

## QUESTION 79

### The Intellective Powers

Next we ask about the intellective powers. On this topic there are thirteen questions: (1) Is the intellect a power of the soul, or is it the soul's essence? (2) If it is a power, is it a passive power? (3) If it is a passive power, should one posit an active intellect (*intellectus agens*)? (4) Is the active intellect a part of the soul? (5) Is there a single active intellect for everyone? (6) Does memory exist in the intellect? (7) Is it a power distinct from the intellect? (8) Is reason a power different from the intellect? (9) Are higher reason and lower reason distinct powers? (10) Is intellective understanding (*intelligentia*) a distinct power over and beyond the intellect? (11) Are the speculative intellect and the practical intellect distinct powers? (12) Is *synderesis* a power of the intellective part of the soul? (13) Is conscience a power of the intellective part of the soul?

#### Article 1

##### Is the intellect a power of the soul, or is it instead the soul's essence?

It seems that the intellect (*intellectus*) is not a power of the soul, but is instead the soul's essence:

**Objection 1:** The intellect (*intellectus*) seems to be the same thing as the mind (*mens*). But the mind is the essence of the soul and not a power of the soul; for in *De Trinitate* 9 Augustine says, "Mind (*mens*) and 'spirit' (*spiritus*) are not predicated as relations (*relative*), but instead point to the essence." Therefore, the intellect is the very essence of the soul.

**Objection 2:** The diverse kinds of power that belong to the soul are united in the soul's essence alone and not in any one power. But as *De Anima* 2 says, the appetitive and the intellective are diverse kinds of power belonging to the soul. And yet they come together in the mind (*mens*); for in *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine locates intellective understanding (*intelligentia*) and willing (*voluntas*) in the mind. Therefore, the mind or intellect (*mens et intellectus*) is the very essence of the soul and not one of its powers.

**Objection 3:** According to Gregory in his homily on the feast of the Ascension, "Man has intellective understanding along with the angels." But the angels are called 'minds' and 'intellects'. Therefore, the mind or intellect of a man is the soul itself and not one of the powers of the soul.

**Objection 4:** It is because a substance is immaterial that it is intellective. But the soul is immaterial through its essence. Therefore, it seems that the soul is intellective through its essence.

**But contrary to this:** As is clear from *De Anima* 2, the Philosopher posits the intellective as a power of the soul.

**I respond:** Given what was said above (q. 54, a. 3 and q. 77, a. 1), one should reply that the intellect is a power of the soul and not the very essence of the soul. The only time the immediate principle of an operation is the very essence of a thing is when the operation itself is the thing's *esse*. For an essence is related to its *esse* in the same way that a power is related to its operation, i.e., its act. But it is only in the case of God that His intellective understanding (*intelligere*) is the same as His *esse*. Hence, it is only in the case of God that His intellect is His essence, whereas in other intellectual creatures the intellect is a certain power of the one who has intellective understanding (*quaedam potentia intelligentis*).

**Reply to objection 1:** 'Sense' (*sensus*) is sometimes taken for a power and sometimes for the sentient soul itself, since the sentient soul is denominated by the name of its principal power, viz., the sensory power. Likewise, the intellective soul is sometimes denominated by the name 'intellect' as by its principal power. For instance, *De Anima* 1 says, "The intellect is a certain substance." And this is also

the sense in which Augustine says that the mind is ‘spirit’ or ‘essence’.

**Reply to objection 2:** The appetitive and the intellective are diverse kinds of power belonging to the soul, corresponding to diverse types of objects. But the appetitive agrees in part with the intellective and in part with the sentient as regards the mode of operating with a corporeal organ and the mode of operating without a corporeal organ. For appetite follows upon apprehension. This is why Augustine locates willing (*voluntas*) in the mind (*mens*) and the Philosopher puts it in reason (*ratio*).

**Reply to objection 3:** In the angels there are no powers other than the intellective power and the will, which follows upon intellective understanding. And the reason why an angel is called a ‘mind’ or an ‘intellect’ is that all his power consists in this. By contrast, the soul has many other powers, such as the sentient and nutritive powers. And so the two cases are not parallel.

**Reply to objection 4:** The immateriality of an intelligent created substance is not itself its intellect; rather, it is because of its immateriality that it has the power to have intellective understanding (*virtutem ad intelligendum*). Hence, the intellect does not have to be the substance of the soul; all it has to be is the soul’s virtue and power (*virtus et potentia*).

## Article 2

### Is the intellect a passive power?

It seems that the intellect is not a passive power:

**Objection 1:** Each thing is acted upon or suffers (*patitur*) in accord with its matter, whereas it acts by reason of its form. But the intellective power follows upon the immateriality of an intelligent substance. Therefore, it seems that the intellect is not a passive power.

**Objection 2:** As was explained above (q. 75, a. 6), the intellective power is incorruptible. But as *De Anima* 3 says, if the intellect is passive, then it is corruptible. Therefore, the intellective power is not passive.

**Objection 3:** As Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12 and as Aristotle says in *De Anima* 3, to act is more noble than to be acted upon. But all the powers of the vegetative part of the soul are active, and yet they are the lowest among the powers of the soul. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the intellective powers, which are the highest, are all active powers.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, “To have intellective understanding (*intelligere*) is in some way to be acted upon.”

**I respond:** ‘To suffer’ or ‘to be acted upon’ (*pati*) has three senses:

First, its most proper sense, viz., when something that belongs to a thing by its nature or by a proper inclination is taken away from it—as, for instance, when water loses its coldness by being heated, or when a man gets sick or becomes sad.

Second, a less proper sense, viz., when someone is said to suffer or be acted upon by reason of the fact that something is taken away from him, whether or not the thing in question is agreeable to him. In this sense, someone is said to suffer or be acted upon not only when he gets sick but also when he gets well, not only when he becomes sad but also when he becomes joyful, or when he is altered or moved in any way at all.

Third, a thing is said to be acted upon in a general sense (*pati communiter*) solely by reason of the fact that what is in potentiality in some respect receives what it was in potentiality with respect to, without losing anything at all. In this sense, anything that goes from potentiality to actuality can be said to suffer or be acted upon, even when it is being perfected. And this is the sense in which for us to have

intellective understanding is to be acted upon.

This is clear from the following line of reasoning:

As was explained above (q. 78, a. 1), an intellect has its operation with respect to being in general (*ens in universali*). Therefore, we can think about whether a given intellect is in potentiality or in actuality by considering how that intellect is related to being in general (*ens universale*).

For there is an intellect that is related to being in general (*ens universale*) as the actuality of all being (*actus totius entis*), and this is the divine intellect, i.e., God's essence, in which all being preexists virtually and in its origin, as in its first cause. And so God's intellect is not in potentiality but is instead pure actuality (*actus purus*).

By contrast, no created intellect can be related as actuality to the whole of being in general (*ut actus respectu totius entis universalis*), since in that case it would have to be an unlimited being (*ens infinitum*). Hence, by the very fact that it is created, a created intellect is not the actuality of all intelligible things, but is instead related to intelligible things themselves as potentiality is related to actuality.

