

The role of Thomas Aquinas in the development of semiotic consciousness¹

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Abstract

'Semiotic consciousness' is the awareness we have of the role and action of signs in the world. This essay examines the role of Thomas Aquinas (1224/5–1274) in the growth of semiotic consciousness among the Latins, as Charles Sanders Peirce will take up the matter in influencing the twentieth-century establishment of semiotics as a global intellectual movement. Although Aquinas never focused on the subject of signs for its own sake, he frequently treats of it in relation to other direct investigations in a great variety of contexts. The result of his treatments is to have left a series of texts which, though not without their inner tensions, contain a series of consequences and connections which can be developed into a unified theory of the being constitutive of signs as a general mode. Precisely this theory was spelled out systematically for the first time in the 1632 Treatise on Signs of John Poinset, expressly grounded in a pulling together of Aquinas's various texts together with a careful analysis of the role of signs in human experience. The resulting doctrinal perspective proves to have been implicit in Aquinas and to lie at the foundation of Peirce's notion of signs as triadic relations, a notion he took over from the later Latins and developed anew, particularly in shifting the focus from the being to the action proper to signs, or 'semiosis'. It is this appropriation and shift that marks the boundary between modernity and postmodernism in philosophy, with respect to which the writings of Aquinas are like a taproot.

Nature versus culture

Signs are just one of the many things with which the human animal has to deal in the course of daily life. So common sense would have it, at least on the face of it. And so was the original conception of sign among the ancient Greeks. Hippocrates used the notion to establish the beginnings

of medicine as a scientifically founded art, and Aristotle (c.348/7BC *Prior Analytics* II, ch. 27, 70a8) circumscribed the notion in the manner that sign would continue to be thought of down to the very end of the Greek period of ancient philosophy: ‘anything such that when it is another thing is, or when it has come into being the other has come into being before or after, is a sign of the other’s being or having come into being.’ When the ancients spoke of ‘sign’, this class of natural events as described by Aristotle is what they meant. And of course the word for this was not an English but a Greek term, namely, *σημείον*. During these Greek centuries — say, from the beginnings of philosophy with Thales (c.625–c.545BC) to the time of Proclus (c.410–485AD) and the infamous Pseudo-Dionysius (c.455–535AD) — while no one denied that the words of human language are signs, ‘for no writer’, as Markus put it (1972: 66), ‘is reflection on language [language as a whole, *langue*] carried on in terms of “signs”.’ In rhetorical tradition and in the development of logic (see Jackson 1972: 116–119), particular words particularly associated with classes of events providing a basis for inferences came to be associated with the *σημείον*, especially, as Jackson points out (1972: 116–119),² in later Stoic logic.

Of course, words assimilated to the notion of sign as *σημείον* differed from *σημεία* (in the paradigmatic sense of natural events) in being formed *for the purpose* of signifying. The word ‘mother’ is formed *for the purpose* of identifying a female who has given birth to offspring. But no one thinks that a woman’s breasts fill with milk *for the purpose* of identifying her as a mother, even though milk in the breasts is an event from which ‘having given birth’ can be inferred. Only events of the latter sort were strictly and properly *σημεία*, signs in the original Greek sense. Among *σημεία*, what happens is primary, that they enable us to guess or to know what happens is secondary. With words, however, the situation is exactly reversed. As vibrations in the air or marks on a page they ‘have little or no interest in themselves’, as Markus puts it (1972: 73). Be the word ‘mother’ spoken (and so a vibration in the air) in Hebrew or Greek, be it written in pencil, ink, or sand (and so exist as a mark), what it says can remain unaffected; whereas thunder as a *σημείον* cannot be at all *except* as a vibration of the air.

So the difference, in the ancient world little noticed, but profound, waiting, as it were, to be taken into account by some systematic theory: ‘Certain things,’ namely, words, have little to no interest in themselves, ‘but their whole importance lies in their being used as signs’ (Markus 1972: 73); while other things, namely, medical symptoms and phenomena of nature, are important primarily for what they are in themselves, regardless of whether they are further taken to signify. The natural events and the words of language, in this perspective, lie, as it were, at two ex-

tremes: natural events to which signifying is something added versus linguistic events to which signifying is the main point. The former are what they are regardless of our correct or incorrect interpretation of them. The latter are what they are only because of our original stipulation of what it is that they are to 'stand for'. The former, we might almost say in the accent of the Latins, are signs *per accidens*, by the circumstance that they come to be interpreted. The latter, by contrast, are signs *per se*, by the very circumstance that they are at all. Smoke as an effect of burning is unaffected by occurring among the Greeks or the barbarians. But not so words as spoken. Such was the original Greek contrast, at its extremes, of the sphere of nature or *φύσις*, on the one side, and convention or *νόμος*, on the other side; but it was not conceived in the perspective of signification.

The birth of semiotic consciousness

The first to suggest a theoretical means of overcoming this division by reducing its extremes into a unity was Augustine of Hippo, who did so without fully realizing what he was doing, for he was ignorant of Greek and did not know that 'sign' (*σημείον*) belonged determinately and properly to the sphere of *φύσις* in its contrast with or opposition to the sphere of *νόμος*. For him, the obvious thing was what the Greeks for the most part overlooked: the things whose *whole* importance lay in signifying belonged to *νόμος* first of all, and to nature only secondarily. What was obvious to him in the bliss of his ignorance was that both *νόμος*, with its *ονοματτα* and *σύμβολα*, and *φύσις* with its wonders can come to be known only by and through significations, with all the risks of error that this entails.

So he did something original. Umberto Eco, Roberto Lambertini, Costantino Marmo, and Andrea Tabarroni (1986: 65), describe his original move as follows:

With Augustine, there begins to take shape this '*doctrina*' or 'science' of *signum*, wherein both symptoms and the words of language, mimetic gestures of actors along with the sounds of military trumpets and the chirrups of cicadas, all become species. In essaying such a doctrine, Augustine foresees lines of development of enormous theoretical interest; but he suggests the possibility of resolving, rather than effects a definitive resolution of, the ancient dichotomy between the inferential relations linking natural signs to the things of which they are signs and the relations of equivalence linking linguistic terms to the concept(s) on the basis of which some thing 'is' — singly or plurally — designated.

Medieval semiotics knows at this point two lines of thinking as possibly unified, but without having achieved their actual unification. This is a crucial observation.

Indeed. Looking back from the vantage of the twenty-first century, we can see now clearly what neither Augustine nor anyone else of his time realized: Augustine introduced the first Latin initiative in philosophy, the notion of *signum* as transcending the opposition of nature to culture, not only in its extremes, but over its whole extent. Augustine proposed — *posited*, really — *that* the sign does this, *that* the sign functions as an interface between nature and culture, the human world and the world of nature. But *how is it possible* for signs to accomplish this feat, *what is the being proper to sign* that enables signs so to act as to move back and forth across the divide of *φύσις* and *νόμος*, weaving the two together in human experience, he did not think to explain. He had other goals to pursue, Christian apologetics in particular.

But by the very proposing of ‘sign in general’ he gave to the Latins a ‘*problema candente e inevitable, siempre vivo*’ (Beuchot 1986: 26) — a ‘constantly alive, burning and unavoidable problem’, which, ‘slow by slow’, the succeeding generations of Latin thinkers would bring to resolution (just in time for Descartes to turn the attention of philosophers elsewhere).

The original semiotic consciousness of Augustine, as Jackson (1972: 92) rightly said, was a theory of signs (rather, a *doctrina signorum*) ‘proposed for a definite use and not for its own sake’. The process of coming clearly to understand the theory through the development and realization of its implications, then, may rightly be called the *first florescence* of semiotic consciousness. Elsewhere I have undertaken to trace something like the full trajectory of that distinctively Latin development of an increasingly explicit semiotic consciousness from Augustine to John Poinsett. Here I want to examine in particular only one stage of the development after Augustine, what seems to me the most important ‘intermediate step’, as it were, namely, the role of Thomas Aquinas in the increasing of semiotic awareness, in ‘the growth of semiotic consciousness’.

From Augustine to semiotics today

The sign, said Augustine, is whatever makes known to us something else along with itself. So saying, he was not yet original.³ What came next, however, proved not just original but truly revolutionary. It was not the words of Augustine’s definition itself that begat the revolution. It was the understanding he gave those words by stating the first division of signs that followed from it. The sign, he said (*signum*, not *σημείον*), can be divided into those signs which are things apart from any intention to signify something besides themselves, the *σημεία* or *signa naturalia*, and those

signs which are things formed for the purpose of communicating to others something besides themselves, or *signa data*, in particular, but far from exclusively, the species-specifically human words of verbal language.

Consider. The cause or root of the signifying of the *signa naturalia* is the natural being of the very things which signify when we understand them. Thus smoke is an effect of burning whether or not anyone understands the connection or not. But given an awareness of the connection, smoke is not only an effect but also a sign of burning. The cause-effect relation in itself is dyadic. But the sign-signified relation is always triadic, for a sign is a sign only to or for some third.

But the cause or root of the signifying of the *signa data* is the very aim of communicating which brings them into being in the first place. Obviously words, *signa ad placita*, are among such signs. But such signs as purely conventional are at the extreme of the *signa data*. Many *signa data* do not depend upon convention (or, more precisely, *stipulation*) at all, or not originally, and not for the most part. A person in pain may groan without any intention of communicating to someone else that he or she is in pain, but simply because of the pain itself. In such a circumstance the groan is a *signum naturale* in Augustine's scheme. At other times a person may groan not only because of the pain being suffered but also to elicit sympathy of a companion and precisely to let them know 'how bad the pain is'. In such a circumstance, without ceasing to be a *signum naturale*, the groan participates *also* in the nature of a *signum datum*, a deliberate sign. Yet other times a person may groan in order to deceive another into thinking that a pain is present when it is not. In such a circumstance the groan belongs to the order of *signa data*, all right, but the way a lie belongs to language. It is a pure *signum datum*, yet one which, if it succeeds in bringing about the intended deception, does so because of the fact that groans normally participate in the order of *signa naturalia* and only sometimes in the order of *signa data*.

And the implication of the *signa data* with the order of $\varphi\nu\sigma\iota\varsigma$ goes even deeper. Plants as living things communicate among themselves and also with animals by means of signs. An infected tree develops antibodies in the effort to heal itself, and uninfected trees in a mile's radius then also develop antibodies, not to heal themselves but to protect themselves from the infection. These too fall under Augustine's proposal of the class of *signa data*, signs which originate in order to signify.⁴

Today in semiotics we speak not only of 'signs' but of their action, 'semiosis', to wit, that activity by which signs distinctively manifest the being proper to them as signs. Indeed, by 'semiotics' we have come to mean precisely the knowledge that develops from the systematic study of the action of signs, and we debate whether that action properly speaking

occurs only among living things or also in the realm of physical nature prior to and independent of life. This last (controversial) field is the realm of ‘physiosemiotics’ in contrast to the realm of ‘biosemiotics’, or the study of the action of signs among living things in general. The opposition of Augustine’s *signa naturalia* to his *signa data* in general can be seen to be embodied, then, in the contemporary distinction between physiosemiotics and biosemiotics, while the full range of his *signa data* is embodied in the contemporary distinctions between ‘phytosemiotics’, which studies the action of signs among plants and between plants and animals from the side of the plants; ‘zoösemiotics’, which studies the nonlinguistic action of signs among animals, whether human or not, and between animals and plants or even inorganic nature taken from the side of the animals; and finally ‘anthroposemiotics’, which studies the species-specifically human use of signs, including finally the linguistic signs which owe their existence not only to original stipulations but, over time, especially to conventions and habit structures. Even human language, in itself species-specific, has a stipulative origin (*signum ad placitum*) but a customary transmission (*signum ex consuetudine*), by which it is assimilated also to communication with non-linguistic animals as a peculiar variety of zoösemiosis, for example, in domestication.

So we see quite plainly that we in semiotics today stand as the heirs and beneficiaries of a long tradition, which goes back to the Greeks on the side of *signa naturalia* or *σημεία*, but principally rather to the Latins insofar as semiotics deals not merely or mainly with inferences based on natural events, nor with equivalences and associations based mainly on conventions and custom, but with ‘sign in general’ as transcending the Greek divide between *φυσίς* and *νομός*.

Nor is this the end of the story of the debt semiotics today owes to the Latin traditions of intellectual culture, for it was also the Latins who established the further transcendence of signs in their proper being to the divide modern philosophers drew between ‘the mind’ (*res cogitans*) and ‘the external world’ (*res extensae*), ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’, or (to reduce the matter to its simplest terms) ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ (‘inside the mind’ and ‘outside the mind’, where ‘mind’ means always finite consciousness). For it was precisely the culmination of the Latin development to demonstrate that the being proper to signs consists in triadic relations suprasubjective as relations to any and all ‘users of signs’. What began in 397AD with Augustine’s proposal of ‘sign in general’ culminated in 1632 with Poinset’s demonstration of how such a general mode of being is possible. When Charles Sanders Peirce picked up from the Latins the ball which the early moderns had dropped and the later moderns knew nothing of, to propose *semiosis* or the action of signs as the proper study for

developing that body of knowledge Locke seems first to have proposed under the rubric of 'semiotics', the game was afoot in earnest. The argument of Aquinas c.1266 in his *Summa theologiae* I, q. 3, art. 4, reply to the 2nd objection, that, outside of true mysticism, the highest grade of reality can only be reached by signs (see Deely 2001: 83), together with the argument of his last Latin commentator that the origins of animal awareness in sensation already depends from the first on sign relations,⁵ was at last fully put into play.

That is the object of the present essay, to manifest to the students of semiotics today the role of midwife that Aquinas played in the passage of semiotic consciousness from its full origin in Augustine's proposal to its vindication in Aquinas's last (practically speaking) Latin pupil, John Poinset. Thus it was that Augustine's rich conception of sign as equally *naturale* and *datum* was finally shown to be real in its possibility and not merely another — yet another — nominalism, like the gods of ancient Greece and Rome, the *Dator Formarum* of Avicenna, the phlogiston of Stahl and Priestley, and so on through the whole of human efforts to wrestle from signs the secrets of 'what is'. Because, as a relation, the sign could be indifferent as to whether its foundation in given circumstances was natural or cognitive; while, as suprasubjective in its proper being, it could not be reduced to the subjectivity either of what lay within or lay without a given mind; and, as triadic, it could not but involve at least one reality among its three terms, while being always open to the reality also of two or even all three of those terms included in its single being.

Seeing Aquinas in postmodern vantage: In place of a preamble

Thomas Aquinas is a thinker who, in a certain sense, has been cheated by history. To come to know his thought is to come to know a thinker of global importance, easily on a par with Plato and Aristotle among the ancients, Augustine among the Latins, Kant, Hegel, and Husserl among the moderns, Heidegger and Peirce himself among the postmoderns. Yet, because of the circumstances of the so-called Protestant Reformation and the way in which the Council of Trent responded to those circumstances by placing the *Summa theologiae* of Aquinas open on its altar along with the supposed papal *Decretals* (at the very time that the crucial forgeries among them were coming to light) and the Bible itself, throughout the modern period Aquinas came to be identified as a specifically 'Roman Catholic' or 'papist' thinker, even though he was dead nearly two-and-a-half centuries by the time Luther posted his 'theses' on the church door of Wittenberg, theses which proved as revolutionary in the sphere of

theology and religious thought as had proved the theses of Augustine in the matter of sign.

