

THOMISTIC DOCTRINE ON CAUSALITY

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OUTLINE

I. Introduction ~

II. Principle

- A. Defined
 - 1. According to St. Thomas
 - 2. According to Aristotle
- B. Twofold division
- C. First principle
 - 1. Perfect principle
 - 2. Imperfect principle
 - 3. Self-evident principle

III. Doctrine on cause

- A. Distinct notions
 - 1. Principle
 - 2. Cause
 - 3. Condition
 - 4. Occasion
- B. The genera of causes
 - 1. Material
 - 2. Formal
 - 3. Efficient
 - 4. Final
- C. Instrumental and Exemplar Cause
- D. Cause and Effect
 - 1. Priority
 - 2. Relation (perfection)
- E. Relationship between causes

IV. Efficient cause and its causality

- A. As explaining existence of finite being
- B. As explaining existence of Supreme Being
- C. The causality of creatures
- D. Nature of efficient cause
- E. Conditions requisite for efficient cause

V. Conclusion

Cause is one of the most familiar and commonly employed ideas in the realm of reasoning and everyday practical action. Yet from the time of its conception even to our present day, myriad writers have expressed the idea of cause more often than not in obscure and ambiguous terms. The reason is that the untrained mind is more intent on the concrete apprehension of causes and less interested in investigating the essential notion of cause as such.¹

From the erudite thought fostered by St. Thomas Aquinas clarifying, correcting and following Aristotle, who found an entire system of physics and metaphysics on cause, there was effected the true and genuine essence of the four causes.

Adhering, then, to the excellent thought taken from just a few of the multivarious works of the Angelic Doctor, a study of cause and causality can be made both interesting and efficacious. Before advancing to an analysis of the genera or types of cause, it will be well worth while to view the distinction St. Thomas gives between principle, cause, and those notions essential for the proper understanding of cause in general.

"The word principle," says St. Thomas, "signifies only that from which something proceeds: since anything from which something proceeds in any way we call a principle."² A more precise definition is given by Aristotle: "A principle is the first thing from which something either is or is made or is known." From this we derive a twofold division.

The first thing from which anything is or is made implies an ontological principle, i.e., it is that which exists in reality independent of the mind. Likewise, the first thing from which anything is known implies a logical principle, one which exists in the mind with a basis in reality, i.e., derived from reality.

Most basic of all principles and absolutely necessary for any knowledge of causality at all is what is known as the first principle. The first principle in general signifies a principle per se notum, or known through itself. It must, therefore, be most certain, self-evident, and indemonstrable. The absolutely first principle is a principle both in the ontological and logical order which supposes no other principle before itself. This first principle is able to be taken primarily as the most perfect principle which actually contains all other truths deduceable from it through direct demonstration (this can be none other than God, for to know truth in all its causes is perfect truth), and secondarily as the most imperfect principle, yet the highest potentially or the most universal judgement which does not actually contain all other truths, but from which all other truths can be demonstrated indirectly. The latter, it is clear, is that from which we know anything, the logical principle, which is the principle of contradiction formulated from a comparison of being with non-being. St. Thomas expresses it thus: "Being is not non-being," or "a thing is not able to be and not be at the same time under the same aspect."³

Other first principles or principles per se notum - the principle of identity, of the excluded middle, of causality, etc., - are all reducible to the principle of contradiction because it is the most basic, most known, indemonstrable principle from which all other truths can be demonstrated. This fact is most essential in the study of cause since on it St. Thomas builds the whole edifice of cause and causality.

Cause differs from principle in that it adds to principle the essential note of positive influence in producing something.⁴ It is the positive principle from which something really proceeds according to a dependence for existence. Since cause connotes something positive, a negative principle cannot be a cause; therefore, every cause can be said to be a principle, but not every principle is a cause. The two used coterminously have often been the cause of much confusion.

One other distinction made by St. Thomas to clarify these notions is important, and this is the term element.