Now there are two ways in which potentiality is related to actuality. There are some potentialities that are always being perfected by an actuality, as we claimed above (q. 58, a. 1) concerning the matter of the celestial bodies. On the other hand, there are some potentialities that are not always actualized (*non semper in actu*) but instead proceed from potentiality into actuality, as is the case with generable and corruptible things. Thus, the angelic intellect is always in actuality with respect to its intelligible things—and this because of its closeness to the first intellect, which, as was just explained, is pure actuality. By contrast, the human intellect, which is the lowest in the order of intellects and furthest from the perfection of God's intellect, is in potentiality with respect to intelligible things, and at the start it is “like a blank slate on which nothing has been written,” as the Philosopher puts it in *De Anima* 3. This is manifestly obvious from the fact that at the start we have intellective understanding only in potentiality, and afterwards we are brought to have intellective understanding in actuality.

So, then, it is clear that for us to have intellective understanding is for us to be acted upon, in the third sense of being acted upon. And, as a result, our intellect is a passive power.

**Reply to objection 1:** This argument goes through for the first and second senses of being acted upon, which are proper to primary matter. However, the third sense of being acted upon belongs to anything that is in potentiality and is then brought to actuality.

**Reply to objection 2:** According to some, the passive intellect is the sentient appetite, in which the passions of the soul reside and which, in *Ethics* 1, is called “rational by participation” because it obeys reason. On the other hand, according to others, the passive intellect is the cogitative power, which is named ‘particular reason’. In both cases, ‘passive’ is being taken in accord with the first two senses of being acted upon, insofar as such an ‘intellect’, so-called, is the act of a corporeal organ.

However, the intellect which is in potentiality with respect to intelligible things and which Aristotle for this reason names the ‘passive intellect’ (*intellectus possibilis*) is passive only in the third sense. For it is not the act of a corporeal organ. And so it is incorruptible.

**Reply to objection 3:** The agent is more noble than the patient as long as the action and passion are being referred back to the same thing; however, it is not always the case if they are being referred back to diverse things. Now the intellect is a passive power with respect to the whole of being in general, whereas the vegetative power is active with respect to a particular being, viz., the conjoined body. Hence, nothing prevents what is passive in the one way from being more noble than what is active in the other way.

### Article 3

#### Is it appropriate to posit an active or agent intellect?

It seems that it is inappropriate to posit an active or agent intellect (*intellectus agens*):

**Objection 1:** Our intellect is related to intelligible things in the same way that the sensory power is related to sensible things. But it is not the case that because the sensory power is in potentiality with respect to sensible things, an active sensory power is posited; instead, only a passive sensory power is posited. Therefore, since our intellect is in potentiality with respect to intelligible things, it seems that only a passive intellect (*intellectus possibilis*) and not an active intellect (*intellectus agens*) should be posited.

**Objection 2:** If someone replies that there is also an agent, such as light, involved in sensing, then against this: Light is required for vision insofar as it makes the medium actually lucid; for color itself is in its own right the mover of what is lucid. By contrast, in the case of the intellect's operation there is no medium posited that has to be actualized (*quod necesse sit fieri in actu*). Therefore, it is unnecessary to posit an active intellect.

**Objection 3:** A likeness of the agent is received in the patient according to the mode of the patient. But the passive intellect is an immaterial power (*virtus immaterialis*). Therefore, the intellect's immateriality is sufficient for its being the case that forms are received in it in an immaterial mode (*immaterialiter*). But a form is actually intelligible by the very fact that it is immaterial. Therefore, there is no need to posit an active intellect in order that it might make the species actually intelligible (*ad hoc quod faciat species intelligibiles in actu*).

**But contrary to this:** In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, "Just as in every nature, so also in the soul, there is something by which it becomes all things and something by which it makes all things." Therefore, it is appropriate to posit an active intellect.

**I respond:** According to Plato's opinion, there was no need to posit an active intellect in order to make things actually intelligible (*ad faciendum intelligibilia in actu*)—though, as will be explained below (a. 4 and q. 84, a. 6), positing an active intellect was perhaps necessary in order to provide the 'intelligible light' for the one having intellectual understanding (*ad praebendum lumen intelligibile intelligenti*). For Plato held that the forms of natural things subsist without matter and are consequently intelligible, since a thing is actually intelligible by virtue of being immaterial. He called them 'species' or 'ideas' (*species sive ideas*), and he said that it was by participating in these ideas that (a) corporeal matter is formed in the sense that the individuals are naturally constituted in their own genera and species, and that (b) our intellects are formed in the sense of having knowledge (*scientia*) of the genera and species of things.

By contrast, since Aristotle did not hold that the forms of natural things subsist without matter and since forms that exist in matter are not actually intelligible, it followed that the natures or forms of sensible things—natures that we have intellectual understanding of—are not actually intelligible. But nothing is brought from potentiality into actuality except by some actual being, in the way that the sensory power is brought into act by what is actually sensible. Therefore, it was necessary to posit some power on the part of the intellect that would render them actually intelligible by abstracting the species from material conditions. And this is why it is necessary to posit an active intellect.

**Reply to objection 1:** Sensible things are actualized outside the soul, and so there is no need to posit an active sensory power. And in this way it is clear that (a) in the nutritive part of the soul all the powers are active, whereas (b) in the sentient part all of them are passive, and (c) in the intellectual part there is something active and something passive.

**Reply to objection 2:** There are two opinions about what the effect of light is:

Some claim that light is required for vision because it makes the colors actually visible. And given this view, the active intellect is required for intellectual understanding in a way similar to, and for the same reason that, light is required for seeing.

By contrast, according to others, light is required for seeing not in order that the colors might become actually visible, but in order that the medium might become actually lucid, as the Commentator claims in *De Anima* 2. And given this view, the analogy by which Aristotle assimilates the active intellect to light consists in the fact that just as light is necessary for seeing something, so the active intellect is necessary for understanding something intellectually—but not for the same reason.

**Reply to objection 3:** Assuming that an agent already exists, it is quite possible for its likeness to be received in different ways in diverse patients because of their diverse dispositions. But if there is no preexistent agent, then the patient's disposition makes no difference in this regard.

Now as regards the nature of sensible things, which do not subsist outside of matter, there is nothing in the nature of the things that is actually intelligible. And so the immateriality of the passive intellect would not be sufficient for the intellectual understanding of those things if there were no active intellect present to make them actually intelligible by way of abstraction.

#### Article 4

##### Is the active intellect something that belongs to our soul?

It seems that the active intellect is not something that belongs to our soul:

**Objection 1:** The active intellect's effect is to illuminate for the sake of intellectual understanding. But this illumination is effected by something higher than the soul—this according to John 1:9 (“This was the true light, which enlightens every man who comes into this world”). Therefore, it seems that the active intellect is not something that belongs to the soul.

**Objection 2:** In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says of the active intellect (*intellectui agenti*) that it “is not such that it is sometimes engaged in intellectual understanding and sometimes not (*non aliquando intelligit et aliquando non intelligit*).” But our soul is not always engaged in intellectual understanding; rather, sometimes it is engaged in intellectual understanding and sometimes not. Therefore, the active intellect is not something that belongs to our soul.

