

WHY A PHILOSOPHER CAN AND SHOULD READ ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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I begin by explaining how Aquinas understands the task of the theologian so that theology necessarily includes much philosophy. I then present two philosophical theses from Aquinas and describe their relevance for contemporary discussion to the contrary: first, Aquinas' immediate and direct realism of sensation versus the priority of consciousness since the critical turn and, second, Aquinas' view of the thing's existence as a unique kind of act or attribute of the thing versus the contemporary fact-view of what is meant by the thing's existence.

I.

I am a philosophy professor and I think that I know and am respectful of the norms of philosophical discourse. One of those norms involves the avoidance of *ad hominem* reasoning. In *ad hominem* reasoning one concludes either to the truth or falsity of what is said on the basis of the one saying it. A philosopher knows that this reasoning is illegitimate because the insane can utter truths and the sane can utter falsehoods. For example, we can plant the arithmetical proposition $3 + 2 = 5$ on the lips of a maniac. Does that make the proposition any the less true? How, then, is a philosopher to proceed? The philosopher's total concentration must be on the content of what is said and the intrinsic evidence offered for the truth of that content. Given one's revulsion for the speaker, this exercise can often be excruciating. But the philosophical vocation demands total fidelity to truth and that entails an investigation of what is said on its own merits. The philosopher cannot

take the easy road and accept what is said because it is uttered by the most “current” thinkers, is published by the most prestigious houses, or taught at “Ivy League” schools. Neither should he reject what is said because it is the opposite of these things.

For eight weeks in the Spring semester 2000, I taught two courses in Vilnius. At the Pedagogical University, I lectured on Aquinas’ philosophical basis for obligation, or moral necessity. At Vilnius University, I spoke on the 20th Century Thomistic Revival. Both assignments gave me good contact with students and faculty. One attitude that I noticed immediately on the part of many was the *ad hominem* dismissal of the philosophical character of Aquinas’ thought and that of his followers, the Thomists. The master and his disciples were believing Catholics, i.e., members of an authoritatively teaching Church. Hence, the real basis for what they said could only be religious. The given impression was that if a Catholic is to do philosophy credibly, the Catholic would do better to choose as a philosophical instrument the thought of Kant or Husserl.

Philosophy is difficult, and so it is understandable why many would like to deal with what philosophers say in an *ad hominem* manner. Besides, it is often embarrassing to admit that one does not understand the reasons for what is said. It is always much easier to brush off an obtuse position by saying that its basis is religious. But I want to plead that my fellow philosophers remain true to the norms of philosophical discourse and resist the quick and easy behavior of *ad hominem* dismissal. In particular I want to urge this in respect to St. Thomas Aquinas (1225?–1274). *Prima facie* it may appear that I have no case. A Dominican friar, Aquinas was self-admittedly a theologian, and he acknowledged that theology is religiously based. Theology’s basis is Divine revelation accepted on faith. In contrast, philosophy proceeds in virtue of the natural capacity to understand found in all humans. Hence, the audience of theology is much more parochial than that of philosophy. In reading Aquinas, would not a philosopher be “barking up the wrong tree”?

The question is reinforced today by theologians, even Catholic ones, who would not be caught dead doing philosophy. For them it is a badge of honor that they do theology without philosophy.¹ But it would be myopic to take this as true of Aquinas’ own understanding of theological practice. For Aquinas theology is more expansive and in-

¹ For a description of these theologians, see John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, paras. 61–62.

clusive than is suggested by the narrower views of today's theologians.² Aquinas saw his duty to explain, to make understandable, the content of Divine revelation. But that content includes two kinds of truth: truth accessible to natural reason (e.g., God's existence, uniqueness, spirituality, and even moral truths as are found in the Ten Commandments) and truth inaccessible to natural reason (e.g., the Triune nature of God, Christ in the Eucharist, Christ as the Son of God). To be especially noted is that even naturally known truth is included in God's speaking to us. This inclusion is not redundant on God's part. Left to our own resources only few after a long time and with much error would attain it. For example, many philosophers reasoned to God but identified God with a body or with a finite being. Hence, to avoid the impropriety of humans returning God's revelation by addressing the sun, God also informs us that he is an infinite spiritual being. In principle, natural reason could have reached these conclusions but in fact, natural reason did not and probably would never have.

