover and beloved, subject and object respectively, retain their distinction while retaining their identity. Still, they become one by reason of the mutual modification of their wills, inclining one to the other.

For from this that love transforms the lover into the beloved, it makes the lover enter into the interior of the beloved and conversely, so that nothing of the lover remain in the beloved (which is) not united; just as the form comes to the intimate interior of the formed thing and conversely.<sup>16</sup>

It is the object itself, totally in all its individual characteristics which is present in the lover as modifying it by way of inclination, for no other object than this particular good would so affect the will of the lover to it. Just as a stone, because it by nature has weight, naturally tends to fall rather than to rise, so too does the will naturally tend to this object. Thus, unless the will is affected, stamped, colored, modified or qualified by the individual content of this particular good, the will must remain indifferent to it. Thus it is the presence of the beloved in the intellectual appetite of the lover, by way of inclination, which constitutes the affective union and is love essentially. It is therefore, this new modification of the will which constitutes that other real-

ity which we have shown is necessary to incline the will to this or that good.

Perhaps an example would help to clear up the difficulty arising from this unusual type of union of object and subject. St. Thomas uses this physical example to solve the problem. He states:

Consequently, that which is loved is not only in the intellect of the lover, but also in his will: although in diverse ways. For, it is in the intellect (the object) according to the similitude of its species: but in the will of the lover, as the term of a motion is said to be already in its proportioned motivating principle by reason of that convenience and aptitude of the principle to that term. Thus, in a sense, the higher place is in the flame, because fire is volatile, and consequently is proportionate and apt for such a place: and the kindled fire is in the kindling fire by the likeness of its form.<sup>17</sup>

Although the example itself is perhaps a bit weak, it nevertheless serves the purpose of pointing out the nature of the union of the subject and object. For, in the way that principle and term are proportionate in a movement, the lover and beloved are analogously related. For the object exists in the will of the lover inclining, impelling, drawing, affecting the lover from within, out to the object loved. "Since however, the beloved object exists in the lover as inclining and, as it were, inwardly impelling the lover to the thing lover...."<sup>18</sup>

To conclude this treatment on the nature of the affective union it would do well to quote a very pertinent passage from St. Thomas:

...a natural agent produces a twofold effect on the patient: in the first place it gives it the form; and secondly it gives it the movement that results from the form. Thus the generator gives the generated body both weight and the movement resulting from the weight: so that weight, from being the principle of movement to the place, which is connatural to that body by reason of its weight, can, in a way, be called natural love. In the same way the appetible object gives appetite first a certain adaption to itself, which consists in a being-pleased (complacencia) in that object; and from this follows movement toward the appetible object.... Accordingly the first change wrought in the appetite by the appetible object is called love, and is nothing else than being-pleased in the object.... (For) love consists in a change wrought in the appetite by the appetible object....<sup>19</sup>

Thus we see that the "first change brought about in the appetite by the appetible" effected in and by the will under the finalizing and specifying influence of the object conditioned by its apprehension by the intellect, formally constitutes love - the affective union.

Now that we have investigated the nature of the affective union, we can draw some practical conclusions from this treatment. The first conclusion is readily seen from the very purpose of the affective union - which is none other than to proportion the will by way of inclination and thus carry it out to the object loved - the union thus takes on a role of motivating, impelling force. St. Augustine, in his Confessions, calls love his weight by which he is carried wherever he is carried. "My love, my weight, by which I am carried wherever I am carried."  
20 The affective union, as a quality inhering in the will,

thus becomes the motive force by which love, once initiated, is made to continue. It is the impulse or weight in the will by which the impression of the appetible object inheres more firmly in the will. This is precisely what St. Thomas speaks of when he states that the beloved exists in the lover as an impelling force driving the lover from within toward the object loved.<sup>21</sup>

From this weight, impelling the will towards the beloved, we can reason to the fact that because of this inclination, it can influence other actions of the lover. Furthermore, the more perfectly a particular good weights the will so that its influence is felt in other actions, so much more perfect and universal must this good be. Finally, if this good so permeates the will that it unifies and colors all the actions of the lover, then this good becomes an ultimate end for the lover and is said to be loved with his whole heart.<sup>22</sup> A good example of such an act is seen in friendship. This topic is one about which Aristotle devoted two books of his treatise Ethics. Books eight and nine of this treatise are devoted solely to investigate its nature, difficulties etc. and would be well to quote a few lines from it.

