41 - ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN BODY, KNOWLEDGE AND NATURE IN THOMAS AQUINAS

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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the contemporary historiography of physical education, a singular feature of centuries XI, XII and XIII, situated in Middle Age, was the emergence of philosophicaland theological doctrines proposing reflections about the ontological dimensions of body (Ramos, 1982; Grifi, 1989). Among the thinkers producers of some of the most dense reflections on this question, it is worth stressing the name of Tomas de Aquinas (1225-1274).

Thomas Aquinas was one of the main systematic thinkers of knowledge and theories that were circulating inside the scholastic monasteries and religious orders, proposing notable summaries between the Aristotle philosophy and the principles of Christianity. Preceded and inspired by Alberto Magno, his teacher at the University of Paris, Thomas Aquinas raisedhis system from the understanding that faith and reason, despite havingtheir own spheres of intervention,were not necessarily exclusive. Quite the contrary, faith and reason must agree, because there is only one truth. The philosophical reason should investigate Nature and admit what is demonstrable through logic and argument. Concerning theology, philosophy must analyze the divine authority in its manifestations, whose totalities need to be accepted by man, although the will of Godremainsnot susceptible to the ravages of reason.

Thus, it is fallacious to put that the natural truths affected by tracks of logic and the truths placed beyond this domain are conflicting poles (Melani, 2012). Instead, the reason, when properly applied, strengthens the anteriority of divine revelation.The following example illustrates this relationship: no man can, by some type of logical-rational methodology, demonstrate the essence of God by the description of their properties and characteristics, but has the ability to show that this same God constitutes the primeval cause of all things.In fact, if everything that exists is caused by something anterior, the application of this reasoning to all entities will lead to situations where, in a moment, men intelligence won't be ableto identify secure determinations becausethey are beyond theirpossibility of apprehension. This moment is the one where the faith in the supreme omnipotence of Godis imposed as a necessity.

In the wake of this compatibility between the dogma and the exercise of thought, we can say that Thomas Aquinas articulates a theory of knowledge given in regard to natural objects, taking as a reference the epistemic and gnostic limits between men cognitionand the knowledge revealed, full of mystical origin.This done, in so far as the human reason holds the truths of understanding without denying recognition of a divine will, there is an urgent question: what is the role played by the body in this context? In this regard, the delineation of a reflection on this theme is the aim of this essay. Parallel to it, a brief investigationenhancing what kinds of moral attributes, and in what circumstances, are associated with embodiment, will be done. The need of a study such as this finds its justification in the fact that the system of thought created by Thomas Aquinas resulted in Thomistic Philosophy, namely the doctrine based uponthe philosophical and theological ideas of this author. One should remind that the Thomistic Philosophy substantiate the educational projects of many European religious currents, including the Jesuit one, what was responsible for the creation of the first educational establishments in Brazil (Werneck, 1991). Therefore, revisit their conceptual basis is a fruitful strategy to understand the guidelines ofthe beginnings of Brazilian formal education.

KNOWLEDGE, BODY AND MORAL IN THOMAS AQUINAS

In accordance with the philosophical system of Saint Thomas Aquinas, God is pure act, i.e. the first cause and end of all entities. God contains all things inside himself, determining their destinations and providing their origins. However, at the time of creation, it is establisheda distance between the creator and the creatures, since none of them meets the perfection of the first. But this gap does not preclude that a hierarchy among the beings exists, because certain creatures have degrees of perfection larger than the other.

At the apex of creation are the angels, creatures intangible and immaterial. Distributed into several classes, even among them there are qualitative differentiations.There are angels more coming or distant from the act of purity that is God. After the angels, the emergence of man has a peculiar condition. Endowed with a principle of understanding, named, the soul, men follow aligned with the series of immaterial beings. For Aquinas, the true dimension of the human soul does not put men next to the superior intelligence of the angels, because they need a body composed on matter: this is the reason why the soul is only a principle of understanding. In what concerns the interaction between body and soul in the philosophy of Aquinas, Gilson (1995), recognized medievalist, complements:

> A alma é, com efeito, uma substância intelectual, mas à qual é essencial ser a forma do corpo e constituir com ele um composto físico de mesma natureza que todos os compostos de matéria e de forma. É por isso que a alma humana está no último grau das criaturas inteligentes; ela é a mais distante de todas as perfeições do intelecto divino. Em compensação, enquanto é a forma de um corpo, ela o domina e o supera de tal maneira, que a alma humana assinala os confins e como que a linha do horizonte entre o reino das outras Inteligências e o domínio dos corpos (Gilson, 1995, p. 667).