The element is applied only to the causes of which a thing is composed, which are properly the materials. Moreover, it is not said of just any material cause, but of that one of which a thing is primarily composed; ...we say that earth and water are the elements (of man), because these are not composed of other bodies, but natural bodies are composed of them.⁵

A summation of this distinction is well expressed in the following quotation:

Just as cause is more common than element, which signifies something first and simple in the genus of material cause, so principle is more common than cause; for the first part of motion or of a line is called a principle but not a cause. In

this, it is clear that a principle can be said to be something which is not according to a distinct essence, as the point of a line.⁶

Two other distinctions used frequently by Scholastics are worth noting. A condition sine qua non (requisite condition) for an act is not a cause but is only a disposition for a cause to be able to produce an effect. For example, water is not the cause of swimming but is a necessary requisite. An occasion is not a cause or a condition, but is an opportunity for acting. The occasion for swimming, for example, could be a party or the need of a bath.

Distinguishing these notions and their relation to cause leads us over to the kinds of causes as described by the Scholastics, Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. Working from and analyzing the very definition of cause, a noted Scholastic says that something is able to influence existence in another in one of four ways: first, matter sustains form, and this is the material cause; second, form actuates the matter, and is the formal cause; third, an efficient agent effects or makes, and is the efficient cause; fourth, the end desired as the end is the final cause. These four are the only possible influences.⁷

Aristotle found four primary kinds of causes, and among the many places he describes them, his most thorough treatment is in Metaphysics, I,3 and II,2, and in Physics II,3 and II,7. In the second book of his Physics Aristotle gives a concise and brief enumeration of the four causes:

In one sense, that out of which a thing comes

to be and which persists is called 'cause' [material cause], e.g., the bronze of the statue, the silver of the bowl, the genera of which the bronze and silver are species. In another sense, the form or the archetype, that is, the statement of the essence, and its genera are called 'causes' [formal cause], and the parts in the definition. Again, the primary source of the change or coming to rest [efficient cause]; e.g., a man who gave advice is a cause, a father is a cause of a child, and generally what makes is the cause of what is made and what causes change of what is changed. Again, in the sense of end, or 'that for which' a thing is done [final cause]; e.g., health is the cause of walking about... This then perhaps exhausts the number of ways in which the term cause is used.⁸

In his commentary on Aristotle's Physics, St. Thomas analyzes the Stagyrte's fourfold division, and proves its necessity:

It is necessary that there be four causes: because, when there is a cause upon which follows the existence of another, its existence which has a cause is able to be considered in a twofold way: one way absolutely, and thus the cause of existence is the form, by which something is in act: another manner according as from a potential being there becomes a being in act: and because everything which is in potency, is reduced to act by that which is being already in act, from this it is necessary that there be two other causes, namely, the material cause and the agent cause, which reduces matter from potency into act. The action of the agent, however, tends to some determined thing, just as it proceeds from some determined principle; for each agent acts in a manner befitting itself. That, however, to which the action of the agent tends, is called the final cause. Therefore, it is necessary that there be four causes.⁹

In the preceding quotation St. Thomas deduces the four causes, finding four necessary conditions for something to come to be. What comes into being must be something of a determinate nature, and hence must have a form determining that nature. Secondly, what comes into being must come from

something which was it potentially before. This is matter, or material cause. These first two causes, the material and formal, are referred to as the intrinsic cause, i.e., those which help produce the effect, and also enter into it as constituent parts. Material and formal causality, however, does not consist in action, for action, as we shall see, belongs to the agent alone.¹⁰ Thirdly, for the matter to pass from potentiality to actual being, it must be moved by an agent in act. This is the efficient cause. Finally, this efficient cause, in moving the matter to actuality, must tend in its action toward something determinate befitting its own determinate nature. That to which it tends is the final cause. These last two causes are referred to as the extrinsic causes, i.e., those which are productive of an effect, but do not enter as elements or constituent parts of the effect when it has been produced.¹¹

It will be well to interpolate here the Thomistic theory of instrumental cause which is necessary for the proper understanding of the relationship between cause and effect. An instrument is an efficient cause which, under the influence of a principle cause, is rendered capable of producing an effect which surpasses its own natural powers. A piece of chalk, for example, is capable of making a mark, but to produce a signum, there must be some agent endowed with a higher power. Instrumental cause differs from the principal cause in two ways: by achieving an effect which surpasses its own powers, and by working under the influence of an alien and

communicated power. This added power in it is not permanent, but a transitory quality found in it only while the action lasts and in view of the action; it is also intrinsic to it, and thus is a physical motion. Such motion, moreover, does not merely accompany the motion of the instrument, being applied along with it to the effect, but modifies the instrument itself when in action, raising it to a higher order and applying it.