My point, then, should be clear. Since Aquinas' duty as a theologian is to explain God's revelation to his fellows and since God's revelation includes truths knowable by natural reason, then when in the course of doing his theology Aquinas explains naturally knowable truths, Aquinas will necessarily be doing philosophy. In his own reflections, a philosopher can turn to Aquinas at those times Aquinas is philosophizing. In sum, do not think that because Aquinas is a theologian, then the only things that he says are theological. It is not as simple as that.

Aquinas' acknowledgement of naturally knowable truths is more than lip service. His seriousness is underlined, for example, by his rejection of the famous *Proslogion* argument for God of St. Anselm (1033–1104). Anselm claimed that if God is thought of as the greatest conceivable, then God would have to be thought of as an existent, for it is greater to exist than to not exist. Aquinas concedes that the argument concludes to something but not exactly to what Anselm intends. The argument shows that if you think of the greatest conceivable, you must think of it as existing. But this necessity of thought is distinct from any necessity of affirmation. You can *think* of something as existing, even necessarily, and for all that not be *affirming* it to exist. As theologically attractive as Anselm's simple and direct argument for God is, Aquinas rejects it for the much more convoluted and difficult

² The following explanation is taken from Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Random House, New York, 1955, pp. 366–368.

Aristotelian argument from motion. Does not Aquinas' critique of Anselm show that Aquinas is interested in more than making points for a religiously dictated agenda? Before a point can perform that service, it must pass the philosophical test. Aquinas is cognizant of philosophical procedure and is honestly trying to practice it. Hence, he is a thinker that a philosopher can also read.

2.

But there are good philosophers and poor philosophers, philosophers who practice the craft better than others. Obviously, philosophers ought to spend their time and energy reading the former. So, even if Aquinas' theologizing is not to the detriment of his philosophizing, what grounds does one have for thinking that Aquinas is a good philosopher rather than a mediocre one? I want to mention two grounds that are also central positions in Aquinas' larger philosophy.

First, today it is widely regarded that philosophy came of age with the "critical turn." The turn consists in the recognition that the existence of consciousness is more evident, hence more foundational, than the existence of the world. Though the understanding of consciousness has undergone many permutations since the critical turn was made, it is still the focus of philosophy, even in post-modernism. What necessitated the turn and has perpetuated it are scenarios in the methodic doubt exercise described in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* of René Descartes (1596–1650). Two of these scenarios are classic ones. The first is the dream/hallucination possibility. I have dreamed or hallucinated that I was reading a philosophy article; how do I know that I am not dreaming or hallucinating right now? My inability to articulate a fool-proof answer prevents any assertion of the world's existence. Second, also from Descartes but especially from the British Empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, and Hume) comes the critique from the relativity of perception. I see the field of poppies as red, a color-blind person sees the field as gray. Who sees the real color of the poppies? To stay perfectly impartial, these philosophers insist that we have to answer, "Maybe nobody sees the real color." The colors that we see may just exist in our perception. Also, the people to the front see the shape of the paper that I hold as rectangular; the people to the sides see the shape as trapezoidal. Who sees the real shape? To be impartial, we have to say, according to the Empiricists, that maybe no one sees the real shape. In the second way also, the world's existence slips away.

The undeniable perspectival character of perception was also used by Husserl in *Ideas I* to critique the “natural attitude.”³

Aquinas belonged to the period before Descartes in which thinking began with a presumed contact with a real world. For Aquinas, following Aristotle, that contact is achieved in sensation, i.e., what you are doing right now as you look this way and listen. Aquinas is not so naïve as to think that sensation immediately presents bodies, or sensible substances. Yet he thinks that sensation immediately presents their real “accidents”, e.g., their color, shape, fragrance, texture, motion, temperature, etc., from which the intellect could cogently reason to bodies as the real substrates of these accidents.⁴ By saying that the accidents are real, Aquinas means that they present themselves as ontologically independent of the sensor. Hence, if the sensing stopped because the sensor was rendered blind or deaf, the sensed item would be understood as still existing. Obviously, this “immediate realism” of sensation makes Aquinas a target for the above classic reasons for the critical turn and casts him as outmoded for contemporary philosophy. But if these reasons are benchmarks for “critical and mature” philosophy, then a realist who can reply to them is *ipso facto* supereminently critical and mature. I will contend that Aquinas is this philosopher.⁵