**Objection 3:** An agent and a patient are sufficient for something's being done. Therefore, if the passive intellect, which is a passive power, belongs to our soul, and if the active intellect, which is an active power, does, too, then it will follow that a man is always able to engage in intellectual understanding when he wants to. But this is obviously false. Therefore, the active intellect is not something that belongs to our soul.

**Objection 4:** In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says that the active intellect is “a substantial being in actuality (*substantia actu ens*).” But there is nothing that is both in actuality and in potentiality in the same respect. Therefore, if the passive intellect, which is in potentiality with respect to all intelligible things, is something that belongs to our soul, then it seems impossible for the active intellect to be something that belongs to our soul.

**Objection 5:** If the active intellect is something that belongs to our soul, then it must be a power. For it is neither a passion nor a habit, since habits and passions do not have the character of an agent with respect to the ‘passions of the soul’; rather, a passion is the action itself as belonging to the passive power, whereas a habit is something that follows upon actions. But every power of the soul flows from

the essence of the soul. Therefore, it would follow that the active intellect proceeds from the essence of the soul. And so it would not be in the soul through participation in any higher intellect—which is just wrong. Therefore, the active intellect is not something that belongs to our soul.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, “It is necessary for these differences to exist in the soul,” viz., the passive intellect and the active intellect.

**I respond:** The active intellect of which the Philosopher speaks is something that belongs to the soul.

To see this clearly, note that beyond the human intellective soul it is necessary to posit a higher intellect from which the soul obtains its power to engage in intellective understanding. For it is always the case that what participates in something and is changeable and imperfect requires prior to itself something that is such-and-such through its essence, unchangeable, and perfect. But the human soul is called ‘intellective’ through participation in an intellectual power. An indication of this is that the human soul is intellective not as a whole, but rather with respect to a part of itself. Moreover, it arrives at an intellective understanding of truth discursively and through a movement, by way of argument. Again, it has imperfect intellective understanding, both because it does not understand all things and also because in the case of those things that it does understand, it proceeds from potentiality to actuality. Therefore, there must be some higher intellect by which the soul is assisted in engaging in intellective cognition. Thus, some have claimed that it is this intellect, separated with respect to its substance, which is the active intellect and which, by illuminating the phantasms, renders things actually intelligible.

However, granted that there is some such separated active intellect, it is nonetheless still necessary to posit within the human soul itself a power which is a participation in that higher intellect and through which the human soul renders things actually intelligible. As in the case of other perfect natural entities, there are, in addition to the universal agent causes, proper powers that are derived from the universal agents and given to individual perfect things. For instance, it is not the sun alone that generates a man; rather, there is in man a power to generate man—and the same holds for the other perfect animals. But among lower things there is none more perfect than the human soul. Hence, one must claim that within the human soul there is a power, derived from a higher intellect, through which it can illuminate phantasms. We know this from experience when we perceive ourselves abstracting universal forms from particular conditions—which is what it is to render things actually intelligible. But as was explained above (q. 76, a. 1) when we were discussing the passive intellect, an action belongs to a being only through some principle that formally inheres in it. Therefore, the power that is the principle of this action must be something within the soul. This is why Aristotle compared the active intellect to light, which is something received in the air.

Plato, on the other hand, compared the separated intellect that leaves an impression on our souls (*imprimentem in animas nostras*) to the sun, as Themistius reports in his commentary on *De Anima* 3. Now according to the teaching of our Faith, this separated intellect is God Himself, who is the creator of the soul and in whom alone the soul is beatified, as will become clear below (q. 90, a. 3 and *ST* 1-2, q. 3, a. 7). Hence, it is because of Him that the human soul participates in the intellectual light—this according to Psalm 4:7 (“The light of your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us”).

**Reply to objection 1:** The true light in question illuminates as a universal cause, because of which, as has been explained, the human soul participates in a certain particular power.

**Reply to objection 2:** The Philosopher is talking about actually engaging in intellective understanding and not about the active intellect. Hence, a little before this he had said of the former that it is the same as actual knowledge of the thing.

An alternative reply is that if he is indeed talking about the active intellect, what he means is that it is not because of the active intellect (*non est ex parte intellectus agentis*) that we are sometimes engaged in intellective understanding and sometimes not; instead, it is because of the intellect that is in

potentiality.

**Reply to objection 3:** If the active intellect were related to the passive intellect as an active object is related to a power, in the way that something visible in actuality is related to the power of sight, then it would follow that we have intellectual understanding of all things immediately, since the active intellect's function is to fashion all things.

As things stand, however, the active intellect behaves not as an object but as that which renders the objects actual, and what is required for this, besides the presence of the active intellect, are (a) the presence of phantasms, (b) well-disposed sentient powers, and (c) the exercise of the right sort of act. For through one thing that is understood intellectually other things come to be understood as well; for instance, propositions come to be understood through terms, and conclusions come to be understood through first principles. And as far as this is concerned, it makes no difference whether the active intellect is something that belongs to the soul or something separated.

**Reply to objection 4:** The intellectual soul is, to be sure, actually immaterial, but it is in potentiality with respect to the determinate species of things. Conversely, the phantasms are in actuality likenesses of certain appearances (*similitudines specierum quarundam*), but they are immaterial in potentiality. Hence, nothing prevents one and the same soul, insofar as it is actually immaterial, from having (a) one power—a power called the active intellect—through which it renders things actually immaterial by abstracting them from the conditions of individual matter, and (b) another power that is receptive of this sort of species—and this power is called the passive intellect insofar as it is in potentiality with respect to species of this sort.

**Reply to objection 5:** Since the essence of the soul is immaterial and is created by the highest intellect, there is no problem with a power proceeding from it—just as other powers of the soul do—which is a participation in the highest intellect and by which it abstracts from matter.

## Article 5

### Is there a single active intellect for everyone?

It seems that there is a single active intellect for everyone:

**Objection 1:** Nothing that is separated from a body is multiplied as bodies are multiplied. But as *De Anima* 3 says, the active intellect is “separated.” Therefore, it is not multiplied in the many bodies of men, but is the same in everyone.

**Objection 2:** The active intellect fashions the universal, which is one in many. But that which is the cause of oneness is *a fortiori* one. Therefore, there is a single active intellect for everyone.

**Objection 3:** All men agree in the first conceptions of the intellect. But they assent to these conceptions through the active intellect. Therefore, all men agree in having a single active intellect.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says that the active intellect is like light. But it is not the case that the same light exists in diverse illuminated things. Therefore, it is not the case that the same active intellect exists in diverse men.

**I respond:** The truth with regard to this question depends on what has already been said (a. 4).

For if the active intellect were not something that belongs to the soul but were instead a separated substance, then there would be a single active intellect for all men. And this is how those who posit the oneness of the intellect understand the situation.

On the other hand, if the active intellect is something that belongs to the soul as one of its powers, then one must claim that there are many active intellects corresponding to the plurality of souls, and that

they are multiplied as men are multiplied, as was explained above (q. 76, a. 2). For it is impossible for numerically one and the same power to belong to diverse substances.