To see Aquinas as a ‘Catholic’ thinker in the post-Reformation sense of Catholic, which is to say, the sense of irredeemably opposed to Protestantism, is to make of his work a caricature. How Aquinas would have reacted to the circumstances and theses of the Reformation is, respecting his own work and times, among the futurities which no finite mind can divine with certainty. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council of the twentieth century, fortunately, there is a growing awareness that Aquinas is a thinker of ecumenical proportions religiously and global proportions philosophically, a thinker who needs to be freed by right and at last from the ghetto of post-Vatican I Catholicism to play a role on the stage of intellectual culture as the equal of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Hegel, and — if I may venture my own opinion — the better of Kant. For, as I think will emerge from the present study, the work of Thomas Aquinas on sign, performed medieval by virtue of the times of its composition, proves to be a taproot respecting the postmodern development of semiotics after Peirce, wherein the medieval distinction of mind-independent and mind-dependent being is not only restored to its full force but strengthened by the full realization of the manner in which the two orders interpenetrate in the constitution of human experience as part of what Sebeok has rightly and more generally termed the ‘semiotic web’ whose weave Augustine first put us on the way to understand.

Semiotics today in no small part is among the consequences of the Thomistic patrimony as it bears on the ever-changing context of society and intellectual culture in the ongoing evolution of human civilization. This fact is a matter of the cultural unconscious (Deely 2000: esp. 11–13) which the present essay aims to bring into the realm of actual consciousness so far as concerns the work of Aquinas in its particular bearing on the understanding of a word he never knew.

For modern philosophy, the central preoccupation came to be called ‘epistemology’; and no one for a long time has hesitated to speak of the ‘epistemology of St. Thomas’, even though that word is nowhere to be found in St. Thomas’s own lexicon. In cases like this we see the fulfillment of a completely natural process: new ‘takes’ on experience necessitate new words to express them, and these new words in turn sometimes exhibit such illuminative power that a kind of anachronistic use of them becomes all but necessary in analyzing the work even of previous thinkers. Today, a reaction is setting in against the limits of modernity. For want of a better term, we find intellectuals of the most diverse sorts laying claim to being ‘postmodern’, and we see almost a scramble to figure out what this word might mean.

In philosophy, I have argued for a number of years and in a number of contexts, the term ‘postmodern’ is destined to acquire a rather clear and precise meaning, one that bodes well in particular for another — yet another — Thomistic Renaissance within the larger context of our nascently global intellectual culture. And, I want to suggest that, for reasons that will become apparent, the still-unfamiliar term ‘semiotic’ is destined to become as familiar and inevitable in postmodern philosophy (including its Thomistic strands) as ‘epistemology’ became in modern philosophy (even for mediaevalists, and for better reason). For if you pay attention, you will find that, however ineptly they may handle the theme, every one of the philosophers who have given prominence to talk of ‘postmodernity’ has had a central preoccupation with the play of signs.

Now ‘sign’ in the general sense is not an ancient notion, as we have already noted. It was first put into play by St. Augustine, and first explained in its proper being by John Poincot, a follower of St. Thomas usually referred to in Thomistic circles by his religious and pen name *Joannes a Sancto Thoma*, ‘John of St. Thomas’. And Poincot achieved his explanation on the basis of intellectual materials and tools gathered mainly in the works of St. Thomas. So ‘sign’, which comes directly from the Latin *signum*, imports, however unconsciously, into contemporary discourse a perspective and philosophical development that derives not only principally and substantially from our Latin past, but also from that part of the Latin past in particular in which Thomas Aquinas played a pivotal or, perhaps better to say, transitional or ‘midwife’ role.

So in writing here about the role of Aquinas in the development of semiotic consciousness, I speak to you of only one of a thousand themes that could be drawn from the writings of Aquinas; but I choose this one because I think it is one that is not only central to Thomas himself, both in his philosophy and in his theology, but it is also one — and the single most pregnant one, I will argue — that situates his work both in relation to the indigenous speculative development of the Latin Age as an organic whole and in relation to the emerging preoccupation with how to comprehend the sense of a postmodern epoch in philosophy and intellectual culture (see Santaella-Braga 1994).

Finally, let me note that I will restrict my considerations of sign to its ontological and epistemological dimensions (in semiotics, in contrast to modern philosophy — and indeed this is what makes semiotics irreducibly *postmodern* — the two can only imperfectly be separated, as is also true in the writings of Aquinas himself), both historically and speculatively. But I should think and would hope that the theological import of my remarks will be fairly huge and obvious, if not in detail at least in large-scale implications. For the first impact of Augustine’s proposal of

signum was in the development of sacramental theology, what has been called the ‘high semiotics’ of the Middle Ages. Indeed, Augustine’s definition of sign, which would otherwise be attacked, as we shall see, in order to vindicate more broadly his general notion, is the very one enshrined at the beginning of the discussion of sacraments in the fourth book of Lombard’s mid-twelfth century collection of patristic opinions or ‘*Sentences*’.

So my remarks are confined to philosophy. But even in philosophy I will not be able to go into what I consider to be the single most immediately important problematic in the *opera omnia* for a new epoch of Thomistic studies, namely, the problematic of *ens primum cognitum*. Even so, there can be no mistake that, in discussing sign, I am touching on a theme which has the most profound and far-reaching consequences for a renewal and deepening destined inevitably to involve theology as well as philosophy and all of the sciences with a global intellectual culture as a whole. Hardly without theological interest, to be sure, is the fact that the uniqueness of relation upon which Poinset — John of St. Thomas — finally rests his account of sign is the very point upon which St. Thomas rests his explanation of the Trinity of Persons in the One God, namely, the unifying suprasubjectivity proper to and utterly distinctive of relation in its proper being.

Central to St. Thomas himself, both theologically and philosophically, the theme of sign is central also to the historical epoch of the ‘first Thomism’, as I will explain. For, indeed, the theme of sign is central to the Latin Age as a whole; to the import of the Latin Age for the postmodern development of intellectual culture; to the immediate future of the reading of St. Thomas himself. And the theme has in addition the singular merit of providing a new heuristic model for research into the ‘medieval period’. This theme, or research paradigm, really, has the surpassing merit of requiring investigation henceforward to include the neglected centuries between Ockham and Descartes, and to include in particular within those centuries the authors and controversies of the Iberian universities, with their extensions into the ‘New World’ — a veritable ‘new determination of the field of medieval thought’ (as Otto Bird first put it: see Deely 2001a; more recently Noone 2004) that can only be a boon to Thomistic studies as well as to the growth of semiotics.

‘Late-modern Thomism’

Whatever one may think of Descartes, his approach to philosophy achieved a general success on at least one front: his sharp distinction between speculative thought and historical knowledge led rapidly to a gen-

eral acceptance of the notion that the history of philosophy is of little or no use, little or no importance, for the actual doing of philosophy. And whatever curiosities the study of history might reveal, the pure philosopher, of whose work Descartes sought to provide an exemplar, can safely ignore previous writings of the ancient Greeks and medieval Latins as amounting mainly in principle to a record of false starts and blind alleys, and does other than ignore those writings at his (or her) own peril. For not only *can* the writings of our predecessors be ignored, but it is *better* to be ignorant of them: 'there is a considerable danger that if we study these works too closely traces of their errors will infect us and cling to us against our will and despite our precautions' (Descartes 1628: 16).

The period of forgottenness and the role of Suarez in the forgetting

So the traditions and speculative developments of the Latin Age soon fell into desuetude, and soon after into virtual oblivion, in the wake of the new trail being blazed by the mainstream moderns. The early moderns, to be sure, knew Latin as a language well enough. But they and their heirs expressed themselves by preference in the newly emerging national languages of Germany, France, and England.⁶ As for the Latin achievements, such as they were, they were assigned to all-too-detailed commentary on books written by men, in particular by Aristotle and also Aquinas (the 'Glory of the Latins', '*decus Latinorum*', as Pomponazzi [1516: 286] well called him). The modern philosophy turned away from all that. The idea — in itself a good and necessary one for the context — was to break with the established Scholastic tradition of commentary on texts to look rather directly, and, as it were, with rinsed eyes, at the book of nature itself, whose author could, from such observation (the hope was), better instruct inquirers into the truth of things than could even the greatest of the ancient human authorities, whether Greek or Latin. In addition, the new shift in attention from books to nature herself could all the more securely be made as we had in any event, with the recent *Disputationes Metaphysicae* published by Suarez in 1597, a handy and copious summary of all that the Latin commentary tradition had achieved in speculative matters.

Indeed, even today a casual reader of Suarez's tomes feels, in Gilson's accurate report (1952: 99),⁷ as if he or she has been brought to the judgment seat on the four hundred preceding years or so of Latin philosophy, that is, the Latin Age from the beginning of the commentary tradition in the work of Albert the Great and Aquinas after him (following upon the slightly earlier introduction of Aristotle's works into Latin beginning

c.1150) down to the dawning ‘age of reason’ (1600 and after). Thus Bréhier’s classic modern history (Brehier 1938) records that, for the contemporaries of Descartes and after, Thomism was taken to be what Suarez summarily reported it to be. And not until half a century or more into the ‘Thomistic revival’ mandated by *Aeterni Patris* in 1879 was it finally demonstrated to the satisfaction of all that Suarez could not speak for Thomas Aquinas, that in particular he had effectively falsified or nullified the basic positions the great Aquinas had staked out for himself and his posterity particularly in matters that came to be called, after the time of Christian Wolff (1679–1754) down to the present, ‘epistemology’. In what concerned sensation, which for Suarez did and for Aquinas did not directly involve the formation of mental ‘representations’ or ‘images’ (*species expressae*: see Deely 1991, 2001: 345), as in what concerned relation, which for Suarez⁸ did not and for Aquinas did involve an ontological constitution indifferent to the opposition of *νομος* to *φυσικς*, in short, in what involved the very foundations of the doctrine of signs as demonstrated in the synthesis of Poincot,⁹ the work of Suarez spoke not for but against the work of Aquinas.

Now how could it be that a thinker of the magnitude of Thomas Aquinas could have receded so far into the shadows of history that only a mythical version of his doctrines on being, relation, and knowledge survived into modern times? Precisely there we see the success of the Cartesian *Cogito*, the modern idea that each individual should be his or her own philosopher, beginning with one’s own contemporary experience, with no need for so much as a thought given to the historical layers upon which, belatedly and recently, much too late for Descartes, we have come to learn that the ‘individual experience’ depends for its shape, texture, and substance. All too clearly now we see that the Cartesian idea of the *cogito*, free of all dependence on sense or history, was itself a myth, and one that wrought considerable damage in the house of philosophy from about 1637 onwards to the end of modern times.

By the late eighteenth century, it was not at all uncommon for ‘histories of philosophy’ to jump from the report of Plato and Aristotle to Descartes and modernity, consigning the ‘medieval period’ or ‘dark ages’ in its entirety to superstition and religious thought, at best ‘theology’, but containing little to nothing of interest to or import for that pure enterprise of reason we call ‘philosophy’. The instauration of ‘Neothomism’ as a historical epoch happily coincided with the highwater mark of nineteenth century historical scholarship, and the work of those earliest ‘neothomists’ responding to Pope Leo XIII’s call for a revival of the reading and understanding of the *opera* of Thomas Aquinas is a marvel to behold, as, little by little, the pieces of paleography and textual criticism are put in

place that enabled the generations of the modern twilight to recapture something of the spirit and actual doctrinal detail of the mighty Aquinas. But no sooner was this task achieved in principle than modernity itself collapsed in matters philosophical, as the chain of classical modern mainstream thinkers finally had made it clear to the culture at large, if not to themselves, the unacceptable limits of the modern epistemological paradigm according to which the mind can know nothing of what it does not itself create through its own operations. The ‘epistemological turn’ which culminated in the Kantian synthesis, to say nothing of the later ‘linguistic turn’ as a variant thereon, proved to be a cul-de-sac.

The attempt at revival

The ‘neothomists’ had sought to remind the moderns that being is more than a construct of the mind, and in this it may be said that they largely succeeded. If even an anemic ‘realism’ is again acceptable today in the writings of such late moderns as Putnam and Searle, or even Quine, that is in no small part owing to the historical reconstruction the Thomists achieved in demonstrating that Aquinas was no mere sectarian thinker of purely theological interest, but a philosophical thinker in his own right of a rank equal among the Latins to the stature of Plato and Aristotle among the Greeks. The bridge from ancient Greek philosophy to modern national language philosophy, allowed to fall into disrepair and finally complete ruin by the generations of thinkers succeeding Descartes, was finally being attended to by the obedient sons of Leo XIII and the newly revived participants in the school of St. Thomas.

Understanding the revival’s limitations

But the revival had its limits. To understand these, we need to draw first a physiognomy of ‘the Latin Age’ as a historical period in that part of the human enterprise we have come to call, after the coinage first suggested, apparently, by Pythagoras of Crotona (c.570–495BC), ‘philosophy’. The Latin Age began with the loss of contact with Greek heritage, through the oblivion among the peoples of the original Roman lands of the Greek language. And even though this oblivion had not yet befallen the contemporaries of Augustine (354–430AD), it befell shortly thereafter; and, as for Augustine himself, everything transpired *as if* the ‘dark age’ of loss of the patrimony of Greek classics had already occurred. So we shall not be far wrong if we date the outset of the indigenously *Latin* development of

philosophy from Augustine's maturity, say the fifth century. And even though the Greek language would be recovered by the Latin speaking peoples after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, when Greek scholars fled Turkish arms and Islamic rule to the Christian lands of the Latin West, and in particular Italy, this 'Renaissance' of classical appreciation did not change the fact that the university mainstream of philosophy continued in Latin up to and still after the debacle of Galileo and the revolution of Descartes.

We are talking, then, about twelve centuries, maybe thirteen, depending on how you measure the transitions, which constitute the historical epoch or age in which Latin provided the medium for the transmission and development of philosophical speculation so far as philosophy can be said to have made any advance beyond the Greeks.¹⁰ Now the later modern attitude toward the Latin Age was much shaped (to say the least) by the Protestant Revolt which, after Luther (1483–1546) as a landmark, splintered medieval 'Catholic' Christendom into many parts. Of course, this was only a sequel to the earlier split of Catholic Christendom into a Greek East and a Latin West, with the mutual excommunications issued in 1054 on the Latin side by the Bishop of Rome, Pope Leo IX, and on the Greek side by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bishop Michael Cerularius. But after the Protestant Revolt, 'Catholic' gradually ceased to be a synonym for 'Christian' and became instead, in the West, an oppositional term to 'Protestant'.

The significance of this split for philosophy in the Latin Age becomes apparent in retrospect. Augustine never suffered from the split. Catholics and Protestants alike considered him as their own, and so the origins of the Latin Age in his many writings were never eclipsed. But a similar fate did not befall Aquinas. As I earlier noted, even though Aquinas was dead two-hundred and forty-three years by the time Luther nailed his theses to the Wittenberg church door on October 31 of 1517, the use made of the work of Thomas Aquinas by the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and the choice of his work by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1566) as the guide for his newly formed Society of Jesus to spearhead a 'Reformation' *counter* to that of the Protestants, all but guaranteed that Thomas Aquinas, notwithstanding his historical status as 'Catholic' at a time when 'Catholic' was synonymous with 'Christian' *tout court*, would in fact become identified for some time to come as a thinker 'Catholic' in the sense oppositional to 'Protestant'. And the Protestants would have no part of him.

Thus it happened that when philosophy turned to contemplate the founding of a new science of nature in the seventeenth century, Aquinas, associated in the contemporary mind with the Roman Inquisition and the

condemnation of Galileo, came to be ignored by almost all in the succeeding centuries,¹¹ Catholics and Protestants alike. So the 'first Thomism' came a cropper both of modern philosophy and of the 'Protestant Reformation' both together and at once. The 'first Thomism', which had been a primarily Dominican school, contrasted with Scotism and Nominalism in defining the last centuries of the Latin Age. It began with Capreolus (c.1380–1444) well over a century after Aquinas had died, and spans a continuous line of Latin thinkers or 'commentators' down to John of St. Thomas (Poinsot, 1589–1644) as the last of the Latin line.