I want to begin a Thomistic reply to the dream and hallucination possibilities by asking you to do something. Imagine tarantulas crawling up your back. Yes, for a second you are frightened, but then you regain your composure. You realize that you were only imagining. But we need to take a closer look at this. Did you not come out of your fright thanks to an act of reflection that made apparent the cognitive device in and through which you were imagining the tarantulas crawling on your back? In other words, your reflection from what you were

³ “The studies we have completed left us with the transcendence of the thing over against the perception of it, and as a further consequence, over against every consciousness generally which refers to the thing; not merely in the sense that the thing as a real constituent part of consciousness is as a matter of fact not to be found—the whole situation rather concerns eidetic insight: in absolutely unconditioned generality or necessity, a thing cannot be given as really immanent in any possible perception or, generally, in any possible consciousness. Thus a basic and essential difference arises between *Being as Experience* and *Being as Thing*.” Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*, Collier Books, New York, 1972, p. 120.

⁴ For the argument from real accidents to real substance, see Richard J. Connell, *Substance and modern science*, Center for Thomistic Studies, Houston, 1988, chapters 2–3.

⁵ For an elaboration of the replies with texts, see my ‘Aquinas’ metaphysics and Descartes’ methodic doubt’, forthcoming in the American theological and philosophical quarterly, *The Thomist*.

imagining does not immediately and directly go to yourself. It first crosses something in and through which the imagining was occurring. This cognitional device is called an “image”, and it is a fascinating item. It possesses an “intentional” charge, a capacity to bring your awareness to something else. Other states of human awareness involve similar cognitional devices. For example, remembering does. Here the cognitional device is called a “memory”, not an image. For purposes of discussion, let me call all of these cognitional devices, these items with an “intentional” charge, — “ideas.”

Now it is Aquinas’ contention that both dreaming and hallucinating occur in and through ideas. Some times when we are on the boarder between sleeping and waking we can be catch sight of the dream ideas in and through which we were dreaming this or that. You would then come out of a dream or an hallucination by an act of reflection that uncovers the ideas in and through which you were dreaming or hallucinating. Sadly but truly, some people cannot reflect and uncover the ideas in and through which they are hallucinating. For these people, hallucinations become a real torture, e.g., alcoholics who suffer *delirium tremens*. So, how do I know that I am not dreaming or hallucinating right now? The answer is that my reflection from my current awareness shows that no ideas are present. Reflection shows that my awareness right now is not an awareness of real things in and through ideas, as happens in dreams and hallucinations. Rather, reflection shows that my awareness right now is of real things directly and immediately. In other words, reflection upon my current sensory cognition shows that my object is self-manifestly real.

It is regrettable fact that many Thomists compromise this reply to the dream and hallucination possibilities by insisting that even sensation occurs in and through “ideas.”⁶ Just as there are “ideas” of imagination, remembering, dreaming, and hallucinating, so too for many Thomists there are ideas of sensation. This move resurrects all the doubts about sensing a real world, for we can never be certain that like ideas of imagination the ideas of sensation bring us to something not real. Fortunately the reflexively ascertainable truth is that sensation does not include ideas. Finally, I will note in passing that correctly understood, Aquinas’ doctrine of sensory cognitional likenesses, the “sensible impressed species”, is not any reference to sensory “ideas.”

⁶ For a description of these Thomists, see my ‘Yves R. Simon and the Neo-Thomist Tradition in Epistemology’, in: Anthony O. Simon (ed.) *Acquaintance with the absolute: the philosophy of Yves R. Simon*, Fordham University Press, New York, 1998, pp. 83–100.

The sensible impressed species is the very form of the real thing as it is in the knower.⁷

What about the relativity in perception critique of the immediate realist understanding of sensation? The relativity in perception is not sufficiently great to justify doubt about immediate realism. Note, both me and the color blind person see real color, we just disagree on the exact shade. Also, when I hold up the paper, everyone in the class sees real shape. Students just disagree on the exact configuration. Even relativity theory fails to blunt knowledge of something really moving. While day-dreaming at the window of my train, I might for a moment think that the near-by truck has begun moving. In fact I began moving as my train pulled slowly from the station. Was my perception of motion false, an illusion? No, the motion that I observed was real; I was not wrong about that. I was wrong only about the precise subject of the motion. For a moment, I thought that it was the truck. So, note that in all these cases, sufficient immediate realism exists for the Thomist to initiate his philosophizing. The Thomist does not have to know what is the exact shade of color of the poppies, the exact configuration of the paper, the exact subject of the motion. It is enough that sense cognition provides real color, shape, and motion.