In loving a friend, men love what is good to themselves. For the good man in becoming a friend becomes a good to his friend. Each, then, both loves what is good himself and makes an equal return both as to willing and to the kind of willing. For friendship is said to be equality. These things are found chiefly in the friendship of the good.<sup>23</sup>

Many more pertinent passages could be inserted here but because of the nature of this paper, it is impossible to do so.

A second and final conclusion to be drawn from this study is one which is perhaps more difficult to realize, but immediately follows upon the above conclusion. Fr. Faraon states that by reason of the object's intimate presence in the will through its weight, it can be seen how and why a more perfect love does not require a proportionate previous perfection of knowledge. It is true that knowledge is a conditio sine qua non for love, but once this initial role of knowledge is fulfilled, the love can increase and become more perfect without depending on a proportionate increase in knowledge. For love regards the object as it is in itself and not as it is represented, and it is the object as it exists in reality which affects the will. However, the more perfect the love, the more intimate lover and beloved become, and the more intimate the lover becomes with the beloved, the more perfect does the understanding of the beloved come to the lover. This special understanding of the beloved is the fruit of love and is by reason of love. True, this affective knowledge of the beloved can, in its turn, cause the increase of love, but it must itself be first caused by love.

Thus we see the interplay of intellect and will more fully now. For the action of the will depends on the intellect for



its first impulse and once this is made to be a weight in the will, the action of the will to its object far surpasses any knowledge the intellect can receive from its object. We have also shown that by means of a more perfect love, the lover can know more of the beloved than he can through the intellect alone. Thus we see the important role the action of the will plays in our life.

### CONCLUSION

Now that we have presented the nature of the affective union, we can ask the question - what is the purpose of this affective union? Briefly, it is the real union of lover and beloved - subject and object. Now a real union implies<sup>1</sup> contact and this contact is diversified according as the nature and state of the object in question. Thus, there are three types of contact possible - spiritual, physical or both spiritual and physical. The first - spiritual - is proper only to purely spiritual beings and the second to brute animals. The third contact is the one which we are interested in here and needs some explanation.

Since man is not a "body and soul" but rather, as Fr. Faraon states a "souled-body" the real union which human love is capable of will not at one time be spiritual and another time physical, but rather spiritual and physical in the same act of love. Still, the real union will be primarily spiritual because the spiritual 'part' of man's essence is the more noble. Thus physical contact - in the sense of the act of procreation of children - is not a conditio sine qua non for love in marriage, for this act is accidental to the act of love. Hence, we see that love can obtain between two people whose motives or interests are other than this type of physical contact.

This is exactly what St. Thomas and Aristotle hit upon

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when they state that friendship between members of the same sex can surpass any love obtainable between the opposite sexes or even between a father and son or other filial relationships. Thus we see that love is not something to be regarded as off-bounds in a priest's or seminarian's life, but rather an integral part of his life and one which could and should permit development.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Michael J. Faraon, The Metaphysical and Psychological Principles of Love, p. 41.
2. Summa Contra Gentiles, I, cap. 76.
3. Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 50, a. 5, ad. 1.
4. Summa Contra Gentiles, I, cap. 72.
5. Summa Theologiae, I, q. 37, a. 1, c.
6. John of St. Thomas, Cursus Theologiae, Vol. 4, q. 27, Dis. 27, art. 7, n. VI.
7. Michael J. Faraon, idem. p. 44.
8. Summa Contra Gentiles, I, cap. 72.
9. De Caritate, a. 4, ad. 4.
10. Michael J. Faraon, idem. p. 45.
11. John of St. Thomas, Cursus Philosophicus, Naturalis Philosophiae, I, q. 13, art. 2.
12. Michael K. Faraon, idem, p. 46, (footnote)
13. Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 28, art. 1, c.
14. Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum, III, d. 27, q. 1, art. 3, ad. 2.
15. idem., III, d. 29, q. 1, art. 3, ad. 1.
16. idem., III, d. 27, q. 1, art. 1, ad. 4.
17. Summa Contra Gentiles, IV, cap. 19.
18. idem., IV, cap. 19.
19. Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 26, art. 2, c.
20. Confessions, Book 13, cap. 9.
21. Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 50, art. 5, ad. 1.

FOOTNOTES (cont.)

22. John of St. Thomas, Cursus Philosophicus, Vol. 2, q. 13, art. 2.

23. Aristotle, Ethics, Book VIII, chap. 5, 1157b.

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