This is the double circumstance of human soul: linked to biological constraints, it loses the ability to apprehend directly the most subtle and elaborate intelligible essences. "Sem dúvida, resta em nós algum débil clarão do raio divino; visto que acabamos por encontrar nas coisas o vestígio do inteligível que presidiu à sua formação, nós ainda participamos por algum ponto da irradiação de que Deus é o foco" (ibid. p. 667). In other words, the weakness of this "blaze" is a fact because itpoorly illuminates the opacity of the things over which focuses.

In effect, the maximum that the human soul performs is an access to the principles of things, because they are both insidethe objects and intellectual functions. But the soul can only operate by means of abstractions on the sensitive dimension. "A origem do nosso conhecimento está, pois, nos sentidos; explicar o conhecimento humano é definir a colaboração que se

estabelece entre as coisas materiais, o sentido e o intelecto." (ibid. p. 667).

In short, men, while sum of material body and the soul as a form of this body, are located in a universe full of other bodies with material forms. The element which particularizes and individualizing these natures is the matter; the universal element they harbor is, on the contrary, theform. Knowing implies in unhooking from the objects the universal substance they contain (Boehner& Gilson, 2003).

The task of the human intellect is to adducethe material restrictions present in objects, sinceobtainment of the intelligible is the result of this process. Meanwhile, Thomas Aquinas (cited by Gilson, 1995) asserts that such procedure presents a singularity to be underlined:

> Uma espécie de relação ao mesmo tempo correspondente e inversa se estabelece, pois, entre o intelecto e as coisas. Num certo sentido, a alma humana é dotada de um intelecto agente, num outro sentido, é dotada de um intelecto possível. A própria alma racional existe, de fato, em potencial relativamente às espécies das coisas sensíveis; essas espécies lhe são apresentadas nos órgãos dos sentidos a que elas chegam, órgãos materiais em que representam as coisas com suas propriedades particulares e individuais. Portanto, as espécies sensíveis só são inteligíveis em potencial, não em ato. Inversamente, há na alma racional uma faculdade ativa capaz de tornar as espécies sensíveis atualmente inteligíveis: aquela que se chama intelecto agente. E há nela uma aptidão passiva a receber as espécies sensíveis com todas as suas determinações particulares: aquela que se chama intelecto possível. Essa decomposição das faculdades da alma permite-lhe ao mesmo tempo entrar em contato com o sensível como tal e fazer dele um inteligível. (Gilson, 1995, p. 668).

With this reasoning, Aquinas establishes a conceptual bridge between the fields of intellective reason and moral actions.In so far, as the only way afforded to men to exercise the little flashes of divine bright inside themselves refer to the uses of the intellect agent, then only by this employmentthey put theirbehavior in harmony with the Supreme and Infinite Good (God). This requirement demands, in addition to discipline, the skills of contemplation and concentration.Whenfellowsdo not carry out this contingency, they tend to fall into moral deviation. Said another way, if fellows forget to practice the faculty of understanding in favor of attachment to lassitude orabsence of intellectual habits, what confirms the seduction by material goods, they will feel unhappy.

As regards the body, he, in fact, corresponds to the first vehicle to access the possibility of knowledge. But if he is treated by means of a desire that is dedicated, without moderation, to appetites and pleasures fatally the reason end will be clouded and even withered with the passing of time. This happens because the lack of moderation in dealing with the sensible impulsesgenerates inhibition of intellect agent.

It follows from the foregoing thisconsequence: the convergence to the Supreme Good is not automatically guaranteed for the human condition. Men must choose the procedures and attitudes that take them towards God. What does this mean? Basically, in the philosophical project of Thomas Aquinas, there is a sphere for the free option. To choose the way to the Supreme Good or to the appeal of the sensations generated by the activation of sensory circuits depends on how personal behavior manages his inclinations. The more fellow is virtuous, understanding virtue as the groundfor a conduct that needs to be exercised for the learning of moral, more he knows how to discern the necessary, in terms of the functions of the excessive body.