But when the work of St. Thomas was revived under the late nineteenth century impetus of Leo XIII, it was unquestionably in the distinctively oppositional sense of 'Catholic' that the work of Aquinas became a phoenix in history, now for the first time made visible outside the Latin Umwelt in the modern context of the national languages as the *lingua franca* of philosophy and culture generally. Yet it was not mainly as a religious thinker that Leo had called for the revival of Thomas's work, but as a philosophical thinker. And, in Aquinas, it is not possible fully to separate religious thought and belief from philosophy (see Deely 2001: 257–263, 304–305), for philosophy for him names the distinctive grasp of being which separates the human animal from the brutes, and makes possible religious belief in the first place.

The famous theme of the harmony of faith and reason under the doctrine of there being but one Truth as eternal as God is eternal was the very reason why Leo, as Pope, saw Aquinas as antidote to the idealism which had everywhere triumphed philosophically in the high modern intellectual culture.¹² This idealism, the summary thesis that the mind can know only what the mind itself makes, of course, is the solipsistic consequent, at once inevitable and necessary, upon acceptance of the famous supposition common to Suarez, Descartes, and Locke, and after them to every thinker of the modern philosophical mainstream, that the very objects we directly and immediately experience in everyday life are the ideas that our mind forms under the stimulus of our surroundings. So the phenomenal veil hiding the things-in-themselves was no invention of Kant, but simply the rigorous systematization of the assumption from which Rationalism and Empiricism alike had departed in their otherwise different paths of epistemological analysis. The story of modern philosophy is indeed in the main the story of the differences between empiricism and rationalism and their final synthesis in Kant. But from the point of view the work of St. Thomas affords, their differences are as nothing by comparison with their common assumption that the mind first knows its own product as such, for this is all that is systematized and reduced to its utmost consequences in Kant.

No wonder that Aquinas appeared in the eyes of neothomists as above all a ‘realist’ in philosophy: it was precisely under this guise that he stood as oppositional to the idealism in the modern sense that had prompted Leo XIII to call for a revival of his work in the first place. But one thing escaped for the most part the notice of even the best of those who undertook this massive historical and speculative work of a ‘second Thomism’ in the national language context of late modern times, with the exception mainly, and almost solely, of Jacques Maritain (see Deely 1986). What the neothomists as a movement and group overlooked was that, however realist he be, realism in the sense that interested these late moderns was itself a creation of the opposition to modern idealism. For Aquinas himself, the grasp of being as ‘*id quod primo in intellectu cadit*’ (‘that which falls first in the understanding’¹³) was not a matter of ‘realism’ in the distinctively modern sense, for he anteceded that philosophical problematic by a duration of time even greater than his antecedence to the ecumenical problematic of Catholicism *versus* Protestantism. And his doctrine of the being first grasped by human understanding in its difference from the sense perception of animals lacking intellect was of a piece with his doctrine of cognitive powers distinguished by formal objects (see Deely 2001: 343–345). Whence real being, *ens reale*, being physical as well as objective, fell under *ens ut primum cognitum*, but was not of a piece with it. For *ens rationis*, purely objective being, also falls under *ens ut primum cognitum*, and the distinction between *ens reale* and *ens rationis* arises only subsequent to the prior grasp of being as first known. And here already the background doctrine of relation as essentially constitutive of the difference between things and objects is already in play. For anything known, whether real like the sun or unreal like the leprechaun, exists *as* known at the terminus of a relation which has its basis in a ‘passion of the soul’ of the cognitive organism. The leprechaun, however, has *no other* being, while the sun has also a subjective and physical existence which renders it independent for being of being an object. Yet because every true relation, whether mind-dependent or not, exists suprasubjectively, so does the terminus as terminus. We will see later how these simple facts basic to the ‘epistemology’ of Thomas Aquinas also imply the priority of signs over things and objects alike in the ontological constitution of experience — but that is an insight more postmodern than modern, and wholly semiotic.

By reviving his philosophy within the problematic of modern thought, the neothomists risked missing a grasp of how the ‘epistemology’ of St. Thomas stood not only in opposition to the epistemological paradigm of classical modern philosophy but further transcended the terms of that opposition from the outset. This insight, however, was clarified more among

the first Thomists, within the classical Latin Thomistic development from Capreolus to John Poinset (*Joannes a Sancto Thoma*, to speak properly Latin) than it was in St. Thomas himself. And when the ‘Thomistic revival’ came to concentrate, especially after Gilson, all but exclusively on the writings of St. Thomas himself, first to the neglect and later almost to the contempt of the writings of the Latin commentary school that began about a century and a quarter after St. Thomas’s death and continued down to the very lifetime of Galileo and Descartes, a myopia set in, a myopia that came to define the interpretive horizon of neothomism as the ‘second Thomism’.

The ‘Thomistic revival’ begun in 1879 went as far as the vindication of realism against modern idealism, but after that was at a loss whence to proceed. Hence when ‘postmodernism’ began with the rejection of the limits of the modern epistemological paradigm altogether, the version of Thomism which had been conceived and developed in correlative opposition to that paradigm was at a loss for what to do next. It was in the end a ‘Thomism’ — and this is said not in any way to disparage or detract from its many and permanent achievements for intellectual culture — too isolated from the larger problematic of philosophy as a historical enterprise of human understanding developing in history doctrinally distinct from religious belief from the beginning, from theology after the thirteenth century, and from scientific theorizing after the seventeenth century (see Deely 2001: esp. Chap. 7, 255ff., Chap. 11, pp. 487–492).

The denouement

Look at what happened. Let us use the work of Gilson as exemplar, for he was easily the most creative and important of those who participate in the ‘second Thomism’ using primarily the tools of modern, post-nineteenth-century historical scholarship. As I have documented elsewhere (in Ciapalo 1997: 68–96), Gilson took the *ipsissima verba* of Aquinas himself as the criterion of the restoration, an unexceptionable criterion of pure historical scholarship, but one that has its inevitable limitations for philosophy in its properly speculative dimension. As a result of applying this criterion, it was apparent that the entire line of the Latin ‘first Thomism’ had already begun to speak different words from those Aquinas had spoken. Well, compare the English of Chaucer, say (c.1342/3–1400), with the English of a literary writer a century and a quarter later. Whether within or outside a philosophical ‘school’, natural language changes over time, new words and ways of weaving words inevitably reflect new interpretations put on experience, new problems thought of and new

dimensions of old problems come into view. The change cannot be avoided. Every time a statement is made, the sense of the logical predicate as what is being said enters into the comprehension of the logical subject which the statement concerns (which is of course the reason why the doctrine of 'rigid designation' is a fallacy).

So the 'second Thomists' of national language times in philosophy came generally to neglect the 'first Thomists' of the fourteenth to seventeenth century, in favor of exclusive concentration on the thirteenth century Thomas himself. They rebuilt the bridge from Greek antiquity across the Latin centuries only from Augustine as the first tower to Aquinas as the second tower — a span of some nine centuries, no small feat of intellectual engineering. They may be excused for pausing from exhaustion. They labored enough. By their work they changed the landscape of the history of philosophy as it could be respectably taught in the schools. Gone, hopefully forever, are the eighteenth and early nineteenth century 'histories of philosophy' which jumped from the Greeks to the moderns. Today, thanks largely to the work of the 'second Thomists', no respectable history of philosophy can leave out Augustine or Aquinas. But what about after Aquinas, what about philosophy between Aquinas and Descartes?

Misleading consequences

We were led to believe that there was among the later Latins mainly, if not exclusively, a decline. Scotus was something of an embarrassing anomaly, but, as in grammar 'tis the exception that proves the rule, so the dominance of Ockham's nominalism after 1350 was enough to prove the story. Hero to the secular partisans of science against religious thought, such as Quine, say; villain to the partisans of philosophy as capable of supporting belief; Ockham was accepted on both sides as a farthermost boundary of the Latin development of anything of real speculative import or interest. So we have the new 'standard outline' of the history of philosophy: there was a 'medieval' or Latin Age, begun with Augustine and continuing to Aquinas and Ockham, but after that we may rightly and safely pass to Descartes for something of interest, for stretching between Ockham and Descartes, according to the standard late-modern picture, there is only, in Matson's words (1987: II, 253) a barren, sterile 'philosophical desert'.¹⁴

Of course, omitted from such a picture is the whole of the 'first Thomism', if by 'Thomism' we mean the development of philosophical and theological thought inspired by and concerned to be consistent with and

faithful to basic insights achieved in the thirteenth century literary corpus left behind by Aquinas himself. Yet, as I will now proceed to show you, precisely at the farthest point of the development of the ‘first Thomism’ we find the third tower of speculative thought we require to complete the suspension of a bridge to link across the Latin centuries Greek philosophy to modern thought and, beyond modernity, to a fourth age of philosophical development properly called ‘postmodern’, if we include the tower of Charles Sanders Peirce’s speculative thought as the fourth tower sustaining our span. Such an achievement, if fully carried out, could, and perhaps by rights should, bring with it nothing less than yet a ‘third Thomism’, a historically distinct and more integral stage of the development (across these many centuries we call our lives) of the thought first embodied in that treasury of thirteenth century writings penned by Aquinas, but then taken up after him and embodied further by the line of the ‘first Thomists’ within the Latin language, then by the line of the ‘second Thomists’ preoccupied with realism correctly seen as foundational in the writings of Thomas, and now, in continuity with the movement begun in 1879, hopefully by ourselves, renewing and carrying the historical growth one step further to appreciate how the thought of St. Thomas, more than that of any other thinker, makes it possible for us to understand how and why human understanding develops always and only through signs (at least outside the context of mystical experience wherein, as Aquinas teaches, God acts directly on the soul as material objects in ordinary experience act directly on the senses).

It is this ordinary experience that philosophy begins with and depends upon, according to Aquinas (see Deely 2001: esp. 547–553). Now what does this have to do with the sign?

Seeing the Latin age whole: Its first initiative, indigenous development, and last achievement

If we look at the Latin history in philosophy in the light of sign as a theme, we discover something astonishing. Instead of an originally chaotic age going off in many directions, an age that only gradually achieves a center of gravity in the so-called ‘high medieval’ period and afterward dissolves into nominalism on one side and into the exuberance of the Renaissance recovery of Greek classics on the other, we find unfolding a distinctive philosophical epoch that is organically unified from beginning to end. And the source of this organic unity is precisely the first speculative initiative of Latin thought that was made without aid of precedent or anticipation in the world of ancient Greek philosophy. The general notion

of sign, it turns out, was the original Latin initiative in philosophy, and provides the theme that shows a true unity of that age in moving from the simple positing of this fundamental notion to its complex justification as no *flatus vocis* but rather the nexus of human experience as transcending nature in the direction of mind and back again from mind in the direction of nature. When the Latin Age is viewed under the speculative theme of sign as a general concept, not only do all the traditional themes of ontology and epistemology (including notably the vast controversies over *nominalism*) find a place, but they all appear as parts of a single tapestry of speculative development from the late fourth to the early seventeenth century, when what will become mainstream modern philosophy begins its takeover.

Tracing the root-system of postmodernity

The concept and destiny of sign that furnishes the foundations for the body of living knowledge being developed today out of the thematic observation and analysis of the action unique and proper to signs, both as such and in their various kinds, in fact is a contemporary recovery through the work of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce of a concept that founds its ontological weight and center first in a rather late stage of the Latin language itself (see Deely 1994b; Beuchot and Deely 1995). For the general notion of sign was a posit, as has been said, put into play just three years before the end of the fourth century of the Christian era by St. Augustine, at the very beginning of the Latin Age. But this brilliant notion was reduced to its ontological ground and systematized in principle as a theme of speculative thought only as that very age approached its end, by John Poinset (*Joannes a sancto Thoma*), a man considered by Maritain (1953: v–viii) to be the last commentator of genius in the original Latin Thomistic line, a man who lived in the very period of Galileo and Descartes when the attention of what was to become ‘modern philosophy’ was turning away from the developments of Latin tradition in order to vindicate a quite different enterprise of human understanding, namely, the beginnings of science in the modern sense of mathematical physics, experimentation, and observation of sensible nature in its details. As the pen-name of our last great Latin author of the Thomistic school sufficiently indicates, it is nowhere so much as in the thirteenth century literary corpus that are to be found the pieces for completing the puzzle that Augustine bequeathed to intellectual posterity by putting into play the notion of sign as able to shuttle back and forth between the realms of nature and culture in weaving together the

strands of human experience upon which understanding depends in order to cast its net of guesses at the various riddles that life and the universe pose.

Well, by coincidence, Augustine put in play his original speculative gambit at the very time when the move of the capitol of Roman Empire from Rome to the Byzantine region had just been consolidated. This was the time when the peoples who would form Europe everywhere adopted the original Latin tongue of the old empire, while the rulers themselves were abandoning Latin in favor of the Greek language. This was the time, in short, when we witness (in hindsight) the astonishing split of a single political entity, the Roman Empire, into two halves soon to share virtually no common linguistic tie (see Deely 2001: Chap. 5).

Of course there is a contemporary term widely, almost universally, used now to name the area of study of signs, to wit, 'semiotics'; and the common wisdom is that this name for the study derives from the root of the Greek word for sign, *σημείον*. As is all too often true of common wisdom, so in this case it forms a dangerous alliance with ignorance by concealing more than it reveals without any overt hint of what is hidden.¹⁵ In this case, what the common wisdom conceals is of far greater import for any deep understanding of the Latin Age and its import for the immediate future of a 'postmodern' development of philosophy than even the most devoted students of Latinity in the academy have so far realized. For the truth, the astonishing truth, as we noted in our opening remarks, is that there is no general concept of sign to be found in Greek philosophy, and the term *σημείον* standardly mistranslated to conceal that fact is a word which means, in Greek, not at all 'sign' in any general sense but only very specific forms of sign, particularly ones associated with divination, both in the invidious sense of prophetic and religious divination and in the more positive scientific sense of prognostications in matters of medicine and meteorology.¹⁶

All this will change, as I have said, only after Augustine (354–430AD). Too busy in his youth for one set of reasons to learn the Greek language in use all around him, too busy in later years for another set of reasons to learn the Greek language visibly losing ground in the Western regions of Roman empire but yet dominating the realm of theological and religious discussion, and, in any event, disinclined by temperament to study Greek in any season (Augustine 397: i, 14), Augustine it was who, in an ignorant bliss, first began to speak of sign in general, sign in the sense of a general notion to which cultural as well as natural phenomena alike relate as instances or 'species'. Not knowing Greek, he was ignorant of the originality of his notion.¹⁷ That he was proposing a speculative novelty never crossed his mind, and, his principal readers being similarly ignorant, the

fact is not known to have occurred to any one in his large and growing audience.

What was obvious to the Latins was the intuitive clarity of the general notion of sign and its organizing power. Look around you. What do you see? Nothing or almost nothing at all that does not further suggest something besides itself, something that almost normally is not itself part of the physical surroundings immediately given when you ‘look around’. There is a tombstone, my childhood friend’s grave; there is a tree, the one planted for the occasion of the burial; there is a pot of flowers now dead, placed here a month ago to honor the memory of this friend. And so on. Nothing at all is all that it appears. Everything is surrounded by the mists of significations which carry the mind in many directions, all according to knowledge, interest, and level of awareness brought to bear at any given moment when we happen to ‘take a look around’. Of course all these perceptions involve signs, the gravestone no less than the cloud. And the fact that the one comes from human artifice and the other from nature makes no difference to the fact that both alike signify, that both alike, in Augustine’s words, ‘praeter species quas ingerit sensibus aliquid aliud facit in cognitionem venire’ (‘over and above the sense impressions, make something besides themselves come into awareness’).