It is worth mentioning that immediate realism never claimed that in directly knowing real things, we know real things perfectly. The immediate cognitional presence of the real should not be confused with an immediate physical presence of the real. Physical presence demands exactitude and brooks no exception. For example, to be physically present a one-arm man cannot be two-armed. But often real things come to be cognitively present at the end of long chains of physical causality, so that real things become directly present in cognition imperfectly. Yet in fairness, one should note that the physical causality can also achieve exactitude. Our experience with TV cameras shows that sometimes physical causality gets it right. The pink shade of the dress of the woman in the studio is captured by the image on the screen. But again, for the Thomist the fundamental point remains that perception presents something real — a real color, a real shape, etc., even granting inexactitude in the perception.

⁷ For texts and an explanation, see Joseph Owens, *Cognition: an epistemological inquiry*, Center for Thomistic Studies, Houston, 1992, chapter 2.

3.

A second idea that makes Aquinas a valuable philosophical study is his development of a unique understanding of a thing's existence. Aquinas says that something is called a being in virtue of possessing its *esse* or *actus essendi*. Consequently, a being is a "*quasi habens esse*." A being is "as if a haver, or possessor, of *esse*." Just why Aquinas makes a qualification here, I will explain. Now I want to describe generally what Aquinas means by *esse* or *actus essendi*. Neo-Thomists render these phrases into English as "the existence of a thing." This translation is unfortunate because we can start thinking about *esse* or *actus essendi* as if it were just the fact of a thing. For example, if we ask, "Does so-and-so exist?", all that we want to know is whether so-and-so is a fact, is in the world. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) philosophically expressed the fact-view of existence in his famous critique of Descartes' ontological reasoning for God. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant observed that no real difference exists between a hundred possible thalers and a hundred actual thalers. The actual thalers are simply the possible thalers as in themselves as distinct from in their cause. In sum, existence is not a real predicate that could be added to a thing. Real predicates, like red or blue, make a real difference to the thing.

Aquinas thinks differently. I have mentioned Aquinas' notion of *ens* as *habens esse*. In still other passages,⁸ Aquinas regards existence as a distinct principle composed with the individual substance to render the substance a being (*ens*), an existent. In fact, *esse* is sufficiently distinct to compare its composition with a substance with form's composition with matter within the substance. Aquinas also uses the infinitive "*esse*" as a noun, or substantive, in the context of referring to the individual generable and corruptible thing as "*possibile esse et non esse*." Moreover, he compares the meaning of *ens* and *esse* to those of *currens* and *currere*. Just as a runner is a man plus his act of running, so too a being is something plus its act of existing. But the act of running is something distinct from the man, hence a thing's act of existing should also be distinct from it. The same thinking is revealed in a most famous remark on *esse*. Both in his *De Potentia Dei* and in his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas says that he understand by "*esse*" the act or actuality of all acts and the perfection of all perfections. But as an act or actuality, substantial and accidental forms are distinct items composed with another item

⁸ For Aquinas' Latin texts referred to here with Lithuanian translation, see Šv. Tomas Akviniėtis, *Ištraukos*, LOGOS leidykla, Vilnius, 1998, pp. 126–159.

that is in potency to the act. Hence, calling *esse* an act and an actuality should indicate on Aquinas' part similar thinking. Aquinas will also be considering *esse* as a distinct item composed with another item that is in potency to the act.