By way of illustration, articles 1 and 2 of the question 168 of work Summa Theologiae (considered the main writing of the philosopher along with the Summa against the Gentiles), emphasize, with a wealth of detail, the necessity of some recreation motor activities in a balanced way. Among the two articles, one must highlight the dedication to games However, before showing the arguments of Aquinas about the appropriateness or not of gaming, and in which situations this dedication should occur, it is importantto say that the issue 168, in the view of many historians of philosophy, is the first systematic study on this topic. This observation corroborates the pioneering spirit and the broad spectrum of ideas of Aquinas, even more in the case of a medieval philosopher (Duflo, 1997).

Article 1, entitled "Is there any reasonin outward movements of the body?", introduces the problem as a whole. As well as the development of the theme takes place, Aquinas underlines the need to treat the study of body movements depending on a double point of view: the adequacy for the person who moves arms, legs, head, etc.,and to the amount of external entities involved (people, objects, spaces, etc.).At the end, the following conclusions are presented:

1. BodilyMovements are indicatorsofinternalprovisions, thesisthatconfirmed in Ecclesiasticus19:26-27: "Pelo seu aspecto se conhece o homem, e pelo semblante se conhece o homem sensato. A veste de um homem, seu sorriso e seu andar revelam o que ele é." (Bíblia de Jerusalém, 2011, p. 1173).
2. Although the human trends for the execution of a particular style of body movement derive from intimate impetus, this connection does not exclude the possibility of the intervention of the efforts of reason. With much property, Saint Ambrose (cited by Aquino, 1947) warned in OfficciiMinistrorum, I, 18 that one should leave the designs of nature guide the human movement. But if nature fails, for whatever reason, additional efforts need to come up in order to assist it.
3. Whereas the body movements, despite being external, denote certain inner trends, it is accepted that they derive from passions of the soul, becauseaccording to the preaching of Saint Ambrose (cited by Aquino, 1947) in OfficciiMinistrorum, I, 18, the profile of body movements of a man announces ifhis heart obeys frivolous or noble reasons about the goals orienteering him. In addition, the Ecclesiasticus 19:26-27 reports that the garments, the smile and the mien of a man reveal their greater or lesser righteousness before the similar.Thus, we conclude that these signals need rigorous evaluations to effectively show the character of the individual displaying them. It seems that Saint Augustine had already realized this when proclaimed that, in our bodily movement, we should not produce offensive gestures to the eyes of people observing us. Now, the words of Augustine assume an ingredient of moderation, ingredient that was formerly mentioned by Aristotle in Nicomachean Ethics, IV, 6-7, in their particular analysis of two specific virtues: the medium-term and veracity.Thus, consideringthat the actions of bodily movement open the access to other people on us, to the point of establishing communicative channels with them, it comes that the accomplishment of gestures without exaggeration means an option in favor ofthe virtue of medium-term. In themselves, controlled and moderated actsare valid sincethey allow the soul to migrate from its depths until the plan of the organs of the senses and show the true inner character of fellow.
4. Is not advisable or prudent to investigate the human movement and its styles accounting them as ends in

> themselves, neglecting their circumstances of keys that open the doors to the internal rules of the person. This purpose should guide those who wish to study bodily movements,because since they are often bad coordinated, one can inform the performer the proper technics to optimizethem with training and repetition. With much relevance, Saint Ambrose (cited by Aquinas, 1947) proclaimed in OfficciiMinistrorum, I, 18 that tolerance to lack of grace in the acts of the body does not mean leaving them without the perspective of improvement.

With such placements, Thomas Aquinas (1947) ends up the first article of the issue 168. The second article, named "It is possible the presence of virtue in the game? ",lies precisely on the theme of men play appetite.

Revisiting Saint Augustine, Aquinas underlines that in situationsof extreme intellectual and physical fatigue,people should be wise and suspend the activities causing those undesirable tension through playful acts or words. The own dedication to these pleasures does not violate virtue. Nevertheless, Aristotle did not let this issue go unnoticed in book IV of Nicomachean Ethics.