So little were Augustine and the Latins after him aware of the novelty of their general notion of sign, indeed, that the novelty would appear never to have come to light before researchers of our own time turned the tools and light of scholarship to uncovering the historical origins of the notion.¹⁸ So far as concerns contemporary semiotics, it was the team of researchers who have worked the fields of ancient thought under the guidance and tutelage of the celebrated Italian scholar Umberto Eco who first brought to light (Eco et al. 1986)¹⁹ and subsequently established more fully (Manetti 1993) Augustine’s incognizant originality in this particular.²⁰ The English word ‘sign’ comes directly and immediately from the root of the Latin term *signum*, and this term with the familiar general sense it has today of providing a subject matter that merits investigation into natural and cultural phenomena alike was a novelty in the maturity of Augustine.

So there is the earliest definitive landmark distinctive of the Latin Age as a new era in the history of philosophy: the very notion of sign in the general sense was introduced at the dawn of the fifth century AD to draw attention to and mark the fact that *all* our objects of sense perception are experienced within a web of relations that postmodern thinkers — Thomas Sebeok (1975) in particular, developing a suggestion in the work of Jakob von Uexküll — aptly designate a *semiotic web*. The very word ‘sign’ is itself a sign self-reflexively of the Latin heritage, the very concrete

fact that 'Europe' was the gradual creation of the Latin-speaking heirs and interlopers to the original Western lands of the Roman Empire. This *mélange* of peoples inherited and transformed the original language of that Empire through an indigenous philosophical development that began roughly in the fourth century and continued thereafter until the seventeenth century. At that time began the decisive break of modernity from the Latin Age, both in the establishment of science in the modern sense (as an intellectual enterprise distinct no less from philosophy than from theology and religious thought) and in the establishment of the developing national languages in place of Latin as the principal vehicle henceforward for the sustenance of European intellectual culture.

Sign itself, the general notion or type (the 'general mode of being', Peirce liked to say) of which all particular signs are instances or tokens, then, is the first and foundational element of the distinctively Latin heritage in philosophy. And that presupposed notion makes the development of a doctrine of signs possible in the first place, whether in theology or philosophy. It marks, as we may say, the initial awakening of a semiotic consciousness; and it occurs more or less at the very beginning of the Latin Age in the history both of the political formations that lead to modern Europe and of that part of intellectual culture traditionally called philosophy. Semiotic consciousness owes its initial awakening, if not its name, to the introduction of the general notion of sign in the work of Augustine (i.397–426 in particular); but as an achievement of reflexive and speculative consciousness, as we shall see, it belonged mainly to Latin Thomism of the seventeenth century, in a drawing together of the necessary speculative elements found scattered but complete in the thirteenth century work of Thomas himself, as gathered by Poinsoot.

The burning question

For after Augustine we find that the Latin Age contributes much more to this so-called semiotic consciousness than its nascence in a foundational and organizing notion of sign. As a matter of fact, Augustine's original and constitutive contribution in this regard risked in advance the disaster of *nominalism*, that infection of speculative thought which blinds the mind to the dependence in understanding of everything the senses yield upon general modes of being insensible as such, yet as independent or more independent of human whim as anything on the order of rocks or stars. For it is not enough to *propose* the general notion of sign as a mode of being. The proposal needs to be theoretically justified as well. *How is it possible* for there to be such a thing as a general mode of being

that transcends the division of objective being into what exists prior to and independently of cognition and what exists posterior to and dependently upon cognition or mind?

This question never occurs to Augustine. For him, as for the next seven centuries of Latin thinkers, the general idea of sign seems so intuitively valid that they employ it throughout their theological and philosophical writings without a second thought. Of course, the seven centuries in question are not exactly luminous with speculative developments within philosophy. In fact, they are precisely what first the Renaissance humanists and even to this day modern historians refer to derisively as ‘the dark ages’, the centuries marked more by the collapse than by the rise of centers of serious learning. This was a function of the condition of civilization itself in the early indigenous Latin centuries. But by the time in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when we see the universities, that greatest of all the contributions to present civilization surviving from the politics of the Latin Age, begin to form at Bologna and Paris and then all across what will become Europe, spreading even to China by 1900, the ‘constantly alive, burning and inevitable problem’ (Beuchot 1986: 26) Augustine has bequeathed to Latin posterity makes its way to the fore. *Signum*: general mode of being or empty nominalism, *flatus vocis*?

The burning question springs into flame as early as the writings of Aquinas (1225–1274) and Roger Bacon (c.1214–1292). Bacon will play a crucial role in the historical development of this distinctively Latin doctrine of speculative philosophy. But the main elements for resolving the problem are to be found not at all in Bacon’s writings, but rather in the writings of his contemporary, Thomas Aquinas. Since it is St. Thomas who not only interests us here principally, but who also principally provides the pieces of the puzzle that his seventeenth century follower, John Poinset (*Joannes a Sancto Thoma*), will finally prove clever enough to assemble into their proper places, let me lay out in detail the pieces of the puzzle as they appear in the very writings of Aquinas. After that, I will trace in the quickest broad outline I can the historical movement from Aquinas to Poinset in this matter, and, beyond that, to the contemporary scene and the transition from modernity to postmodernity as a new epoch in intellectual culture and philosophy introduced by the realization that modern epistemology can neither contain nor explain the action of signs.

Sign in Aquinas

The problem of sign as it crops up in the writings of Thomas Aquinas marks a watershed in the Latin development of Augustine’s philosophical

initiative. And it is easy to show, for example, that any doctrine of analogy such as Aquinas developed would be a subalternate part of a general doctrine of sign (Deely 2002a), as we will shortly see. Here in the work of Aquinas come to the surface of conscious attention all the tensions latent in Augustine's original proposal. After Aquinas, much of the best speculative energies of thinkers over the three and a half centuries remaining to Latin as the mainstream language of philosophical development will be expended, with an increasing clarity of focus, in the working out of these surfaced tensions.

Revealing the tensions

In his quite early writing, his 'doctoral dissertation' of commenting on Lombard, composed between 1254 and 1256, Aquinas manifests awareness of a problem with Augustine's proposed formula for defining sign in general. Yet he so expresses himself that the reader must conclude that, whatever the problem, the young Aquinas is not ready to reject outright the Augustinian formula which restricts signs to relations grounded in sense-perceptible vehicles of signification. He is not himself poised to formulate a unified doctrine of signs, a full-scale semiotic.

Here in the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (c.1256), Aquinas distinguishes the term 'sign' according to a primary usage, which denotes something sense-perceptible founding a relation of signification,²¹ and he says that, at most, it is only by a kind of secondary usage that something which does not fall under the senses might be called a sign.²² Whence he concludes, for example: effects of intelligible causes are not signs of their causes; only effects of causes falling within the order of sensible phenomena are signs of their causes.²³ Again: the concepts involved in the communications among angels are called signs only figuratively or metaphorically.²⁴

But not only the young Aquinas speaks in this way. In some of his very last writing (c.1273) in his *Summa theologiae* Aquinas virtually repeats the early view:²⁵

The name and definition of a thing is taken principally from that which belongs to the thing primarily and essentially, not from that which belongs to it through something else. Now a sensible effect, being the primary and direct object of man's knowledge (since all our knowledge springs from the senses), by its very nature leads to the knowledge of something else. Intelligible effects, by contrast, are not such as to be able to lead us to the knowledge of something else except insofar

as they are manifested by another, that is, by sensible things. Thence is it that things offered to the senses are primarily and principally called signs, as Augustine says in Book II *Of Christian Doctrine*, where he writes that ‘a sign is something that, beyond the impression it makes on sense, makes something else enter cognition’. But intelligible effects do not have this rationale of sign except insofar as they are manifested by some signs.²⁶ And in this way, too, some things which are not sensible are yet said in a certain way to be sacraments, namely, insofar as they are signified by sensible things.

Even a careful student of Aquinas, unless that reader were focused systematically on the problem of sign in the writings of Aquinas, could easily seem justified in taking Aquinas’ apparent acceptance of Augustine’s proposed definition of sign as an adequate general definition. It would be enough, for example, to cite as Aertsen does (1988: 230) the apparently categorical statement from Aquinas’s *Disputed Question* (c.1256/9) concerning communication among angels, to receive the impression that the matter was settled:²⁷

A thing cannot be called a sign, properly speaking, unless it be something from which one arrives at an awareness of something else as if by discoursing;²⁸ there is accordingly not a sign in the case of angelic communication, because angelic knowledge is not discursive, as we saw in the previous question. And for this reason too signs in the case of human beings are sensibles, because our knowledge, which is discursive, arises from sensible things.

Resolving the tensions

But the problem with Augustine’s formula, not even in the writings of Aquinas, is as simply and easily resolved as the texts cited so far make it appear. To see the actual complexity of Aquinas’s thought on this matter, a more careful attention is required, and a more systematic examination of the writings. The reader in this matter, it turns out, cannot afford to be focused, like Aquinas himself, on problematics other than that of the sign thematically taken as such according to its proper being and action — at least not without running the risk of being misled, like Aertsen, into reaching a premature conclusion. For when other considerations are put aside or subordinated to the problem of the being and action proper to signs, and the writings of St. Thomas are thematically perused in this light, even though he did not write them in this light (even though, that is to say, he did not write a systematic *Tractatus de Signis*), the problem with Augustine’s formula begins to appear as insurmountable.

Consider the following remarks. First, from the *Disputed Questions on Truth* (q. 9, art. 4, the reply to objection 5):²⁹

Even though in our experience of material objects whose effects are more known to us than are the causes a sign is something posterior in nature, nevertheless, that it be prior or posterior in nature does not belong to the rationale of sign properly understood, but only that it be something logically prior.³⁰

Whence not only can effects become within experience signs of causes, but so transitively can causes become within experience signs of effects; for, as we will see (Poinsot 1632: Book I, Question 2, 137/8 note 4), the relation constitutive of any sign as such cannot be reduced to *any* relation of cause *or* effect.

Second, even in the earlier text (at note 27 above, the reply to the previous objection 4) cited by Aertsen as if settling the matter of Aquinas' view of sign, the cited passage is immediately followed by a second statement which reveals a kind of schizophrenia within the thought of Aquinas about the sign. He contrasts sign '*properly speaking*' ('*proprie loquendo*') with sign '*in general*' ('*communiter dicere*'):³¹

Only something from which we are led to the cognition of another discursively can be called a sign, properly speaking; and from this point of view there is no sign for an angel, since the knowledge of angels is not discursive, as was established in the preceding question. And from this point of view too signs for human beings are sensible objects, because our knowledge, which is discursive, arises from sensible things. But, in general, we can say that anything whatsoever known on the basis of which something else is known, is a sign; and from this point of view a concept can be said to be a sign of whatever is known through it. And so angels do know things through signs; and so too does one angel speak to another through a sign, namely, by means of a specifying form or concept in the actuality of which the understanding of the one angel is rendered directed or ordered to that of the other angel.

But in this light (compare Poinsot 1632: 225/17–26, and 226/8–45), '*proprie loquendo*' seems almost to say '*loosely speaking*' or '*according to an unreflected way of putting the matter*'; while '*communiter*' seems almost to say '*strictly speaking*' or '*from the point of view of a scientific consideration of the matter*'. This is not the usage of a man fully comfortable with what he is saying! The speculative tensions it reveals are not small.

Yet other texts buttress this opposition. Again from the *De Veritate*, this time q. 4, in reply to a seventh objection to the effect that³² by as much as an effect is posterior, so much the more does it have the rationale of a sign. The example cited to support the objection is crucial:³³

But a spoken word is a final effect issuing from the understanding. Therefore the rationale of sign belongs more to it than to the concept of the understanding; and likewise too the rationale of word, which is imposed from the manifestation of the concept.

Aquinas introduces at this point remarks implying some distinctions concerning the concept of the relation of cause to effect that will not be fully clarified for a long time after him (I am referring to the contemporary notion of interpretant, as something which need not be mental³⁴), and he frames his answer accordingly:³⁵

The rationale of sign belongs by natural priority to an effect before it belongs to a cause when the cause is related to the effect as its cause of being, but not when related to the effect as its cause of signifying. But when an effect has from the cause not only the fact of its existence, but also the fact of its existing as signifying, in that case, just as the cause is prior to the effect in being, so is it prior in signifying; and for this reason the interior word possesses a rationale of signification that is naturally prior to that of the exterior word.

Perhaps even more intriguing is the lead Aquinas throws out in passing in the fourth of his *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* (c.1269/72), when he distinguishes spoken words from what is understood by them: ‘the spoken word is a sign only and not what is signified; but what is understood is both sign and signified, as is also the thing.’³⁶ (But of course the thing as signified is an object which has also a subjective being, whereas other times the signified may be objective only.)

Clearly, over the years, whatever he said in his doctoral dissertation, Aquinas moved far beyond a simple-minded contrast of a ‘literal’ to a ‘figurative or metaphorical’ use of the term ‘sign’ as it applied to psychological states in contrast with overt behavioral manifestations of those states, and as it applied in some generic, common sense to both. John Poinsett, the only classical Latin author systematically to study the writings of Aquinas from a semiotic point of view and to synthesize the results of that study in a formal *Tractatus de Signis*, showed how the schizophrenia we have foregrounded in the texts can be resolved. Poinsett pointed out that Aquinas himself never undertook to author a treatise on signs as such, but contented himself with commenting on various aspects of the doctrine of signs as they impinged on various other concerns which Aquinas had taken as his thematic focus in this or that discussion. As a result, in his various remarks, depending on the focal theme of the particular discussion, one or another aspect of the action of signs would be in the foreground of Aquinas’ attention, and he would make his re-

marks accordingly. By taking into account these focal differences in the various remarks the schizophrenia of the writing about sign can be overcome (Poinsoot 1632: Book II, Question 1, 225/16–25):³⁷

In order to make clear the mind of St. Thomas on this question, one must reckon with the fact that sometimes he speaks of a sign precisely as it exercises the office of representing another besides itself, and in this way of speaking he concedes to the formal sign [the icons of perception and understanding, as we will see] the rationale of a sign simply. At other times St. Thomas speaks of signs which, as things objectified and first known, lead us to something signified, and in this usage he teaches that a sign is principally found in sensible things.

What the resolution reveals

The schizoid appearance of the texts, then, is nothing more than a by-product of the absence in the writing of an explicitly semiotic point of view systematically employed throughout.

What the schizophrenia signaled (or ‘symptomized’), it turns out, was an ultimate disquiet on the part of Aquinas, not with the general notion of sign as put in play by Augustine, but with the formula proposed by Augustine to express that general notion in a definition. Aquinas, in the end, had no problem with the general notion itself. Like Augustine, he knew almost nothing of Greek, nor does anything suggest that it occurred to him that there was no general notion of sign in Greek philosophy (see Deely 2004c). His problem was with the definition Augustine had proposed for it, yet a definition he was initially inclined to adopt both because of its consonance with our first impressions about the action of signs within our experience as human beings and because of the weight of authority and respect which the name of Augustine had come to carry in Latin tradition by the time Aquinas undertook his studies.