Besides its instrumental action the instrument has its own action, which it produces as a principal cause. This action affects that of the principal cause to a certain extent, since this must use the instruments in a way adapted to their nature. The action of the instrument, as such, is all one with that of the principal cause, so that a single effect results from their combined efforts. Both instrument and principal cause are thus responsible for the whole of the effect.¹²

Regarding the intrinsic causes also, a certain type of formal cause must be understood, namely, that which is called the extrinsic formal cause. The extrinsic formal cause is that which specifies a thing extrinsically. It is called the exemplar cause or the idea, and is defined by St. Thomas as "the form which something imitates from the intention of an agent, which determines itself to an end."¹³ In other words, the form according to which an artist works - for example, an art piece or ~~the~~ the erection of a building from blueprints - is the imitated form and not the intrinsic form. In regard to its existence, the idea is proximately in the mind of the

artist and remotely in the object in nature which the artist imitates. The exemplar cause, it must be noted, can be reduced to the efficient cause in so far as it directs the efficient cause, and also to the final cause in so far as the form of the exemplar is the end intended by the agent.¹⁴

A few points regarding cause and effect in general will help to clarify the types of causes just mentioned. Concerning the relationship or reference of cause to effect, cause precedes effect by a priority of nature. This is made clear from the Thomistic axiom: "Every cause is prior to its effect," and holds true if the cause and effect are materially taken.

Every cause, moreover, is more perfect than its effect, at least secundum quid or in a certain respect. By the fact that a cause really causes or has a part in producing, the effect really depends upon the cause and therefore is less perfect. Simpliciter or absolutely, however, according to its nature and existence absolutely considered, not every cause is more perfect than its effect. A principal efficient cause, for instance, is equally as perfect or more perfect than its effect, because it is a cause which can produce a certain effect by itself (per se). An instrumental efficient cause does not have to be more perfect than its effect nor equally as perfect, because the effect is assimilated by the principal agent and not by the instrument.

Returning to the consideration of the genera of causes, of the four types, the final cause has the highest rank, and is called by St. Thomas "the cause of causes," since by its

determining nature it directs the efficient cause and influences material and formal cause. His own words will clearly express the primacy of the final cause:

The efficient cause is the cause of the end as regards its existence, indeed, because the action of the efficient cause is for this that it be the end; but the end is the cause of the efficient cause, not in the existential order but in the order of causality.¹⁵

The end is the cause of efficient causality which makes the efficient to be efficient; and similarly, it makes matter to be matter, and form to be form, since matter does not receive form except on account of an end, and form does not perfect matter except through an end. Therefore, it is said that the end is the cause of causes because it is the cause of causality in all causes.¹⁶

From Aristotle, who recognizes the distinction of the four causes, we also get the explanation of how they are mutually related. Becoming presupposes an undetermined being (potency or matter) which acquires a determination (act or form). This progressive determination of potency presupposes a determining principle (efficient cause), and this active potency of the agent gives the determination rather than another only because it is ordained to such an act and not to a certain order. With Aristotle, the fact that potency refers to act, is one of the simplest formulas of the principle of finality. From this it follows that causes mutually interact from different points of view. Matter receives and limits the form, the form determines and contains the matter. The efficient cause brings about that which makes it a finality. The desire of some good arouses the agent to action, and the action causes it to acquire the desired good.¹⁷

Besides this mutual relation and the dependence of all the causes upon the final cause, there is an interdependence between the extrinsic efficient and final causes just as there is between the intrinsic material and formal causes. This interrelation is brought out fully by St. Thomas who finds a twofold order, namely, the order of intention (final cause), and the order of execution (efficient):

Now there is to be observed a twofold order in ends—the order of intention, and the order of execution; and in either of these orders there must be something first. For that which is first in the order of intention, is the principle, as it were, moving the appetite; consequently, if you remove this principle, there will be nothing to move the appetite. On the other hand, the principle in execution is that wherein operation has its beginning; and if this principle be taken away, no one will begin to work. Now the principle in the intention is the last end; while the principle in execution is the first of the things which are ordained to the end.¹⁸

St. Thomas clearly illustrates here that there will be no efficient cause unless there is a prior final cause, and yet the final cause presupposes the existence of an efficient cause.