> Uma vez que a vida é feita não só de atividade, mas também de repouso, e este inclui o lazer e o entretenimento, parece haver (...) uma espécie de intercâmbio que se relaciona com o bom gosto. Pode-se dizer, e também escutar, o que se deve e o que não se deve. A espécie de pessoa com quem falamos ou escutamos influi no caso do mesmo modo. Evidentemente, também neste campo existe o excesso e a falta em relação a um meio termo. Aqueles que levam a jocosidade ao excesso são considerados bufões vulgares; são os que procuram provocar o riso a qualquer preço e, na sua ânsia de fazer rir, não se preocupam com a inconveniência do que dizem nem em evitar o mal-estar daqueles que elegem como objeto de seus chistes; ao passo que os que não sabem gracejar nem suportam os que o fazem, são rústicos e grosseiros. Os que, porém, gracejam com bom gosto são chamados espirituosos, o que envolve um espírito vivo que se volta de um lado ao outro; efetivamente, essas agudezas do espírito são consideradas movimentos do caráter, e assim como o corpo é apreciado pelos seus movimentos, o caráter também o é. (Aristotle, 2003, p. 100).

Aquinas follows from the foregoing that the capacities of the body and soul are finite with regard to the types and quantities of work to which they are submitted. Even when the understanding focuses too much on some empirical object, independent on being guided by imperatives of practical reason or speculative reason, the resulting fatigue arises in the sphere of the body, because many organs are called in those operations (heart, brain, vision, etc.). In the cases fellow exerts contemplative activities, the physical costsare even greater, because the task of developingthoughts without the material content of sensitive goods demand abstractions whose maintenance calls on large intakes of organic and psychic energy. But, if an individual exhausted needs relaxation to dissipate the wearinessof spirit,the spirit does not relaxes through immersion in a framework of inertia and torpor, as happens with the body in sleep: his appeasement comes by way of pleasure, stresses the philosopher. The self-surrender to fun contributes to recover the investigative excesses of contemplative reason. In these cases, the dedication to gamesis not only advisable but welcome.

Meanwhile, Thomas Aquinas warns that some care must be taken in playful relaxation. The first refers to the nature of words and gestures exercised during games, what should be decent and peaceful. The second has to do with the maintenance of mental balance: in the course of the game, it is meaningful to contain the excesses of desire. The third refers to the rigor in the choice of companions and game places, because it is essential to prevent inappropriateness fun.

All of these recommendations, advocate rational habits; however, rational habits belong to the universe of moral virtues. Respected this restriction, horizons trading equilibrate virtue and game can rise. The encounter of both leads the born ofeutrapelia, which, according to Aristotle, is equivalent to a balanced combination of joy and good humor.

In the structure of the above reasoning, seriousness and joy are not conflicting values in full. Quite the contrary, when gaming is moderate,benefits to gamersappear. Aquinas reminds us that even the biblical doctrine does not disqualify the joy in favor of seriousness in the construction of human language: the Sacred Text restricts its use only in the ecclesiastical communication of wisdom.

Summarizing, the acceptance of games depends on the pleasure they produce be moderately directed to the recreation of the individual whose body and soul give signs of exhaustion due to excess work. In this circumstance, games legitimacy cannot be denied, and much less the third objection maintained.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The exposure developed previously, despite its brevity, allows the announcement of some conclusions the description on how Thomas Aquinas conceives the relations between body, nature and knowledge.

The first one refers to the observation that Aquinas confirms the differentiated status of men in relation to the other living creatures, because only themare cited as keepers of a soul whose essence reiterates the divine power of creation, even in evanescent dimensions. Although the philosopher had supported this thesis, those same men, due to the requirement of having to live in biological bodies, do not reach the possibility to exist as pure intelligence, like the angelic entities. Therefore, the contingencies of the soul confirm that they belong to a given constituency where the ontological knowledge of essences is not franchisee. Then, the body can be interpreted as an obstacle to legitimate knowledge, because,at first sight, it blocks the access to the pure intelligible.

However, if we look at the body into the territories of their own ontological human condition, i.e., not more from a vertical perspective, but rather from an horizontal one, it becomes clear that the sensory attributes (sight, touch, smell, hearing, kinesthesia, etc.) have the prerogative to initiate the process of construction of knowledge, because they absorbthe information coming from the external environment. Without the participation of body, the world cannot receive the intervention of intellect agent. In other words, the world data need the participation of the body as a mean to engage the performance of the intellect agent. But, as hestarts to work, a complex abstraction onthe material conditions of objects happens, because without such operation, the true and reliable knowledge remains inaccessible. Said another way, men prove theircognitive constitution effectively working upon the information that the organs of the senses provide.

On the other hand, the work of the intellect agent depends on efforts and expenditures of energy, tasks that cause fatigue when too much. Once the power of intellect agent is rooted in the soul, which is wound into the plane of the body matters, one concludes from this linkthat when the intellect is using the maximum of hisenergy and accuses exhaustion, such effects are recognizable in the body.