As the problem of metaphysics in the writings of Aquinas can be seen enigmatically compressed in the formula from his *Commentary* (c.1268/72: Book IV, lect. 5, n. 6, in Busa vol. 3 p. 421 col. 2) on Aristotle’s *First Philosophy*, ‘*non enim omne ens est huiusmodi*’ (‘yet not all being is of this material kind’), so the problem of sign in the writings of Aquinas might be likewise compressed in a saying paraphrastic of his *Commentary* on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, apropos of Augustine’s definition of sign in general in *On Christian Doctrine*: ‘*non enim omne signum est huiusmodi*’ (‘yet not all sign-vehicles are of the order of perceptible objects’).³⁸

We become aware of signs, says Aquinas, in the objects presented by sense. Only later, if ever, do we come to realize that the psychological

states which transform sensations into objects of perception and understanding are able to bring about this transformation, and so give structure and meaning to our experience of objects in their difference from sensations, only because these states themselves, the *passiones animae* ('passions of the soul') mentioned by Aristotle in his work *On Interpretation*, are already themselves signs (sign-vehicles) in the first place. Sensible objects at first seem to be but things; but, as we learn more and more of their connections with other objects, both in the world of nature and in the world of culture, these objects become more and more significant. But the ideas in the mind by which we think these objects, the thoughts by which we say how things appear to us and to be apart from us, these *are* signs from the beginning.

In his *Disputed Questions on Truth*, Aquinas elaborated.³⁹ Signs for us are sensible objects because human knowledge as discursive originates from the senses. But it can be said more generally that a sign is anything known in which something other than itself is presented, and this is the case with an intellectual concept in presenting the intelligibility of any object, or with a percept presenting the desirability or undesirability of any object. Thus the ideas and images, the thoughts in our mind, which alone transform physical sounds or marks into signs, are the cause of both the existence and the exercise of the signification, for example, of linguistic signs.

The words of human language, apart from the thoughts and habit structures binding the human community together through conventions and customs, fall back to the status of mere physical phenomena, of sounds and marks without significations. But within the context of human social interaction, these same sounds or marks are elevated at once to the level of signifying sounds and marks. Their becoming associated with and participation in the ideas and feelings of the ones discoursing is what brings about the transformation. Thus, not only the being of linguistic elements as signs, but also their actual exercise of signification, can be seen to depend on thought as cause. 'And therefore the interior word, the thought or idea, has the rationale of sign more fundamentally than does the spoken or written word.'⁴⁰ In this way angels, no less than human beings, know things through signs, and through signs speak to one another.⁴¹

'A little less than the angels you made him, and a little more than the beasts.' As the angels apprehend objects always in their intelligibility, so human beings sometimes do too. Humans are like the angels in being able to know something of what things are. But like the beasts and unlike the angels, human beings first know objects not according to what they are but only according as they act here and now on the senses. The human

animal first forms an Umwelt. Unlike the beasts which have no intellectual apprehension, but unlike the angels which have no power of sense perception, the human being *becomes aware* that the objects related to the perceiver and the perceiver's interests *also* exist in the physical universe with an independence of that perception and those interests. This awareness, the inchoation of a semiotic consciousness, as we will say, is the beginning of philosophy, science, and morals — of civilization as distinct from social interaction. It is the difference in principle between the Umwelt of animals and the Umwelt as human, between society and culture, between Umwelt and Lebenswelt.⁴²

Signs among angels and animals: What Augustine's definition concealed

There is a distinctively human use of signs which overlaps both the knowledge of angels and the awareness of animals. And this distinctively human use Augustine's definition fails to capture. Augustine says what is true of the sign as it is found among brute animals and among human animals as well. But of the sign as it is found among human animals but not among brute animals, his definition misses the point. For all animals are aware of surrounding bodies, and make use of them as signs; but only human animals become aware that there are signs (as Maritain 1957 first pointed out), because only human animals can understand that there are relations even though not relations but only related things can be sensed. If the postmodern move in philosophy is to bring out from under erasure *ens reale* without making the mistake of thinking to separate it within experience entirely from *ens rationis* in the encounter with objects, then equally the postmodern definition of human being restores the animality of the human without losing the emphasis on the distinctive activity of awareness by which the human being is set apart. The moderns began by emphasizing the latter and suppressing the former in adopting the formula *res cogitans* to define human being. The postmoderns, then, in retaining the latter while restoring the former (and the interdependencies of connection between the two) define the human being as *animal semeioticum*, the semiotic animal, the only animal that knows that there are signs as well as makes use of them to survive and to thrive.⁴³ But to understand such an animal a notion of sign not tied to external sense is required.

As to signs among angels, what shall we say? It is not merely that Augustine's original definition of sign left the case out; it is the question of whether the case is really a case. Are there angels?⁴⁴ In Aristotle's cosmology, the mathematical model of revolving spheres first developed by

Eudoxus and later brought to such perfection by Ptolemy, interpreted as a physical model, provided inferential grounds for postulating the physical existence of ‘separated intelligences’, that is to say, intelligent, living substances which never had and never will have a body. *Separated* intelligences, that is to say, intellectual substances which are pure forms and not the form of a body, not now, not ever. In the Latin Age some saw this as a philosophical proof of the existence of angels,⁴⁵ others argued that the angels whose existence is spoken of in the revealed scriptures have nothing to do with the ‘separated intelligences’ postulated to move the celestial spheres.⁴⁶ But in either case, separated intelligences and scriptural angels have in common that they are understood to be intellectual substances of a purely spiritual or wholly immaterial nature, living forms without and apart from matter. Human souls, if immortal, are *separable* substances, but as actually separated they are *incomplete*, being spiritual forms indeed (hence immortal) but yet forms created to animate bodies, a fact which Aquinas saw as one of the ‘verisimilitudes from the order of nature of something taught by the faith’,⁴⁷ in this case the doctrine of the resurrection of the bodies in the formation at the end of time of a ‘new heavens and a new earth’, the *parousia*.

Now from the doctrine of angels we are arriving at a notion of a use of signs that transcends the cognitive activity of the brutes and even that of humans, although not entirely; and yet the philosophical grounds on which were postulated of old substances of the sort angels would be have long since in the main turned to sand. Yet it is not necessary determinately to establish the actual existence of angels in the order of *ens reale* in order to make use of them in the development of hypotheses or ‘thought experiments’ that determinately bear on that order. The case is not at all like that of the existence of God, where, unless it be determinately established that he *is* as an actual existent, all other proofs ‘that he is’ good, ‘that he is’ one, etc., are mere ‘noumena’, empty conceptual constructs. For we are not trying to establish an actual science of angels. That they be mere hypotheses is enough,⁴⁸ as long as that supposition is coupled with the determinate judgment that material being does not exhaust reality. Maritain (1959: 220–221) gives an interesting illustration of the point:

It is impossible for human science to know determinately the behavior of a corpuscle at each instant. For human science observes and measures things with the aid of material instruments and in virtue of physical activities, and can only see an electron by jogging it with light. But suppose a pure spirit, who knows *without material means* (and so, no longer by means of empiriological concepts) the behavior of this corpuscle at each instant; such a spirit would see that the principle of causality applies strictly and in its full ontological sense. The hypothesis of a

pure spirit has no meaning for the physicist. But if it had no meaning for a metaphysician, there would be no metaphysics.

Analogy as a semiotic phenomenon

But let us return to the time of Aquinas. See how tardily, we can say from that time, are the philosophers of being arriving at the problematic rooted in the human use of signs! And in this arrival even the angels, be they merely beings of intellectual imagination (for no brute animals could dream them up), have played a role that is actual if only historically. We move in the history of philosophy not in the order of knowledge already in hand to be clarified, what the medievals called the *ordo disciplinae* ('order of exposition'). Historical development reveals more the opposite, the order of discovery, or *ordo inventionis*, where hypotheses ('abductive guesses') play an indispensable part. Practically everything seems to get discovered ahead of the sign, and all of it comes to bear eventually on the speculative requirements for rendering an account of what the being proper to sign is once one becomes aware of it and of its ubiquitous role in knowledge, experience, and reality.

Take, as an illustration, the problem of analogy, which is at the forefront of the problem of metaphysical knowledge when we ask how is it, what is that psychological condition or state, the *passio animae*, on the basis of which being as such becomes an object of human understanding. Being as such is not a thing but a distinctively human object of understanding in the light of which we are able to come to understand the objective structure of experience as an interweaving of mind-independent with mind-dependent elements, and thence further the created character of the physical world as 'dependent in being' regardless of whether or not it has always existed and will always exist. For in this light we come to understand that God is *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* and that the physical universe throughout is by consequence *ens per participationem essendi*. In the light of this distinctive object (being, that is, not God) we can thematize the difference between objects and things, and between finite and infinite things. In this light, the light of being, we are able to ask about God and the world, and dispute whether there are angels, and whether there is life after death. Neither a concept nor a thing, being as such as an object is unique precisely because its internal unity is not that of a substance nor that of an accident, but of a nature which transcends substance and accident to enable us to see both as beings, and to see being itself as 'able to be said in many ways', mind-dependently as well as mind-independently. The analogy of being presupposes, on the side of our

knowledge, distinctively human discourse which makes the analogous unity of being as such possible in its own right as objective. To every objective state over and above sensation as such there corresponds, not in particular (one-to-one) but generically, a subjective state, an *Innenwelt*, on the basis of which that objective state is presented in awareness. To every *Umwelt* there corresponds an *Innenwelt*. But the sign is what mediates the two. What is *this* being which is neither subjective nor objective in *its* proper being, restricted neither to nature nor to culture in its functioning?

The problem of analogy, in this light, suddenly appears as but a fragment of the much larger problem of the role of signs in knowledge, a species-specifically human case of the use of signs, truly enough, which even the angels have helped historically to identify, but a ‘species’ under a ‘genus’ nonetheless (a ‘token under a type’, as could also be said), the ‘genus’ (or should we say ‘genius’) *signum*. This is why Heidegger (1927: 3, esp. n. 1) speaks of the problem of being in terms of a unity that being exhibits *prior* to the categories; and why he sees in Cajetan’s doctrine of analogy (1927: 93, text and note xiv), as also in Aquinas’ doctrine of the transcendentals (1927: 3 no. 1),⁴⁹ attempts to get at the fundamental problem which yet are not attempts sufficiently clarified in principle. For the problem lies deeper still than any awareness of diversity, and goes to the possibility for beings to appear in *any* guise in the first place, particularly as ‘things’, apparently independent objects within experience. Whence the clearing within which objects stand as things, real or apparent? So the knowledge of being may depend on the prior action of signs; but being must become known before signs can become known,⁵⁰ and the investigation of the action of signs must await the establishment of the reality of what is acting, if the science is not to be empty.

Toward a ‘third Thomism’

If I have persuaded you that there is a new dimension here to the thought of Aquinas that is missing from the ‘second Thomism’ of the nineteenth and twentieth century but clearly present both in the writings of Aquinas himself and also in key authors of the ‘first Thomism’ in Latin times, then I think you might be inclined to agree with me that there is room, as the twenty-first century opens, for yet a ‘third Thomism’ that not only transcends the limitations of the neothomistic revival and retrieves at the same time the riches both neglected and forgotten (again excepting Maritain) from the classical Latin or ‘first Thomism’, but that is a principal contributor to the growth of semiotic consciousness as the quintessence

of a postmodern epoch for philosophy. There is room, in short, to contribute to the Thomistic heritage as well as the heritage of semiotics as a matter of *future* inquiry as well as past achievement — for human inquiry is never exhausted, and normally builds on what past achievements have made possible.

Let me add only in the broadest and hastiest strokes a sketch of the ‘suspension bridge’ as it covers the four centuries between Aquinas and (together) Poinset, Galileo, and Descartes, down to the work of Peirce and semiotics as a global intellectual movement of the twenty-first century.

From Thomas Aquinas to John Poinset and after

The first turn after Aquinas that the controversy over sign takes toward a generally theoretical development of Augustine’s posit hanging in thin air (for what is to prevent the vocable *signum* from being a sound signifying nothing, like ‘phlogiston’ or ‘ether’ or any of the countless words posited across the centuries which turn out to be names for confusions in thought which, when clarified, disappear) fastens not on the general notion itself but on the question of whether only a sensible object can function in the capacity of a sign. For Augustine’s posit had two aspects: the general notion of sign as verified in whatever makes present for awareness something besides itself, and a proposed definition that ties this functioning to impressions made upon sense.

The stages of the Latin development of semiotic consciousness

It was over the formulation of Augustine’s definition of sign that the problem first broke into open flames. Beginning with Aquinas⁵¹ and Bacon (esp. c.1267), then developing after them in the writings of Duns Scotus (c.1266–1308), William of Ockham (c.1285–1349), Pierre d’Ailly (1350–1420), Dominic Soto (1495–1569), Pedro da Fonseca (1528–1599), the Conimbricenses (1606, 1607), Francisco Araújo (1580–1664), and culminating in the work of John Poinset (1589–1644),⁵² this first aspect of the problem received an all but unanimous resolution among the Latins: not only sensible objects as sensible, but also those interpretive structures of the mind (called today ‘ideas’ but in those times ‘species expressae’ and, more generally — for this would include the affections or emotions — ‘*passiones animae*’) on the basis of which sensible objects are presented in experience as this or that kind of thing, fulfill the function essential to being a sign. A common terminology even evolved, after

d'Ailly (c. 1372), to mark the point linguistically: sensible objects as such which make present in cognition something besides themselves the Latins agreed to call 'instrumental signs', while those interpretive structures of thought as such which serve to make sensible objects present as this or that kind of individual they called by contrast 'formal signs'.⁵³

But this agreement on terminology proved to be but a verbal agreement, which is perhaps why it proved to have little enduring power beyond the time of those who forged it. In fact, the comity among the differing Latin schools on this verbal point served to mask a much deeper disagreement that became apparent to the cognoscenti as soon as the question of Augustine's defining formula was realized to involve the more profound problem of the very being proper to signs — the being, that is to say, enabling signs to function as signs in the first place. Augustine's original proposal of a general definition may have been too narrow, as all came to agree, but at least it had the merit of applying to particular things. Now Ockham and his followers increasingly distinguished themselves by insisting that only particular things are real. Ideas of the mind may not be sensible characteristics of individuals, but they are subjective characteristics of individuals no less than is the color of one's skin or the shape of one's nose. *My* idea is as much a part of my subjectivity as is *my* shape or size or color. Hence the nominalists could distinguish formal and instrumental signs as respectively inaccessible and accessible to direct sense perception, without admitting that there is any *type* or general mode of being verified equally in the differing tokens or instances of sign that pertains to the order of mind-independent being.⁵⁴

The Scotists and the Thomists accepted the terminology proposed seemingly by Nominalists for distinguishing between signs whose foundation was and signs whose foundation was not directly sense-perceptible (instrumental vs. formal signs, respectively). But they also insisted, against the nominalists, on a more fundamental point: when a particular object or an idea is said to be a 'sign', what makes the appellation true is not the particularity of the feature in question but the fact that it serves to ground a relation to something other than itself; for this relation, *indifferently mind-dependent or mind-independent, depending only on circumstances surrounding the relation (relatio secundum esse)*, not the individual characteristic upon which the relation is based, constitutes the being proper to the sign as such. Thus the Latin authors eschewing nominalism insisted that not only was Augustine wrong to propose a definition tying signs to sense-perceptible objects as such, but that the *reason why* he was wrong was not merely that ideas as well as words and rocks serve as vehicles of signification. The reason why he was wrong is much more profound, namely, that the relations actually and properly constituting signs

are always as such and in every case without exception knowable as such only to understanding in its distinction from the perception of sense. This distinction is exactly what we assert today when we recognize that linguistic communication arises from a species-specifically distinct modeling system, and that it is this modeling system as such (see esp. Sebeok 1987), not the linguistic communication exapted⁵⁵ from its distinctive function, that constitutes 'language' in the species-specifically human root sense, a capacity more traditionally designated 'intellect' among the Latins and (more obscurely) 'understanding' among the later moderns.