Having established the Thomistic proof and fourfold division of causality and causal interaction, the most important point in the consideration of cause is the efficient cause, and the implications of its causality. Thus far, we have merely proved the existence of an efficient cause and its place among the other causes. Now our concern will be the reason for the existence of the efficient cause.

One look at the world about us with its myriad natural things in existence will give us the first view to the reason

for the efficient cause. Finite beings, it is obvious, have actual existence, and it is this existence which absolutely necessitates the existence of a higher cause. St. Thomas aptly expresses this in the following:

Whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the constituent principles of that essence (like a property that necessarily accompanies the species - as the faculty of laughing is proper to a man - and is caused by the constituent principles of the species), or by some exterior agent - as heat is caused in water by fire. Therefore, if the existence of a thing differs from its essence, this existence must be caused either by some exterior agent or by its essential principles. Now it is impossible for a thing's existence to be caused by its essential constituent principles, for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence, if its existence is caused. Therefore that thing, whose existence differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another.¹⁹

In the *De Ente Et Essentia*, St. Thomas uses this same argument, and names, moreover, the higher cause as the efficient cause:

It is impossible that the act of existing be caused by a thing's form or its quiddity, (I say caused as by an efficient cause); for then something would be the cause of itself and would bring itself into existence - which is impossible. Everything, then, which is such that its act of existing is other than its nature must needs have its act of existing from something else.²⁰

An extrinsic principle, in other words, which is none other than an efficient cause, must be the sole reason for the existence of actual finite beings.

Treading on the same line of thought, this argument can also be proposed from the fact of any composition in things. Since composite beings do exist (a composite being is one which results from the union of many different principles),

we must conclude to the existence of causes. St. Thomas in his tract on the simplicity of God clearly shows the necessity of causes for composite beings. The following quotation states it specifically: "Every composite has a cause, for things in themselves different cannot unite unless something causes them to unite."²¹ His words, also, in a parallel article from the Contra Gentiles strengthens this statement:

Everything which agrees to something not according to that which it is, agrees to it through some cause, as white in a man; for what does not have a cause is first and immediate; hence, it is necessary that it be per se [through itself] and secundum quod ipsum [according to that which it, itself, is].²²

In the argument just stated, St. Thomas declares that anything which belongs to a thing not essentially, but by participation, (composition), belongs to it through a cause.

The explanation of composites leads us directly over to the next step in the analysis of being as reason for the existence of efficient cause. In the latter part of the second quotation above, St. Thomas states that anything without a cause must be first and immediate. Now, this first and immediate being must necessarily be the one, first, uncaused being. This being is God, because He is the only being without a cause. Further words of the Angelic Doctor express the idea clearly:

Since every being which exists through another is reduced, as to its first cause, to one existing in virtue of itself, there must be some being which is the cause of the existing of all things because it, itself, is the act of existing alone. If that

were not so, we would proceed to infinity among causes, since, as we have said, every being which is not the act of existing alone has a cause of its existence. Evidently, then, it has its act of existing from the First Being which is simply the act of existing. This is the First Cause, God.²³

A glance back at composite beings will suffice to tell us that they are among the beings which are "esse tantum," and therefore must have a cause of their esse. St. Thomas informs us:

It happens that everything which in any way is (exists), is from that being of which there is no cause of existence. It has been shown, however, that God is this being of which there is no cause of existence (since He is "pure Esse"). From Him, therefore, everything which in any way is, has its existence.²⁴

Likewise, that which exists by virtue of its essence is the cause of all things which exist through participation, just as fire is the cause of things burning in regard to anything. God, however, is a being through His own essence, because He is existence itself; every other being, however, is being through participation, because a being which is its own existence is not able to exist except as one. God, therefore, is the cause of existence of all other beings.²⁴

Having proved from St. Thomas the existence of an efficient cause, the necessity of efficient cause for the existence of finite and composite beings, and the existence of the First Cause, we now proceed to the nature of efficient cause itself.