**Reply to objection 1:** The Philosopher proves that the active intellect is separated from the premise that the passive intellect is separated. For, as he points out, the active intellect is more noble than the passive intellect. But the reason why the passive intellect is called ‘separated’ is that it is not the act of any corporeal organ. And it is in this sense, too, that the active intellect is said to be ‘separated’—and not in the sense that it is a separated substance.

**Reply to objection 2:** The active intellect is a cause of the universal by abstracting it from matter. What is required for this is not that it be [numerically] one in everyone who has an intellect, but rather that it be one in everyone as regards its relation to those things from which it abstracts the universal and with respect to which the universal is one. And this feature belongs to the active intellect insofar as it is immaterial.

**Reply to objection 3:** All things of the same species share in an action that follows upon the nature of the species, and, consequently, they share in the power that is the principle of that action—but not in the sense that the power is numerically the same in all of them. Now to have cognition of the first intelligible things (*cognoscere prima intelligibilia*) is an action that follows upon the human species. Hence, all men must share in the power that is the principle of that action, and this is the power of the active intellect. But it is not necessary for this power to be numerically the same in everyone; what is necessary is that it should be derived from a single principle in each of them. And so the fact that men share in the first intelligible things points to the oneness of the separated intellect that Plato compares to the sun, but not to the oneness of the active intellect that Aristotle compares to light.

## Article 6

### Does memory exist in the intellective part of the soul?

It seems that memory does not exist in the intellective part of the soul:

**Objection 1:** In *De Trinitate* 12 Augustine says that what belongs to the higher part of the soul “are not things that are common to men and beasts.” But memory is common to men and beasts; for in the same place he says, “Beasts can sense corporeal things through their bodily senses and commit those things to memory.” Therefore, memory does not belong to the intellective part of the soul.

**Objection 2:** Memory is of past things. But ‘past’ expresses a determinate time. Therefore, memory provides cognition of a thing under the rubric of a determinate time (*sub determinato tempore*), i.e., it provides cognition of something under the rubric of a *here* and *now*. But this feature belongs to the sensory power and not to the intellective power. Therefore, memory exists only in the sentient part of the soul and not in the intellective part.

**Objection 3:** What is conserved in the memory are the species of things that are not actually being thought about. But this cannot occur in the intellect, since the intellect becomes actualized (*fit in actu*) by being formed by an intelligible species (*per hoc quod informatur specie intelligibili*), and for the intellect to be actualized is just for it to be actually engaged in intellective understanding (*intellectum esse in actu est ipsum intelligere in actu*). And so the intellect understands in actuality all the things whose species it has within it. Therefore, it is not the case that memory exists in the intellective part.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says, “Memory, intellective understanding (*intelligentia*), and will are one mind.”

**I respond:** Since it is the nature of memory to conserve species of things that are not actually

being apprehended, the first thing that has to be considered is whether intelligible species are able to be conserved in this way in the intellect.

Avicenna, for one, claimed that this is impossible. For, he said, this sort of thing happens in the sentient part of the soul with respect to certain powers insofar as they are acts of corporeal organs in which species can be conserved without actual apprehension. But in the intellect, which lacks a corporeal organ, nothing exists except as actually intelligible (*nisi intelligibiliter*). Hence, if the likeness of a thing exists in the intellect, then that thing is such that it is actually being understood intellectually. So, then, according to him, as soon as someone ceases to be having an actual intellectual cognition of a given thing, the species of that thing ceases to exist in the intellect. Moreover, if he once again wants to have an intellectual cognition of that thing, then he must turn to the active intellect, which Avicenna posits as a separated substance, in order for the intelligible species to flow from it into the passive intellect. And from the exercise and practice of turning to the active intellect, there follows in the passive intellect, according to him, a certain facility of turning to the active intellect, a facility that he claimed is the habit of knowledge (*habitus scientiae*). Therefore, according to this position, there is nothing conserved in the intellectual part of the soul that is not actually being considered. Hence, on this view memory cannot be posited in the intellectual part of the soul.

However, this opinion is manifestly incompatible with what Aristotle says. For in *De Anima* 3 he says that (a) “when the passive intellect becomes each of the things in knowing them, it is said to be actually knowing them (*dicitur qui secundum actum*),” and that (b) “this happens when it is able to act *through itself*; thus, even at that point it is in some sense in potentiality, though not in the same way as it was before it learned or discovered the relevant thing.” Now the passive intellect is said to ‘become each thing’ insofar as it receives the species of each thing. Therefore, by the fact that it receives the species of intelligible things, it is such that it is able to operate when it wants to, but not such that it is always operating; for even then it is in some sense in potentiality, though in a different way from the way it was in potentiality before it had intellectual cognition. More specifically, it is in potentiality in the way in which someone who knows something habitually is in potentiality with respect to actually considering that thing.

Moreover, the position described above is contrary to reason. For what is received in a thing is received in it in accord with the mode of what receives it. But the intellect has a more stable and unchanging nature than does corporeal matter. Therefore, if corporeal matter holds on to the forms it receives not only while actually acting through them but also after it has ceased to act through them, then *a fortiori* the intellect will receive intelligible species in an unchangeable and permanent way, regardless of whether they are taken from sensible things or flow forth from some higher intellect.

So, then, if ‘memory’ is taken to mean merely a power that conserves species, then one must claim that memory exists in the intellectual part of the soul. On the other hand, if it is also part of the concept of memory that its object is something past insofar as it is past, then memory will exist only in the sentient part of the soul, which apprehends particulars, and not in the intellectual part. For since ‘the past insofar as it is the past’ signifies being under the rubric of a determinate time, it involves the condition of a particular.

**Reply to objection 1:** Insofar as it conserves species, memory is not common to us and the beasts. For species are conserved not in the sentient part of the soul alone, but rather in the conjoined being, since the power of remembering is the act of an organ. By contrast, the intellect conserves species in its own right, without a connection to any corporeal organ. Hence, in *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, “The soul is the locus of species—not the whole soul, but the intellect.”

**Reply to objection 2:** Pastness (*praeteritio*) can apply to two things, viz., the *object* that one has cognition of, and the *act of cognition*.

These two are joined together in the sentient part of the soul, which apprehends a thing when it is

changed by a present sensible object. Hence, an animal remembers at the same time both (a) that it was *sensing at a prior time* in the past and (b) that it was sensing some *past sensible object*.

By contrast, as far as the intellectual part is concerned, pastness is incidental to, and does not belong *per se* to, the intellect's *object*. For the intellect has an intellectual understanding of a man insofar as he is a man, and it is incidental to a man insofar as he is a man that he exists in the present or in the past or in the future.

On the other hand, as far as the *act* is concerned, pastness can be taken account of *per se* in the intellect as well as in the sensory power. Our soul's having an intellectual cognition is a particular act that exists at this or that time, since a man is said to be having an intellectual cognition now or yesterday or tomorrow. This is not incompatible with the status of intellection (*non repugnat intellectualitati*), since even though this sort of act of intellectual cognition is a particular, it is nonetheless an immaterial act, as was explained above concerning the intellect (q. 76, a. 1). And so just as the intellect has an intellectual understanding of itself even though it itself is a singular intellect, so it has an intellectual understanding of its own act of intellectual understanding, which is a singular act existing in either the present or the past or the future.