Here, unnoticed by any currently established historian of philosophy, including Gilson no less than Matson, the theoretical divide between the nominalists and their Latin opponents widens to a chasm. For the nominalists, relations exist only as mind-dependent objects through and through, as comparisons made in thought by the mind itself. They exist wholly within and function as no more than a distinguishing part of subjectivity itself, that total complex of characteristics and functions whereby one individual in nature exists unto itself as distinct from the rest of the universe.

For those opposing nominalists in the matter of resolving the 'burning and inevitable problem' bequeathed from Augustine, relations are as much a part of nature as are individuals, and in fact are a part of nature apart from which individuals could not so much as exist as distinct individuals. For while indeed in the Latin notion of 'substance' there is embodied the affirmation of natural individuals, the nominalist interpretation of that notion (the only interpretation familiar to the classical authors from whose works sprang the distinctively modern mainstream of philosophy) is completely at loggerheads with the notion as we find it in Aquinas and Scotus or their followers among the Latins, or as we find it before them in the Greek texts of Aristotle.

For the opponents of Nominalism among the Latins, substance itself is a relative notion, not an absolute one;⁵⁶ for the individual is only relatively distinct from the surrounding universe, and the individual maintains its actual existence as relatively distinct only through and on the basis of an unremitting series of *interactions* which sustain a network of actual relations, relations mind-independent and physical even though not subjective, which link the individual to what it itself is not but upon which it depends even in being what it is (cf. Hoffmeyer 1996). So they distinguished substance as a relative notion of what exists in itself dependently upon other things besides itself, *subjectivity*, from *intersubjectivity*, pure relations as such which actually link the individual to whatever it is that the individual depends upon in whatever way without being that other thing. Intersubjectivity in this pure sense thus *characterizes* the

individual but does not *reduce* to the subjectivity of the individual. Individual characteristics are thus both subjective and intersubjective, and the actual existence of the individual as relatively distinct from and within its physical surroundings depends upon *both* types of characteristics.⁵⁷

The nominalists denied that these intersubjective characteristics had any reality outside of thought or over and above subjectivity itself. All relations, Ockham asserted, and all the nominalists after him agreed (including Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume; Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant⁵⁸), are constituted only in and by thought itself whenever and only insofar as the mind makes comparisons between objects and aspects of objects.

Comparisons the mind makes do indeed give rise to relations within thought, countered the later followers of Scotus and Aquinas. But what makes these relations unique is not the fact that thought forms them so much as the fact that thought is able to form them only because the understanding has already recognized intersubjectivity as a reality of the physical world, on the basis of experiencing which the mind can go on to make *further* comparisons of its own. These further comparisons, like relations in nature, will be 'between' objects as linking one to the other, but with this difference: relations between individuals in the physical environment cannot exist *except* as intersubjective, whereas relations fashioned by thought, always interobjective, yet may or may not be intersubjective in fact, inasmuch as one or the other term of such a relation either may not exist at all, or may not exist in the manner that thought presents it to exist. I may be mistaken about who my father is, even though there is no question that in fact I have a father. That is the whole and only difference between mind-dependent and mind-independent relations insofar as they are relations, but it reveals a distinctive feature of pure relations as such that will prove crucial for understanding how signs are possible:⁵⁹ while every pure relation exists as such over and above whatever subjectivity it depends upon in order to actually exist here and now, only some pure relations are in fact *intersubjective*. Therefore the feature essential to and constitutive of the purely relative as such is not intersubjectivity but *suprasubjectivity*.

If that is so, and every sign consists in a relation as such (a relation of three terms, a *triadic* relation), then every sign as such serves to link an individual to something that is other than itself, *whether or not this other signified actually exists in any physical sense as a subjectivity in its own right*. The implications of this point are not only enormous; they are decisive for semiotics. The point enables us to see, in the first place, how signs can be used indifferently to lie, to blunder, or to express some truth: the situation depends upon factors wholly external to the sign relation as

such, just as my being or not being an uncle is quite independent of anything I do. But perhaps the most interesting theoretical implication of this last point developed among the Latins, tentatively with the Conimbricenses and Araújo, definitively with Peirce and, after him and independently, with Peirce, is that the relations in which signs consist according to their proper being as signs differ from physical relations in nature in having of necessity (or 'in principle') three terms united rather than only two. In other words, it suffices for intersubjective instances of relation to be dyadic, whereas the suprasubjective instantiations of relations *as signs* must always be triadic. A car can hit a tree only if there is a tree there to be hit; but a sign can warn a bridge is out whether or not the bridge is out, or, for that matter, whether or not there is even a bridge there at all where the sign 'leads us to believe' there is a defective one!

The development as a whole

Semiotic consciousness, thus, first arose in the time of Augustine, but its principal development as a theoretical theme did not occur until much later, beginning with Aquinas and Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century and continuing thereafter right down to the time of Galileo and Descartes with its 1632 culmination in the work of John Peirce.

This main period of theoretical development as a whole occurred in two phases, both of which have been identified only in the most recent times, and both of which have only begun to be explored in depth.

The first stage occurs between Aquinas and Ockham, or perhaps d'Ailly, when it comes clearly to be recognized that the being proper to signs need not be directly perceptible to sense, culminating in the linguistic marker of the 'formal/instrumental sign' distinction.

The second stage occurs between Soto and Peirce, when it comes clearly to be recognized that the being proper to signs not only need not but *cannot* be directly perceived by sense, for the reason that this being is constituted not by any subjective characteristic upon which a relation happens to depend existentially, such as the shape of an object perceived or the contour of a sound heard, but by the very *triadic relation itself* which, as suprasubjective, as over and above its sense-perceptible occasion of existing (its 'foundation' in the Latin sense), is *never* sense-perceptible and need not even be intersubjective, as long as it presents to or for another something that the sign-vehicle itself is not (see Deely 2001b, or 2003: Part III). It follows from this that sign relations, that is to say, the relations in which the being proper to signs as such consists (or, simply, in which *signs* most formally and properly speaking consist), must also be

triadic and never merely dyadic. This triadic character of sign relations obtains even when the sign happens to relate actually existing physical subjectivities, for actuality in that sense depends upon factors wholly extrinsic to the sign-relation as such as mediating the objective.

It further follows that signs are never mere individual things, but exist only insofar as individual beings are involved with things other than themselves, and this with ‘others’ both actually existing and only possibly existing or once having existed (as in the case of dead parents) or only thought mistakenly to exist or have existed. The sign, it turns out, is not merely an object linking another object in thought, but *that upon which every object depends in order to be in thought at all*,⁶⁰ whether truly or falsely. And all of this depends on the doctrine of relation which the Latins inherited from Aristotle’s discussion of categories of physical being.⁶¹ But the Latins expanded upon Aristotle’s terse text enormously,⁶² especially under the pressure of seeking to come to terms with ‘the burning and inevitable problem’ (or rather nest of problems) which Augustine, in his ignorance of Greek, had so casually handed them with his innocent (not to say naive) proposal of sign as a genus to which culture no less than nature contributes species.

In this way we find that what contemporaries call ‘semiotic consciousness’ is an originally and indigenously Latin development. It was first made possible thematically at the outset of the Latin Age by Augustine’s naive posit, but first reduced systematically to its theoretical ground in the being proper to relation in John Poinsett’s *Treatise on Signs*, a work brought to print as the Latin Age is nearing its end, and thereafter lost for more than three centuries in the language that almost became its tomb. But if it is Augustine and Poinsett who anchor at its historical extremes the Latin Age, the former by positing sign as a general notion and the latter by vindicating the posit, it is yet Aquinas, four centuries before Poinsett and nine centuries after Augustine, who left for us the main speculative elements that must be brought together for sign to be understood in its proper being (see Deely 1994a: 58n9). And, before Aquinas, it is the terminology established for the Latins in rendering Aristotle’s doctrine of categories, most especially in their bearing on ‘relative being’,⁶³ that brings into the postmodern problematic of sign not only the Latin Age but the substance of ancient Greek philosophy as well.

Recognizing the Thomistic sense within the larger whole of postmodernity

By the time the American philosopher Charles Peirce (1838–1914) passed from the status of future, that is, not yet living, to the status of present

contributor to philosophical discussion, the Latin notion of *signum*, its origin, development, and vindication over the twelve-hundred or so years of the Latin Age had passed into oblivion, forgotten to all present contributors to the discussion of philosophy outside the circle of modern Thomism influenced specifically by Jacques Maritain. Peirce in this matter proved not to be a typical modern. He did not condemn the past of philosophy, in particular its Latin past. He undertook instead to explore it. And, though his explorations did not reach as far as the work of Poincaré (Beuchot and Deely 1995), they did bring him as far as Poincaré's principal teachers and immediate predecessors in the matter of the doctrine of signs, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and the Conimbricenses.

As a result, Peirce was able to recover the Latin notion of *signum* very nearly at the point where the Latins had left it, that is to say, at the point where it had been realized and definitively explained that *signs* strictly speaking are not their sensible or psychological vehicle, but that this vehicle, loosely called a 'sign' (especially in the case where it is a sensible object), is but the subjective foundation or ground (the vehicle, we might say) for an irreducibly triadic relation which, in its proper being, is not subjective but suprasubjective in linking its subject term to a terminus or object signified as represented to some observer or interpretant, prospective or actual in *its* subjective being. Thus, while both the sign vehicle and the observer when actual are subjective beings, the sign itself is always and irreducibly suprasubjective. And the 'object signified' or significate of the sign is itself always and irreducibly sustained as the direct terminus of a triadic relation, regardless of whether it has any subjective being at all as an immediate part of its objective being — its 'objectivity', or status as signified.

Only Maritain among the neothomistic authors of the nineteenth and twentieth century (the late-modern proponents of the 'second Thomism', national language rather than Latin — as had been the 'first Thomism' and Thomas himself), as I have several times had occasion to mention, showed a profound sense of the relevance of the theme of sign to the future of Thomism and of philosophy itself as moving (finally) around and beyond the 'epistemological' and 'linguistic' 'turns' of the modern period. If the most important development for the immediate future of philosophy (and perhaps for intellectual culture as a whole) is to be, as I believe, the realization of the centrality of the doctrine of signs to the understanding of being and experience for human animals, and, along with this, the tracing of that doctrine to its dependency on St. Thomas's radical doctrine of *ens primum cognitum* almost equally with Augustine's 'ignorant novelty', then Peirce's recovery of the notion of *signum* from the Latins may be said to have marked the beginning of new age in philosophy.

Not a return to the medievals, by any means, but a recovery of their *ens reale* in moving beyond the moderns, every bit as much as the moderns (in ideoscopy, at least, if hardly in cenoscopy, as Heidegger tartly noted in the matter of Cajetan vis-à-vis Descartes in matters foundational⁶⁴). By overcoming the forgottenness of *signum*, the veritable *Zeichensvergesenheit* of modernity, Peirce also destroyed the common foundation upon which the mainstream modern philosophers (from Descartes and Locke to Kant in the classical phase, continuing with analytic philosophers and phenomenologists in our own day) had constantly built. There are some today who embrace modern philosophy's culminating doctrine that only the mind's own constructions are properly said to be known, ones who (or whose epigones) have yet tried to coin and appropriate the phrase 'postmodern' to advertise their stance. But the vain appropriation cannot conceal the stipulation which guarantees that these *would-be* postmoderns are nothing more than surviving remnants of a dying age.

What is surprising and promising in this vast story is the central, or, perhaps better to say, *transitional* or *midwife*, role that the thought of Thomas Aquinas plays, not only in its original thirteenth century embodiment but also in its further embodiment in the two main previous efforts by a community of inquirers to apply and develop the intellectual heritage constituted by the writings of St. Thomas — namely, as I have outlined, the work of the 'first Thomism' of the fourteenth to seventeenth century, and the work of the 'second Thomism' of the nineteenth and twentieth century. In the immediate future of the early twenty-first century, in philosophy and in intellectual culture more broadly conceived, we are likely to see in this regard yet a 'third Thomism', where Thomas Aquinas no longer appears mainly as a sectarian figure in the opposition of 'Catholic' to 'Protestant', or merely a 'realist' opposed to modern 'idealism', but rather as a universal figure, we might almost say as a 'Catholic' in the pre-Augustinian sense,⁶⁵ whose treasure of thought exceeds the riches of any single age or florescence of subsequent 'Thomisms'. For after all, we need the resources of all of those taken together who have studied and sought to apply the genius of St. Thomas if we are to see something of the full profile his thought makes across the centuries, and to see, in particular, his contribution to and role in the long development of semiotic consciousness.

So, after all, how are we to conceive 'postmodernity'?

Modernity began with an assumption (common to Descartes and Locke) that, from the first moments of sense to the intellectual formation of con-

cepts, representations directly apprehended provide the immediate contents of consciousness. Whence it follows that whatever the mind knows in whatever it knows of it the mind itself makes.

Postmodern philosophy, thus, admits mainly of two possible conceptions.

The first conception of 'postmodern'

The first conception involves the letting go of even the pretense, let alone the hope, of rooting our knowledge in a grasp of mind-independent being, *ens reale*, and embracing full-scale the possibility (but now seen as what has been actually the case all along) that discourse is a free play of purely objective relations wherein the task — deconstruction — is nothing less than the unmasking of the pretense that in the order of mind-dependent being as such mind-independent relations and elements enter in and play a role. What makes a philosophy *postmodern* is the rejection of foundationalism as a quixotic quest, the abandonment as mythical of the fountain of youth from which modernity began, by thinking to drink in nature on its own terms. Deconstruction, then, requires all the cleverness demanded by the task of showing that the mind is involved always and only with its own creations, a cleverness necessarily all the more great when it comes to the interpretation and exposition of texts composed originally still under the imaginary ideal of finding in *ens reale* a measure, however partial, of human discourse as 'true science'.

For what finally came to thematic and systematic consciousness in and after Kant was that the first term of what Thomas Aquinas considered the first division of being as the distinctively human awareness of objectivity, namely, the contrast of *ens reale* with *ens rationis*, has been put under erasure, for *ens reale* in that Latin sense equals the *Ding-an-sich* in Kant's sense. Hence we must speak not of *ens reale* under *ens*, but realize rather that *ens* as divided into *ens reale* and *ens rationis* is ~~*ens reale*~~ and *ens rationis*, that is to say, the realization that being is *already* a construction woven of mind-dependent relations which alone determine the constitution of the objective world, the world as known.

This first conception of postmodernism in philosophy, however, differs not really in kind from the epistemology, say, of Kant himself. For it is precisely the putting of ~~*ens reale*~~ under erasure that we now see was the quintessence of modernity from the moment it adopted as the assumption common to Rationalism and Empiricism alike the notion that whatever the mind knows in what the mind knows of it the mind itself makes. It is the intersection in perception of a set of relations that enables a cape-clad

figure with long teeth to appear to us as Dracula or some other vampire. And so it is with all objects of experience, wherein ‘reality’ becomes a variation upon imagination, hardly its source.

So this first meaning of ‘postmodernism’, the perhaps common one in intellectual culture of the moment (inasmuch as it leaves the epistemological situation essentially where Kant left it), is by that very circumstance more *ultra* than *post* modern; for it simply participates in a more fully conscious manner in the *telos* of the way modernity took, via Kant, as the mainstream development from Descartes to Derrida.