The initial step will be to look again at created beings and their capability to act as agents and produce effects. Created beings, it is seen, do act as causes, and do produce effects, but they receive this power to cause only from the First Cause. St. Thomas declares:

God has immediate providence over everything, because He has in His intellect the types of everything, even the smallest; and whatsoever causes He assigns to certain effects, He gives them the power to produce those effects. Whence it must be that He has beforehand the type of those effects in His mind.²⁵

And further:

The active powers which are seen to exist in things, would be bestowed on things to no purpose, if these wrought nothing through them. Indeed, all things created would seem, in a way, to be purposeless, if they lacked an operation proper to them; since the purpose of everything is its operation.²⁶

A point of the greatest importance in this causality of creatures is that of establishing the difference between cause secundum esse and cause secundum fieri, and which to attribute to the created agent.

St. Thomas has clearly made this distinction in his Summa Theologica I, 104, 1c, where he states that creatures can be the cause of the fieri (the becoming of a thing), but not the cause of the esse (the existence of a thing). The example he proposes is that of a builder who causes a house:

Every effect depends on its cause, so far as it is its cause. But we must observe that an agent may be the cause of the becoming of its effect, but not directly of its being. This may be seen both in artificial and in natural things: for the builder causes the house in its becoming, but he is not the direct cause of its being. For it is clear that the being of the house is a result of its form, which consists in the putting together and arrangement of the materials, and results from the natural qualities of certain things. Thus, a builder constructs a house, by making use of cement, stones, and wood which are able to be put together in a certain order and to preserve it. Therefore the being of a house depends on the nature of these materials, just as its becoming depends on the action of the builder. The same principle applies to natural things. For if an

agent is not the cause of a form as such, neither will it be directly the cause of being which results from that form; but it will be the cause of the effect, in its becoming only. Now it is clear that of two things in the same species one cannot directly cause the other's form as such, since it would then be the cause of its own form, which is essentially the same as the form of the other; but it can be the cause of this form for as much as it is in matter - in other words, it may be the cause that this matter receives this form. And this is to be the cause of becoming, as when man begets man, and fire causes fire. Thus whenever a natural effect is such that it has an aptitude to receive from its active cause an impression specifically the same as in that active cause, then the becoming of the effect, but not its being, depends on the agent.²⁷

Sometimes, continues St. Thomas in this same article, an effect is produced that does not have the aptitude to receive the impression of its cause specifically in the same way it exists in the agent. Since this type of agent, for example, a heavenly body, acts in a different way than does the creature, it is out of the realm of the question we are now considering. The preceding explanation of the causality of creatures, however, opens the way to the next step, the nature of and conditions required for efficient causality itself.

The words of Father Francis Meehan, who has made an extensive study of efficient causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas, will give us the start. "The causality of efficient cause," he says, "is the actuality of an active potency that is productive of a term..."²⁸ Hence, it is the exercise of action to produce an effect, and further, efficient causality must involve three things: action, passion and motion.

Concerning these conditions, Henri Renard states: "Action

combines both motion as a foundation together with a relation from the agent to the patient. The difference is found in distinct relations."²⁹

This distinction and interrelation St. Thomas brings out in the following quotations:

Motion is neither the potency of a thing existing in potency, nor the act of a thing existing in act, but it is the act in potency; as through that, which is called act, its order is designated to an anterior potency, and through that, which is called potency of existing, its order is designated to an ulterior act.

Motion is a mobile act in so far as it is mobile... For motion is the act of a thing existing in potency, in regard to this manner; it is mobile, not moving, however, because moving in regard to this manner is being in act. Motion is said to be a passio (passion) according as it is the act of the thing undergoing something.³⁰

Motion, moreover, is the act of the agent:

Motion is the act of the thing moved. For that act is of another whereby it is in act. But the thing moved is said to be from that which is in potency to move; the thing moving, however, is in operation, that is, in that which is existence in act; and thus, since the thing moving is said to be on account of motion, motion is the act of the thing moved.³¹

As the act it is called "actio;" but it takes place in the patient: "The motivating and activating act takes place in the patient (the thing undergoing something), and not in the agent and mover."³²

St. Thomas goes on to explain that the same motion is the act both of the agent and of the patient:

The act of the mover and the moved are identified: for it is said of the mover in so far as it does something, of the thing moved, however, in so far as it undergoes something; but what the mover, by acting, causes, is the same as what the thing moved,

by undergoing, receives... For what is of a mover as an efficient cause, is the same as what is in the thing moved as undergoing and receiving.³³

In a parallel article from the Summa, the Angelic Doctor rejects those who would hold that action and passion are the same thing:

Although action is the same as motion and likewise passion; still it does not follow that action and passion are the same; because action implies reference as of something from which there is motion in the thing moved; whereas passion implies reference as of something which is from another.³⁴

Therefore, we can conclude, action and passion are distinct.