In sum, it is not so much that Aquinas disagrees with the fact-sense of the thing's existence, but rather that Aquinas insists that the fact-sense be deepened to include the act in virtue of which the thing is a fact. A thing is a fact in virtue of its *actus essendi*. The relation of this act to the substance with which it is composed also bears mention. In respect to the substance rendered a being by composition with *esse*, *esse* is prior (*prius*), first (*primus*), most profound (*profundius*), and most intimate (*magis intimum*). *Esse* is the core around which the thing revolves. It is like the hole of a donut. Just as the hole is distinct from the donut yet "inside" the donut, so too *esse* is an act distinct from the thing but for all its distinctness *esse* is most intrinsic to the thing. We are so accustomed to conceiving acts of a thing as items subsequent and posterior to the thing that the notion of an act basic and fundamental to its thing is strange. But for a reason to be given, if one is to correctly appreciate *esse*, usual ways of thinking must be suspended. The priority of *actus essendi* to the thing that it actuates seems to explain Aquinas' earlier mentioned qualification in describing the *ratio entis* as "*quasi habens esse*."

How does one philosophically attain the *esse* or *actus essendi* sense of "the existence of the thing"? Usually we make a distinction between a substance and its accident by finding the substance without the accident. For example, we make a distinction between the hand and the waving by later finding the hand without the waving. But do we ever find the substance apart from its existence as the hand is found apart from the waving? Rather, without its existence, the substance is not found at all. To understand how Aquinas makes the distinction between a substance and its act of existing, you need to go back to his immediate realism. Immediate realism is Aquinas' understanding of sense cognition — what you are doing right now as you look this way and listen. His claim is that your object of sense cognition was something real, a real thing, not an image, picture or representation of something real. In short, according to the immediate realist understanding of sense cognition, a real thing is also cognitively existing. Before the "critical turn", many philosophers acknowledged this fact but then went on to other things. Aquinas sees metaphysical implications in this fact and is not quick to move on.

Aquinas asks, “What does the fact of a real thing also cognitively existing imply?” Aquinas points out that if a real thing also cognitively exists, then the real thing of itself cannot be real. The real thing cannot be intrinsically real. Somewhat similarly, if water were intrinsically cold, it could never be hot. Hence, the thing does not include its real existence but has it as a distinct accidental act. Somewhat similarly the water has the cold temperature as an accident. It is from the facts of immediate realism that we can come to think an individual thing as not necessarily a being. Intrinsically speaking the thing is existence neutral just as we come to regard the water as temperature neutral. A thing is a being if and when it has its real existence as a distinct act. The basicness of the thing’s act of existing is also evident from the above. Since the thing is nothing in reality without its act of existing, one correctly regards the act of existing as basic and fundamental in its composition with the thing.

Finally, there are causal considerations here. Existential act cannot be completely explained by the substance whose act it is. As an accident, existential act is obviously dependent at least upon its subject. But that subject precisely as subject is existence neutral and a potency for its existential act. This means that the total or complete dependency of existential act also involves a reference to something else. Ultimately this something else must be a substance whose *esse* is not an accident but identical with itself. Aquinas calls this first cause: *esse subsistens, esse purum, esse tantum*. He regards it as the God of his belief who told Moses that his name was: “*Ego sum qui sum.*”⁹

I want to mention how Aquinas’ position that a being is a composition of a thing and its fundamental and basic *actus essendi* is a decisive answer to a common and popular criticism of metaphysics. The criticism comes from the British logical positivist, Alfred Jules Ayer. In his well-known *Language, Truth, and Logic*, Ayer criticizes metaphysics for its making the existence or being of the thing an attribute of the thing. Ayer says,

A simpler and clearer instance of the way in which a consideration of grammar leads to metaphysics is the case of the metaphysical concept

⁹ David Hume (1711–1776) claimed that from experience we could appeal only to past constant conjunction to argue for efficient causality. In Hume’s opinion this appeal is worthless in the light of possible future experience. Hume’s critique misses Aquinas’ approach that is based upon characterizing the thing’s *esse* as “accidental.” On how Hume might be constrained to acknowledge the category of the “accidental”, see Connell, *Substance and modern science*, chapter 3.