The second conception of ‘postmodern’

Paradoxically enough, therefore, a second conception of philosophy as ‘postmodern’ would be one that drains the mainstream of its current by showing that its initial assumption was not only improbable but unnecessary. A philosophy ‘postmodern’ in the radical sense — that is to say, one not *nominally* but *really* postmodern — would revisit the early modern period and succeed to show instead that the idea of reading the book of nature on its own terms and codifying the results in mathematical formulae was not a chimerical idea at all, but rather one well-founded and based precisely on a contrast of *ens reale* and *ens rationis* in which neither term comes ‘under erasure’, even though the discovery of the details and true nature of the contrast is a matter of experience and experiment to a far greater degree than the ‘scholastic realists’ of the Latin Age had been able to realize.

Looking back from crossing the threshold of the twenty-first century, the scholastics clearly appear as ones who, generally speaking, exhibit an irreducible naiveté vis-à-vis the postmodern realization that the world of objects indeed exhibits a mixed constitution of mind-dependent and mind-independent relations through which ‘common experience’ involves irreducibly social construction in the everyday presentation of objects within experience. The ‘social construction of reality’ may not be the whole story, but it is always and inevitably the opening chapter of experience, the *Lebenswelt* within which even the most distinctively human activities of animals-become-speculative (*ζῷα λόγον ἐχόν*) — that is to say, aware of truth as possibility for thought beyond practicality — begin.

On this second account of ‘postmodernity’, a clear and distinct conception of the modern enables also a firm recognition of a difference between what is merely *ultra* or *late* modern and what would truly be *post* modern.

A view which succeeded to show how the social construction of the life-world is yet compatible with a critical development within the objective world of the contrast *seemingly* given in experience between aspects of objects which do and aspects of objects which do not reduce to our experience of them as *really* a contrast, a view which succeeded to show that *ens reale* need not be brought under erasure in order for it to be realized that the public world of common life finds its main architecture in the objectivity of *ens rationis* as the public termination of relations which would not be apart from the mind's working, would indeed be *postmodern* and not merely *ultramodern*.

For it would, as Peirce said of pragmatism in contrasting it with pragmatism, retain essentially the scholastic realism incompatible with every variety of nominalism, without reducing to an exclusive focus on the *ens reale* side of the contrast within being as experienced between what is and what is not objectively more than what the mind creates. This post-modernity, in short, would be *semiotics*, a doctrine in which *signa naturalia* and *signa data* would both play a part, exactly as Augustine originally proposed, and that *pars semeiotica* which by preference chose to focus on the extreme of the linguistic *signa ad placita* among the *signa data* would be well labeled 'semiology', whether as a hold-over into the age of the sign from late and 'ultra' modern idealism or as a legitimate subaltern discipline within semiotics ("sematology") depending upon the manner in which it was practiced.

That semiotic consciousness itself, as inherited from the Latins and developed anew after Peirce, subalternates semiology as Augustine's *signum* subalternated the Greek *σημείον*, however, is no longer a matter leaving room for doubt.

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2. See further Deely 2001: 'The Stoic versus Epicurean polemic over signs and inference', 108–112.
3. Cf. Cicero *De Inventionibus* I, chap. 30 (Markus p. 64, Jackson 95); Quintilian, *Inst. Ora.* v. 9 (M 64); Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, V, 3 and 4 (Jackson 118n75 + 143).
4. Augustine 396: Book II, chap. 2, line 3: 'Data vero signa sunt, quae sibi quaeque viuentia invicem dant ad demonstrandos, quantum possunt, motus animi sui vel sensa aut intellecta quaelibet. Nec ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad demonstrandum et traiciendum in alterius animum id, quod animo gerit, qui signum dat.' — 'But deliberate signs are those which living things of whatever kind' — that is to say, whether plant, animal, or human — 'give to one another in order to demonstrate, insofar as they are able, a subjective condition [such as the infection of the tree] or something sensed or whatever it is that is understood.'
5. Poinsett 1632: *Treatise on Signs*, Book I, Question 6, esp. 208/34–37 and 212/41–213/7, text and note 25. See also Deely 2001: 466–468 and 529–534.
6. Somehow even the Spanish-speaking thinkers of modern times succumbed in philosophy to the Cartesian anti-historical knowledge bias, which is a pity, for by far the most important epistemological developments within Thomistic thought and within Latin scholasticism generally (as Maritain noted in *Antimoderne*) took place in fifteenth- to seventeenth-century Iberia. Yet the twentieth-century universities of Iberia, in many ways steeped in stodgy traditions best shed, yet in philosophy ape the fashions of English language 'analytic philosophy' and leave their rich heritage of semiotic consciousness, so far, for other peoples of other lands to recapture. Yet the prospective importance of the late Latin period as it flourished in this region for the major revision of the standard outline of philosophy that is underway today (under the pressure of contemporary interests which resume especially late Latin Iberian themes) is best seen in the ongoing work of the Mexican Dominican scholar Mauricio Beuchot: see the Reference entries under his name.
7. Gilson 1952: 99: 'Suarez modestly introduces himself as a theologian who, to facilitate his own work, has felt it advisable to lay down, once and for all, the philosophical principles of which he makes use in his theological teaching. In fact, Suarez enjoys such a knowledge of mediaeval philosophy as to put to shame any modern historian of mediaeval thought. On each and every question he seems to know everybody and every-

thing, and to read his book is like attending the Last Judgment of four centuries of Christian speculation by a dispassionate judge, always willing to give everyone a chance, supremely apt at summing up a case and, unfortunately, so anxious not to hurt equity that a moderate verdict is most likely to be considered a true verdict. Rather than judge, Suarez arbitrates....'

8. See the extended note 2 on pp. 44–45 of the 1985 Deely edition of Poinso 1632; and see esp. Doyle 1983.
9. To wit, his 1631–1635 *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus* from the second volume of which in particular his 1632 *Treatise on Signs* derives.
10. For the astonishing fact remains, notwithstanding the revisionist protests of such authors as Cavarnos (1989), Pelikan (1974), Dawson (1910), that not a single work of philosophy or science achieved classical status, 'world-historical import', as Hegel might have put it, from within the Byzantine Umwelt from the founding of Constantinople on May 11, 330, to its conquest on May 29, 1453.
11. The work of Billuart (i.1746–1751) needs to be remarked as an outstanding exception. There are always exceptions.
12. Interesting and useful to consult in this matter of the triumph of idealism in the modern philosophical sense are the early editions of Lalande 1926 and after.
13. Or 'that which the human mind as such grasps before all else and thanks to which it grasps whatever else it grasps'. See on this point the seminal essays of Guagliardi 1993 and 1994; and the treatment in Deely 2001: 341–357.
14. This may be blatant nonsense, but it is also common doctrine among English-speaking philosophers of the twentieth century. See Deely 2001: 364ff.
15. Happily, a critical mass of published scholarship in this matter makes it probable in this area that even the 'common wisdom' of popular culture will eventually adjust itself. See Sebeok 1971; Romeo 1977; Deely 1985, 1986a, 1993, 1994c, 2003a, 2004.
16. *Σημεία*, in other words, are from outside the human realm, are from nature, either in the manifestations of the gods or in the manifestations of the physical surroundings. Within the human realm are found not signs but symbols (*σύμβολα*) and, what is after all but a subclass of symbols, names (*ονομασία*), the elements in general of linguistic communication. The most complete single study of this ancient Greek notion of *σημείον* is in the work of Manetti, esp. 1993.
17. One author, B. Darrell Jackson, has tried to distinguish himself in the scholarly arena by demonstrating the claim that, of the several scholars who have explored Augustine in the matter sign, 'at some points their analysis of Augustine's logic and of Stoic logic lacks both historical accuracy and technical precision' (Jackson 1972: 93). As a consequence, while 'it might be more correct to say that Augustine is original among *Latin* authors in calling words "signs";' this is not the case if we look to the Greek authors preceding him; for in this light, 'instead of being novel, Augustine's use of "sign" seems to be in agreement with the Stoic tradition' (*ibid.* 136). Jackson's claim here, however, for all the scholarship he brings to bear, does not stand up. Manetti (1993: Chap. 10) takes full account of Jackson's sources and more, identifying irreducible points of difference (see esp. 157–158) between Augustine's theory and the claimed but not sustained continuity of his theoretical projection with what is truly found in the Stoics. See also Deely 2001: 108–112; and Philodemus i.54–40BC. Jackson's claim stumbles over one insurmountable theoretical point in particular: in the Stoic debate with the Epicureans, it was the Stoic insistence on a conceptual intermediary between the sign and its significate that the Epicureans in particular rejected. In Augustine's theory, the complete failure to make any attempt to integrate his doctrine of the *verbum interior* or concept with his doctrine of the *verbum exterior* as a sign is among the most puzzling

and outstanding features which his Latin successors found themselves forced to come to terms with. Yet, if he were 'in agreement with the Stoic tradition', it would have been with the very matter of this needed integration that he would have begun. The central distinguishing feature of the Stoic treatment of signs, in short, is not a feature at all of Augustine's theory in his proposal which brings words as *signa data* alongside *signa naturalia* as alike subordinated to the general notion of *signum*.

18. The earliest scholar I know of who establishes Augustine's originality in his use of the term *signum* was Markus 1957 (reprinted in 1972 alongside a reprint of Jackson 1969 without any need to respond to Jackson's attempted criticism). But it was within the context of semiotics that this originality also appeared as a possible instrument for re-defining the full extent of 'medieval philosophy' as the Latin Age.
19. See the editorial note on the provenance of this text in Deely, Williams, and Kruse 1986: xix.
20. The discovery entered our semiotic literature of today as an anomaly, a curious fact that, like Albert the Great's fossils in the 1260s, puzzled the mind without suggesting any grand hypotheses. Ironically, when an abduction was finally made and formally presented full-scale in the work of Manetti just cited, the guess missed and, for want of a familiarity with the key texts of later Latin times, as we will have occasion to mention, proffered the wild hypothesis that it was the Latins themselves, and not the late modern structuralists and deconstructionists heir to Saussure, who began the development that culminated in the semiological thesis that there are only conventional signs. See the survey of contemporary usage in Sebeok 1971 and Deely 2004; then further 'Rectificando los terminos "semiótica" y "semiología",' in Deely 1996: 300–317; and 'Ferdinand de Saussure and Semiotics' in Tasca 1995: 75–85. See further Chapter 16 in the *Four Ages of Understanding*. Nonetheless, the asymmetry of ancient Greek and modern national language philosophy on this point is worthy of note: as the ancients recognized only *natural* signs, so the moderns came in the end to recognize only *conventional* signs. The Latins, by contrast, like Peircean postmoderns, are distinguished by the theoretical means of recognizing both.
21. i.1254–1256, *In IV Sent.* dist. 1. q. 1. art. 1. quaestiunc. 2, n. 32 (Busa ed. vol. 1 p. 417 col. 2, ds1 qu 1 ar 1b co): 'Signum importat aliquod notum quoad nos, quo manuducimur in alterius cognitionem. Res autem primo nobis notae, sunt res cadentes sub sensu, a quo omnis nostra cognitio ortum habet. Et ideo signum quantum ad primam sui institutionem significat aliquam rem sensibilem, prout per eam manuducimur in cognitionem alicujus occulti. Et sic MAGISTER accipit hic signum', and with him the young Aquinas.
22. *Ibid.*, n. 33 (ar 1b co): 'Contingit autem aliquando quod magis notum quoad nos, etiam si non sit res cadens sub sensu, quasi secundaria significatione signum dicatur.' His discussion here, based on the second book of Aristotle's *Ethics* (1104b4), anticipates the kind of interpretant that will be called by Peirce 'emotional'.
23. *Ibid.* n. 35 (ar 1b ra2): 'dicendum quod in rebus intelligibilibus fit processus ab his quae sunt notiora simpliciter, sicut patet in mathematicis. Unde ibi effectus non sunt signa causarum, sicut in sensibilibus.'
24. *Ibid.* n. 36 (ar 1b ra3): 'dicendum similiter de locutione angelorum, quod fit per ea quae sunt notiora simpliciter. Unde non possunt proprie dici signa, sed quasi *transumptive*.' 'Transumptive' is also an English word, defined in the OED as figurative or metaphorical.
25. c.1273, *Summa theologiae* III. 60. 4 ad 1 (Busa 2 p. 862): 'unumquodque praecipue denominatur et definitur secundum illud quod convenit ei primo et per se, non autem secundum id quod convenit ei per aliud. Effectus autem sensibilis per se habet quod

ducat in cognitionem alterius, quasi primo et per se homini innotescens, quia omnis nostra cognitio a sensu initium habet. Effectus autem intelligibiles non habent quod possint ducere in cognitionem alterius nisi inquantum sunt per aliud manifestati, idest, per aliqua sensibilia. Et inde est quod primo et principaliter dicuntur signa, quae sensibus offeruntur, sicut Augustinus dicit in ii de doct. christ., ubi dicit quod 'signum est quod praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus, facit aliquid aliud in cognitionem venire.' effectus autem intelligibiles non habent rationem signi, nisi secundum quod sunt manifestati per aliqua signa. et per hunc etiam modum quaedam quae non sunt sensibilia, dicuntur quodammodo sacramenta, inquantum sunt significata per aliqua sensibilia.'

26. By some sensible effects with which they are entangled in human experience.
27. Aquinas c.1256–1259, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, q. 9. art. 4 ad 4 (Busa 3 p. 60): 'dicendum, quod signum, proprie loquendo, non potest dici nisi aliquid ex quo deveniatur in cognitionem alterius quasi discurrendo; et secundum hoc, signum in angelis non est, cum eorum scientia non sit discursiva, ut in praecedentibus habitum est [q. 14. art. 15]. Et propter hoc etiam in nobis signa sunt sensibilia, quia nostra cognitio, quae discursiva est, a sensibilibus oritur.' For a complete discussion of the semiosis of angels in the context of Aquinas's thought, see Deely 2004a.
28. That is, by passing from the one thing as known first to the other as known after and because of the first. Poinot, in his formal *Tractatus*, Book I, Question 6, 206/5–207/17, esp. 206/25ff., discusses the necessity of *discursus* in the action of signs and shows that it is not essential to that action, concluding (207/14–15) that 'si requiretur discursus formalis, neque angelus signis uteretur, quod est falsum'.
29. Aquinas c.1256/9, *De Veritate* q. 9, art. 4 ad 5 (Busa 3 p. 60): 'Ad quantum dicendum, quod quamvis in naturalibus, quorum effectus sunt nobis magis noti quam causae, signum sit id quod est posterius in natura, tamen de ratione signi proprie accepta non est quod sit vel prius vel posterius in natura, sed solummodo quod sit nobis praecognitum: unde quandoque accipimus effectus ut signa causarum, sicut pulsus signum sanitatis; quandoque vero causas signa effectuum, sicut dispositiones corporum caelestium signa imbrium et pluviarum.'
30. *Praecognitum*: that is, a sign must be something which precedes the signified in knowledge logically, whether or not it so precedes temporally. This point will become crucial in analysis not only of icons within perception and intellection, but also in the analysis of sensation prescissively considered, where common and proper sensibles prove no less related by sign relations than one perceived object to another, or any object perceived or understood to the organism cognizing it; so that the whole of our awareness, from its origins in sense experience to its loftiest constructs of understanding, proves to be a web of sign relations. See the extended comparative discussion of the Latin scholastic and mainstream modern way of distinguishing sense qualities in Deely 1994a, and 2001: 522ff.
31. Aquinas c.1256/9: *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate* q. 9. art. 4. ad 4 (Busa vol. 3 p. 60 col. 2): 'signum, proprie loquendo, non potest dici nisi aliquid ex quo deveniatur in cognitionem alterius quasi discurrendo; et secundum hoc, signum in angelis non est, cum eorum scientia non sit discursiva, ut in praecedenti quaestione est habitum, et propter hoc etiam in nobis signa sunt sensibilia, quia nostra cognitio, quae discursiva est, a sensibilibus oritur. sed communiter possumus signum dicere quodcumque notum in quo aliquid cognoscatur; et secundum hoc forma intelligibilis potest dici signum rei per ipsum cognoscitur. et sic angeli cognoscunt res per signa; et sic unus angelus per signum alii loquitur; scilicet per speciem, in cuius actu intellectus eius fit in ordine ad alium.'
32. Aquinas c.1256–1259, *De Veritate* q. 4. art. 1 argument 7 (Busa 3 p. 24 col. 3): 'Quanto effectus est posterior, tanto magis habet rationem signi.'