In these hours, dedication to recreational activities such as games are advocated by Aquinas, because, practiced with

moderation, they propitiate thearistoteliceutrapelia (joy), somewhatwhichpushesthe recovery of the effort expended. For the philosopher, the excessive attachment to games affects the soul as much as the total abstinence from any practice with playful connotation. Thus, a mere play has no sense for Aquinas: the game must be imbued with some purpose rationally justifiable. As a result, Aquinas philosophicalreflections regarding the apologyof gamessuppose an ethical framework, consistent with the state of the art of theological knowledge of his historical era.

To defend this point of view, Thomas Aquinas affirms the idea that the weariness of soul is liable to be surpassed in the sphere of the body, endorsing the impossibility of separation of both in terms of theory of knowledge. Therefore, he is an author who could provide conceptual contributions in some discussions taking placein academic field of physical education, because his viewpointfollows a theoretical path very different from the phenomenological approach. Thislatter hegemonic referential orientates the systematical reflections in this area of knowledge.

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ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN BODY, KNOWLEDGE AND NATURE IN THOMAS AQUINAS

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study refers to investigate the epistemic functions of body as regards to the knowledge of natural objects, according to the theory of knowledge developed by the philosopher Tomas Aquinas. For this purpose, they will be revisited the relations between sensitivity, intellectuality, body movement, virtue and playfulness into one of the main works of this thinker, the book Suma Teológica. After proper explanation of these concepts, the final considerations of the study will emphasize the links between game and recreation for the philosopher, as well as their influences along the cognition that seeks to understand the nature.

KEYWORDS: Body; Knowledge; Nature; Cognition; Tomas Aquinas.

SUR LES RELATIONS ENTRELE CORPS, LA CONNAISSANCE ET LA NATURE DANS THOMAS D'AQUIN

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cette étude porte surl'étude desfonctionsépistémiquesdu corpspar rapport àla connaissance des objetsnaturels, selon la théorie de la connaissancedéveloppée par le philosophe Thomas d'Aquin. Pour cela,il sera examinéles relationsentre la sensibilité, l'intelligence, le mouvement du corps, de la vertu et de jouer dansl'un des principauxprojetsdu penseur, dutraité Somme Théologique. Après mûreexplication de cesconcepts, ce sont les considérations finales, avecla description desliensentre le jeuet les loisirspourle philosophe etson influence surla cognitionqui aspireà connaîtrela nature.

MOTS-CLÉS:corps;connaissance;Nature;Cognition;Thomasd'Aquin.

SOBRE LA RELACIÓNENTRE EL CUERPO, EL CONOCIMIENTO Y LA NATURALEZA EN TOMÁS DE AQUINO

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio se refiere ainvestigar las funcionesepistémicas del cuerpoen relación con el conocimiento de los objetos naturales, de acuerdo con la teoría del conocimientodesarrollada porel filósofoTomás de Aquino. Para esto, serárevisado las relaciones entre la sensibilidad, el intelecto, el movimiento del cuerpo, la virtudy el juego en unde los principales proyectosdelpensador,el tratado Summa Theologica. Después de la debida explicación de estosconceptos, vienen las consideraciones finales, con las descripciones de los vínculos entre eljuego y la recreaciónpara el filósofo, así como sus influenciasa lo largo dela cognición que ansíaconocerla naturaleza.

PALABRASCLAVES:Cuerpo; Conocimiento;Naturaleza;Cognición; Tomás de Aquino.

SOBRE AS RELAÇÕES ENTRE CORPO, CONHECIMENTO E NATUREZA EM TOMÁS DE AQUINO

RESUMO

O objetivo do presente estudo remete a investigar as funções epistêmicas do corpo no que concerne ao conhecimento dos objetos naturais, de acordo com a teoria do conhecimento desenvolvida pelo filósofo Tomás de Aquino. Para tal, serão revisitadas relações entre sensibilidade, intelectualidade, movimento corporal, virtude e ludicidade numa das principais obras desse pensador, o tratado SumaTeológica. Após a devida explanação desses conceitos, virão as considerações finais do estudo, onde enfatizar-se-á os vínculos entre jogo e recreação para o filósofo, assim como as suas influências junto a cognição que almeja conhecer a natureza.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: Corpo; Conhecimento; Natureza; Cognição; Tomás de Aquino.