Finally, St. Thomas integrates action and passion, as distinct predicaments, with efficient causality:

In so far as a thing suffers, by an efficient cause, it is the predicament passion, for to undergo is nothing other than to receive something from an agent. In so far, however, as an efficient cause is determined by an effect, it is the predicament action. For action is the act of an agent in regard to something else.³⁵

The real nature of efficient causality, then, is this exercise of action, and the indispensable requisite for its efficiency is the power to act. It can be summed up by the following from St. Thomas:

The nature of any act is that whereby it communicates itself as far as it is possible. Whence it is that any agent acts in so far as it is in act. For to act is nothing else than to communicate that by which an agent is in act in so far as it is possible.³⁶

By its nature, whatever is in act moves, and whatever is in potency is moved.³⁷

Such, then, is the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas on causality. By way of conclusion, it might be well to summarize

the salient points contained in the consideration of cause. Cause, in its highest aspect, bespeaks action. Action is in a patient, and in its action the agent reduces the matter from potency to act. In reference to efficient causality, this act is seen to be productivity. Efficient cause alone, in the proper sense, exercises its causality through a mode of action, and it is through action alone that the effect depends on its cause.³⁸

The loftiest thought, perhaps, in the consideration of cause, is that man is able to reason to and view so clearly the existence of an Infinite, uncaused Godhead, and that this Being, exercising action in accordance with His own nature, manifests His ineffable Goodness⁰ by causing and sustaining the existence of every soul in the universe.

Finis

FOOTNOTES

1. Oscar J. LaPlante, "Traditional View Of Efficient Causality," Proceedings, (December, 1938)1.
2. Summa Theol., I, q. 33, a. 1c.
3. In Meta., IV, l. 6. "Ens non est non-ens." "Idem non potest esse et non esse sub eodem respectu."
4. Oscar J. LaPlante, op. cit., p. 2.
5. De Principiis Naturae. "Elementum autem non dicitur proprie nisi de causis ex quibus est compositio rei, quae proprie sunt materiales. Et iterum non de qualibet causa materiali, sed de illa ex qua est prima compositio; sicut non dicimus quod membra sunt elementa hominis, quia membra etiam componuntur ex aliis. Sed dicimus quod terra et aqua sunt elementa, quia haec non componuntur ex aliis corporibus; sed ex ipsis est prima compositio corporum naturalium."
6. De Pot., X, a. 1, ad 9. "Sicut autem causa communior est quam elementum, quod significat aliquid primum et simplex in genere causae materialis; ita etiam principium est communius quam causa; nam prima pars motus vel lineae dicitur principium sed non causa. In quo patet quod principium potest dici aliquid quod non est secundum essentiam distinctum, ut punctum lineae."
7. Henri Renard, Philosophy Of Being, p. 138.
8. Aristotle, Physics, Book II, chap. 2, 194b.
9. In Physics, II, l. 10. "Necesse est autem quatuor esse causas: quia cum causa sit, ad quam sequitur esse alterius; esse ejus quod habet causam potest considerare dupliciter: uno modo absolute, et sic causa essendi est forma, per quam aliquid est in actu: alio modo secundum quod de potentia ente fit actu ens: et quia omne quod est in potentia, reducitur ad actum per id quod est actu ens, ex hoc necesse est esse duos alios causas, scilicet materiam et agentem, quod reducit materiam de potentia in actum. Actio autem agentis ad aliquod determinatum tendit, sicut ab aliquo determinato principio procedit; nam omne agens agit quod est sibi conveniens. Id autem, ad quod intendit actio agentis dicitur causa finalis. Sic igitur necesse est esse causas quatuor."
10. Summa Theol., I, q. 2, a. 3.
11. Brother Benignus, Nature, Knowledge And God, p. 71.