33. Ibid.: 'Sed verbum quod est in voce, est effectus postremus ab intellectu progrediens. Ergo ei magis convenit ratio signi quam conceptui mentis; et similiter etiam ratio verbi, quod a manifestatione imponitur.'
34. The notion of interpretant, as something which need not be mental, is the most difficult concept of semiotics as a contemporary and postmodern development, and in fact marks the frontier of semiotic inquiry today (see Nöth 2001). Peirce undertook to think the action of signs as coextensive in fact with the physical universe in its entirety, a 'grand vision' which he never abandoned, but in fact was never able to vindicate, of which he occasionally despaired, referring in a letter to Lady Welby (1908: 80–81) of the more restricted notion of the interpretant as mental as a 'sop to Cerberus'. The Latins, through Aquinas and down to and including Poincot, never envisaged an action of signs beyond the cognitive life of organisms, and so thought of the third term of the triadic sign-relation as a 'potentia cognitiva' with its product, the concept generically conceived (or '*species expressa*': see Poincot 1632: Book II, Question 2, esp. n2 at 240/3). Similarly, even after they had definitively established that the proper being of the sign as such strictly consists in a triadic relation rather than in any one of its three terms, they never thought to re-name the 'other representative' term, just as they continued to use the term 'object' more usually than significate for the 'other represented', even after realizing (at least in the case of Poincot) that the object as such already presupposed sign relations in sensation and perception alike. The first to give to the third term of the sign relation a proper name was also the first to envision an action of signs extending beyond cognitive life, namely, Peirce, and he assigned it the technical name of 'interpretant', just as he assigned the 'other representative' term the name 'representamen', so as clearly to distinguish the sign-vehicle from the sign proper. So it is a little ironic that Peirce's grand vision turns out to require Poincot's notion of virtual signification (*Tractatus de Signis*, Book I, Question 1, 126/1ff., where he explains how 'it suffices to be a sign virtually in order to signify in act') in order to be theoretically vindicated: see Deely 1989. This most general notion of 'physiosemiosis' — an action of signs extending prior to and beyond not only the world of cognitive organisms (zoösemiosis) but even the whole world of living things (biosemiosis), to clarify and perhaps supplant the vaguer notion of 'evolution' — I have made a number of subsequent attempts to clarify. See, besides my 1989 Peirce Congress article: Deely 1990, 1993a, 1995, 1997b, 1998, 1999, 2001: 628ff., 2001b, 2001c. You can see that it is still a somewhat lonely concept, but I have at least Peirce's company!
35. Aquinas c.1256–1259, *De Veritate* q. 4. art. 1 ad 7 (Busa 3 p. 25 col. 2): 'ratio signi per prius convenit effectui quam causae, quando causa est effectui causa essendi, non autem significandi, sicut in exemplo proposito accidit. Sed quando effectus habet a causa non solum quod sit, sed etiam quod significet, tunc, sicut causa est prius quam effectus in essendo, ita in significando; et ideo verbum interius per prius habet rationem significationis quam verbum exterius, quia verbum exterius non instituitur ad significandum nisi per interius verbum.'
36. Aquinas, c.1269/72, *Quodlibetum Quartum* q. 9. art. 17 (in Busa vol. 3 p. 461 col. 1: 019 QDL n. 4. q. 9. art. 2c.): 'Dependet ergo unitas vel diversitas vocis significativae, sive complexae, sive incomplexae, ex unitate vel diversitate vocis vel intellectus; quorum unum, scilicet vox, est signum et non signatum tantum; intellectus autem signum et signatum, sicut et res.'
37. Poincot, *Treatise on Signs* (1632), Book II, Question 1, 225/12–29: 'In sententia S. Thomae probabilius est signum formale esse vere et proprie signum, atque adeo in-voce cum instrumentali, licet in modo significandi valde differant.'

‘Et pro mente S. Doctoris declaranda expendendum est, quod aliquando loquitur de signo, ut praecise exercet officium repraesentandi aliud a se, et sic tribuit formali rationem signi simpliciter. Aliquando loquitur S. Thomas de signis, quae tamquam res obiectae et prius cognitae ducunt nos ad aliquod signatum, et in tali acceptione docet signum principaliter inveniri in sensibilibus, non in spiritualibus, quae minus manifesta nobis sunt, ut loquitur in 4. dist. 1. q. 1. art. 1. quaestiunc. 2. et 3. p. q. 60. art. 4. ad 1.’

38. See Aquinas c.1254–1256: *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Book IV, dist. 1, q. 1, art. 1, quaestiunc. 2c (in Busa ed. vol. 1 p. 417 col. 2 — 004 4SN ds 1 qu 1 ar 1b).
39. See Aquinas c.1256–1259, the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, q. 4. art. 1 ad 7 (in Busa ed. vol. 3 p. 25 col. 2); q. 9. art. 4 ad 4 and ad 5 (in Busa ed. vol. 3 p. 60 col. 2).
40. Ibid. 4. 1. ad 7 (Busa ed. vol. 3 p. 25 col. 2): ‘et ideo verbum interius per prius habet rationem significationis quam verbum exterius.’ The point is expanded upon under the topic of the dependency of the instrumental on the formal sign in Poinso’s *Tractatus de Signis*, 1632: 271/22–42.
41. Ibid. 9. 4. ad 4 (Busa ed. vol. 3 p. 60 col. 2): ‘Et sic angeli cognoscunt res per signa, et unus angelus per signum alteri loquitur.’ Cf. Poinso 1644: *Tractatus de Angelis*, disp. 41, 42, and 45; Deely 2004a: esp. 23–49.
42. See Deely 2004b: ‘Semiotics and Jakob von Uexküll’s Concept of Umwelt’; Deely 2002: *What Distinguishes Human Understanding*.
43. The understanding of human beings as semiotic animals proves to be the key to understanding also the uniqueness of humans that Waddington (1960) emphasized with the rubric ‘ethical animals’, updated by Petrilli (2004) as the ‘semioethical animal’. There is a logical dependency of priority and posteriority between the two, to be sure (Deely 2004d); and it is interesting to see how, more and more, the overcoming of the speculative/practical distinction which semiotics entails (see Deely 2003: 100–112) is also leading semioticians (e.g., Tarasti 2000) to explore in the light of semiotics the traditional realm of ‘moral philosophy’. On the notion of semiotic animal and its rationale as the postmodern definition of human being, see Deely 2001: 736, 2002, 2002b, 2003b, 2004d, 2004e. Of course, this is an area concerning which Thomas Aquinas had much to say, some of which becomes all the more pertinent with the discovery of the evolutionary context of animal evolution (Deely 1965, 1966, 1969, 1973: 187ff.).
44. See Deely 2004a: 52–55, on why the question is semiotically interesting whether or not it be positively answerable.
45. Even today, Thomistic authors can be found who subscribe to this line of thinking as a genuine and veritable proof, most recently Ashley 2005.
46. This seems to have been Poinso’s position in 1644.
47. Aquinas c.1257/8: *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, Q. 2. art. 3c (Busa ed. vol. 4 p. 525 col. 1): ‘cum in imperfectis inveniat aliquid imitatio perfectorum, in ipsis, quae per naturalem rationem cognoscuntur, sunt quaedam similitudines eorum quae per fidem sunt tradita’; whence philosophy can be used within theology ‘ad notificandum per aliquas similitudines ea quae sunt fidei’. See Deely 2001: 304f.
48. Cf. Maritain 1959: 220–221: ‘It is impossible to say that the possible existence of pure spirits implies any contradiction. For the notions of spirit, knowledge, love, far from implying existence in matter, of themselves imply immateriality. That pure spirits do exist in fact,’ he goes on to argue, we have ‘some well-founded indications of the natural order’, indications which turn out to be dialectical, not probative, be it noted. ‘But even if this existence be taken as simply possible, metaphysics is not dispensed from

considering its discoverable laws. He who has not meditated on the angels will never be a perfect metaphysician', and the theological tract on the angels inspired by the extravagant and detailed pseudo-descriptions of the infamous Pseudo-Dionysius, at least as it is found in the *Summa* of Aquinas, 'virtually contains a purely metaphysical treatise concerning the ontological structure of immaterial subsistents, and the natural life of a spirit detached from the constraints of our empirical world.' Such 'knowledge as we can thus acquire of pure created spirits', Maritain concludes, belongs determinately to 'intellection by analogy' and to what we know from direct experience of the structure of finite being in its contrast to the infinite being of God wherein *esse* is the *essentia*.

49. See Aquinas c.1256/9: *De Veritate* q. 1. art. 1c (Busa 3 p. 1 col. 2), where the transcendentals are systematically derived from within being-as-first-known. See further Wolter 1946, 1978, 1978a.
50. In my circle of acquaintances, only Vincent Guagliardo undertook to probe this problem directly, and his promising inquiries (Guagliardo 1992–1996) were aborted by an untimely death.
51. Especially with Aquinas, for, as we have just seen in some detail, even though he never focused thematically on sign as a question of systematic pursuit, his work is so vast, and problems central to the eventual formation of such a systematically pursued theme recur tangentially to issues he does systematically pursue, that he leaves a trail of tantalizing suggestions to be pursued over the entire *corpus* of his writings, the very trail that Poinsoot will follow in bringing to publication 358 years after Aquinas' death the first systematic demonstration of a being common to all signs as such, and hence the first *demonstration* (in contrast to *posit*) of the existence of a unified subject matter for semiotic inquiry. It will be exactly 353 more years before this effort of Poinsoot will surface outside of the Latin language — such is the slow rhythm of philosophical development in this area.
52. Not that there were no other Latin authors of the time and after who treated the sign. Of course there were (e.g., Timpler 1604, 1612; Keckermann c.1607; Scheibler 1617; Mastrius and Belluto 1639; Comas 1661; Makowski 1679; and others); but Poinsoot was singular in cutting to the heart of the perspective and establishing the vantage unique to a doctrine of signs superior to the division between inner and outer, nature and culture. See the discussion of reviews in Deely 1988.
53. Apart from Deely 2001: Chap. 8, 364–410, the fullest historical discussion of this first phase of the later Latin development is presented in Meier-Oeser 1997: 'Die Unterscheidung von *signum formale* — und *signum instrumentale*', pp. 238–251.
54. This second and decisive aspect of the late Latin development of semiotic consciousness has, so far as I am aware, first been discussed in the literature in Deely 2001: Chaps. 9 and 10, pp. 411–484. Meier-Oeser, in his work splendid as far as it goes, appallingly misapprehends this aspect of the problem. The *Four Ages of Understanding* (cf. the 'promissory note' in Deely 1996a) traces the complete history of philosophy from Thales to Eco in terms of the bearing that history has on the current and prospective development of semiotics as the positive essence of what can only be called (in philosophy at least, where 'modernity' is defined by the epistemological paradigm according to which the human mind is capable of knowing only the products of its own operations) a *postmodern* development.

The opening of the new historical epoch of postmodernity, in fact, may be dated specifically to May 14, 1867, when Peirce presented his 'New List of Categories': for the list in question contrasts both with Aristotle's original list of c.360BC, by including specifically the objective products of mind as well as the knowable elements

of physical nature, and also with Kant's list of 1781, by including specifically objective, i.e., directly and immediately known, elements of physical nature as well as phenomena owing their whole being to the mind's own operations. For the creation, in Peirce's 'New List', of an 'intersection of nature and culture' (Sebeok 1975a; cf. also Sebeok 1979), set the problematic of the sign squarely beyond the modern quarrels between idealism and realism, in conformity exactly with the terms originally set by John Poinset for beginning a systematic development of the doctrine of signs (1632: 117/24ff.): 'the sign in general . . . includes equally the natural and the social sign', that is to say, 'even the signs which are mental artifacts'. And if there is anything which philosophy cannot account for and remain within the constraints of the Descartes-Locke equation of ideas with the objects of direct experience, it is the possibility of a knowledge of structures of the physical environment according to a being proper to them. See Deely 2001: 'Categories and the Action of Signs', 637ff.

55. See Gould and Vrba 1982 on the term 'exaptation'.
56. This is the notion of the *relativum seu relatio secundum dici* finally clarified by Poinset 1632: *Tractatus de Signis*, Second Preamble: 'On Relation', Articles 1 and 2, 80/1–99/42, esp. 89/21–91/29 and 96/1–36. See also Deely 1994a: 'Contrasting Ontological and Transcendental Relatives', 249–253.
57. This needs to be compared with the absolutely absolute notion of substance in Locke or, even more, in Kant: see Deely 2001: 555–556.
58. Such a spectrum of authors agreeing on so basic a point is worth documenting. The first one to do so in a brief and systematic compass, I believe, was Weinberg 1965 — although Peirce himself, as early as 1898 (CP 4.1), to cite a specific mention (though the point runs throughout his writings), had already taken note that not only is every modern philosopher from Descartes to Hegel a nominalist, but further that 'as soon as you have once mounted the vantage-ground of the logic of relatives . . . you find that you command the whole citadel of nominalism, which must thereupon fall almost without another blow.'
59. Perhaps it is not too much to say that grasping the semiotic bearing of this point is what constitutes the uniqueness of Poinset's *Tractatus* of 1632.
60. See Deely 2001: 'A New Definition of *Signum*', 434–435. See further 2001b or 2003: Part III.
61. See Deely 2001: Chap. 6, esp. 'Boethius', pp. 224–232.
62. This can be seen most readily in their subsumption of Aristotle's categorial relation, the *relatio praedicamentalis seu realis*, together with the thought-constituted relation, *relatio rationis*, under the more general rubric of *relatio secundum esse*; and their setting of this general mode of being in contrast with the order of subjectivity *tout court* subsumed under the rubric of *relatio transcendentalis seu secundum dici*, which latter expressed the requirement both for discourse and for physical existence that substances be always in interactions and pure relations with their surroundings either to be or to be understood. See esp. the 'Second Preamble' of Poinset's *Tractatus*, and Deely 2001: Chaps. 5–10.
63. See Deely 2001: 'Boethius' Terminology for Aristotle's Difficulties with Relation', 226–231.
64. See Heidegger 1927: 93, where 'Descartes is always far behind the Schoolmen' in working out the problem of the *primum cognitum*, with Cajetan's treatment of analogy specifically cited (note xiv, p. 491 in the Macquarrie and Robinson trans.) 'in this connection'.
65. See '*Conceptus Catholici*' in Deely 1997a: 67–71.

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 2. Summa contra Gentiles, Autographi Deleta, Summa Theologiae;
 3. Quaestiones Disputatae, Quaestiones Quodlibetales, Opuscula;
 4. Commentaria in Aristotelem et alios;
 5. Commentaria in Scripturas;
 6. Reportationes, Opuscula dubiae authenticitatis;
 7. Aliorum Medii Aevi Auctorum Scripta 61.
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