So, then, insofar as it concerns past things, the nature of memory is preserved in the intellect by the fact that it understands intellectually that it has previously had an intellectual understanding—but not by its having an intellectual understanding of a past thing insofar as that thing has a *here* and *now*.

**Reply to objection 3:** An intelligible species sometimes exists in the intellect only in potentiality, and in such a case the intellect is said to be in potentiality. On the other hand, an intelligible species sometimes exists in the intellect because of the full completion of the act (*secundum ultimam completionem actus*), and in such a case the intellect is said to be actually engaged in intellectual understanding (*tunc intelligit actu*). And sometimes the intellect is in a middle state between potentiality and actuality, and in that case the intellect is said to be habituated (*in habitu*); and it is in this mode that the intellect conserves species even when it is not actually engaged in intellectual understanding.

## Article 7

### Is intellectual memory a power distinct from the intellect?

It seems that intellectual memory is a power distinct from the intellect:

**Objection 1:** In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine posits in the mind “memory, intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*), and will.” But it is clear that memory is a power distinct from the will. Therefore, it is likewise a power distinct from the intellect.

**Objection 2:** The nature of the distinctions among the powers is the same in the case of the sentient part of the soul as it is in the case of the intellectual part. But as was explained above (q. 78, a. 4), in the sentient part memory is a power distinct from the sensory power. Therefore, memory in the intellectual part of the soul is a power distinct from the intellect.

**Objection 3:** According to Augustine, memory, intellectual understanding, and will are equal to one another, and one of them arises from another. But this could not be the case if memory were the same power as the intellect. Therefore, it is not the same power.

**But contrary to this:** It is part of the nature of memory that it is a treasury or locus where species are conserved. But as has been pointed out (a. 6), in *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher attributes this role to the intellect. Therefore, in the intellectual part of the soul it is not the case that memory is a power distinct from the intellect.

**I respond:** As has been explained (q. 77, a 3), the powers of the soul are distinguished by the diverse natures of their objects, since the nature of each power consists in its being ordered toward what it is related to, i.e., its object. It was also explained above (q. 59, a. 4) that if a power is by its proper nature ordered toward an object taken under some general concept of the object, that power will not be diversified by the diversity of particular differences; for instance, the visual power, which relates to its object under the concept *being colored*, is not diversified by the difference between *white* and *black*.

Now the intellect is related to its object under the common conception *being (respicit suum obiectum secundum communem rationem entis)*, since the passive intellect is that by which the intellect becomes all things. Hence, there is no difference among beings by which the passive intellect is diversified. Yet the passive intellect is diversified as a power from the active intellect because, with respect to the very same object, there must be one principle that is an active power and makes a thing to be an object in actuality, and another principle that is a passive power and is moved by the object now existing in actuality. And so the active power is related to its object as a being in actuality is related to a being in potentiality, whereas the passive power's relation to its object is just the opposite, as a being in potentiality is related to a being in actuality. So, then, there can be no difference among the powers in the intellect except the difference between the passive and the active.

Hence, it is clear that memory is not a power distinct from the intellect; for it pertains to the nature of a passive power to conserve as well as to receive.

**Reply to objection 1:** Even though in *Sentences* 1, dist. 3 the claim is made that memory, intellective understanding, and will are three "powers," this is nonetheless not what Augustine means. For in *De Trinitate* 14 he explicitly says, "If memory (*memoria*), intellective understanding (*intelligentia*), and will (*voluntas*) are taken to be always present in the soul regardless of whether they are being thought of, then they seem to belong to memory alone. At present, by 'intellective understanding' I mean that by which we understand when we are thinking, and by 'will' I mean love or affection (*dilectio*), which joins together the child with the parent." From this it is clear that Augustine is not using these words for three powers, but that he is instead taking 'memory' for the soul's habitual retention, whereas he is taking 'intellective understanding' for an act of the intellect and 'will' for an act of the will.

**Reply to objection 2:** The past and the present can be proper differences that diversify sentient powers, but they cannot, for the reason stated above (a. 6), be proper differences that diversify intellective powers.

**Reply to objection 3:** Intellective understanding arises from memory in the way that an act arises from a habit. And it is in this sense, too—and not as one power with respect to another—that memory is equal to intellective understanding.

## Article 8

### Is reason a power distinct from intellect?

It seems that reason (*ratio*) is a power distinct from the intellect (*intellectus*):

**Objection 1:** In *De Spiritu et Anima* it says, "When we wish to ascend from the lower to the higher, the first thing to occur to us is the sensory power, then the imagination, next reason (*ratio*), after that the intellect (*intellectus*)." Therefore, reason is a power distinct from the intellect, just as imagination is distinct from reason.

**Objection 2:** In *De Consolatione Philosophiae* Boethius says that the intellect is related to reason

in the way that eternity is related to time. But being in eternity does not belong to the same power as does being in time. Therefore, reason and intellect are not the same power.

**Objection 3:** Man shares intellect with the angels and sensory power with the brute animals. But reason, which is proper to man and by which man is called a ‘rational’ animal, is a power distinct from the sensory power. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, reason is a power distinct from the intellect, which belongs properly to the angels and is the source of their being called ‘intellectual’ beings.

**But contrary to this:** In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 3 Augustine says, “That by which man exceeds the non-rational animals is reason (*ratio*), or mind (*mens*), or intellective understanding (*intelligentia*), or whatever other word it is most appropriately called by.” Therefore, reason and intellect and mind are a single power.

**I respond:** Reason and intellect cannot be diverse powers in man. This is seen clearly if the acts of the two of them are examined. For to have intellective understanding (*intelligere*) is simply to apprehend intelligible truth, whereas to engage in discursive reasoning (*rationari*) is to proceed from one thing that is understood to another in order to come to a cognition of intelligible truth (*veritatem intelligibilem cognoscere*). And so as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 7, angels, who by their nature have perfect possession of the cognition of intelligible truth, do not have to proceed from one thing to another, but instead apprehend the truth about things simply and without discursive reasoning (*simpliciter et absque discursu*). By contrast, as he says in the same place, men arrive at the understanding of intelligible truth by proceeding from one thing to another, and this is why they are called ‘rational’.

Therefore, it is clear that to engage in discursive reasoning (*rationari*) is related to having intellective understanding (*intelligere*) in the way that moving (*moveri*) is related to coming to rest (*quiescere*), or in the way that coming to acquire (*acquirere*) is related to possessing (*habere*)—where the one is complete (*perfecti*) and the other incomplete (*imperfecti*). And since motion always proceeds from what is unmoved and terminates in what is at rest, so it is that (a) on the path of *inquiry* (or *discovery*) (*secundum viam inquisitionis vel inventionis*) human reasoning proceeds from some things that are simply understood, viz., first principles, and, again, (b) on the path of *judgment* (*in via iudicii*) it returns through analysis (*resolvendo*) to the first principles and in light of them examines what has been discovered. Now it is clear that even among natural things, moving and coming to rest are traced back to one and the same power and not to diverse powers, since it is through the same nature that a thing moves to a place and rests in that place. Therefore, *a fortiori*, it is through the same power that we have intellective understanding and reason discursively. And so it is clear that in man reason and intellect are the same power.