12. Henri Renard, op. cit., p. 152.
13. De Ver., q. 3, a. 1. "Forma ad quam recipiens artifex operatur est forma imitativa non forma intrinseca."
14. Henri Renard, op. cit., p. 147.
15. In Meta., V, lect. 2. "Efficiens est causa finis quantum ad esse quidem, quia movendo perducit efficiens ad hoc quod sit finis. Finis autem est causa efficientis non quantum ad esse, sed quantum ad rationem causalitatis. Nam efficiens est causa in quantum agit; non autem agit nisi causa finis."
16. De Principiis Naturae. "Finis est causa causalitatis efficientis qui facit efficiens esse efficiens; et similiter facit materiam esse materiam, et formam esse formam, cum materia non suscipiat formam nisi propter finem, et forma non perficiat materiam nisi per finem. Unde dicitur quod finis est causa causarum quia est causa causalitatis in omnibus causis."
17. Garrigou-Lagrange, God, His Existence And Nature, Vol. II, p. 313.
18. Summa Theol., I-II, q. 1, a. 4c.
19. Idem, I, q. 3, a. 4c.
20. De Ente et Essentia, chap. IV.
21. Summa Theol., I, q. 3, a. 7c.
22. Contra Gentiles, II, cap. XV. "Omne enim quod alicui convenit non secundum quod ipsum est, per aliquam causam convenit ei, sicut album homini; nam quod causam non habet, primum et immediatum est; unde necesse est quod sit per se et secundum quod ipsum."
23. De Ente et Essentia, chap. IV.
24. Contra Gentiles, II, cap. XV. "Item, quod per essentiam dicitur est causa omnium quae per participationem dicuntur, sicut ignis est causa omnium ignitorum in quantum hujusmodi, Deus autem est ens per essentiam suam, quia est ipsum esse; omne autem aliud ens est ens per participationem, quia ens quod sit suum esse non potest esse nisi unum. Deus igitur est causa essendi omnibus aliis."
25. Summa Theol., I, q. 22, a. 3c.
26. Idem, I, q. 105, a. 5c.

27. Summa Theol., I, q. 104, a. 1c.
28. Francis X. Meehan, Efficient Causality In Aristotle And St. Thomas, p. 239.
29. Henri Renard, op. cit., p. 138.
30. In Physics, III, lect. 2. "Motus neque est potentia existentis in potentia, neque est actus existentis in actu, sed est actus in potentia; ut per id, quod dicitur actus, designetur ordo ejus ad anteriorem potentiam, et per id, quod dicitur in potentia existentis, designetur ordo ejus ad ulteriorem actum."
 "Motus est actus mobilis inquantum est mobile. Quia enim motus est actu existentis in potentia inquantum hujusmodi; existens autem in potentia, inquantum hujusmodi, est mobile, non autem movens, quia movens inquantum hujusmodi est ens in actu. Motus dicitur - passio secundum quod est actus patientis."
31. In Meta., XI, lect. 9. "Motus sit motivi actus. Illud enim actus est alicujus quo fit actu. Sed motivum dicitur ex eo quod est potens movere; movens autem in operari, idest in eo quod est esse actu; et ita cum movens dicatur propter motum, motus erit actus motivi."
32. In De Anima, III, lect. 2. "Actus motivi et activi fit in patiente, et non in agente et movente."
33. In Physics, III, lect. 4. "Idem est actus moventis et moti: moventis enim dicitur inquantum aliquid agit, moti autem inquantum patitur; sed idem est quod movens agendo causat, et quod motum patiando recipit. Idem enim est quod est a movente, ut a causa agente, et quod est in moto ut in patiente et recipiente."
34. Summa Theol., I, q. 28, a. 3, ad 1.
35. In Physics, III, lect. 4. "Secundum quod aliquid denominatur a causa agente, est praedicamentum passionis nam pati nil est aliud quam suscipere aliquid ab agente. Secundum autem quod e contra denominatur causa agens ab effectu, est praedicamentum actionis. Nam actio est actus ab agente in aliud."
36. De Pot., II, lect. 1. "Natura cujuslibet actus est quod seipsum communicat quantum possibile. Unde unumquodque agens agit secundum quod in actu est. Agere vero nihil aliud est quam communicare illud per quod agens est actu secundum quod est possibile."
37. In Physics, VIII, lect. 7. "Natura sua quidquid est actu movet, et quidquid est potentia movetur."

38. Summa Theol., I-II, q. 51, a. 2, ad 1.

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