of Being. The origin of our temptation to raise questions about Being, which no conceivable experience would enable us to answer, lies in the fact that, in our language, sentences which express existential propositions and sentences which express attributive propositions may be of the same grammatical form. For instance, the sentences ‘Martyrs exist,’ and ‘Martyrs suffer’ both consist of a noun followed by an intransitive verb, and the fact that they have grammatically the same appearance leads one to assume that they are of the same logical type. It is seen that in the proposition ‘Martyrs suffer,’ the members of a certain species are credited with a certain attribute, and it is sometimes assumed that the same thing is true of such a proposition as ‘Martyrs exist.’ If this were actually the case, it would, indeed, be as legitimate to speculate about the Being of the martyrs as it is to speculate about their suffering. But, as Kant pointed out, existence is not an attribute. For, when we ascribe an attribute to a thing, we covertly assert that it exists; so that if existence were itself an attribute, it would follow that all positive existential propositions were tautologies, and all negative existential propositions self-contradictory; and this is not the case. So that those who raise questions about Being which are based on the assumption that existence is an attribute are guilty of following grammar beyond the boundaries of sense.¹⁰

Ayer’s argument against metaphysics is as follows. Metaphysicians who are engrossed with talking about the existence of a thing as if it were an attribute of the thing simply have had their thought misled by the way they speak. Metaphysicians have wrongly assumed that because we speak about the existence of the thing in the same grammatical fashion as we speak about genuine attributes of a thing, then the existence of the thing is also an attribute of the thing. But for two reasons, this thinking of the metaphysicians, understandable as it is, must be erroneous. Logically speaking, both the ascription and the denial of an attribute to a subject presupposes the subject as there. For example, “Prof. Knasas studies Thomas Aquinas” attributes studying Aquinas to an already existing Dr. Knasas. Hence, it really is saying “The existing Dr. Knasas studies Aquinas.” And if we made the negative attributive statement, “Dr. Knasas does not study Hegel”, we once more would be presupposing the fact of Dr. Knasas, as is indicated by the appropriateness of asking, “Well, what then is Dr. Knasas doing?”

If we now turn to existential propositions, but logically considered to be subject/attribute in character, watch what happens. According to the logical norms of ascribing attributes, “Dr. Knasas exists” would become the useless redundancy, “The existing Dr. Knasas exists.” And

¹⁰ Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, truth and logic*, Dover Publications, New York, 1952, pp. 42–43.

according to the logical norms of denying attributes, “Dr. Knasas does not exist” would become the embarrassing self-contradiction, “The existing Dr. Knasas does not exist.” Hence, thought through, the metaphysical attempt to make something of the being of a thing by considering the being an attribute collapses. The attempt collapses because it renders perfectly good ways of speaking into bad ways of speaking. Whatever the logic of existential propositions is, the logic is not subject/attribute as maintained by the metaphysicians.

Ayer’s refutation of metaphysics is just another way that a philosopher makes the case for the fact-view of existence. For Ayer, saying something exists is simply saying something is a fact. Would it be appropriate to include Aquinas in the metaphysicians of being ably refuted by Ayer? It seems not. For these metaphysicians, the being of the thing is not simply an attribute. More accurately speaking, they conceive existence as an attribute posterior and subsequent to the thing. What force would Ayer’s argument have against the view that the existence that the thing possesses is basic and fundamental to the thing? None at all. For Aquinas “Martyrs exist” is subject/attribute but translates to “The existentially neutral martyrs exist.” This is not a tautology. Also, “Martyrs do not exist” translates to “The existentially neutral martyrs do not exist.” This is not a contradiction. Aquinas is not one of the metaphysicians of being whose thinking is lead astray by the way they speak. It is not the superficialities of grammar that have engendered Aquinas’ metaphysics but the hard cold facts of reality.

4.

Many other of Aquinas’ philosophical positions are worth pondering: his distinction between univocal and analogical concepts, his application ofhylomorphism to the human person, his grounding real freedom and real obligation on the fact that the human is an intellector of being (*ratio entis*). Hopefully I have said enough to illustrate the rashness of ignoring what Aquinas says because of the *ad hominem* reason that a theologian is saying it. I must admit to a perverse fantasy. Suppose because of the Trinity Doctrine, the Pope were to write an encyclical dealing with mathematical propositions. Would this mean that mathematical propositions are now Catholic doctrine? Would this mean that they are too sectarian to be included in public school curricula? Would contrary types who say black if the Pope says white, now have to say that 3 is 1? The fact is that the Catholic faith of

Aquinas contains many truths that are naturally knowable as those of mathematics. One cannot deeply reflect upon these truths without being driven to philosophize just as one cannot reflect upon numbers without being driven to mathematicize. Religious believers can also “think” and only *ad hominem* dismissals will exclude them from a place in philosophical discussion.