**Reply to objection 1:** This enumeration is made in accord with an ordering of acts and not in accord with a distinction among powers—though the book in question does not have much authority in any case.

**Reply to objection 2:** The reply is clear from what has been said. For eternity is related to time in the way that what is unchanging is related to what is changing. And so Boethius is likening intellective understanding to eternity and discursive reasoning to time.

**Reply to objection 3:** The other animals are inferior to man to such an extent that they cannot attain to the cognition of the truth that reason seeks. Man, however, attains in an imperfect way the understanding of intelligible truth had by the angels. And so the angels’ cognitive power is not of a different genus from the cognitive power of reason, but is instead related to it as the perfect is related to the imperfect.

## Article 9

### Are higher reason and lower reason diverse powers?

It seems that higher reason and lower reason are diverse powers:

**Objection 1:** In *De Trinitate* 12 Augustine says that the image of the Trinity exists in the higher part of reason but not in the lower part. But the parts of the soul are its powers. Therefore, higher reason and lower reason are two distinct powers.

**Objection 2:** Nothing takes its origin from itself. But lower reason takes its origin from higher reason and is regulated and directed by it. Therefore, higher reason is a power distinct from lower reason.

**Objection 3:** In *Ethics* 6 the Philosopher says that the *scientific* (*scientificum*) part of the soul, by which the soul knows necessary things, is a different principle and different part of the soul from the *opinative* and *ratiocinative* part (*alia pars animae ab opinativo et ratiocinativo*), by which it has cognition of contingent things. And he proves this by appealing to the fact that “parts of the soul that differ in genus are ordered toward things that differ in genus.” Now the contingent and the necessary differ in genus as the corruptible and the incorruptible. But since the necessary is the same as the eternal and the temporal is the same as the contingent, it seems that (a) what the Philosopher is calling the ‘scientific’ part is the same as higher reason, which, according to Augustine, “tends toward considering and consulting eternal things,” and that (b) what the Philosopher is calling the ‘ratiocinative’ or ‘opinative’ part is the same as lower reason, which, according to Augustine, “tends toward dealing with temporal things.” Therefore, higher reason is a power of the soul that is distinct from lower reason.

**Objection 4:** Damascene says, “From the imagination comes opinion. Then the mind, judging that the opinion is true or false, judges with respect to truth, and then it is called ‘mind’ (*mens*), from ‘measuring’ (*mentio*). Therefore, what is called ‘intellect’ has to do with those things that have already been judged and truly determined.” So, then, the opinative part, which is lower reason, is different from ‘mind’ and ‘intellect’, which can be interpreted as higher reason.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Trinitate* 12 Augustine says that higher and lower reason are distinguished only as functions (*non nisi per officia distinguuntur*). Therefore, they are not two distinct powers.

**I respond:** As higher and lower reason are understood by Augustine, they cannot in any way be two distinct powers of the soul. For he says, “Higher reason tends toward considering and consulting eternal things”—‘considering’ in the sense that it looks at them in themselves, and ‘consulting’ in the sense that takes from them rules for acting. On the other hand, he says that lower reason “tends toward temporal things.” Now these two sorts of things, viz., the temporal and the eternal, are related to our cognition in such a way that the one is the medium for the cognition of the other. For on the path of *discovery*, we go by way of temporal things to a cognition of eternal things—this according to the Apostle in Romans 1:20 (“The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood through the things that have been made”)—whereas on the path of *judgment*, we pass judgment on temporal things by reference to eternal things, once we have cognition of them, and we go on to deal with temporal things in light of the nature of eternal things.

Now it is possible for a medium and that which is arrived at through the medium to belong to diverse *habits*, in the way that the first indemonstrable principles belong to the habit of understanding (*intellectus*), whereas the conclusions deduced from them belong to the habit of scientific knowledge (*scientia*). And so from the principles of geometry it is possible to draw a conclusion in another science, viz., the science of perspective.

However, both the medium and ultimate end belong to the same *power* of reason. For an act of reason is, as it were, a movement that arrives at one thing from another; but the same moving thing that passes through the medium is the one that arrives at the terminus. Hence, higher and lower reason are one and the same power of reason. They are distinguished, according to Augustine, by the functions of their acts and by diverse habits; for instance, wisdom (*sapientia*) is attributed to higher reason and scientific knowledge (*scientia*) to lower reason.

**Reply to objection 1:** The term ‘part’ can be used in a way corresponding to any sort of partition. Therefore, it is because reason is divided by diverse functions that higher and lower reason are called parts (*partitiones*)—and not because they are diverse powers.

**Reply to objection 2:** Lower reason is said to be derived (*deduci*) from higher reason, or regulated by it, insofar as the principles that lower reason makes use of are derived from and directed by the principles of higher reason.

**Reply to objection 3:** The ‘scientific’ part of the soul that the Philosopher is talking about is not the same thing as higher reason. For necessary knowable things are also found among temporal things, and there is natural science and mathematics with respect to them. On the other hand, since the opinative and ratiocinative part has to do only with contingent things, it is concerned with less than lower reason is.

But neither should one claim simply that there is one power by which the intellect has cognition of necessary things and another power by which it has cognition of contingent things. For it has cognition of both in accord with the same type of object, viz., in accord with the natures *being* and *true*. Hence, necessary things, which have perfect *esse* in truth, are such that the intellect has perfect cognition of them as far as their ‘what-ness’ (*quidditas*) is concerned, and it is by appeal to the ‘what-ness’ that the intellect infers (*demonstrat*) their proper accidents. On the other hand, contingent things are such that the intellect has imperfect cognition of them, even as they themselves have imperfect *esse* and truth. However, the actual perfect and imperfect do not diversify powers; instead, they diversify acts with regard to their mode of acting and, as a result, they diversify the principles of the acts and the habits themselves.

And the reason why the Philosopher posited the scientific and the ratiocinative as two parts of the soul is not that they are two distinct powers, but that they are distinguished according to their diverse aptitudes for receiving diverse habits. And it was the diversity of the habits that he wanted to inquire about in that place. For even if contingent things and the necessary things differ in their proper genera, they nonetheless agree in the common nature *being*, which is what the intellect looks to and which contingent and necessary things are related to in diverse ways as the imperfect and the perfect.

**Reply to objection 4:** This distinction of Damascene’s has to do with a diversity of acts and not with a diversity of powers. For ‘opinion’ signifies an act of the intellect that is drawn to one part of a contradiction with fear of the other part. And to ‘pass judgment on’, or to ‘measure’ (*mensurare*), is an act of the intellect that applies firm principles to the examination of proposed objects; and this is what the name ‘mind’ (*mens*) is taken from. On the other hand, to ‘have intellectual understanding’ is to adhere with a sort of approbation to what has been judged.

## Article 10

### Is intellectual understanding a power distinct from the intellect?

It seems that intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*) is a power distinct from the intellect (*intellectus*):

**Objection 1:** In *De Spiritu et Anima* it says, “When we wish to ascend from the lower to the

higher, the first thing to occur to us is the sensory power, then the imagination, next reason (*ratio*), after that the intellect (*intellectus*), and after that intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*)." But imagination and the sensory power are distinct powers. Therefore, so are intellect and intellectual understanding.

**Objection 2:** In *De Consolatione Philosophiae* 5 Boethius says, "The sensory power, the imagination, reason (*ratio*), and intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*) all see the man himself in different ways." But the intellect (*intellectus*) is the same power as reason (*ratio*). Therefore, it seems that intellectual understanding is a power distinct from the intellect, in the same way that reason is a power distinct from the imagination and the sensory power.

**Objection 3:** As *De Anima* 2 says, "Acts are prior to powers." But intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*) is a certain act divided off from the other acts that are attributed to the intellect. For Damascene says, "The first movement is called intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*), and when there is intellectual understanding with respect to something, this is called an intention (*intentio*); and when the soul is stable and configured to that of which there is intellectual understanding (*permanens et figurans animam ad id quod intelligitur*), this is called thinking things out (*excogitatio*); and when thinking things out remains the same and the soul examines itself and passes judgement, this is called *phronesis*, i.e., wisdom (*sapientia*); and *phronesis* extended in time (*dilatata*) makes for cogitation (*cogitatio*), i.e., orderly interior speech (*interius dispositum sermonem*), from which, they say, comes forth speech expressed by the tongue." Therefore, it seems that intellectual understanding is a certain special power.

**But contrary to this:** In *De Anima* 3 the Philosopher says, "Intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*) is of indivisibles, in which there is nothing false." But this sort of cognition belongs to the intellect. Therefore, intellectual understanding is not a distinct power over and beyond the intellect.

**I respond:** The name 'intellectual understanding' (*intelligentia*) signifies the very act of the intellect, viz., to have intellectual understanding (*intelligere*). However, in certain books translated from Arabic, the separated substances that we call angels are called 'intelligences' (*intelligentiae*), perhaps because they are always actually engaged in intellectual understanding. By contrast, in the books translated from Greek they are called 'intellects' (*intellectus*) or 'minds' (*mentes*).

So, then, intellectual understanding (*intelligentia*) is distinguished from the intellect (*intellectus*) not as one power from another, but as an act from a power. Such a division is found also among the philosophers. For instance, they sometimes posit four 'intellects', viz., the *active intellect* (*intellectus agens*), the *passive intellect* (*intellectus possibilis*), the *habitual intellect* (*intellectus in habitu*), and the *acquired intellect* (*intellectus adeptus*). Of these four, the active intellect and passive intellect are diverse powers, just as in all other cases the active power is one thing and the corresponding passive power is another. However, the other three are distinguished as three states of the passive intellect, which (a) sometimes is only in potentiality, and in that case it is called the *passive intellect*; (b) sometimes is in first actuality, i.e., knowledge (*scientia*), and in that case it is called the *habitual intellect*; and (c) sometimes is in second actuality, i.e., actual consideration, and in that case it is called the *intellect in act or actuality* (*intellectus in actu*) or acquired intellect (*intellectus adeptus*).

**Reply to objection 1:** Assuming that this authority should be taken seriously, 'intellectual understanding' is being posited as an act of the intellect. And so it is divided off against the intellect as an act is divided off against its corresponding power.

**Reply to objection 2:** Boethius is taking 'intellectual understanding' (*intelligentia*) for an act of the intellect that transcends the act of reason. Hence, in the same place he says that reason belongs only to the human race, just as intellectual understanding belongs only to God, since it is proper to God to understand all things without any inquiry at all.

**Reply to objection 3:** All these acts enumerated by Damascene belong to a single power, viz., the intellectual power. First, the intellectual power simply apprehends something, and this act is called

*intellective understanding (intelligentia)*. Second, it orders what it apprehends either toward having cognition of something else or toward acting, and this is called *intention (intentio)*. When it persists in inquiring into that which it intends, then this is called *thinking things out (excogitatio)*. And when it examines what has been thought out with respect to some things that have certitude, it is said to know (*scire*) or to be wise (*sapere*)—which is *phronesis* or wisdom (*sapientia*), since, as *Metaphysics 1* says, it belongs to wisdom to pass judgment. And from the fact that it holds something as certain and as having been examined, it thinks about how it might be possible to make it manifest to others; this is the *ordering of interior speech (dispositio interioris sermonis)*, and from this flows *exterior speech (exterior locutio)*. For it is not every difference among acts that makes for diverse powers; instead, as was explained above (q. 78, a. 4), it is only the sort of difference that cannot be traced back to the same principle.

## Article 11

### Are the speculative intellect and the practical intellect diverse powers?

It seems that the speculative intellect and the practical intellect are diverse powers:

**Objection 1:** As *De Anima 2* makes clear, the apprehensive power and the power that effects movement are diverse powers. But the speculative intellect is purely apprehensive, whereas the practical intellect is a power that effects movement. Therefore, they are diverse powers.

**Objection 2:** Powers are diversified by the diverse natures of their objects. But the object of the speculative intellect is the true, whereas the object of the practical intellect is the good; and these objects differ in nature. Therefore, the speculative intellect and practical intellect are diverse powers.

**Objection 3:** In the intellective part of the soul, the practical intellect is related to the speculative intellect in the way that, in the sentient part of the soul, the estimative power is related to the power of imagining. But as was explained above (q. 78, a. 4), the estimative power differs from the power of imagining as one power from another. Therefore, the practical intellect and speculative intellect differ in the same way.

**But contrary to this:** *De Anima 3* says that the speculative intellect becomes practical by extension. But it is not the case that one power is changed into another. Therefore, the speculative intellect and practical intellect are not diverse powers.

**I respond:** The practical intellect and speculative intellect are not diverse powers. The reason for this, as was explained above (q. 77, a. 3), is that something related incidentally to the nature of a power's object does not diversify the power. For instance, it is incidental to what is colored that it is a man, or that it is large or small; hence, all things of this sort are apprehended by one and the same visual power.

Now it is incidental to what is apprehended by the intellect that it is ordered or not ordered toward an action—but it is in this that the speculative intellect and the practical intellect differ. For the speculative intellect orders what it apprehends only toward the consideration of truth and not toward an action, whereas the practical intellect is such that it does order what it apprehends toward an action. And this is just what the Philosopher says in *De Anima 3*, viz., that “the speculative intellect differs from the practical intellect in its end.” Hence, each is denominated from its end, the one being speculative, and the other practical, i.e., operative (*operativus*).

**Reply to objection 1:** The practical intellect is a power that effects movement not in the sense that it executes movement, but in the sense that it directs one toward movement. This feature belongs to it because of the mode of its apprehension.

**Reply to objection 2:** The true and the good include one another, since the true is a certain good

(otherwise it would not be desirable) and the good is in a certain sense true (otherwise it would not be intelligible). Therefore, just as the true can be an object of desire insofar as it has the nature of a good, as when someone desires to have cognition of the truth, so the object of the practical intellect is a good that can be ordered toward action, under the concept of the true. For the practical intellect has cognition of truth in the same way that the speculative intellect does, but it orders the truth it has cognition of toward action.

**Reply to objection 3:** As was explained above (a. 7), there are many differences that diversify the sentient powers but do not diversify the intellectual powers.

## Article 12

### Is synderesis a special power distinct from the others?

It seems that synderesis (*synderesis*) is a special power distinct from the others:

**Objection 1:** Things that fall under the same division seem to belong to the same genus. But in Jerome's Gloss on Ezechiel 1:6, synderesis is divided off against the irascible, the concupiscible, and the rational, all of which are powers. Therefore, synderesis is a certain power.

**Objection 2:** Opposites belong to the same genus. But synderesis and sensuality (*sensualitas*) appear to be opposites, since synderesis always inclines one toward what is good, whereas sensuality always inclines one toward what is bad; this is why sensuality is signified by a serpent, as is clear from Augustine in *De Trinitate* 12. Therefore, it seems that synderesis is a power in the same way that sensuality is.

**Objection 3:** In *De Libero Arbitrio* Augustine says that present in nature's court of judgment (*in naturali iudicatorio*) are certain "rules and seeds of the virtues, both true and unchangeable," and these we call synderesis. Therefore, since, as Augustine claims in *De Trinitate* 12, the unchangeable rules by which we make judgments have to do with the higher part of reason, it seems that synderesis is the same as reason. And so it is a power.

**But contrary to this:** According to the Philosopher, the rational powers bear a relation to opposites. However, synderesis does not bear a relation to opposites, but inclines one only toward what is good. Therefore, synderesis is not a power. For if it were a power, it would have to be a rational power, since it is not found in brute animals.

**I respond:** Synderesis is a habit and not a power, even though some have claimed that synderesis is a certain power higher than reason (*ratio*) and others have claimed that it is reason itself—not reason insofar as it is reason, but reason insofar as it is a nature.

To see this clearly, note that, as was explained above (a. 8), since man's discursive reasoning (*ratiocinatio*) is a movement, it proceeds from the intellectual understanding of certain things (*ab intellectu aliquorum*) that serve as unchangeable principles—viz., things known naturally without reason's inquiry—and likewise terminates in an intellectual understanding, insofar as we make judgments on the basis of principles naturally known in themselves (*per principia per se naturaliter nota*) about the things that we discover by reasoning discursively. But it is clear that practical reason reasons about actions (*de operabilibus*) in the same way that speculative reason reasons about speculative objects (*de speculativis*). Therefore, just as we have been naturally endowed with principles regarding speculative objects (*principia speculabilium*), so too we have been naturally endowed with principles regarding actions (*principia operabilium*).

Now the first principles regarding speculative objects that we have been naturally endowed with do

not involve any special power, but instead involve a special habit, which is called the *intellective understanding of principles* (*intellectus principiorum*), as is clear from *Ethics* 6. Hence, the principles that we have been naturally endowed with regarding actions do not involve a special power, either, but instead involve a special natural habit, which we call *synderesis*. Hence, *synderesis* is said to goad us toward what is good and to murmur about what is bad (*instigare ad bonum et murmurare de malo*), insofar as (a) we proceed to discover things on the basis of the first principles and (b) we pass judgment about what has been discovered.

It is clear, then, that *synderesis* is a natural habit and not a power.

**Reply to objection 1:** Jerome's division is made according to a diversity of acts and not a diversity of powers. But diverse acts can belong to the same power.

**Reply to objection 2:** Similarly, the opposition between sensuality and *synderesis* is made by reference to an opposition of acts and not an opposition of diverse species within a single genus.

**Reply to objection 3:** Unchangeable natures of the sort in question are the first principles of actions, concerning which one cannot be in error. And they are attributed to reason as a power and to *synderesis* as a habit. Hence, we make natural judgments by means of both, viz., reason and *synderesis*.

### Article 13

#### Is conscience a power?

It seems that conscience (*conscientia*) is a power:

**Objection 1:** Origen says that conscience is “the spirit corrector” and “companion teacher of the soul, by which the soul is separated from what is bad and adheres to what is good.” But ‘spirit’ names a power in the soul, either the mind—this according to Ephesians 4:23 (“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind”)—or the imagination; hence, it is also called an imaginative spiritual vision, as is clear from Augustine in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 12. Therefore, conscience is a power.

**Objection 2:** Nothing is subject to sin except a power of the soul. But conscience is subject to sin; for Titus 1:15 says, “Their mind and conscience are defiled.” Therefore, it seems that conscience is a power.

**Objection 3:** Conscience must be either an act or a habit or a power. But it is not an act, since in that case it would not always remain in a man. Nor is it a habit, since in that case there would be many such habits and not just one; for in our acting we are directed by many cognitive habits. Therefore, conscience is a power.

**But contrary to this:** Conscience can be laid aside (*deponi potest*), but a power cannot be laid aside. Therefore, conscience is not a power.

**I respond:** Properly speaking, conscience is an act and not a power. This is clear both from the name ‘conscience’ and also from what is attributed to conscience by common linguistic usage.

For according to the strict meaning of the word, conscience implies an ordering of knowledge toward something, since ‘conscience’ means ‘knowledge with another’ (*cum alio scientia*). But the application of knowledge to something is accomplished through an act. Hence, from the meaning of the name it is clear that conscience is an act.

The same thing is evident from what is attributed to conscience. For conscience is said to testify (*testificari*), to bind (*ligare*), or to goad (*instigare*), and also to accuse (*accusare*) or rebuke (*remordere*), or to restrain (*reprehendere*). And all of these follow upon the application of our cognition or knowledge to the things we do. This application is accomplished in three ways. First, insofar as we recognize that

we have done or not done something—this according to Ecclesiastes 7:23 (“Your conscience knows that you have often spoken ill of others”), and it is in this sense that conscience is said to *testify*. Second, our knowledge is applied when through our conscience we judge that something should be done or should not be done, and it is in this sense that conscience is said to *goad* or *bind*. Third, our knowledge is applied when through our conscience we judge that something that has been done was good to do or was not good to do (*quod est factum sit bene factum vel non bene factum*), and it is in this sense that conscience is said to *excuse* (*excusare*) or to *accuse* (or *rebuke*).

Now it is clear that all these things follow upon the actual application of knowledge to what we do. Hence, properly speaking, ‘conscience’ names an act. However, since habits are the principles of acts, sometimes the name ‘conscience’ is attributed to the first natural habit, viz., synderesis, in the way that in a Gloss on Ezechiel 1:6 Jerome calls synderesis ‘conscience’, and in the way that Basil calls natural judgment ‘conscience’, and in the way that Damascene says that conscience is the law of our intellect. For it is common for causes and effects to be named by one another.

**Reply to objection 1:** Conscience is ‘spirit’ in the sense that ‘spirit’ is standing in for ‘mind’, since conscience is a sort of dictate of the mind.

**Reply to objection 2:** Defilement (*inquinatio*) is said to exist in a conscience not in the sense that conscience is the subject of the defilement, but in the sense that what is known exists in the cognition of it, i.e., insofar as someone knows himself to be defiled.

**Reply to objection 3:** Even if the act does not always remain in its own right, it nonetheless remains at all times in its cause, which is the power and the habit. And even if there are many habits by which a conscience is informed, all of them nonetheless have their efficacy from a single first habit, viz., from the habit with respect to the first principles, which is called ‘synderesis’. This is why, as was noted above, this habit especially is sometimes called conscience.